Designers of Color

A work in progress document that lists designers of color including architects, landscape architects, urban designers, urban planners, and engagement specialists focused on implementing urban public, cultural, and institutional projects.

June 5, 2020
Notes

These architects, landscape architects, and designers are included because their work is well recognized as innovative, thoughtful, and compelling. We have listed design firms owned and led by a person of color in addition to senior designers of color within larger firms.

Approaches to creating a design team:

Community Values: Determine community values and identity through engagement to establish expertise needed from architecture and design firms

Emerging Firm Lead: Support an emerging firm or architect with local established partners

Large Firm Lead: Work with an established national firm with specific internal leadership

Multiple Expertise: Combine various partners that may have specific expertise (facade design, interior design, furniture and fabrication, installation, engagement, public art, retail, healthcare, sustainability, etc.)

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For questions, edits, ideas, or access to working document please contact:

Chris Merritt
chris@merrittchase.com
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Sir David Adjaye OBE is recognized as a leading architect of his generation. Adjaye was born in Tanzania to Ghanaian parents and his influences range from contemporary art, music and science to African art forms and the civic life of cities. In 1994, he set up his first office, where his ingenious use of materials and his sculptural ability established him as an architect with an artist’s sensibility and vision. He reformed his studio as Adjaye Associates in 2000. The firm now has offices in London, New York and Accra with projects in the US, UK, Europe, Africa, Asia and the Middle East. His largest project to date, the $540 million Smithsonian Institute National Museum of African American History and Culture, opened on the National Mall in Washington DC in fall of 2016 and was named Cultural Event of the Year by the New York Times. Other prominent completed work include the Idea Stores in London (2005), which were credited with pioneering a new approach to library services, the Moscow School of Management SKOLKOVO (2010), the Sugar Hill mixed-use social housing scheme in Harlem, New York (2015); and the Aishti Foundation retail and art complex in Beirut (2015). Prominent ongoing projects include a new home for the Studio Museum in Harlem, New York, a new headquarters building for the International Finance Corporation in Dakar, and the just-announced National Holocaust Memorial and Learning Centre in London.

In 2017, Adjaye was recently knighted by Her Majesty the Queen for services to Architecture, following the previous award of an OBE in 2007. The same year, he was recognized as one of the 100 most influential people of the year by TIME magazine. He has additionally received the Design Miami/ Artist of the Year title in 2011, the Wall Street Journal Innovator Award in 2013 and the 2016 Panerai London Design Medal from the London Design Festival. Adjaye is known for his frequent collaborations with contemporary artists on installations and exhibitions. Most notably, he designed the 56th Venice Art Biennale with curator Okwui Enwezor (2015). The Upper Room, featuring thirteen paintings by Chris Ofili (2002), is now part of the permanent collection of Tate Britain. Further examples include Within Reach, a second installation with Ofili in the British pavilion at the Venice Biennale (2003) and the Thyssen-Bornemisza Art for the 21st Century Pavilion that was designed to show Your Black Horizon, a projection work by Olafur Eliasson, at the 2005 Venice Biennale. Adjaye has held distinguished professorships at the Harvard, Princeton and Yale universities. He has also taught at the Royal College of Art, where he had previously studied, and at the Architectural Association School in London.
Allison Grace Williams Studio

San Francisco, CA

Architect Allison Grace Williams FAIA, has amassed an international portfolio of large scale civic, cultural and research facilities. While in practice at SOM, Perkins+Will and AECOM, Williams’ inventive instincts and interdisciplinary design leadership generated award-winning buildings that bridge culture, technology and the environment and that convey the values and traditions of their audience and place. Her most successful projects and the work of the organizations and institutions with whom she collaborates are in huge part, a commentary on the order of priority they place on the relevant issues of our time. They are reflective of their sponsor’s concern for sustainable environments and for inclusive, equitable and socially just outcomes. They also demonstrate a level of tolerance for innovation, risk-taking and doing good, in the hierarchy of other competing business factors. Williams established AGWms_studio in 2017. It is built on her history as a respected team leader who enlists the power of ideas and design thinking as creative tools in mission-strategic problem solving. Her clients have included corporations, institutions and other design professionals at critical moments in their creative process, defining issues, articulating and prioritizing choices, filtering and consolidating ideas. Williams partners with them to imagine impactful concepts and synergistic design solutions as their narrative toward shaping a positive future.
A(n) Office
New York, NY; Detroit, MI

