

THE BERKELEY PRIZE

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Abstract

It is clear that healthful architecture starts with a deep and empathetic understanding of the people who will use a building or place. The goal of such an understanding is rarely part of contemporary architectural school curricula. For 17 years, an online competition, the international Berkeley Undergraduate Prize for Architectural Design Excellence, has worked to change this deficiency by directly challenging architecture students to go into their local communities for the purposes of thinking and writing about the meaning of an architecture that originates from this broader perspective. Nearly 1900 students from 62 countries have participated in the PRIZE's Essay and Travel Fellowship competitions.

In 2014, the PRIZE topic was, "The Architect and the Healthful Environment." There were four student Essay winners responding to the competition question: How do you Design a Healthful Environment?

Tazrin Islam, Bangladesh University of Engineering and Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh: "Livability vs. Lovability";

Nipun Prabakar and Sukruti Gupta, School of Planning and Architecture, Bhopal, India: "Spaces to Grow: A Comparative Study of Two Orphanages";

Michael Philpott, Dalhousie University, Halifax, Canada: "Healthful Halifax: Designing Healthful Spaces, Learning by Example"; and

Aparna Ramesh, Visvesvaraya National Institute of Technology, Nagpur, India: "The Architecture of a Healthful Learning Environment".

Simultaneously, the PRIZE launched its second Teaching Fellowship in the Social Art of Architecture, reflecting the year's competition topic. Three undergraduate studio faculty from around the world were selected to integrate the ideals of human-centered ideals and values into their current course syllabi with a focus on healthful architecture. Their work is on-going.

Gauri Bharat is an Assistant Professor of architecture at CEPT University in Ahmedabad, India. She has led her 2nd and 3rd year students in the design of a public library with a strong emphasis on different user groups. Her 2nd semester students will collate an "alternative architectural history of roadside shrines" that have deep local meaning.

Ruzica Bozovic Stamenovic, Ph.D, is concurrently teaching at both the University of Belgrade (first semester) where she is an Associate Professor, and the National University of Singapore (second semester). She leads similar design studios on social housing and an elective research course in each university, investigating how the same themes are understood in the different contexts. She is also a Faculty Fellow at the Center for Health Systems and Design, Texas A&M University.

Joseph Francis Wong, Ph.D, is an Assistant Professor of architecture at the City University of Hong Kong. Using his local context of ultra-high density residential skyscrapers, he has led his 4th year design studio in the creation of healthy vertical environments. He will analyze the results through his second semester spatial analysis class.

Based on the history of the PRIZE; the results of 2014 Essay competition; and the collective analysis of the results of all of the Teaching Fellowships, the author investigates the problems and potentials of shifting the focus of architectural education to people-driven design. In doing so, the idea that

new approaches need to be adopted in order to teach and design healthful architecture is examined. An outline for the adoption of these approaches is proposed.