The newsletter of CHICAGO WOMEN IN ARCHITECTURE promoting the interests and addressing issues of women in architecture since 1973.

winter 2006 + 2007

[From CWA’s President]

[RED™ & GREEN: A New Year’s Resolution on Social, Economic and Environmental Accountability]

I am certain you have all seen Gap’s (RED™) T-shirts, Motorola’s (RED™) MOTORAZR, and Apple’s (RED™) iPod Nano. Many of you are probably aware that these ad campaigns are sponsored by The Global Fund’s initiative to fight HIV/AIDS in Africa, through a new brand known as “Product RED.” It’s an interesting concept – having mainstream businesses support a not-so-mainstream idea by providing mainstream consumers with what is on its way to becoming an immediate conscious choice to defeat AIDS in Africa.

Is this the future of ad campaigns? And what if this socially responsible national campaign idea was to catch on as a new business model? We could be on our way towards not only transforming our global economy but also revolutionizing the idea of sustainability. Sustainable design – (GREEN) design is about providing high performance design that respects social, economic and environmental principles. More than that, the concept of (GREEN) design extends to strategically understanding how we provide products at a variety of levels to consumers without compromising their health, safety or welfare and without depleting the social, economic and environmental resources around us.

How can we use advertising and architecture to make (GREEN) design more accessible, more diversified, more popular – more mainstream? As architects, you are the leaders in your communities who have been trained to tread lightly on the world. So, the first step might be to make a New Year’s resolution dedicated to actively engaging in social, economical and environmental responsibility. Resolve to save (GREEN) energy at home, use recycled (GREEN) materials, observe healthier (GREEN) construction practices – and spread the word (GREEN).

Chicago Women in Architecture is here to advocate, promote and voice what is important to us, socially, economically and environmentally. Seeking to broaden this concept of red and green, please join us for our Holiday celebration at Prairie Avenue Bookshop, where Martha Thorne, Executive Director of the Pritzker Architecture Prize, will present her reflections on the right to be heard in, “Hearing Women’s Voices.” Proceeds from this event will go towards the CWA Foundation which continues to provide scholarships to sustain young women entering their final year of architecture school in Illinois.

Additionally, CWA will continue to sponsor innovative women, as we feature two emerging voices in our 2007 Lecture Series. Please join us as co-host Winka Dubbeldam, of ARDOR-TECTONICS, with the Architecture and Design Society at the Art Institute on February 7th. On May 15th, along with the Museum of Contemporary Art, CWA will also be co-hosting Nanako Umemoto, who will be presenting the works of Reiser + Umemoto.

The CWA Foundation plans to continue providing a voice for women but we cannot continue without your help and encourage each of you to provide us with an annual tax-deductible donation. We greatly appreciate your contribution as do our scholarship winners, our speakers and the audiences that attend these packed house lectures. We would not be able to provide these gifts to the architectural community without your support.

As we continue to promote the interests of women, and seek out what is important to our members, sustainability continues to be a prominent theme, both in retaining women within our profession as well as sustaining our built environment. Buildings account for 40% of all energy consumption. This winter, lower your thermostat by two degrees. Under recycled paper and compact fluorescent bulbs for your homes and offices. Specify special waste removal as part of your basic construction practices.

How we build is a direct reflection on what we value and with small steps and a conscious choice, each of us has the power to make a great impact on our world.

With warm (RED™) thoughts and bright (GREEN) reflections,
Happy Holidays!

Meggin

[Calendar of Events]

Confirm dates, times and locations with the sponsoring organization

December 2006

[1] CWA Board Meeting @ Archeworks: 625 North Kingsbury, 6:15 pm
All are welcome!

[2] Green Holiday Party @ USG Solicitors Office, 222 W. Hubbard St.,
5:30pm Sponsor: AIA Chicago Environment NC, free event

[3] Sustainable Affordable Housing: Financial Aspects @ Chicago Center for Green Technology, 445 North Sacramento Boulevard, 6pm
Sponsor: Chicago Center for Green Technologies, free event, registration required.

