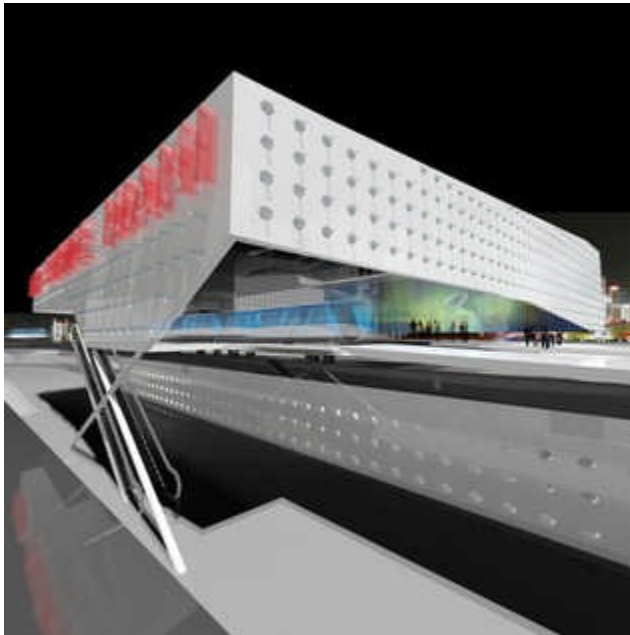


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## Architects compete to dress up Bicentennial Park Metromover station

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Winning design in the architectural competition called DawnTown / Office 24/7

Here's how to transform a blah Metromover station, courtesy of Miami's mold-shattering DawnTown architectural competition: Place a multifaceted, shell-like "diaphragm" over the Bicentennial Park station tracks, and let it glow. So goes the winning idea from a cutting-edge firm from Australia, Office 24/7, which proposes turning the station into a big covered plaza while turning the wall facing the planned new art and science museums into a giant video screen.

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Or there's this, the second-place entry from See You Sunday, a partnership of two young architects from Bangkok: A simple, curling, white strip of structure that would envelop but not touch the Metromover guideway.

Or this from the third finalist, DoubleKatya, from St. Petersburg, Russia: An angular, tent-like "Fish Frame" placed over the mover platform that would glisten in the sun like, well, fish scales.

The three winners, selected by a jury from among 90 international entries, were announced Friday morning at an event designed to draw some of the blazing Art Basel/Miami Beach limelight to Miami's nascent downtown.

It's the second consecutive year for the international competition, the brainchild of Andrew Frey, a young Miami zoning lawyer with a planning background and a zeal for design who says downtown Miami's often-uninspired buildings could use a good, invigorating jolt.

That means infusing "human spirit" into necessary engineering infrastructure by melding art, architecture and nature, said the event's keynote speaker, Dutch designer Adriaan Geuze, whose rising international reputation rests on an uncanny ability to do just that.

“It creates such euphoria, people go nuts,” said Geuze, whose firm is designing a new Miami Beach park to accompany architect Frank Gehry’s new building for the New World Symphony just off Lincoln Road.

Unlike last year’s almost purely whimsical winner -- a conceptual makeover of the ugly downtown sewage pumping station that would have sheathed the plant in a writhing orange, anemone-like creature -- it’s almost possible to envision this year’s finalists getting built.

Jury members, including former Miami Art Museum Director Terence Riley, Miami Science Museum Director Gillian Thomas and architect Luis Revuelta, said they were looking for functionality married to originality.

The winning entry met the goal especially well, Thomas said. The Melbourne-based firm’s proposed station would not only seamlessly deliver visitors from the Metromover platform to a planned plaza between the two new museums, but also reconnect the station and park to the streets to the north, now sundered by the access ramp to the MacArthur Causeway.

“It’s exciting and engaging, and it’s both iconic and practical,” Thomas said. “For Miami, it’s a wonderful opportunity.”

Not that Miami-Dade Transit is promising anything, though the organizers pointedly put agency Director Harpal Kapoor on the jury.

The goal of the competition is to gather creative -- and potentially iconic -- ideas that might encourage those in charge of such things to try something new and different. Last year’s competition led to meetings with Miami-Dade Water and Sewer administrators, who seemed open-minded, though nothing to date has come of the effort.

“Hopefully, it will inspire what happens downtown,” Frey told attendees at the Marquis condo tower, whose meeting-room windows looked directly over the empty Bicentennial Park and the Metromover station.

The organizers picked the Bicentennial Park Metromover station, which has been closed for years, because it will soon become a principal arrival point for the new Miami art and science museums.

Those dazzling new structures seemed to call for something more *simpatico* than the inoffensive but purely serviceable existing station, Frey said. Miami-Dade Transit has set aside more than \$1 million to reopen the station, but that would not likely cover a major do-over, he said.

Funding from the Knight Foundation is already in place for a third competition next year, Frey said.