FUTURES OF THE ARCHITECTURAL EXHIBITION

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in Conversation with Students

Edited by Reto Geiser
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PARK BOOKS

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N°7

ANN LUI

CURATING COLLECTIVE SPACE

What are the relationships between your work as a curator and your work as a practicing designer? What are your shared concerns or methods of connection between these two ways of working?

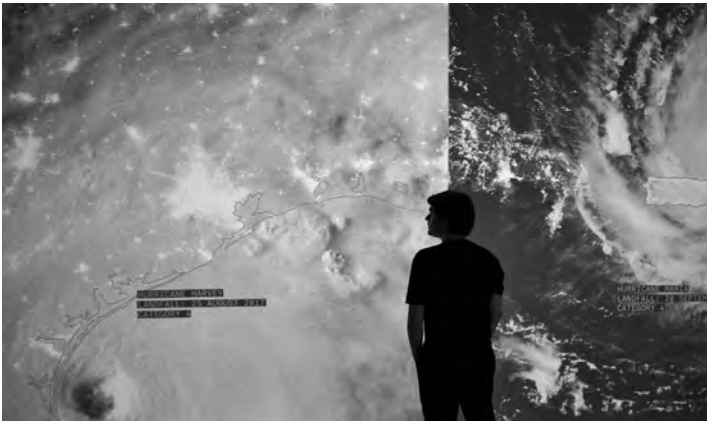
Creating platforms is important in both my curatorial projects and in my design work. In our work at Future Firm, we tend to work with clients or on self-initiated projects that deal with collectivity of different kinds. Curating and editing is also about creating collective space—physical space, as well as time, money, and visibility—for others to do their own work and share it with a broader audience. In architectural practice, I find myself collaborating with folks who share a similar point of view. I think this is the same case for architecture and design. My friend and client Eric Williams, for example, has cultivated and elevated the work of designers, musicians, and artists of color in his store the Silver Room in Chicago's South Side. When we collaborate, our approach to design, construction, and operation of a project reflects those efforts. It's not lost on me that Eric's platform-building mentality is why he took a risk on me as a relatively unproven architect.

In that way, building platforms for others, in both my curatorial work and my design practice, is personal. My own career has directly benefited from the efforts of people who at some time or another believed I had something interesting to say. Now I feel it's important to continue that momentum. It's also selfish, since I find it pleasurable to advance conversations in architecture that I personally find interesting. Exhibition and editorial work gives me a way to engage with ideas that I don't engage through professional practice, and vice versa. Practice can have a very narrowing effect on my worldview. It's easy to get bogged down in budgets, schedules, and the many challenges of trying to get things built in the world. Similarly, editorial and curatorial work can also be narrowing, but in another way, divorced from the urgency and stakes of non-architects doing business and trying to live in the complex messiness of cities. I think it's important to let those two points of view balance each other.

Are there lessons learned in the making of exhibitions that you've applied specifically to your architectural practice, or vice versa? How do the two modes of working inform each other?

The approaches necessary for the two roles are very similar. I found that the skill sets needed for much of the curatorial work for *Dimensions of Citizenship*, the exhibition at the 2018 U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, were closely aligned with those needed for practice. ○ The biggest challenge in both curatorial and professional practice is negotiating divergent voices to produce an outcome that is more than the sum of its parts. The U.S. Pavilion had many stakeholders, each interested in having the project speak to their interests, and those visions had to be negotiated through many levels of review, from city to biennale to donor. Broadly, that is the same work as professional practice. The way the plumber sees a building is entirely different from the way the framer does, or the city's plan reviewer, or a bank approving construction payments. Ultimately, you need to bring everyone on board with a compelling "big idea" and also be able to further the priorities in the project that are significant to individual stakeholders. Of course, sometimes the job of the architect and curator is to recognize when those priorities are fundamentally at odds, and then the work is to set boundaries rather than to do translation.

