

# **CZECH TECHNICAL UNIVERSITY, FACULTY OF ARCHITECTURE, PRAGUE, CZECH REPUBLIC**

AUTHOR: GRIGORII MATIUNIN

DIPLOMA PROJECT SUPERVISOR: VLADIMIR SITTA

DEPARTMENT 15120

SCHOOL YEAR 2024/2025 SUMMER TERM

TITLE OF MASTER'S PROJECT: **MAROU** / THE POWER OF COMMUNITY

LOCATION: NAVITI ISLAND, FIJI

## **1.0 Introduction**

Architectural competitions are an essential part of the architectural discourse. This is especially valid for competitions, which are not focussing on securing a job but on a worldwide debate. Exploring possibilities without constraints of the client's chequebook remains one of dwindling opportunities for the architects to untie their creativity. The impetus for this project came courtesy of LAGI, an organisation whose chart is to synthesize architecture, art, environment, energy generation, provision of drinking water etc. The project ought to be a beacon of change, aspirational and inspirational. Whilst in previous years the initiative privileged visual aspects, now the focus shifted towards much more holistic approach. Another novelty in the equation is also an emphasis on the C2C principle.

## **2.0 Analysis**

In the absence of the personal encounter with the site, the analytical part appropriates a substantial part of the detailed competition brief. This is enhanced by further search and consultations with the diploma project supervisor, who has a good knowledge of the Pacific region.

## **3.0 Architecture**

Pacific region is a home to specific form of the vernacular architecture. It has to withstand tempestuous weather, scorching sun and drenching monsoons. Used construction materials are handy. Bamboo groves form a natural vegetation cover. Regular renewal, a need to rebuild is also prompted by the relentless activity of termites. I hope that this brief introduction helps to understand a rather complex information mycelium, which Grigorii had to untangle whilst embarking upon this challenge. Examples abound around Pacific, especially New Caledonia and increasingly Fiji, that there is not more stable hegemony of vernacular architecture. Pacific islands are rapidly changing due to invasive western culture. Therefore, it seems that a cultural hybridisation is inevitable. Taking a conservative stance (not my position), the architecture may appear too scintillating. I do not think that the work must be a vapid posturing and superficial applique. It is still possible to design transformative architecture, which is still rooted in place. The suggested construction system is no doubt a challenge for local tradesmen but at the same token, I do not consider it patronizing.

Another, often forgotten aspect is that the architecture is touching the ground lightly, the landscape flows under the floor uninterrupted, yet another aspect of vernacular architecture.

#### **4.0 Presentation**

The work is clearly and competently presented. Construction details are convincingly elaborated and explained. The perspectives has in my view a necessary pulling power.

#### **5.0 Conclusion**

Yes, this project is intentionally decoupled from the local scene. (Mea culpa!) I thoroughly enjoyed the entangled journey through this project. It has been a pleasure to witness unfettered fecundity, the entire process of searching, finding, rejecting, returning to discarded up to the final distillation of the concept. I applaud Grigori's courage to venture into a realm of unknown. Without risking failure, architecture cannot move forward. To supervise Grigori's work was exciting, albeit due experimental nature a quite demanding journey. I recommend this project, without any reservations, for defence in front of the jury.

Suggested mark: A – Excellent

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Sitta', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Vladimir Sitta, Prague 1<sup>st</sup> June 2025

#### **Suggested questions**

Bamboo joinery is a specific art perfected through centuries-long practice. An exemplary of the sophisticated use you can find for example in the contemporary work of Vo Trong Nghia. Could you imagine a construction without imported metal connectors, ties etc.? Would it compromise the iconic character of your proposal?