Ricker Notes was originally a periodical for the School of Architecture, edited and published by students, who included feature articles, news, poetry, drawings, and book reviews. The title “Ricker”, refers to Nathan Clifford Ricker, the first graduate of an architecture program in the United States in March of 1873.

In 2018, Ricker Notes was brought back in the form of Ricker Report. The goal of Ricker Report is to connect architecture, engineering, and other disciplines while featuring students, alumni, and other talented professionals.

Ricker Report is dedicated in the honor of Emeritus Professor James Warfield and Architecture Ricker Librarian, Chris Quinn. Their passion and loyalty to the Illinois School of Architecture, Ricker Library, and the University of Illinois continues to inspire students each day.

Ricker Report Team

Matt Ehlers | Founder and Editor-In-Chief
Diego Huacuja Bucay | Editor
Jessica Stark | Editor
Hannah Galkin | Editor
Zach Michaliska | Contributor
Joshua Downes | Contributor
Andrew Cross | Contributor
Jonathan Levitske | Contributor
TJ Bayowa | Contributor
Shravan Arun | Contributor
Bhavi Dalal | Contributor
Adam Czapla | Contributor
Mila Lipinski | Contributor
Jerry Rodriguez | Contributor
While our work to create this publication is meant to honor the alumni of the Illinois School of Architecture, not all current students and recent graduates are taught about the many vital figures in our program’s history. Other than Nathan Ricker, the first graduate of an architecture program in the United States in March of 1873, the Illinois School of Architecture alumni list also includes the first female graduate with a degree in North America, one of the earliest Chinese architecture graduates in the United States, and the first African American female licensed as an architect.

Mary Louisa Page was the first woman to graduate with a degree in architecture in North America in 1879. She received a Certificate in Architecture in 1878 and a Bachelor of Science in Architecture in 1879. Often the only woman in her classes, she played a pivotal role in numerous clubs and organizations including several all-female societies at the university.

Another notable alum, and one of the earliest Chinese architecture graduates in the United States, is Tsin Chuang. He graduated in 1914 from the Illinois School of Architecture and moved back to China to become the university architect for – what is now – Tsinghua University. He modeled Tsinghua’s campus plan after the University of Illinois quadrangle along with other buildings that bear a resemblance to the Illinois campus.

Lastly, Beverly Greene was the first African American female to be licensed as an architect. She was also an early African American graduate of the Illinois School of Architecture and the first African American woman to receive a bachelor’s degree in architectural engineering from the University of Illinois in 1936. She later earned a master’s degree in city planning and housing.

While these are only a few examples of our vast list of notable alumni, it is important that we know their names and what they contributed to our program, profession, and society. The Illinois School of Architecture is fortunate to have a diverse mix of students and faculty. We owe it to ourselves and those who came before us to continue to collaborate to set high standards for what an elite college architecture program should exhibit.

**EDITOR’S NOTE**

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**Editor in Chief | M.Arch + M.S.A.S. Candidate 2021**
ETHOS & EXPERIENCES: A CONVERSATION WITH SUCHI REDDY
Suchi Reddy founded Reddymade in 2002. Reddymade focuses on the agency that architecture has on economic, social, environmental, and cultural dimensions of human life.

RE-CREATION
With a background in three-dimensional design, Associate Professor Mark Taylor has worked in the fields of interior design, construction management, architecture, and scenic construction for the film industry.

CERAMIC TENSEGRITY
Graduate students Logan Whitley and Shelby Orr, with the help of Professor Marci Uihlein, took a pavilion project from ARCH 551 to the 2019 IASS Symposium in Barcelona. Working Group 21 organized the competition for innovative pavilions.
WOMEN’S REUNION + SYMPOSIUM
On September 26 - 28, 2019, the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Urbana - Champaign had a reunion and symposium examining, celebrating, and recognizing our alumnae.

BIENNIAL OF PUBLIC SPACE: AARON BRAKKE
Assistant Professor Aaron Brakke has been awarded the First Prize for the Best Public Space in the category of Gestion Integral (Integrated Development) at the Biennial of Public Space in Bogota.

KEENAN DAILEY
Keenan is a multidisciplinary artist and Graphic Design MFA Candidate at the University of Illinois. Keenan’s work is Afrofuturist in nature. He is also a skilled video editor, creator of music, and film producer and actor.

GYULL

BRETT WIE Teacher
An alum of the University of Michigan’s Neuroscience and Pre-Medicine program, Brett has become a well known photographer and videographer on the west coast.
WOMEN’S REUNION & SYMPOSIUM
The Women’s Symposium was held at the University of Illinois from September 26th to the 28th. Hosted and organized by the ISOA’s own Sarah Bartemeus and Marci Uihlein, the Symposium held keynote lectures, student and professional panels, and a KAM Gallery Exhibition. Speakers included Carol Ross Barney, Patricia Saldana Natke, and Dina Griffin. The University of Illinois has had a long history of women in architecture. In 1879 Mary Louisa Page graduated from the Illinois School of Architecture, becoming the first woman to earn a degree in architecture in North America. In 1936 Beverly L. Greene graduated with a degree in architectural engineering, becoming the first African American woman to graduate from the program and later became the first African American woman registered as an architect.
ILLINOIS STUNS NO. 6 WISCONSIN

On October 19, 2019, Wisconsin's football team came to Champaign as No. 6 in the national rankings as a 30-point favorite against the Illini. With the help of the top tier Illinois defense, the team forced a pivotal fumble against Heisman Trophy candidate Jonathon Taylor. Following the fumble, Illinois produced a 75 yard drive on four plays resulting in a 29-yard touchdown catch by Josh Imatorbhebhe. The game winning drive was then set up by an Illinois interception of Jack Coan (Wisconsin Quarterback) leading to a game winning 39-yard field goal by James McCourt as time expired. The image to the right, taken by Craig Pessman of Illinois Athletics, shows the Illinois fans running onto the field following the win. It is considered one of the biggest college football upsets of this season.
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New Director of the ISOA has been Announced

The Illinois School of Architecture has announced Francisco Javier Rodriguez-Suarez as the new Director of the School. Rodriguez-Suarez previously studied at Georgia Tech, Universite de Paris, and the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He was also recently recognized as an AIA Fellow as well as a Distinguished Professor of the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA). Rodriguez Suarez most recently served as the ACSA Distinguished Professor of Architecture at the University of Puerto Rico. He also served as the Dean from 2007 to 2016.
Alumni News, Awards, and Recognition

Mike Toolis (BS ’74, MArch ’76, MBA ’77) received the 2019 FAA Distinguished Legacy Award on September 6. Michael Toolis has spent the past 40 years practicing architecture with specific expertise in hospitality and workplace design. During his career, he built and managed VOA Associates, a 350-person international design firm headquartered in Chicago with offices in New York, Washington DC, Orlando, Beijing, Shanghai, and Sao Paulo. The firm’s expertise included healthcare, department of defense, residential, hospitality, workplace, and higher education, and received over 300 awards for design excellence. He believed in continuous improvement and strove to be the best design firm in the world before being acquired by Stantec.

Robert Kleinschmidt (BS ’63) received the 2019 Illinois Arts Legacy Award on September 6. Robert Kleinschmidt joined the Chicago office of Skidmore, Owings, & Merrill in 1964. In 1976 he left SOM to establish the firm of Powell/Kleinschmidt, Inc., based in Chicago and specializing in interior architecture and space planning. A pioneer in modernist interior architecture and an avid art collector, Kleinschmidt’s work in Chicago has defined mid-century interior design in North America. In addition to being a longtime generous supporter of the Krannert Art Museum, Kleinschmidt’s philanthropic endeavors include serving on the board of the Mies van der Rohe Society and restoration work on the Mies van der Rohe buildings at Illinois Institute of Technology. He has also been engaged with the River North Dance Chicago benefit committee in assisting and securing auction items for their annual gala.

Michelle Ryland, recent graduate, licensed Architect and licensed Structural Engineer, was selected as the Outstanding Young Engineer Award Recipient by the Structural Engineers Association of Illinois!

Made Yudha, recent graduate, was selected to receive the Chicago Committee on High-Rise Buildings (CCHRB) Scholarship.

Congratulations to Professors Marci Uihlein and Sara Bartumeus for organizing a very successful Women’s Reunion + Symposium that took place on September 26-28, 2019!

Among our guest speakers were Kathryn Anthony,
Faculty News, Awards, and Recognition

The Illinois School of Architecture is pleased to announce that Suchi Reddy, founding principal of New York-based architecture and design practice Reddymade, has been appointed as the Plym Distinguished Visiting Professor in Architecture for the fall 2019 semester.

Professor Jeffery S. Poss, FAIA, retired from the University of Illinois on August 30, 2019, after 30 years of service to the School of Architecture. Professor Poss held the Interim Director role from 2017–19. Also retiring from the School of Architecture is Associate Professor Therese Tierney (2009–19).

Associate Professor Abbas Aminmansour was invited to the Blue Ribbon Review Panel by the American Society of Civil Engineers. Prof. Aminmansour was also interviewed for a six-part mini-series titled Skyscrapers: Engineering the Future that will run on the Science Channel.

Professor Kathryn Anthony participated as an invited panelist at EDRA on a session on “Developing Perspective: How to Put Academia (and Life) in its Place.”

Professor Sara Bartumeus presented a paper at the 4th International Conference in Greece on June 25 titled, “Fertile Grounds: Emergent Ecologies and Commons.” Professor Bartumeus also received 1st place in the Urban Landscape Studies Competition for Lot 1. New Left Example neighborhood, Urban Landscape Municipal Instituted, City of Barcelona.

Interim Director & Professor Mohamed Boubekri along with Professor Kristen Bub from the University of Georgia with two of their graduate students (Kate Curry and Jaewook Lee) will be presenting a paper titled “Let There Be (Day)Light: Investigating the Links between Classroom Daylighting, Sleep and Learning-Related Skills” at the American Educational Research Association Conference to be held in San Francisco in April 2020. This study exploring the benefits of daylight on elementary school children was supported by the National Institutes of Health (NIH).

Assistant Professor Christina Bollo presented research at the EDRA Conference in New York as well as the ARCC in Toronto this summer.

Assistant Professor Aaron Brakke was awarded First Place in the Bogota Biennial.

Associate Professor Lynne Dearborn was a panelist at the UIA International Forum in Baku; represented ACSA at the Council of the International Union of Architects; and participated in the Accreditation Review Forum in Chicago with Boards of 5 NAAB Collaterals + NOMA & CCCAP.

Clinical Associate Professor Randall Deutsch gave a keynote at the NCARB Summit w/ Renee Cheng; keynoted DFC (6 times) across Australia; keynoted
Assistant Professor Aneesha Dharwadker won Second Place in the 2018 Chicago Prize Competition.

Associate Professor Kevin Hinders taught U of I Campus Honors Students and University of Arkansas Landscape Students in Rome in May. Professor Hinders also completed The Regan House at 1212 Windsor Road in Champaign, IL, for occupancy.

Lecturer Tait Johnson commissioned to develop the historic district master plan for Franklin Park, Bloomington, IL, and presented a research paper at the Chicago Construction History Society of America Conference titled “Enemies on the Same Side: Alcoa, Reynolds, and the Battle for Progress.”

Assistant Professor Sudarshan Krishnan presented a paper, organized, and chaired the Architectural Engineering Division’s technical sessions at the American Society of Engineering Education (ASEE) 2019 Conference in Tampa, FL. The title of his paper, co-authored with PhD student Yuan Liao, is “Integrating Shelter Design and Disaster Education in Architecture Curriculum.”

Teaching Assistant Professor Andrea Melgarejo de Berry was on the design team for the exhibition “Revealing Presence: Women in Architecture at the University of Illinois, 1874-2019” that was held at Krannert Art Museum as part of the Women’s Reunion & Symposium.

Andrea also collaborated on a design remodel and expansion of a single-family house in Asuncion, Paraguay.

Professor and former Interim Director Jeffery Poss continued design work for the Solon Redux: 21st C insertions into 19th C Victorian House in Champaign.