V. Mitch McEwen and Marcelo López-Dinardi, Principals

V. Mitch McEwen joined the faculty of Princeton University School of Architecture in the fall 2017 from the University of Michigan’s Taubman College of Architecture & Urban Planning, where she had been an assistant professor since 2014. She is the co-founder of A(n) Office, an architecture collaborative of studios in Detroit, Los Angeles, and Brooklyn. McEwen’s design work has been awarded grants from the Graham Foundation, Knight Foundation, and New York State Council on the Arts. A(n) Office projects have been commissioned by the US Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit, and the Istanbul Design Biennial. Her projects in Detroit have produced a series of operations on houses previously owned by the Detroit Land Bank Authority. These include a combined residence and flower incubator for an engineer at 3M, a strategy for 100 houses selected by the City of Detroit to densify the neighborhood of Fitzgerald, and an award-winning repurposing of a balloon-frame house titled House Opera. Her work in urban design and architecture began at Bernard Tschumi Architects and the New York City Department of City Planning, as well as founding the Brooklyn-based non-profit SUPERFRONT. McEwen earned her M.Arch. at Columbia and B.A. at Harvard.

Marcelo López-Dinardi is an immigrant, in-part designer-theorist, and educator based in Texas, and an Assistant Professor in the Department of Architecture at Texas A&M University. He is also Partner of A(n) Office. He’s interested in the multiple scales of design; biopolitics and agency in design and education; and architecture as expanded media (publications and curatorial practices). His work as partner of A(n) Office was exhibited in the Venice Biennale of Architecture in 2016 and has written for Avery Review, The Architect’s Newspaper, Domus, Planning Perspectives, Art Forum (China), and lectured at The Cooper Union, Princeton University, RISD, GSAPP, among others. He holds a B.Arch. from the Polytechnic University of Puerto Rico, and a MS in Critical, Curatorial and Conceptual Practices for Architecture from the (GSAPP) Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation of Columbia University.
Array Architects (Danei Cesario)

New York, NY

As healthcare architects, Array has extensive experience in planning, architecture and interior design for hospitals and medical centers. Danei Cesario’s portfolio includes projects for the Mount Sinai, NYU Langone Health and New York City Health and Hospitals Corporations. Danei is also the Chair of AIA New York’s Diversity and Inclusion Committee, and a member of the nycobaNOMA Executive Board.
Henry J. Carter Specialty Hospital Skilled Nursing Facility

Harlem Park Medical Office

Henry J. Carter Specialty Hospital Skilled Nursing Facility, New York, NY

Mount Sinai Cardiovascular ICU

NYU Langone Health Radiation Oncology & Infusion Treatment Center
Atelier Amina

New York, NY

Amina Blacksher, Principal & Founder

Led by Amina Blacksher, the emerging firm’s primary work is in installations, including work with robotic arms and documentary films. Prior to joining the design faculty at Columbia University, Amina Blacksher taught at Yale School of Architecture, where she was a presidential visiting fellow. She graduated from the Yale School of Architecture, where she was named the Robert Leon Combs Scholar.
Paola Aguirre is the founder of Borderless, urban design and research practice based in Chicago. Paola has been trained as an architect and urban designer, and her professional experience includes working with government, universities and architecture/urban design offices both in Mexico and the United States.

She is also founder of Borderless Workshop, a research and collaborative platform focused on rethinking cities among the US-Mexico border region. On that front, she is the creator-producer of Mapeo Workshops that work with multiple universities and students from different programs to research, critically discuss and creatively think about urban challenges using mapping as a main tool. Mapeo works with students, instructors, community members, and guest experts to create conversations, exchange knowledge and ideas through an intense boot-camp format.
Caples Jefferson Architects
New York, NY

CJA is led by Everardo Jefferson and Sara Caples, and has expertise in architecture, interior design and urban design. They engage with social, cultural and community concerns with a focus on sustainability in their material selection and efficient construction processes. Their projects include the Weeksville Heritage Center, which has won numerous state and national awards. The firm also received the 2017 AIANY President’s Award and the 2012 AIANY State Firm of the Year.
Colloqate

New Orleans, LA

Bryan C. Lee Jr.,
Director of Design

Sue Mobley,
Director of Advocacy

Colloqate is a multidisciplinary non-profit design justice practice. Their work focuses on “expanding community access to and building power through the design of social, civic and cultural spaces, and includes youth programs, urban design, and public art. Bryan C. Lee Jr. is the founding organizer of the Design Justice Platform and the Design as Protest National Day of Action. Sue Mobley is also the author of Human Rights, Human Wrongs, Observation of Human Rights Law and Norms in the UN Peacekeeping Operations.
Prioritizing community engagement in every project, Concordia’s portfolio includes schools, neighborhood centers, libraries, and adaptation and resilience projects. Their work spans around the country, and they have developed a nexus framework that supports their engagement process. Concordia’s work has been featured in several publications, including Forbes, Architectural Digest, Architect Magazine, Metropolis, and the New York Times.
De Nichols

