



ARCHITECTURE
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Robert Edson Swain
Robert Edson Swain, Inc.
Biography

Robert Edson Swain has been lead Architect and Urbanist on more than 500 projects ranging in scale from a new city master plan in China to an interior for a private Boeing Jet, and commercial buildings to private residences.

If Robert Swain's architecture + design practice can be summarized in a single description, it is this: designs that are magical yet gratifyingly practical, developed with sincere respect for place and user. He engages his clients and team in a joyful process to achieve deeply pleasing conclusions. Innovation is consistent yet always practical, and his designs have always been environmentally respectful, long before Green Design was fashionable.

From his heritage in New England boat building to his passion for Italian design, Mr. Swain has developed a unique ability to transcend traditional architectural solutions. He has received numerous international, national and regional awards for the design of schools, housing, interiors, retail spaces, along with site responsive architectural, urban design and city-planning projects. His work is applauded for its integration of classic and innovative design ideas with contemporary building technology.

Mr. Swain's diverse portfolio includes: City planning projects in Ningguo and Huaibei both cities in Anhui China; as well as winning a global competition for the design of a new city in Shandong China — Lang Ya City a satellite of Qingdao — a 100 square kilometer coastal zone for industry and tourism; to the detailed interior design for the Boeing 737 Business Jet — a project that encompasses his respect for tradition and his passion for innovation.

Mr. Swain's love for Italian design was founded in a formal design education from Istituto Universitario Di Architettura, Venice, Italy where his awareness of exquisite detail deepened while studying with Carlo Scarpa and Nani Valle. The Architect Louis Kahn was a primary personal influence in the decision to study in Italy. Mr. Kahn imparted a sense for the integrity of materials and their use, as well as a strong clarity of building systems ordering.

During studies at the University of Arizona, in a region where the work of Frank Lloyd Wright is prominent, Mr. Swain developed his sense for the integration of architecture with nature... "design emerges from and is responsive to an intimate familiarity with the site and its environs."

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As an educator he has affiliations with universities in the United States, Latin America, Europe and Asia. He served as visiting Professor of Architecture at the Seconda Università di Napoli (S.U.N.), Naples, Italy and as Affiliate Professor in the Department of Engineering at the University of Washington focusing on design process, teamwork in design, industrial design and inventive adaptation of materials for sustainable living. He has taught in the University of Washington's Lifelong Learning Program. He holds an appointment as Professor in Sustainable Urbanism at the Anhui Agricultural University, Hefei, Anhui, China (AHAU). He has served as architectural and environmental design Guest Lecturer and Design Critic at Universidad Nacional Autonoma de Mexico (UNAM), Universidad del Diseno Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo Costa Rica, the University of Washington, Western Washington University, Conway School Masters in Landscape Design, the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Harvard University, Boston Architectural Center and the University of California at Berkeley. As Architectural Design Critic in Residence, at the University of Nebraska, he taught in association with Professor Dale Gibbs, FAIA.

Mr. Swain currently serves and has served on various corporate and non-profit boards: President of the Board, Pratt Fine Arts Center, dedicated to promoting creative development and artistic engagement to the local and global community, Seattle WA; Bellevue Arts Museum (BAM), the Pacific Northwest's center for the exploration of art, craft and design, Bellevue, WA; Rhodes Architectural Stone, an international leader in antique and hand-crafted masonry products based in Seattle, WA; as a longtime trustee of the Conway School of Landscape Design in Conway, Massachusetts; and, a trustee of McKinnon's Neck Conservation Trust in Nova Scotia, Canada.

Mr. Swain's work is distinguished by applying the design process as a primary tool for exploring and articulating a project's resource and creative potential. He provides his visionary design consultation skills in numerous scenarios, from the intimate settings of residential projects, to large-scale urban-planning projects, as well as, to the boardrooms of global corporations.