Student News, Awards, and Recognition

Yu-Lun Hsu and Ali Gholamabbas won second place in the 2019 Graduate Award in Architecture student competition for their entry Hybrid Network. Yu-Lun and Ali developed their entry in Therese Tierney’s fall 2018 graduate design studio.

Cyrus Amani, Osiel Guzman, Himangshu Kedia, and Wei Che Chang won third place in the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) Timber in the City competition. The students developed their entry in Lecturer Tait Johnson’s independent study course Arch 597.

Graduate students Aaron Deroux and Jacob Bartels were recently awarded second place in the 2019 ACSA Built2Last International Student Concrete Design Competition for their entry “The A.R.C.” In addition, Shelby Orr and Caroline Bair were awarded honorable mention for their entry “[En]Durability.” Both projects were completed during the spring 2019 semester in a graduate studio instructed by Lecturer David Emmons. The winning designs will be exhibited at the ACSA 108th Annual Meeting in San Diego, CA, in March 2020.

“PERPETUAL MOTION” by student Alexander Brosh, sponsored by Associate Professor Erik Hemingway, won an honorable mention in the ACSA 2019 Steel Design Student Competition. Located at O’Hare airport in Chicago, the project uses steel in an innovative way to rehabilitate and shift existing travel constraints. Read more.

PhD Candidate Nastaran Shishegar and Professor Mohamed Boubekri presented a paper titled “The Potential of Tunable White Lights to Improve Quality of Life in Older Adults” at the 2019 Illuminating Engineering
Society (IES) Annual Conference in Louisville, KY, August 8–10, 2019. The two will also present a paper titled “Tuning Environmental Lighting to Improve Sleep Quality and Cognitive Performance in Older Adults” at the Gerontological Society of America’s 71st Annual Scientific Meeting in Austin, TX, November 15–17, 2019. The Journal of Innovation in Aging published an abstract of this paper. Nastaran Shishegar was also invited to give a talk at the Chase L. Leavitt Graduate Building Science program of the School of Architecture at the University of Southern California. The invited lecture was about the healing power of light for older adults.

In Memoriam

Message from Jane Block, Professor Emerita

Chris Quinn passed away on Wednesday September 18, 2019, at 8:07 am at age fifty-eight at OSF Richard L. Owens Hospice Home in Peoria, IL after a valiant fight combatting congestive heart failure.

The major love of Chris’ life was Ricker Library of Architecture and Art at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign. He was serving as interim head, as he had done on several previous occasions, until illness overcame him. Chris was devoted to Ricker’s welfare and improvement since he first stepped foot through its doors in 1986. He held a myriad of positions within Ricker Library before entering the tenure track in 1995. As a native of Champaign, IL, and a history major, he was fascinated by history and especially local stories. So, it seemed only natural that he would explore the area in which he resided to achieve promotion to Associate Professor in 2001. He based his research agenda on a series of useful articles on Nathan Clifford Ricker investigating Ricker’s role at the University of Illinois as a translator and educator. In addition, he published on the history of the Krannert Art Museum and analyzed the journals published by Schools of Architecture over the decade of 1987–97 (published in Art Documentation, vol. 21:1 (2002): 36-42). These articles have proven to be seminal in their explanation and interpretation of visual culture at the University of Illinois. In addition, he provided service to the profession, holding membership in the Art Libraries Society of North America (ARLIS) and served on its research committee from 2001–04 as well as ARLIS Midstates where he chaired the chapter from 1997–98 and co-chaired its fall meeting held at the University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign, in 1995. Chris was also a member of the Association of Architecture School Librarians as well as the Society of Architectural Historians and the Illinois State Historical Society.

Of greater importance to Chris, however, was his mentoring of thirty graduate assistants over the course of the years that have gone on to hold key positions in major libraries. In addition, a generation of undergraduate and graduate students from the College of Fine and Applied Arts can look back from their successful careers, wherever they may be, and remember the invaluable help Chris gave them to finish term papers, semester projects, or solve research problems. Chris simply gave his all and worked with them no matter how long or complicated the problem was. Chris was equally resourceful and generous in assisting faculty, remembering their research interests and putting materials in their grateful hands. Chris simply had one of the world’s kindest and sweetest dispositions. And he was patience personified. For me, working beside him for over twenty-five years was a joy and a privilege. I know his loss will be felt deeply by all who knew him.
9/16
Collective Poetics
Ana Valderrama &
Marcelo Barrale
TBH @ 5pm

9/26-28
Women’s Reunion & Symposium
Lectures | Panels | Exhibits

10/2
Extraordinary Architectural Experiences. From Storytelling to Neuroscience
Julio Bermudez
TBH @ 5:30pm

10/14
Following Modernism
Benjamin Hartigan
+ Housing the Global Citizen
Aaron Hodges
TBH @ 5pm

10/23
The Universal Attraction to Vitality and its Role in Architectural and Urban Design
Colin Ellard
TBAG @ 12pm

10/24
1919: Black Water on Painting, Climate Change, and the History of Environmental Segregation
Torkwase Dyson
TBH @ 5:30pm

11/4
Kinds of Space
Sergei Cipshtain
TBH @ 5pm

11/18
Building Intervening Connecting
Gong Dong
Seventeenth Church of Christ Scientist @ 5:30pm

12/10
Form Follows Feeling
Suchi Reddy
TBA
ETHOS & EXPERIENCES
A Conversation with Suchi Reddy
ABOUT SUCHI

Suchi Reddy grew up in Chennai, India. She came to the United States at age eighteen and completed her architecture degree at the University of Detroit. Following graduation, she worked at Arquitectonica, Polshek Partnership and Gabellini Sheppard, before subsequently starting her own practice - Reddymade - in 2002.

With a masterful ability to manipulate architectural elements - from color combinations of tiles, facade integration of a building, and knowledge of the intersection of architecture and science - her work depicts expressions of neuroaesthetics and architectural perspective.

She is a member of the Van Alen Institute of Leadership Council and Board Member for the Design Trust for Public Space and Storefront for Art and Architecture.

In 2002, she founded Reddymade in New York City. Her firm’s work focuses on the facets of architecture relating to economic, social, environmental, and cultural dimensions of human life. Reddymade has received numerous awards, including NYCxDesign, AIA Brooklyn + Queens Award, AIA New York State Excelsior Award and Interior Design’s Best of Year Awards.
"These influences made the house a protagonist in the story of my life, giving me a deep sense of the power of architecture. It made me think about how to authentically make architecture."

Ricker Report: One of the things that you speak about often is the idea of ‘form follows feeling’. What was the genesis of that idea?

Suchi Reddy: Well, where does any idea come from, right? Somewhere else - as they say. I grew up in a house, that as a child, had a profound effect on me. It was, unusually for those days, designed by an architect who was an autodidact, and very much influenced by Japanese architecture. It was open to gardens on four sides and it had large courtyards in the middle. These influences made the house a protagonist in the story of my life, giving me a deep sense of the power of architecture. It made me think about how to authentically make architecture.

One of the questions that really interests me - and also troubles me - is this idea of authenticity. I was exposed to a lot of contemporary theories when I was in college. None of them had the kind of meat that I really wanted to dig my teeth into. I started thinking about what makes authentic architecture. I realized, authentic architecture has to come from how spaces make people feel. ‘Form follows feeling’ became my mantra.

As architects, I feel that we have ceded power and agency to the forces of capital and technology. Bringing the focus of architecture back to the democratic space of the body - one that we can all understand - despite the differences we see in our
volatile times, can be a way for us to move forward, and recalibrate our agency as architects within our culture.

RR: You talked about how Japanese architecture has influenced some of your designs. Do you feel that there is anything else that influences your design?

SR: One of the things that is really important to me - and a principle that influences me whenever I start a project, whether it’s working with my students or in my office or with clients - is this sense that I am really honored and humbled to be an architect every day. I am honored and humbled because what we do is uniquely suited to serve humanity.

No one else can do it in the way that we, as architects do, and I am constantly reminded of that. It is also the reason that I am never bored in my life. I can be completely fascinated by the edge of a table because I am thinking about how that was made, and what the materials were, and where they came from, and what the carbon footprint was, and ‘could it have been done better?’ This kind of wonder and joy in life that architecture gives me, I’m eternally grateful for. It is one of the biggest influences in the work that I do.

I do not necessarily have stylistic influences. I will say that I have influences of ethos, and those can range from all kinds of things — from readings
by neuroscientists to philosophers to poets to architects. Culture and artistic thinking really guide my perception of what I think might actually be useful as a conversation, whether it’s in a project or whether it’s in a larger context.

**RR:** We already talked about how sensory design can define the narrative and how we can create architecture as a way to help the world. What would you say would be the narrative moving forward in design?

**SR:** I actually have trouble with the word ‘narrative’. I think we have really developed as a culture an excessive bent towards narrativization. I think this trend has been accelerated by social media. Even before people have an experience, they are already processing how they want to talk about it. To me, that negates the idea of experience. It negates the idea of architecture. Architecture exists in time, space, and motion. Thus, we have to experience it in all of those forms to really feel its power. Whichever way we get around to exploring this principle in the future, I do not have any specific predictions for how it will go. I will say that our interest in sensory design and the great work that my studio is doing is really heartening.

I am seeing themes in the way that people are
"I will say that I have influences of ethos, and those can range from all kinds of things — from readings by neuroscientists to philosophers to poets and architects. Culture and artistic thinking really guide my perception of what I think might actually be useful as a conversation, whether it is in a project or whether it is in a larger context."
thinking about space – I call them ‘natural themes.’ ‘Natural themes’ tend to be things that come out of history through unconscious exploration. I can not predict what kinds of architecture will emerge in the future, but I will say what you all are inheriting is an incredibly fertile place for ideas and for placemaking.

You are going to be in the world of self-driving cars. You are going to be in the world of travelling to other planets.

These things can be real for you. I think every generation has to really think about what their contribution to the field is, and to the history of it. I do not have any predictions, but I do have some warnings.

RR: What are some of the warnings?

SR: Make sure not to narrativize so much. Be present. Be really present and think carefully about the contribution of what you are doing. Think about why you are doing something first and foremost, and not so much about what you are doing until it fulfills your ‘why.’
HSINTA ECOLOGICAL POWER PLANT

NATURE + POWER = NATURE + CULTURE
Inspired by the natural beauty of the site and surrounding wetlands our concept creates a new vision for the Hsinta Ecological Power Plant, not just as a power generating complex, but as a park and cultural destination like no other. Designed as an elevated terrace that hovers over the plant, the new park houses a museum for the environment that will feature and focus on local nature and cultural histories. Along with a restaurant, viewing tower, outdoor theatre and biking trails, the park affords stunning views of the surrounding area. On axis with the historical architecture, the viewing tower provides a perspective on the past and the future.

The new power plant is organized along the Hsinta Road. Screened by perforated brick walls that recall the historical architecture of the area, and by a billboard screen designed to announce its ecological mission, the plant is integrated into its natural and cultural environments.

The roofs of most of the buildings receive inclined photovoltaic panels to add an architectural and ecological layer to the roofline. The chimneys are clad in reflective torqued metal, turning the tallest elements of the plant into a slightly distorted refraction of the surroundings, to represent man's interventions into nature. The transmission towers, situated in the wetlands are designed as birds flying above the landscape. The design of the buffer zone and flood retention area are integrated into a landscape that is drawn from the text: 'NATURE IS POWER - POWER IS NATURE'.
BILLBOARD WALL AT WEST FACADE

SITE VIEW LOOKING NORTH
Women’s Reunion + Symposium
Illinois School of Architecture

Share Your Stories | Expand Your Network | Come Make Change
KEYNOTE LECTURE
Ruth Baleiko
The Miller Hull Partnership
Seattle, WA

OPENING SESSION
Welcome: Sara Bartuemus & Marci Uihlein, Associate Professors, ISoA
Dean Kevin Hamilton, College of Fine & Applied Arts
Kevin Erickson, Associate Director Graduate Studies, ISoA
Opening Speaker: Kathryn Anthony, ACSA Distinguished Professor, ISoA

PANEL: EXAMINING FOUNDATIONS
Moderator: Heather Grossman, ISoA
Deven Gibbs, U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, Chicago, IL
Jenna Goebig, Facebook, Chicago, IL
Tiffany Liem, WeWork, New York, NY
Eleanor Gorski, Department of Planning and Development, Chicago, IL

OPENING RECEPTION
AT EXHIBIT
Revealing Presence: Women in Architecture at the University of Illinois, 1874-2019
Krannert Art Museum

KEYNOTE LECTURE
Dina Griffin, Interactive Design Architects, Chicago, IL

26 Thursday, September
27 Friday, September
PANEL: MAKING ARCHITECTURE
Moderator: Christina Bollo,
Associate Professor, ISoA
Michelle LaFoe, OFFICE 52 Architecture, Portland, OR
Brodie Bain, Perkins + Will, Seattle, WA
Angela Hurlock, Claretian Associates, Chicago, IL

PANEL: STUDENTS ASK THE QUESTIONS

DINNER
In Conversation with Illinois Medal Recipient
Carol Ross Barney, Ross Barney Architects
Patricia Saldaña Natke, UrbanWorks Ltd.

