

Mississippi Celebrates Architecture

Contributed by AIA Mississippi

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SUMMARY

Mississippi Celebrates Architecture (MCA) was a five-week exhibition and lecture series produced by AIA Mississippi (AIAMS). The program was fully financed through donations of more than \$20,000. The program proved successful attracting over 3,000 attendees to the art exhibition, lectures, or black tie dinner.

SO MUCH TO CELEBRATE

AIA Mississippi reached out to the local community to celebrate art and architecture through a series of events. The program titled, Mississippi Celebrates Architecture, included a collaborative exhibition held at the Mississippi Museum of Art Gallery, now called the Jackson Arts Center, that included photography, artwork, and architectural sketches. The following art was represented at the gallery showing.

- America's Favorite Architecture, the traveling AIA 150 exhibition
- Mississippi's Favorite Architecture, an exhibit displaying 12 of the state's favorite buildings
- Art by Architects, art work by AIAMS members
- A Sense of Place, a juried architectural photography exhibit
- AIAMS design awards
- An exhibit of the history of AIAMS

Mississippi Celebrates Architecture also offered a lecture series and weekly guided architectural walking tours of downtown Jackson.

PUTTING IT TOGETHER

The organization and planning for this event took well over a year. For marketing and public relations as well as printing, copying, and advertisements the budget estimate was \$20,000.

To kick off the planning, the first step was to book the exhibition space. The Mississippi Museum of Art donated the 15,000 sf exhibition space for the five-week program and opening night gala. The five public lectures were held at either the Mississippi War Memorial or the Planetarium, also donated space.

Advertising the event was critical to its success, to inform the local community multiple communication channels were used. An interview and discussion about the event was aired on Mississippi Arts Commission radio, an email marketing and direct mail campaign was targeted to local schools and residents. Additionally the design, production, and hanging of two large advertising banners at the airport and off the highway were produced at no cost to AIAMS.

Advertisement space was purchased in Jackson Portico magazine, Mississippi Business Journal and on Mississippi Public Radio. McGraw-Hill donated advertisement space in the South Central Construction magazine.

Michael Jones, president of AIAMS, wrote a letter to members to support the event either through cash donations, volunteering, or submitting art for the exhibition. Over 1,000 invitations to the black tie event were mailed to the design and construction industry, local media, and municipal officials. Sending the invitations was also a way to introduce community members to the event even if they could not attend the opening night festivities.

A SUCCESSFUL CELEBRATION

The opening night black tie gala drew 300 attendees; including members of the press; state, county and municipal elected officials, architecture students, AIAMS members and the general public.

Close to 600 people attended the lecture series, the Arts Center estimates 3,000 people visited the exhibition, including 1,000 school children from across the state.

After Mississippi Celebrates Architecture closed its doors, the artwork was broken down and AIAMS

was able to evaluate the event's success. MCA was featured in articles in two local papers, the Mississippi Business Journal and the Clarion Ledger. The Art by Architects exhibit produced over 200 items and A Sense of Place architectural photography contest yielded over 100 photography entries. A debut award was given, the AIAMS Lifetime Achievement Award, and publicly presented to Bob Canizaro, FAIA at the final lecture. Overall, the event was a huge success.

RESOURCES

More Best Practices

The following AIA Best Practices provide additional information related to this topic:

- 21.05.01 Meeting Architects' Needs
- 21.06.04 AIA Iowa Celebrates 100 Years, Increases Architecture Awareness
- 21.06.02 The Art of Practice: A Gallery Show of Process and Design

Feedback

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Key Terms

- Leadership
- Associations
- Design associations
- Architectural associations
- The American Institute of Architects
- AIA components
- Arts exhibit
- Public art