GLASS & METAL ALLIANCE

2020 ARCHITECTURAL GLASS STUDENT DESIGN COMPETITION

Fourth Annual Challenge

By: Amanda Gibney Weko

SPOTLIGHT

2020 STUDENT WINNERS

First Place

Derek Sherony and Paulina Tylutka

Second Place

Zuzanna Borjarska and Christopher Casserly

Third Place

Meredith Lapen and Elizabeth May

Project Site

The historic Robinson Store at 1020 Market Street in Center City, Philadelphia, was designed by Victor Gruen and Elsie Krummeck in 1946.

From left: D. Kratzer, L. Guthrie, S. Beletz, J. Clabbers, winners P. Tylutka and D. Sherony, K. Blanchard, and E. De Veyra

4TH ANNUAL COMPETITION

On 3 February, winners of the 2020 Architectural Glass Student Design Competition were selected at Jefferson University. Third-year Jefferson architecture students in the Tectonics Investigation Studio worked in two-person teams to develop entries. Judges included representatives from three GMA member glazing contractors: Joe Clabbers of National Glass & Metal Co., Inc., Steve Beletz of Beletz Bros. Glass Co., Inc., and Lynn Guthrie of Guthrie Glass & Mirror, Inc. They were joined by Erike De Veyra of the Center for Architecture + Design, Karen Blanchard of SITIO architecture + urbanism, and David Kratzer of Jefferson University. Jefferson's Ryan Glick facilitated.

DESIGN CHALLENGE

Influential commercial architects Victor Gruen and Elsie Krummeck designed 11 ultra-modern storefronts for the Grayson-Robinson chain of budget womenswear during the mid 20th century, including a venue in Center City, Philadelphia, designed in 1946. The stores used architecture as a form of advertisement. The Philadelphia location's dramatic curved and mosaic-clad facade remains a notable part of the business district.

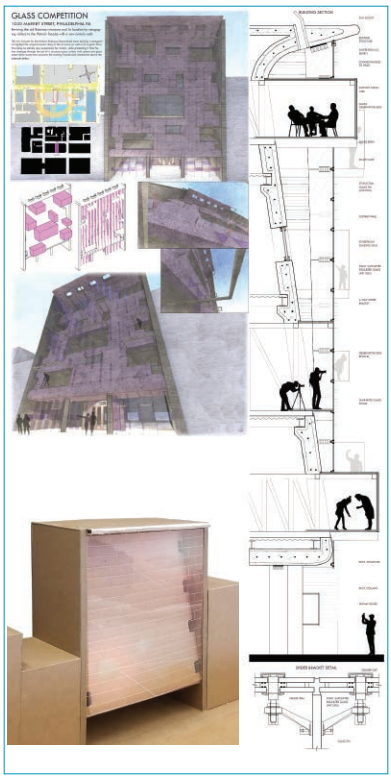
Students were challenged to design a new facade for the historic building using a primarily glass system. Conceptual ideas evolved through intense detailing and included a presentation board and model. Students could choose how much or little of the historic facade to reveal, obscure, or accentuate through the new glazing.