PANEL: BUILDING COLLECTIVE
Moderator: Lynne Dearborn,
Associate Professor, ISoA
Kim Johnson, Interactive Design Architects, Chicago, IL
Molly Murphy, Gensler, New York, NY
Ingedia Sanchez, SOM, Chicago, IL
Korey White, DLR Group, Chicago, IL

KEYNOTE LECTURE
Patricia Saldaña Natke,
UrbanWorks Ltd., Chicago, IL
WOMEN’S REUNION & SYMPOSIUM

KEYNOTE LECTURE
Ruth Baleiko
The Miller Hull Partnership
Seattle, WA

OPENING RECEPTION AT EXHIBIT
Revealing Presence: Women in Architecture at the University of Illinois, 1874–2019
Krannert Art Museum

DAY 01
THURSDAY
SEPTEMBER 26, 2019
I think what is good about this is that if you can see it you can do it. I think that seeing and hearing all these stories being told show the trials and triumphs of the profession. This is good to hear because you have something to aspire for and even for established professionals to hear other women’s stories about things that happen on the job site. I think it is something that is powerful, and it sticks with you and it gives you the encouragement to continue.”

- Alycia C. Belton (B.S. 1990, M.S. 1992)

Interview with Nesma Hamouda (B.S. 2018)

Ricker Report: Currently in your second year as a graduate student, how do you think this event will impact you?

Nesma Hamouda: Hearing from many established women who have gone through the same educational program as me and have taken so many unique career paths afterwards, this event has unveiled the number of opportunities that are out there.

Whether it’s through architecture or a complimentary field, I am inspired to challenge myself to contribute to the greater whole.

Interview with Interim Director, Mohamed Boubekri

Ricker Report: How do you think the Women Symposium has an impact on providing context for current women in architecture?

Mohamed Boubekri: I am thinking of that freshman female architect or female student that comes into this program and looks at the number of great female architects who have come before them, both in terms of quantity as well as the quality of work. [I’m] just thinking of what [this means], these [projects] that young freshman female architects must be thinking about right now. They see all this work and obviously it is great, it’s a great lesson to learn from [and see]
other pioneers [who] have come before them. They have forged the way and the way is a lot clearer now than it was 20, 40, 50 years ago. I was just looking earlier at the very first female architect from 1878, so you start from there and you go all the way to this moment here. This is fabulous.

Ricker Report: What was your first impression of the exhibit itself?

Mohamed Boubekri: I was honestly blown away because I had not seen it before today. I was blown away particularly by the visuals in the other room where you can see the years and the number of participants and graduates. It is just incredible and that just tells you the whole story right there, in terms of where the profession is, where it is going, the impact of women, and the importance of what women have done. This is incredible. I am really glad we are doing it.

Interview with Geraldine Kelley (B.S. 1981)

Ricker Report: What was your first impression of the symposium when you walked in?

Geraldine Kelley: My impression was that this was fantastic. All these women in one place. It really was amazing.

Ricker Report: What are you most looking forward to this weekend?
Geraldine Kelley: Hearing other women’s experiences. I am the first woman in our firm and there are a couple more now but it has been a male dominated field. It will be interesting to trade stories and share experiences.

Ricker Report: How have you been promoting women in architecture?

Geraldine Kelley: Most of our work is for non-profit agencies and a lot of them are headed by women. We are like minded in thinking and providing for families and for the homeless. One project displayed here is called “New Moms”. It was for pregnant homeless teens and so the whole thinking around motherhood came naturally of course because of the women and it was interesting because the construction team was headed by women. So it was a very interesting experience because of the women architects, the women contractors, and the women clients.

Interview with Sarah Patterson (B.S. 2015) and Rebecca Anderson (B.S. 2015)

Ricker Report: What was your first impression when you walked into the exhibit?

Sarah Patterson: The graphics are phenomenal and I can just see that a lot of work has been put into really figuring out the fact that women have had on architecture as well as just over time it has changed and that there are a lot more women in the field.
Ricker Report: What is your impression on all of the exhibits that promote the fact that all these great female architects have come out of this school?

Sara Patterson: I think that this is something that I am very aware, and I am actually signed up to take my first ARE in one month.

Part of the reason why I am doing it [getting licensed] is just so that I can add another data point to moving the scales towards having more licensed female architects. A lot of females get pushed out of the workspace as they have family obligations and other [responsibilities] that society puts on us. As there is a bigger force of women in the field it helps everybody band together and make structural changes that enable people to stay at work even if they decide to have kids.

Rebecca Anderson: What she is saying is spot on. These kinds of conversations are very important across all fields. This symposium is just great for the conversation and just figuring things out beyond architecture as well as within.

Interview with Maya Krolikowski (B.S. 2015)

Ricker Report: What were your thoughts of the exhibition?

Maya Krolikowski: Obviously that was one of my favorite things because it was tangible, it was documented, I even saw friends share on Facebook who didn’t even go to U of I like “look at this exhibit!” and I’m like “yeah I’m a part of that exhibit!”. That was so cool that was being shared on the Internet. So, it made waves, and I think that alone was really powerful.
"I really enjoyed all the panels, as I felt they all brought a different perspective to light. I especially enjoyed the exhibition of female architecture graduates from UIUC over the years. As a visual memoir, I thought that it was tangible evidence that the profession has been changing and continues to grow in a direction where women are not only present but becoming leaders in architecture."

- Nesma Hamouda (B.S. 2018)
FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 27, 2019

OPENING SESSION
Welcome: Sara Bartuevus & Marcie Uihlein, Associate Professors, ISoA
Dean Kevin Hamilton, College of Fine & Applied Arts
Kevin Erickson, Associate Director Graduate Studies, ISoA
Opening Speaker: Kathryn Anthony, ACSA Distinguished Professor, ISoA

PANEL: EXAMINING FOUNDATIONS
Moderator: Heather Grossman, ISoA
Deven Gibbs, U.S. Department of Housing & Urban Development, Chicago, IL
Jenna Goebig, Facebook, Chicago, IL
Tiffany Liem, WeWork, New York, NY
Eleanor Gorski, Department of Planning & Development, Chicago, IL

KEYNOTE LECTURE
Dina Griffin, Interactive Design Architects, Chicago, IL

PANEL: MAKING ARCHITECTURE
Moderator: Christina Bollo,
Associate Professor, ISoA
Michelle LaFoe, OFFICE 52 Architecture, Portland, OR
Brodie Bain, Perkins + Will, Seattle, WA
Angela Hurlock, Claretian Associates, Chicago, IL

PANEL: STUDENTS ASK THE QUESTIONS

DINNER
In Conversation with Illinois Medal Recipient
Carol Ross Barney, Ross Barney Architects
Patricia Saldaña Natke, UrbanWorks Ltd.
Student & Professional Excerpts from Panel: Students Ask the Questions

Student Moderator (Damla): Hi my name is Damla and I am a sophomore. My question for you all is why and how did you decide to attend the University of Illinois for your architecture degree and what other degrees do you possess?

Professional: I grew up in a small town, I did not understand that there was a person that could do all these cool things with buildings. I did not realize that there was a profession called architecture. I was a freshman in my French class and a friend came back from traveling in Versailles and she stopped by to say hi to our small French class. She told us about the amazing experiences studying in Versailles and taking architecture courses. My natural response was: ‘study where? What is architecture?’ Thus, I started researching more about it and told myself that I need to do follow this path.

I worked really hard and I was pretty good at math and engineering. Everybody kept saying: ‘you’re a girl and there are no women in engineering.’ With the love of art and drawing, I chose the University of Illinois specifically because of the Versailles program. It was an amazing experience. Another great thing about the University of Illinois was that it had a very technical program. I found that I still enjoyed the engineering side, so when I came back for graduate school, I did the structural option so that I could practice both as an architect and as an engineer. I could further understand the engineering and the architecture, utilizing my degrees. It was an amazing experience to take both of the things that I loved and create a professional path out of them. The
“You have to prepare for [different generations and levels of technical knowledge] once aspiring architects come into the workplace because you are going to be the ones who inspire younger interns and architects who are going to work at your firm. Think about more of what you can contribute to the profession, and to the knowledge of the profession. Keep reading, keep working, keep learning, from the past, the present and for what’s about to come. Make sure to just get out there.”
University of Illinois was able to help me achieve this because they had that opportunity to offer technical education.

There weren’t many universities that had dual programs at the time. So that was one of the reasons I chose the University of Illinois. I think a lot of my friends at the time asked why I wasn’t doing the design theory program and I really wanted to learn something that will be harder for me to learn out of the profession than in the profession. So when you are looking at school opportunities, you should look at how you can stretch what you learn because once you go out into the profession of architecture you have the rest of your life to learn how to integrate and design. Focus on the things that are harder to learn on your own or while you are working when you are looking at your other degrees or opportunities.

Professional: I am a 2012 graduate of the B.S.A.S. I
I don’t have the standard architecture background or one that necessarily ended up back in Champaign. I played with Legos when I was younger and was fortunate enough to. I know we talked a lot about mentors today, to have a coach and an advisor. My art teachers growing up played that role for me. Originally, I thought I wanted to be a surgeon, but my art teacher said, “you like art and a lot of things, so why not architecture?” My response was: “okay, why not.” Now I have had five years of practice and went to the University of Maryland for graduate school. Right out of undergraduate studies, I took a class to discover additional interests. If I had to give any advice about other degrees, I have a lot of amusing stories about allied interests.

I was fortunate enough to do an independent study with a professor at Maryland where we worked at doing a seminar which we could help undergraduates be exposed to different types of architecture and allied professions. So through that, I had an interest and took Paul Kapp’s course in historic preservation at Illinois. I loved it. Right out of school, I sought out my first job with historic preservation because I had to know more about that facet of architecture. I took a job as an intern at the Frank Lloyd Wright House and quickly discovered that I wanted to have both the architecture degree and the historic preservation specialty. So then I started looking for programs and I knew that the university had to have the dual master’s option. Following Illinois, I ended up at Maryland. I’ve been in Washington D.C. now for seven years. I encourage you – if you have an interest – to follow it because that’s usually where people follow their passion. I had somebody a really long time ago tell me that architecture alone will not keep you fully happy so you have to find that other thing that is allied with architecture that can really expand your career and connect your interests.

Student Moderator (Karen): Hi my name is Karen and I am a senior in architecture. My question is, as a student I have struggled with time management, so as a professional how do you manage your time?

Professional: I am going to answer your question and also wanted to answer the previous question. I also chose the University of Illinois. I am very proud of this university and my selection was because this is
WOMEN’S REUNION & SYMPOSIUM
one of the best universities, not only in the nation, but also our state. So I want all of you to be really proud that the class that you are graduating from, how many of our graduates in the real world are practicing architecture. From the directors of programs to the CEOs of the firms that you may be applying to, your college colleagues are all around you in the professional world. Many of them, especially in Chicago, have gone to the University of Illinois.

I am really grateful for all of us to connect and network with each other and be resources for each other. In terms of time management, I think it was touched upon briefly when we went over our schedules. I don’t want you to be afraid of settling and setting some boundaries with work and time management. I think in school we all go above and beyond in pulling all-nighters. We sort of carry that to the work force since we all start working. Thus, it is easy to wear out. I have actually quit two jobs because of the burn out.

