

>> NEWS FROM RICEDESIGNALLIANCE.ORG

NEW WEB FEATURES

RDA is rolling out more online goodies. The rdAGENTS have a new webpage to connect young professionals. OffCite launched a page dedicated to the Unexpected City campaign featuring an interactive map of sites. Ricedesignalliance.org now includes a deeper archive of past programs and features rdaTV, a surprisingly rich and growing video collection, including past lectures by Winka Dubbeldam and Douglas Brinkley.



FROM LEFT: Philip Johnson-designed Interfaith Peace Chapel of the Cathedral of Hope in Dallas; RDA tourgoers in Finland at Villa Maire; Rainer High School students at rdAGENT's Anything That Floats competition.

> RDA VISITS DALLAS

The Dallas Art Fair gave a group of 33 RDA tourgoers entry into houses designed by Philip Johnson, Richard Meier, Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, Antoine Predock, O'Neil Ford, and Dan Shipley, among others. The Rosewood Mansion at Turtle Creek was a home away from home during the group's stay April 7-10, 2011.

What does one do first when arriving in Dallas? Go to Neiman Marcus, of course! Architect Mark Dilworth, the recently retired managing partner of Omniplan, the architecture firm responsible for NorthPark Center, joined the group for lunch at the Neiman Marcus Café. Before giving a tour of the center and the public art installed throughout, Dilworth, a Rice School of Architecture grad, spoke about the history of the design of the center (1965, Harrell

& Hamilton, with Eero Saarinen & Associates designing the Neiman Marcus store). According to architectural historian Stephen Fox, NorthPark Center is known for its dignity and refinement and "feels more like an art museum or public place than a shopping mall." For Houstonians it was a breath of fresh air compared to the noisy and crowded Galleria.

From Neiman's the group dashed over to the nearby Temple Emanu El (1956, Howard R. Meyer and Max Sandfield with William W. Wurster), Dallas's oldest Jewish congregation. Congregation member Kathy Aferiat led the group on a tour that included the breath-taking prayer hall, with its still intact installations by artists Gyorgy Kepes and Anni Albers.

Read more about the trip at ricedesignalliance.org.

> LONG DAWNS IN HELSINKI

Thirty-five RDA members arrived in Helsinki June 7 in time for a heat-wave that brought bright blue skies and highs in the mid-80s, perfect weather for the group, whose friends and families back home in Houston were sweltering in temperatures reaching 100 degrees. The group was led by Rice architecture professor Carlos Jiménez, whose Finnish friend and fellow Pritzker Prize juror Juhani Pallasmaa assisted in the planning of the trip along with architectural historian Stephen Fox and intrepid RDA tour director Lynn Kelly.

A welcome dinner was held at the famous Savoy Restaurant, whose interiors were designed by Alvar Aalto. Pallasmaa gave a brief preview of the walking tour of Helsinki Centre that he would lead the following day. Sights included works by C.L. Engel, Lars Sonck, Alvar Aalto, Eliel Saarinen, and Steven Holl.

Enjoy more highlights about the Helsinki trip at ricedesignalliance.org.

> ANYTHING THAT FLOATS

Along Buffalo Bayou at Sesquicentennial Park, five high school students handily defeated teams of professional engineers and architects in the rdAGENTS first annual Anything That Floats competition. The event, held April 9, challenged seven teams to build floating devices from discarded materials.

At 7:30 AM, teams were allotted PVC pipe, foam insulation, plywood, and waterproofing sheeting, all generously donated by J.E. Dunn Construction, Gowan, Inc., and Chamberlin Roofing & Waterproofing. Participants could bring hammers, nails, duct tape, battery-operated power tools, and other "connecting" materials to construct floating devices within three hours.

Rainard High School's John Cramerus, Leighton Moreland, Micah McClimans, Daniel Rasi, and Robert Mendez took home the Grand Prize for their design that knifed through 100 meters of dark bayou waters.

SAVE THE DATE!

11.12.11

THE RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE
2011 GALAHONORING THE WOODLANDS
AND THE WOODLANDS
DEVELOPMENT
COMPANY

FALL LECTURE SERIES

CHINA IS BIG >>

RDA's fall lecture series, "Chinese Architecture: 中国建" and a special issue of *Cite* will explore the impact of the 30 year building explosion in China. "The lecture series will be a great opportunity to see design being done in China in the context of tremendous growth," says RDA board member and Chinese Architecture steering committee member Camilo Parra. A grant from the National Endowment for the Arts is supporting this unprecedented exchange of designers and scholars.

