



The Guide

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Africa n
Studi o .1

Fez,
Morocco

18 July
–15 August
2025

African
Futures
Institute



The Guide

Welcome to *The Guide*, your comprehensive resource for the African Futures Institute's flagship teaching programme, Nomadic African Studio, launching in July/August 2025. *The Guide* is a two-part document. Part 1, *Applications*, provides essential details about how to apply for the upcoming studio taking place in July/August 2025. Part 2, *The Toolkit*, will be launched in April and will be sent to successful applicants ahead of the programme start.

We know that the application process can be time-consuming and confusing, so a great deal of effort has gone into making our application process as simple and straightforward as possible. A detailed FAQ section at the end of the *The Guide* covers most of the basic questions you may have. If you don't find the answer you're looking for, please email us using the link provided. We are a small team, however, so please bear with us while waiting for a response.

We are delighted to be part of Rolex's **Perpetual Arts Initiative**, their long-term commitment to preserving our planet, perpetuating our cultural heritage, promoting innovation and inspiring new generations.

We would like to thank the following organisations for their long-term support of the Nomadic African Studio.

Open Society Foundations
Ford Foundation
Mellon Foundation



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About Us



1. Programme



Like so many ideas, Nomadic African Studio was hatched over dinner, at Il Ridotto, a small restaurant in Venice. Fresh from the experience of running the first-ever architecture college at the Venice Architecture Biennale, six of us began exploring the idea of an annual studio somewhere on the African continent. Where should it be located? Since the African Futures Institute is headquartered in Accra, it seemed a logical place to start. But we were also intrigued by the idea of basing locations on themes, rather than places. Although decolonisation and decarbonisation were both the overarching themes of The Laboratory of the Future and topics which underpin all of our work, we instinctively felt we needed to take a step sideways, perhaps coming at the issues from another direction. By the time coffee and *dolce* came around, it wasn't clear who first mentioned it, but the word 'nomadic' was suddenly on everyone's lips: Nomadic African Studio was born.

Since that dinner in August 2023, we've held countless workshops, conversations, and more Zoom meetings than we can remember. We've argued, compromised, dreamed of possibilities beyond our wildest imaginations, sketched out plans, gone looking for money and support, built a team, gathered our core faculty, engaged a wider cohort of fantastic global critics, convened in Accra, London, Fez and Dakar and finally — *finally* — we're ready.

The annual series of studios will take place in either July/August or January/February each year, partly to accommodate differing academic calendars between the global North and global South, and partly due to weather conditions in the locations we've chosen.

We're offering graduate-level students, practitioners and academics under the age of 35 an opportunity to explore ideas in a focused, supportive and experimental format. Through design projects, seminars, lectures, trips, readings, films and conversations, participants will work with tutors to open up new territories of thought and action, exploring some of today's most challenging issues: cultural identity, migration, displacement, climate change, race and social equity, public health, governance and city-making.

2.

