



AIANY CIVIC LEADERSHIP PROGRAM 2023





FOREWORD

[Congratulations to the seventh cohort of the AIA New York and nycoba|NOMA Civic Leadership Program!](#)

In January 2023, I was inducted as AIANY President and announced my presidential theme “Our City, Ourselves” as a love letter to New York City and a call to action to create a just and equitable city for all. This past year, chapter leadership organized a range of initiatives and programming that sparked the imagination and fortified the chapter’s will to fight for change in New York City and beyond. In working with the chapter’s members and committees and engaging with the Civic Leadership Program, I enjoyed guiding the chapter’s advocacy efforts to address the most pressing issues facing our city, and highlighting the importance of placing architects at the center of policymaking. This effort speaks to the mission of the CLP and attending your Kick-Off Day and Development Session 5 were incredibly rewarding. Your commitment to addressing personal issues and challenging practices is a testament to your unified effort. I hope that this program has helped you lay a foundation of skills and grow a network of shared perspectives with your fellow cohort that will not only guide you forward, but help you find your voice as a civic minded leader. I would like to thank Suzanne Mecs, Jenna Reichberg, the five advisors; Iyatunde Majekodunmi, Kasey Motley, Ankita Nalavade, Harriet Provine, Bradley Sherburne, and AIANY staff for their support of this program in its seventh year. I look forward to watching the continued work you will be carrying forward and the inspiration that each of you provide to the world.

Congratulations,

[Matthew Bremer, AIA, NCARB](#)

2023 President, AIA New York

Founder and Principal, Architecture in Formation

[Congratulations to the 2023 Class of the AIA New York and nycoba|NOMA Civic Leadership Program!](#)

Celebrating nycoba|NOMA’s collaboration with the Civic Leadership Program for the fourth year marks the continued effort to provide an opportunity to explore and support the interests of architects in civic leadership and advocacy engagement. The 2023 CLP covered topics related to modern technology and digital tools, emergency housing and preparedness, historic preservation and development and queer space. These topics reflect the passions of the 2023 cohort and represent a range of topics that critically question the impacts of policy-making and designing for inclusivity. The CLP program aligns perfectly with nycoba|NOMA’s mission to champion diversity within the profession through our promotion of design excellence, community engagement, and the professional development of our members and firm owners. As fellow architects and designers of diverse backgrounds, nycoba|NOMA innately understands the importance for design professional to be engaged in communities at a local scale. It is paramount to provide our knowledge and a voice to local communities, while also encouraging and empowering the participation of community members for an equitable and inclusive process that is beneficial for all stakeholders. Thank you, Class of 2023 for your dedicated participation in this year’s program. We look forward to working with and supporting you throughout the development of your careers and future endeavors.

Most Sincerely,

[Allison E. Lane, AIA, ASID, NOMA, NCARB, NCIDQ, LEED AP, WELL AP](#)

2023-2024 President, nycoba|NOMA

Senior Associate and NYCHA/Multi-family Studio Lead, AECOM



PROGRAM MISSION



The AIANY Civic Leadership Program (CLP) develops a class of emerging architectural professionals into civic leaders by refining the critical skills that design professionals need to better represent the people that they serve.

We do this by increasing architects' connections to their communities, developing their advocacy capacities, and supporting their pursuit of public service in elected or appointed office.

Each year, the CLP selects ten emerging AIA members to participate in a six-month journey to improve their community outreach and public relations skills, strengthening the AIANY's culture of advocacy by providing opportunities to interface with municipal agencies, community development organizations, and local stakeholders.

JUNE 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						17
				22		
				29		

FULL-DAY PROGRAM KICKOFF

CONCEPT DEV SESSION

LOGISTICS SESSION

OCTOBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					19	
						28

DEVELOPMENT SESSION #5
Designing for Queer Publics:
Riis Beach and Beyond

WORKSHOP #3
RETI Center Field Trip

PROGRAM SCHEDULE

JULY 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					14	
		18				

DEVELOPMENT SESSION #1
Urgency, Emergency, Emergence

WORKSHOP #1
Working in NYC Public Sector

AUGUST 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					4	
					25	

DEVELOPMENT SESSION #2
Historic Preservation:
The Architect's Dilemma

DEVELOPMENT SESSION #3
Are You Ready? Equitable Infrastructure
and Emergency Planning

SEPTEMBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					15	
	25					

DEVELOPMENT SESSION #4
The ArchiTECH:
Who Are the New Designers?

