

# UNIQUE HELSINKI

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“Beauty is the harmony of purpose and form” Alvar Aalto

What is unique to a city? What can transform a city like Helsinki in a more unique destination for everyone? What is suitable for the Daughter of the Baltic Sea?

Some say that we past the time, when a building brands a city, and that is mostly true. Now you need a bigger branding strategy and a master plan with a sustainable approach, that benefit the city and the people for the right purposes. In this case for the South Harbor, which has big potential to become one of the most exquisite urban oasis in Scandinavia, and for that the municipality had a contest with great results for the South Harbor and Helsinki.

Despite critics, Helsinki deserves an unique crown jewel with the Bilbao effect, but this is not a Guggenheim museum because it doesn't represents the Finnish truly, and is not unique like the spirit of Helsinki.

Helsinki needs something resounding like the Guggenheim, in function and form, with a new spirit, maybe a Pritzker Museum and Auditorium. It can be unique in the world, whit big media coverage and with big potential to make it an important place on the cultural map of the world, but it has the same disadvantages like the Guggenheim.

What if Helsinki already has that resounding “UNIQUE THING” which offers an outstanding reputation and a world wide recognition, but it is not used at its full potential of his legacy. That “UNIQUE THING” is the Alvar Aalto Medal.

What if the Alvar Aalto Medal becomes a new world phenomenon and outperforms even the Pritzker or the Mies van der Rohe Award and, at the same time, becomes the own national big thing, like Sweden and the Nobel Prize.

For the Alvar Aalto Medal to happen at a higher stage, Helsinki and Finland need, not only, a great legacy (Fig.1), but also an event and a prize every year for making it more renowned in the public eyes.