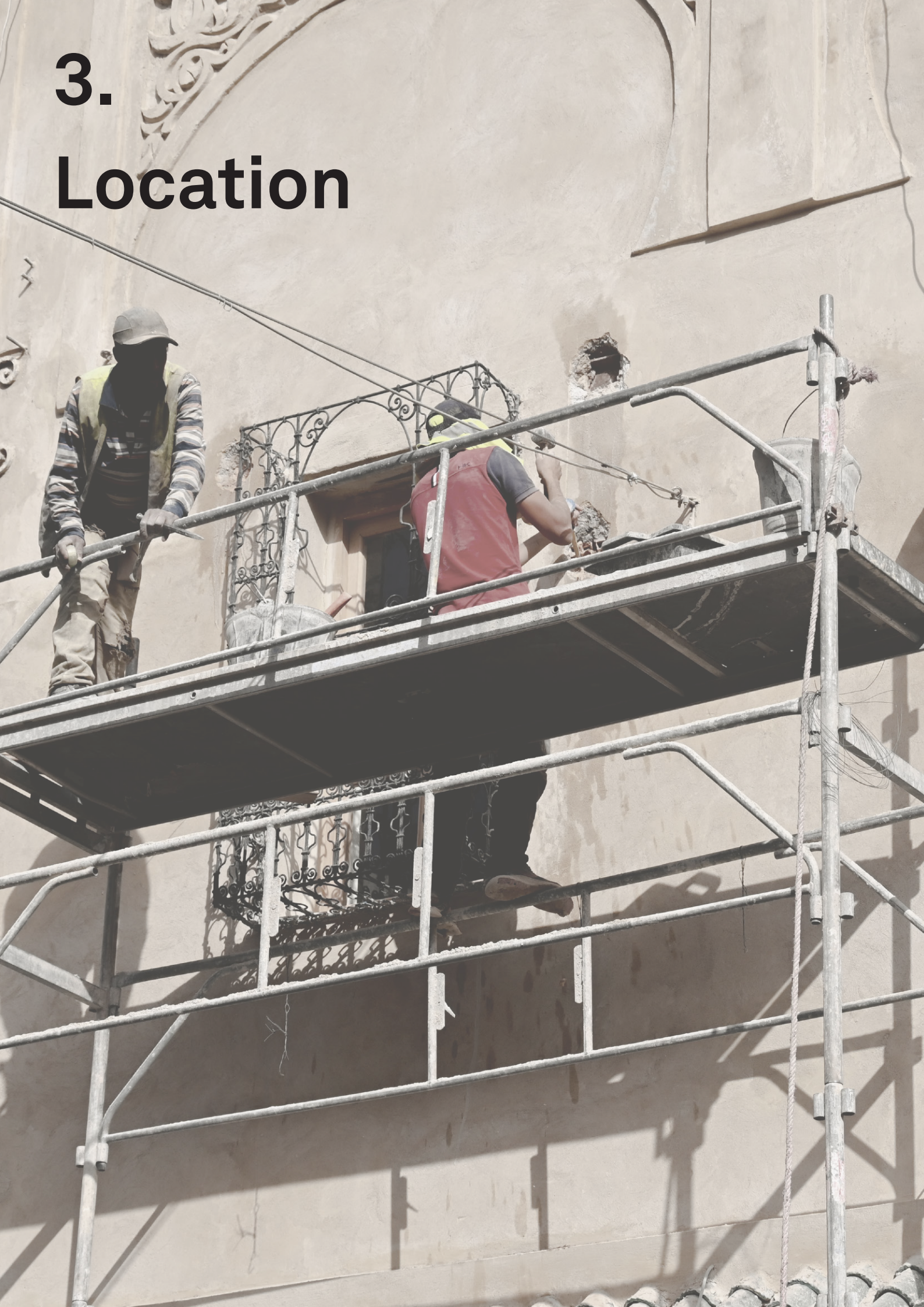
Pedagogy



Our teaching programme is inter-, trans- and multidisciplinary, involving perspectives, methods and insights from a wide and varied range of disciplines. We follow the Unit System method of teaching, first developed at the Architectural Association in London in the 1970s, where tutors work in pairs with small groups of 6–8 participants (we prefer to call those who take part ‘participants’, rather than ‘students’, since some of the participants will already have graduated and work in practice or academia). Four Units will be on offer which participants choose in a lottery-style meeting on day one, including a Local Unit, focused specifically on issues that are central to the Studio location that year. All the work produced in Nomadic African Studio will be archived in the African Futures Institute’s digital archive, freely available on our website. All lectures and final reviews throughout each Studio will also be filmed and made available online. A closing exhibition and the opportunity to publish work in ***FOLIO: Journal of Contemporary African Architecture***, published bi-annually, are a key feature of each Studio.

3.

Location



Our first Studio will take place in Fez, Morocco, from Friday 18 July to Friday 15 August, 2025.

Widely regarded as the cultural and spiritual centre of Morocco and one of its largest cities, Fez consists of two old medina quarters, Fes el-Bali and Fes Jdid, as well as an urban area founded during the French colonial period, the Ville Nouvelle, and neighbourhoods built after the country's independence in 1956. The medina has been listed as a Unesco World Heritage Site since 1981. It is also considered the largest active medieval city in the world and boasts one of the world's largest and oldest urban pedestrian zones. The University of al-Qarawiyyin is the oldest continuously functioning institute of higher education in the world. In 1912, immediately after Morocco was occupied by the French, the capital was changed from Fez to Rabat, leading the city to lose its political aura and most of its elite. After years of decline, Fez is positioning itself as the spiritual capital of Morocco, and the craft cradle of the country.

We are thrilled to have the opportunity to base the inaugural Nomadic African Studio in this fascinating city and to challenge participants to devise a series of creative and critical responses to its layered entanglements of history, culture, power and place.

4.

Theme



The overarching theme of this year's programme is 'Maghreb', meaning 'the place where the sun sets', a challenging and contested term that we feel has wider resonance for us all in a time of increasing political polarisation and fragmentation. First introduced by Roman and Arab historiographers, the term is commonly used to define a region encompassing much of the northern part of Africa, excluding Egypt and the Sudan which are considered to be part of the Mashriq, the eastern part of the so-called Arab world. Medieval Arab historians called it the 'Jazirat al Maghreb', the 'island of the Maghreb', as a land confined by a desert and a sea. In the Renaissance, the region was referred to by European cartographers as 'Barberie', the land of the Berbers (or 'Amazigh', an Indigenous term meaning 'free men'), then 'Mauretania', the land of the Moors. Under the French colonial rule, the 'Maghreb' came to refer to French occupied territories only, namely Morocco, Algeria and Tunisia. In 1989, the term 'Arab Maghreb', a region comprising Morocco, Algeria, Tunisia, Mauretania and Libya, was reinforced by the creation of the Union du Maghreb Arabe, which helped differentiate it from the Arabic name of the country Morocco, 'al Maghreb', while counteracting mounting Berber regionalisms.

Such fluctuating descriptions imagine territories that go beyond the nation state, implying an identity that is both fluid and multifaceted. We are interested in the possibility of more dispersed models of identity, culture and nationhood that might give us new and more relevant models for belonging. How might these be spatially constructed? What new public and civic typologies can we conceive that more accurately describe a world in perpetual flux? How can architects respond in more meaningful ways to place-making when the term 'place' is contested or in conflict?

For anyone interested in exploring this topic further, we recommend reading *The Invention of the Maghreb: Between Africa and the Middle East* by Abdelmajid Hannoum. For those unable to access a copy, we recommend reading an interview with the author on www.soufflesmonde.com

5.

