

# ***IN AND AROUND FRANCE***

**Andrew Frame, Raoul Wallenberg Award 2012  
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**With the support of the Raoul Wallenberg award, I was able to spend six weeks in Europe, exploring the countries and cultures of France and England. During this time, I visited magnificent architecture and vibrant cities, met wonderful people, studied with French architects in an international studio course, and gained an experiential understanding of the life of these places. My travel has fed my mind and senses, and left me full of memories that will continue to nourish my life and work.**



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# PARIS

The majority of my time abroad was spent in the summer architecture program of the American Beaux-Arts School of Fontainebleau. This is a unique studio course for English-speaking students from all over the world, which is taught by French architects. The course began with a three-night stay in the center of Paris. During this time we were able to discover the city and learn about its urban development, both historic and contemporary. A meeting with the planning authorities of the new Rive Gauche district revealed a smart approach to design. They explained that this commercial and residential district is being designed based on master plans at the scale of small neighborhoods, and each master plan is selected through a competition. Successful design is a goal from the very beginning, and walking through the district gives one an immediate sense of this priority.



# FONTAINEBLEAU

A 40 minute train ride from Paris, this town originated in the middle ages around the kings' hunting retreat, the Chateau de Fontainebleau. This Chateau has a lot of history. Architecturally, it is a record of France's 16th century transition into the Renaissance. Fashionable architects and craftsmen were brought in from Italy to work on the building.

Today, students are brought in from not only America, but also Hong Kong, Russia, and France itself to work in a studio inside this historic palace. Our course consisted of four consecutive one-week design projects. Each week had a different focus, from urbanism to architecture to landscape to performance. Each week was taught by a different team of designers with expertise in these fields.

It was a rewarding challenge to design at these different scales, but the most rewarding aspects of the course were the chance to collaborate with such an international body of students, and the requirement to use hand-drawing techniques. Also, I should mention what a treat it was to share the Chateau with a music school, which gave us many opportunities to hear amazing performances and meet talented musicians.



## ***FRANCE CONT'D***

The Fontainebleau program also included visits to many French architectural treasures. This was an opportunity to experience the country's cultural history and feel the enduring power of built spaces. In addition to some famous sites for architectural pilgrims, we were also taken off the beaten path to see more exclusive wonders, such as the gorgeous, private gardens of the Chateau de Courances. An extended trip through Burgundy led to some of France's more remote sights, including the haunting utopian complex of Arc-et-Senans. Burgundy is a beautiful region with a strong winemaking tradition and a relaxed pace of life compared to metropolitan Paris. Still, the excitement of Paris drew me in, and after the end of the Fontainebleau course I was happy to spend several more days in Paris. During this time I was able to take in even more of the life of this city.



# ENGLAND

A short journey over the English channel took me to yet another foreign land. Even though it's the country of my own native language, England seemed to me a very unknown, fascinating place.

London was my home base for the week I spent in the country, and much of that time was spent exploring the city, looking at art, going to concerts, and searching for architecture.

My trips outside of London were a severe contrast to the busy, post-Olympic city. I was able to visit the charming town of Cambridge, as well as the pastoral landscape of Stowe, considered a quintessential English garden. My experience in England left me with a broader understanding of this unique country with which I share a language.

My time in France showed me a vibrant and beautiful culture, and taught me a great deal about its history and its contemporary architectural situation. My travels have introduced me to a host of people, buildings, landscapes, cities, experiences, that I will never forget.

