



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Kate O'Donnell
703.506.2895
kodonnell@edra.org

Environmental Design Research Association Announces Recipients of 16th Annual Great Places Awards

Projects on display during 2014 conference in New Orleans, Louisiana

May 14, 2014 (McLean, VA) – Six exemplary projects in architecture, planning, landscape architecture, and urban design have been named winners of the 2014 Great Places Awards, and will be on display during the 45th annual conference of the Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA), May 28-31, 2014. The EDRA Great Places Awards recognize professional and scholarly excellence in environmental design and pay special attention to the relationship between physical form and human activity or experience.

The “**Masoro Village Project**,” a **2014 Place Design Award** recipient from [GA Collaborative](#), was conceived by the nonprofit design organization comprised of practitioners and educators to bring design thinking to Masoro, Rwanda in the form of new housing. The first house built in 2013 used low-impact building materials, engaged both skilled and unskilled local labor, and was a vehicle to test and teach building techniques new to the country. To sustain the newly gained knowledge within the country, GA Collaborative worked closely with local architecture students from the Kigali Institute of Science and Technology who were involved with the project at each stage, working side-by-side with the villagers.

A second **2014 Place Design Award** recipient, “**Open House**,” is a community-built physically transforming house/theater in York, Alabama. In 2011, artist [Matthew Mazzotta](#) was invited by the Coleman Center for the Arts to organize an artwork with the people of York. During Mazzotta's initial visit, he engaged the community in a dialogue about their needs and desires for the space. From this conversation, they developed a project that uses the materials of an abandoned house as well as the land it sits on to build the transforming structure on the footprint of the old house. Open House directly addresses the lack of public space in York by providing a physical location as common ground for community dialogue and activities.

Formerly a parking lot in a faded industrial area, the third **2014 Place Design Award** recipient, “**Sugar Beach**” from [Claude Cormier et Associés](#), marks a significant moment in the continuing revitalization of Toronto's waterfront. As the first public space built in the emerging East Bayfront neighborhood, Sugar Beach sets the mood to define the area's shift from dereliction to a diverse live-work-play community. The increasing rate of intensification in downtown Toronto brings with it a need for public realm that is generous. As the traditional appeal of the cottage getaway succumbs to cost, automobile, and environmental constraints, Sugar Beach offers a sustainable alternative where people do not have to leave the city or spend money for recreation.

-more-

1760 Old Meadow Road, Suite 500, McLean, VA 22102
p. 703.506.2895 f. 703.506.3266
www.edra.org



The **2014 Place Planning Award** recipient, “**Pike-Pine Renaissance**,” sponsored by the Downtown Seattle Association, was developed from a call for design guidelines for downtown streets and has expanded to a much larger advocacy for the street as the city's greatest public space. Building on the numerous plans already in place, the team at **Gustafson Guthrie Nichol** focused on broadening expectations of what it would mean to meet the client's goals of making Seattle “America's Best Urban Experience,” while simultaneously developing details for new construction. Pairing the practical with the highly ambitious allowed stakeholders to dream big while offering achievable incremental goals that could start immediately.

The recipient of the **2014 Place Research Award**, the “**Green Alley Demonstration Project**” represents the culmination of nine years of applied, community-engaged design research that asks how the regenerative redesign and reconstruction of alley networks influences the dynamic capacities of three coupled systems: low-income households, biophysical environments, and municipal management. To answer this question, a partnership between the **City of Austin, The University of Texas Center for Sustainable Development, the Guadalupe Neighborhood Development Corporation, and Austin Community Design and Development Center** was formed to redevelop a selected demonstration alley using regenerative design principles.

The **2014 Place Book Award** recipient, “**The Street: A Quintessential Social Public Space**” by **Vikas Mehta**, argues that one of the cardinal roles of the street, as public space, is to provide a setting for a range of social behaviors. This in-depth study of streets systematically examines the actions and perceptions of people, develops a comprehensive typology of social behaviors in public space, and provides a thorough inquiry into the social dimensions of streets.

The winners were selected by an esteemed jury of research and design professionals: **Profip Biswas**, Vice President, Homelessness and Community Outreach, United Way of Greater Atlanta; **Shashi Caan**, Founding Principal, The Collective US/UK, and President IFI – The International Federation of Interior Architects/Designers; **Blair Humphreys**, Director, The Humphreys Fund; **Elizabeth Mossop**, Director, Spackman Mossop Michaels; and **Lynn Paxson**, Professor, Iowa State University Architecture Department.

Award recipients will be recognized on Wednesday, May 28, during the opening reception of EDRA45NewOrleans. To learn more about each of these projects, visit www.edra.org/greatplaces.

About EDRA: The Environmental Design Research Association is an international, interdisciplinary organization founded in 1968 by design professionals, social scientists, students, educators, and facility managers. EDRA exists to advance and disseminate environmental design research, thereby improving understanding of the interrelationships between people, their built and natural surroundings toward creation and curation of environments responsive to human needs. For more information on the organization, membership, and services provided, visit www.edra.org.

#