Faculty

There are 12 core faculty at the African Futures Institute, all experienced and committed academics and practitioners who have worked tirelessly over the past two years to develop the Institute's teaching programmes. Led by Professor Lesley Lokko OBE, they are:

Prof Lesley Lokko OBE
Patti Anahory (Programme Liaison)
Prof Sean Anderson
Dr Jhono Bennett (Programme Support)
Nana Biamah-Ofosu
Meriem Chabani
Prof Aziza Chaouni
Ngillan Faal
Thireshen Govender
Ana Monrabal-Cook (Programme Manager)
Samir Pandya
Rahesh Ram

In addition to our core faculty, we have an international Critics Cohort made up of academics and practitioners from around the world who visit our studios on a rotating basis. In 2025, the Critics Cohort are:

Prof Mabel O Wilson (USA)
Christian Benimana (Rwanda)
Sumayya Vally (South Africa)
Sekou Cooke (USA)
Dr Huda Tayob (South Africa)
Emmanuel Ofori-Sarpong (Ghana)
Nzinga Biegueng-Mboup (Senegal)
Dr Kuukuwa Manful (Ghana)
Kwamina Monney (Switzerland)
Dr Sechaba Maape (South Africa)
Dr Thandi Loewenson (Zimbabwe)
Jerome W Haferd (USA)
Giles Tettey Nartey (Ghana/UK)
Prof V Mitch McEwan (USA)
Issa Diabaté (Cote d'Ivoire)
Dr Samia Henni (Algeria)
Akosua Mensah (Ghana)
Emanuel Admassu (Ethiopia/USA)
Lois Innes (UK)

Core Faculty



Professor Lesley Lokko OBE is the Founder and Chair of the African Futures Institute (AFI) in Accra, Ghana. She holds a BSc (Arch), MArch and PhD in Architecture from the Bartlett School of Architecture, University College London. She was the Founder and Director of the Graduate School of Architecture, University of Johannesburg (2014–2019). She is the Editor of *White Papers, Black Marks: Race, Culture, Architecture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2000) and the Editor-in-Chief of *FOLIO: Journal of Contemporary African Architecture*.

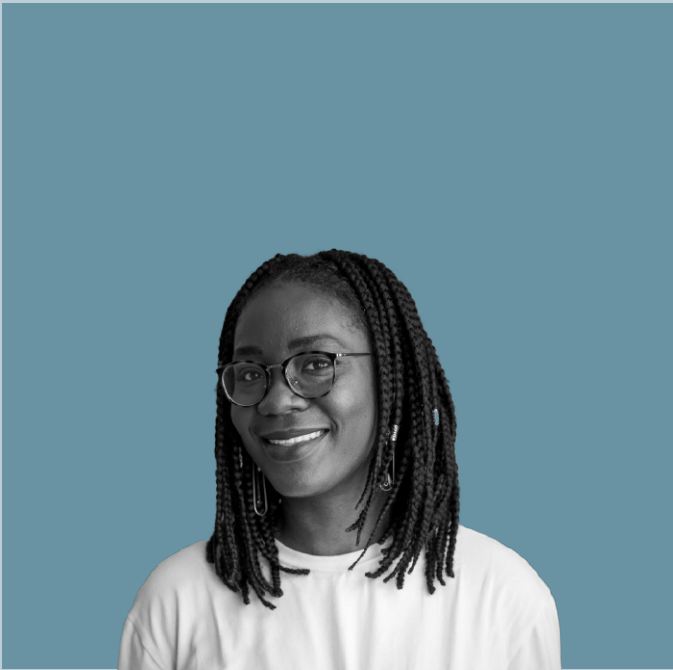
She is currently a Visiting Professor at the Bartlett School of Architecture and at University College Dublin. She was appointed Curator of the 18th International Architecture Biennale at La Biennale di Venezia in 2023. In January 2023, she was awarded an OBE 'for services to architecture and education' in King Charles' New Year's Honours List. In January 2024, she was awarded the UK's highest architecture award, the RIBA Royal Gold Medal. In April 2024, she was named one of the world's 100 most influential people in the annual TIME100 list.



Prof Sean Anderson was the Associate Curator in the Department of Architecture and Design at The Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) before returning to Cornell as an Associate Professor in Architecture and Director of the BArch Programme. A Fellow of the American Academy in Rome with a PhD in African Art History, he has practised as an architect and taught in Afghanistan, Australia, India, Italy, Morocco, Sri Lanka and the United Arab Emirates. He has authored books on South Asian ritual sculpture, the modern architecture of colonial Eritrea, and co-edited a volume dedicated to contemporary architecture and design in Sri Lanka. In 2020, he cocurated the exhibition *On Muzharul Islam: Surfacing Intention* at the Dhaka Art Summit in Dhaka, Bangladesh. At MoMA, he organized the exhibitions *Insecurities: Tracing Displacement and Shelter* (2016–17); *Thinking Machines: Art and Design in the Computer Age, 1959–89* (2017–18); and four iterations of the Young Architects Program at MoMA PS1. He has also been responsible for or collaborated on permanent collection galleries including the ongoing Building Citizens and 2019's Surrounds. He co-organised with Mabel O Wilson, *Reconstructions: Architecture and Blackness in America*, the first exhibition ever at MoMA to highlight the work of African American and African diasporic architects.



