

CITINGS

>> NEWS FROM RICEDESIGNALLIANCE.ORG

WEBSITE THRIVES

The Rice Design Alliance website features commentary and podcasts from RDA civic forums and lectures, a calendar of RDA events and events sponsored by other area organizations, travel journals from RDA city tours, and several resources, including links to OffCite.org, the *Cite* blog, and CiteMag.org, a website featuring free access to the *Cite* archives.



FROM LEFT: A home built by the the Make It Right Foundation in the Lower 9th Ward of New Orleans; Norma and David George, Jo and Art Storey, Kimberly Hickson, and Greg Cunningham at the RDA Gala 2010; Finlandia in Helsinki.

> NEW ORLEANS FIVE YEARS LATER

With the five-year anniversary of Hurricane Katrina having passed, the city of New Orleans remains in the hearts and on the minds of many. While images of the Crescent City once evoked heartbreak and destruction, the once-awash city now features a landscape of resilience—both through its people and its infrastructure.

Rice Design Alliance's Spring Lecture Series, "New Orleans: Five Years Later," presents the ongoing recovery efforts in New Orleans, including city-wide planning and infrastructure improvements, local neighborhood reconstruction projects, and various other community efforts.

The series begins Wednesday, January 19, with historian and best-selling author Douglas Brinkley.

> TOUR THE DESIGN CAPITAL OF TEXAS

Please join RDA April 7-10, 2011, for a beautiful spring weekend of architecture and art as RDA teams up with the Dallas Art Fair. The Mansion on Turtle Creek will be the home base as tourgoers visit the arts district studded by buildings designed by Pritzker winners; art collectors' home tours and receptions; houses by O'Neil Ford, Edward Durell Stone, and Dan Shipley, among others; and a visit to the new Cowboys Football Stadium, which contains an amazing collection of public art.

Please visit ricedesignalliance.org for more information and to register for the Dallas trip.

> TOUR THE DESIGN CAPITAL OF THE WORLD

If you are looking for a destination farther away than Dallas, join RDA, June 7-14, 2011, for a trip to Helsinki.

The city was founded in 1550, and the "Daughter of the Baltic" has been the Finnish capital since 1812 when the tsars of Russia rebuilt it along the lines of a miniature St. Petersburg. Today, Helsinki pulls off the trick of being something of an international metropolis while still retaining a small-town feel. The city is the official World Design Capital 2012.

The city's architecture is typified by Nordic minimalism and refinement as in the works of Alvar Aalto.

Modernism, functionalism, and the largest concentration of Art Nouveau buildings in Northern Europe make Helsinki a major city of architecture.

Go online for more information.

> GALA

Over 1,000 Rice Design Alliance members from Houston's art, architecture, engineering, and construction industries gathered on November 13 for the organization's gala, "Progressive Art: Infrastructure, Greenspaces, and Waterways."

The event occurred downtown at the Hilton Americas-Houston, and was held in honor of Art Storey, Executive Director of the Harris County Public Infrastructure Department.

Norma and David George served as gala chairs, Doug Combes as underwriting chair, and Mary Beth Woiccek as auction chair.

PGAL's David Andrews, along with Las Vegas associate Rong Singer, designed an elegant ballroom environment.

Over 500,000 dollars were raised to fund RDA programs for the upcoming year.



Vlad Tenu's "Minimal Complexity" won the TEX-FAB REPEAT Digital Fabrication Competition and will be built for an exhibition in February.

SPRING LECTURES

**RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE:
NEW ORLEANS: FIVE YEARS LATER**
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Brown Auditorium
Wednesdays, 7 p.m.
ricedesignalliance.org

The public and RDA members are invited to hear the following speakers during the series:

DOUGLAS BRINKLEY
January 19
Rice University
www.bakerinstitute.org/personnel/fellows-scholars/dbrinkley

SCOTT BERNHARD
January 26
Tulane University
www.architecture.tulane.edu/people/scott-d-bernhard

RAYMOND MANNING
February 2
Manning Architects
www.manningarchitects.com

ALEJANDRA LILLO
February 9
GRAFT
www.graftlab.org

RICE UNIVERSITY:
Rice School of Architecture
Farish Gallery, 5:30 p.m.
arch.rice.edu

