IALD AWARD OF MERIT TO SMITHSONIAN MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE – FAÇADE
LIGHTING DESIGN BY FISHER MARANTZ STONE

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 façade of the Smithsonian Institution National Museum of African American History and Culture, in Washington, DC USA, with lighting design by Fisher Marantz Stone, took home an Award of Merit, accepted in person by Charles Stone, FIALD.

The National Museum of African American History and Culture is the newest Smithsonian museum, occupying the last building site on the National Mall in Washington, DC. The building is wrapped in 3,600 bronze-finish decorative panels that form a corona, inspired by the three-tiered crowns used in Yoruban art. As the only non-white building on the Mall, it was decided early on that the building needed to be lit for a suitable nighttime presence. The challenge was to develop a design that captured the dignity of the building and its prominent location – while being responsible to the budget and environment.

The ground floor of the museum has a continuous glass curtainwall, but the vast majority of the building is completely covered in dark metallic panels. This continuous array of panels meant any scheme needed to cover nearly an acre of area. Initial designs relied on light that would “leak” from the overlaps in the corona tiers, so the lighting design team’s job became one of intervention, allowing the building mass to appear more lively, transparent and less tomblike.

The building skin consists of a sandwich, with glass panels forming the outer envelope of the building. Designers wanted to illuminate the glass to silhouette the patterned metal. Adding a minimal frit of small dark dots to the glass curtainwall have a negligible effect on views looking out from the building, and provide a sufficiently lightable surface to reveal the basketweave nature of the metal panels.

At the top of each tier, designers identified a common location to place fixtures, allowing a consistent downward aiming angle and eliminating light pollution. At the time of specification, LED had not yet evolved to drop in price, dictating T5 fluorescent fixtures.

To satisfy various conservation and historical requirements for Washington’s Monumental Core District, the fully lighted building needed to blend with other buildings on the Mall and not compete with the Washington Monument. Designers tuned the brightness accordingly throughout a series of mockups and surveys. The final lighted result renders the building façade as a porous screen, allowing one to appreciate the life and activity within.
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

SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE – FAÇADE
WASHINGTON, DC USA

LIGHTING DESIGN
Hank Forrest, IALD
Carla Ross Allen
Charles G. Stone II, FIALD
Fisher Marantz Stone

ADDITIONAL CREDITS
ARCHITECTURE
Freelon Adjaye Bond/SmithGroup

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