Parson’s Jiyoung Bae and RPI’s Erin Ryan Awarded Thesis Prizes from the IESNYC for their Research on Light and Health

The Illuminating Engineering Society New York City Section (IESNYC) awarded its annual Thesis Prize to Jiyoung Bae, MFA Lighting Design, Parsons the New School for Design and Erin Ryan, MS Lighting, Lighting Research Center at Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute (RPI) at a reception held on May 22, 2014. Each school selected one winner based upon their own criteria which included originality of ideas, and their contributions to and advancements of the lighting profession. The award winners presented their thesis projects, both of which are investigations of the correlation between light and health, and each student received an award of $1,000 from the IESNYC.

“It is especially gratifying for me as a graduate of the LRC’s MS Lighting Program, says Kelly Seeger LC, IES, LEED AP, senior applications developer at Philips Research North America and IESNYC Board Member, who coordinated the program,” to be able to present these awards on behalf of the Board of the New York City Section and I’m pleased to facilitate the sharing of this important thesis work with our membership.”
Jiyong Bae’s thesis, entitled “Urban Therapy,” explored a side effect of the increasing amount of time spent indoors at work and at home in urban areas, decreasing the exposure to sunlight, upsetting our natural biological rhythm. She posits that light therapy could be administered passively by architectural lighting design, particularly using natural sunlight in a way that can be replicated and incorporated into many built environments, particularly in the dark spaces that are typical of underground concourse and passageways underneath office. Her proposed design used the Rockefeller Center concourse is an exercise to transform the way light therapy is delivered, by bringing sunlight into the daily lives of people on a large scale via daylighting, to create the feeling of walking outside on a sunny day.

“The IESNYC Thesis Prize rewards a student thesis' overall excellence, from argument to research and design proposition, as well as its pertinence to the field of lighting design,” says Nathalie Rozot, associate teaching professor at Parsons The New School for Design and Jiyoung’s primary advisor. “Jiyoung showed great sophistication in the ways she argued for improving urbanites’ well-being.”

Erin Ryan’s thesis entitled “The Impact of Weekly Lighting Condition on Performance, Sleepiness, and Mood,” proposes that over a week’s period of time, lighting conditions could have an impact on the entrainment of the biological clock. She designed an experiment to test this hypothesis and showed how lighting conditions produced differences in performances in healthy individuals. Twelve subjects spent eight hours a day for a week in each of three lighting conditions - daylight, dim light, and high light. Performance tests monitoring reaction time, memory and accuracy measures were administered, sleepiness ratings were collected, and self-reports of mood was surveyed at the beginning and end of each week.
“I am impressed with Erin Ryan’s interest and understanding of the subject matter and her willingness to assist in the research and design work that we are doing,” says Mariana Figueiro, Ph.D., associate professor and LRC Light and Health Program director. “I expect her research to yield interesting results that will ultimately help us to design better working and living environments for people.”

In addition to the Student Lighting Competition, scholarships, grants, and funds, the Thesis Prize is another way the IESNYC supports students studying lighting and lighting programs in area schools.

About the IESNYC

IESNYC (www.iesnyc.org) is the New York City Section of the Illuminating Engineering Society. The IESNYC is a volunteer professional membership organization whose members share a mutual appreciation for and fascination with, all things lighting. They are lighting designers, architects, engineers, consultants, lighting manufacturers, lighting representatives, electrical distributors and allied professionals. IESNYC members are dedicated to promoting the art and science of illumination engineering to their members, professionals, the lighting industry, and the public through inspiring events, informative programs and educational series, social outreach, and networking opportunities.

Photos:
Left (left to right) Kelly Seeger, Jiyoung Bae, Brian Belluomini (principal, Shimstone Design Studio and vice president of the IESNYC), Erin Ryan

Right (left to right) Derek Porter (associate professor of Lighting Design, Constructed Environments, Parsons the New School for Design), Jiyoung Bae, Brian Belluomini, Russell P. Leslie (professor and associate professor and associate director Lighting Research Center, RPI), Erin Ryan

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