In both types of practice, I've found it's important to leave room for people to surprise you.



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In Plain Sight, Diller Scofidio + Renfro, Laura Kurgan, Robert Gerard Pietrusko, with the Columbia Center for Spatial Research (top). Installation view of the exhibition *Dimensions of Citizenship*, as part of the 2018 U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale (bottom). Photographs by Tom Harris.
Images courtesy of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the University of Chicago.

I learned this from Mimi Zeiger, whose approach toward curating is a model for me. During *Dimensions of Citizenship* she often reminded me not to try to take too much control. From an architect's point of view, I was often frustrated by the lack of detail we received from participants about commissioned works during the planning process. But the works, once they emerged, surprised us in wonderful ways. I've since learned that clients and builders are collaborators and can surprise you in a good way if you leave space for it.

> Of course, we still debate what can be called curation or who can be called a curator. In recent years, these terms have become so expansive that almost anyone can be talked about as a curator, whether it's a curator of a menu, a conversation, or an exhibition. This differs from more specifically art-historical or institutional definitions of curatorial practice as a discipline. Do you have a position on these different definitions of the term curator?

I don't like gatekeeping. I'll never tell somebody they're not an architect if they want to say, "I'm an architect of my dinner plate." I'm not harmed by

other people thinking about the work we do as a metaphor for the way they want to work or as a way of sparking different parts of their brain. Nonetheless, I want to acknowledge that the kind of ad hoc curating I do differs in major ways from the curatorial work of those who have spent a lifetime dedicated to the discipline of curating, as you described.

For me, the first battle in my practice was for the title of "architect," and that title is sometimes still not conceded to me despite the fact that I'm licensed and I build. People have referred to me as somebody who does "soft skills" work, such as curatorial work or community engagement. The folks who make that mistake also perceive soft skills as "lesser than," which is itself a form of ignorance.

I'm interested in this tension between valuing disciplinary expertise and expanding the boundaries of the discipline within architectural practice. On the one hand, I believe the built environment has always been the result of co-authored, multidisciplinary efforts. On the other hand, these days the importance of being licensed, insured, and executing technically proficient work for my clients does dominate my way of thinking. If you don't know anything about insulation, you don't have any business designing an exterior wall. First and

foremost, a building project must be safe, structurally sound, and not leak. However, we should also expect more out of architecture. Depth of knowledge is important, but also breadth of experimentation, and those things shouldn't preclude each other but can exist in dialectical engagement.

> In your essay "Toward an Office of the Public Architect," you propose a new model of design practice to address public needs that can't adequately be addressed through the conventional architectural office. Can you talk about expanding the definition of the architect, especially considering your body of work, which navigates between architectural practice, curatorial work, and research and writing?

My essay in *Log*, "Toward an Office of the Public Architect," is an effort to expand the definition of the architect. It asks: If you're entitled to a public defender when you're accused of a crime and you can't afford an attorney, shouldn't you also be entitled to a public architect when you're issued a building violation that you may not have the means to address? I was trained as an architect in a very traditional way. After a five-year undergraduate

degree, I then worked at SOM doing tall towers and corporate headquarters buildings. However, at SOM I always felt something was missing. I went back to school for a graduate degree in history, theory, and criticism, and colleagues there brought me over to the "dark side," where we understand architecture as part of larger sociocultural contexts rather than solely as a product for profit. The way most architects practice professionally is limited, yet those limitations provide a certain agency by enforcing a zone of professional expertise and responsibility. In my *Log* essay, I quote Ivan Illich, who argues that professions set the requirements for the things that only they can do. That's very much the case for architects. Architects were part of establishing the legal authority of building codes that dictate that only architects can be responsible for implementing them.

