

DECEMBER 2023

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CIAL  
JUS-  
TICE

SO-  
CIAL  
EQ-  
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DE-  
SIGN



DESIGN  
FUTURES

"I am forever grateful for the opportunity to have been immersed in an incredible community of individuals who are all passionate about working towards a future of equity."

COURTNEY KLEE (2019)  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

# RA- CIAL JUS- TICE

## CONTEXT WE WORK WITHIN:

Minimal resources and support for design curriculum related to social justice.

Design field exalting practitioners that exert “design on” people, rather than designing with communities.

Students and faculty that center social equity in their pursuits are often isolated.

## OUR YEAR-ROUND PROGRAMS INCLUDE:

Five-day interdisciplinary student conference and training

Faculty and practitioner convening

Design x DEI peer mentorship for faculty

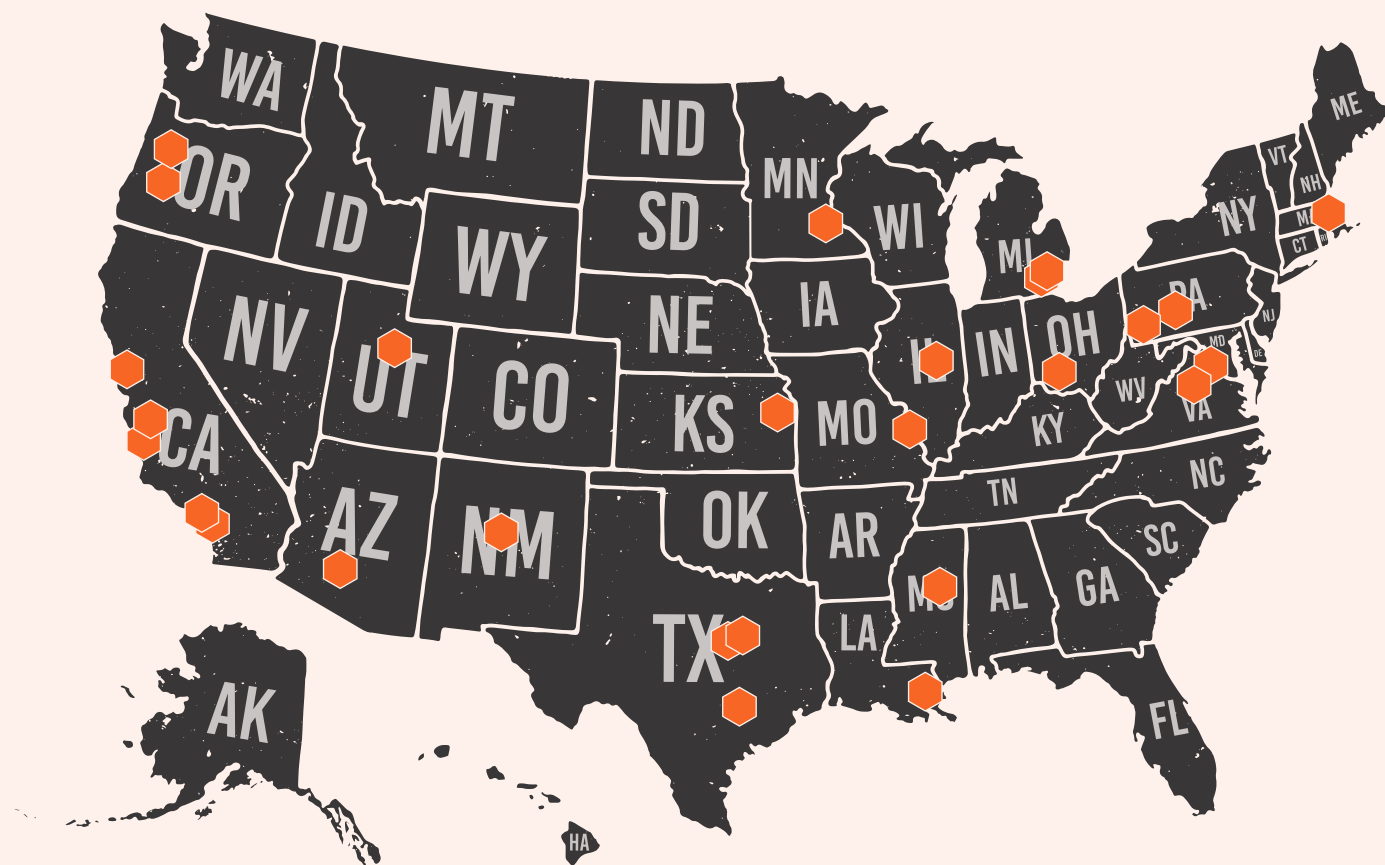
# SO- CIAL EQ- UITY

# DE- SIGN

**Design Futures is a place to reimagine the role of the designer in addressing and dismantling systemic oppression in the built environment. Dedicated to aligning the field of spatial design with social movements, Design Futures creates critically needed design education spaces by bringing together students, faculty and practitioners together to learn and advance community-based design practice.**

