

University of Idaho
Department of Landscape Architecture
2009 ASLA Honor and Merit Award Competition
Held Saturday, April 18, 2009

Jury Members:

Jon Breckon

Kent Watson

Mary McGown

Honor Award Winner – Cody Erhart

Cody Erhart is a graduating senior from Idaho Falls, Idaho. He presented three items to the jury; his portfolio, his junior studio project entitled "Paradise Creek Restoration" and his "All You Need Is Architecture" project from the University of Copenhagen where he studied abroad during fall semester of 2008. A continuing theme through all three parts included understanding the design process and its multiple avenues.

Regarding the Paradise Creek project, he discussed how his education in landscape architecture at the University of Idaho takes students through a design process that is very much grounded in scientific understanding and principles. Geology courses, Soils, Biology, Plant Materials, and Ecology all aid in the student's understanding of values of natural systems, and as a result the students inevitably apply this to the design processes when approaching a project. It guides initial programming, site inventory and analysis, and leads to alternative schematics that aim at maximizing these benefits. It is a very logical process and very thorough. Cody related, "I feel the Department of Landscape Architecture at the University of Idaho moves us through it very well."

While in Copenhagen Cody was exposed to a different design process through his workshop entitled "All You Need Is Architecture". Through this conceptual design workshop "we students moved through a design process based on Human Interactions and Human Ecology, Sociology, and Ethnographies. The premise of the project introduced a large project site with problems, and as we worked through various forms of media (posters/slogans, videos, models, diagrams) our design intervention for the project site came about as a result of our individual experiences within the space. This design process allowed us to take a very large site and essentially tame the problem through what we identified as the underlying social issues of the site. A series of these 'taming the problem' benchmarks eventually led me to one area of the site and then to one specific street in which I proposed my final design solution."

Erhart concluded that although different design processes and underlying philosophies vary, they are complimentary. One can be inserted into the other and visa-versa at different stages of the design process. As a graduating landscape architect, "I plan to apply them both to future projects I undertake."

Erhart plans to take a year off before starting graduate school. In the mean time he will look to find work as a landscape architect, designer, urban planner, graphic artist or graphic designer. "I don't plan to allow my formal degree to limit what I actually do for a career. If anything it should be a qualification for a plethora of different jobs ranging from art to engineering. I don't know where I'll be or what I'll be doing but for sure I will be enjoying my time!"

Merit Award Winner – Karla Benjamin

Karla Benjamin is a graduating senior from Great Falls, Montana. She presented four projects to the jury. Her first was a metaphor project, integrating a concept into design. The second was an Urban Park that would integrate a dense, mixed use development into the fabric of Moscow, Idaho. The third project was a riverfront park plan for Cascade, Idaho. Lastly, she presented her case study and thesis on strip developments and their role in the future. All of the projects included communities with populations of 4,000 to 24,000 and shared the unifying theme of creating community using unique local or regional inspiration. The projects “seek to find what makes a project, location, community, or landscape unique and then sharing that to add to the identity, connectedness, and sacred places of the community”, said Ms. Benjamin.

This summer Karla will be working for Hill Rental Properties, LLC in Moscow, Idaho doing design/build projects and looking for a job with a planning/community design firm.

Merit Award Winner – Dorienna Hassett

Dorienna Hassett is a graduating senior from Radium Hot Springs, British Columbia, Canada. She presented to the jury a brief summary of her work from the two-year Landscape Architectural Technology program at NAIT - The Northern Alberta Institute of Technology. After she completed the program at NAIT, she transferred to the University of Idaho, receiving junior-level status. She presented to the jury one project completed during her junior year entitled “Design for Riparian Zones - Restoring Urban Creek” from the Paradise Creek Restoration Project. A second project from senior studio was presented entitled “Cascade, ID - Riverside Park Project” and included the design development package to construction document package.

After graduation Ms. Hassett plans to work for the summer at IBI/Landplan in Calgary, Alberta. In September she hopes to go on a trip to Europe for one or two months.

