1st Prize competition
“RETHINKING SOMES”

Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Rethinking Somes
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Producing a diverse range of solutions to the varied conditions of the river Somes, this proposal reimagines the role of the river as it crosses through Cluj-Napoca for over 15 kilometers.

The Somes river is no longer understood as a thin line that divides the city in half but rather as a thick band that is part of Cluj-Napoca, incorporating distinct ecological systems and integrating public space. The Somes is envisioned as an urban connector of public spaces and green areas as well as the primary circulation path for pedestrians and bicycles. Thus, this proposal aims to bridge that gap between the river and the city. Firstly, a system of terraces expands the river’s edge and allows it to permeate into the urban fabric. As the river section is widened, the existing hard edge is transformed into a softer and more natural environment with the inclusion of local vegetation, rocks and sand. This system of terraces allows the river to become more accessible and incorporates areas for recreation where a diverse range of activities can take place. Secondly, a system of longitudinal bicycle and pedestrian paths give continuity to the circulation routes along the river, currently fragmented, and allows the Somes to become the primary spine of movement throughout the city. Thirdly, a system of diagonal paths aims to stitch the river and its immediate context. These paths redefine the existing urban connections by extending them to the water’s edge, creating a visual, and physical, connection between the city fabric and the river.

Location: Cluj-Napoca, Romania
Architects: PRÁCTICA (Jaime Daroca, José Mayoral, José Ramón Sierra)
Collaborators: Raúl Brito, Sofía Valdivia, Gonzalo Cortes
Organizing institution: Transilvania Branch Office of the Order of Architects of Romania in partnership with the Order of Architects of Romania
Promoter: Cluj-Napoca Municipality
Project area: 147,800 m²
Competition date: October 2017
After understanding the value of the existing beach as a platform for a meaningful relationship between the river and the citizens, additional ones are incorporated. A system of beaches is created through the river Somes that allows users to sunbathe and experience the river in another manner.

This section of the river is proposed for several areas where the intervention is minimal and limited to the edge of the river with the goal of reducing the distance between the river and the inhabitants of Cluj-Napoca.

This section of the river is proposed for areas in which the very dense city fabric touches the river. A hard surface is created as an extension of a public space.

This edge condition of the river can be applied in several areas, especially in zone 2. The soft terraces bring the park closer to the water by incorporating the park as part of the ecological ecosystem of the river and allowing people to enjoy the water while in the park.

This section of the river is proposed for several areas in the east part of the site. A soft intervention makes the Somes accessible for people with the goal of connecting the proposed cycle and pedestrian paths with other metropolitan areas. This is a system of soft terraces with sand, dirt and
Area 1 “Lunca Somesului Mic”
Edge conditions. Area 1 “Lunca Somesului Mic”
New Tranzit House Square and Germans’ bridge
Renaturalized shore from Pedestrian Bridge
Area 2 “Parcul Armătura”
Edge conditions. Area 2 “Parcul Armătura”
New Somes Beach at Railway Park
New water front at Nadas River