The Office of the Public Architect is design driven. It uses fiction and speculation as tools to imagine how a new kind of practice might manifest spatially. When we created the image of the Office of the Public Architect for the 2017 exhibition at the Chicago Architecture Foundation that led to the essay, we were trying to think about how to make something boring and bureaucratic into something emotionally compelling. The image we produced

for the exhibition is kind of magical and surreal, showing an architect figure in a literal cyclone of paperwork. We were thinking of the moment in the first Harry Potter movie where ten-year-old Harry goes to the wand shop and finally holds the magic wand he was destined for—there's a sudden glow as objects around him begin to rise into the air. We wanted to evoke that feeling of a pivotal moment of change, about the work we each may be destined in one way or another to do, but for the Department of Buildings, which in real life is a beige office in Chicago's City Hall with crappy laminated desks and peeling paint.

You mentioned stakeholders as a driving force in both your curatorial work and your design practice. How has your work been affected by the evolving set of collaborators you've worked with—from your first curatorial project, *Circus for Construction*, to the Night Gallery in Chicago, to the U.S. Pavilion at the Venice Biennale?

No architectural project of scale, whether a building or an exhibition, is ever produced in isolation. That part of exhibition-making has been clear to me since the beginning, even with self-initiated, low-budget efforts like *Circus for Construction* or the Night Gallery. Any pavilion in Venice is the result of the collaboration of an extraordinary number of people, acknowledged or not, even though a kind of star system surrounds the commissioned participants and the curators. *Dimensions of Citizenship* was executed in large part by local builders, tradespeople, and cultural workers in administration, such as grant writers, project managers, and so on.

How can we bring the stakeholders of a project like the U.S. Pavilion to community-led projects or to independent, off-the-beaten-path work? What was amazing to me about the U.S. Pavilion was the

scale of funding that was mobilized in a relatively short period of time. In some cases, we worked with philanthropists or institutions with records of support for research in specific areas—say, sustainability and ecology. However, other funders seemed open to hearing from curators and designers about what topics should be of urgent concern. Can curatorial work, understood as a process of translation and framing, be used to redirect funding and opportunity toward individuals and communities that aren't receiving the same kind of visibility? I've been wondering how I can connect my curatorial work to the pro bono work I've been doing as a practitioner—using the same tools of making things legible, meaningful, and understandable to different audiences?

> Could you describe your pro bono work in more detail and the relationships you see between this work and your curatorial practice?

I'm currently working pro bono with community members in North Lawndale on the Central Park Theater in Chicago's West Side. The theater is "the mothership" of collaborations between movie palace developers Balaban & Katz and architects

Rapp & Rapp. The church that owns the building has been unable to heat it for the past five years. For that, they really just need a furnace and some spiral ducts to stave off further damage, which costs nothing compared to what is regularly funded by major donors to the Venice Biennale. Can curatorial techniques be used to advocate for the significant historical value of this building, for its opportunity to function again as an arts and culture hub for the neighborhood? Can we organize tours? Can we have it photographed beautifully? Can we do a publication? Can those things give it the kind of sparkle and legibility that will make it interesting to the same kinds of donors who are interested in the U.S. Pavilion? We've made some progress on this front: the theater will be part of the Chicago Architecture Biennial 2021, so we'll see if that has the positive effect we imagine.

I've also been working over the last two years in collaboration with the Bluhm Legal Clinic at Northwestern University to support victims of a reverse mortgage scam. A fraudster stole ten million dollars from dozens of North Lawndale homeowners by telling them they were signing up for a city-sponsored repair program. Sometimes I contribute in my capacity as a traditional practitioner; for example, by evaluating the extent of a home's

disrepair or using my role as a licensed professional to try to get calls returned. Right now, I'm working on a contribution to a website led by the team at Bluhm; it educates elderly homeowners about their legal rights and responsibilities, as well as homeowner and construction issues—what are common building violations, what can be solved by an architect versus a contractor, what are existing vetted resources, and so on. I see that work as curatorial, too, as it aims to translate general knowledge about buildings in a way that is legible and useful. It's also a mini-pilot for the Office of the Public Architect.