Dr Jhono Bennett is the co-founder of 1to1 – Agency of Engagement, an architectural organisation established to address systemic inequality in Southern African cities. His work navigates the necessarily complex intersections of people, place and power, exploring how repair, collaboration and creative resistance can shape more just cities. He has completed a PhD in Architecture (Design) at The Bartlett School of Architecture, UCL, where he has worked as both a lecturer and researcher, alongside a parallel role at the University of Cambridge. His practice moves fluidly between research, teaching and built interventions, engaging communities, the private sector, students and urban officials alike. As a Mandela Washington Fellow and Ashoka Changemaker, Bennett's work addresses the challenges of Southern Africa within a global context while also connecting deeply with the situated perspectives of place.



Nana Biamah-Ofosu is an architect and director of YAA Projects, an architecture, design and research practice dedicated to exploring counter-histories, material and diasporic culture, through making, speaking and writing architecture. Recent projects include *Althea McNish: Colour is Mine*, which was included in The Guardian's 'Best Designs and Designers of 2023', the ArchiAfrika Pavilion and *Tropical Modernism: Architecture and Power in West Africa* at the 18th Venice Biennale which was selected as part of ArchDaily's 'Top 2023 Pavilions and Installations Interrogating Architecture of the Global South.'

As part of the Curator's research team at the 18th Venice Architecture Biennale, Biamah-Ofosu contributed to the articulation of the main exhibition and Pinpoint, an archive of African and African Diaspora practitioners focused on decarbonisation and decolonisation.

Biamah-Ofosu has lectured in UK and internationally, including at the inaugural Venice Biennale College Architettura, Kingston University and currently at the Architectural Association where she leads a diploma unit. She has been researching African compound housing as a building, spatial and material typology which can inform the development of future housing and urbanisms with a book due for publication later this year.

Her writing practice explores the social, political, and cultural impact of design and architecture and engages with leading practitioners in contemporary practice, defining a critical, expansive, and open discourse on the built environment.



Meriem Chabani is the Founder and Principal of NEW SOUTH, an award-winning architecture, urban planning, and anthropology practice prioritising spaces for vulnerable bodies in contested territories. In the words of bell hooks, 'she puts the margin at the centre'. Her work on complex sites includes the Taungdwingyi Cultural Centre in Myanmar, the Globe Aroma refugee art centre in Brussels and the upcoming Mosque Zero in Paris.

As an educator, Chabani has taught and lectured extensively, shaping, and currently teaching the Master's Design Studio 'Afterlives' at the Royal College of Arts (UK), and the African Health Architecture studio at the Ecole Nationale Supérieure d'Architecture Paris Malaquais (France). Previously, she taught at HEAD — Genève (2020–2024) and the Ecole Polytechnique Fédérale de Lausanne (2018–2020), after serving as visiting faculty at Central Saint Martins (UK), Mohamed VI Polytechnic University (Morocco), the Department of Architecture at the University of Algiers (Algeria) and the Ethiopian Institute of Architecture, Building Construction and City Development (Ethiopia).

Since 2019, she serves as an expert on affordable housing and inclusive cities for the French delegation at the World Urban Forum. In 2022, she was selected as Fellow for the LINA European Platform, and Grantee of the Graham Foundation. Her work has been showcased at a number of international architecture biennials, including Venice, Istanbul, Oslo and Lagos.

In 2020, Chabani won the Europe 40 under 40 award from The European Centre for Architecture and The Chicago Athenaeum. In 2023, she was named one of the leading women architects in France by AMC.



Prof Aziza Chaouni is Associate Professor of Architecture at the University of Toronto, John H Daniels Faculty of Architecture, Landscape, and Design and the Founding Principal of Aziza Chaouni Projects with offices in Fez, Morocco and Toronto, Canada. Chaouni's practice, research and teaching focus on innovative approaches to rehabilitation and adaptive reuse of African heritage buildings and urban landscapes. Chaouni has rehabilitated several heritage buildings, including the Qarawiyine library, the oldest library in Africa. She is also responsible for the conservation management plans for the Sidi Harazem Thermal Bath Complex and for the CICES (with Mourtada Guèye), both supported by the Keeping it Modern grant of the Getty Foundation. Chaouni is the lead architect of the rehabilitation of the Maison du Peuple in Ouagadougou, Burkina Faso and of Old Fourah Bay College in Freetown, Sierra Leone, in collaboration with the World Monuments Fund.



Ngillan Faal is an architect and urbanist, whose work engages African genealogies of practice and urbanity; speculation, improbability, and realisation, explored through the work of Unit 7 at the Graduate School of Architecture (GSA) in Johannesburg. She recently set up a small research studio – Faal & Kompin, concerned with what she calls 'Elusive Architectures' – African ways of making and being that are fragmented, partially erased, and therefore consistently speculative and hopeful. Faal is also the Programme Convenor for Making at the GSA, a Visiting Research Fellow at WITS University, and has a long trajectory in formal architectural practice in Johannesburg and London. Outside of architecture, she has worked within the global policymaking sphere on climate, equity, and urbanisation with groupings such as UN Habitat and the United Nations Environment Programme. Faal has an MSc in Urbanisation and Development from the London School of Economics and Political Science and completed her professional architectural qualifications in the UK at the University of Sheffield, the University of East London, and The Bartlett School of Architecture.