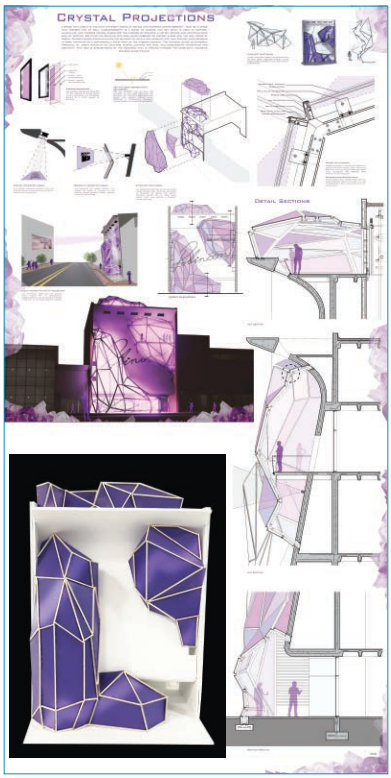
FIRST PLACE

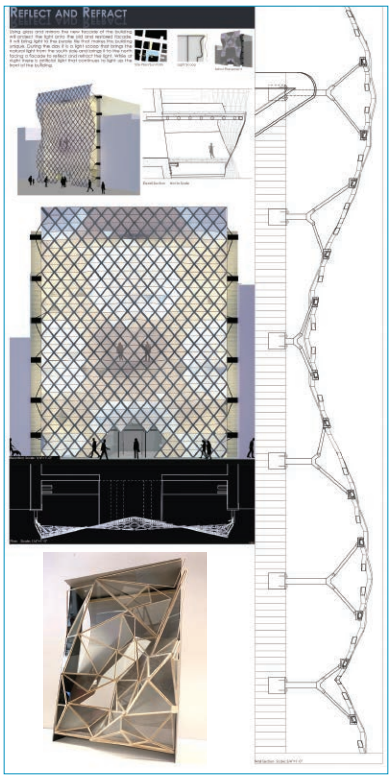
The winning entry by Derek Sherony and Paulina Tylutka sought to revive the structure with a new curtainwall. The solution highlights the building's original mosaic tiling and organic form. The structural glass curtainwall system features glass observation boxes that puncture the facade and cantilever above the sidewalk.

"The competition opened my eyes to the different types and uses of glazing," said Sherony. "It helped me understand that glazing is more than just a window and that it really has a plethora of different uses." Tylutka added, "Using glass helped my concept and really fit this facade design. Now, I definitely feel more comfortable and more willing to incorporate and explore glazing systems within my future designs."

From left: First Place, Second Place, and Third Place winners of the 2020 competition







SECOND PLACE

For second place winners Zuzanna Borjarska and Christopher Casserly, the project was reimagined with purple dichroic glass "crystal" projections to become a space to display and inspire cinematography. Juror Karen Blanchard found the use of color most surprising. "I had no idea that the existing facade is actually made from purple tiles. The student's discovery of this and their use of the color to enhance their designs was intriguing."

THIRD PLACE

Third place winners Meredith Lapen and Elizabeth May used glass and mirrors to reflect natural and projected light onto the building, also accentuating its purple tiles. Lapen said the presentations by industry professionals impacted her design. "It showed us what could and could not be done with glass and also helped us to understand how facades are built, which helped us develop our own system." May said the learning experience has shaped how she now views architecture. "Wherever I go I look at the glazing system used and I try to figure out what it is so that I can use the stuff I learned in the real world."

REAL WORLD IMPACT

Now in its fourth year, the Student Design Competition aims to expose architecture students to glazing opportunities while fostering dialogue that can mitigate future issues and increase collaboration among design and construction professionals. Juror Joe Clabbers explained, "It is important for the designer to understand the challenges and parameters of glazing systems to ensure they work together with the overall structure and surrounding materials." Juror Lynn Guthrie added, "Designing unique and special facades is important, however this needs to be developed with recognizing the limitations of systems and costs associated with same. Working together at the start can help to alleviate installation issues and budget-busting designs." Both were surprised by the students' creativity and how much they learned and accomplished in a short amount of time.

Repeat juror Erike De Veyra believes fostering communication between design and glazing is important because "It's where and how work really becomes innovative, when experts can come together and collaborate . . . it's a pain point we're finding in the profession. But [when] lines of communication are fostered earlier, then it will hopefully grow into our professional culture."

Jefferson Director of Architecture Kratzer agrees. "The architecture, architectural studies, and master of architecture students benefit greatly from these real-world experiences and the input from members of different areas of the construction, fabrication, and installation disciplines. For architecture students to be able to engage in this dialogue is extremely beneficial to their education and enlightening."