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Lyceum Fellowship: A 30-year Journey

Spring of 1978; as a University of Cincinnati Cooperative Work Study student, I worked at Symmes, Maini & McKee in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Lucky for me, SMMA was very busy and they moved my desk into Principal Jon McKee's personal office; he became a mentor in architecture and life.

—Mark A. Hutker, FAIA

A MENTOR WITH A VISION

Little did I know at the time that Jon had a long history of mentoring young architects through travel opportunities around the world. He had a passion and habit of opening eager eyes to the cultural values imbued in architecture through experience. Two such opportunities were extended to me, traveling to Southeast Asia and Europe. To this day, those trips influence the way I think about space making and creating architecture with a deep connection to place.

In 1985, McKee conceived a legacy fellowship to offer independent travel anywhere in the world to undergraduate students of architecture. It was important that student travel be experienced prior to completion of their academic career, so that it would influence their focus in final years. The Lyceum Fellowship concept was born, named after Aristotle's Peripatetic teaching method. McKee invited Peter Vincent, FAIA; Steve Arens, AIA; Joseph Szabowski, AIA; Jennifer Sweet; Mark Spaulding, AIA, and me to join him in shaping the fellowship as a board of directors.

The Lyceum Fellowship was established with the mission of advancing the profession of architecture by engaging students in design and travel. Through a unique structure of design competition, jury process, and prize-winning travel grants, the Lyceum promotes collaboration, connectivity, and a design dialogue among schools, their students of architecture and the prominent architects who serve as program authors and jurors.

For nearly 30 years, the fellowship has awarded over \$423,000 in prize money to 84 students, of which 56 have travelled to over 58 countries worldwide, representing 250 months (20 + years) of total travel. In addition, more than 100 students have been recognized with merit or citation awards.

In 2010, on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of the Lyceum Fellowship, The Boston Society of Architects bestowed upon Jon McKee a Medal of Honor for his vision, benevolence, mentoring, and advancement of the profession of architecture. The Lyceum Fellowship, Inc. is a non-profit corporation and the board serves its mission pro bono.

“Traveling: it leaves you speechless, then turns you into a storyteller.”

Justin Chapman, 1st Place, 2012

THE BEGINNING

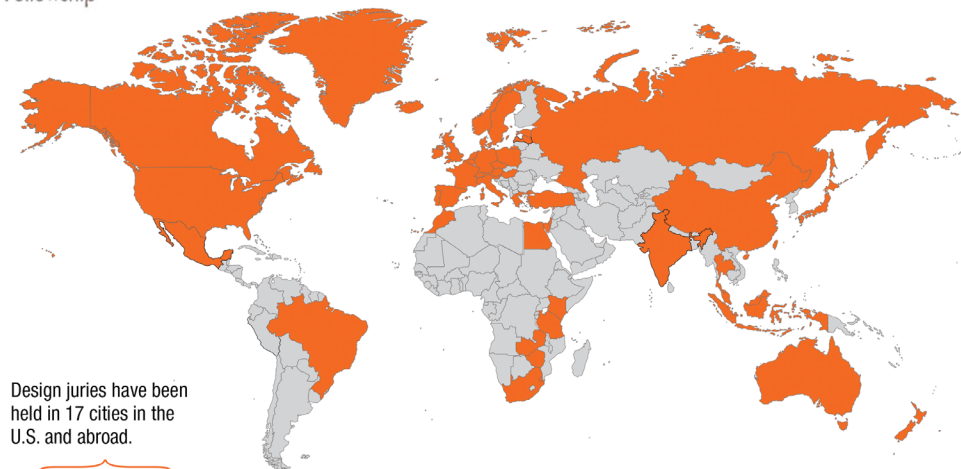
The first fellowship program, “Creating a Contemporary Lyceum,” was hosted at Rensselaer Polytechnic University, with Robert Campbell, FAIA serving as jury chair. Interestingly, this was the only program written in-house. We quickly learned that program au-

thorship was an attractive opportunity for nationally recognized architects. These authors-at-large have created a theoretical basis for each year’s competition, which in turn engages each school’s faculty and students.

The initial juries were comprised of the program author, one of the Lyceum Directors on a rotating basis, and five invited jurors from participating schools. It has always been important to the ethos of the Lyceum that each student learn, not only by designing a solution to the program brief, but also through feedback



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Design juries have been held in 17 cities in the U.S. and abroad.