[4] CWA Annual Holiday Party @ Prairie Avenue Bookstore
[5] Antonio Gaudi @ Gene Siskel Film Center, 364 North State
Sponsor: Gene Siskel Film Center, visit www.siskelfilmcenter.org for times and ticket prices

January 2007

[8] CWA Board Meeting @ Archeworks: 625 North Kingsbury, 6:15 pm
All are welcome!

[9] Prairie Skyscraper: Frank Lloyd Wright’s Price Tower @ Price Tower Arts Center, Lecture and Exhibition Opening, 6pm Sponsor: Chicago Architecture Foundation, Exhibition January 18 - April 29

February 2007

[10] CWA Lecture Series: Winka Dubbeldam, principal of ARDOR-TECTONICS @ the Art Institute of Chicago, in collaboration with the Architecture and Design Society

[11] CWA Board Meeting @ Archeworks: 625 North Kingsbury, 6:15 pm
All are welcome!

Be sure to check the CWA website periodically for new events!

CWA members directory:
CWA will be publishing a members directory this spring.

Members - Please update your current contact information by emailing Kristen at kmstrong@uic.edu.

If you would like to become a CWA member, please download a membership form at www.cwaw.org
The following article has been reprinted with permission of the AIA. It originally appeared in the January 27, 2006 issue of the AIA’s online publication AIArchitect.

The article is titled “Diversity and the Profession: Take II” and is authored by Tracy Ostroff. The article discusses the importance of understanding different cultures and being more diverse in the profession to sustain it into the future. Ostroff argues that by opening a world to architects, the profession will continue to have an impact on the rest of the world.

The article also addresses the length of time it takes to become an architect and how this might limit inclusiveness. Ostroff suggests that shortening the path to licensure for all groups, not just women and people of color, would encourage more of these individuals to become architects.

The article concludes by highlighting the opportunities for collaborative initiatives that can leverage resources and improve diversity without placing the burden on any one group. The profession, as a whole, is more prepared to address issues of diversity than it was a couple of decades ago.

Diversity and the Profession: Take II

Does the length of time it takes to become an architect play a role in limiting inclusiveness?

Architecture education as currently structured is perhaps the longest and most arduous path into a profession—of any group in any profession. This is a particular concern for women and persons of color and other groups that have traditionally experienced barriers to entering the profession.

By Tracy Ostroff

AIA convention, what about today’s society shows that we are making progress toward a more inclusive profession?

Many local components have initiated programs in the last few years designed to enhance diversity. There are more mentoring programs today—middle schools through design schools and into the profession—than there were two or three decades ago. There are more summer programs, in particular those in programs that are primarily African American, or New York or Newark, and other parts of the country that have initiated exemplary models for nurturing diversity, both within firms, and in conjunction with design schools. The fact that the AIA membership voted overwhelmingly to provide financial support for the recently completed first stages of a demographic analysis of the profession is a very good sign that the profession as a whole is more prepared to address issues of diversity than it was a couple of decades ago.

What discourages you?

Our data collection and analysis across the collateral organizations that oversee education, entry into, and licensing of the profession that are not limited to the often narrowly defined models of what successful architecture practice is.

Where do design schools fit into the issue of diversity?

Recommendations from the AIAS Task Force, which were recently adopted by NAAB to increase the quality of studio culture in schools by supporting more nurturing critiques and by reducing the amount of gratuitous abuse that many students have historically suffered in the learning process, will, in the long run, improve the effect of the architecture school process less Darwinian. It will be more likely to educate architects capable of working in a diverse culture and pursuing alternative paths within the profession that are not limited to the often narrowly defined models of what successful architecture practice is.

Does the length of time it takes to become an architect play a role in limiting inclusiveness?