Thireshen Govender is an architect, urbanist and researcher practising through Johannesburg, South Africa. Following a Master's in Urban Design at The Bartlett (UCL), he founded UrbanWorks, a design-research studio concerning itself with the design and implementation of transformative infrastructures in post-traumatic sites. Through research, interventions writing and drawings his practice seeks to develop a spatial literacy on insurgent design tactics to engage with increasingly volatile urban conditions. He is the co-author of *Township Economies: People, Spaces, Practices* (2020) – which brings new insights into how frontier territories are being established through rampant informal practices. His research through the University of Johannesburg's Graduate School of Architecture, where he led Unit 14: Rogue Economies, documents the hidden forces shaping our cities while experimenting with methods on radical speculation in the context of extreme urban crisis and volatility.



Ana Monrabal-Cook is an architect whose work spans higher education, academic research and architectural practice. As an Associate Professor at UCL's The Bartlett School of Architecture, and former Director of the undergraduate Architecture programme, Monrabal-Cook's focus is on strategic leadership, curriculum development and quality assurance in architectural higher education. With over a decade of teaching experience at various international institutions, including The Bartlett, Cedim in Mexico, and most recently, the University of Newcastle in Australia, Monrabal-Cook has diverse pedagogic experience at both undergraduate and postgraduate level. She has contributed significantly to strategic planning, pastoral care and student experience enhancement, serving on the RIBA Validation Board. Ana is a registered architect in the UK, RIBA member and founder of the practice A-M-C-A, focusing on rehabilitation and reuse of buildings with construction experience in the UK, Spain and Australia.



Samir Pandya is an architect, a Reader in Architecture, and Associate Head of the College of Design, Creative, and Digital Industries at the University of Westminster (London), where he was also Course Leader for the design-led MA Architecture, Cultural Identity and Globalisation for over a decade. He has held visiting and external academic posts across the UK, as well as in Cyprus, India, Italy, and South Africa, and was one of 14 tutors invited to lead a studio at the inaugural Biennale College Architettura at the 2023 Venice Architecture Biennale. His committee memberships and chairships have included the Society of Black Architects (Executive Committee), the RIBA Education Committee (Member), Architects for Change (Chair), and he is a member of the Academic Advisory Board for the pioneering African Futures Institute. He has served on numerous juries and awards, including for the National Association of Students of Architecture in India, the RIBA Annie Spink Award for Excellence in Architectural Education, and is the current Chair of the RIBA President's Dissertation Medal Jury. In addition to being Co-Editor of *National Identities: Critical Inquiry into Nationhood, Politics & Culture* (Taylor & Francis), he is an Editorial Board member for *FOLIO (Journal of Contemporary African Architecture)* and *Veranda*, the peer-reviewed journal of Sushant School of Art & Architecture, Delhi (India). His latest edited book, *After Belonging: Architecture, Nation, Difference* (Routledge, 2024) explores the complex bond between architecture, spatial politics, and collective (non-)belonging.



Rahesh Ram is the Associate Head for Student Success at the School of Design and Programme Lead for Master's in Architecture at the University of Greenwich. He has been teaching for 17 years at both BA and Master levels. At the university, he leads a Master's unit – Unit 12, which places speculation at the centre of the pedagogic practice. The unit is particularly interested in fiction and identity as a tool to speculate. He recently published a conference paper, 'Architecture/Fiction and Thought Experiments', which looked at what makes the essence of fiction a tool to enable architectural speculation on topics such as race, gender, and climate crisis. He also instigated an exhibition called *House of Many Cultures*, which showcased students of different ethnic backgrounds that investigated their own cultures through the conduit of architectural practice. He previously ran NAAU Ltd, a collaborative practice that worked with architects, artists and filmmakers.



Patti Anahory is an architect working across building, art, pedagogy and curatorial practices. Her interests centre around interrogating narratives of identity and belonging from an African island perspective confronting geopolitical, memory, race and gender constructs. Anahory co-founded *Storia na Lugar*, a storytelling and counter-narrative practice, which exhibited at the 2021 Venice Biennale Architettura and is co-curator of *her(e), otherwise*, an experimental architectural and curatorial platform that invites African and Diaspora women architects to interrogate notions of representation and belonging. The project was awarded a Graham Foundation grant in 2022. That same year, she was selected as the alternate for the Civitella Ranieri Foundation Architecture Prize. Between 2009 and 2012 Anahory served as Founding Director of CIDLOT, a multidisciplinary research centre at the University of Cabo Verde. More recently she was Visiting Professor at Columbia University (2022-23). She co-authored the book *Panorama de Arquitetura Habitacional em Cabo Verde*.

The Team

We want to extend our deepest gratitude to the incredible team of dedicated individuals who have worked behind the scenes to bring the Nomadic African Studio to life.