WORKSHOP #2
NYC Planning: Section 197a

NOVEMBER 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				9		
				30		

PUBLIC EVENT #1
Storytelling in Architecture:
Stories & Places

PUBLIC EVENT #2
(Re)group: Collective
Practices of Architecture

FEBRUARY 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		6				

PROGRAM CONCLUSION



2023 LEADERS & ADVISOR TEAM

2023 LEADERS



ADAM ACHRATI

AIA

CALVERT WRIGHT ARCHITECTURE
SPATIAL DISCIPLINE

“A physical building represents a political act directly involving dozens and hundreds of individuals and indirectly involving countless more. Architecture as a means, an idea, design or plan, only becomes a reality with political action such as stakeholder buy-in and lobbying.”

Adam Achrati is a licensed architect working on higher-education projects at Calvert Wright Architecture | Spatial Discipline. His current work includes master planning and renovations for historic buildings in urban settings. His past work experience includes ground-up and renovation work across a variety of project types, including multi-family housing, affordable housing, mixed-use buildings, fabrication shops, and single-family homes. Achrati has been privileged to work in New York, Washington, DC, and Chicago. He studied at a community college in Chicago, completed a BS Arch at Catholic University in Washington, DC, and Barcelona, and earned a M. Arch at UPenn. Outside of his work, Achrati is interested in bridging the gap between the architectural profession and the broader community through artwork and public installations. He enjoys photography and its ability to flatten and recontextualize urban vignettes and has a long standing interest in North African architecture and urbanism—the K’sour and medinas—as well as informal urbanism more broadly. Achrati is a dual citizen of the United States and Algeria. He shares his young son’s fascination with the New York transit system and his wife’s deep appreciation of and interest in New York City’s great civic parks. They live in Crown Heights, Brooklyn, and enjoy exploring every part of Prospect Park and the Brooklyn Botanic Gardens.



ALEXIS B. CLARKE
WEDG, ENV SP
THORNTON TOMASETTI

“Civic engagement, awareness, and advocacy give voice to those who have been systemically oppressed by the built environment and also give voice to those who have historically had limited influence on design decisions made by owners, stakeholders, developers and institutions. Civic engagement, awareness, and advocacy is a way for designers to use their design skills to foster a built environment informed by the community it serves.”

Alexis B. Clarke is an aspiring architect seeking to better the accessibility of resilient infrastructure in at-risk communities through sustainable design and master planning. Clarke is a Senior Designer at Thornton Tomasetti with a dual role in the Forensics and Resilience Practices, where she investigates buildings and infrastructure before and after events. As a part of her role, Clarke analyzes building codes and industry standards, conducts building assessments, evaluates cause and origin forensic investigations, and assists in multi-hazard risk assessments and master planning of coastal cities. Clarke is pursuing licensure as a registered architect and professional engineer to actualize resilient and equitable design solutions in neighborhoods affected by socioeconomic inequalities and systemic racism. She attended Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute, where she received her Bachelor of Architecture and studied at the Center for Architecture Science & Ecology, where she researched and analyzed innovations in built ecologies, resilience, and energy efficiency at an urban and global scale. Clarke later pursued a post-graduate degree in Geo-Futures, where she participated in advanced research design on the role of architecture in the Anthropocene and its impact on culture, society, the environment, and urban environments. Over the last few years, Clarke has worked with RALX, a cultural practice that critiques contemporary mainstream aesthetics in architecture and design. She also specializes in visualizations of the African American diaspora and black aesthetics in architecture.