Eventually, it simply took looking for the right kind of firm to offer you that flexibility to manage your own time. It is good to have good working habits and prove yourself at the position that you are working at in your firm. It is also good to set boundaries so that you say: ‘I have to end working at 5:30 or 6:00 tonight and I have other obligations at home to commit to’. It’s good to go above and beyond and give more than 100% at everything you do, including your job. However, it is also good to stay healthy and to take care of yourself, your friends, and your family. You should have relationships outside of work and also your hobbies. It is really easy to lose track of that and work 100 hours a week and 10-plus hour days. That’s just a side of your life that’s going by really quick.

Professional: I’m a project manager at my firm so one of the things that I help people do is figure out time management. So, regarding time management, the number one thing that you can do is not blame anybody else. If something’s not going your way, you don’t blame the engineer, you don’t blame the mailman for not bringing something, you don’t blame the computer for being down. You take ownership of what you were supposed to get done and when it’s supposed to get done. You have to make sure to maintain that. Whenever somebody gives you a task, ask them how many days or how many hours you have to complete it.

Always take ownership of that and say: ‘I have ten days to do this, and I’m supposed to be spending 20 hours on this.’ Once you get 10 hours through it, look at it and say, ‘am I 50% done with the work?’ or do I need to start working on this even more to try and get it done? So just make sure that with any task you get, ask yourself: ‘how long do I have to do this?’ Then write it down and put it in whatever task management programs you use, put it on your calendar, whatever your mentality.

Student Moderator (Jasmine): Hi, I’m Jasmine, a junior undergraduate student. My question is: during collaboration with other professionals, it must take a lot of collective understanding to complete tasks. What do you think it takes to be a good partner and teammate throughout each project?

Professional: I graduated in 2012 from the University of Illinois. I work at Aria Group Architects which is in Oak Park. We’re a 130-person cosmopolitan firm. We work on a lot of small-scale projects. We often have project teams and work with consultants when completing interior design work. You’re going to talk to consultants more – you’ll meet the engineers
and structural engineers on campus right now, on the north side of campus – but I’ve learned more from the engineers just within my first five years at the firm and just listening and absorbing as much information as you can from them.

Often times as a young professional you’re put into meetings with people who’ve been in the industry a lot longer than you. Of course you don’t want to come off in a poor manner, so asking questions and trying to teach yourself as much as you can from others’ experiences is a beneficial way to go. Learning from a collective community of professionals allows to better understand the plethora of building systems and how they’re integrated into each other. Architecture is just a small part of it. Talking to the community developers, the urban planners, the client, I feel like architecture school should have required, not a sociology class, but a class on dealing with how to talk to the people. Also a class centered around how to learn and how to design your ideas with effective communication while understanding the different specialties that everyone is bringing to the table. All of these experiences and qualities being brought to the table, allows you to learn how to use them to make a project the best it can be.

I feel like in the digital age, people email a lot. I often like meeting people in person to talk. The human contact and interaction build those relationships more effectively than if you’re just emailing for an entire project correspondence and not fully

“That’s the most important thing, to support a cause that you can get behind, and [that] you are passionate about, and you can put your full energy and your soul into it because that’s how you’re going to excel.”

- Maya Królikowski (B.S. 2015)
understanding the tone. You’ll be a fine project team for a whole year and multiple years if you’re working on large developing projects. Those relationships that you build with people outside of your firm are equally if not more important than the ones you build within your firm.

Professional: I chose the University of Illinois mostly because of the structures option which was not available where I am originally from. I became a licensed architect and a licensed software engineer. If somebody asked me how to work with engineers’, I think the best piece of advice that I can give in working with allied professionals: first of all, there are times where the architect does not know everything, and you don’t need to know everything. Sometimes there are other professionals who have more experience or more practice on the areas that you need to know. The second thing is that if you don’t know anything about a certain aspect, don’t be afraid to say: ‘I don’t have experience, I don’t have expertise in this area’. We will look for somebody with the expertise to help you.

Don’t be afraid of saying that you are not an expert on a certain aspect or topic of a building. There’s always another expert who knows how to do that. That’s the beauty of collaboration. You’re gathering experts and professionals from different areas of expertise who come together to try to solve the problem at hand. So there you have it.
“So in regards to time management, the number one thing that you can do is not blame anybody else. If something’s not going your way, you don’t blame the engineer, you don’t blame the mailman for not bringing something, you don’t blame the computer for being down. You take ownership of what you were supposed to get done and when it’s supposed to get done. You have to make sure to maintain that.”
Building Collective

- What efforts can be made to ensure that women are included in opportunities in the workplace?
- How do we find role models? How do we become them?
- What actions to change the field’s culture could be implemented to increase women’s representation/voice/impact?
- What is one collective thing we take away from this event?
- What next steps could the School of Architecture take to help build the collective?
WOMEN’S REUNION & SYMPOSIUM

DAY 03
SATURDAY
SEPTEMBER 28, 2019

PANEL: BUILDING COLLECTIVE
Moderator: Lynne Dearborn, Associate Professor, ISoA
Kim Johnson, Interactive Design Architects, Chicago, IL
Molly Murphy, Gensler, New York, NY
Ingedia Sanchez, SOM, Chicago, IL
Korey White, DLR Group, Chicago, IL

KEYNOTE LECTURE
Patricia Saldaña Natke,
UrbanWorks Ltd., Chicago, IL
“We need females to be vocal in all aspects and related organizations, and we need to step up and mentor those just entering or a few years into their careers. That’s what has really stuck with me since the event—that I need to be more open to discussing these issues both here at work as well as taking a more active role in some of the outside organizations. We can’t expect change to happen if we aren’t out there every day voicing our concerns in a constructive way."  

- Meghan Richard (B.S. 2001)

Interview with Eileen Schoeb (B.S. 1988, M.S. 1991)

Ricker Report: Overall what was your favorite part of the Women’s Symposium? Was there a discussion, panel or exhibit that resonated with you most?

Eileen Schoeb: I really enjoyed the Symposium and it is hard to pin this down to just one favorite. I thought the exhibit was very powerful, especially the first room with all the “highlighted” areas. You can really see the disparity as well as the “highlights” or “what needs to be improved”. It was great sharing with everyone that first night, meeting new people as you discussed your class, creating new connections that grew deeper as the conference went into the next two days.

I also loved the interview with Carol Ross Barney.

It was very inspiring and inciteful to hear from a prominent woman in the field. We were also sitting with students at our table and that was a great place to discuss, share, and answer questions.

Ricker Report: Who did you attend the event with?

Eileen Schoeb: I attended with my classmates from my undergrad class 1988. We all took one car down together and shared rooms. We also had a few friends from the class of 1986 that we have worked with now or in the past, so it really felt like a Homecoming.

Ricker Report: How was revisiting campus?

Eileen Schoeb: It was nice to see the campus again with my friends that have not been here since we graduated. Both of my daughters attended UIUC for
college, so I have been back many times. It was fun to reminisce in the Architecture Building, and TBH was not even built yet, so nice to explore.

**Interview with Meghan Richard (B.S. 2001)**

Ricker Report: Overall what was your favorite part of the Women’s Symposium? Was there a discussion, panel or exhibit that resonated with you most?

Meghan Richard: So many aspects of the Women’s Symposium resonated with me, it’s difficult to choose just one. The exhibit highlighting the women in each graduating class provided such a strong visual example of the path towards equity we women have been fighting for since the beginning of the field, but the final panel on Saturday morning, “Emerging and experienced voices discuss the strengthening of the collective voices of women in the built environment” is what I found to be the most thought provoking. I came back to the office, here at the Boston Planning and Development Agency, continuing to think about how we women can work together to keep making progress. I’m pleased to hear how some of the larger firms are making headway but hearing from the panelists also reminded me of how much more we need to do to truly be considered on an equal playing field.

Ricker Report: How was revisiting campus?

Meghan Richard: It was quite an interesting experience to be back on campus! The last time I had been back was in 2011 for a football game, and so much has changed even since then. I try to stay somewhat updated by following the different Illinois
social media accounts but seeing the changes both on campus and off in Champaign and Urbana in real life was quite extraordinary.

It was nice to reminisce and recall our time spent on the quad (I was quite impressed by the restoration of Lincoln Hall), and in the studios of both TBH and the Architecture Building, but it was quite eye-opening to see all of the changes on Green Street in Campustown as well as in downtown Champaign! I spend a lot of time reviewing new construction here in Boston, and it never occurred to me that both Champaign and Urbana are also experiencing that same amount of rapid change in terms of new developments offering luxury housing to students, etc. I also understand that the student population has grown quite a bit since when I graduated in 2001, so it makes sense that more housing is needed.
Ricker Report: Your Architecture career path took a non-traditional route. What is a takeaway from this event that you brought back to your professional life?

Meghan Richard: Yes, while my career path has been somewhat non-traditional in that I haven’t spent years working in an architectural firm, I certainly utilize both my undergraduate degree in architecture from Illinois along with my graduate degree in historic preservation every day conducting design review for the Boston Planning and Development Agency.

I routinely meet with developers, architects, landscape architects, property owners, contractors, and other City Agencies and Departments including the building department.
The progress towards equity within the built environment needs to continue within this larger field—in many instances, I’ve experienced more progress here in the public sector than you see in traditional architecture firms, but I don’t think that progress has occurred anywhere near as much as it needs to on the developer/contractor side of things. That progress needs to continue in roles beyond the traditional architecture firms and advocacy organizations like the AIA.

We need females to be vocal in all aspects and related organizations, and we need to step up and mentor those just entering or a few years into their careers. That’s what has really stuck with me since the event—that I need to be more open to discussing these issues both here at work as well as taking a more active role in some of the outside organizations. We can’t expect change to happen if we aren’t out there every day voicing our concerns in a constructive way.
Interview with Maya Królikowski (B.S. 2015)

Ricker Report: Having experienced the conversation between Patricia Natke and Carol Ross Barney at the dinner, what are some things you took away from the experience?

Maya Królikowski: Women are taking hold of their passions and their interests and pursuing them and just doing it not feeling like they must ask for permission or be a certain way or follow a certain man’s lead. Instead, [the attitude of] I’m going to trail blaze, and I’m going to trailblaze on a path that I support and that is good for our world and is inclusive and is diverse because that is what the future needs to hold for design. It’s not designed for the top two percent it’s really designed for everyone and especially for those who are underrepresented, so their voices are heard, and their futures can be brighter and stronger and better.

Ricker Report: Can you tell us a bit more about what you took away from the miscellaneous panels over the course of the last several days?

Maya Królikowski: I just think it was really incredible to see where women took their careers and how many options there are, and if anything, it’s super inspiring. There are a million things you can do, and all of these women are doing is continually successfully. It honestly kind of blew my mind. Just thinking of that, and how we have so many options as designers to do something that we really care about.

That’s the most important thing, to support a cause that you can get behind, and [that] you are passionate about, and you can put your full energy and your soul into it because that’s how you’re going to excel.

If anything, it kind of helped resemble this more diverse passive architecture and lift up those voices that aren’t heard as often or you don’t think of as often. I really appreciated the holistic view on what design could be, and different avenues of it. I mean, there was a woman from Facebook talking about her designing office facilities, and then another woman working with the city, and then there was so many different varieties [of pathways] that it was really great to hear those voices and hear those perspectives that you don’t usually hear.
noun: re-creation

1. “activity done for enjoyment when one is not working.”
ABOUT MARK

With a background in three-dimensional design, Professor Taylor has worked in the fields of interior design, construction management, architecture, and scenic construction for the film industry. His experiences have taken him across the US, Sri Lanka, and Haiti. He was the architectural faculty lead for the University of Illinois Solar Decathlon projects in 2009 and 2011 and is currently teaching design studios in the undergraduate and graduate programs, his popular graduate seminar offering aims to bring a sense of play back into the design process. Professor Taylor was recognized as an Outstanding Educator by the Central Illinois’ Chapter of the AIA in 2011 and awarded the Nathan Clifford Ricker Award in 2014. His work in Haiti following the 2010 earthquake was recognized with an Award for Excellence in Public Engagement by the University of Illinois in 2015. This year Professor Taylor became the chair of the Detail + Fabrication program area with a vision to strengthen collaborations with community and industry partners.

