UNIVERSITY OF IOWA’S HANCHER AUDITORIUM WINS IALD AWARD OF EXCELLENCE
LIGHTING DESIGN BY CLINE BETTRIDGE BERNSTEIN

PHILADELPHIA, PA USA, 10 MAY | Luminaries of the lighting profession gathered at the Crystal Tea Room on 10 May to honor the winners of the 34th Annual International Association of Lighting Designers (IALD) International Lighting Design Awards. Twenty-two projects from eight countries were on display – including interiors, monuments, façades, museums, and a residence. This year’s winners represent some of the most innovative and inspiring work found anywhere in the world of architectural lighting design.

The new Hancher Auditorium at the University of Iowa in Iowa City, IA USA, with lighting design by Cline Bettridge Bernstein Lighting Design, took home an Award of Excellence, accepted in person by Francesca Bettridge, IALD, Michael Hennes, and Nira Wattanachote.

The owner of the Hancher Auditorium included a challenge in their brief to replace a beloved institution destroyed by flooding: “Give us something we’ve never seen before.” Cline Bettridge Bernstein’s design highlights the pastoral setting reflected in the architecture while creating a breathtaking experience for patrons.

A custom light fixture with a dropped lens lights the wood ceiling and describes the form of the building inside and out, dissolving barriers between interior and exterior. It achieves three purposes: its form and layout recalls a modern marquee, announcing the building’s purpose as a theater; it creates rivulets of light relating to the river below; and it gives the building presence by allowing it to glow from within, circumventing ordinances prohibiting façade lighting. The apparent ease of the downlight pattern in the wood ceiling belies the considerable challenge of making the geometries work from every angle.

The lighting in the soaring atrium accentuates the space’s height and gives it scale. The core wall is outlined with grazers in shielded, solite-lensed slots. This detail, repeated twice more, breaks up the massive surface. The elevator core is lit top-to-bottom with the same detail. The glowing design of the coatcheck and concession desks also masks considerable detailing. Each is evenly illuminated by one high-output linear fixture, easily accessible through the toekick. At the atrium ceiling, cove lighting and custom bracket-mounted fixtures illuminate curving skylights, preserving them as sources of light at night.

Within the theater itself, monumental custom fixtures create an awe-inspiring ceiling, while ingenious front-of-balcony lights make the house sparkle and glow. Giant custom rings of light, varying from 8’ to 55’ in diameter, create the ceiling plane against a dark blue painted slab. Partial arcs of these fixtures adjacent to the perimeter walls create the illusion that the lighting extends beyond the theater — again, dissolving boundaries and barriers between spaces and creating a dynamic, engaging experience. The rings feature glowing lenses and decorative illuminated points that can be programmed to sparkle and chase.

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One judge called it “A beautiful, elegant solution for a theater design, seamlessly blending with the architecture.”

At balcony fronts, grids of LEDs arrayed along vertical surfaces are programmed to sparkle behind perforated metal screens. These, in turn, are frontlit by custom curving LED rails. This combination of lighting effects gives the balcony fronts depth and movement.

“Wonderful compositions, layers of light, commitment to concept, and energy savings,” one judge wrote. “This is a space that celebrates anticipation. Nice twist on an old recessed downlight idea.”

The lighting celebrates the rebirth of this cultural hub, and indeed creates a facility unlike any the community has ever experienced.

The IALD Lighting Design Awards program, established in 1983, honors lighting projects that display high aesthetic achievement backed by technical expertise. A panel of award-winning lighting designers, architects and interior designers review the projects in a three-day, anonymous review process. Full information about the judging process can be found in the 34th Annual IALD Awards Call for Entries.

For complete details and high resolution photos of this year’s award-winning projects, visit iald.org/awards.

The International Association of Lighting Designers (IALD), established in 1969, is an international organization supporting a network of more than 1,300 lighting design professionals who satisfy its rigorous qualification process. Its members are distinguished by a unique blend of aesthetic and technical expertise, and operate at the highest level of integrity to create a better world through leadership and excellence in lighting design; to cultivate the universal acknowledgement and appreciation of the Power of Light in human life.

END OF ITEM

34TH ANNUAL INTERNATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF LIGHTING DESIGNERS AWARDS PROJECT CREDITS

HANCHER AUDITORIUM, UNIVERSITY OF IOWA
IOWA CITY, IA USA

LIGHTING DESIGN
Francesca Bettridge, IALD
Michael Hennes
Nira Wattanachote
Glenn Fujimura
Cline Bettridge Bernstein Lighting Design

ADDITIONAL CREDITS
DESIGN ARCHITECT
Pelli Clarke Pelli Architects

ARCHITECT OF RECORD
OPN Architects

THEATER CONSULTANT
Theater Projects Consultants

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