**Design Futures alumni work in many fields, including:**

**ARCHITECTURE** **AFFORDABLE HOUSING** **ENGINEERING**  
**URBAN PLANNING** **COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT** **PUBLIC POLICY**  
**SUSTAINABILITY** **LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE**



**Our university network has included 28 institutions:**

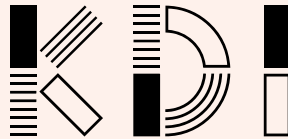
Arizona State University  
 Art Center College of Design  
 California College of the Arts  
 Carnegie Mellon University  
 Cornell University  
 Kansas University  
 Massachusetts Institute of Technology  
 Mississippi State University  
 Morgan State University  
 Penn State University  
 Portland State University  
 Southern Methodist University  
 Tulane University  
 University of California, Berkeley

University of Cincinnati  
 University of Detroit Mercy  
 University of Georgia  
 University of Illinois  
 University of Michigan  
 University of Minnesota  
 University of New Mexico  
 University of Oregon  
 University of Southern California  
 University of Texas Arlington  
 University of Texas Austin  
 University of Utah  
 University of Virginia  
 Washington University in St. Louis

Past practitioners have included  
representatives from:

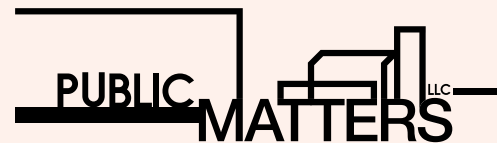


**DEPARTMENT OF  
BELOVED PLACES**



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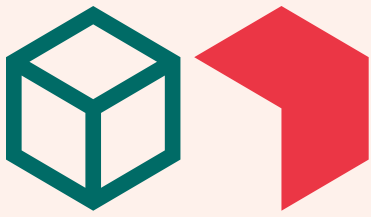
**MASS.**



**NATIONAL  
ENDOWMENT** for the **ARTS**  
arts.gov







# DESIGN FUTURES BY THE NUMBERS.

Over the years we've directly  
engaged with...

**650**  
STUDENTS

**150**  
FACULTY

**110**  
PRACTITIONERS

In 2021, over 80% of student attendees identified as women or non-binary and 49% were people of color.

100% of the design workshops were led by people of color and 100% co-led by women.

# What students have to say about their experience:

**“To be surrounded by like-minded people and engage in deep, constructive discussion for a whole week was so cathartic — it was a life-changing experience for sure.”**

Arielle Meisel (2023)  
Washington University of St. Louis

**“Participating in Design Futures was critical to my personal and professional development as a public servant... I feel exceedingly more equipped to advocate for equitable standards in the provision of resources.”**

Linda LaNoue (2019)  
University of Michigan

**“Overall, the forum reframed my perspective of design and opened a space for me to reconsider my role and impact as a designer.”**

Tulane University Student (2023)

**“There were a lot of amazing students and practitioners there and meeting them helped me to find my tribe... all that you did and continue to do in developing students has made a huge impact in my life and I hope to continue giving this gift you have given me.”**

Cornell University Student (2016)





# Impact on students

## COMMUNITY

Breaking isolation and finding other people who are dedicated to spatial justice

## ADVANCING SKILLS

Bringing rigor: Learning and practicing frameworks, tools and mindsets

## CAREER CHOICES

Expanding their understanding of what career pathways are possible by meeting people who are practicing community-based design in the field

## MENTORSHIP

Receiving mentorship from award-winning practitioners and building peer-mentorship circles

# Impact on faculty

## COMMUNITY

Joining a network of peers to share curricula, student engagement approaches, and systems change strategies for their university

## ACADEMIC RECOGNITION

Renewing energy for their work in receiving validation for efforts that aren't always recognized within their university

# Impact on the field

## COMMUNITY

Building relationships between aligned practitioners across the country

## CENTER BIPOC LEADERSHIP

Lifting up the existing BIPOC leadership in community-based design

## EXPAND ACCOUNTABILITY

Creating space for practitioners to share their work and be accountable to responsible practices

## FREEDOM TO INNOVATE

Providing an opportunity for practitioners to try more radical frameworks than what they can typically explore in the field



# Support Design Futures by:

## MAKING A FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTION

To become a sponsor, check out our sponsorship levels and benefits on the next page.

Want to make a tax-deductible donation instead? [Click here!](#)

## JOINING AS A UNIVERSITY MEMBER

[Take a look](#) at what a University Membership includes!

## SHARING YOUR DF STORY

Have you joined us at Design Futures before? [Tell us a bit about your experience and how the forum has impacted your career.](#)

## APPLY TO LEAD A WORKSHOP AT DF 2024

Ready to help cultivate the next generation of leaders? [Check our website](#) to apply to join us at Washington University in St. Louis from May 20 - 24, 2024.