St. Louis, MO

De Nichols

De is a social practice artist, serving as the Principal of Design and Social Practice at Civic Creatives. She is currently a 2020 Loeb Fellow in residence at Harvard University GSD. De’s work has been recognized by the Regional Arts Commission in St. Louis, the Clinton Global Initiative, and the John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts. She is the youngest member of the Board of Directors for Forward through Ferguson, and the inaugural chair of the Board of Directors for the Creative Racism Lab.
Yarning to Know You, St. Louis MO

Visualizing Agency, Authorship and Allyship, John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts

Sticky Note to Self Project, Soulard MO

Newport Health Equity Zone Lab, Newport RI

Faces of the Movement
Dr. Diane Jones Allen has established a national reputation by bridging practice and research in the areas she cares most deeply about: transportation access, sustainability, and environmental justice. These interests have led to a research and creative output that is remarkable for the holistic integration of academic productivity with successful and meaningful practice. Dr. Jones has recently added two publishing ventures to her CV. The first is a book where she is the sole author (Routledge Press) and the second is a book chapter with her mentor at UC Berkley, Randy Hester, and others. Both books are available for pre-order: Lost in the Transit Desert: Race, Transit Access, and Suburban Form, and Design as Democracy: Techniques for Collective Creativity. These books extend her reputation in areas of interest and expertise beyond her articles, conference proceedings, community and national service, and other synergistic activities. They indicate that her commitment to scholarship has actually increased since her caesura from academia in 2014. Transportation equity and “transit deserts” are moving increasingly into the forefront of discussion for planners, landscape architects, and engineers. She has successfully positioned herself nationally as a leader of this movement within the discipline of landscape architecture. She was elevated to Fellow by the American Society of Landscape Architecture.

One of the highest honors it bestows on its members. Dr. Jones has a long record of successful practice, including responsibility as a design principal and owner at two firms. This success has been recognized by a national American Society of Landscape Architects award in 2016, her participation in the prestigious award jury for the national ASLA 2017 professional awards in May of 2017, in published interviews, and as a keynote speaker, panelist, and speaker for an accelerating series of important venues. So far in 2018, these include the New York ASLA State Conference, The Housing + Conference held at the MIT Media Lab, and the Kresge Foundation Climate Adaptation Influencers Meeting in Washington, DC. Last year saw several events that ranged from Minnesota to Louisiana. She is clearly in demand for her unusual and timely interdisciplinary focus on the interplay of transportation and water infrastructure and social and environmental justice.
Design Studio for Social Intervention

Dorchester, MA

Kenneth Bailey, Sector Organizing and Strategy Lead

Lori Lobenstine, Program Design Lead

Ayako Maruyama, Creativity Lab Design Lead

Dedicated to changing how social justice is imagined, DS4SI is engaged with activism, public art, social practice and civic engagement. Their work includes social interventions, writing, civic engagement, placemaking, creativity labs, and community events. DS4SI engages artist fellows and artists in residence for their work, as well as an advisory board. Their present and past funders include the Boston Foundation, the Kresge Foundation, and the Ford Foundation.
Dream the Combine

Minneapolis, MN

Led by Jennifer Newsom and Tom Carruthers, the practice creates site-specific installations that “disrupt the assumed dichotomies and manipulate the boundary between real and illusory space.” Their work has been widely featured, including in Metropolis Magazine, Architectural Record, and the New York Times. They are also winners of the 2018 MoMA PS1 Young Architects Program for their Hide & Seek installation.
Make It Rain, Vancouver BC

Hide and Seek, MoMA PS1, New York

Clearing, Shakopee MN
EDSA (Kona Gray)

Fort Lauderdale, FL

Kona Gray, Principal

Strong leadership and a sense of purpose are part of Kona’s DNA. With experience in 30+ countries, his global management sense has positively shaped the outcomes of many award-winning assignments. He successfully integrates creativity and regional resources into functional environments that invigorate the imagination. With an uncompromising dedication to quality, Kona creates welcoming public places that bring a strong sense of vitality back to neighborhoods. Blending sensitivity with innovative design solutions, he unites a client’s vision with his own vanguard designs to produce programs with purpose and presence.
Fitzgerald Collaborative Group