Arabiya Issa, Logistics Support
Dr Jhono Bennett, Archive and Website Support
Fred Swart, Graphic Design
Azraa Gabru, Social Media Support
Felix Attua-Afari, Travel Support
Harry Appiah, Travel Support
Prof Alex Toshkov, Stakeholder Liaison
Dr Patrick Ata, Trustee
Victor Sackey, Trustee
Nyambura Mbugua, Programme Coordinator



Arabiya Issa holds a joint BA in Arts Management and Dance and holds fully qualified and registered Dance Teacher Status with the BBO (British Ballet Organisation). She spent her gap year teaching for the BBO in Jordan, whilst freelance writing for Mosaic Magazine. At university, she was a member of Dynamite Dance in Leicester, a company supported by the Prince's Trust. After graduation, she interned at the Barbican, then went on to a role as Senior Media and Marketing Executive at SOFEX International Exhibition and Conference Event, whilst teaching ballet and organising UK examinations for the BBO in Jordan.

Since her return to the UK, she has held positions as PA to the late Dame Zaha Hadid; EA to Professor Hanif Kara OBE, Es Devlin and Adam Kenwright, working across disciplines in the arts, architecture and engineering sectors.

She's now a proud full-time member of the AFI team, but occasionally volunteers as teacher, offering a community dance class on weekends.



Fred Swart studied Graphic Design at Pretoria Technicon, before setting up his own agency, Die Ateljee. He has worked across multiple sectors, most notably corporate, academic, and cultural. He began his association with Prof Lesley Lokko during her tenure at the Graduate School of Architecture and was responsible for the graphic design and brand identity of the Spitzer School of Architecture, CCNY, during her time as Dean. He is the graphic designer of the 18th International Architecture Biennale at La Biennale di Venezia in 2023. In 2024, a retrospective exhibition of his poster work, Fred Swart Posters EP1, was held at the Goethe-Institut in Johannesburg, showcasing 30 years of his design work.

He is currently the AFI's graphic designer and brings enormous energy, vibrancy and criticality to the work of the institute as a whole.



Azraa Gabru is our Social Media Specialist. She is a Johannesburg-based architect who describes her style of practice as ‘architecture adjacent’, due to her work in graphic design, social media and architectural education. She completed her undergraduate degree at the University of the Witwatersrand and her master’s degree in Unit 14 at the Graduate School of Architecture (GSA).

She has previously taught at the Department of Architecture at the University of Johannesburg and currently co-leads Unit 21 with Craig McClenaghan at the GSA, while working at LINEWORK Drawing Workshop. Azraa has an interest in how cultural and religious principles, hierarchies and power structures manifest and contribute to the construction of our spaces. She is also interested in architectural representation, its multiple modes and definitions, and how these have evolved to reveal new ways of seeing, generating new conversations between creator, subject, and viewer.



Felix Attua-Afari is Director of Blue Cube Travel Ghana Limited. He has worked in the travel and aviation industry for nearly 30 years, starting in Accra with various agencies before moving to Lufthansa’s Accra office with stints in the London office. He partnered with directors in London to set up Blue Cube Travel Ghana in 2012. He loves to travel, likes playing tennis and is an F1 fan.



Harry Appiah is Senior Business Travel Consultant at Blue Cube Travel, Accra, Ghana, working right at the heart of operations. He has extensive travel and aviation industry experience, having worked for Ghana Airways and Lufthansa in London, and Globe Ground London at Heathrow. For the past 12 years, Harry has been focused on corporate travel. In the little spare time he has, he loves travelling and likes biking.



Prof Alex Toshkov received his doctorate from Columbia University in East-European history. A specialist of political agrarianism¹, he is the author of *Agrarianism as Modernity in 20th-Century Europe: The Golden Age of the Peasantry*. Since 2021, he has been part of the Faculty of Human and Social Sciences at the EuroMed University of Fez. Currently he is the director of the UEMF Language Center, responsible for the introduction of levelled, inter-faculty instruction aligned with the Common European Frame of Reference for Languages, to facilitate a transition to English-language instruction at the University. He has taught histories of modern architecture and theoretical seminars on social and spatial transformation at UEMF and ENA de Fès and has come to the conclusion that further engagement with the Medina might mean actually living there.

¹ *Agrarianism is a social and political philosophy that advocates for rural development, a rural agricultural lifestyle, family farming, widespread property ownership, and political decentralization. Agrarian political parties sometimes aim to support the rights and sustainability of small farmers and poor peasants against the wealthy, powerful and famous in society.*



Dr Patrick Ata is the Managing Director of the privately-held Atlantic International Holding Company, located in Accra, Ghana. He holds engineering degrees from Bristol University, King's College London and a PhD from University College London. He brings significant top-managerial and directorship experience to the team, as well as critical business acumen and implementation know-how. A keen pilot and avid motorcycle rider, he lives in Accra with his wife and two young children.



Victor Sackey holds a degree in economics from Coventry University and worked in the security service industry in the UK before relocating to Ghana in 2003. Since 2003, he has initiated a number of start-ups in Ghana across different sectors, and is now heavily involved in property development, with projects in Tema and Accra. He brings significant hands-on and practical experience of the property development sector to the team, as well as great integrity and energy in operations management.



Nyambura Mbugua is our newest addition, joining us in the Nomadic African Studio as a Programme Coordinator. A creative producer whose work spans the cultural, creative, and social impact sectors across Africa, she has a background in cultural heritage, youth development, creative ecosystems, event production, and communications.

