

2008 BSA/IIDA/ASID Interior Architecture/Interior Design Awards Program

Jurors' Comments

This year we had the opportunity to review 82 submissions to this biennial design awards program. We received a variety of project types, including corporate office, education, hospitality, medical service (with an emphasis on pediatric care) and high-end residential housing projects. Surprisingly, we saw very few retail, single-family housing or public projects.

In general, the quality of work was high, though a majority of the projects struck us as competent, rather than innovative or exciting, frequently offering good details that did not quite unite the whole. Only a handful of projects were seeking LEED certification, but it was clear that most designers have internalized the tacit requirement to provide sustainable solutions; this awareness was most articulately expressed through materials choice and daylighting solutions.

We noticed in several project types — retail, hospitality, education, and corporate office -- a trend toward design that provides maximum transparency and openness. This broadly applied concept appears to be an example of design keeping pace with business trends as well as following a generational mandate to create spaces that promote collaboration and group interaction. In addition to supporting changed social behaviors this trend also supports tighter budget requirements by decreasing the required per-person square footage.

In addition, we saw several projects that sought to create another type of transparency — this one between indoors and outdoors; in one instance, designers brought the natural elements directly into a living space; other projects provided deep visual connection to the outdoors by painting interior walls to reflect and extend the outside view.

Smartly conceived ceilings added verve to many projects, introducing a design element to many rooms without interfering with programmatic requirements, in many instances partially suspended ceilings provided rooms with scale, enhanced daylighting or acoustical depth.

Because these documents represent a juror's only opportunity to assess a project's values and virtues, it's incumbent on us to add a few thoughts about the presentations themselves. We encourage designers to:

- put your best photograph, or "money shot," up front to excite us right away;
- leave out poor photographs, they only detract;
- edit your portfolios as if you were personally walking us through the space and telling the story;

- caption your photos so we understand why it's important for us to be looking at each image you present;
- be careful-- don't make us wonder which caption and image belong together;
- provide us with bullets rather than narrative prose so we can be sure we grasp the central points that you want to make;
- remember to tell us about the client's goals for the project, especially as you boast about meeting them;
- show us in images anything significant you claim in writing; and avoid using thin acetate sleeve (we like to see your work without the cloudy prophylactic).

We have chosen to honor 11 projects this year and have based our judgments on what we consider to be excellent design. We recognized surprising responses to programmatic requirements, innovations of all sort, beautiful work that was technically well executed, and projects with clear conceptual connections between the building and its interior. We spoke often about our shared desire to dwell in the spaces that we selected and, in the text below, we offer a few comments specific to each honored project.

As always, serving as jurors in a program such as this is an educational experience for the jury and that was the case this time for us. We wish to express our appreciation to the BSA and to ASID and IIDA for this opportunity and we encourage all interior designers and architects to consider submitting work to this program again in 2010 as we seek to raise professional and public awareness of the possibilities of good design.

The Jurors

Marty Anderson (Fidelity Real Estate Co., Boston)

Mark Hutker AIA (Hutker Architects, Falmouth MA)

Angie Lee FAIA IIDA (SmithGroup, Chicago)

Felice Silverman IIDA (Silverman Trykowski Associates, Boston)

HONOR AWARDS FOR DESIGN EXCELLENCE

Grant Recital Hall (Providence RI)
for Brown University

designed by Brian Healy Architects (Somerville MA)...E.W. Burman, Inc. (general contractor, Warwick RI); Richmond So Engineers (structural engineer, Watertown MA); The Collaborative Engineers (M/E/P/FP engineer, Boston); Lam Partners (lighting consultant, Cambridge MA); Kirkegaard Associates (acoustics and a/v engineer, Chicago); Campbell-McCabe (architectural hardware, Waltham MA)

Like a glimpsed ankle, this light and airy performance studio, a renovation described by one of us as “best in show,” emerges yet hides...A graceful sequence throughout, the hall is an intimate, sinuous line of warmly lit, interlocked shapes and spaces...The tonal qualities of the visual environment are especially harmonic, with details beginning at the sidewalk... A perforated bamboo screen around the stage defines the space and provides acoustical depth...This project represents wonderfully consistent, mysterious, authoritative design.

Circa Restaurant (Memphis)
for John Bragg

designed by 3SIX0 Architecture & Design (Providence RI)...Metro Construction (general contractor, Memphis); Mystic Millwork (fabricator, Norwood MA); Yoder and Tidwell (structural engineer, Providence RI)

Incorporating a poetic interplay between solids and voids, this long and narrow restaurant makes creative use of a series of 3-D aluminum screens cut with squiggle patterns of varying dimensions...The panels are not only used to store wine, but to create privacy throughout the highly activated room...The screens provide the optical phenomenon of a moiré when one passes by them, but appear open when viewed directly...The back-lit cherry-paneled wall at the rear of the space offers a graphic interpretation of the screen wall’s moiré effect while providing much of the light to both restaurant and bar...The floor is a polished, neutral counterpoint to the rest of the space...We wondered whether the choice of straight-backed chairs represented a lost opportunity to incorporate the otherwise lively character established by the panels.