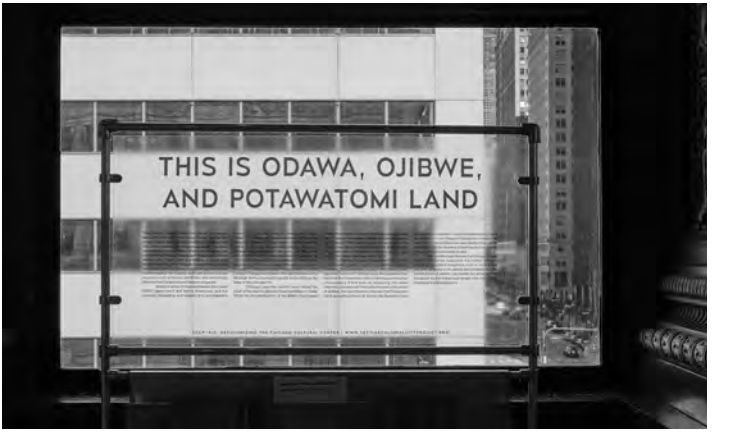
> You collaborated with historians Ana María León and Andrew Herscher and Heather Miller from the American Indian Center on the Settler Colonial City Project for the 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial. How did you see the boundaries of your role as a designer when working in a collaboration with other curators or exhibitors?

What's interesting is that Ana María, Andrew, and Heather were commissioned as participants, but I feel as if they approached their involvement as building curators. Other participants produced work that could be placed in a room alongside

work that was similar and relevant. Ana María and Andrew resisted that approach, instead proposing didactic physical signs throughout the Chicago Cultural Center that challenged one's understanding of the entire building. These signs shared research describing the building's siting, decor, construction, and materiality through the lens of a long history of both violence against Indigenous people and their resilience. Ana María, Andrew, and Heather engaged the building at a 1:1 scale and challenged visitors to understand it discursively. ○ In my opinion, the Settler Colonial City Project shaped the reading of all the other projects in the exhibition.

My role on that project was essentially as a technical designer. Architecture can act purely in support of others' efforts to change the built environment, and that's an important part of the work I do. Supporting people behind the scenes through technical means, through negotiations with different regulatory agencies, through the procurement and deployment of materials, can be both curatorial and architectural work if it enables others to make change at a different scale.

Curators think about the idea of audience in different ways. One your earliest collaborative projects, *Circus for Construction*—



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Settler Colonial City Project, *Decolonizing the Chicago Cultural Center*, as part of the 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial (top).
Circus for Construction, as part of WorldWide Storefront, a Storefront for Art and Architecture, New York, project, 2014 to 2015 (bottom).
Photographs by Tom Harris.
Images courtesy of Future Firm.

a mobile exhibition space designed for the back of a flatbed truck—is very much both an architectural and a curatorial work, but it's also a project for audiences that are not necessarily typical in an institutional or museum setting. Who do you see as the audiences for your work?

With *Circus*, the idea of audience was almost flipped. ○ Rather than the exhibition being a host to others, we were knocking on doors asking to be part of other people's worlds for a little bit. We were all students at the time, and in retrospect it was a form of curating driven by curiosity and a certain hunger for ways of doing architecture that might exist outside the academic bubble. We were consuming first, then amplifying. We weren't as discerning about having a certain kind of legibility for any specific audience. The actual audience often reflected our partners at local sites. When we were in Buffalo, for example, the folks who came to our events were the friends and colleagues of the people who hosted us. That group included academics, as well as a group of residents and builders who at the time were informally managing and activating Silo City, the complex of abandoned grain elevators where we held the exhibition.

