

AIA GULF STATES PRESS RELEASE

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AIA GULF STATES REGION CELEBRATES EXCELLENCE IN DESIGN

Architects from the Gulf States Region of the American Institute of Architects gathered in Philadelphia to celebrate the 2016 Honor Awards program. Fourteen projects were recognized for their thoughtful response, refreshing simplicity, and overall design excellence. Respected jury members chose these projects from those entered by architects practicing in the Gulf States region. The Honor Awards program identifies built works of distinction, and strives to promote the excellent work by architects from Alabama, Arkansas, Louisiana, Mississippi and Tennessee.

An accomplished group of design professionals, led by William Carpenter, FAIA, founder and president of Lightroom (Decatur, GA) juried the projects. Jury members included Jim Burton, AIA (Carter + Burton Architecture, Berryville, VA) and Nicholas Cusimano, Associate AIA (Lightroom Studio). Philip E. Black, AIA, of Simonton, Swaika, Black Architects in Birmingham acted as Program Chair,

Together, they reviewed and chose the following projects for recognition from over 130 entered in the program.

MERIT AWARDS

Courtyard House (Little Rock, AR)

Architect: Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design Design Build Program – University of Arkansas (Fayetteville)

Program Statement:

The Courtyard House is a pre-fabricated, single-family residence, designed and built by students in Fayetteville, Arkansas, and then installed in the South Main Neighborhood in Little Rock, Arkansas. The house is composed of five sections. Four of the sections were pre-fabricated as 14' x 20' modules and contain the main interior spaces of the house: master bedroom, living room, kitchen/dinning, and second bedroom. The 5th section, the courtyard, was built on site and is the focal point of the project. The courtyard is embedded in the house between the living room and master bedroom modules. From the exterior it is concealed by the envelope of the building. The three interior sides of the courtyard are floor to ceiling glass, allowing ample natural light deep into the master bedroom and living spaces.

Jury's Comments:

- Getting a wide footprint with prefab is so important
- Bringing the light in with the courtyard as the soul of the house was an essential choice
- Very thorough, thoughtful, and articulate coming from a group of talented students
- I can see this prototype used as a business model for the future of prefab housing. I would encourage the next iteration to consider the cost per sq/ft and affordability.

Ascend Amphitheater and Riverfront Park (Nashville, TN)

Architect: Smith Gee Studio (Nashville) and Hodgetts + Fung (Culver City, CA)

Program Statement:

Ascend Amphitheater, situated within Nashville's Riverfront Park, is a 6,800 patron world-class music venue designed to augment its surrounding green space during non-performance days.

Mayor Karl Dean set forth three goals for the amphitheater from its infancy: 1) It must be a "Park First," designed to enhance green space rather than overshadow it; 2) It must be a "World-Class Music Venue" in accordance with the prestigious quality for which Music City is renowned; 3) It must be a "Civic Icon," honoring Nashville's culture, heritage, and history.

Receiving a LEED Gold Certification, the project boasts a bioswale, a 2,800 sq. ft. green roof, a 400,000 gallon rainwater harvesting cistern, geothermal heating and cooling, 1,350 sq. ft. of solar panels, and permeable pavers.

Jury's Comments:

- In spite of the formal inspirations, the final outcome of this serious and whimsical Amphitheater is forward thinking, and connects with place as its asymmetrical morphology expands, connects and frames with visual and functional
- The reference to the amplifier as a metaphor could have been dangerous, but the architects' subtle use of form and space was strong in its execution

- I am excited to see how this landscape project activates the downtown area and revitalizes the city in large. They have made a landmark that people will actually enjoy and want to go to

University of Arkansas Community Design Center Studio (Fayetteville, AR)

Architect: University of Arkansas Community Design Center and Polk Stanley Wilcox Architects (Fayetteville)

Program Statement:

The tenant space renovation for an off-campus community design center reclaims the muscular expression and scale of the original masonry-clad building accompanied by contrasting lightweight interventions. Renovations remove the warren of offices (and their lay-in surfaces) subdividing the masonry structure and covering large-scale windows with views to the Ozark Plateau. Two sculptural walls were introduced into the 3,100 square foot shell, which frame the main studio space in a saddlebag plan. Dialectically, each wall shares similar shelving, height and plan dimensions, yet their tectonic differences are borne through a reverse solid-void relationship describing carving or assemblage. The intervention reconciles the original building's strong symmetry with the asymmetry of support spaces in the conference room and kitchen/storage/service opposite, while maintaining visual continuity throughout the center's modest space.