The Susan P. and Richard A. Friedman Study Center (Providence RI)
for Brown University

designed by Architecture Research Office (architect/interior design, New York City)... Shawmut Design and Construction (general contractor/construction manager, Providence); Leslie E. Robertson Associates (structural engineer, New York City); Altieri Sebor Wieber (M/E/P engineer, Norwalk CT); Tillotson Design Associates (lighting designer, New York City); Shen Milsom & Wilke (acoustics/information technology, New York City); Hughes Associates (code and life safety, Great Neck NY); Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates (landscape architect, New York City); Open (graphic design, New York City); Move Management (furniture vendor, Providence); Paul Warchol Photography (photographer, New York City)

Elegant and quiet, this renovation to the three lower floors of a Brutalist campus building introduces a creative use of signage to manage sound levels throughout the building and moveable curtainwalls made of resin that allow natural light to flood the core while still providing private areas in which to read, chat with friends or flirt... The walls are printed with dozens of quotations and illustrations from books found in the university's library, including their call numbers, enabling curious students to find the permanent graffiti's source... The collaborative work areas are fitted with translucent, writeable walls that bring openness to the process, revealing the work underway while making the product of that work part of the center's visual environment.

Studzinski Recital Hall at Bowdoin College (Brunswick ME)
for Bowdoin College

designed by William Rawn Associates, Architects (Boston)... H.P. Cummings Constructions Co. (general contractor, Winthrop ME); LeMessurier Consultants (structural engineer, Cambridge MA); TMP Consulting Engineers (M/E/P engineer, Boston); Carol R. Johnson Associates (landscape architect, Boston); Harimman Associates (civil engineer, Auburn ME); Horton Lees Brogden Lighting Design (lighting consultant, New York City); Kirkegaard Associates (acoustics, Chicago); Theater Projects Consultant (S. Norwalk CT); Robert Benson (photographer, Hartford CT)

This below-street-level recital hall for student performers is a remarkable re-use of an historic swimming pool, completely integrated and beautifully executed... A spare assemblage of materials, lighting, proportion and color, the design is classic and clean and won't detract from the performances... Adjustable brass mesh tuner panels define the space architecturally and allow for it to respond to a variety of acoustical programs... This theater is an intimate vessel pitched at a very comfortable angle in a lovely space greatly activated by mature, restrained design.

Lewis Walpole Library, (Farmington CT)
for Yale University

designed by Centerbrook Architects and Planners (Centerbrook CT)...PAC Group (general contractor, Harwinton CT); Altieri Sebor Wieber (M/E/P engineer, Norwalk CT); Gibble Norden Champion Brown (structural engineer, Old Saybrook, CT); Phillip R. Sherman, P.E. (code consultant, Elkins NH); Milone & MacBroom (civil engineer, Cheshire CT); Stephen Stimson Associates (landscape architect, Falmouth MA); Atelier Ten (lighting consultant, New Haven CT); JLC Preconstruction & Estimating Services (cost consultant, Madison CT); Peter Aaron/Esto Photographics (photographer, Mamaroneck NY)

With almost Shaker simplicity, this library addition and renovation is restrained and sophisticated...Informed by a local tradition of connected farm buildings, the addition is an attached barn that contains discreet state-of-the-art HVAC and security systems to protect the valuable collections inside...The reading room in the new building is modern and spacious, with a magnificent white oak-paneled ceiling that bends toward the windows, framing daylight...The renovated library offers a warm, traditional counterpoint to the contemporary addition...Throughout the complex, space is well- delineated to respond to diverse programmatic requirements, providing secure public exhibit space, comfortable rooms for quiet contemplation and for staff, and a modern work environment that includes plenty of natural daylight.

AWARDS FOR DESIGN

Continuum Headquarters (West Newton MA)
for Continuum

designed by Sasaki Associates. (Watertown MA)...Commodore Builders (contractor, Newton MA); LeMessurier Consultants (engineer, Cambridge MA)

Designed to bring complete transparency and maximum flexibility to the business process, this consulting studio renovation is conceptually holistic and meticulously executed...The designers were careful not to overwhelm the fully connected studio with brash colors and tones...The main stairway connecting the two floors is lit by box-shaped skylights...A rhythmic series of cloud-like panels lowered from an otherwise exposed ceiling energizes the entire space and brings intimacy and definition to particular areas within the open floors...Smartly selected, budget-friendly, mass-produced furniture includes conference tables on wheels, enabling easy reconfiguration and reorganization.