Atlanta, GA

Darrell Fitzgerald, Managing Principal
Donald Gray, Jr., Principal

With projects in architecture, urban design, and interiors, FCG specializes in civic, aviation, higher education, and K-12 schools. Led by Darrell Fitzgerald and Donald Gray, their projects include the Dallas Federal Reserve Bank, the Northside Hospital Women’s Center, and the Egleston Children’s Hospital in Atlanta. Darrell also served on the Board of Directors for 100 Black Men of America and was the president of the 100 Black Men of Atlanta.
Designers often operate with either formal or social-impact imperatives. Grayscale Collaborative LLC ("Grayscale") engages this problematic binary by acknowledging the intersectionality of race, class, and the production of urban space. In 2015, Stephen Gray founded Grayscale and joined the faculty of Harvard’s Graduate School of Design to work at the intersection of urban design practice and research. Previously a senior urban designer at Sasaki, he brings more than a decade of experience working with municipal agencies, colleges and universities, private developers, non-profits, multinational NGOs, and the public. Stephen’s personal background directly influences his work and allows him to make meaningful contributions in culturally dynamic and sometimes contentious urban settings.

Stephen has been a lecturer in urban design at MIT School of Architecture + Planning and Northeastern University School of Architecture, Associate Director on the Board of the Boston Society of Architects (BSA), and he has been tapped to serve on several Urban Land Institute (ULI) advisory panels.

He holds a B. Arch. Degree from the University of Cincinnati and a Master of Architecture in Urban Design (MAUD) Degree with distinction from Harvard University where he received the Thesis Prize for Urban Design and the Award for Outstanding Leadership in Urban Design. Having successfully collaborated on or led more than 20 high-quality and community-engaged design projects around the country and the globe, Stephen has been nationally recognized by the American Institute of Architects (AIA) for his contributions to urban design thinking in the U.S. context with the National AIA Honor Award, the highest honor given to individual associate AIA members.
Hamilton Anderson Associates

Detroit, MI

HAA’s mission is “to enhance life as we build communities through design excellence.” Their work spans across healthcare, campus design, hospitality, historic and civic projects. Notable projects include the Wayne State University Medical Office, the Detroit Ronald McDonald House, and the Michigan State Weils Hall. HAA’s team also founded ROGUEHAA, a design and urban advocacy collaborative that operates outside of the boundaries of traditional design practice to cultivate public awareness and dialogue around current design issues.
HECTOR Design Service

Newark, NJ

Jae Shin, Partner

Damon Rich, Partner

Hector is an urban design, planning and civic arts practice led by Jae Shin and Damon Rich. Their work spans hands-on civic engagement at the Museum of Modern Art, park design and planning at the Newark Riverfront, and zoning and land-use regulations in Newark. Jae Shin recently served as an Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellow at the NYC Housing Authority. Damon Rich previously served as planning director and chief urban designer for the City of Newark. Damon was also awarded the 2017 MacArthur Genius Grant.
Space Brainz, Yerba Buena 3000, San Francisco CA

Broadacre 2017, MoMA NY

Newark Riverfront Park & Plan, Newark NJ
HOK (Kimberly Dowdell)

Chicago, IL

With a global practice spanning nearly all design disciplines and markets, HOK’s expertise in healthcare design is demonstrated by the Indianapolis Sidney & Lois Eskenazi Hospital, the Cedars-Sinai Advanced Health Sciences Pavillion, and the Harlem Hospital Center Modernization. Kimberly Dowdell collaborates with HOK’s Chicago studio leadership to develop and implement strategic business development and marketing initiatives. She is also the current National President of the National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA), and a Crain’s Detroit Business “40 Under 40” honoree.
Walter Hood, Creative Director

Walter Hood is the creative director and founder of Hood Design Studio in Oakland, CA. He is also a professor at the University of California, Berkeley, and lectures on professional and theoretical projects nationally and internationally. He is a recipient of the 2017 Academy of Arts and Letters Architecture Award, 2019 Knight Public Spaces Fellowship, 2019 MacArthur Fellowship, and 2019 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize.
Huff + Gooden Architects

New York, NY

Mario Gooden, Principal & Founder

Huff + Gooden’s primary work is in education and institutional projects. Led by Mario Gooden, the firm was selected to design the expansion of the California African American Museum and has exhibited at the Chicago Architecture Biennial and Columbia University. Mario Gooden is a Professor of Practice at Columbia GSAPP, and is also the co-director with Mabel Wilson of the Global Africa Lab at Columbia. Mario is a 2012 National Endowment for the Arts Fellow and a MacDowell Colony Fellow. In 2016, he authored *Dark Space: Architecture Representation Black Identity*. 
Jaklitsch/Gardner Architects

