



Pamplona (2006), New Haven, Connecticut  
DeWitt Godfrey

# 2024 RALPH RAPSON TRAVELING STUDY AWARD COMPETITION

Follies, an ingrained part of architectural history, have typically been decorative or whimsical structures with minimal functional purpose, often serving purely ornamental roles. Designed to evoke fantasy and playfulness, follies were intentionally extravagant and found in gardens, parks, estates, and landscaped areas.

However, an architectural folly with meaning transcends mere ornamentation. It becomes a deliberate expression of profound messages, cultural commentary, or symbolic significance. These structures go beyond conventional whimsy, reflecting themes like artistic expression, social commentary, or environmental narratives. Examples might include installations commenting on the built environment, sites of resilience and community action, structures that engage the balance between humanity and nature. These follies engage viewers intellectually and emotionally, adding layers of significance beyond their aesthetic appeal.

# RALPH RAPSON 1914-2008



Ralph Rapson, Chicago 1940's

“Architecture is not only a highly precise social and physical science but also a fine art - the process of organizing and ordering space and relating it to society for use, comfort, pleasure and spiritual satisfaction.”

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“In other words it is the total act of converting and controlling, shaping and ordering the entire physical environment into an effective expressive and harmonious setting for human life...in our search for environment, the art of architecture must always control the science and technology of architecture, and the total must control the parts. The creative act must govern.

# COMPETITION BRIEF

## **FOLLY WITH A SOCIAL CONSCIENCE?**

Design an architectural folly that can be inhabited solo or in small to medium size groups.

Consider a folly that celebrates thematic elements that reflect the identity of the community, thereby enriching a sense of belonging and shared experiences.

Consider utility, the folly as a tool or device for community engagement and exchange.

Consider fabrication, how this folly might sit upon the earth, in self-awareness of its environmental footprint and yet inventive, imaginative or tongue-in-cheek in its expression.

## **WHERE MUST IT GO?**

The site selection is at the discretion of the entrant, but competitors are encouraged to consider the use of in-between, neglected or left-over spaces in the community.

Competitors have the agency to place their folly where it best acts to engage the community. Playfulness is a hallmark of this folly even as it tries to reach hearts and souls and invites and activates tourists and spectators and passers-by to be engaged community members.

Competitors have the liberty to select their own site, presenting a distinctive chance to explore various locations and contexts for their architectural or design interventions. This independence enables participants to choose a setting that resonates with their creative vision and addresses the particular needs or traits of the selected community.

Community engagement, whether at present or throughout the anticipated lifespan of the folly, is not compulsory but is also not discouraged, thereby nurturing the potential for a range of creative solutions and fostering respectful, collaborative involvement. This approach recognizes the importance of local perspectives in shaping meaningful, contextually relevant design interventions.

## **DESIGN CRITERIA**

Competitors are entrusted with the creation of a folly, adhering to the following criteria:

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- The competitor is tasked with thoughtfully exploring the significance of gathering and connection within their chosen community and how a meaningful folly can serve to enhance these aspects. They are encouraged to delve into why community cohesion is vital and how their design can actively facilitate it.
- Illustrate a thoughtful and imaginative exploration of thematic elements that resonate with the identity of the selected community. Examples of such themes may encompass communal gathering, storytelling, celebration, pride, loss, multi-generational play, the community's origins, place-making, identity, rejuvenation, dialogue, beauty, and more.
- Showcase creativity, inventiveness, artfulness and a unique approach to the development of both the architectural and landscape character, incorporating artistic elements that enhance the overall aesthetic and cultural significance of the design.
- Consider inclusivity and diversity in the design exploration.
- Take into account the environmental impact and sustainability considerations inherent in the folly's design.
- Devise a folly with a well-considered end-of-life strategy.

### **JUDGING CRITERIA**

- Response to the program
- Conceptual Depth: The extent to which the folly embodies and communicates its purpose to the selected community
- Aesthetic Quality: The visual appeal, creativity, artfulness and uniqueness of the folly.
- The design and landscape as it relates to the competitor's selected site and larger contextual concerns
- Illustration of the competitor's design process
- Degree of design skill and invention
- Sustainable design concepts & conservation of resources
- Attention to craft and detail as commensurate with the length of the competition
- Graphic skill
- Adherence to the submission guidelines and requirements

### **SUBMISSION REQUIREMENTS**

- No more than two (2) digital boards may be submitted and must be formatted in 20"x 30" proportions in a landscape orientation for possible printing and easy display.
- A minimum of two perspectives are required as part of the presentation, including one overall project perspective. Other perspective sketches are at the option of the competitor.

## Ralph Rapson Traveling Study Award Competition

- All boards must include a visible label identifying it as “2024 Ralph Rapson Traveling Study Award”.
- All boards/files must be anonymous and shall not include your name or reveal any authorship on any images viewed by the jury.
- The RRTSA competition is framed to be the work of a single individual competitor. All work, ideas, concepts, and designs must be work of the individual competitor unless otherwise identified as AI generated (see AI generated statement.) This is not a group project.
- Guidelines for AI Integration in the Competition: Participants must refrain from utilizing AI algorithms or models pre-trained on proprietary or restricted datasets unless explicit permission is obtained from the data owners. This regulation is intended to safeguard data privacy and intellectual property rights while not discouraging participants to innovate using publicly accessible or appropriately licensed datasets. Additionally, all images generated using AI must be clearly labeled as such. Failure to comply with these guidelines may lead to disqualification from the competition.
- Competitors are asked to include a statement declaring how AI generated materials were included in the submission, if at all. This statement will not appear on the boards/files however, will be a field included in the submission process and will be shared with the jury.
- No additional digital information such as links to websites or videos are allowed.
- All submissions should be in high-resolution JPEG/JPG format. File size not to exceed 10MB per file. Files are to be uploaded to [AwardForce](#) (AIA Minnesota's award submission platform) NO LATER THAN 12:00 noon (CST) on Tuesday, March 5, 2024. *You are advised to create an account and complete the basic information in advance of the deadline. **Late submissions are subject to disqualification.***

### SCHEDULE

- Competition starts: February 22, 2024, 12:00 noon CST
- Competition ends: March 5, 2024 (Digital submissions must be posted no later than 12 noon CST - see Submission Requirements)
- Preliminary jury: March 14, 2004 (Finalists selected and announced)
- Final jury: March 28, 2024 (Finalist interviews and winner announced)
- Celebration dinner: March 28, 2024 (For finalists, winner and jury members)

### COMPETITION AWARD

The winner of the competition will receive \$15,500 to advance their education in architecture through international or domestic travel-study. Finalists will receive a \$500 stipend.