

2004 AIA Cleveland and IIDA Design Awards



Photos by Al Teuffen Photography

Area architects & interior designers (above, bottom-right) enjoy the festivities at the combined AIA-Cleveland and IIDA Design Awards. Top-right: Professor Jorge Otero-Pailos, chair of the award jury, addresses the crowd.

By Ken Krych

Area chapters of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and International Interior Design Association (IIDA) joined together recently for a combined awards event at HealthSpace Cleveland. Celebrating the first joint awards program for the two organizations, members of AIA-Cleveland and IIDA-Cleveland/Akron gathered for conversation and cocktails before taking part in the evening's awards ceremony.

This year, AIA-Cleveland Co-Chair Rick Ziska spearheaded an effort to bridge what he calls "the proverbial divide between town and gown." He challenged Columbia's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation to weigh in on Cleveland's current architectural practice. The school rose to the occasion with an interdisciplinary jury, chaired by Columbia University Professor of Historic Preservation Jorge Otero-Pailos, which included its best and brightest minds from

design, preservation, urban design, history, theory and criticism. Prizes, presented by Otero-Pailos, were awarded in the categories of commercial, residential, entertainment, cultural, preservation.

Otero-Pailos, an iconoclast architect known for his radical theories on preservation, opened the evening

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with a lecture entitled "The Aesthetics of Incompleteness."

He discussed works by architects such as Rem Koolhaas, Jesus Aparicio and others who exemplify a new architectural fascination with leaving new buildings unfinished, exposing rough concrete floors and displaying drywall unpainted.

Otero-Pailos argued that this is not just an attempt by architects to

involve people in the creation of the work by letting them complete the building by adding their own finishes and decoration. That was an old idea that was important to late modernist masters such as Aldo Van Eyk, and Hertzberger. The point of new buildings is that they are intended to remain incomplete forever. According to Otero-Pailos, "the new generation is more interested in narration than in construction, they leave clues around the building that point to stories beyond the architecture and its immediate site."

One example is the mark reading "Made in Macedonia" left on the steel of Aparicio's new lecture hall in Madrid. The idea is to relate the building to larger realities beyond itself (such as the workings of the global steel industry). This, according to Otero-Pailos, is the key difference between contemporary "unfinished" works and their Modernist predecessors: the new architecture tries to generate narratives that are potentially infinite, whereas late Modernist buildings