Design School Library (Providence RI)
for Rhode Island School of Design

designed by Office dA (Boston)... Shawmut Design and Construction (contractor, Providence); Simpson, Gumpertz, & Heger (structural engineer, Waltham MA); Harry Grodsky & Co. (mechanical/HVAC engineer, Springfield MA); Dykeman Electrical (electrical engineer, Providence RI); Hogan/McCauley Architects (lighting consultant, Providence RI); Meyer Scherer & Rockcastle (signage/project consultant, Minneapolis MN)

Located in the lower levels of an historic bank, this library renovation retains the stately character of the architecture while providing a fully contemporary, open and well-scaled interior design that makes maximum use of every object and surface in the room; for instance, we loved the settees doubling as bookshelves... The space is fully activated by the architectural insertion of two pavilions, or islands, in the open lobby space... Adding dimensionality and strong contemporary gestures that seem at home in the historical setting, one of the islands holds the library's main reading center while the other is for circulation administration... The furniture is modern, mobile and looks comfortable, clustered into a reading lounge at the base of these two colossal islands... We admire the elegance and clarity in this design.

banq (Boston)

for SoWa Restaurant Group

designed by Office dA (Boston)... Homeland Builders (contractor, Fall River MA); Wozny/Barbar & Associates (M/E/P engineer, Hanover MA); Simpson, Gumpertz, & Heger (structural engineer, Waltham MA); Collaborative Lighting (lighting consultant, Concord MA); TriMark USA (kitchen designer, Attleboro MA)

Using a system of undulating Baltic Birch wood slats to conceal mechanical systems, plumbing, lighting and structurally significant columns, this renovated bank is now a wholly unique and innovative restaurant and bar... Fully enveloped by the design, patrons dine beneath the warmly lit wooden canopy that extends in one elegant gesture from ceiling to floor... Making the most of its woody metaphor, a wine rack in the center of the room suggests a monumental tree trunk.

CITATIONS FOR DESIGN

Outside-in-Loft (Boston)

for Sam and Leslie Davol

designed by Howeler + Yoon Architecture (Boston)... Benjamin Construction (contractor, Boston); Sarkis Zerounian (structural engineer, West Newton MA); Ibrahim Engineers (Mechanical engineer, Boston)

This minimalist urban hacienda makes gorgeous use of glass...Beautifully executed, the space is essentially a glass-walled courtyard around which an apartment is fashioned, allowing its inhabitants to observe the natural elements directly within their living quarters...Conceptually very, very interesting, though we wanted to see people actually dwelling in the space, to help us better understand the outside/inside dynamic.

Stix Restaurant (Boston)

for Helvetica Group

designed by 3SIX0 Architecture & Design (Providence RI)...Cafco (general contractor, Boston); Butler Architectural Woodwork (fabricator, New Bedford MA); Tec Engineering (structural engineer, Lawrence MA)

This funky restaurant design engages the entire interior envelope...Warm, neutral wood panels fold in continuous gestures over the ceiling, walls, tables, floor and bar...It is a very clever activation of space though we wished we might have seen the environment photographed at its liveliest, to help us fully appreciate its scale.

World Headquarters for the International Fund for Animal Welfare (Yarmouth Port MA)
for International Fund for Animal Welfare

designed by designLAB Architects (Boston)...JK Scanlan Co. (general contractor, Falmouth MA); Stephen Stimson Associates Landscape Architects (landscape architect, Falmouth MA); TMP Consulting Engineers (M/E/P engineer, Boston); Daniel A. Ojala PE, PLS (civil engineer, Yarmouth Port MA); KVAssociates (owner's representative, Boston); ODEH Engineers (structural engineer, Providence RI); Norfolk Ram (geotechnical engineer, Boston); Sladen/Feinstein (lighting consultant, Boston); Leslie Saul Associates (furnishings, Boston); Peter Vanderwarker (photographer, West Newton MA)

Incorporating recycled structural steel and many other sustainable materials and processes, this think tank is designed to provide large open spaces where staff can meet and engage visually with one another, facilitating communication and interaction... Cleverly conceived fabric "sails" are lowered from the ceiling above interior work surfaces, providing reflected light and buffering sound...Glass screens are used well to introduce opacity and delineate private crannies to the space...Captivating primarily due to the sustainability story behind the building itself, we applaud the well-detailed visual and ethical attention extended to the interiors of this LEED Gold-seeking project.