



## President's message: January at the Center for Architecture

January 18, 2008 - Spotlights

In the December issue I wrote about our 2008 theme Architecture: Designs for Living, which is intended to reflect the broad range of building types and urban design that shape our communities and define our city. It is our response to the Mayor's initiatives for PlaNYC.

The theme reflects a remarkable transformation of the AIA mission since the Center for Architecture opened in 2003. With 15,000 s/f of gallery and lecture spaces, it has provided a wonderful public forum for the presentation and discussion of current architecture and urban design issues. Throughout the country, AIA chapters are developing Centers for Architecture and public programs like ours. At the national level, Marshall Purnell, FAIA, from Washington, D.C., is the first African American president of the AIA, and his theme "We the People" reaches out to wider, more diverse audiences. At the international level, the Union of International Architects theme is "Communicating Architecture," and will hold its triennial conference in Turin, Italy, designated as the 2008 "World Design Capital." Architecture in New York City is part of a larger international community, which makes it so exciting.

January represents the start of the 2008 Center for Architecture programs and exhibition openings, which are free and open to the public, and often preceded by catered receptions conducive to the social mix of meeting friends and colleagues - and making new ones.

New Design Directions for Education on Tuesday, January 22, will be the first of 12 monthly public lecture programs to explore design directions that will form the "building blocks" for new growth envisioned by PlaNYC. The program, preceded by a reception, will be moderated by Dr. David Steiner, Dean of the School of Education at Hunter College, and feature presentations and discussions of innovative school designs in New York City, Minneapolis, and Iowa by noted architectural firms, including Steven Holl and Mitchell/Giurgola. The program is sponsored by our Architecture for Education Committee which offers similar seminars and lectures throughout the year.

The first theme exhibition opening will be a Project Showcase: The Bank of America Tower at One Bryant Park on Monday, January 28. A 5 p.m. panel discussion, moderated by Carol Willis, director of the Skyscraper Museum, with the building designer, Rick Cook, AIA, of Cook + Fox Architects and others, will explore the role of collaboration in the design of high performance green features that make this one of New York City's most sustainable new skyscrapers. The panel will be followed by the exhibition opening at 6 p.m.

In addition to theme programs and exhibitions, our committees offer a wide range of innovative public events at the Center for Architecture. On January 7, New Issue for Senior Housing: What do Baby Boomers Want? presented new trends and design directions. I learned that this age group includes 75 million people with substantial economic influence who prefer to retire in urban settings centered on public transit, a positive trend for the revitalization of older cities. On Wednesday,

January 23, in Sustainable Healthcare Architecture, Robin Guenther, FAIA, will discuss her new book, co-authored with Gail Vittori, which features new best practices in healthcare design from around the world. On Thursday, January 24, Green Affordable Housing, a PBS film on the future of sustainable development and global warming narrated by Brad Pitt, will be presented. The screening will be followed by a panel discussion with Jonathan Rose of Jonathan Rose Companies, whose New York City projects are featured in the film.

Last but not least, Berlin-New York Dialogues Film Screenings, the evenings of January 4, 11, 18, and 29, present a cinematic exchange between the two cities that has drawn large, diverse audiences. The series is part of the current Berlin-New York Dialogues exhibition that closes January 26, and re-opens at the German Architecture Center (DAZ) in Berlin on March 6.

Upcoming February theme programs include the second Public Lecture, A New Vision for the Justice System in New York City on February 11, and the exhibition opening for Building China: Five Projects / Five Stories on February 26. We hope to see each of you at the Center for Architecture in coming months. Go to [www.aiany.org/calendar](http://www.aiany.org/calendar) for program descriptions and to RSVP.

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