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Taking Orchids & Onions on the road

The return of the venerable Orchids & Onions design program after a three-year absence takes place this week with the opening of a retrospective on 30 years of good and bad architecture, planning and other elements of the built environment.

Sponsored by the San Diego Architectural Foundation, the photographic exhibit, “Orchids & Onions 2006 Reinvention,” will open at the Museum of San Diego History in Balboa Park on Tuesday for 2-½ weeks and then moves to six other venues over the next four months.

At the same time, nominations will be open for honoring and skewering this year's crop of projects, with the results announced at an event in and around the North Park Theatre in November.

Orchids & Onions was started by the local chapter of the American Institute of Architects in 1976 and held through 2002 as a “people's choice awards” recognition and education program to celebrate the best (they got orchids) and commiserate over the worst (they got onions.)

Now in charge, the separately run San Diego Architectural Foundation has organized the upcoming traveling exhibit to cover seven themes of past O&O recipients – housing, transit, preservation, public art, libraries, long-range planning and the City of Villages effort to improve and encourage infill development.

It will be on display June 27-July 14 at the San Diego Historical Society's Balboa Park museum in the Casa de Balboa on El Prado, (619) 232-6203; July 17-28 at the Mission Valley Library, 2123 Fenton Parkway, (858) 573-5007; July 31-Aug. 1 at the city of San Diego's Development Services Center, 1222 First Ave. in downtown San Diego (no phone reference); Aug. 14-25 at the Solana Beach Library at Earl Warren Middle School, 157 Stevens Ave., (858) 755-1404; Aug. 28-Sept. 8 at the North Park Library, 3795 31st St.; Aug. 28-Sept. 8, (619) 533-3972; Sept. 11-22 at La Jolla High School, 750 Nautilus St., (858) 454-3081; and Sept. 25-Oct. 6 at the Malcolm X Library, 5148 Market St. in Encanto, (619) 527-3405.

Nomination rules and forms covering eight categories will be available at the exhibit locations, online at www.sandiegoaf.org and at the Union-Tribune's Web site, www.signonsandiego.com, and by calling the foundation at (619) 232-1385. The deadline for submission is Aug. 1.

– ROGER M. SHOWLEY

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