BEN VAN BERKEL
January 27
Principal Architect, UNStudio

MIQUEL ADRIA
February 3
Editor, *Arquine*

ANTOINE PICON
February 10
Harvard University

**JUERGEN MAYER H.
J. MAYER H.**

CATHERINE INGRAHAM
March 10
Pratt Institute

INAKI ABALOS
March 17
Abalos + Sentkiewicz Arquitectos

UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON:
Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture
Auditorium, Room 150
arch.uh.edu

JORGE MARIO JAUREGUI
February 1
3 - 4 p.m.
Atelier Metropolitano

BRAD CLOEPFIL
February 22
6 - 7:30 p.m.
Allied Works

GARY CHANG
March 229
6 - 7:30 p.m.
Edge Design Institute, Ltd.

TEX-FAB
February 10
University of Houston Gerald D. Hines College of Architecture
Check tex-fab.net for fees and registration.

February 10
BRANKO KOLAREVIC
Keynote Lecture
6 p.m.
University of Calgary

February 11
PATRICK HOOD DANIEL
Build Your Own CNC
2 - 3:15 p.m.

**JOE MEPPELINK AND
ANDREW VRANA**
3:30 - 5 p.m.
METALAB

REPEAT Competition Winner
VLAD TENU
"Minimal Complexity"
Gallery Talk and Exhibition
5:30 - 7 p.m.

WORKSHOPS
February 12 - 13

**BRAD BELL AND KEVIN PATRICK
MCCLELLAN**
3D Modeling

MARC FORNES
Scripted Design

CHRIS LASCH
Algorithmic Design

GIL AKOS / RONNIE PARSONS
Parametric Design

**CONCRETE UTOPIAS 1960S
ARCHITECTURE AND URBANISM**
University of Houston Gerald D. Hines
College of Architecture
February 17 - 18

February 17
7 p.m. Keynote Address
Jean-Louis Cohen (NYU)

February 18
9:30 a.m. Americas
12:45 p.m. Lunch Break

3:00 Europe and Asia
4:40 Cinematic Interlude
5:00 Keynote Address: Mega/
Megas/Megarum
Craig Hodgetts (UCLA)
6:00 Opening Reception
7:10 Keynote Address
Jean-Louis Cohen (NYU)

LET US
HEAR
FROM
YOU

Cite encourages readers to send letters, including critical ones, to mankad@rice.edu.

LETTER TO THE EDITOR

TOURING THE TOWNHOUSE BOOM

Back during the presidential campaign season of 2008, I canvassed for Barack Obama in a part of Houston where townhouses are numerous. I found the experience pretty alienating. Although hidden entrances may increase the owner's sense of privacy, they frustrate anybody trying to find the owner, which may be the point. Some of the "entrances" were so hidden that I literally could never find them. Often all I could find was a big, wide garage door. Maybe that is the only entrance for some of these fortresses.

At other times I could only reach the entrance by going down a long, dark exterior hallway, which gave me a very queasy feeling. Sometimes at the end of this hallway, there would be a locked gate. Sometimes you could see the door to the house beyond the gate, but sometimes not. Sometimes there was a doorbell by the gate, but not always. I got the feeling that the people in these houses expected the worst. I began to feel like some sort of mugger or criminal, even though all I intended to do was tell them about early

touring! How do they get packages from UPS or FedEx at these houses? What happens when they invite people to their house?

I should add that these townhouses were not in what I would call a bad part of town. They were right around the Kroger in River Oaks.

I was reminded of all this looking at the photographs in Raj Mankad's and Ben Koush's article about townhouses in Houston. They showed some even more alienating townhouses than the ones I saw in River Oaks. It may be true that these box-like structures will replace all the more human-scaled bungalows in our city, but their monolithic forms and blank elevations are not a virtue for all that. More openness to the street is what we should be looking for.

Pedestrians experience the alienation caused by these blank, forbidding boxes more acutely than car travelers do, I think. Perhaps that's why we tolerate their ugliness: most of us just drive by them quickly, rather than walk slowly past them.

Shannon Stoney