Education:
M.Arch, Illinois Institute of Technology; 2007
B.A., Brighton Polytechnic; 1990
Ricker Report: Can you start by telling us the story of your journey into architecture.

Mark Taylor: I guess my journey began when I started attending the Sir John Cass School of Art, Architecture and Design in London. At the age of seventeen I would commute on the Tube, two hours each way, from West London to the heart of London’s East End to attend what is colloquially known as the “Aldgate Bauhaus”. Following that yearlong foundation course I learnt so much, but still didn’t know exactly what I wanted to do, except I knew I wanted to keep making things. The craft-based design degree in Brighton was a good fit for me. The focus was on materials, specifically wood, metal, ceramics and plastics. Like my time at Cass the design prompts were very open ended, from the same starting point some students would create jewelry while others might create a chair. The teaching technique was very much focused on the process rather than the end result. That time in Brighton gave me an innate understanding of materials, their properties and potential, something I still draw on in my research today.

The period between my undergrad and grad-school was about 15 years. During that time I established my own product design company and worked as a carpenter creating luxury homes in London. In 1993 I decided I wanted to see more of the world so I bought a one-way ticket to Jakarta Indonesia with a plan to go wherever the breeze took me. For the next year and a half, I traveled through South East Asia, into India and finally flying back home from Nepal.

Almost as soon as I got back, I started making plans to return to Sri Lanka but this time with a little more purpose. Working through Voluntary Service Overseas (the UK version of the Peace Corp.) I was very fortunate to secure a position working with Ena De Silva, who was the interior designer for Geoffrey...
“...working in the film industry was very informative as I transitioned from making objects to creating space. The way a film set is created in relation to specific camera angles is very similar to how 3D modeling software is used in an architectural design studio. I often find myself encouraging students to storyboard a narrative for their designs as a way to really understand how it would feel to pass through a space.”

Bawa. That was an amazing experience to work on Geoffrey’s projects which integrate local craft and modern architecture. It was those two and a half years that spurred me to pursue a master’s in architecture at IIT in Chicago.

RR: What materials and technologies are you currently exploring at the University?

MT: Over the past couple of years with funding support from the Campus Research Board and the Student Sustainability Committee I have been investigating the properties of agricultural “waste” fibers and how they can be used in three dimensional assemblies. I was aware that Eric Benson, from Art & Design, was making paper from agricultural fibers so we met and wrote a research proposal to measure the structural and thermal properties of a number of different grass fibers. I am also working with Professor Trudy Kriven from Material Science and Engineering and Tim Stark from Civil and Environmental Engineering on a collaboration which will integrate the use of geopolymers with geothermal systems in the creation of sustainable heating and cooling systems through the use of materials with low embodied energy.

RR: What are you teaching these days?

MT: Currently, I’m teaching a graduate studio and I’m looking forward to teaching my seminar in the spring. In terms of the approach to my studio, for the past 4 or 5 cycles, I’ve been bringing my research interest in energy efficient and “sufficient living” into the design studio. This time we’re pushing those ideas forward through a competition to design a Micro House sponsored by the Bee Breeders Architecture
The Gable Home on the move from the I Hotel to its permanent location at the Energy Farm, 4110 S Race St, Urbana.
Competition Organizers, which adds an additional societal aspect to the challenge. In architecture we often look to sustainable technologies to maintain a particular life style, I think the studio asks a different question, how much of a building does one actually need to be happy and fulfilled.

RR: It'd be great if you could walk us through the process of how you approach a design or how you guide students through the design process in general.

MT: When I returned from working in Sri Lanka I was very lucky to secure a job working as a scenic carpenter on the set of The Mummy Returns. That period working in the film industry was very informative as I transitioned from making objects to creating space. The way a film set is created in relation to specific camera angles is very similar to how 3D modeling software is used in an architectural design studio. I often find myself encouraging students to storyboard a narrative for their designs as a way to really understand how it would feel to pass through a space. The film analogy is also useful to remember architecture is not static, even if its representation is often portrayed that way. Buildings are really the “sets” or the backdrops to our lives, experienced with all our senses, impacting our emotions.

RR: We know you like making things, what are you currently working on?

MT: Over the summer with my research assistant Luis Felipe Flores G we started the renovation and repurposing of Building 931 a small structure on the South Farms. Once the building is made watertight different grass fiber insulations will be installed to see how it performs over time. The grass fibers will be mixed with a lime binder and installed between the stud framing. If everything goes to plan in the new year we will have another installation of hemp, corn and miscanthus crete in a larger pole barn on the Energy Farm. I’m also looking to complete the work that started in 2016 when I taught a summer studio
Buildings 931 and students from Crop Sciences setting up this year’s hybrids and varieties of wheat.
focused on the needs of the non-profit organization Prosperity Garden. That’s an interesting project that will take a building that used to house evidence of crime and transform it into a hub for urban gardening.

RR: I see the prompt for your seminar: Work - Test - Flow is very open ended are you trying to emulate some of the guidance you received when you were at Cass and in Brighton?

MT: Exactly. I think it is important that somewhere in the graduate curriculum there be a place where students can blur the lines between work and play. I’m interested in the idea of “Flow”. As a designer/maker there are many times when your mind and body are engaged deeply in the process of creating, you are living and creating in the moment – this represents Flow to me and I find it regenerative to the spirit. In architecture, and increasingly with the shift to computer aided design the process of creating gets digitized to a point where it can become an unpleasant process. In the seminar I aim to have the creative process feel more like recreation rather than work. I encourage my students to think about the words Work, Test, Flow because for me collectively these words represent an expression of balance that I feel is important to work towards in ones academic and personal life.

RR: That sounds intriguing, what have the end results of the seminar looked like?

MT: Last Spring the output was interesting. One student, Justin MaCallister fully embraced the idea
of Flow, he got lost (in a good way) in the creation of a magnificent wooden canoe. Other students were interested in the thermal resistance tests I had carried out on different grass-cretes so we worked together, getting hands-on, taking that investigation to the next level by constructing a mock-up wall using hemp, corn and miscanthus crete as the insulation and interior finish material. The year before that I think I was in need of some recreation myself so I pitched the idea of making surfboards to the students and they all thought that would be an interesting challenge. I was working on the partial demolition of the building Prosperity Gardens had acquired from the city and instead of sending the ridged insulation to landfill we salvaged it and upcycled it to create surfboards suitable for surfing on Lake Michigan. That experience was certainly inspired by my time at Cass where I was taught how to “make do and get by”; in London we made pin-hole camera’s, a portable darkroom, and took photos along the banks of the Thames.

During my time in Indonesia I learnt to surf, and when I lived in Sri Lanka I would travel eight hours over a weekend just to get to the coast. But here in the middle of America, I have to “make do” with Lake Michigan! That said the process of making a board and riding it on a wave of any size can take you to a point where you are living in the moment, and that’s always a good place to be.
AARON BRAKKE
Awarded First Place at the Bogota Biennial for Public Space
ABOUT AARON

Aaron Paul Brakke is an architect and designer born and educated in the United States. He is Founder and Director of Design of Whiteknee. He worked with several avant-garde architecture firms in New York such as; Joseph Giovannini and at Architectonics (Winka Dubbeldam) prior to beginning his own design firm. He studied architecture at Ball State University where he graduated with a post professional degree in Architecture (MArch II). At this time he was involved in the development of an ACADIA Conference and became interested in researching the reciprocal relationship between the architect and the use of computation and digital fabrication. His educational background also includes an intensive study in Regenerative Ecological Design through the Ecosa Institute. This experience provided the opportunity to inhabit Arcosanti and dialogue with the visionary architect Paolo Soleri.

He spent a decade in the city of Bogotá, Colombia where he founded Whiteknee and was a Professor of Architecture at the Universidad Piloto de Colombia. At this institution, he founded the Center of Innovation which is a platform for transdisciplinary projects and offers access to resources such as digital fabrication equipment and workstations for simulation and visualization (VR and Augmented Reality). He is now Assistant Professor of Architecture at the University of Illinois Urbana Champaign where he founded and directs ILIAD Lab which works with communities on projects of co-creation where alternative futures are collectively envisioned and constructed. Much work has been done with communities inhabiting the urban periphery of Bogota. These zones have been informally developed at rapid rates due to the displacement generated by armed conflict in rural areas of the country of Colombia. This work has been published and presented in South America, North America and Europe.
Ricker Report: Would you be so kind as to give us an outline of the context of Whiteknee, your firm, and how the students of the University of Illinois got involved this past summer in Colombia?

Aaron Brakke: Whiteknee was founded 10 years ago. It is my design firm and we do a variety of projects at multiple scales. Most of our work has been completed in Colombia, where I was living prior to coming to Illinois (whiteknee.com). Some of this work includes pro-bono services to help communities that are grappling with the pressures caused by forced displacement. The way that this interfaces with UIUC is that I am very interested in continuing to help communities with architectural consultation, but also in understanding how these projects are helping develop solidarity for inhabitants. With the social aspect of the work we do, it is important to understand the impact that they have on the communities. Several students have expressed interest in my initiatives and I have created opportunities for them to participate. For example, this past summer Felipe Flores and Steven Ferroni traveled to Colombia with me to support the research of ILIAD Lab (Innovation Lab for Insurgent Architecture and Design). We are a multidisciplinary team of architects, landscape architects, an information scientist, physicist and engineer who are interested in social innovation and the co-creation of the built environment.

RR: Talking about Zig Zag Park specifically, could you describe what you and your colleagues found over the summer and how these findings lead to the first place in the Public Space management category?

AB: The political, social, and economic situation is very complex in Ciudadela Sucre. The community
“The main objective is to empower communities that have been displaced and neglected to envision alternative futures, build community, co-create and transform the built environment with them.”
was founded by “pirated” urbanization, which means that someone sold them fake deeds for the property. The level of organization is very low, it has been stricken by violence and illegal mining operations have adversely affected these people for years. In terms of their public space, the mayor’s office put in a soccer court as an effort, but then left an empty lot to the east for construction waste. What happens with many of these communities is that the government does not invest in infrastructure arguing that they are informal settlements and that people have illegally occupied the land. Take the site of the project, for instance. It has been inhabited for over 40 years and the majority of roads are still not paved. They now have access to piped water and sewage, but not long ago, people still had to walk with buckets to the closest waterway to carry water back to their homes. One of our simple, but important goals was to make the neighborhood more accessible. The lot was completely derelict before we did the park. In the surrounding streets, there were 5 “ollas” (places where narcotics and other controlled
substances are sold) and the empty lot was the place that many consumed drugs and drank. site of drug consumption and kids and young adults were. After the construction of the park, four of the "ollas" closed and now there is just one. Although you can still see what they call "nieros"(teenagers that are not great role models) that create a division in the space, there is a level of respect for the children. In our studies, we found that there much higher levels of involvement and the community is now more open and supportive of this reclaimed public space because it is benefiting their children. Zig Zag park has become a vibrant public space for families and friends.

RR: How do you see the project and the research done progressing into future work that you want to do in Bogota?

AB: The main question is: what is the impact, what is the value you are building with the community through the improvement of the built environment? We have found stories of other communities that have gone through similar steps, with very precarious conditions, where the government is even displacing people that occupied building lots informally. How do we as architects create stability in these communities and how do we empower inhabitants to actively pursue their rights to the city? In *Spaces of Hope*, David Harvey called for Insurgent Architects after noting that "The freedom to make and remake our cities and ourselves is...one of the most precious yet most neglected of our human rights." It is very inspiring to see communities working with architects and other members of academia to these ends.

