

Presented by



MUSEUM of  
OUTDOOR  
ARTS

# Design and Build Competition

2026

## Soundscapes in Structure

### About the Jury

A National  
Art, Architecture & Design Competition

Seventh Annual

Design Brief Launches: September 24, 2025

Competition Portal Opens: October 23, 2025

Competition Closes April 26, 2026

[Competition Website](#)



## ***Design and Build Competition Abstract***

The Museum of Outdoor Arts (“MOA”), based in Greenwood Village, Colorado, announces its 7th Annual National Design and Build Competition, inviting undergraduate students, graduate students and interdisciplinary teams in art, architecture, landscape architecture, design, and related disciplines to submit conceptual design proposals. This year’s theme, “**Soundscapes in Structure**,” challenges participants to design a state-of-the-art amphitheater bandshell that merges acoustic excellence with bold visual identity. This competition represents the next evolution in MOA’s annual Design and Build Competition and challenges entrants to explore the intersection of architectural innovation and geometric harmony within the context of a live performance space.

Entrants must respond to the site’s unique conditions, designing for a wetland retention area within MOA’s sculpture park, Marjorie Park, that requires innovative structural solutions, while ensuring the amphitheater does not obstruct surrounding public sight lines. Proposals may incorporate principles of architecture, landscape design, and sculpture, as well as programmatic features such as lighting, projection, or other sensory enhancements. Designs must prioritize unique aesthetics, sustainability, accessibility, and feasibility within a project budget of \$500,000 U.S.D. Submissions should include conceptual drawings, narratives, and a physical scale model. Winning proposals will be recognized with cash prizes and archived by MOA, contributing to an ongoing dialogue about how architecture can act as both instrument and landmark in public cultural life.

### **Pre-Register your team for the competition by November 16, 2025.**

Proposals are **due by no later than April 26, 2026. Early submissions are encouraged.**

MOA will award the top four entries with the following prize structure\*:

**1st place-** \$10,000

**2nd place-** \$7,500

**3rd place-** \$5,000

**Honorable Mention-** \$1,500

\*Prizes are divided evenly amongst all team members.

(I.e. \$5,000 each if two members win 1st place).

Winning submissions will be placed on the [MOA Design and Build Competition archive website](#).

Read full [Competition Brief](#) with complete entry details.

Visit the [competition website](#) to register your entry.

6855 S. Dayton Street #3368

Greenwood Village, CO 80155

303-806-0444

## *About the Jury*

### **Cynthia Madden Leitner**

President and Co-Founder of the  
Museum of Outdoor Arts



Cynthia Madden Leitner co-founded the Museum of Outdoor Arts (MOA) with her parents, Colorado developer John W. Madden, Jr. and his wife Marjorie Madden in 1982. Designed as a “museum without walls”, MOA’s original mission followed the definition by integrating the arts into commercial landscapes and architecture to create synergistic environments for everyday living. Beginning with a donated outdoor collection of 12 sculptures placed in Greenwood Plaza, the collection now has over 85 outdoor artworks installed throughout the Denver Metro area. In 1995 The Colorado Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts was awarded to Cynthia for the realization of MOA’s unique vision.

Cynthia Madden Leitner has curated over 200 exhibitions for the Museum of Outdoor Arts and more than 20 exhibitions for other arts organizations during her over 40-year tenure as President and Executive Director. She has worked with local, national, and international artists including Nick Bantock, Sanfte Strukturen, Daniel Sprick, and Claudy Jongstra. In 1999 Cynthia Madden Leitner co-curated “A View from Denver” with the Denver Art Museum for the White House Rose Garden. Among the Museum’s publications are *Portrait of a Museum* and *Secret Rooms*; the films “Palazzo Verdi” and “Sacred Water at Burning Man” both aired on PBS.

Cynthia has also spearheaded monumental projects such as creating Design and Build, a renowned education program for emerging artists, building Fiddler’s Green Amphitheatre (FGA) from an earth sculpture into the largest outdoor live music venue in Colorado, and spearheading the creation of Element House, an off-the-grid home near the site of Charles Ross’ Star Axis.



Among civic activities, Cynthia Madden Leitner has served on the board of the International Sculpture Center, is an Honorary Trustee of The Women’s Foundation of Colorado, and a founding member of the National Museum of Women in the Arts in Washington, D.C.. Cynthia has also been selected for the Denver Mayor’s Commission of Arts, Culture and Film, the Denver Foundation’s Arts and Culture Committee, the Colorado Business Committee for the Arts, and the Advisory Committee for the Museum of Contemporary Art in Denver and the Greenwood Village Art and Humanities Council.

Cynthia and the Museum of Outdoor Arts have been honored with the following awards: Distinguished Contributions to Women in the Arts – Colorado Committee for the National Museum of Women in the Arts, 1991; Museum Art Educator of the Year – 1993; Governor’s Award for Excellence in the Arts – 1995; Englewood Builder Award – 2004; Mayor Hickenlooper’s Proclamation for Design and Build Day – 2004; Element House designs and film accessioned by MoMA NY – 2014; AIA New York Design Award issued to MOS Architects for MOA’s Element House – 2015; Architecture Design Award issued to MOS Architects for work including MOA’s Element House – 2015; Governor Hickenlooper’s Proclamation for Design and Build Day – 2016.