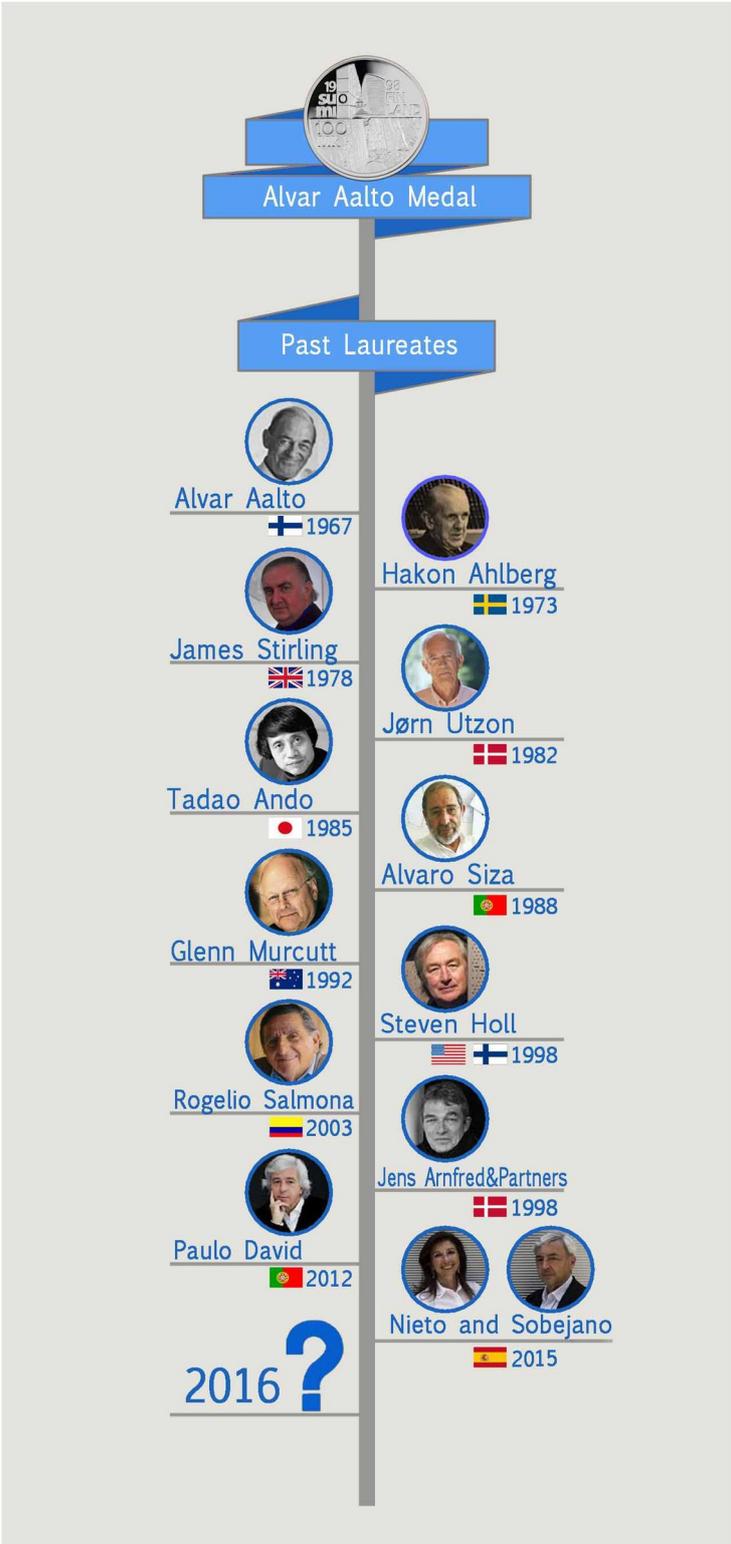


Fig.1

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The Finnish Architecture Museum it is a great stage for the ceremony, because it represents the true meaning of the prize, but what if the location will be moved to the South Harbor, where, instead of the Guggenheim, rises the true crown jewel of the Daughter of the Baltic Sea and that is the Alvar Aalto Medal Museum and Auditorium. This unique place should be not only for the architecture lovers; it is a new urban and cultural hub for Finland and Helsinki. (Fig.2)



Fig.2

It is like an architecture alchemy, mixing the old principles and the traditional materials with the new technologies and the urban city life, making it not only an unique museum in the world but a new urban attraction for everyone. (Fig.3)



Fig.3

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For the new building to become an urban and a cultural hub it needs an active and polyvalent strategy to interact with the city and the surroundings, to be in a permanent dialog with the key points and views of Helsinki. Creating a building that blends in the surroundings but still makes its presence felt, inviting public life into it. (Fig.4)