With regards to the present and future: We are currently developing several projects in Colombia. We have started working with communities in Bogota to protect urban wetlands (humedales) and did a workshop in Tumaco (la Perla del Pacifico) with a community of recyclers that want to make a park for their kids. It would be great to continue to do projects in other countries too. Latin American countries have become urbanized over the past half century (from approx. 40% in 1960 to 80% now) and none of which were prepared to create adequate infrastructure for this explosive growth. Most urban areas have been playing catch up just to provide services to informally settled areas and have not yet addressed public space satisfactorily. The issue of forced migration is further exacerbating this predicament. For Colombia, this has been an important dynamic that has reshaped
the rural-urban relationship. This isn’t an isolated issue, we have started to see the effects of violence, political instability and volatility in the region. For example, we have started to work with many more Venezuelans than 5 years ago.

RR: Through your research and experience, how do you plan on continuing to convey these very relevant topics to the students at the University of Illinois?

AB: Developing possibilities for students to get to know these areas firsthand is a high priority. The idea of forced displacement is something that’s an extremely urgent issue for architects to address. At the global level, 70 million people have been displaced from their homes, many of them without or with very little, we really need to start thinking about other ways of occupying spaces and designing alternative futures that extend beyond humanitarian emergency shelter situations. A first step is to raise visibility by doing more projects with students and letting them engage with communities to create consciousness. Illinois students are very bright and have the potential to contribute, but will only start to think about solutions if they are exposed to these problems. Whenever you have a crisis of this magnitude, there are opportunities. I would welcome students to come and talk to me if they are interested in personal and professional growth, but also looking to innovate as we address one of the most important issues of our time.

RR: Your first project was for a young child with serious health issues that were not being properly dealt with due to the available infrastructure. Can you tell us about it?
FIGURES ON PREVIOUS PAGES: Photos of Ciudadela Sucre by Stephen Ferroni.
IMAGES ON THIS PAGE: Diagrams of Park by ILIAD Lab/Aaron Brakke/Felipe Flores.
AB: Brusly, named after legendary martial artist Bruce Lee, was displaced because of violence, forced off of his land and migrated to the city. His condition was very poor when I met him. The boy was malnourished, half of the size that he should be, and in need of surgery. His health was so fragile that the lack of sanitary infrastructure would put his life at risk, so he needed a bathroom. My first project was to work with him and his family to build a place for him to wash, bathe, and use the toilet. His story was very inspiring, and we raised funds through a foundation to improve his entire home. There have been other projects since then but there is always a great benefit in connecting ethical beliefs and civic engagement with research and teaching. There is a lot of opportunity for students and other faculty to get involved.

RR: Living in Colombia must have offered a firsthand experience of the consequences of economic inequality, which begs the question: what can we as architects do?

AB: There is a lot we can do. Here at Illinois, we are mapping inequality and social and spatial fragmentation to better understand what is happening. Graduate student Dipayan Ghosh using tools for space syntax to support this. We continue to do workshops with people from Europe, North and South America to work with communities. This summer we held one in Bogota and another in Tumaco, a city located on the Pacific Coast just north of Ecuador. Participants were immersed in local culture, ate sea food, saw whales migrating, etc. to build empathy which was crucial as we developed prototypes for several initiatives there. There will be more opportunities to participate and we hope to find funding to try to help support student travel. It would be wonderful for Illinois students to come down and spend time in South America with me.

RR: How do you think that the galardon will influence the perception that people have on those types of projects and how will that influence your future work?

AB: This recognition has and will influence the perception that citizens have of architects and the importance of public space. The jury noted the value of this project for the way that it is ‘building community’ through the making of a park. It was also important for the current mayor of Bogota, Enrique Peñalosa, to see this project. His administration understands the importance of vibrant public space and has dedicated significant resources to the making parks in the city, but also acknowledged that there are many parts of the city that still need attention. It is my hope that Zig Zag park helped one of the most powerful people in Colombia see that involving citizens in the design process can foster inclusion create greater impact as we address social and spatial fragmentation.
[Interview Portion 01] – Conducted Prior to Barcelona

Ricker Report: Could you tell us a bit about ARCH 551 - Structural Analysis [with Professor Marci Uihlein]?

Logan Whitley: ARCH 551 was challenging in the best way. Each week, Professor Uihlein introduced us to new concepts and methods and very patiently answered our questions.

Shelby Orr: ARCH 551 was a class for analysis of structures through differing methods. Professor Uihlein is an incredible professor and the students in her courses get along very well. This makes for a strong learning environment and an enjoyable class period.

Marci Uihlein: This class is often the first class students take if they are seeking to study one of the Structures specializations. It is like Statics, but with deflection and indeterminate structures. It is an intensive course with two homework assignments a week that cover the many analytical methods.

RR: The competition, held by Working Group 21, is quite a lot to undertake in a single semester. Can you give us insight into how you chose your design?

SO: Logan lived in Barcelona for a semester and he was inspired by their famous ceramic materials used throughout the city. That sparked the idea of using ceramic in an innovative manner. We went through several iterations before deciding on ceramic in tension and used the tensegrity sphere to achieve that idea. Logan designed the compression struts in the sphere so that the compression forces are resolved through tension.

LW: We started first by thinking about how a structure could relate to a place. As Shelby mentioned, since the place is Barcelona, we decided to explore the possibility of using ceramics as a structural material. There is good reason why ceramics are not the first choice of any structural engineer. But, the project challenges participants to innovate and try something new.

RR: How did the design and competition research progress over the last year?

SO: The design has not changed much. But the connections have changed a little as we discovered ceramic fiber is very brittle. If you tie it in a knot or pinch the material – it breaks. Most of our fiber connections were knots or clamps so we are in the process of designing new connections for those. We are also testing different materials to determine how strong they are and what is the best and lightest material to use for the compression members.

LW: The overall concept and design has not changed much from the original ideas. Tensegrity structures are a bit convoluted, so we have been focusing on getting the details right in order to ensure a smooth construction process.

RR: It is titled: Ceramic Tensegrity. What is the reason behind this?

LW: We are going to try and use ceramic fiber as the tensile members in the structure. Ceramics are brittle and usually have poor internal structures to resist a large amount of tension. However, new advances in ceramics research have led to the creation of high strength materials – while not ceramic in the traditional sense – still fall under the ceramic category.

SO: Ceramic is almost exclusively used in compression because it is a strong material when compressed. But under tension, as Logan mentioned, it is extremely brittle and breaks. Our idea is to use ceramic fiber in
“My overall goal is to develop my understanding of structures in a general. I know that might come off as a bland, but it is the truth. The physicality of the process is extremely eye opening and has led to many ‘light-bulb’ moments where I have matched a structural concept to a structural behavior that I am actually seeing.”
tension to hold everything together.

**RR: What is your goal for the competition?**

**SO:** The current goal is to finish the pavilion and get it to Barcelona. A secondary goal is to learn from the other teams there and to learn about their pavilions and how they solved their structural challenges.

**LW:** My overall goal is to develop my understanding of structures in a general. I know that might come off as a bland, but it is the truth. The physicality of the process is extremely eye opening and has led to many ‘light-bulb’ moments where I have matched a structural concept to a structural behavior that I am actually seeing.

**RR: What are some takeaways from the competition work and the ARCH 551 course that will benefit you down the road?**

**LW:** ARCH 551 was the deep end that I needed to be tossed into in order to grasp basic structural concepts. This competition is the deep end I am currently swimming in that is helping me understand the full process of construction from sketchbook ideas to organization of manufacturing and assembling of parts.

**SO:** I am currently a structural designer so I will be using the content of structural analysis a lot in my job. The competition was an enjoyable way to think about innovative structures and how to solve complex problems. Structural engineering requires innovative thinking similar to the pavilion competition.

**RR: How does this competition and course relate to your aspirations as professional architects/engineers?**

**SO:** As a structural designer, I want to create beautiful structures that inspire people. I think this project did that.

**LW:** I want to work on cool projects that present interesting problems, and this project has had no shortage of those. And, again, the project is helping with my overall understanding of structures.

**Interview Portion 02 – Following Trip to Barcelona & Construction of Pavilion**

**RR:** Can you tell us about your experience in Barcelona? How did setting up the project fair?

**SO:** The competition in Barcelona was an incredible experience in a lot of ways. It was intense. However, I learned so much in the process. The set up was harder than it was in the United States. We built all
of our members in our Airbnb about half a mile from the competition. During the process, we realized that a lot of our 3D printed components were fatigued from testing in the United States. Thankfully, we had enough that we were able to replace parts as needed and carry all the members to the competition as we assembled the pavilion. Three juniors from the architecture study abroad program helped us assemble as well. We had to build the pavilion flat and then lift it into a dome. When we lifted – we did not have enough people – so several things started breaking and it was challenging to get it off the ground. People around us managed to come and help until we lifted it off of the ground into the shape it stood for the competition.

LW: Overall the experience was great. Barcelona is an amazing city to spend time in and the IASS hosted a rewarding conference. The pavilions were built in a hotel ballroom with very little additional space to the 4 x 4 meters we were allotted. We ended up needing quite a few extra hands to lift our pavilion into place, as Shelby mentioned. Luckily, some of the UIUC students studying in Barcelona came to help, along with some students from a competing team from Leeds, UK. Once the pavilion was standing, we waited around to make sure nothing failed, and also to watch as conference participants stopped and curiously inspected the design.

MSU: Barcelona was such a great experience. It was wonderful to see the pavilion that Shelby and Logan designed come to life. The project and its design took about a year to come together and then to see it built was very rewarding. It was also incredible to see the pavilions from all around the world with...
ours among them. The conference was very fulfilling as many incredible engineers presented their work and even ideas in the making. Again, the participants were a very international group and high-quality research was shared through the paper sessions and presentations. It was also great to see Shelby and Logan present their project to a full room. Of course, Barcelona and its sights were a wonderful break from all of that learning!

RR: What were some additional experiences you enjoyed during the IASS Conference?

SO: I really enjoyed the plenary speakers. We had some top names in structural engineering give speeches that highlighted the research, they, or their firms are working on. Each was incredibly intriguing to learn about. It was very inspiring as well.

LW: Having the opportunity to be exposed to the vast amount of research and new ideas being presented by engineers from around the world was the best part for me. I attended presentations ranging from sustainable optimization of concrete slab designs to experimental kinetic trusses. Everyone there was very welcoming and seemed genuinely curious and excited about the work being presented regardless of the speakers’ background or experience level.

RR: Can you briefly explain the importance of the pavilion project and subsequent competition in a course such as Structural Analysis [ARCH 551 with Professor Uihlein]?

SO: The field of structural engineering is very specific and detailed in practice. The opportunity of designing and detailing a pavilion while thinking about all the little details and connections – how the forces would move through it and testing it in real life – helped me to better understand structures. Additionally the course and project showed me how the real world works from a professional level in a firm, as a structural designer. The leadership experience and being able to make real decisions that impact a structure was eye-opening and has allowed me to become more confident as a structural designer.

LW: The project allowed me personally to make connections between the structural concepts we were learning and the real-life structural behaviors. Our design process was centered around constructing and testing rather than numerical analysis. Thus, our results were physical rather than a number. By doing this, I was able to start to see what typical numerical analysis results mean rather than simply seeing them as a quantity of units.

RR: Having the pavilion project and subsequent competition as a part of a graduate course integrates studio-like environments in a structures course. Can you tell us about your reasoning to include the pavilion project as part of the ARCH 551 curriculum?

MSU: Structures is more than calculations. Ultimately, structure is both designed (in every sense) and a design element. I believe that we need to find opportunities to think about structure and design together and the pavilion competition was a perfect opportunity to do just that. It is important to me that students get asked to think beyond the pages of numbers to allow them to understand why they are doing that math. At the same time, we are studying structures in a School of Architecture, where we make, build, and fabricate. The pavilion project enabled the students to pull all together the various components of their education and follow a project through to construction. The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign is unique in its history of studying structure and architecture together, and the pavilion was an opportunity to continue this legacy as well as provide what I hope is a valuable learning experience for my students.
ABOUT KEENAN

Keenan Dailey is a multidisciplinary artist and Graphic Design MFA candidate at the University of Illinois. Dailey’s work is Afrofuturist in nature and resides in the realm of speculative design. His work relies on a brazen subtly, often utilizing the colors of the US flag to portray the camouflaged revolution, which is an assembly of the Afrofuturism, rage and double mindedness meant to represent the strength of those who have endured certain adversities.