New York, NY

Mark L. Gardner, Principal

Stephan Jaklitsch, Principal & Founder

Founded by Mark Gardner and Stephan Jaklitsch, the firm’s portfolio spans commercial, residential, cultural, and education projects. Their projects include the Tanzania Beekeepers Asali Nyuki Sanctuary, Stilt City Art Center in Rockaway Park, and the Daegu Gosan Public Library in Daegu, Korea. The firm has received nine AIA awards for their work, and was awarded by the Chicago Athenaeum Museum of Architecture and Design. Mark Gardner was the 2017 Director of the Master of Architecture Program at Parsons New School of Design, and is an Advocacy Chair for the NOMA NY Chapter.
Juan Gabriel Moreno Architects

Chicago, IL

Juan Gabriel Moreno, President

JGMA believes that “good design should not be exclusive to the affluent” and aims to support the development of communities surrounding them. They have a diverse portfolio of large institutional, educational, and residential work, including the Esperanza Health Centers in Brighton Park, School of the Art Institute of Chicago, and the University of Antioquia Health Complex in Medellin. JGMA has received several honors including “Best Architecture Firm” by Modern Interiors Magazine, the 2014 and 2013 Driehaus Design Excellence Awards, and the 2012 AIA Chicago Design Award. Juan Gabriel Moreno was also the recipient of the 2013 “PIECE” Award for International Excellence in Colombia.
Kéré Architecture

Berlin, Germany

Francis Kéré, Principal & Founder

Led by Francis Kéré, the firm is well-known for its communal approach to design and commitment to sustainable materials and construction. Their educational and institutional work is primarily in Europe and Africa, with exhibition and installation work in the U.S. The firm has won many global awards in sustainable architecture and construction. In 2004, Francis Kéré won the Aga Khan Award for Architecture for his first building, the Gando Primary School in Burkina Faso.
Gando Primary School, Gando Burkina Faso

National Park of Mali, Bamako Mali

Philadelphia Museum of Art Colorscape, Philadelphia PA
Kounkuey Design Initiative

Los Angeles, CA + Nairobi, Kenya

KDI’s mission is to “partner with under-resourced communities to advance equity and activate the unrealized potential in their neighborhoods and cities.” They are well-known for their work introducing public spaces, facilities, and educational centers in Kenya and California. Their work has been awarded by the Atlantic, the Van Alen Institute, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Institution of Civil Engineers, and MIT. Chelina Odbert was also recently awarded the Public Space Fellowship by the Knight Foundation.

Chelina Odbert,  
Executive Director

Jerome Chou,  
Planning Director
Latent Design

Chicago, IL

Katherine Darnstadt, Founder and Principal

Architect and educator Katherine Darnstadt is the founder and principal of Latent Design, a collaborative of individuals whose projects focus on social, economic and environmental impact beyond the building. Katherine brings innovative design to those in resource and budget limited environments through a holistic, creative approach to design driven by community needs that leverages other partners and assets to address project challenges. Her passion for public interest design through participatory strategies and diverse background have allowed her to collaborate with change agents in design, science, arts and philosophy. Since founding her practice in 2010, Katherine and her firm have been recognized as an emerging leader in the architecture profession and have been published, exhibited and featured widely, most notably at the International Venice Biennale, Core 77 Design Awards, Architizer A+ Awards, Chicago Ideas Week, NPR, and as the 2013 American Institute of Architects Young Architects Honor Award winner.
Liz Ogbu
San Francisco, CA

Liz Ogbu is a multi-disciplinary designer with strong expertise in sustainable design and spatial innovation in challenged global urban environments. Her work spans from designing shelters for immigrant day laborers in the US to exhibiting at the Cooper Hewitt National Design Museum. She has completed a variety of projects engaged with public health access and education. Liz has been profiled in publications including the New York Times, the Atlantic, Places Journal, and Journal of Urban Design. Her honors include the 2009 Holcim Global Innovation Prize, Senior Fellow of the Design Futures Council, and YCBA 100.
MASS Design Group (Jha D Williams)

Boston, MA

A non-profit architecture practice, MASS Design works around the US and Rwanda to “research, build, and advocate for architecture that promotes justice and human dignity.” Their projects include several hospitals and medical facilities in Rwanda and Kenya, as well as the new National Memorial for Peace and Justice in Montgomery, Alabama. The firm has been awarded several honors, including the 2017 Cooper Hewitt National Design Award and was listed on Fast Company’s 2018 World’s Most Innovative Companies. Jha D joined MASS Design’s Boston office in 2018 as a Senior Associate. She is also a spoken word artist and event organizer and co-hosts a monthly open mic called “if you can feel it, you can
Michael Marshall Design

Washington D.C.

