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"I must have been inspired" *Joseph Conrad*

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## Architects get international acclaim for stunning Rwandan chapel design

ART & CULTURE

ANNE CHATHAM AUGUST 01, 2019



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For the chapel, the architects conceptualised it as a space “between” -- “between you and God, between you and nature, between you and me”, as they explain on their Facebook page.

*Gierbienis + Poklewski Design studio*

A team of Polish architects has received international acclaim after entering a competition to design a chapel in Rwanda.

As part of the competition organised by Young Architects Competitions, participants were invited to design a chapel for Rukomo, a remote village in the upland of Rwanda.

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The circular design was chosen for its simplicity, which the architects suggest could offer “balance and harmony” to the local community.

*Gierbienis + Poklewski Design studio*

According to the organisers, the chapel will be “a symbol of global solidarity and cooperation”, as well as “an architectural masterpiece dedicated to one of the most elusive and recurring mysteries of history: the divine.”

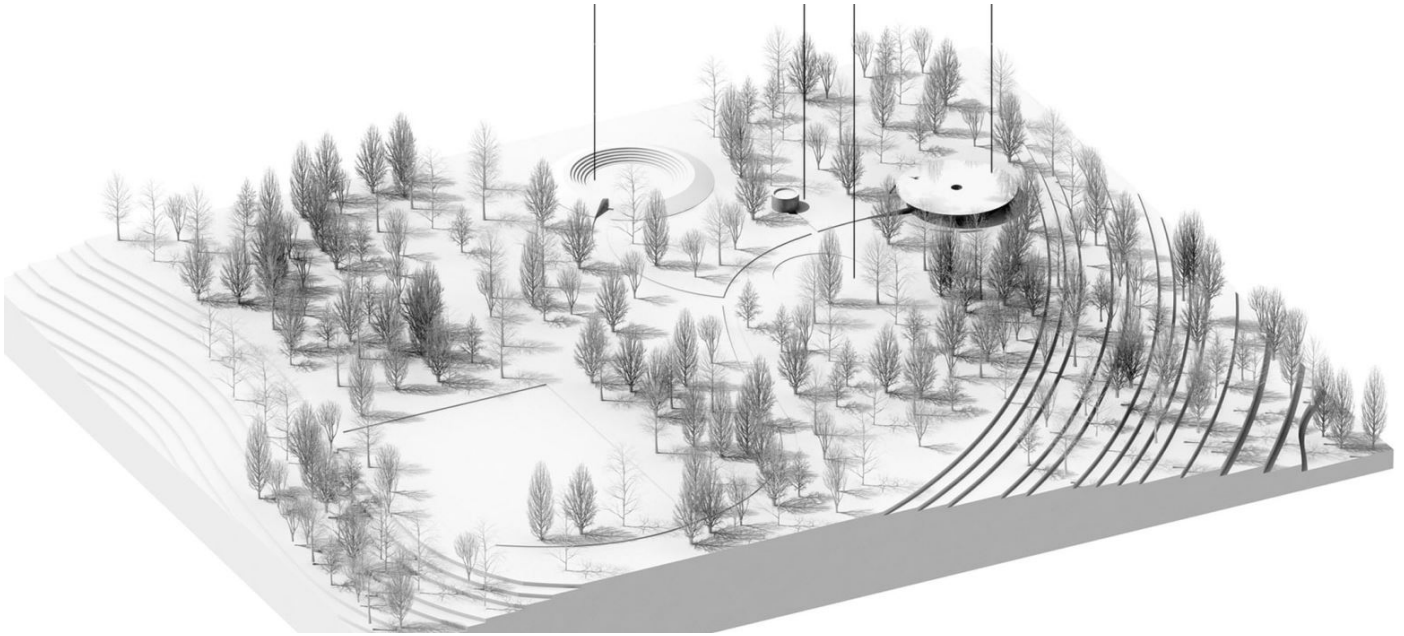
“It will be a place of peace and conciliation to celebrate or meditate regardless of disagreements and differences,” they added.

After assessing the entries, the international jury awarded first prize to the round chapel designed by the Li & Huang team, made up of Lisa Huang and Tian Li.

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Their design features an amphitheatre, garden and chapel enclosed within circles, blurring the boundary between inside and outside.

*Gierbienis + Poklewski Design studio*

Polish team Gierbienis + Poklewski, composed of Marcin Gierbienis, Damian Poklewski-Kozieł and Katarzyna Gierbienis, was among several teams to receive mentions.

Founded in Kraków in 2016, the Gierbienis + Poklewski architecture studio has taken part in several architecture competitions, designing buildings from libraries to public facilities.

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Inside the chapel itself, the circular theme continues. The altar at the centre encircled by a single pew, rather than several rows, which is more common in churches.

“The sacral character of the building and the picturesque location allowed us to create a concept that, while remaining close to the regulations, fit into our design ideology, referring both to human needs and respect for the environment, using the methodology of biophilic design,” the architects added, referring to an approach that focuses on connection with nature.

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