

Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition



1911
ONE HUNDRED YEARS
2011

For Immediate Release

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WINNING DESIGN CHOSEN FOR TRIANGLE SHIRTWAIST FACTORY FIRE MEMORIAL AS HISTORIC INTERNATIONAL DESIGN COMPETITION CONCLUDES

Permanent Memorial to be Built in Greenwich Village at the Site of Historic Fire

NEW YORK, New York, November 21, 2013 -- The Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition today announced winners of its two-phase international memorial design competition. First place went to Richard Joon Yoo and Uri Wegman for "Reframing the Sky," a design featuring graceful steel panels that are visible from a distance. The memorial will be built on the building where the 1911 fire took place, steps from Washington Square Park.

Yoo is an architectural designer in New York City and holds a BFA in Sculpture from Art Institute of Chicago and a Master of Architecture from Southern California Institute of Architecture (SCI-Arc). Wegman has a BArch from The Cooper Union and is completing a master's degree at SCI-Arc.

The seven-member jury awarded second place to Courtney Hunt and Alex Witko of Organelle Design, based in New York City, for "United Ribbon." Third place went to Carmen Potter from Indianapolis for "Points of Light." The designs were selected from 176 entries from over 30 countries, submitted this spring. The winning selections, including four honorable mentions, can be viewed on-line: <http://rememberthetrianglefire.org>

The first-place winners will now be invited to develop their design with a project team that includes the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition and New York University, which owns the building, working within the parameters of the appropriate city agencies. As envisioned, the winning design would engage passers-by both up-close and from afar. Steel panels curve around both sides of the building, with the names of victims cut into an upper panel and reflected onto a lower one. A vertical mirrored panel would reflect the sky and urban environment, extending up the corner and ending abruptly at the 8th floor, where the fire started and many died. The memorial would also include a map of where victims lived, the story of the fire, and the laws that resulted from it.

"This design asked us to think before being told anything—essential to a work of art," said juror Sheila Levant de Bretteville, a public artist and professor at Yale. "Its two visually strong, clear gestures urge passers-by to look up and then down, and then think about why."

The competition jury chair, architect Deborah Berke, FAIA, said, "The finalists all displayed a remarkable ingenuity in addressing the complex issues of the site limitations and the profound significance of the Triangle Fire. The winner displayed a particular sensitivity to the need for the memorial to be a physical presence in the city today, while also recognizing the history of the site and the ongoing labor movement worldwide." The jury also included architect Yama Karim, Principal at Daniel Libeskind Studio; Wendy Feuer, Assistant Commissioner

of Urban Design & Art, New York City Dept. of Transportation; fashion designers Yeohlee Teng and Shani Grosz; and Richard Greenwald, labor historian and Dean of St. Joseph's College.

The first-place team will also receive a \$5,000 award, sponsored by United College Employees of the Fashion Institute of Technology. The American Society of Safety Engineers and Fashion Institute of Technology sponsored the second-place prize of \$3,000; the Safety Executives of New York sponsored the third-place prize of \$1,500.

As a vertical urban memorial, the Triangle Fire Memorial will be an exciting addition to the city's public art landscape. It will be located in the heart of Greenwich Village at Washington Place and Greene Street, the site of the 1911 fire that killed 146 workers, mostly immigrant women and girls. This long-overdue memorial signifies the enduring importance of labor rights. It represents not only the tragic fire, but also the social movement it sparked, including improved safety laws and protections for workers. Recent fires in countries like Bangladesh demonstrate that these issues remain unresolved. Suzanne Pred Bass, descendant of fire victim Rosie Weiner, says, "The memorial to the Triangle fire will be important and gratifying to family members because it ensures that their tragic loss will not be forgotten. It will speak to future generations about the changes to working conditions made because of the fire."

"The Triangle Fire was a defining moment in our city's – and our country's – history," said Mayor Michael R. Bloomberg at the fire's centennial. "It is not the fire that deserves to be remembered so much as the 146 victims and I want to thank the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition for helping to honor their memories."

About the Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire

The Triangle Shirtwaist Factory Fire took place on March 25, 1911. It burned through three floors of the Asch Building, now NYU's Brown Building. One hundred forty-six workers died in the fire, many of whom were young immigrant women. In the wake of the fire, people throughout the nation demanded restitution, justice, and action to safeguard the vulnerable and oppressed. Many of the labor and fire safety laws that protect us today were created in response to this tragic event.

About the Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition

The Remember the Triangle Fire Coalition is a grassroots national alliance of organizations and individuals formed to commemorate and memorialize the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire. Members include families of the victims, unions, arts organizations, schools, workers' rights groups, human rights groups, historical preservation societies, scholars, and concerned citizens. The Coalition educates the public about the fire and labor rights issues, and encourages activism around the world.

**For more information about the fire and RTFC, and to view the winning selections, please go to:
www.rememberthetriangelfire.org.**

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