Working across architecture, branding and interior design, Michael Marshall Design aims to “use design to create greater opportunities and access in the arts, education and community services.” Their work includes the D.C. Audi Field, Howard Theatre, and the UDC Student Center. The firm has received multiple AIA Design Excellence Awards, NOMA Design Excellence Awards and American Graphic Design Awards for their projects. Michael Marshall was named a 2016 “Power 100” Playmaker and 2014 Minority Business Leader of the Year by the Washington Business Journal.
Moody Nolan is the largest African American owned and managed firm in the country, with offices in twelve cities across the US. Their projects include many community centers and university campuses, including the Jacksonville State University recreation building, the Penn State intramural building, and the Columbus Martin Luther King, Jr. Library. Moody Nolan has been ranked as the best architectural firm in Columbus and Central Ohio for three years in a row by Columbus Business First and Columbus CEO.
Olalekan Jeyifous
New York, NY

Olalekan Jeyifous is a visual artist whose work has been exhibited at venues such as the Studio Museum in Harlem, the MoMA, the Vitra Design Museum and the Guggenheim in Bilbao. He has received a number of grants for his artwork such as a fellowship from the New York Foundation of the Arts, the New York State Council on the Arts and the Brooklyn Arts Council. He has recently completed artist residencies with the Headlands Center for the Arts, Bemis Center for Contemporary Arts, the Drawing Center’s Open Sessions program, and he was a Wilder Green Fellow at the MacDowell Colony.
PAU

New York, NY

Mark Faulkner, Associate Partner
Ruchika Modi, Associate Partner, Studio Director
Vishaan Chakrabarti, Founder

Led by Vishaan Chakrabarti, Ruchika Modi, and Mark Faulkner, PAU has expertise in architecture, urban design and planning. They are currently working on the JFK Towers in Philadelphia and the Domino Sugar Refinery in Brooklyn. PAU’s work has been featured in Architect’s Newspaper, Oculus Magazine, and at TED 2018. Vishaan Chakrabarti was also recently appointed dean of UC Berkeley’s College of Environmental Design.
Perkins & Will (Zena Howard)

Durham, NC

Zena Howard, Principal,
Managing Director, North Carolina

Perkins & Will is a global firm, with projects in nearly every market sector. Zena Howard is a Principal and Managing Director of the Perkins & Will North Carolina Practice, and a founding member of the firm’s Diversity and Inclusion Council. Among many other projects, she served as the Senior Project Manager for the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture in Washington D.C.
Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, Washington D.C.

Hogan’s Alley, Langley, Vancouver BC

Anacostia Public Library, Washington D.C.
Glenn LaRue Smith has built an urbanism career inspired by the intersection of landscape and architecture. In thirty-five years of private, public and academic practice he has focused on the ‘city’ as a cultural and artistic medium for practice. As an application of this passion, he has participated in urban design workshops and been an invited juror on urban design competitions in major American cities. Smith has over the years developed a unique design methodology that utilizes the interpretation of place specific imagery to develop highly unique and sculptural form.

Smith brings extensive management and leadership experience to PUSH studio based on prior roles as Acting Deputy Director of the Prince George’s County, Maryland Redevelopment Authority and academic chairmanships at Florida A&M University and Morgan State University.

Smith received a Masters of Landscape Architecture (MLA) from The University of Michigan-Ann Arbor and a Bachelors of Landscape Architecture (BLA) from Mississippi State University. He has served as President of the New York Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects and is a Harvard Graduate School of Design Loeb Fellow.
Quinn Evans Architects (Centric Design Studio)

Detroit, MI

Now joined with Quinn Evans Architects, Centric Design Studio merges architecture and graphic design disciplines. Their projects include the Detroit Neighborhood Stabilization Project, the David Klein Gallery, and St. Andrew’s Hall. Quinn Evans is a full service architecture firm with an extensive portfolio of housing, civic, educational, cultural and commercial work.
Rodney Leon Architects
New York, NY

Rodney Leon, Principal & Founder

Rodney Leon Architects’ expertise lies in “culturally contextual design,” with projects focused on cultural and faith based organizations. Additionally, the firm is implementing sustainable green housing development in emerging global economies, including in Haiti. Rodney Leon has taught at Pratt Institute since 1998, and has been a Capital and Planning Grants Reviewer for the NY State Council of the Arts since 2014.
Pascale Sablan, AIA, NOMA, LEED AP, With over eleven years of experience, she has been on the design team for a variety of mixed-use, commercial, cultural & residential projects in the U.S., Saudi Arabia, India, Azerbaijan, Japan, & UAE. Pascale is the 315th living African American female architect in the United States to attain her architectural license.