With *Dimensions of Citizenship*, we grappled with the question of audience because the audience for the Venice Architecture Biennale is so narrow. It's limited to the discipline's glitterati if you don't challenge it. We created CitizenSHIP, a series of events that roamed around the city, like *Circus for Construction*; it was led by our co-curator Niall Atkinson. It included a series of pop-up events with local organizations focused specifically on the impacts of tourism and definitions of citizenship in Venice. We later brought the exhibition back to Chicago, to a private gallery called Wrightwood 659, with varying levels of success. We also tried to expand that platform by having a strong internet presence. With our project Form N-X00, we asked people to submit an Instagram-scale work—an image and a text. We asked each participant to phone a friend; these friends would then expand the platform exponentially to people outside the curators' immediate circles.

I've always tried to be critical about which audiences are reached by an exhibition but also to recognize the limitations of exhibitions as a medium. The entire nine months of the Venice Biennale—the biggest architecture exhibition there is—probably has the numerical audience of one day of HGTV. We can't be too self-serious about our own impact.

You talked about the idea of collectivity when you're designing and working with clients. Do you consider your curatorial work as a way of interfacing with a public or as work that creates a kind of collectivity? How does this relate to the idea of expanding the role of the architect?

One of the questions I struggle with is how to build trust. I've been working on a few projects in North Lawndale, a predominantly African American community in Chicago that is facing many of the impacts of systemic racism in the built environment. I'm an outsider to the neighborhood, and I practice there knowing that there's not necessarily a built-in trust for outsiders within the community. I've heard stories from residents in North Lawndale about architects showing up, even well-intentioned ones, with plans, ideas, and renderings that never materialize. I've also heard stories about architects and contractors who treat projects as disposable. At best they send their B teams; at worst, they fail to follow through with the project.

My colleague Paola Aguirre, who is a strong advocate for equity in planning and design, told me, "Just do what you say you're going to do." Curating was something I already knew how to do, and it

offered a way of building trust by "doing what you say" faster than through traditional architecture projects. For example, we organized an event in collaboration with Principle Barbers in North Lawndale as part of our exhibition project The Night Gallery. Bobby Price, a resident who owns and runs the barbershop, thought of the event in the same way I think an architecture exhibition should work. When he was growing up, the neighborhood barbershop was a place where he saw all kinds of people, from congressional representatives to school kids, and there was a horizontality to the kinds of conversations that happened there. When he started his own barbershop, he wanted to create a space embodying that horizontality that could also be used for meetings and gatherings. He's hosted a series of curated events there, from performances to campaign events to film screenings.

We collaborated with Bobby on a version of Night Gallery, our public space video and film exhibition project. ○ Together we curated the work of West Side artist avery r. young and Chicago artist Ciera McKissick for an outdoor evening event. avery worked with the South Side Home Movie Project, an archival and research initiative that collects and maintains footage of the daily lives of African American Chicagoans from past decades.

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Installation view of *Another Campo Marzio*, by Outpost Office, as part of The Night Gallery, 2017 (top).
Conversation with Ciera Alyse McKissick and avery r. young, as part of The Night Gallery in collaboration with South Side Home Movie Project at Principle Barbers, 2020 (bottom).

It's footage that has been left out of most film archives. avery screened a film from the 1968 riots in North Lawndale and performed a live ekphrastic work that responded to the film through music. In the audience were people who had lived in North Lawndale for sixty years and remembered the riots. They recognized people and places in the film, which was projected on the side of the building. Also in attendance were members of the architecture community who, because of Chicago's segregation, had never been to the West Side before.

> Architecture can also provide an opportunity to build community. Even for architects and other stakeholders who seek to engage with community members, though, conventional models of practice often have difficulty engaging them substantively in the process. How would you compare the capacity of exhibitions to build community?