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|-------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| Boston | NYC | Australia | France | Italy | Norway | Sweden |
| Cincinnati | Providence | Austria | Germany | Japan | Poland | Switzerland |
| Halifax | Salt Lake City | Belgium | Greece | Kenya | Portugal | Tanzania |
| Honolulu | San Antonio | China | Hungary | Latvia | Russia | Thailand |
| Los Angeles | San Francisco | Czech Republic | Iceland | Malaysia | Scotland | Turkey |
| Martha’s Vineyard | Seattle | Denmark | India | Monaco | Slovenia | Wales |
| Mexico City | Troy, NY | Egypt | Indonesia | Morocco | South Africa | Zambia |
| Montreal | Tucson | England | Ireland | Netherlands | Spain | Zimbabwe |
| Moscow | | Estonia | Israel | New Zealand | Swaziland | |

Courtesy of the Lyceum Fellowship

GROWING UP WITH THE LYCEUM

—Harly Hutker

My experience with the Lyceum Fellowship, a design competition awarding architecture students travel grants, is very unique. I am not a board member, though I have been involved with the fellowship my entire life. I am not a juror, though I have seen many entries. I have never entered a competition, though I am an architecture student. And I have never won the competition, but have traveled a lot along with the Lyceum.

John McKee founded the Lyceum Fellowship in 1985 and invited my father Mark Hutker as co-founder, along with two other young architects who also started their professional architecture careers at Symmes, Manni, McKee. The group of board members, having grown now to five members, and their families meet every year for the competition. We have also celebrated New Years together for many years at Jon's harbor-front apartment; perfect for fireworks.

The Lyceum is an annual event in our family akin to Christmas or Thanksgiving. We have traditions, eat great food, travel, and are always in great company. But what sets me apart from my brother and the few other kids who grew up within the Lyceum family is that I am now an architecture student, and my decision was largely influenced

regarding the jury debate themes and key attributes of the winning solutions. This was facilitated by the faculty jury members who reported back to their students.

As the Lyceum has grown, the juries have come to include international architects, critics, editors, and educators who complement the theme of the program. Today, five-member juries review student entries in a city near the location of the program author or the project site. Jury locations have provided opportunities for the members of the board, our families, and the participating jurors to enjoy broadening personal and professional networks while experiencing amazing travel to locations such as Boston, Cincinnati, Halifax, Honolulu, Los Angeles, Martha's Vineyard, Mexico City, Montreal, Moscow, New York City, Providence, Salt Lake City, Seattle, San Francisco, and Tucson.

Outreach and communication have always been an important part of the dialogue. The "Lyceum Retrospective Exhibition" was held at Boston Architectural College in 1988 and subsequently traveled to participating schools to mark the first three years, with a *Retrospective* booklet including commentaries published in the following year. Today, winning student entries are featured on the Lyceum website along with jury comments and video links as an added learning opportunity for all participants and the public. Featured articles have appeared in *Metropolis*, *Dwell*, *Print*, *Boston Globe* and the *BSA Newsletter*.

COLLABORATION AND MENTORSHIP

Three AIA Gold Medalists have served as program authors: Peter Bohlin, FAIA; Charles Moore, FAIA; and Samuel Mockbee, FAIA. Charles Renfro, AIA; Michael Rotondi, FAIA; Marlon Blackwell, FAIA; and 23 others have also written program statements concerning the most important aspects of architectural thinking over the past three decades. Competing students have been the beneficiaries of the competition experience with preeminent architects, and are cast across the country.

Schools of architecture have included Boston Architectural College; The Cooper Union; McGill University; Miami University (Ohio); Moscow Institute of Technology; North Carolina State University; Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute; Southern California Institute of Architecture; University of Arkansas; University of Arizona; University of Cincinnati; University of Miami; University of Nebraska, Lincoln; University of Oregon; and Woodbury University. For many schools, participation in the Lyceum provides opportunities that would not otherwise be funded. In 1991, the jury was held at the Moscow Institute of Technology, just as the former USSR was emerging from communist rule and opened the door to travel opportunities for students that had been formerly prohibited.

"The Lyceum provides a very necessary forum of ideas and discussion for schools that do not have an overabundance of those kinds of opportunities."

Daniel Perruzzi, AIA, Juror, 1987

by the fellowship. The Lyceum program is an important addition to my architectural, professional and social education, teaching me how broad architectural thinking can be; the value in mentorship, and the importance of travel.

After working for Symmes, Maini, McKee, my father founded an architecture firm on Cape Cod that designs custom residences. They are beautiful, multi-generational homes that are actively embedded in the New England vernacular, each family's narrative, and the natural environment. In my formative years, I thought architecture was only the homes my father built or skyscrapers in Boston. But the 2005 Lyceum program, written by Venice Beach's Jennifer Siegal, entitled "Smart Materials: Wearable Architecture," revolutionized my notion of what could be considered architecture.

