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ANNUAL DESIGN REVIEW

ART BY PABLO ALFIERI

ASK ANY FIVE people to identify the best building design of the year, and you will be presented with five very different opinions. Ask any five architects, and those opinions will be both informed and impassioned. So when we selected a jury for our second Annual Design Review, we cultivated a group with a broad spectrum of specialties—ranging from urban design to office towers, infill to education to art installations—that would analyze entries through different critical lenses.

Jurors John Cary, Yolande Daniels, Scott Kilbourn, Donna Robertson, and Bill Valentine (see page 100) were tasked with evaluating nearly 300 entries. The 24 projects selected across six categories range from a parking structure at the Philadelphia Museum of Art to the transformation of an auto body shop into an architect's office; from an amorphous hotel and race track in Abu Dhabi, United Arab Emirates, to a candy-colored affordable housing complex in Houston; from a convention center in Vancouver to a 1,995-square-foot outdoor classroom in Minnesota.

Some jurors were looking for sustainability, and others for restraint. Still others were seeking that ineffable "it" factor that makes for good design. Juror Bill Valentine focused on projects with a social and environmental conscience. "The whole idea of awarding excess strikes a bad chord with me," he said. And while green design and adaptive reuse were valued by all, Donna Robertson took a special interest in form, especially in the "Play" category. "I would like us to be able to choose some of these glitzy, goofy buildings," she said. This diversity of viewpoints produced the mix of projects in the following pages—some humble, some effusive. But the highest praise may not be the award itself: Each juror found projects that she or he wanted to visit in person. That in itself is a victory. **KATIE GERFEN**

WORK





AWARD

990 TUCSON, ARIZ.

ROB PAULUS ARCHITECTS • There's something inherently satisfying in a good makeover—the diamond in the rough, buffed and shined. If Eliza Doolittle had her Henry Higgins, then the disused auto repair shop on a dusty Tucson, Ariz., street had Rob Paulus. His design team adapted what was on site, transforming the utilitarian building surrounded by gravelly asphalt into a 4,300-square-foot design office with a landscaped courtyard for the firm.

Constructed in 1978, the existing metal panel building was never a beauty, but it did have an efficient steel structural system. Paulus kept the steel frame, added a new aluminum skin, and heavily insulated the walls against the brutal Arizona sun. There's also a new energy-efficient roof and shaded skylights. Along the north façade, large glass windows take the place of the roll-up doors that used to lead into what was the repair shop; CAD monkeys have replaced grease monkeys inside the modern, open office. An undulating wood-slat ceiling hovers over the workstations, mitigating sound and

taking the edge off of the angular steel structure that denotes the building's industrial past.

Calling the project “very intelligent,” the jury was struck by how much of the original structure was repurposed and up-cycled. “I thought they took sustainability really seriously on multiple levels, from adaptive reuse to the systems to the landscaping,” Yolande Daniels said. The roll-up doors and leftover structure became a fence on the property, and a demolished CMU wall and steel from an old overhang were transformed into organic garden beds planted with native species (and watered by an onsite water collection system). On-grade parking remained in place, while an old concrete apron was busted up and the pieces used as a mosaic sidewalk. Even the outdoor sculpture was reclaimed: A dramatic cylinder in the garden is actually an old jet cowling. “The thing that appeals to me so much about adaptive reuse is that it's a timely subject,” Bill Valentine said. “Frankly, it's a part of a cultural change toward not wasting.” **MIMI ZEIGER**