Studio processes are curated for a public who access this mixed-use public building housing university outreach centers, art studios, restaurants, and shops located on the town square. The renovation reconfigures the interior as a storefront to showcase the studio's work on the second floor of this block-long atrium building.

Jury's Comments:

- The simple elegance of the Plan allows for the lightweight interventions to provide the intended lighting, signage, storage and display.
- The tectonic qualities of the exposed ducts and ceiling structure bend down into the lower areas with the mix of steel supports and storage elements creating unified aesthetic.

Fayetteville Montessori Primary School (Fayetteville)

Architect: Marlon Blackwell Architects (Fayetteville)

Program Statement:

Montessori Primary is a complete renovation of an outdated suburban office building into a 9-classroom school building that augments the facilities at the Fayetteville Montessori School in Fayetteville, Arkansas. The renovation was completed in 11 months (design through construction) for \$118 per square foot and utilizes the original structure of the building, including the rhythm of the storefronts along the south and west walls, which now provide large banks of glass into each classroom. A pedestrian bridge for students and teachers connects Montessori Primary with the existing campus.

A suspended façade and canopy, conceived of as a carapace, provides shade and visual separation from the street. An addition on the north side of the building, unseen from the exterior entry of the building, intersects the existing building at the reception area and conference room. The insertion creates a dynamic, acute corner as the corridor extends to three additional classrooms and frames two courtyards, used for outdoor play, between the renovation and the new structure. The material palette of new building – dark bronze box rib metal wall panels and cypress siding – ties back to Montessori Elementary, completed in 2012.

Jury's Comments:

- This project challenges the perception of enclosure with warmth balanced by a feeling of protection
- Abandoned strip malls are becoming an all too common addition to our neighborhood fabric, and this project completely transforms the exiting building to something other worldly
- By confronting the abandoned structure, they created exemplary architecture

Studio Retreat (New Orleans, LA)

Architect: Studio WTA, LLC (New Orleans)

Program Statement:

At the rear of an existing mid-century ranch-style residence in the Lower Garden District, a studio and guest pavilion is designed to provide temporary quarters for visitors and permanent space for the owners' creative endeavors, including fine art and music, while focusing on blurring the line between interior and exterior space as an environmental experience. The existing yard is a lush garden—lovingly cultivated year-round by the owners—who spend a significant amount of time out-of-doors. The program includes an expansive studio with concealed storage for guitars—which doubles as pin-up space—and built-in display storage for LPs, which also performs as a bench with cabinets for a turntable, receiver and flat files. A serene bathroom is adjacent, with custom cypress vanity, mirror and wardrobe, and a marble-clad shower and bench with infinity-edge window to further dissolve indoor/outdoor separation. The soaring studio space is proportioned for maximum filtered light and acoustic performance for playing of live guitar and recorded music. Oversized sliding glass doors and

smaller operable windows encourage cross-ventilation, and a bathroom skylight allows venting from that area. A dual-height, low-sloped standing seam metal roof responds to programmatic needs and existing building conditions.

Jury's Comments:

- All of the moves flow and function in and out, allowing the acoustic ceiling to be a main feature while one rolls around on low slung furniture studying and selecting analogue sound and supporting art
- The addition is sexy and looks like a place anyone would enjoy spending time in.
- All the detailing is expertly done and clean, giving a contemporary vibe to a mid-century style

LOOP PAVILION (New Orleans, LA)

Architect: Emilie Taylor Welty, Tulane City Center (New Orleans)

Program Statement:

Louisiana Outdoor Outreach program [LOOP] engages local students in outdoor education and leadership programs through adventure-based activities on their challenge course site in City Park. LOOP's current island site is difficult to access and far from any seating, storage or shaded gathering spaces. A new pavilion would allow LOOP to provide better, safer programs for the students with whom they work in the hot gulf states weather.