She has led and curated major projects with the Goethe-Institut Nairobi (JENGA CCI), Jägermeister Night Embassy, Global Development Incubator, and the International Civil Society Centre. She has designed collaborative formats for artists, developed event experiences that centre under-represented voices, and brought together diverse teams to deliver ambitious, multi-layered programmes. She thrives at the intersection of creative ambition and operational precision. With an international background and a deep passion for strengthening intra-African collaboration, she connects people, practices, and places to shape experiences that feel meaningful, inclusive, and enduring.

We would like to thank Euromed University of Fez/Université Euro Méditerranéenne de Fès (UEMF) for their support in the organisation of the Nomadic African Studio in Fez:

Prof Moustafa Bousmina, President, UEMF

Madame Saffae Zemmouri, Vice President of Academic Affairs, UEMF

Madame Iman Benkirane, Vice President of Cultural Affairs, UEMF

Madame Wafae Belardi, Director, EMADU UEMF

Prof Alex Toshkov, Director of the Language Centre, UEMF

The effective management of logistics has only been made possible by the dedication and coordination of the following team, whose efforts have ensured efficient and seamless arrangements for hospitality and travel during our time in Fez:

El mekki Bensdira and the Médina Social Club team

Richard, Daniel, Merième, Mohamed, Nadia, Ayoub, and the whole team at Riad Tiwza, Fès

Suzanna Clarke, Owner, Le Caméléon Bleu

About You



6.

Applying

Participants are selected in two ways:

- Nominating Committee
- Open Call

Our international network of nominators put forward candidates who are then vetted by our internal Admissions Committee. This allows as wide a range of eligible candidates as possible with emphasis and consideration given to African and diaspora candidates.

Our Open Call expands the application process by encouraging outliers and candidates who may not be in our Nominating Committee networks. The Open Call is open for two weeks only (from 17 February to 3 March 2025). No late applications will be considered.

To apply for a place, you must complete the Nomadic African Studio [Application Form](#). By accessing this form, you will be guided through a comprehensive application that asks you to provide your contact details, demographic information, professional discipline, and most recent qualification.

Importantly, you will be required to record a **30-second selfie video** responding to one of three questions below. **Please choose one question only.** The questions are repeated in the relevant section of the application form. You can record your selfie video using your phone or tablet, and the built-in video-response on the form. We encourage you to rehearse your response a few times to ensure quality and clarity.

1. What are the top three most valuable skills you possess in relation to your future career in the built environment? ^{1.}

2. How would you describe the role of an African architect in the future of architectural practice? ^{2.}

3. How will you leverage this opportunity in your own practice as a built environment professional (architect, landscape architect, activist, urban designer, planner, public health official, civil servant)?

^{1.} Note that a skill is not a tool. What is a tool? A device, implement or piece of technology used to carry out a particular function. What is a skill? The ability to do something well; your expertise backed up by experience. Revit is a tool. Empathy is a skill.

^{2.} Whether or not you are African or of African descent, we are looking for participants who have an interest in the African context, particularly how it shapes other contexts. We are looking for participants who are able to translate conditions, challenges and opportunities found in Africa into valuable lessons and experiences for the rest of the world. We are not interested in participants who want to 'help' Africa.

How to complete your form and upload your selfie video:

1. Technical tips:

- The application form includes a built-in video-response feature that you should use to upload your selfie video.
 - Use your phone or tablet device's camera and microphone to record your answer.
 - Ensure your device's camera and audio settings are enabled.
-

2. Response tips:

- Plan your answer in advance.
 - Your video response must be concise and no longer than **30 seconds**.
 - Practise beforehand how to communicate your key points effectively and clearly.
 - You can close your form at any point and come back to it when you are ready. We will not receive your application until you click on the submit button at the end of the form.
-

3. Submission rules:

- Only completed application forms with video responses will be accepted.
- Written answers to the three questions are not permitted.
- Your selfie video will only be reviewed internally.
- Applications without a selfie video response will not be considered.
- We maintain a strict one-application-per-candidate policy. If multiple applications are submitted by the same individual, we will automatically disqualify the candidate from the selection process.

7.

Eligibility

To apply, you should be a current or recently graduated student (no more than five years post-graduation as of 31 December 2025) with an accredited Master's-level degree in architecture, architectural history and theory, landscape architecture, urban design or related disciplines.

We also welcome early-career academics and early-career practitioners from design disciplines (architects, landscape architects, urban designers, planners), disciplines related to the history and theory of architecture, (cultural critics, environmental theorists, heritage specialists), those working in public sector roles (public health, civil servants, municipal officer, policy makers), as well as developers, artists or activists with specialised design backgrounds.

You should be under the age of 35 on 31 December 2025.

You must be available to attend in-person for the duration of the studio in Fez, Morocco (from 18 July to 15 August 2025).

We are looking for participants from a balanced geographic spread, with particular emphasis on Africans and the African diaspora.

The application process is rigorous, and each application will be reviewed internally.

Successful applicants will be informed within two months of the programme start date.

8.

Dates

Open Call

17 February – 3 March 2025

Notification

30 April 2025

The Toolkit

5 May 2025

Nomadic African Studio

18 July – 15 August 2025

9.

