

For Release: Thursday, January 22, 2009

RENOWNED DESIGNER, DR. DIANA BALMORI, TO DISCUSS CREATING SUSTAINABLE ENVIRONMENTS IN URBAN LANDSCAPES AS BRIT DISTINGUISHED LECTURER ON THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 5, 2009; FREE AND OPEN TO PUBLIC; RECEPTION, 6:30 P.M.; LECTURE, 7:00 P.M.

FORT WORTH, Texas – Dr. Diana Balmori, who holds a joint appointment with the Yale School of Architecture and the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies, will explore “Plants and Cities: A New Relationship,” as part of the Botanical Research Institute of Texas (BRIT) continuing lecture series on Sustainability by Design — on Thursday, Feb. 5, 2009, at 7 p.m. in the Fort Worth Botanic Garden’s Dorothea Leonhardt Lecture Hall at 3220 Botanic Garden Boulevard. A reception at 6:30 p.m. in honor of Dr. Balmori will precede the lecture, which is open and free to the public.

Seating is available on a first-come, first-served basis. For information, to www.brit.org or call: 817.429.3200.

Dr. Balmori will explore how in the past, landscape in cities concentrated on plants and planting; landscape was seen as the "shrubbing-up" of architecture. Today landscape has a much broader scope – dealing with vegetation, with soils, with water, with air, and with climate. In other words, the discipline has transformed into a tool of much greater complexity. Its fusion with ecology has added to its growth and comprehensiveness. Only in the late twentieth century did we realize the relevance landscape has for cities. Only now is the power of this tool being tested on urban problems. Diana Balmori will discuss several examples from her work that demonstrate this changed role for landscape, in particular the role landscape plays in BRIT’s [planning for its new LEED certified facility](#) in Fort Worth.

The 2008-09 series, organized by BRIT and sponsored by Home Energy Americas and Oncor, presents green buildings and landscape practices that help Texans be better stewards of the environment and its finite natural resources.

This topic has directly informed BRIT’s plans for a 68K sq. ft. headquarters which will incorporate sustainable design in construction, operation and landscaping. The \$48 million project is structured to achieve Gold LEED certification when completed in 2011.

More information about the [future headquarters](#) as well as all lectures in the [Distinguished Lecturer Series](#) and can be found on BRIT’s website: www.brit.org.

Co-hosts of the lecture series are the Fort Worth Botanic Garden, Fort Worth Botanical Society, and Fort Worth Garden Club.

About Diana Balmori, PhD, IFLA

Diana Balmori, founding principal of Balmori Associates, brings a breadth of experience in architecture, urban design, landscape architecture, ecology, architectural history and sustainability to her New York-based landscape urban design office. Recognized internationally, Dr. Balmori has been honored by numerous institutions, including the National Endowment for the Arts, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the American Institute of Architects.

In 2006, Dr. Balmori was appointed a Senior Fellow in Garden and Landscape Studies at Dumbarton Oaks in Washington, DC.; Dr. Balmori is currently serving her second term on the U.S. Commission of Fine Arts. A design educator as well as practitioner, Dr. Balmori, holds a joint appointment with the Yale School of Architecture and the Yale School of Forestry and Environmental Studies.

About the Botanical Research Institute of Texas

Opened in 1991, BRIT is a nonprofit international botanical resource center open to the public. Its mission is to conserve our natural heritage by deepening our knowledge of the plant world and achieving public understanding of the value that plants bring to life. BRIT fosters respect for ecological balance and the interconnectedness of all living things, the conservation of biological diversity, the integrity of scientific investigation and intellectual pursuits, and the desire to discover the unknown to expand humankind's knowledge and understanding of plants in our natural environment.

BRIT has conducted extensive research in tropical rainforests in the Philippines, Costa Rica, and currently in Peru and Papua New Guinea. BRIT's exploration of the natural world through field study, scientific research, botanical analysis, and educational programs places it in the forefront of conservation and preservation of Earth's finite resources.

At the Fort Worth headquarters, BRIT's staff presents workshops and educational programs and provides consultation to research scientists, students, teachers, artists, plant enthusiasts, vineyard owners, ranchers, veterinarians, farmers, homeowners, gardeners, lawyers, physicians, businesses, government agencies, museums, schools, arboreta, hospitals, and poison control centers.

With a collection of approximately one million dried plant specimens representing most of the Earth's plant families, BRIT has one of the largest herbaria in the United States. It has the largest independent herbarium in the Southwest and one of the world's best collections of Texas plant specimens. Its botanical library houses approximately 100,000 volumes of books, periodicals, and journals from 100 countries.

BRIT's primary facility is in downtown Fort Worth in a restored historic warehouse at the corner of 4th and Pecan Streets.

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