Architecture education as currently structured is perhaps the longest and most arduous path into a profession—of any providing so little financial return. Steps to accelerate the path to licensure as recently recommended by the AIA and ACSA must be supported nationally to encourage potential licensed practitioners to be able to practice sooner.

To the extent that we change how quickly one could become licensed that would almost certainly have the effect of encouraging more African American and women interns to then become licensed architects. There are other things like that. The quicker you get to licensure, the greater the likelihood you would stay in the profession.

What are the best avenues to tackling some of these broad-based issues?

We are entering a very creative period as we develop new approaches to increasing diversity. Scholarships alone, or mentoring alone, is insufficient. We can now begin to develop a unified, longitudinal approach to attracting more diverse populations into our schools, supporting them in school, helping them as interns, and supporting their development as new professionals.

The opportunities for collaborative initiatives are great because they leverage resources and do not place the burden of improving diversity on any one group. Local components, schools, the AIA’s national component, and our collaborative organizations at NAAB, NCARB, AIAS, and ACSA can draw from the demographic data analysis that will help shape specific local programs that are designed to improve diversity. What our schools and universities need to do is to diversify faculties and student bodies will not be the same as what local components can do to support interns as they enter the profession, but schools and the local components will need to work together to support the transition from school into practice.

Whitney Young spoke of a certain degree of cynicism among the students he met touring high schools and colleges. What is your view of that observation then and now?

Some say finding ways to diversity make plain economic sense.

If we look around the world at the places like New Orleans, Pakistan, and elsewhere, where architecture is most needed, today and into the future, we are looking at a world where our clients will be more diverse than most of the clients we served through the 20th century. By understanding different cultures and being more diverse as a profession, we will open a world to us that will help sustain this profession into the future. The alternative is to act as though diversity is somehow a secondary concern for this profession. The consequence of that will be that we should expect American architects have on the rest of the world will continue to diminish.

—Tracy Ostroff

CWA would like to welcome our new members:

Abir Ali, Landon Bone Baker
Catherine Baker, Landon Bone Baker
Nicole Ells, Kuklinski and Rappe
Irisha Girwood, Landon Bone Baker
Elmari Qafa, Landon Bone Baker
Victoria Leatherman, URBANWorks, Ltd.
Kris Robinson, Muller+Muller, Ltd.

CWA Annual Holiday Party

Thursday, December 14
Prairie Avenue Bookstore
418 South Wabash

Guest Speaker Martha Thorne
“Hearing Women’s Voices”

6:00 Reception  6:45 Presentation
$20 CWA & AIA-PD members
$25 Non-Members
All donations benefit the CWA Scholarship Fund
RSVP @ 312.409.8855 (CWA voicemail)

Martha Thorne is currently the Executive Director of the Pritzker Architecture Prize. Prior to this, she served as Associate Curator and Acting Department Head of the Department of Architecture at The Art Institute of Chicago through 2005. Her work during her nine-year tenure at the museum involved curating many exhibitions, including Unbuilt Chicago, Big Bass: The Transformation of a City, and Modern Trains and Splendid Stations, developing publications, and participating in the groundbreaking cataloging, collecting, and exhibiting digitally created design materials. Before coming to Chicago in 1995, Ms. Thorne lived and worked in Madrid, where she organized and produced exhibitions and publications on architecture for various public institutions. In Spain, she was a member of the three-person editorial board of Quaderns d’Arquitectura i Urbanisme, the 50-year-old journal originating in Barcelona. She is the co-author of the book Masterpieces of Chicago Architecture, editor of David Adler: The Elements of Style, editor and author for The Pritzker Architecture Prize: The First Twenty Years, co-editor of Skylcrapers: The New Millennium, and author of numerous articles for architectural journals and encyclopedias. Ms. Thorne received a Master of City Planning degree from the University of Pennsylvania and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Urban Affairs from the State University of New York at Buffalo. She undertook additional studies at the London School of Economics.