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DESIGN

Architecture awards honor the realized and imagined

Homes, public buildings and an installation with plastic bubbles are among the 53 winners.

By Bettijane Levine
Times Staff Writer

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FROM interactive bubbles to a postmodern bungalow, multiple marvels of fine architecture will be on exhibit, highlighting the creativity that is the hallmark of the prestigious annual competition sponsored by the Los Angeles branch of the American Institute of Architects.

All 382 entries in this year's architecture competition will be featured at the exhibition, which opens this evening at the Eli and Edythe Broad Art Center on UCLA's campus. The 53 winners of the 2007 AIA/LA Design awards were announced at a gala dinner last Thursday.

The awards and the exhibit are divided into two categories: work built by L.A. architects, and work as yet unbuilt. The design jury for built work included Hitoshi Abe of UCLA's department of architecture and urban design; architect Peter Pran, of the Seattle firm NBBJ; and San Diego architect Jonathan Segal. Their award selections included a wide range of residences, public buildings and an installation composed of milky-white plastic bubbles.

An honor award — the highest award level — went to a West Los Angeles residence designed by Barton Myers Associates Inc. Judges called it "the most promising concept in residential" and described Myers' work as "incredibly fresh."

Carlo Caccavale, associate director of AIA/LA, described the house as "very modern and U-shaped, with a central courtyard, cement floor and a roof that sits on metal pillars. The side walls of the house are basically garage doors that roll up, leaving the house completely open. It's a total marriage of indoors and outdoors."

An honor award also went to the design firms of Fox Lin Inc., NONdesigns and Brand Name Label for an installation called "Bubbles Los Angeles." The judges called it intriguing — "an interactive architectural expression that corresponds with the visitor."

Caccavale said that the architects installed a series of gas-inflated bubbles in an open space between two apartment buildings in Los Feliz. "When the bubbles are touched, they deflate, letting people into the interior of the bubble space," he said. "As they enter, the bubbles automatically inflate again, pushing them further inside. It's a complete interaction between the space and the person. Once you're inside, you're completely surrounded by bubbles."

Merit awards went to Frederick Fisher & Partners Architects for a Santa Ynez residence, just north of Santa Barbara, and to Steven Ehrlich Architects for a Venice residence commonly known as 700 Palms.

"It's a very beautiful, very modern and very sustainable house that tries to respect the bungalow tradition," Caccavale said of 700 Palms.

In giving a merit award to Studio Pali Fekete Architects for the Beuth residence in Los Angeles, the judges praised the home's purity of space.

And of XTEN Architecture Inc.'s minimalist concrete-and-glass residence called Open House in L.A., the judges said: "It's pretty cool. We all want to live there."

Among the 12 citations awarded for built work were the Glencoe residence in Venice by Marmol Radziner & Associates; the Redelco residence in Los Angeles and the Orange Grove Lofts in West Hollywood, both by Pugh + Scarpa Architects; and the One Window House in Venice by Touraine Richmond Architects.

Entries for the Next LA awards, which acknowledge work by L.A. architects that is not yet built, will also be exhibited at the show.

Honor awards in this category recognized Sky Line Residence in Los Angeles, by Belzberg Architects; Target Tower in Colorado, by Belzberg Architects; Cal State Northridge science building, by Cannon Design; Hunin Urban Development in Seoul, by Nadel Architects. Among 15 merit award winners in this "unbuilt" category are the Palomar Medical Center West in Escondido, by CO Architects; residence on Terrybrea Terrace, Tarzana, by architect Edmund M. Einy; Bluff Bodies in Pasadena, by John Freidman Alice Kimm Architects; and Club Nokia @ L.A. Live in L.A. by Gensler; the Pittman Dowel residence in La Crescenta by Michael Maltzan Architecture Inc.; 333 Venice Way, by Narduli Studio. Citations for excellence went to local architects for projects outside the United States. The firm Eric Owen Moss Architects won for the design of Republic Square, a public square in Kazakhstan. Struere won for the Praha-Prague Library in Prague.

Studio Pali Fekete architects won a citation for the Wallis Annenberg Center for the Performing Arts in Beverly Hills, and RTKL Associates Inc. for the Moscow Sports & Entertainment Complex in Moscow.

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Design show

The exhibit of the 2007 American Institute of Architects Los Angeles chapter Design Awards opens this evening with a free event and a live DJ from 6 to 9 p.m.

When: Today through July 15

Where: Eli and Edythe Broad Art Center, UCLA

Admission: Free. Parking, \$8.

Hours: 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., Monday to Friday

For information: AIA/LA. chapter (213) 639-0777; www.aialosangeles.org

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