She is the Founder and Executive Director of Beyond the Built Environment, LLC, positioned to uniquely address the inequitable disparities in architecture by providing a holistic platform aimed to support numerous stages of the architecture pipeline. Beyond the Built Environment, elevates the identities and contributions of minority architects and designers through exhibitions, curated lectures, and documentaries that testify to the provided value of their built work and its spatial impact. Pascale was recently appointed to American Institute of Architects New York Board of Director and American Institute of Architects National Strategic Planning Committee Member to set 2020-2024 strategic plan for the organization.

She has been recognized for her contributions to the industry with several awards, including the 2018 Pratt Alumni Achievement Award, Emerging New York Architect Merit Award and the NOMA Prize for Excellence in Design. Pascale was selected as one of 2018 American Institute of Architects (AIA) Young Architects Award Recipient and was featured in the Council of Tall Building & Urban Habitat Research Paper, in the same company as Jeanne Gang and Zaha Hadid. She was named Building Design + Construction 40 Under 40 and was featured on the Cover of the September 2017 issue of their magazine.

Mrs. Sablan holds a Bachelor of Architecture from Pratt Institute and a Master of Science in Advanced Architectural Design from the Columbia University. Pascale has given lectures at Institutions, Universities and Colleges all over the US; Schools such as Columbia University, Georgia Technical College, Tuskegee University, Pratt Institute, Parsons The New School, Madison Area Technical College and California Polytechnic State University and Institution such as the National Museum of African American Heritage & Culture and the United Nations Campus.
Sekou Cooke Studio

Syracuse, NY

Sekou Cooke, Principal

Sekou Cooke’s work is intertwined with the emergent field of Hip-Hop Architecture. The studio brings thoughtful and rigorous experimentation to residential, commercial, mixed-use, and tenant improvement projects around the US, Liberia and Jamaica. Sekou’s research has been exhibited at the AIANY Center for Architecture and widely disseminated through writings, lectures and symposia, such as at the Museum of Contemporary Art in LA and the US Modernist Radio. He is also currently an Assistant Professor at Syracuse University School of Architecture.
SOM (Tiara Hughes)

Chicago, IL

Tiara Hughes, Senior Urban Designer

As a global architecture firm, SOM’s projects in healthcare range from Aurora, CO to Giza, Egypt. These include the Christ Hospital Joint and Spine Center in Cincinnati, the Mount Sinai Hess Center in New York, and the Rocky Mountain Regional Veterans Affairs Medical Center in Aurora. Tiara Hughes was recently appointed by Chicago Mayor Lightfoot to the Commission on Chicago Landmarks. She is the Public Relations Director on the National Board for NOMA, and is a founder of The First 500, a research initiative designed to raise awareness of African American women in architecture.
Street Theory

Boston, MA

Liza Quinonez, Co-Founder, CEO

Victor Quinonez, Co-Founder, Creative Director

Founded by artist Liza Quinonez and graffiti artist Marka27, the agency’s expertise lies in street art, experiential marketing, cultural placemaking, and branding. They have over 20 years experience in large scale public art, art and design direction, and exhibitions and special events. Street Theory also curates the annual Underground Mural Project in partnership with National Development.
Germane Barnes leads a research and design practice that “investigates the connection between architecture and identity, examining architecture’s social and political agency through historic research and design speculation.” Projects include installations, residential development, and cultural institutions. The studio’s work has been exhibited by the Graham Foundation, the New York Times, DesignMIAMI, and the National Museum of African American History, where Barnes was identified as a member of block design professionals Reshifting the Landscape.
studio:indigenous

Milwaukee, WI (Oneida Nation)

Chris Cornelius,
Founding Principal

studio:indigenous is a design and consulting practice serving American Indian clients. The firm’s work spans architecture, public installations, furniture design, memorial design, and design research. Chris Cornelius is a citizen of the Oneida Nation of Wisconsin, and associate professor at the University of Wisconsin Milwaukee. His honors include an Artist in Residence Fellowship from the National Museum of the American Indian and the inaugural J. Irwin and Xenia S. Miller Prize.
trickster (itsnotatipi), Sheboygan WI