DONGZOO HAN
ASSOC. AIA, LEED GA
MBB ARCHITECTS

“It is essential for architectural designers to be aware of societal issues when making decisions about how to allocate resources for large scale architecture projects... Designing a project that positively impacts people’s lives requires constant passion and a willingness to refine one’s skills to translate user feedback into spatial languages.”

As an architectural designer, Dongzoo Han is drawn to designs that engage the public. Her career started with an interest in for museum and exhibition design, areas that require careful consideration of potential audiences. As she began practicing architecture, she also prioritized issues of sustainability and accessibility. Driven by her passion for sustainable design and community access, Han obtained a master’s degree at RISD specializing in adaptive reuse. In Korea, she had witnessed the pressing need to reuse massive structures to serve diverse new uses, leading to her thesis work, which delved into the lives of low-income residents of Seoul who face the risk of eviction and offered solutions to improve their access to dignified housing. Currently, she is gaining experience as a designer at MBB Architects, delivering feasibility studies and practicing architecture for institutional organizations to achieve long-term sustainability and accessibility goals. She is committed to more inclusive designs that not only meet the needs of the present but also leave a positive and lasting impact on the community.

2023 LEADERS



IVAN HIMANEN

AIA
AECOM

“*With effort, I hope to grow a rich career designing and planning in the public realm by making the invisible forces visible. The CLP will give me the chance to collaborate with policymakers, activists, organizers, business owners, data analysts, and developers during the program and into the future.*”

Ivan Himanen is a registered architect, urbanist, and researcher whose multifaceted practice strives for balance: between buildings and cities, clients and communities, technology, and craft, and the democratic and creative processes. Currently an architect and design manager at AECOM, Himanen has also worked at PAU, H3 Hardy Collaboration, and the Rockwell Group. Notable projects include the Borough-Based Jails Program, COVID-19 alternate care facilities on CUNY campuses for the US Army Corps of Engineers, the Sunnyside Yard Master Plan for NYCEDC, and the Steven Tanger Performing Arts Center in Greensboro, NC. In 2017, he wrote and directed *¿Qué Le Dirías a Tlaloc? (What Would You Say To Tlaloc?)*, a documentary film about Mexico City's water infrastructure. His independent design work has been recognized by Data Through Design, the Satellite Collective, SUPERFRONT, and the Park Slope Civic Council. Himanen's fiction has been published by Arts and Letters Journal at Georgia College, Zagreb University, and CLOG. He received his B. Arch from the Cooper Union in 2010, where he also taught architecture and sound composition in the Saturday Program, and a Master in City & Technology from the Institute of Advanced Architecture of Catalonia in Barcelona. He lives in Brooklyn Heights with his wife, daughter, 28 house plants, and a sourdough starter named Audrey II.



TIANA HOWELL

Assoc. AIA, NOMA
ARRAY ARCHITECTS

“*I believe that at the core of success of every designer is the power of advocacy for your passion. My goal in becoming a civic leader is to nurture the mindset required to think critically about how my work impacts the community and develop the toolkit needed to serve as an active participant in public engagement to produce change.*”

Tiana Howell is currently an Architectural Designer at Array Architects. Originally from Queens, New York, she received her Bachelors of Science in Architecture from the University of Maryland in 2017 and her Masters of Architecture 2020 from the Spitzer School of Architecture at the City College of New York in 2020. Her graduate thesis focused on architectural representations of landmarks and spaces associated with the Black diaspora throughout the United States, with a focus on historic freedmen towns.

Howell has previous experience in real estate development and space planning, and currently enjoys working in the healthcare and life science sectors. Her interests include digital fabrication, mentorship, networking, and diversity, equity and inclusion initiatives. Howell serves on the Young Professionals Committee of the Association of Medical Facility Professionals New York City Chapter, is a member of nycoba|NOMA, and is currently pursuing licensure. Howell believes that at the core of producing a successful project is active collaboration, creative thinking, and communication. Her background in healthcare and life sciences has led to her holistic approach to design, analyzing the project at all scales and considering the diverse needs of all who experience a space. Howell aims to use innovative methods and new technologies, pushing the boundaries of possibilities in design. Driven by her compassion for others, she strives to create inclusive and safe spaces within the healthcare system.

