The Art Institute of Chicago’s Architecture and Design Department has announced the winners of the 24th annual Schiff Foundation Fellowships. Evgeniya Plotnikova, a 2013 graduate of the Master of Architecture program at the University of Illinois at Chicago (UIC), has been named the recipient of the $15,000 Schiff Foundation Fellowship for Architecture. Kathryn Loeb, a dual-degree graduate student in the departments of Art History, Theory, and Criticism and Arts Administration at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago (SAIC), was chosen as the recipient of the $5,000 Schiff Foundation Fellowship for Critical Architectural Writing. In addition, Penelope Phylactopoulos (B.Arch. 2013, Illinois Institute of Technology) was awarded a Special Mention, a non-monetary award category begun in 2012, for her architecture project Silence Retreat.

Evgeniya Plotnikova’s winning project, Water Pulse was produced in a studio course investigating material energies in architecture taught by UIC Assistant Professor Sean Lally. In this project, Plotnikova explores alternative ways of organizing and activating space in a futuristic spa and hotel. Instead of distinct areas dedicated to hotel rooms, lobby, and spa, this watery environment allows for
a wide spectrum of public and private zones structured through thermal flows, steam, and individual and group ‘pods.’ Although experimental in nature, Water Pulse responds to concrete observations about the need for hotels to provide space for an increasing number of overlapping functions including dining, clubbing, quiet relaxation, work space for freelancers on laptops, and an ever expanding number of leisure pursuits from spas to family entertainment. Plotnikova’s graphic presentation blends elements of sci-fi fantasy with rigorous investigation: graphs and charts are nested within a digitally rendered environment where hotel guests enjoy a high-tech grotto of floating pods, Technicolor pools, and fields of steam.

Plotnikova holds a Bachelor of Architecture degree from Novosibirsk State Academy of Architecture and Fine Arts in Russia, and received her Master of Architecture from UIC in May 2013. During her studies, Plotnikova worked for a number of architects including Chicago offices Weathers/Sean Lally and UrbanLab, Studio9one2 in Los Angeles, and Russian firm AK architecture + design. During her time with UrbanLab she worked on two projects that were chosen as finalists in major international competitions including Great Pier, a redesign of Chicago’s Navy Pier created in association with architecture firms !melk and HOK, and the 2012 MoMA/PS1’s Young Architects Program in New York. Plotnikova’s work has been recognized with the Frank Szilvasy Best in Show Award from UIC in 2013 and an honorable mention in the 2012 Zagreb Society of Architects ThinkSpace competition that was subsequently exhibited at the Storefront for Art and Architecture in New York. The Schiff award will support Plotnikova’s position and research at WORKac, the New York architecture office where she began work in June 2013.

Kathryn Loeb was awarded the 2012 Schiff Foundation Fellowship for Critical Architectural Writing for her essay titled “Test Site Frontiers & Simparch’s Clean Livin’,” written in a graduate seminar on design and the body taught by SAIC art history professor Bess Williamson. Her paper examines the many myths and histories of Clean Livin’, an experimental artist colony housed in a remote former military base in Utah which was designed/repurposed by the architects Matthew Lynch and Steven Badgett of Simparch in 2003. Loeb analyzes Simparch’s interest in sustainability, survivalism, and myths of the American frontier through the lens of the experiments of the Cold War era. Here Loeb examines and challenges Simparch’s references to the demountable structures of WWII, high-tech experiments of Buckminster Fuller, against the backdrop of the promises and failures of 1960s countercultural communities of the American west, such as Drop City, Colorado.

Loeb is a student in the dual-degree M.A. program in Art History, Theory, and Criticism and Arts
Administration at the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, specializing in the history of American landscapes and representations of indigenous cultures in contemporary art and media. She holds a Bachelor of Arts degree in American Studies from Pomona College and she has completed several internships at major art institutions including the Smithsonian in Washington D.C. and the Museum of Contemporary Art in Chicago. She has worked as a graduate curatorial assistant at the SAIC Sullivan Galleries, and helped organize two exhibitions in 2012 including the SAIC Post-Baccalaureate show and the themed exhibition *Queering Spaces*. Loeb plans to use this award to fund her travel and research in the United States and Israel related to her thesis project on indigenous fiber artist Marie Watt.

The distinguished members of the 2013 Jury included Sara Beardsley, senior architect, Adrian Smith + Gordon Gill Architecture; Chris Bentley, Midwest editor, *The Architect's Newspaper*; and Weston Walker, architect, Studio Gang.

**About the Schiff Foundation Fellowship**

The Schiff Foundation Fellowships were founded in 1988 and rank among the most significant fellowships of their kind in the United States. Created by Harold Schiff to support the professional development of young architects, the fellowships are administered annually by the Department of Architecture and Design at the Art Institute of Chicago. Each year, projects created by an elite group of upper-level undergraduate and graduate students from architecture schools at the University of Illinois at Chicago, the School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the Illinois Institute of Technology are selected by their faculty members to participate in the Schiff Foundation Fellowship for Architecture.

The Schiff Foundation Fellowship for Critical Architectural Writing was established in 2005 to promote critical writing about architecture and the urban environment and to encourage interdisciplinary graduate courses at Chicago-area universities. Each year an independent jury of distinguished local and national architects and critics assesses the competition entries, and the winning Architecture portfolio becomes part of the permanent collection of the Art Institute. Students have used fellowship funds to complete internships at architectural firms around the world, travel, prepare for state licensing exams, and purchase equipment to set up their own firms.

Harold Schiff was a founding partner of Schal Associates, a pioneering firm in the field of construction
management that was responsible for building many iconic skyscrapers in Chicago including the Chicago Board of Options Exchange by Skidmore, Owings & Merrill (1981) and 200 South Wacker Drive by Harry Weese and Associates (1981). Mr. Schiff was born and raised in New York City, where he earned a civil engineering degree from Columbia University and worked for the construction firm Morse Diesel, where he rose to the rank of chief executive. Projects with this firm led him to Chicago, where he founded Schal Associates with Richard Halpern in 1976. Mr. Schiff was a generous benefactor and a life trustee of the Art Institute of Chicago and was one of the founding board members of the Department of Architecture and Design. Mr. Schiff passed away in 2012 and the Schiff Awards are an enduring testament to his support of architecture in Chicago and many future generations of young architects.


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