Architects should be thinking about how to share a way of seeing and understanding buildings with people who aren't trained in architecture. That's not the goal of all exhibitions and doesn't have to be. Many exhibitions are meant to communicate only to a specific subset of other architects and can be

important for producing new disciplinary knowledge. However, exhibitions should have a role in exploring ways to read or understand buildings. One example is the Settler Colonial City Project. I believe that project resonates with so many people because it shares a new way of "reading" a building. It suggests that the materials of the building, the land on which it sits, and the ways in which the building codifies different histories all matter. If there's a way to think or talk about buildings in a different way that can be mediated by exhibitions, that seems to me to be an important potential.

> Many curators affiliated with institutions are tasked with positioning work within white-box constraints. How do you, as an independent curator or as a practicing architect, rethink the spatial constraints that other institutional actors are beholden to?

Perhaps other forms of curatorial practice might have the freedom to ignore these dimensions of the built environment—to treat spaces in abstraction and expect the audience to suspend disbelief about the context they're in and get lost in the work. But I think the second you ask people to take on architectural space discursively, you're saying that drawings, materials, and the ways in which things are built have meaning. You have a burden to engage discursively the space you're in if that's the way you want people to think about architectural practice. This is a way of thinking, looking, and working that can apply anywhere. All buildings, let's say, have both fraught and wonderful histories.

Thinking about the Settler Colonial City Project, I believe it will be difficult for anybody doing an exhibition there afterward to treat the Chicago Cultural Center as a white box. The histories they foregrounded are now too loud, and rightfully so. In *Dimensions of Citizenship*,

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Thrival Geographies (In My Mind I See a Line), by Amanda Williams and Andres L. Hernandez in collaboration with Shani Crowe. Photographs by Tom Harris.
Images courtesy of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the University of Chicago.

commissioned participants Amanda Williams, Andres L. Hernandez, and Shani Crowe critically engaged the neo-Jeffersonian architecture of the U.S. Pavilion, which was built in the 1930s. Their work in the courtyard of the pavilion, *Thrival Geographies (In My Mind I See a Line)*, was an act of resistance to the space around it. ○ When you were inside the steel and woven structure they built, you could look up into the sky and, in a way, escape the world around you. It was important for them, in speaking about histories of space-making by Black women, to acknowledge the fact that the U.S. Pavilion was built in the style of a plantation building.

As of the summer of 2020, we've also seen institutions that want to bring forward Black artists, architects, and designers but don't want to treat Black curators or cultural workers equally. We've seen so many examples of the ways in which institutions, because of old habits, fail their own purported values. I believe there has to be a way for institutions and individuals to be self-reflective and self-critical, and that doing so always makes the world around us richer, more interesting, and more expansive. A design practice should also consider its own practices suspect. There's always a way of engaging buildings in both curating and practice

that is discursive, that resists the easier illusion of the white box. For example, making an architecture exhibition should mean that the architecture in which the exhibition takes place is also under scrutiny.

> Your proposal to create an Office of the Public Architect began as your firm's contribution to a 2017 exhibition, titled *Between States*, in which the vast majority of architects who participated showed more conventional design projects. Is this different mode of participation in exhibitions related to the size of Future Firm's design practice? What nimbleness does a smaller practice afford you in thinking across curatorial and architectural opportunities?

Between States was the second exhibition held at the Chicago Architecture Center (then Foundation) during the Chicago Architecture Biennial. It included all the big architecture firms, like SOM, AECOM, HDR, and Gensler. We were the smallest firm by far. At that point, Future Firm was just me and my partner, Craig Reschke. The next smallest firm in the exhibition had probably two hundred employees, while the largest had twenty thousand!

The brief called for a realistic project that could have an impact. We knew that all the big firms were going to show large-scale mixed-use projects for programs like affordable housing, cultural hubs, and infrastructure.

As a tiny firm, how could we try to say that the tiny stuff also has an impact? That's where the idea of the Office of the Public Architect emerged. None of the other firms were going to be talking about building violations, which are largely considered unglamourous, poorly paid, thankless work for architects to address. However, you could argue that violations work might have the biggest positive impact on Chicago communities—by scale and number, if not by architects' fees. In an exhibition with very tight format limitations, where you get to show one image or one model, we tried to do something that responded differently from the other work presented. As an exhibition participant, I enjoy "biting the hand that feeds." It allows you to surprise people. This is different from how we work with clients, of course, where that way of working would be counterproductive to our shared goals.