The destruction of China's vernacular buildings and courtyard-style houses has garnered widespread criticism. Some Chinese architects, however, are now creating projects that engage traditional styles and preservation in innovative ways.

Houston also has experienced tremendous booms in its history, and is projected to grow in the next 25 years to a population of 8.8 million. Like many Chinese cities, Houston has an industrial base and is planned through infrastructure, unconventional regulations, and public-private partnerships rather than traditional zoning methods. The Houston community can learn from China's recent attempts to accommodate new buildings within the existing fabric of its global cities.

The lecture series will feature a U.S. scholar and three successful Chinese architects who have reacted to China's growth in three of its most important cities: Beijing, Shanghai, and Hangzhou.

RDA's quarterly publication *Cite* is joining the transnational conversation as well. "We sent Christof Spieler, one of Houston's brightest minds, to China," says Raj Mankad, editor of *Cite*. Spieler, an award-winning engineer, Rice School of Architecture lecturer, and METRO Board member, has written on-the-ground reports for OffCite.org and will contribute a feature to the special issue.

CALENDAR

RDA LECTURES

All lectures held at
The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston
Wednesdays, 7 p.m. (Brown Auditorium)
ricedesignalliance.org

SPOTLIGHT PRIZE GRACE LA AND JAMES DALLMAN

September 7
Partners, La Dallman
Milwaukee, Minnesota

VIRTUOSO PABLO FERRO & THE ART OF FILM TITLE DESIGN

September 21
2009 AIGA Medalist
Los Angeles

CHINESE ARCHITECTURE

The series includes the following speakers:

THOMAS J. CAMPANELLA
September 28
Associate Professor of Urban Planning,
University of North Carolina

PEI ZHU
October 5
Studio Pei-Zhu
Beijing

WANG SHU
October 12
Amateur Architect Studio
Hangzhou

QINGYUN MA
October 19
Dean, University of California School
of Architecture
Principal, MADA s.p.a.m.
Shanghai

LETTER

CITE ENCOURAGES READERS TO SEND LETTERS, INCLUDING CRITICAL ONES, TO MANKAD@RICE.EDU.

CITE 85

John Mixon makes some good points in his article "Zoning Around" in the Spring edition of *Cite*. But government power also helps poor and middle class neighborhoods. And a comprehensive zoning ordinance is not the only answer to Houston's ugly land-use battles.

Middle-class Eastwood had their councilman's help when they fought the Magnolia Glen Homeless Shelter. Sharpstown has the city and state's help in their fight against the Carnival Night Club. Inwood Forest had help from the mayor to prevent development on an old golf course. Sunnyside is one of Houston's poorest neighborhoods. City Council actually



wrote a special ordinance to help in their fight against a concrete-crushing plant.

We could fix the bad parts of the "Houston Way" with education, communication, and grass-roots urban planning. The city could educate developers and neighborhoods. Developers could be more sensitive to neighborhoods. Neighborhoods could decide what they want ahead of time and communicate in a consistent way. This is already starting to happen. A comprehensive zoning ordinance would only get in the way of it.

Kindest regards,
Adam J. Weiss, AIA
President, Braeburn Super Neighborhood Council

CORRECTIONS

"An Honest Look at Downtown" by Kelly Klaasmeyer in the Spring 2011 issue of *Cite* (85) misidentifies the material of the bridge between the Houston Ballet Center for Dance and the Wortham Theater Center. The bridge is made from steel. / The text for "Glass House on a Concrete Canyon" inadvertently included edits not accepted by the writer. His preferred version is available as a PDF at citomag.org. / Anna Mod's bio was mistakenly not included in the list of contributors of *Cite* 85. She is a historic preservation specialist with SWCA Environmental Consultants in Houston.

UNEXPECTED CITY



PUTTING YOUR HOUSTON ON THE MAP

HOUSTON'S UNEXPECTED PLACES—FROM THE WAREHOUSES SURROUNDING DOWNTOWN TO OLD-SCHOOL BARBERSHOPS TO OPEN FIELDS—GIVE THE CITY ITS SPARK. HOUSTONIANS ARE OFTEN WALKING LIBRARIES OF SUCH PLACES.

Rice Design Alliance has launched a campaign entitled *Unexpected City* that is asking for submissions for publication on Offcite. Send ideas to Katie.Plocheck@rice.edu. Places off the beaten path or a personal experience that provides fresh perspective on a familiar icon are welcome.

Visit Offcite.org to view the latest entries!