Visit [moaonline.org](http://moaonline.org) for more information.

## *About the Jury*

**Robin Ault, AIA**  
**Architect and Artist**  
**Senior Principal and Design Director**  
**Fentress Studios- a Populous Company**



Robin Ault is an architect and artist – a true visionary who deftly creates in both two- and three-dimensions. A third-generation Colorado native, he has a deep connection to his roots and a sincere appreciation for the diversity of places and people found throughout the state. Robin’s fascination with architecture was sparked in high school, opening him to the transformative power of space and the recognition that design shapes the built environment and the lives of those who experience it. A professional architect since 1995, Robin has always applied his talents as a visual artist to his projects, integrating sketching and painting into the design process.

Senior principal and design director at Fentress Studios - a Populous Company, Robin’s award-winning portfolio includes a diversity of public architecture throughout the country, including the renowned Sanford Consortium of Regenerative Medicine in La Jolla, California, the LEED Platinum Humanities Gateway at UC Irvine, the 50 Fifty office tower in the Denver Tech Center, the Colorado Convention Center Expansion, and the stunning Raleigh-Durham International Airport in North Carolina.

Robin is passionate about honoring both people and place, masterfully balancing sophisticated architectural expressions and cutting-edge technologies in his designs. His projects are characterized by highly sculptural forms and the artful integration of daylighting, creating a welcome harmony between the natural and built environments, and ensuring each project is distinctly tailored to its location.



Ever focused on the human experience, Robin is a conscientious architect who places great value on design that serves both people and planet. As a LEED Accredited Professional, he is committed to designing sustainable buildings that significantly reduce waste, conserve resources, and are energy efficient. He is also an accredited Fitwel Ambassador, a champion in the healthy building movement and an advocate for the evidence-based connection between design and well-being.

Robin is a member of the American Institute of Architects (AIA) and is currently serving as co-chair for the 2025 AIA Colorado Design + Honor Awards. He received his Bachelor of Environmental Design from the University of Colorado, College of Architecture and Planning, and continues to serve as a visiting critic and mentor to the next generation of architects. In addition, he is a Design Review Board Member for the Lowry Community Master Association. Robin was honored as one of ENR's 'Top 20 under 40' in 2012.

Photograph by Jason Knowles, 2024

Visit [fentress-studios.com](https://fentress-studios.com) for more information.

## *About the Jury*

**John Birkey**  
**Landscape Architect**  
**Principal and Partner**  
**Norris Design**



John Birkey is a Principal and Partner with Norris Design, a Planning, Landscape Architecture and Branding firm with nine offices regionally including: Tulsa, Austin, Dallas, Flagstaff, Tucson, Phoenix, Denver, Frisco, and Ft. Collins. John has been with Norris Design and practicing Landscape Architecture for nearly 30 years. He received a Master of Landscape Architecture degree from The University of Colorado at Denver in 1997 and is a licensed Landscape Architect. His undergraduate degree is in Studio Fine Arts from UCD as well. Practicing with Norris Design for his entire career, he has been blessed to be a part of many talented teams, designing award winning private and public parks, master planned, multi-family and affordable housing communities, recreation centers, trails, natural areas, civic, industrial, and judicial projects. John has a passion for art, the environment and plant materials, with dexterity in drawing, painting, and photography.

John collaborated with The Museum of Outdoor Arts, Norris Design team and consultants for the renovations at Marjorie Park. The focus involved improving the overall aesthetics of the site while providing an artistic approach to the regional detention complimenting the primary function of the park as an outdoor museum. Programmatic elements within the park consist of; an entry plaza with café tables and seat-walls, a wooded walking path through mature pine trees displaying several lion sculptures, open-lawn areas, a looped art-walk with Alice In Wonderland sculpture scenes, a seven-petaled vesica garden path made of mosaic stone tiles, a Zen-inspired garden with large granite stone monoliths, detention area with wetland and native plantings and kinetic sculpture elements, an elevated boardwalk/overlook that can double as a stage, and amphitheater lawn with seat-walls oriented back to the stage area. With performances prior to the Fiddlers Green Amphitheatre events programmed for the boardwalk stage area, a variety of seating and overlook areas were designed to orient users to the performances.



John also enjoyed being a part of the team working closely with MOA to design living walls for the interior of the Fiddlers Green Amphitheater. The living walls are refreshed each year with new patterns that enhance and beautify the venue with colorful lush flowers and trailing plants in artistic patterns as visitors enjoy live music in the Colorado air.

John is also a passionate photographer, creating images of designed and built projects for Norris Design as well as for clients use in sales, marketing, and photorealistic 3D renderings of proposed projects. He has strong knowledge of plant materials and promotes sustainability in his designs which express sense of place and regionalism. He has been involved in volunteering within the community throughout his career with the American Society of Landscape Architects as Colorado Chapter President, The Jane Silverstein Ries Foundation as President and Volunteers for Outdoor Colorado as a Technical Advisor for over thirty trail building and tree planting projects. He currently enjoys leading Norris Designs Tulsa, Oklahoma office, and lives in Claremore with his amazing wife Mary who is a Registered Nurse at Hillcrest Hospital along with his two twin stepdaughters, Marydith and Madalin.

Visit [norris-design.com](http://norris-design.com) or more information.