Dailey was born an only child and raised by his mother in a single parent household on the west and south sides of Peoria, IL, respectively. At the age of twelve, Dailey’s mother was diagnosed with breast cancer. At the age of fifteen, Dailey and his mother would be evicted from their home on the west side of Peoria, IL and would move back to the south side of Peoria to live with his grandfather. At the age of seventeen, Dailey would experience the death of his grandmother Emma Dailey and the death of his grandfather Cleo Dailey Sr. two years after.

At the age of thirteen, the Dailey household would have its first computer. That computer came embedded with one core value: “fiscal opportunity.” For Dailey, escapism and the dream of financial gain were one in the same. This value would manifest at the age of fifteen and grow into full mobility at the age of eighteen. Ultimately becoming Dailey’s dive into digital discovery and mastery of form, it would be the escape he longed for. Dailey would sacrifice self-care, self-love and rest to escape poverty. It wasn’t until the age of twenty-one, when he met the love of his life Gertrude Namara, that self-reflection, emotional growth, and self-care would become – not only a goal – but a necessity.

All of these events in tandem have led to Dailey’s perspective on trauma and emotional oppression. These perspectives offered a new philosophy that seeks to place Black Americans in the context of afro-centric royalty and divination. The primary focus of those who’ve been marginalized, traumatized and caged in disparate realities – in hopes that through his medium he can drive and aid emotional autonomy, growth, mindfulness, and happiness.
Ricker Report: Originally planning on studying mechanical engineering at the University of Illinois, why did you choose to pursue an art background through Fine and Applied Arts?

Keenan Dailey: So when I first got into college I was pursuing a means for financial gain. I was trapped in the social dogma, that in order to succeed or be recognized as successful as an African American, I would have to follow the academic path into a STEM field. That was something that was encouraged when I was a high school and coming from a low-income background. I really felt like an [engineering college degree] was the only version of escape that I could find. I ultimately ended up choosing graphic design because I enjoy video games. I found an escape in video games as a kid. Of course, that ended up being the spark that would direct me towards graphic design as a major.

Tracing back to my early undergraduate years, when I was in STEM courses, I did not necessarily enjoy the classes. I did not find them particularly challenging, and in my opinion, I took issue to not being challenged on different levels by the material. I met with a mentor, TC, who led me to be more self-reflective and more introspective about my career goals. He was a big role model for me at that time and helped me reach the graphic design major. I ended up submitting my portfolio to the graphic design school and was able to transfer into it from the undeclared program I was originally a part of.

RR: Can you tell us a little bit about your work?

KD: So my work is of Afrofuturism nature. I did not originally know that it was Afro-futurist or that Afrofuturism was a cultural aesthetic and philosophy of art when I first started. I started making work in 2014 when I first became interested in digital...
illustration. This was directly following my transfer into the graphic design program that I really started to dive into digital illustration. I had been drawing and doodling my whole life – which drew precedent from comic books. I would look at my uncle’s and older cousins’ comics and would love to draw them. I thought less about stories when I was a kid but would love to just draw these figures, the scenes, and try to trace, copy or replicate anything I could from them. However, it wasn’t until 2014 that I would return to a more consistent artistic practice. I downloaded GIMP, a free raster manipulation program, as I didn’t have money for the Adobe Suite (or a laptop for that matter). I worked primarily from my desktop computer, which started my illustration journey.

RR: Since your transition to art, film, and digital artwork, how have you been able to be successful across a multitude of artistic disciplines?

KD: I feel as though I’ve been able to be successful across so many disciplines because of trauma that has occurred in my life. When you have such a deep level and understanding of the bottom you will always find any means to get to the top. Similarly described in my bio, even though I transferred out of the traditional STEM field, it does not mean that the embedded values of financial success dissipated. With that being said, the technical rigor with which I would approach my work in the graphic design program would be much greater than my peers due to this higher level of pressure and expectation.

Though I would not wish trauma on anyone in order to cultivate discipline, I would definitely say that it has had an effect on me. Problems continued as I would find myself technically strong, but I would not feel present in my work. I would not be able to hear
ASPIRING PROFESSIONALS

KD: Black women, in my work, are often deified. As I was raised by a single mother, and feel like my girlfriend has saved my life, I have high reverence for black women. Afrofuturism, in my artwork, is my perspective on hope. Studying under illustrator, Stacey Robinson, I have been able to get a clear understanding of what Afrofuturism actually is and its origins. More specifically, my expression of Afrofuturism looks at both nuance and the dark depths of trauma in order to bring forth hope.

RR: “Greene,” telling a story of a young gallery owner Marcus Greene’s struggle with life and coming to terms with his past, has been accepted into ten film festivals. Can you tell us about “Greene” and why you consider it a reflection of yourself?

KD: Greene came at such a pivotal moment in my artistic career (2017). I started writing this film in

RR: Your graphic work, “Calliope,” an Afrofuturistic depiction of a black woman, won Chicago Literati magazine’s 2017 cover-design contest and was also featured on Afropunk. Can you tell us a bit about your “Calliope,” and your Afrofuturism works?

KD: Black women, in my work, are often deified. As I was raised by a single mother, and feel like my girlfriend has saved my life, I have high reverence for black women. Afrofuturism, in my artwork, is my perspective on hope. Studying under illustrator, Stacey Robinson, I have been able to get a clear understanding of what Afrofuturism actually is and its origins. More specifically, my expression of Afrofuturism looks at both nuance and the dark depths of trauma in order to bring forth hope.

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KD: Greene came at such a pivotal moment in my artistic career (2017). I started writing this film in
January, finished writing in February, and started filming immediately after. During that time, I conducted all of the casting, all of the crew recruitment, and all of the marketing and fundraising only to result in a failed Kickstarter campaign. With no money, we were still able to pull it off. Additionally, this was during the spring semester of my fourth year. Greene was a beast of a project but I am so glad that I did it – from the screenwriting, the rehearsals, the filming, to the location searching – I was proud of all of the work that I put into this film. Outside of technique, the subject matter of the film follows a black Gallery owner struggling with depression. During this film, I dive into my own perspective on tonality, emotion, self-actualization, and betrayal. While not all of these facets are articulated in the story and plot, they are articulated through the tone, and directorial and editorial choices. I did not finish editing this film until August 2017. It released at its first film festival, the New Art Film Festival in Champaign Illinois two months after that.

RR: Along with your incredible artistic talents, you are also recording your own music, completing a visual album, and working on 3D animated music videos. Can you tell us a bit about these additional projects?

KD: The music production started freshman year during my undergraduate studies. I had always loved music. I loved to sing in church as a kid when my mom was a choir director. This eventually led me to performing at the cotton club variety show multiple years in my undergraduate. I would always freestyle with my cousin in his car on the way to martial arts practice. I had a friend on campus, Jeffrey Reed, who was a DJ and we would always go to black Greek parties. He would DJ and I would get into the parties for free and when we would head back to our apartment, he would make beats in his room. This served as an inspiration for me.

From then on, I knew I wanted to sing and rap on records. Something key stood out to me – I knew that I really wanted to make sure that my sound and the tones that I was creating came through crystal clear – so from that point on I produced a lot of instrumental music. It took until the release of my first album, “The First Decade” in 2016, for me to feel confident that I could create a strong project with solid sound, something that felt professionally concrete. During my music production tenure, I probably made about a hundred and fifty or more songs that have gone unreleased. Whether I am just laying down a simple melody, a whole instrumental song, singing on tracks I have made or freestyling, I just enjoyed the feeling of making music and still do.

In 2018 I released “Quasar”. Quasar was a big step up from “The First Decade”. I wanted to go all out and make something that was technically sound, wonderful to listen to, and professional. Originally, my 3D work started around 2016 with After Effects. Eventually, I got myself a student copy of Cinema 4D and started playing around with tutorials and production. Finally, this past summer, I entered into a professional 3D animation setting. I was commissioned by the band Elsinore to make a music video. They had seen Greene and wanted to do something for a song they were about to release. I felt it would be beneficial to go above and beyond for a 3D music video as I worked for about fifty hours designing and rendering an entire video off of one computer. I was really happy with how it turned out and was able to achieve something that could stand on its own professionally.

RR: You recently won the 2019 Student ACE Award from 40 North 88 West, the Champaign County Arts Council. Can you tell us a bit about the significance of this award and what it meant to you?

KD: I recently won the Student Ace Award from 40 North 88th West, which is the Champaign County Arts Council. It was incredibly intriguing and feels amazing to be able to say that I am an award-winning artist. I honestly never thought that I would receive something...
Keenan Dailey accepting his Student Ace Award from 40 North 88th West, the Champaign County Arts Council.
like this for my work. It feels surreal and I can barely begin to describe what [the award] meant to me. It felt like my story had been seen and that validation made me feel like my work has meaning.

RR: On a more personal note: who are your role models, or those who have helped you get to where you are today?

KD: My role models have been Raffeal Sears, Patrick Hammie, Linda Kwon, Ben Grosser and Gertrude Namara. All of these people have been instrumental in helping me get to where I am today. They have put in the work to hear me and help me articulate my unconscious mind which has been meaningful – not only to my artistic career – but to my life. I wouldn’t be the man, the artist, or the person I am today without those people leading, guiding, and aiding me.

RR: Do you have any advice for young artists that aspire to be like you when they grow up?

KD: Always be free in your expression. Never let anyone cage your emotional autonomy. Be rigorous and diligent in the way you bridge the gap of understanding between you and others. And never give up on any of your dreams.

“More specifically, my expression of Afrofuturism looks at both nuance and the dark depths of trauma in order to bring forth hope.”
“Red Tide”
“A Tale of Unrequited Burden”
“Ascension”
“Rebirth XV”
This 3-part vector series [pages 128 - 131] is called “The 7th Eye” which began February 8th, 2018 with the piece “A Tale of Unrequited Burden” [page 128]. This piece allowed me the space to explore American Black and Latino masculinity in an Afrofuturist context. Commissioned by the Black and Latino Male Summit of 2018, this piece served to be an introspection of ancestral divinity and spirituality that was set in contrast to the femininity that is inherent to the nature of masculinity. The series would continue September 23rd, 2018 with the release of the piece, “Rebirth XV”. “Rebirth XV” is a piece that served as an introspection on the legacy of American Black cognitive leaders. The series would come to a close with, “Ascension”, a piece that speaks to the Afrofuturist divinity of POC men. Commissioned by the Black and Latino Male Summit of 2019, this piece highlights the juxtaposition of peace and stoicism in Black and Latino Masculinity.
RETROSPECTIVE
IN CONVERSATION WITH PHOTOGRAPHER GYULL
AND PREPARATION FOR HIS FIRST EXHIBITION
Ricker Report: First and foremost, congratulations on the exhibition, I’m sure it has not been easy planning the exhibition simultaneously while in school. What is the title of the exhibition?

GYULL: Thank you so much. It was really tough for me to pull this through, especially because I am a full-time graduate student, but I am confident that it will be very meaningful to me and I hope it gives good feelings to anyone who sees my photos in the exhibition. It was really hard to come up with the title to be honest because most of my work is literally my own record of what I wanted to record. After having a conversation with a good friend of mine, we came up with the word, ‘retrospective’ and I really liked it as a main theme because it can be related to most of my work.

RR: When did you first gain interest in photography?

G: It was my junior year during my undergraduate studies when I first got a DSLR. I bought it because there was a coolness to those who carried a nice chunky digital camera. There was one event where I let my friend borrow my camera and she asked me where the white balance menu was on my camera, and I embarrassed myself by asking her what white balance was. That is when I started to actually dig in. She was like “you are the owner of this camera and you should know this” Now, I am waiting for someone to ask me about white balance [laughs].

RR: Since we began collaborating for this interview it seems like you never sleep [laughs]. How do you manage your time between being an engineering student and your creative endeavors?

G: I am a person who really needs sleep and can’t function without sleep, but I would rather sleep less to do something that I really enjoy. As much as I need sleep, I also need to work towards objectives that I am dedicated to, and that always drives me forward despite the fact that I might be tired.

RR: Are you interested in architecture? Are there any particular architects or structures which you like?

