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Frank Harmon Presents Project, Opening Lecture at “Southern Exposure: Contemporary Regional Architecture”

February 8, 2008 (RICHMOND, VA) -- When Modern architecture embraces the particulars of a place – the culture, climate, materials and landscape of the region in which it is built – it is no longer “stark” or “cold,” as detractors would suggest, but warm, charming and often quite “green.”

This is the message the Virginia Society of the American Institute of Architects AIA/VA conveys in a new exhibit entitled “Southern Exposure: Contemporary Regional Architecture,” which opened in the Virginia Center for Architecture in Richmond on February 7 and will run through June 8, 2008.

Southern Exposure is “a pictorial tour of some of the Sun Belt’s most respected Modern architecture,” according to Rhea George of AIA/VA. The projects included demonstrate that, in the right hands, Modern design can be as “warm and imaginative as buildings from any period in history,” she said, as they “balance beauty with sustainability.”

Award-winning Raleigh, NC-based architect Frank Harmon, FAIA, who has conducted seminars on “America’s New Regionalism” during the last three National AIA conventions, presented a lecture on his regional approach to design at the exhibition’s public opening event Thursday night.

Harmon’s contribution to the exhibit is a Low-Country residence in Mt. Pleasant, SC, that was designed to tread lightly on its tidal-marsh site. Taking his cue from traditional shutters on nearby Charleston’s historic homes, Harmon designed a series of large, metal screens to protect the house from harsh sun and hurricanes – a “21st century solution to a 400-year-old problem,” he said.

The show also includes work by Marlon Blackwell of Fayetteville, Ark.; W. G. Clark of Charlottesville, VA; Mack Scogin of Merrill Elam Architects in Atlanta, GA; Lake/Flato Architects of San Antonio, TX; and the groundbreaking work of students at Auburn University’s Rural Studio in Alabama, founded by the late Samuel Mockbee, which combines social outreach with architectural education (www.ruralstudio.com).

The Virginia Center for Architecture is located at 2501 Monument Avenue in Richmond’s historic Fan District and is open to the public Tuesday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday from 1 to 5 p.m. For more information, visit www.virginiaarchitecture.org. For more information on Frank Harmon, go to www.frankharmon.com.