Can you speak to the difference between the physical space of the exhibitions you've curated and the editorial and digital platforms that accompany and often exist beyond them?

Unlike buildings, which have indeterminate futures, most exhibitions have a definitive end date. But an exhibition should be the beginning of things, not the end. At the 2018 Venice Biennale, some of the national pavilions didn't approach curating as a tool for beginning a longer-term conversation. There was a trend in our year where architects produced installations that were mostly meant to be experienced in the moment and that seemed to be purposely apolitical. For me, to arrive in Venice with no interest in catalyzing conversation beyond the immediate physical experience, or to choose not to share the platform with other voices that might conflict with or challenge us as curators, would have felt like a squandered opportunity.

Dimensions of Citizenship didn't answer many of the questions we began with, though it answered other questions that we didn't expect. But what has been really rewarding is seeing the scholarly and research works have a ripple effect and continue on, whether into other exhibitions, as references in

student work, or as citations that other scholars or designers are building upon.

> How did you approach the installation of the seven projects in *Dimensions of Citizenship* in a way that responded to the specific temporality of the Biennale and its audience while also setting up the projects for a life beyond the exhibition?

Mimi Zeiger and I wanted the exhibition to be easily legible in a literal way. We wanted both the people who spend hours with an exhibition and the people who run through it in thirty seconds (a common speed at which people experience the Biennale) to glean something from it. Robert Somol says that architecture can either be "What? Wow!" or "Wow! What?" One can either be impressed and then confused, or confused and then impressed. Ideally, the strongest work leaves you impressed and then impressed; it has both a short-term legibility and a long-term legibility. In *Dimensions of Citizenship*, the work on display in the U.S. Pavilion was organized using seven scales, from the citizen to the cosmos. If you were to walk through, you would proceed telescopically from the human scale upward through the scales of the civic, the regional,

the national, the global, the networked, and the cosmic. The exhibition was also circular, so a sense of continuity remained.

The moments we were most excited about in the space were those in which you might see different resonances across scales. For example, mapping and cartographic projects physically bookended the pavilion at different scales: by Teddy Cruz and Fonna Forman at the scale of the nation and by DS+R, Laura Kurgan, and Robert Gerard Pietrusko at the global scale. Both of these projects questioned the ways in which maps do or do not reflect the lived experience of folks on the ground, through very different approaches and levels of granularity. ○ The exhibition also included a series of one-to-one artifacts—stones, asteroids, and porous concrete blocks—that together talked about how rocks and material objects might have agency in constructing citizenship at different scales. We used visual strategies to try to give a quick impression but also to let visitors learn more if they stayed with any of the works for a long time. Works were often paired with films that provided more depth. If a visitor had time, for example, they could easily spend two hours with Keller Easterling and MANY's project, reading all the descriptions in the app and imagining all the possible combinations,

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Mexus: A Geography of Interdependence, by Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman. Photographs by Tom Harris.
Images courtesy of the School of the Art Institute of Chicago and the University of Chicago.

and it still wouldn't be enough. But they could also just walk by it and quickly understand the idea of a Tinder-like app for connecting individuals and groups in ways that elude national boundaries or restrictions.

Many of the projects also included longer-term strategies that extended beyond the Biennale. SCAPE's project, *Ecological Citizens*, contained marsh rebuilding units that went into the Venetian lagoon after the Biennale closed and formed part of a remediation strategy at a specific site nearby.

> In the introductory essay for *Dimensions of Citizenship*, you framed the exhibition as speaking to two temporalities: to the direct urgency of issues of citizenship in the political context of 2018, but also to the broader questions of community and belonging that transcend those urgencies and are oriented toward futures.

