

# FORUM AID AWARDS 2009

Supplement 1.09



BEST OF NORDIC  
ARCHITECTURE,  
INTERIOR DESIGN,  
PRODUCT DESIGN  
AND STUDENT WORK



Architecture

Winner

**Mountain Dwellings**  
**BIG**





## Winner

## Jury's motivation

"Mountain Dwellings by BIG is a bold, ambitious and seemingly illogical building that on closer inspection is highly rational, as well as being a lot of fun. Situated on an unpromising suburban site, the client's demand for both car parking and housing has been met by placing the residential element on top of the car park. With their mountain analogy, BIG has successfully reduced a complex brief to something resembling an expert logotype – colourful, witty and unforgettable."



It's easy to forget that Bjarke Ingels has yet to turn 35. After studies in Copenhagen and Barcelona, as well as a stint with Rem Koolhaas at the Office

of Metropolitan Architecture in Rotterdam, the Danish architect founded PLOT together with his Belgian OMA colleague Julien de Smeedt in 2001. Five years, three buildings, and a bursting prize cabinet later (among them two Henning Larsen Prizes, two Mies van der Rohe Awards, a Golden Lion from the Venice Biennale and a Forum AID Award), he moved on to set up his own practice.

Bjarke Ingels Group has gone on to receive even more critical acclaim, pushing its director into the spotlight as Denmark's – and perhaps Scandinavia's – leading young architect. Since 2007, 22 projects have been added to [www.big.dk](http://www.big.dk), where 85 "architects, designers, builders and thinkers" define each new building site as a "test bed for its own pragmatic utopian experiment."

"The Mountain," explains Ingels, "is the first example of what we call architectural alchemy – the idea that by mixing traditional ingredients such as housing and parking, you can exploit the differences and create unprecedented qualities, not gold. This symbiotic mix of different programmes into one idea is a strategy that we will pursue a lot more in the future, especially in the context of sustainability."

**How so?**

"Our work will be characterised by a renewed commitment to what we term ecological design, an approach that combines economic and ecological sustainability. If a sustainable idea is too expensive, it will never be applied on a large

scale, and large-scale applications are what we need. Reversely, a business model that is based on exhausting our natural resources won't provide long-term growth. So we have to pursue a hybrid that merges the two. This form of alchemical combination of complementing programmes is one of many strategies that we're currently using."

**Where is your focus at the moment?**

"Three years ago I was profoundly interested in formulating the potential of Copenhagen. The Danish capital seemed to finally be waking up to economic growth, a building boom, increased effects of globalisation, the bridge to Sweden, the Mohammed cartoons. It felt like the right place to operate, and the Mountain is a consequence of this optimism. Now Stockholm seems to be experiencing a similar renaissance, with government and planners geared for a more experimental approach than previous regimes."

**What lessons did you learn from merging housing with parking?**

"Cars want big open floor plates close to the street. Apartments want sun and views. Turn the car park into a tilted podium for the apartments, and both can have what they want."

**You seem to have a vested interest in topography as architecture. Why this obsession?**

"We should probably all see a shrink. A Freudian explanation could be a topographical penis envy – based in a country without mountains we have become obsessed with making them ourselves."

**Text:** Magnus Larsson

[www.big.dk](http://www.big.dk)



“  
We should probably all see a shrink”  
”

Winner



1 The flats have been arranged as if they were cabins featuring generous and well screened terraces.

2 An example of the role colour plays in Mountain Dwellings.

3 Aerial view of Mountain Dwellings with Plot's Forum AID Award winning VM-complex to the left.

4 Internal corridor in Mountain Dwellings.

5 Section of Mountain Dwellings with the flats stacked on top of the parking garage.



MUUTO

MUUTO

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Work submitted

Nominees

Winner

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103

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# Design

## Stacked

### JDS Architects/Muuto

Julien de Smedt's JDS Architects is comfortable with big-scale projects such as the new Holmenkollen ski jump in Oslo. So it is almost sweet that the office's answer to Muuto's request for a "simple and classic looking shelving system" was found in the creative chaos of Julien de Smedt's own home. The challenge was to develop modular storage, neither screaming for attention, nor boring or throwaway. What JDS came up with is so simple and flexible that it seems blindingly obvious. Three sizes of white MDF rectangles can be stacked and clipped together in any shape, ranging from the conservative to the bizarre, and in three dimensions if the space requires it.

"Like most seemingly obvious ideas, its origins were almost accidental," explains Wouter Dons, product designer at JDS Architects. "The idea for the Stacked shelves came from a solution that already exists in Julien's flat. Different shelves gathered randomly over the years are piled up organically, filling an entire wall space. Besides each shelf being used, the cavities between also become part of the system."

The Muuto assignment was immediately linked to Julien de Smedt's DIY. Brainstorming sessions resulted in the addition of the safety-enhancing clip. The team based shelf proportions on their own frustrations at trying to fit their possessions in standardised systems.

"The square cube got its dimensions from a conventional bookshelf with a twist – it should be able to contain architecture or design books, which are often too large or too deep for conventional dimensions. The small cube, when placed horizontally, is ideal as a rack for small things, such CDs. On the other hand, vertically placed it can fit a vinyl collection."



Most importantly, however, the voids between the cubes can act as shelves or storage for objects of infinite variety.

"One of the freshest uses of Stacked that we've seen is constructed as a whole wall with an archway."

**Text: Johanna Koljonen**

[www.jdsarchitects.com](http://www.jdsarchitects.com)  
[www.muuto.com](http://www.muuto.com)



 Its origins are almost accidental 

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## Nominee



**1** Shelving system Stacked is simple - three sizes of white MDF rectangles can be stacked and clipped together in any shape.

**2** Designer Julien de Smedt posing in front of his own stack of bookcases, the source of inspiration for Stacked.

**3** Some of the possibilities of individual variation the Stacked system offers.