**Questions? Reach out to Ezra Kong, Executive Director at [DesignFuturesForum@gmail.com](mailto:DesignFuturesForum@gmail.com)**



# Become a sponsor with benefits.

## 25k

### **Moonshot Designer**

Entry to Forum Keynote and Local Panel  
Full page feature as sponsor in Forum booklet  
+ benefits below

## 10k

### **Leader**

Entry for 2 individuals for the faculty convening  
Logo on 2024 Design Futures welcome banner & website  
+ benefits below

## 2k

### **Ally**

Logo on the Design Futures Forum program and marketing materials



# Directly cover our convening costs.

**Support Students** **8k**

Cover the costs for 5 students to fully participate from a university that cannot afford the registration or travel costs. Priority given to HBCUs.

**Support Practitioners** **5k**

Cover the speaker fees and travel costs of the 2024 Forum Keynote (someone with demonstrated courage and creativity at the intersection of social justice and design.)

**Support Faculty** **3k**

Cover the costs of the annual Faculty Dinner, which brings together university faculty and Forum speakers during the Forum to connect.

**Based in St. Louis? Contact us for more ways to be connected to the 2024 forum.**

# OR... Give general support at any level!



# In our 2023 post-forum survey, participants described the forum as:

**“Educative,” “Informative,” “Insightful,” and “Thought-provoking”** — suggesting that the forum provided valuable information and encouraged participants to think critically and gain new insights.

**“Transformational,” “Intense,” “Reflective,” and “Life-changing”** — pointing to the idea that Design Futures helped facilitate personal growth, self-reflection, and even profound changes in perspective.

**“Community,” “Connection,” “Inclusive,” and “Human-centered”** — reflecting the sense of belonging and interpersonal connections participants felt during the experience.

**“FUN!”**

**“It made me think of how much more fun designing will be without having to use the same tired formula.”**

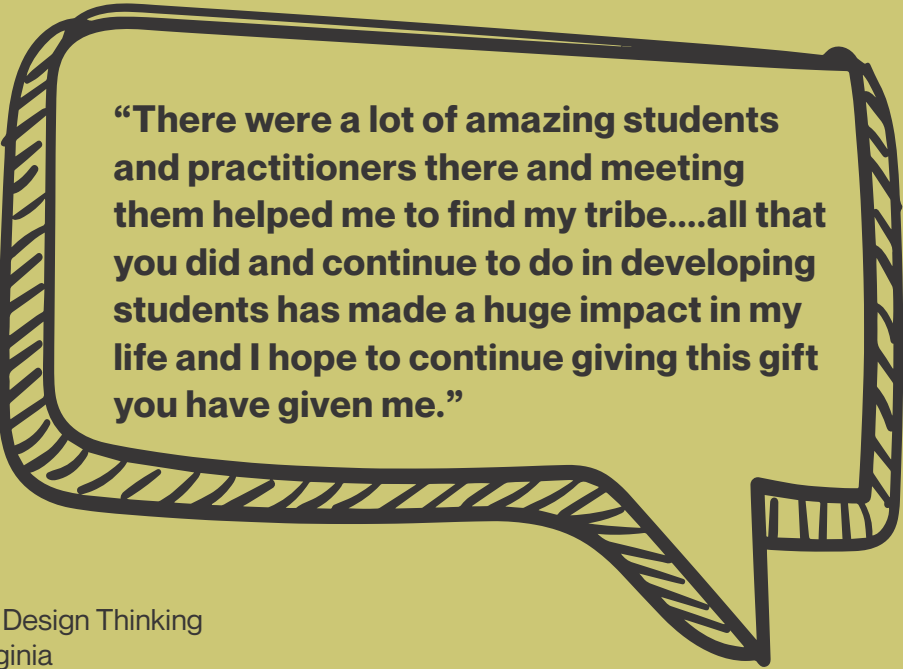
**“Empowering,” “Hopeful,” “Joyous,” “Exciting,” “Enriching,” and “Affirming”** — indicating that the experience had a positive impact on participants and left them with a sense of empowerment and enthusiasm.

**“I learned new things about my own identity, others, and the intersection between design and social change.”**



## Staff

**Ezra Kong** (they/them/theirs)  
Executive Director  
DesignFuturesForum@gmail.com



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## Board of Directors

**Elgin Cleckley** (he/him)  
Assistant Professor of Architecture and Design Thinking  
School of Architecture, University of Virginia  
With appointment in the Curry School of Education and the School of Nursing

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Collaborative Design Project Manager, Adjunct Lecturer  
The Albert and Tina Small Center for Collaborative Design, Tulane School of Architecture

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Assistant Director of Research  
School of Architecture, University of Texas at Austin



**“I’ve been to Design Futures to teach, learn and now to participate as a board member...”**

**To learn more about our team, visit [designfuturesforum.org](https://designfuturesforum.org)**



# DESIGN FUTURES

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