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Exhibition Showcases Philadelphia's Architectural Design Boom

Potluck 01: Fertile Ground gathers 12 of Philadelphia's Most Innovative Design Firms in an unprecedented self-organized installation

Philadelphia, September 15, 2009 – Philadelphia's affordability, diverse neighborhoods and "under the radar" personality have fueled a robust and growing design culture over the past decade. The city is going through an evolution in shaping its design identity, and architecture is clearly playing a key role. Liabilities that historically drew negative attention to the city – crime, trash and lack of economic growth—have provided a context within which a strong creative community has emerged on its own terms.

"This 'work in progress' mentality proved to be a tremendous advantage for architects during the last real estate boom, as Philadelphia quickly established itself as a lifestyle destination on the back of new luxury housing, urban mixed-use development and a strong interest in greening," says Brian Phillips, Principal of Interface Studio Architects. "With *Fertile Ground* we're bringing together 12 architectural design firms that represent a critical mass of innovation that has grown out of this particular Philadelphia-specific context."

Many of the participating firms have strong connections to the four schools of architecture in the city, promoting a true sense of praxis where client-based construction and academic pursuits cross-fertilize. This exhibition is a timely consideration in the midst of current economic trends which have challenged the traditional model of architectural practice over the past two years. The work represents a collection of research agendas, cutting-edge software, and new and hybrid business models.

"We hope that by engaging this community, new and interesting ideas, dialogues and relationships will follow," added Phillips. "Some of the offices have already gained national recognition while others are start-ups that are just beginning to make their marks. The common thread running through the work is a sense of experimentation and enthusiasm for the future."

Participants are:

Austin+Mergold, LLC

DIGSAU

Erdy McHenry Architecture, LLC

International Design Clinic

ISA Interface Studio Architects, LLC

Jibe Design

KBAS Studio

Moto Design Shop Inc.

Normal Architecture Office NAO

Onion Flats, LLC

Point B Design

Sabin+Jones LabStudio

The Fertile Ground exhibition will run October 8th – October 25th, with an official opening reception on October 13th at 6pm in The Ice Box gallery at the Crane Arts Building.

For more information, please visit www.is-architects.com/fertileground.html.