Through her program, I learned that architecture is not static, but can be portable, malleable and modular. Wide-eyed, looking through the entries as a twelve year old, I thought these images were really exotic. They were not gable roofed elevations but showed figures inhabiting a pliable façade like a hammock or wearing a hip belt that turned into an underwater pod. The ideas generated in this program were flexible and adaptable to all architectural thought, but, to me, they showed that the minds that can design homes and libraries could also imagine these far-out ideas seemingly fit only

for extra-terrestrial life. I think that without this wide view of architecture, I may have shied away from architecture school, afraid that I'd be limited to designing monopoly pieces. My mom says, "Architecture is the best liberal arts education you can get!" So, unsure of what I wanted to pursue in college, I decided architecture school would be a good way to start, thinking that, even if I didn't like it, it would exercise my imagination and develop good work habits and presentation skills. Architectural thought, after all, could apply to lots of fields — fashion, engineering, or photography.

After learning all that architecture could include from the Lyceum program itself, I learned from the jurors and board members that architecture is an apprentice profession with a tradition of "paying it forward." Jon McKee took a personal interest in the professional growth of each one of the board members, providing insight and experiences.

The board members all see the value in mentorship, and now want to give students with aptitude equally significant opportunities. Jurors also see the competition as a way to help architects grow. I witnessed program author Peter Bohlin review every student's entry — reading each project statement completely, respecting the ideas and hard work, and looking for gems of genius in the pile of submissions.

Traveling is at the core of the Fellowship's mission, which, until starting my architec-

The competition format has also fostered collegial interchange among faculty members across the United States, Canada and Russia. Schools create Lyceum studios within their curriculum. These classes are in the highest demand and faculty lobby to teach them. Schools celebrate the fact that their students have placed in the competition, contributing to a strident opportunity for each school's recognition, and recruitment efforts. More than 3,000 students have advanced their education by participating in the Lyceum studio offered at their school. More than 350 Lyceum studios have been taught by faculty who have exchanged ideas and critiqued projects, focused on timely issues facing architects each year.

Parallel to the competition is the formative collaboration with award-winning graphic designer Nancy Skolos and photographer Tom Wedell for commissioned announcement posters. The 29 posters to-date, designed to the theme of each program statement, represent the evolution of the graphic design concepts of these two artists over three decades in tandem with the evolving architectural concepts — an added dimension of the Lyceum program through the documentation and communication of timely and relevant design ideas. Skolos-Wedell have lectured globally about their process of design and the posters have been exhibited widely and acquired for permanent museum collections. Skolos-Wedell also created the award-winning Lyceum brand identity and design of its website www.lyceum-fellowship.org.

TRAVEL

The fellowship prizes are generous and meaningful. The grants allow the first place winning student to travel anywhere in the world for four months, second place travels for two months and one month travel is offered for third prize. Students are required to prepare a preliminary itinerary of travel at the time of project submission. Juries consider the travel goals and aspirations of the students as part of project submissions. Often the intent of travel is significant enough to break a tie.

In situ and upon return from their travels, each student submits ongoing and final reports to the Lyceum about lessons learned and inspirations. Student blogs, photography, and journal entries are posted on the Lyceum website. Student sketches depict the immediacy, nuance, and importance of learning about architecture through direct experience, a legacy of the Lyceum that is instrumental to the development and education of young talent and next generation leaders.

"It was an important and formative time for me and something I absolutely could not have done without the Lyceum Fellowship grant."

Murray Legge, FAIA 2013, 1st Place, 1988

Alumni/ae are contributing in a myriad of ways to the architecture profession in firms, institutions and endeavors across the U.S. and

ture schooling, I saw as a "reward" rather than an integral part of an education. I recognized the significant value in the mission when the likes of Tom Kundig, Susan Sznazy and Craig Dykers stepped in and juried, volunteering their time and valuable expertise. I think the goals of the Fellowship strike a chord among prominent architects and provide a mechanism to give back to the profession and future generations.

For me, study abroad provided the most real-life educational experience thus far. This past spring I studied in Berlin, which was a fantastic place to visit because there is a lot of new construction in general, and these new buildings address important issues about sustainability, society, scale, history, and heritage. My teachers were able to send me directly to precedents, and I was able to walk down any street and be inspired. I think all designers — professionals and teachers — see the value in experiencing the built environment first-hand.