Costs

We cover in full the costs of travel to Fez, accommodation, breakfast, lunch and dinner, tuition and field trips. You will be responsible for visa application costs, medical insurance, lunch and any personal expenses. From experience, you should budget approximately \$200 (USD) for your needs during the month-long studio.

10.

Contact

We are committed to making your application experience as clear and supportive as possible.

Our comprehensive FAQ section will help you navigate the application process. We cannot respond to queries submitted via social media and urge you to look through the FAQ **before** contacting us using the link provided [here](#).

11.

FAQ

Q: We are a group of students/practitioners working collectively. Can we apply as a group?

A: No, applications can only be made by individuals. If you are part of a collective, you must all apply separately.

Q: Can I send an application via email?

A: No, all applications must be submitted via the application form to protect your personal data. Applications made via email will not be considered.

Q: Can you tell me why I wasn't successful?

A: Due to the volume of applications we receive, we will not be able to provide individual feedback. We encourage you to apply for the next Nomadic African Studio in 2026.

Q: I was not able to complete my application before the closing date and time (17:00 GMT on 3 March 2025). Can I submit a late application?

A: No, all applications must be received by the closing date and time.

Q: I am currently a student at university. Can I still apply?

A: You are eligible to apply if you are enrolled in the final year of your postgraduate course (Master's level) in architecture or a related subject and will graduate before 31 December 2025. You must be available to participate in person between 18 July and 15 August 2025.

Q: How many participants will be accepted on the programme?

A: Up to 30 eligible participants will be selected following the Open Call deadline.

Q: Who makes the selection?

A: All applicants are reviewed by our Core Faculty and our nominators. The programme receives a high volume of applications and the process is competitive. To increase your chances of success, please consider the question you wish to answer carefully and ensure your video is of good quality and clarity.

Q: How will travel be arranged?

A: Once you have received notification of selection, we will be in touch with you to organise your travel. Please note that you are responsible for securing any required visas. Visit the Moroccan government [travel website](#) to check requirements. All travel must be finalised by 15 June 2025.

Q: I accepted a place but for reasons beyond my control I am unable to participate. What should I do?

A: Inform us as soon as possible. Notifications made after 1 June will mean we are unable to fill your place.

Q: I read that you will be filming the outputs. What if I don't want to be filmed?

A: Agreeing to be filmed is a condition of taking part. All videos will be archived and available on our website for educational purposes.

Q: What if I don't have travel insurance?

A: We strongly recommend taking out [travel insurance](#). If you do not have adequate cover, we cannot be responsible for any medical costs you may incur. All participants will be asked to sign a waiver prior to your arrival stipulating that any and all medical costs are at your expense.

Q: Is Morocco a safe country to visit?

A: Morocco is regarded as a safe country for tourists. See the UK government advice on travel to Morocco [here](#). Remember that you will be in a group for the majority of your stay and you should take the same precautions you would in any big city or foreign country.

Q: Will I receive a certificate or any formal proof of attendance at the end of the studio?

A: Yes, all participants who successfully complete the studio will receive a Certificate of Completion issued by the African Futures Institute.

Q: Do I need to speak Arabic or French to participate in the studio in Fez?

A: The primary language of instruction and collaboration is English. Translation support will be available for site visits and local collaborations. Knowledge of Arabic or French is a bonus, but not a requirement.

Q: Are there any reading materials or preparatory work required before the studio starts?

A: Yes, there will be a recommended reading list available once you are accepted. All successful applicants will receive *The Toolkit*, which will outline the key themes, preparatory readings, and any other relevant materials.

Q: What if I have dietary restrictions or specific health considerations?

A: The accommodation will include breakfast and dinner, and we will do our best to accommodate common dietary restrictions (e.g., vegetarian, vegan, gluten-free). We will request additional information from the final participants.

Q: Are there any vaccinations required or recommended for traveling to Morocco?

A: We advise you to check the health recommendations from your country's travel advisory or the World Health Organization. You are responsible for ensuring your own vaccinations and travel medication are up to date. We strongly recommend having suitable travel insurance in place.

Q: Are there any hidden or additional costs during the studio?

A: We cover travel to Fez, accommodation, breakfast, lunch and dinner, tuition and field trips. You are responsible for visa fees, any required medical/travel insurance, daily lunch and personal expenses. We estimate you will need around \$200 (USD) for the month, but this may vary depending on personal spending habits.

Q: Can I participate remotely if I cannot travel to Fez?

A: No, the programme is designed as an immersive, in-person experience. All participants must be physically present in Fez for the entire duration. Remote or hybrid participation is not possible.

Q: Can I get feedback on a draft video before submitting?

A: We unfortunately cannot review draft videos. We recommend rehearsing to ensure you stay within the 30-second limit and convey your main points clearly. Multiple submissions from the same applicant are not permitted.

Q: Can I contact a member of the faculty directly to ask questions about my eligibility or chances?

A: No. To maintain fairness, all queries must be submitted via the official channels listed in this FAQ. We cannot respond to personal queries via faculty members' emails or social media.

Q: Did we answer your question?

If you have a question that hasn't been answered, please use this form [here](#).



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**African Futures Institute
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