To address these issues, the project team designed a shade pavilion that incorporates seating and shade in a large pavilion structure used for teaching and gathering during challenge course activities. The design is inspired by the tree canopy surrounding the challenge course, and uses 600 aluminum traffic signs as a modular, exterior grade unit to create an abstracted, high-performing canopy overhead. In keeping with the context of the adjacent ropes course structure, the canopy was suspended with steel cable from a larger steel structure in a way that creates an undulating complex curve. The seating is built into an earth berm created by reusing railroad ties from the St. Charles Ave. streetcar line.

Jury's Comments:

- This sublime beauty is achieved by building pattern and a lightness that surely attracts people, while also protecting them from a harsh southern climate
- Playful, nuanced, and incredible detailing comes to mind when I see this student project. They really challenged themselves to develop and produce an iconic pavilion that looks so effortless

Renovations and Additions to Monroe Hall Loyola University of New Orleans (New Orleans, LA)

Architect: Holly & Smith Architects APAC (New Orleans) and Holabird & Root (Chicago, IL)

Program Statement:

The original antiquated 1970's building housed the majority of University's classroom space within its 170,000 SF five story structure. Entrances, Way-finding and Classroom Spaces were dark, dismal and dreary, not unlike a submariner's environment, which was imbued in the building's ship-like aesthetics. The strategic re-visioning of the building demanded a complete, holistic approach to re-think the building's organization and celebrate its rejuvenation. In a progressive response, an interdisciplinary consolidation of Math, Sciences, Performing and Visual Arts was embraced by an academic structure; to create a more comprehensive and collaborative learning environment. The re-evaluation of the building spatial program and curriculum yielded a requirement for an additional 100,000 SF of area on an already site-restrained building footprint. The building restructuring implemented a new (2) story vertical expansion, as well as a new roof-top mechanical penthouse and experimental greenhouse. The complexity of the project scope involved a complete renovation of all existing floors, which was conducted floor-by-floor, in descending order, to include replacement of all mechanical, electrical, plumbing and special systems infrastructure. All new vertical transportation and circulation was deployed throughout and the entire building envelope was replaced with new energy efficient glazing incorporating an innovative thin-brick façade. All modifications and renovations were provided over a construction duration of (5) years - while maintaining the FULL OCCUPANCY that the University required. The undertaking has been compared to changing the oil in a locomotive – while it is running.

Jury's Comments:

- Although the design goes a long way to deny the previous horizontality, it has created a complete overhaul feel over a five-year period while maintaining full occupancy as required
- The architects took an eyesore and gave it the Cinderella treatment
- While using the structure of the existing building, everything else gets a much needed facelift and looks as if it was always that way

University Medical Center of New Orleans (New Orleans, LA)

Architect: nbj (Seattle, WA) / Blitch Knevel (New Orleans)

Program Statement:

Ten years after the devastation brought by Hurricane Katrina, the University Medical Center (UMC) rebuilds New Orleans' vital medical care resources and sets the stage for transforming healthcare within the region. UMC is the new predecessor for the historic Charity Hospital, which closed following Hurricane Katrina. Centrally located on Canal Street in New Orleans' Mid-City neighborhood, the medical center serves as the cornerstone of an expanding medical district and a new symbol of flourishing progress for the city post-recovery.

The hospital program consists primarily of 424 patient beds in towers fronting Canal Street; a Diagnostic and Treatment building within the heart of the campus; a clinic building facing Galvez Street; a structured parking garage; and a central utility plant on Tulane Avenue.

UMC captures the essence of New Orleans' culture and place, and provides the city and Louisiana with a world-class academic medical center. UMC serves the cornerstone of an expanding biomedical district, and as a vital hub for world-class research and academics, through collaborative partnerships with nearby universities Tulane, LSU Health Science and Xavier.

