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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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**VAN ALEN INSTITUTE AND CITY PARKS ASSOCIATION OF PHILADELPHIA ANNOUNCE FIVE FINALISTS AND FIVE HONORABLE MENTION AWARDS FOR URBAN VOIDS: GROUNDS FOR CHANGE, AN INTERNATIONAL DESIGN IDEAS COMPETITION FOR PHILADELPHIA'S VACANT LAND.**

*INTERNATIONAL COMPETITION ATTRACTED 220 ENTRIES FROM 25 COUNTRIES*

The Executive Director of the City Parks Association, Deenah Loeb, and Van Alen Institute Chair Sherida E. Paulsen today announced the five finalists and five honorable mentions selected in the first round of Urban Voids, an international design ideas competition sponsored by the City Parks Association of Philadelphia.

**FINALISTS**

**Ecosistema Urbano Architects Ltd**

Belinda Tato, Jose Luis Vallejo,  
Constantino Hurtado, Elena Prieto  
Madrid, Spain

**Jill Desimini and Danilo Martic**

Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**Front Studio**

Yen Ha, Ostap Rudakevych,  
Michi Yanagishita  
New York, New York

**Matthew Langan**

Advisor Gale Fulton  
University Park, Pennsylvania

**Charles Loomis Chariss McAfee Architects**

Juliet Geldi, Chariss McAfee, Charles Loomis,  
Gavin Riggall (KieranTimberlake Associates)  
Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

**HONORABLE MENTION**

**Felipe Ariza and Ana Maria Alvarez**

Barcelona, Spain

**Elizade/Gomensoro Architects**

Leonardo Elizade, Nguyen Gomensoro, Ximena  
Silveira, Francisco Nader, Ignacio Percovich  
Montevideo, Uruguay

**Andries Geerse Stedenbouwkundige**

Andries Geerse, Johan De Wachter,  
Mathias Madaus, Job Lee, Laura Gracia,  
Alexandra Waluda, Ludvig Netre  
Rotterdam, the Netherlands

**Interboro**

Georgeen Theodore, Tobis Armhost, Daniel D'Oca  
Brooklyn, New York

**Loop | 8**

Christopher Marcinkoski, Andrew Moddrell,  
Dartagnan Brown  
Larchmont, New York

"It is clearly evident from the impressive range, both geographically and professionally, of the 220 entrants that the issue of urban vacancy is fertile ground," said Deenah Loeb, the Executive Director of the City Parks Association of Philadelphia and a judge. "We are very excited that the five finalists articulated five very specific, and extraordinarily different strategies which offer Philadelphia opportunities for both the short term and the long term."

"The process has been quite extraordinary," said Eva Gladstein, Director of Philadelphia's Neighborhood Transformation Initiative (NTI) and a judge in the competition. "It began with an innovative community input process, and then top designers from around the world focused on Philadelphia, on turning this city's



liabilities into assets, on changing our vast acres of vacant land into miles of beautiful, inviting open space. Since it began, NTI has sought to transform the vacant land in our neighborhoods into opportunities; this competition has brought that effort to a new level. I can't wait to see the ideas the finalists bring to us and for the winner to be chosen."

The competition is the second phase of a three-part program. Launched in the spring of 2005 a series of community education and 'visioning' sessions were held that looked at natural land and water resources at the regional scale as well as neighborhood structure at a local scale. At that time community participants learned from experts about the city's ecological foundation-it's hydrology and geology, and studied maps of Philadelphia's extensive vacant lands, natural resources, and built environment. Out of these sessions grew the brief for Urban Voids which asked the question, "How can a city respond to the crisis of vacancy?" The competition challenged registrants to present compelling ideas that would address vacancy as an opportunity, creating long-term solutions for the 40,000 vacant properties in Philadelphia. The competition was launched in September 2005 and attracted over 220 entries from 25 countries including Canada, Chile, Finland, Japan, Korea, New Zealand, Poland, Romania, United Kingdom, and Uruguay.

A distinguished panel of 13 jurors from across the United States, representing a diverse cross section of disciplines and interests served as judges for the competition. These jurors chose the five finalists who will receive \$5,000.00 each to continue working on their ideas in the next phase of the competition where they will develop strategies for implementing their ideas and will prepare site-specific design proposals. In May 2006, a second jury will be held in Philadelphia, to select one winner.

#### JUDGES FOR URBAN VOID DESIGN COMPETITION

**Diana Balmori**

Landscape architect  
Principal, Balmori Associates

**Ramon Cruz**

Policy Analyst, Living Cities Program  
Environmental Defense

**James Corner**

Founder and Director, Field Operations  
Chair and Professor, Department of Landscape  
Architecture and Regional Planning  
University of Pennsylvania Graduate School of  
Design

**Milton S. F. Curry**

Principal, OrbitMCA Design Studio  
Associate Professor of Architecture, Cornell  
University

**Graham Finney**

President, 21st Century League

**Eva Gladstein**

Director, Neighborhood Transformation Initiative  
City of Philadelphia

**Jerold Kayden**

Professor, Co-Chair, and Program Director,  
Harvard Design School  
Department of Urban Planning and Design

**Deenah Loeb**

Executive Director, City Parks Association

**Jody Pinto**

Environmental Artist

**Shawn Rickenbacker**

Founding Partner, Creative Front Architecture

**Anne Whiston Spirn**

Professor of Landscape Architecture  
MIT Department of Urban Studies & Planning

**J. Phillip Thompson**

Associate Professor of Urban Politics  
MIT Department of Urban Studies & Planning

**Cathy M. Weiss**

Executive Director, Claneil Foundation

# urbanvoids

GROUNDS FOR CHANGE  
AN INTERNATIONAL DESIGN IDEAS COMPETITION

To view finalists, honorable mentions and all other entrants to this competition please visit [www.vanalen.org](http://www.vanalen.org)



Jurors James Corner, Milton S. F. Curry and Eva Gladstein

Jury Discussion of Finalists

## About City Parks Association

City Parks Association stimulates visionary thinking about natural resources and open space in the urban community. Founded in 1888, City Parks' programs foster ongoing dialogue and collaborative action among people committed to the stewardship of our city's natural resources. For more information please visit [www.cityparksphila.org](http://www.cityparksphila.org)

## About Van Alen Institute: Projects in Public Architecture

Van Alen Institute is a non-profit organization dedicated to improving design in the public realm through a program of exhibitions, competitions, publications, lectures and forums. The Institute is located at 30 W 22 St, NY, NY 10010. For information about contributions and supporting Institute programs please visit [www.vanalen.org](http://www.vanalen.org) or contact 212 924 7000 x 10.

Van Alen Institute and City Parks Association's project partners include the Pennsylvania Horticultural Society, the Pennsylvania Environmental Council, and The Reinvestment Fund.

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