It's important for us to situate things in multiple time frames. We wrote the proposal for *Dimensions of Citizenship* in the months between Donald Trump's election and inauguration. Our work was partially funded by the State Department under the Trump administration, and it was important for us to

recognize and resist our own complicity through the staging of the exhibition. For us, trying to acknowledge this tension was essential, even if the projects didn't solve or untangle it completely. During the Black Lives Matter protests in the summer of 2020, it was more evident than ever to me that issues that seemed particularly visible or cruel under the Trump administration were battles people have been fighting for a long time across many governmental and political contexts. Those battles continue and are agnostic to any specific administration in certain respects, which is to say that a defining characteristic of both racism and xenophobia is their durability as ideologies. Mimi and I wanted *Dimensions of Citizenship* to acknowledge that citizenship, and questions of belonging, were both newly and forever urgent. Beyond this, we also wanted to look forward through speculation. One of our commissioned participants, Andres L. Hernandez, connected us with a text by author and Afrofuturist Samuel Delany that calls on us to produce images of tomorrow—for better and worse—so we might know how to get there, before it arrives on its own. We challenged all of the works to balance these ways of engaging with time, and I think they each did so in their own ways.

Looking back, how do you situate the aspects of *Dimensions of Citizenship* that could be read as more temporally specific to that moment, like the interrogation of the U.S.-Mexico border wall, since many of the broader questions about citizenship, belonging, and our commitments to one another as individuals and as communities persist today?

The border wall was mostly addressed in Estudio Teddy Cruz + Fonna Forman's work. They have been working in Tijuana and San Diego for a long time, and the kinds of projects they presented in Venice contribute to a longer project that both preceded the Trump administration's attempts to build the wall and will continue beyond it. The work made visible many aspects of the border that are cruel, violent, or just nonsensical, and some of which were part of Trump's construction campaign. Beyond this, the work mapped interconnected watersheds as a socio-ecological terrain that has shaped how the border region evolved and will continue to be shaped. In this way, their work in *Dimensions of Citizenship* will continue to remain relevant, though I'm sure the bigger project—which is grounded in local communities at the border—will also continue to evolve.

I would say the same about Amanda Williams, Andres L. Hernandez, and Shani Crowe's work, which carried the mantra "Black woman space matters." Their work impacted me personally by challenging me to change my point of view during our production of the exhibition. At the time, I was so grateful for the work's generosity, which manifested in the breadth of its vision and catalyzed that personal process for me. This year, during the nationwide reckonings with police brutality and the resurgence of violence against Asian Americans, their work, *Thrival Geographies*—with its emphasis on transcendence through survival—has even more resonance for me than it did before.

Some formats of the exhibition may become dated, for sure. Tinder, which was the basis for Keller Easterling and MANY's project, will probably seem absurdly out of date in two years as an example of an app, but that's the nature of the medium. Other projects will be measured by their impact at one-to-one scale. A part of Studio Gang's project in Memphis is now under construction in collaboration with SCAPE. Will it be embraced or challenged? Like all public spaces, it will likely be an unexpected mixture of both. Ultimately, I hope our curation didn't center the political context of 2018 too much, which would have made the works less accessible

beyond that time. Some of the texts in the catalog helped expand the work beyond the exhibition and uncovered histories or introduced possible futures that made them relevant beyond that particular moment.

> If the experience of an exhibition is grounded in a moment in time, how do you engage a sense of timelessness through the artifacts?

We can read all exhibitions as indexing their moment, place, and authorship, whether they do so consciously or not. That's an analytical tool that we have at our disposal as people who are interested in curating. I don't think anything can avoid being in the world in which it is made, even if it tries. I hope we can remember to struggle with the specific moment of an exhibition, with all its material and geographical specificity. That struggle is something that can be built into an exhibition, rather than work that is only done analytically by third parties afterward.

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