

PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Contact: Katie Plocheck

Phone: (713) 348-5668

Email: Katie.Plocheck@rice.edu

Unexpected City: Putting Your Houston on the Map

Rice Design Alliance launches new campaign to celebrate Houston

Houston, Texas (January 12, 2011) Houston has its share of famous buildings like Mies van der Rohe's MFAH building and Renzo Piano's Menil Collection. While places like these garner global acclaim, it is often Houston's unexpected places—from the old warehouses surrounding downtown to old-school barbershops to open fields, and the many places in between—that give Houston its spark. Other times, the unexpected allure of Houston exists in a personal experience of a well-known place—like the sensation of wondrous disorientation as you walk into the slanted-glass entrance of Philip Johnson's Pennzoil Place. Houstonians are often walking libraries of beloved places that may go unseen by other passersby.

It is these places and their accompanying experiences that the Rice Design Alliance wants to know about. This month, we are launching a campaign entitled "Unexpected City" that is asking Houstonians, or anyone who wants to participate, to submit their favorite location in the city. Submissions will be published here on [Offcite](http://Offcite.org). In addition to submissions, Katie Plocheck and others will also be visiting many of the locations and documenting the time spent there on Offcite.org. Our hope is that we can have an exhibition of places at the end of the year, or one day, a publication.

RDA hopes that unexpected places will span the city, scattered across the wards and suburbs, and the innumerable cities within the city. By participating as a reader or writer, individuals will help educate and portray Houston as a hub of hidden delights. Ideally, readers will not only find places to eat, hike, and dance, they will come to understand the question of "Why Houston?" by considering the built and natural environments.

Criteria for submissions is that the site be partially or completely open to the public. The focus of "Unexpected City" is primarily places that are not already widely published, represented, or commercial. These can be places off the beaten path, or places on the beaten path where the contributor may have had a unique experience. Rice Design Alliance reserves the right to not publish or share submissions.

Please send submissions to Katie.Plocheck@rice.edu and if you'd like, let us know why this place stands out to you via written word, video, or any other way you would like to communicate your opinion about the place. Please visit Offcite.org to view submissions!

ABOUT RICE DESIGN ALLIANCE (RDA)

The Rice Design Alliance is a nonprofit organization dedicated to the advancement of architecture, urban design, and the built environment in the Houston region through educational programs, the publication of *Cite: The Architecture + Design Review of Houston*, and active programs to initiate physical improvements. Membership is open to the general public.