Wiikigami Miller Prize Winner, Columbus IN

Indian Community School, Milwaukee WI
Sean Canty founded Studio SC in 2017, a design practice that activates environments by conjoining discrete geometries, materials, and architectural types. Canty is a Designer and Assistant Professor of Architecture at the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where he teaches architectural design in the Core Design Studios. Prior to joining the faculty at the GSD, Canty held teaching positions at the Cooper Union, University California Berkeley, and California College of the Arts. In addition to architectural design, Canty has taught classes on descriptive geometry and design media. Canty is one of the founding principals of Office III (OIII), an experimental architectural collective that spans New York, San Francisco, and Cambridge. Selected as a finalist for the 2016 MoMA PS1 Young Architects competition, OIII has completed a Welcome Center for Governors Island and exhibited work at the Museum of Modern Art in New York. Prior to founding these studios, Canty was a Project Designer at IwamotoScott Architecture in San Francisco. With IwamotoScott, he led commercial projects for clients including Pinterest, Bloomberg, and HeavyBit and oversaw residential projects including the Goto House and Noe Valley Residence. Canty received an M.Arch from Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design and a B.Arch from California College of the Arts.
Studio SUMO

New York, NY

Yolande Daniels, Founding Partner
Sunil Bald, Founding Partner

Founded by Yolande Daniels and Sunil Bald, Studio SUMO has a portfolio of institutional, residential, installation and exhibition work in the US and Japan. They focus on “innovative design involving extensive research, formal exploration, and material invention.” The firm won the 2010 Architectural League’s Emerging Voices Award and was listed in the 2006 Design Vanguard from Architectural Record. Their work has been exhibited at the Venice Biennale and at the Museum of Modern Art. Yolande Daniels currently teaches at Columbia University, and Sunil Bald currently teaches at Yale University.
Studio Zewde

Harlem, NY

Sara Zewde, Principal & Founder

Founded by Sara Zewde, the studio’s expertise lies in landscape architecture, urban design and public art. Its design methodology “syncs site interpretation and narrative with a dedication to the craft of construction.” Their projects include First Creek Park in Tacoma WA, the Plank Road Masterplan in Baton Rouge LA, and the Mander Recreation Center Campus in Philadelphia PA. Sara Zewde’s memorial design for the Valongo Wharf in Brazil was featured in Landscape Architecture Magazine and Next City. She recently co-curated an exhibition at Boston’s Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum titled “Big Plans: Picturing Social Reform.” Sara was also the Spring 2019 Fellow for the Mellon Initiative at Dumbarton Oaks for her research titled “Cotton Kingdom, Now.”
Toni Griffin
(Just City Lab, Urban Planning for the American City)

New York, NY; Cambridge, MA

Toni Griffin, Founder, Professor in Practice

Toni L. Griffin is the founder of Urban Planning and Design for the American City, based in New York. Through the practice, Toni served as Project Director the long range planning initiative of the Detroit Work Project, and in 2013 completed and released Detroit Future City, a comprehensive citywide framework plan for urban transformation. Most recent clients include working with the cities of Memphis, Milwaukee and Pittsburgh. Ms. Griffin was recently a Professor of Architecture and the founding Director of the J. Max Bond Center on Design for the Just City at the Spitzer School of Architecture at the City College of New York. Founded in 2011, the Bond Center is dedicated to the advancement of design practice, education, research and advocacy in ways that build and sustain resilient and just communities, cities and regions. Currently the Center is focused on several design research initiatives including the Legacy City Design Initiative, that explores innovative design solutions for cities that have lost greater than 20% population lost since their peak; “Just City Design Indicators Project” that seeks to define the core values of a just city and offer a performance measure tool to assist cities and communities with evaluating how design facilitates urban justice in the built environment; and “Inclusion in Architecture” that examines the participation of people of color in architecture and related design fields. Prior to returning to private practice, Toni was the Director of Community Development for the City of Newark, New Jersey, where she was responsible for creating a centralized division of planning and urban design, launching the city’s complete overhaul of its comprehensive master plan and zoning ordinance. Between 2000-2006, Ms. Griffin served as Vice President and Director of Design for the Anacostia Waterfront Corporation in Washington, DC, leading the planning for the Washington Nationals Ballpark District, and held the position of Deputy Director for Revitalization Planning and Neighborhood Planning in the D.C. Office of Planning, responsible for the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative, the downtown City Center redevelopment, and numbers neighborhood revitalization plans. Between 1998-2000, Ms. Griffin served as Vice President for Planning & Tourism Development for the Upper Manhattan Empowerment Zone Development Corporation in New York City. She began her career as an architect with Skidmore, Owings & Merrill LLP in Chicago, where she became an Associate Partner involved in architecture and urban design projects in London and Chicago. Ms. Griffin received a Bachelors of Architecture from the University of Notre Dame and a Loeb Fellowship from the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, where she also taught as an Adjunct Associate Professor between 2006-2011.