

How to Win the CODAawards

Stand out from the crowd.

2018 marks the sixth year for the annual CODAwards program celebrating commissioned projects that required collaborations of design + art. In 2013, the inaugural year of the CODAwards, the program celebrating the integration of art into an interior or architectural space had 433 entries from 29 countries. The CODAwards caused an international splash in the art and design community, garnering a 14-page spread in *Interior Design* magazine and bringing recognition for the winners of the awards.

The winners had one thing in common: they submitted stunning and interesting projects, featuring artwork commissions that required collaborations of design + art.

How can you make your entry stand out in the crowd of hundreds? CODAworx gleaned a few key insights on creating award-winning entries from the people who made the decisions -- the jurors.

Your Images

We could reiterate, postulate, extrapolate on how true the picture-thousand-word equivalency cliché really is, but **Barbara Tober**, Chairman Emerita of the Museum of Arts and Design, said it best:

“Your images are terribly important. Different views, beautifully lighted—it’s important to have a view of everything from all different angles.”

The winning entries are distributed to millions of people through hundreds of channels. It’s essential that the accompanying images meet both the design qualifications (interesting subject matter, composition) and the press qualifications (as high-resolution as possible).

Browse past winners to understand the quality of photographs required for a winning entry. For example, the photos of 2015 Commercial category winner [Morrison & Foerster](#), submitted by Gensler, are an outstanding example of showing a variety of perspectives and close detail.

TIPS FROM THE EXPERTS

- *“You have to look at your photographs as if you have never seen the project. The pictures have to tell a very beautiful story. Using different light sources, showing the project at different times of the day, and including detail are all important aspects of presenting the full scope of your project.”*

- **Kevin Walz,**
Walzworkinc

- *“Quality photographs are essential. Details can be important. Pick finely-tuned details that are clever.”*

- **George Beylerian,**
*Material
ConneXion*

Your Writing

In your project descriptions under the overview, goals, process, and additional information explain to the jury your goals for integrating artwork and describe the collaboration process of the design team. The jury seriously considers the description of the project when judging. This is your opportunity to present the narrative of your work.

Clearly articulating the goals of the project helps our jury to determine if the project was a success. The more explicit, the better. For example, in the winning entry [Starlight](#), submitted by Cooper Joseph Studio, cited four key goals for the suspended artwork, including to change the public perception of the museum, to encourage use of the monumental stairs, to emphasize sustainability, and to integrate with the interior design.

Even after submission, projects are editable until entries close at the end of May. Want to have the sharpest story? Parse your answers and carefully edit your writing. Have your design team contribute and review your answers before submitting.

The Art

The CODAwards center on the integration of art into a space. Each entry must feature at least one site-specific work of commissioned art. Each winning entry will blend the art and design seamlessly to create a place as art, rather than a place with art.

“The most successful integration happens when it feels like an integral part of the environment, emphasizes its characteristics (height, void, surprise effects), and responds to factors like changing light over the course of the day,”

- **Emanuela Frattini Magnusson**, Global Head of Design at Bloomberg.

Outstanding CODAwards entries will fall in line with the emerging trend in the art and design world: artwork projects created in collaboration between artists, designers, architects, clients, and, often, the ultimate users of the space.

• *“[You] have to take off [your] hat as a designer or artist, and [you] have to be the editor. Learn to be able to talk about the project, keep it succinct, show the richness and complexity, and talk about it in those terms.”*

- **Kevin Walz**,
Walzworkinc

• *“My favorite projects are fully integrated into the architecture. The architecture benefits from the installation and I could not imagine that piece anywhere else. I appreciate projects that attract the public’s attention to what would have been less developed spaces.”*

- **Michael Holzman**,
Holzman Moss
Bottino Architecture

The X-Factor

The last piece of the puzzle, and the most difficult to grasp, is the *x-factor* of a project, the *je ne sais quoi*, the quality of a piece of work that leaves a distinct and lasting impression on anyone who experiences it.

“A project should have dignity and a timelessness to it. There should be a dialogue between this element and the space, and there should be a sense of well-being for the people occupying the space,”

- **Kevin Walz**, Principal at *Walzworkinc*

Good candidates for the CODAwards are not all things to all people, but rather meet a specific need or execute a concept especially well.

“I particularly loved projects that distilled the spirit of a project in some incredibly simple, graspable, yet elegant way (read: not cute or predictable). And I was drawn to, when well done, gestural works that made a single, dramatic statement without diminishing the project it adorned.”

- **Jorge Arango**, Design writer and stylist

The CODAwards are also contemporary. We honor projects and artwork that push the boundaries of design. As juror **Dror Benshetrit** says:

“A good entry is gorgeous and interesting, either intellectually or [with] new use of material, or provokes some kind of thought.”

Above all else, Dror advises, *“Follow your instinct!”* ■

• *“Follow your instinct. If you’re too calculating, wondering if something will be accepted in these circles or that way, you’re shifting from your own integrity. Feeling in touch with your own work... will mean it’s always successful.”*

- **Dror Benshetrit**,
Studio Dror

To learn more about this year’s CODAwards and to see last year’s winners, visit the CODAworx site at

www.codaworx.com/awards

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