I have also learned a lot from the Lyceum entries themselves, impressed by the graphic content, outside the box thinking, and travel goals. I remember one specific entry from 2013 that was all about revitalizing the abandoned stair infrastructure in Cincinnati, Ohio. It was a response to the program writer's "call to action," a challenge for students to identify their own design problem in their community. The student argued it could be a huge recre-

ational circulation system that would reconnect the city's stratified cultural fabric.

The project was well developed and looked beautiful, but the most lasting impression the project had on me was when the student said that, if awarded travel money, he would research different cultures' use of stairs. I love the idea of focusing on one specific problem, in this case, connecting different levels of terrain, and comparing cultures through their solutions. Inspired, I decided to focus on bricks while I was in Berlin — brick patterns, pavers, screens, even the brick proportions themselves. I don't quite know what it all means yet, but I really like looking at a city through a lens and collecting data.

While I've acquired all these different ways of thinking about architecture, I also admire the people involved in the Lyceum Fellowship. Everyone involved is united under the mission to provide really meaningful feedback and opportunity. The program started under Jon, the unassuming patriarch during juries, travels and New Years dinners. Following his example, the Lyceum Fellowship legacy he created brings people together to learn from each other, and sends them out into the world to experience something new.

Harly Hutker is a fourth year architecture student in the co-operative work study program of Northeastern University. In 2013, she studied photography in Havana, Cuba and in 2014, studied architecture in Berlin, Germany. She has contributed to the November/December 2013 issue of Design Intelligence, and continues to grow with the Lyceum.

around the world. The respected architects, writers, and educators that participate as program authors and jury members are part of the Lyceum's extraordinary network of over 150 professionals connected in design dialogue, education, and mentorship.

Winner of the first Lyceum competition, Joseph Krupczynski, is now Associate Professor, Department of Architecture, at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Murray Legge, FAIA, winner in 1988, was just elevated to the AIA College of Fellows. 1991 winner Sergei Sitar from Moscow travelled to the U.S. and stayed with Jon McKee's colleagues across the country. In southern California, through introduction to Michael Rotondi, FAIA, Sergei was offered a full ride single-term scholarship to SCI-Arc. He was able to return to Russia with enough money left over to publish the very first architectural journal in that country. Frank Gartner, the 1988 merit recipient, founded the studio Vertu in Chicago in 1993; Charles Stone, 1990 1st place winner, is an Associate at Herzog & de Meuron in New York; Pietro Ganaiola, 1st place in 1992, is Principal at Lewis & Ganaiola in Swansea, UK; Casey Shenton Hughes, 1st place winner in 2002, is now Principal at Casey Hughes Architects, Los Angeles; and Joel Davenport, 2003 recipient, is now Associate architect in the London firm of Allies & Morrison Architects.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Thirty years from commencement, the Lyceum Fellowship is in positive transition in two major ways. First, an amazing gift from patron founder Jon McKee has endowed the Lyceum into the future. Our goal is to administer the annual competition and award travel grants in perpetuity. Second, in spring of 2013 the Lyceum board conducted a two day strategic planning session inviting 'outside voices' to assist in visioning the next three decades. We are currently deploying the action plan. Major aspects of this plan include:

- Reach out to each past participating school of architecture for their input with faculty and student experience.
- Cultivate the Lyceum into the premier architectural travel grant program in the country.
- Beginning in 2015, open the competition to all schools of architecture in North America and Canada, and actively call for new participation.
- Steward and grow the endowment.
- Develop and deploy an efficient and user-friendly administrative process supporting all Lyceum responsibilities.
- Diversify and grow the board of directors.
- Seek 'partnerships' with strong leaders, schools of architecture, institutions and firms

in the industry that share values of advancing the profession of architecture.

The Lyceum's influence is broad and deep, yet over the years it has been a rather quiet and discrete enterprise. This is mostly attributed to the modesty of the patron founder and the interest on the part of the Fellowship in the artistic, intellectual, and personal development of the individual winners. Marking three decades, the Lyceum is coming to the forefront. Each board member, in different ways, has been deeply touched by our involvement in the Lyceum and we remain deeply committed to its future. With a focused positive transition and dedicated board members, the Lyceum Fellowship continues to influence and mentor next generation talents and further advance the profession. The next 30-year journey is only just beginning.

"Thank you for all you are doing for our future architects and for architecture."

Richard Wesley, Head, Department of Architecture
University of Pennsylvania



Mark A. Hutker, FAIA, is founder of Hutker Architects of Martha's Vinyard and Falmouth, MA; recognized for residential architecture in a new regional vernacular. Dedicated to design education, Mark is a long-standing director and co-founder of the Lyceum Fellowship, which advances the profession of architecture by engaging students in design and travel.