Jury's Comments:

- Even at this large scale, a restraint and rigor are present that emphasize light, color and warmth ultimately inspiring healing with an accessible modern beauty
- The seamless blend of interior and exterior by giving intense thought to landscaping and planning is truly commendable
- This campus was the work of many different offices with unique specialties (I assume), yet it feels like one hand – this shows great collaboration and leadership by the lead office

Tulane University – Yulman Stadium (New Orleans, LA)

Architect: Gould Evans Architects with Lee Ledbetter & Associates (New Orleans)

Program Statement:

Nestled into the heart of a landlocked urban campus like the last piece of a larger contextual puzzle, this new LEED Silver Certified football stadium is the final component of a master plan for the University's athletic precinct. The stadium is a spirited place that responds to its particular time and cultural milieu, returning football games to campus after 40 years and providing a signature backdrop for the new athletics quadrangle.

This University is an institutional and cultural anchor for Louisiana, but its alumni base is spread internationally. Each year thousands of former students and friends return to campus for various activities; football games in particular, are powerful catalysts for reconnection. The

new stadium celebrates the decorated athletic history and rich traditions using a modern architectural vocabulary that marries old and new.

Sensitivity to the surrounding neighborhood and contextual conditions was paramount and influenced design decisions relative to architectural massing and material expression. Functionally, this facility maintains rule-of-thumb criteria specific to this building type—excellent sightlines, signature fan amenities, calibrated stadium lighting and acoustics—fusing them with an ambience that is unmistakable to its place.

Jury's Comments:

- The project presents an active asymmetric and tectonic massing, highlighting key elements that play well with this mid-sized scale
- The screen wall system softens the dramatic and shifting geometry
- The scale and materiality blend well with the Tulane campus aesthetic and gives the students a proud community amenity.
- The architects also took into consideration the adjacent neighbors and families which makes for a modest yet powerful massing and project

Sedgwick (Dublin, OH)

Architect: archimania (Memphis)

Program Statement:

The company wanted to break from their outdated office cubicle prototype and develop a new flexible and adaptable approach to their tenant infill strategy that would better reflect the company culture. As the first implementation of these new strategies, the design reuses the existing core and extends it to house private conference and meeting functions which offers employees views and access to natural light. Unique collaboration pods break up the expanses of open office space with the use of color, form and materiality. The existing acoustical ceiling was retained to control noise over the active work areas, but is pulled away from the core and collaboration pods to expose the steel structure and showcase the pods as objects within an open office landscape. Materials like osb, raw wood, and Homosote were selected for their natural and textural qualities rather than synthetic finishes more typical in a corporate setting. A color scheme was developed based on the company's corporate color that complements the natural materials and highlights the different public collaboration areas in a unique way. Colored film on the two enclosed collaboration areas create colored artwork out of the notes and scribbles from brainstorming sessions that take place in these transparent think tank rooms.

Jury's Comments:

- The simultaneous contrasting of the old dropped ceiling and revealed ceiling structure expresses a visual spacial and acoustic split while celebrating boldly shaped tech pods that create inspired and pressurized creative zones.
- The amount done with such a tight budget is pretty extraordinary. The architects did a great job playing with sequencing, ceilings, and special nodes to create a unique work environment.
- I can tell that there was a high level of fun involved in the making of these interiors.

Crescent Park (New Orleans, LA)

Architect: Eskew+Dumez+Ripple (New Orleans)

Program Statement:

This 1.4-mile linear park includes 20 acres of indigenous landscaping, bike paths, playgrounds, a dog run, and the adaptive reuse of two industrial wharfs. The original riverfront development plan, established in 2007 and 2008, proposes a key role for a six-mile stretch along the East Bank of the Mississippi River. From Jackson Avenue upriver to the former Holy Cross school site just down river of the mouth of the Industrial Canal, this plan envisions an urban, active, beautiful river crescent for the city's citizens to enjoy.

The first phase to be implemented from this plan grants unparalleled physical and visual access to the river, creating an environment for locals and visitors to interact and enjoy the essence of New Orleans — our quality of life. Employing alternative energy resources and a simple economic model, the park will be both energy self-reliant and financially self-sufficient.

