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Toronto architectural firm RVTR wins Canada Council for the Arts Professional Prix de Rome

Ottawa, June 29, 2009 – The Canada Council for the Arts announced today that Toronto architecture firm RVTR is the winner of the Professional Prix de Rome in Architecture for 2009. This award recognizes exceptional talent and achievement in the field of architecture and architectural design.

The Professional [Prix de Rome in Architecture](#), valued at \$50,000, is awarded to a young architect or practitioner of architecture, an architecture firm or an architectural design firm that has completed its first buildings and demonstrated exceptional artistic potential. The prize, established in 1987, allows the winners to travel to other parts of the world to hone their skills, develop their creative practice and strengthen their presence in international architecture culture. The project can involve multiple trips to a number of destinations, spread over a two-year period.

RVTR was formed in 2007 as a collaborative architectural practice specifically structured to advance design research by directors

Colin Ripley, Kathy Velikov, Geoffrey Thün and Paul Raff. This award will allow the directors to extend their design research on responsive northern housing and facilitate dissemination of their design work to an international audience. In the first year, they will study the methods used by mass-customized prefabrication industries in Japan. During 2010, they will investigate traditional and emerging technologies, buildings and communities for living in cold climates, particularly in Japan, Iceland, Scotland, Norway, Sweden, Finland and Russia, and facilitate dissemination of their design work to an international audience. According to RVTR, “cultural and social constructions, as well as technological advancements and energy performance, will shape the development of a new sustainable housing industry leading the way to a higher quality of life for a broad range of constituents.”

RVTR was selected by a peer assessment committee appointed by the Canada Council, comprised of Manon Asselin (Montreal),

Bernard Flaman (Regina), Valerie Gow (Toronto), Richard Kroeker (West Pennant, NS) and Darrin Morrison (West Vancouver). The committee commented that “they feel the very timely and pertinent issues this project raises will resonate with Canadians and the world.”

[Download images of the RVTR and their work.](#)

Colin Ripley

Colin Ripley, a member of the Ontario Association of Architects, completed his M.Arch. degree at Princeton University in 1994, and also holds degrees in engineering and in theoretical physics. He is an Associate Professor in the Department of Architectural Science at Ryerson University, and Graduate Program Director for Ryerson's Master of Architecture degree. He is the author, with Marco Polo and Arthur Wrigglesworth, of *In the Place of Sound: Architecture|Music|Acoustics* (Cambridge Scholars Press, 2006).

Kathy Velikov

Kathy Velikov, a member of the Ontario Association of Architects, completed her B.Arch in 1996 at the University of Waterloo and holds a Masters in History of Art and Architecture from the University of Toronto. She is currently Assistant Professor at the University of Waterloo School of Architecture, where she teaches design studio, advanced research and theory, and is also Chair of the Canada Green Building Council's Academic Education Committee. In September 2009, she will be Assistant Professor at the Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan, where she previously held the 2006/07 Oberdick Fellowship. She received the 2008 Young Architects Forum Award from the Architectural League of New York.

Geoffrey Thün

Geoffrey Thün completed his B.Arch in 1996 at the University of Waterloo and holds a Masters in Urban Design from the University of Toronto. He is currently Assistant Professor at the University of Waterloo School of Architecture, where he is Faculty Lead and Primary Investigator for North House, and the Post Carbon Highway design research projects, funded by the US Department of Energy/ NREL and SSHRC respectively. In September 2009, he will be Associate Professor at the Taubman

College of Architecture and Urban Planning at the University of Michigan. He received the 2008 Young Architects Forum Award from the Architectural League of New York.

Paul Raff

Paul Raff, a member of the Ontario Association of Architects (OAA), completed his B.Arch in 1992 at the University of Waterloo and is a frequent visiting critic to a range of cultural institutions. He is previous winner of the 2001 OAA Allied Arts Medal, and 2009 RAIC Allied Arts Award. In addition to his role as a director of RVTR, he maintains a parallel independent award-winning practice, Paul Raff Studio.

General information

In addition to its principal role of promoting and fostering the arts, the Canada Council for the Arts administers and awards many prizes and fellowships in the arts, humanities, social sciences, natural and health sciences, engineering, and arts management. These prizes and fellowships recognize the achievements of outstanding Canadian artists, scholars, and administrators. The Canada Council for the Arts is committed to raising public awareness and celebration of these exceptional people and organizations on both a national and international level.

Please visit our website for a complete listing of these [awards](#).

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