

CALL FOR ENTRIES: As Seen On [] **DEADLINE: Monday, October 19, 2015 | 11:59pm EDT**

We are pleased to announce the **fourth annual Urban Omnibus writing competition: As Seen On []**. This year, UO invites writers to explore the changing relationship between performance, audience, and the physical city through narrative, theory, history, or humor. Read on for a complete description and spread this call for entries widely!

DESCRIPTION

Cities, to many, are synonymous with performance. Their landmark theaters loom large as civic architectures, while their role in incubating artistic communities is well recognized. But the greatest concentration of performers and their work has long taken place outside the proscenium arch — on the streets, sidewalks, plazas, piers, parks, esplanades, transit, and atria that make up the public realm.

This trope of public space as stage has a long history in urbanist writing, continually reaffirmed in contemporary life. References to Jane Jacobs' characterization of street life as an intricate sidewalk ballet are ubiquitous; the Victorian tradition of traipsing down the promenade to see and be seen is acutely mimicked on the High Line; and the theatrical disruptions of the Situationists — meant to thrust passersby into real, spontaneous moments outside the confines of capitalist spectacle — precede Occupy Wall Street's "corporate zombie" marches and Black Lives Matter die-ins. These performances of everyday life — and protests against it — take place alongside more formal street theater, from professional productions geared toward "placemaking" to parades, flash mobs, and other immersive, participatory forms.

Though the clearly critical role performance (broadly defined) plays in the urban public realm remains a constant, the relationship between spaces, performers, and spectators is increasingly in flux. Whether you want to be watched or not, urban public space almost guarantees you an audience. Unaware descendants of [William \(Holly\) Whyte](#), from the police to your grumpy bodega proprietor, continuously capture the banality of daily routines on surveillance systems. People watching has given way to people documenting with their cell phones, in hands or on sticks, always within reach to turn the next street scene into a new episode for global consumption outside its local context. The public performance — formal or informal, intended or unintended, a conscious or unconscious exercise in free speech and assembly — is thus a medium through which to understand and experience the city, first-hand and from afar.

With this writing competition, Urban Omnibus invites writers to explore this changing relationship between performance, audience, and the physical city through narrative, theory, history, or humor. Feel free to riff on concepts like typecasting, roleplaying, scripting, and stagecraft. And remember, we're a publication about how the city is made, so don't forget all that built context.

AWARD

The jury will select one first-prize essay, whose author will receive an award of \$1,000. Up to two second place winners will receive prizes of \$250 each. Winning submissions will be published on *Urban Omnibus* and in a printed booklet. The booklet will be sold at [Greenlight Bookstore](#), and winners will be invited to read their submissions at an event at the bookstore in January.

SELECTION CRITERIA

The criteria for selection include the quality of the prose, the originality of the interpretive position on cities, and the extent to which an essay provokes readers to discover something new or surprising in a familiar urban condition.

ELIGIBILITY AND SUBMISSION INSTRUCTIONS

Staff and board members of The Architectural League are not eligible for this competition. All others are encouraged to submit.

Essays should be between 800 and 2000 words and must be previously unpublished. Prior to publication on *Urban Omnibus*, winning submissions may be copyedited to adhere to house style.

Imagery to support or illustrate the essay is encouraged but not required. If imagery is included, the author must have legal permission to reprint it. If imagery is not included, Urban Omnibus editorial staff will source or illustrate as appropriate, in consultation with the author.

Entries must be submitted as letter-sized PDFs. The applicant's essay title must appear at the top of the first page. To maintain anonymity during the jury process, **DO NOT** include your name in the document. Your name will be logged with your essay title on the submission form.

Use the form at urbanomnibus.net/submit to submit your entry. Submissions must be received by **11:59pm EDT on Monday, October 19, 2015**. Late submissions will not be accepted. Questions about this call for entries can be sent to info@urbanomnibus.net, and updates will be available at urbanomnibus.net/asseenon. Winners will be announced in November.

JURY

Abraham Burickson, Artistic Director, [Odyssey Works](#); co-author of the forthcoming *Six Proposals for a More Beautiful World*

Annie Coggan, Contributing Editor, [A Public Space](#); principal, [Coggan + Crawford Architecture and Design](#); founder, [Chairs and Buildings](#)

Rosalie Genevro, Executive Director, [The Architectural League of New York](#)

Joshua Jelly-Schapiro, geographer and Visiting Scholar at the Institute for Public Knowledge, NYU; author of the forthcoming *Island People* and co-editor of *Nonstop Metropolis: A New York City Atlas*

Jonathan Tarleton, Senior Editor, *Urban Omnibus*

PARTNERS

Urban Omnibus is grateful to our partners for their support of As Seen On []:



NY Writers Coalition

A PUBLIC SPACE



THE ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE'S
Urban Omnibus
THE CULTURE OF CITYMAKING

**T H E A R C H I
T E C T U R A L
L E A G U E N Y**

ABOUT URBAN OMNIBUS

Urban Omnibus is The Architectural League's online publication dedicated to defining and enriching the culture of citymaking. We explore projects and perspectives in urbanism, architecture, art, policy, and activism — tried and tested in New York City — that offer new ways of understanding, representing, and improving urban life and landscape worldwide.

ABOUT THE ARCHITECTURAL LEAGUE OF NEW YORK

The Architectural League of New York nurtures excellence in architecture, design, and urbanism, and stimulates thinking and debate about the critical design and building issues of our time. As a vital, independent forum for architecture and its allied disciplines, the League helps create a more beautiful, vibrant, innovative, and sustainable future.