Jury's Comments:

- This linear park provides the public connection with the river that has been missing while revealing a palimpsest of tactical erasures and subtle additions, creating the park nodes over the six mile stretch.
- The Mississippi River is a powerful symbol in New Orleans, and the park lets residents and tourists engage with its power through strategic nodes and focal points.

Chambers Cafeteria Addition and Renovation – Arkansas Tech University (Russellville, AR)

Architect: AMR Architects, Inc. (Little Rock)

Program Statement:

Chambers Cafeteria is the primary dining facility for Arkansas Tech University. In 2013, Chambers Cafeteria was at the end of its effective service, serving more than three times the number of students than it was previously designed to accommodate. The University considered building a new facility, but placed a high value in maintaining the University's primary dining facility in the center of campus, so the decision was made to renovate.

The goals were to create an exciting dining experience with decentralized flow thereby avoiding long, crowded lines, and replace and modernize the existing systems infrastructure. The design solution created one continuous open dining area by removing the traditional back-of-house kitchen, and joining the east and west dining rooms. The new 2,400 square foot east glass addition set a new roof elevation higher than the original, which created a warm naturally lit dining area. In the end, the project doubled the seating capacity, was completed on a five-month timetable and within budget.

Jury's Comments:

- The new decentralized dining experience of this expanded space has added warmth and a cheerfulness that should encourage a healthy appetite.
- Just through the use of natural lighting, the architects created a dining hall that students will actually enjoy their time in.

HONOR AWARDS

Regional One (Memphis, TN)

Architect: archimania (Memphis)

Program Statement:

A renovation of an unused hospital courtyard between two adjoining towers provides an updated image reflective of the hospital's new brand and level of care.

The main design challenge was to offer a more welcoming and humane respite than the hospital's existing courtyard which was mostly concrete bordered by small residentially scaled shrubbery and two generic metal benches. Pavers were installed within an organic shape to contrast surrounding hospital towers that enclose the space. Bamboo was introduced as the main landscape material which offers a new vertical scale to the space and provides a soft veil to mask the building. The bamboo encircles the space and is broken only by the entry and the few windows looking into the space allowing clear views for security. The entry and windows are delineated by Cor-ten steel thresholds on the floor plane to provide openings through the bamboo veil. Massive wooden seating elements act as not only a functional device, but provided another natural element that acts as a sculptural element in the courtyard. The courtyard is designed around a permanent storm grate that could not be moved, but is set up to be concealed by a sculpture that will be mounted from a raised base plate concealing the

grate and acting as the focal point of the space (fundraising will take place to acquire the sculpture over the next year or so).

Jury's Comments:

- Truly sublime and emotional
- These designers developed a masterful courtyard for contemplation, grieving, and easing stress for the occupants of the hospital

Memphis Slim Collaboratory (Memphis, TN)

Architect: brg3s (Memphis)

Program Statement:

The historic home of famed blues musician Memphis Slim has been reconstructed into music collaboratory where local artists can work together. Peter Chatman, the famed blues singer and pianist better known as Memphis Slim, drew attention for his punishing performing schedule and unorthodox lifestyle. Extreme poverty characterized much of his life, but also created a personality which was uncommonly resourceful. His life embodied the paradox of his music: hard times and rough experiences were transformed into an upbeat and lively musical energy, the essence of triumph.

Memphis Slim's boyhood home is typical of many in the low-income neighborhood in which it is located. The original home reflected the character of the individuals in the community: strength, survival against overwhelming odds, and resourcefulness. The collaboratory embraces those qualities, building a space that will inspire future musicians to achieve despite potential setbacks, while simultaneously engaging the community.

Jury's Comments:

- A tapestry of complexity and contradiction.
- We are excited to see new life brought forward to this historic building without the use of sentimentality or a tax credit aesthetic
- The exterior cladding is intellectual and gives great visual cues to programmatic shifts happening on the interior
- The contemporary use of wood siding and metal sheeting refreshes typical housing materials

The Honor Awards were presented at the AIA Gulf States Region reception in Philadelphia in conjunction with AIA's National Convention.

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