G: I originally wanted to study architecture. I still have a great interest in architecture because an architect’s thinking process towards the final work

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“I am trying to get to the level of making my images look like a scene from a movie. I really enjoy a cinematic look and when I get that image, I get really excited.”
is just amazing. When their creativity is applied to the complex system of lines of structures, it becomes a piece of art. It might be too typical, but I love Tadao Ando and Mies Van der Rohe, because I am a minimalist. I once went to Jeju Island in South Korea and had a chance to visit three different museum that were designed by Tadao Ando. One of the museums is named the walk-in trail as ‘infinite polaroid’ and I was able to tell right away where they got that name because it was frame after frame of nature. Simply, amazing works.

RR: With this being your final semester it is quite befitting to have an exhibition right before you graduate. Would you describe these images as a time lapse of your development as a photographer?

G: I think the question is already answered within the question. The exhibition’s works are composed of my work from where I first started photography to where I am now.

RR: Your images cover several subject matters and genres of photography, is there a specific story which you try to tell through your images?

G: As you can see in my work, my photos are very simple and don’t include many objects. I am trying to get better with making a storyboard and having better production, but I am afraid to go too in depth down this path because I think too many concepts make photos look unrealistic.

So, the main story of my photos would be to observe the details that you miss in your daily life because they are truly beautiful. I can honestly walk the whole day just watching people, trees, or buildings because they change constantly and that keeps me looking around.

RR: You don’t limit yourself to one specific genre of photography, you shoot portraits, street photography, and landscape. Is there a particular genre which you prefer?

G: I started off as calling myself a portrait photographer, I still prefer portraiture, but more street portrait photography because I feel a picture is more alive when people are unconscious.

RR: I am a fan particularly of your street photography and portraiture, there seems to be a great amount of respect and connection present between you and your models. How do you achieve this?

G: It was really hard for me initially because I am an introverted person. In order to achieve what I want, I had to walk up to them as a stranger and initiate the conversation, which was my biggest struggle, but I got more used to it when my first experience went well. I introduce myself first and show my work so that I look professional. I believe that if my work is good, people will talk back to me.

RR: What attracts you to those you capture on the street?

G: I always think about the concept or particular style of shots that I want. I have a habit of looking at people passing by. If I see someone whom I think will be a good match to the concept that I am developing, I walk up to them. For street photography, I am trying to get to the level of making my images look like a scene from a movie. I really enjoy a cinematic look and when I get that image, I get really excited.

RR: When we met one of the mutual interests which we shared was clothing and fashion. There is a

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sense of style in all your models, is a sense of style a factor in the selection process?

G: Definitely, yes. I honestly have a lot of pride in my wardrobe and would really want to present it to people who can appreciate it. In terms of selecting models, I usually don’t care about their sense of style. Rather I enjoy when I style someone who has absolutely no idea about clothing but kills with the outfit because they have a unique mood on their face. Like a makeover almost.

RR: One particular image that comes to mind that reflects the style of your models is the image of the elderly man on a bench with the bleached pants, how did that image come about?

G: I was walking around Champaign downtown one day with my friend and I saw this elderly man sitting on a bench alone with a really moody facial expression. With street photography, I get extremely shy because you never know how someone reacts when you photograph them without their consent. I literally walked the same path three times thinking whether I should ask him for a photo or not. Finally, I asked him for a photo, and with a warm smile, he told me to just leave 10 dollars next to him after taking a photo [jokingly]. It definitely made my day.

RR: Images like that of the elderly man and your night photography of suburban homes are very “Americana” subject matters, is interest in this subject matter influenced by you being an international student?

G: I spent most of my lifetime in the USA. Going to school in a suburban area of Chicago didn’t really make me think of this place as a subject matter. But I realized that it was mainly because I wasn’t really paying attention to my surroundings. Many of my friends always say that it is very hard to take pictures here because it is so rural. I totally disagree, because I find this place pretty unique after becoming more conscious of my surroundings.

RR: Are there any major differences in the creative space here compared to Korea?

G: I just wish they had more galleries in here because Korea is crazy about artsy places (mostly due to Instagram), and you will be amazed how diverse the creative space is in South Korea. I get a lot of inspiration whenever I visit South Korea.

RR: After you graduate you will be living in Chicago, is there anything in particular you are especially excited about living in the city?

G: City, more buildings and more people, I think you can find me walking around downtown all day carrying my chunky film camera. I am very excited to explore new places in the city to take pictures and meet new people who can work with me.

RR: In terms of photography, where do you see yourself, let’s say in the next five years?

G: My goal is to be published in one of my favorite magazines, I-D, and I see myself as a part time film photographer with a full-time job as a Structural Engineer.
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ENVIRONMENT
through the eyes of Brett Weitecha
ABOUT BRETT

Born and raised in the Midwest, I chose to attend the University of Michigan where I studied Neuroscience, Pre-Medicine and Business. After graduating in 2017, I let my curiosities of wanting to see more of the world [and escaping the cold] drive my move to the west coast. I was able to travel around the world over six months visiting Colombia, Ecuador, Peru, Bolivia, Chile, Argentina, Taiwan, Philippines, Malaysia, Singapore, and Thailand. Eventually, this travel acted as a catalyst that allowed me to pursue photography and cinematography in a professional capacity. Now living in Seattle, I am a former Neuroscientist, continuing to chase my curiosities and intrigue in the film industry and world of professional photography.

If I am not working on video editing or photography, I find myself sneaking away to the beautiful mountains that surround Seattle or letting off steam on the soccer field.
... there is much more to life than solely a professional career and work. There is a plethora of knowledge and experience to be learned beyond the classroom. And the world, via travel, is one of the best ways to gather that additional knowledge and experiences.”

Ricker Report: Being an alum from the University of Michigan for Pre-Medicine and Neuroscience, what led to your decision to pursue photography and videography?

Brett Wietecha: Coming from such an analytical background, I frequently looked for different creative outlets. After graduating and working for some time, I decided I needed to travel and see what the world could teach me. During that time I kept a photo, written and video blog of my experiences. One thing led to another and companies started to notice my work and reached out.

RR: Following college graduation, you mentioned traveling overseas and exploring photography. Can you tell us where you traveled and some of the experiences that you were able to capture?

BW: Here is a list and a memory from each country that stood out:

[01] Colombia – Cerro de Monserrate

One of my first experiences outside of the United States was in Colombia hiking up Cerro de Monserrate (named after Catalan homonym mountain Montserrat). The history of the hike was revealed to me with each step we took, as the hike was over 1,500 stairs. Different groups of people could be seen passing you or being passing every few steps. The scenery included locals on their way to the church at the top, tourists talking about the beautiful views and people using the stairs to exercise. It made for a diverse experience of cultures. My breath escaped me – partly from the immense stair workout – but mostly due to the beautiful scenery. Other memories of my 1,500-stair voyage included seeing a man with no legs making his way to the top, traveling faster than those around him, while solely moving with support of his hands. A rough translation of the sign he had around his neck read “It is too easy to look at what is going wrong in life, but to be happy means to see what is going right”.
[02] Ecuador – Cotopaxi Volcano

In Ecuador, I was able to climb the Cotopaxi stratovolcano (19,347 ft). Hiking to the start of the glacier was magical. Not a single sound could be heard in the night. Breathing became the meditative drone that canceled almost all your thoughts out. With an ice axe in hand, and crampons fastened to my feet, we began to tackle the daunting glacier. The higher we reached the longer time dragged out. An hour remaining in the summit, I was on my knees with my head in my hands forcing myself to breathe deeply – in and out. On the edge consciousness, I feared I would not make it to the top as the elevation was slowly depriving my brain of vital oxygen.

The wind burn and cold producing tears from my eyes had frozen at the corners. Reaching the summit was the hardest thing I have done in my life, and an accomplishment that was rewarded by views unlike anything I have ever experienced. The photo atop the volcano is one of my favorite photographs.

[03] Peru – Mancora

Watching the sunset on a hill in the beach town of Mancora was a finer memory from Peru. A group of other travelers sat with me watching as the long brown grass flowed in the wind. The clouds rising from the burning horizon made the sky look as though it had been set on fire.
[04] Bolivia

[05] Chile – Cochamo

In the northern tip of Patagonia is a well-kept secret of Cochamo. It has thirteen miles of the muddiest hiking trails that takes you to the camping grounds of a beautiful scenery. Different hikes from el anafeiteatro [the amphitheater] to arco iris [rainbow] span out in 360-degree views of the most incredible rock faces with clouds at their walls.

[06] Argentina – Bariloche

Windsurfing in Bariloche – enough said.

[07] Taiwan – Taroko Gorge

Exploring the national parks in Tawian, Taroko Gorge holds a special place in my heart. Six months into my trip, I had a friend decide to join me. The days were spent exploring hidden hot springs inside of the gorge. Locals showed us these various locations. The nights were filled with the ambiance of the famous ‘night markets’. We were able to find some of the most exotic food, from stinky tofu to coagulated pigs blood coated in peanuts.

[08] Philippines – Hidden Wonders

You need to go here in your lifetime. From the waterfalls to the locals, I had never been to a place like this before. Local families invited me into their homes. They would feed you homemade food and guide you around their cities. This genuine kindness and hospitality, simply because they were happy to have you there and proud of their country.

[09] Malaysia – Kuala Lumpur

Exploring the temples in the Capital of Malaysia, Kuala Lumpur, and being able to see and learn the extensive history was a pivotal experience in my travels. The scenery included several-story golden statutes and the various animals – including adorable monkeys – climbing around on the steps as you made your way to the top.

[10] Singapore – “Gardens by the Bay”

A city from the future. I’ve never seen such a clean city in my life. More specifically, the ‘Gardens by the Bay’ is breathtaking to experience. It is an expanded nature park adjacent to the Marina Reservoir. It primarily consists of three elegant waterfront gardens: Bay South Garden, Bay East Garden and
Bay Central Garden. The micro ecosystems work collectively to create a fully sustainable system.


The Phi Phi islands had rock faces that I previously thought only existed in movies. As an island group in Thailand, it provides near perfect scenery, which is why it has always been such an active location for tourists and photographers.

RR: On a more personal note: who are your role models, or those who have helped you get to where you are today?

BW: My dad [Thomas Wietecha] has always been the man that I have admired. He has multiple sclerosis. However, watching his approach to life, he has never seemed to have any sort of ailment to me. I will never forget the day we went to the Grand Canyon. We stood at the rim, staring down into it. There was a hiking trail on the side down into the canyon. I elected to stay at the top with my dad, while my brother and mom would continue down. By the time I had looked back at my dad, he was leading the charge on the hike. For a man who has difficulty walking - to be the first working his way down the canyon – it is safe to say it is hard for me to ever be lazy considering all that man has given to me.

My grandfather [Jack Knight], was a man I looked up to, but was not particularly close with. He showed me the person I want to grow into. From fixing neighbors’ roofs, cars, to old school photography equipment, he was a kind man who never complained. He was the person you would go to in order to get tasks completed. He had stubborn approach to life - with his slogan: ‘I can do it by myself’ - a joking retort he would often have with my mother. Other comments that resonated with me were: ‘the day I can’t do the things I want to do is the day I am better off dead.’

He lived every day of his life that way. He fought pancreatic cancer for three years. Notably, three years past the original three-month mark the doctors gave him.

Kevin Garner (Soccer Coach) – As most teens, my teenage years were quite difficult. However, my soccer coach at the time [Kevin Garner], made life significantly more manageable. He helped mold me through those difficult times, teaching so much more beyond the game of soccer. I am truly indebted to this man as he taught me how to endure through difficult times.

The professor [Vic Strecher] who took the time to meet with me – when serious injuries took my professional soccer aspirations away and following the death of my grandfather – Vic stands out as a role model to me. He was the man who inspired me to travel. He also helped me realize there is much more to life than solely a professional career and work. There is a plethora of knowledge and experience to be learned beyond the classroom. And the world, via travel, is one of the best way to gather that additional knowledge and experiences. Vic taught me this.
Auburn Hills, Michigan
Mt. Si, Washington

Coati in Costa Rica
Ecuador – Cotopaxi Volcano
Nauyaca Water Falls in Costa Rica
Matt Campbell in Costa Rica