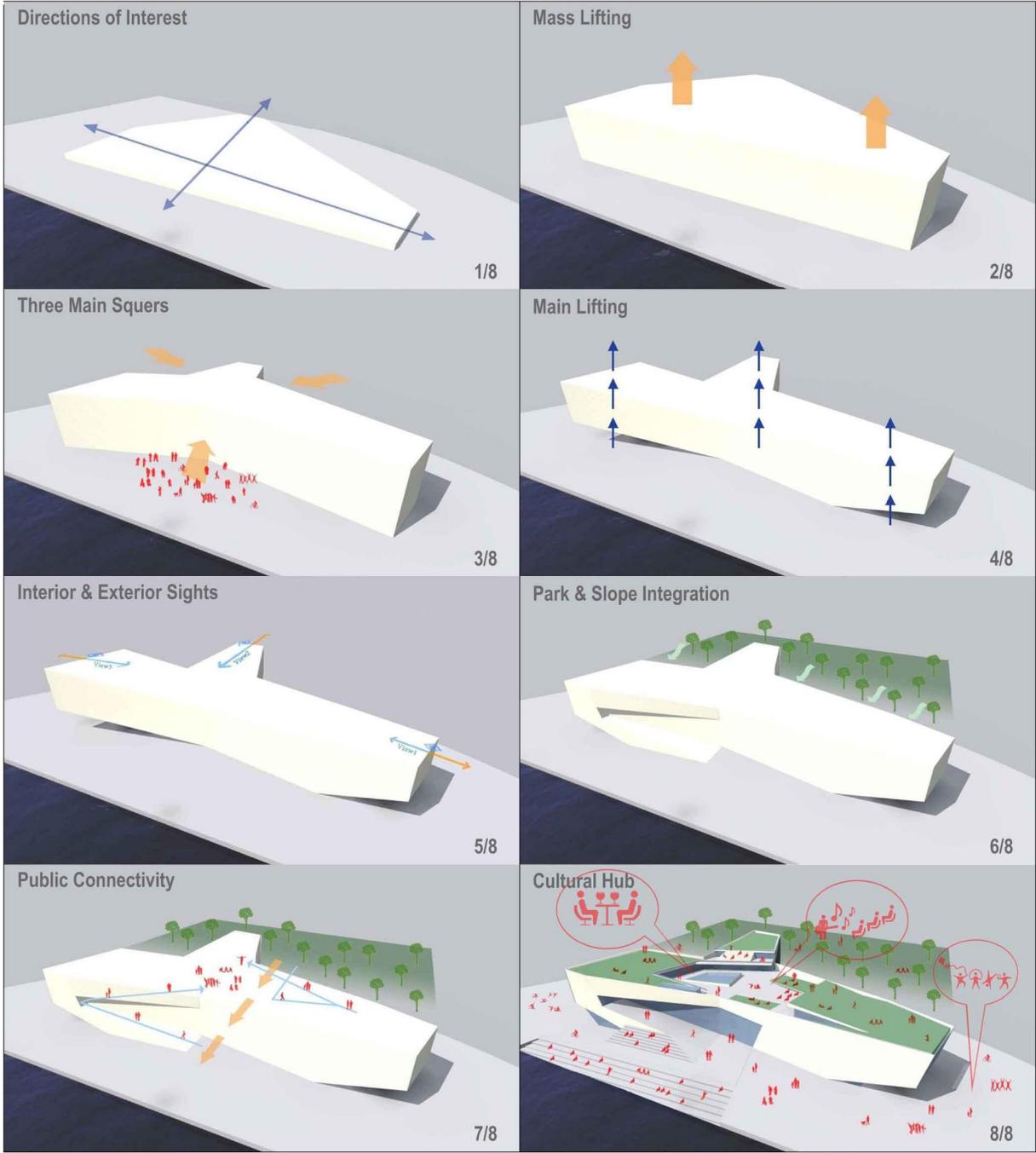


Fig.4

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The main function of the museum is a permanent exhibition dedicated to winners of Alvar Aalto Medal made in a scenography of old and new, with original drawings, models and hi-tech techniques, that interact with the visitors and makes the museum truly unique.

Another important part of the museum is the auditorium hall where the award will take place every year. The view of the auditorium should be facing the city to create a poetic dialogue between the prize principles and the city's transition through time. At the same floor with the auditorium hall, communicating with the central atrium, is the exhibition dedicated to the winner of the Alvar Aalto Medal for that year.

A very important aspect of the museum is the adaptability of space and function that defines the other major parts of the museum like the temporary exhibition, auditorium, workshops rooms, thematic liberty, cafe shops, children's playrooms and workshop, shops, outdoor and indoor agora's. The roof of the museum it is a big agora for cultural manifestation and like a pinnacle where you can see the city and the harbor at its best in all directions, making it a unique scenery of Helsinki (Fig.5)

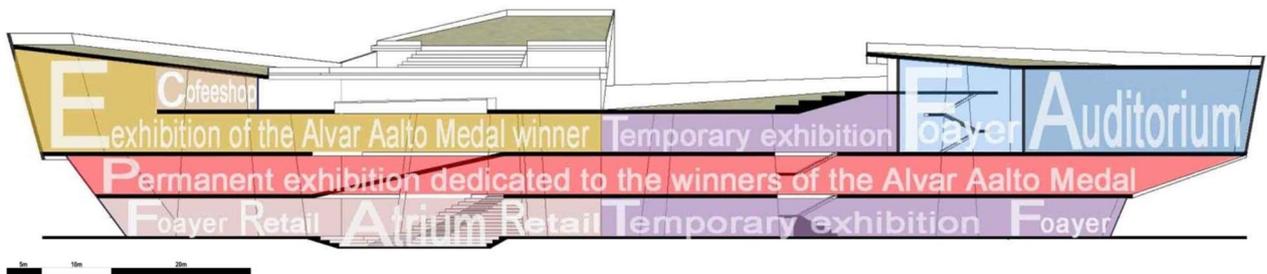


Fig.5

In this case study, the main idea is to create something that is strongly connected within the roots of Finland's culture and represents a national brand that is recognized and respected all over the world. The uniqueness of what Alvar Aalto Medal means to the world of architecture, can be extended at an important level throughout history, in a new landmark building that interacts with Helsinki and reflects the true meaning of "Beauty is the harmony of purpose and form" Alvar Aalto.