2023 LEADERS



DEAN LABOWITZ

NYC OFFICE OF TECHNOLOGY
AND INNOVATION

“While escalating legislative attacks seek to expel queer and trans people from public life across the country, the built environment in the public spaces where we gather become increasingly essential considerations in advocacy and civic leadership.”

Dean Labowitz is an urban planner and writer living in Brooklyn. They recently graduated with honors from the Hunter College Masters in Urban Planning program, where they were the editor in chief of the Urban Review. Labowitz created major projects on designing for the future of the queer and trans enclave Jacob Riis Beach, and wrote their year-long studio report on community wealth-building opportunities in New York City’s climate adaptation industries. Since graduating, Labowitz supports Black-owned small businesses in Central Brooklyn as a program manager with the community-based nonprofit IMPACCT Brooklyn. As an Innovation Fellow and later as a consultant with the NYC Office of Tech and Innovation, they co-founded the NYC[x] Tech and Innovation Awards (now the NYC Hayes Innovation Prize), a citywide honor for exceptional municipal employees. Labowitz publishes writing on surveillance, abolitionist futures, and queer and trans urban spaces. Prior to graduate school, Labowitz worked and organized in New York and New Orleans on issues of public defense, economic justice, immigrants’ rights, and queer community making. They enjoy the challenge of making a meal from whatever’s in the fridge, riding their bike around Brooklyn, and reading too much.



AMI MEHTA

Assoc. AIA
PERKINS EASTMAN

“Architecture, ultimately, is meaningless without the people who use and occupy it and civic engagement gives designers a range of vital tools to begin developing a sensitivity and consciousness to those contexts.”

Ami Mehta is a graduate of the architecture program at Cornell University, currently working as an architectural designer in the education studio at Perkins Eastman. She was raised in Nairobi, Kenya and Bangalore, India, two complicated urban environments in the throes of inequity. This experience has impacted her approach to design, making her ask how we can learn to better lives and brighten futures.

As a design professional, she believes that design does not occur in a vacuum but is a shared enterprise, influenced by communities, policy makers, artists, and users.

This belief has led to her involvement as a designer and researcher at international non-profits, where she has spearheaded advocacy initiatives for mental health and equity in education, with particular interest in mentoring future generations of designers. Mehta’s research, which earned her several fellowships and the thesis prize at Cornell University, focuses on ethnographic approaches to urban design and primary school design. She is also the director of the non-profit Archea, which focuses on creating more equitable architecture via a toolkit for research, community collaboration and design visioning. Mehta spends her free time learning from her world in New York City, from second-hand bookstores and unexpected encounters to art fairs and concerts.

2023 LEADERS



DAVID G. POLK

AIA
US GENERAL SERVICES
ADMINISTRATION

“Design isn’t always about the concert of many voices, but expressing the discord and differences. I think buildings come to life because of communities, not because of architects.”

David G. Polk currently works as the Regional Chief Architect for the Northeast & Caribbean Region for the US General Services Administration, overseeing the implementation of national Design Excellence policies while providing individualized subject-matter expertise. As Regional Chief Architect, he is actively involved in the evaluation and procurement of AEI design teams and peer reviews. He also supervises programs that enhance the quality of the Federal public realm, including Art in Architecture, Workplace, Historic Buildings, and Urban Development. Prior to this role, he worked in DC for the GSA Office of the Chief Architect for nine years, where he helped establish the Center for Architecture, focusing primarily on federal courthouse projects, land ports of entry, master plans, and workplace solutions. Polk has also taught, lectured, and been a visiting critic at many schools on the east coast. With twelve years of professional experience, he has worked on various projects throughout the American continent, focusing primarily on public, civic, and institutional architecture. Polk received a pre-professional degree in Architectural Studies with Honors from the University of Utah, where he also participated in an exchange program with the Universidad Litoral Nacional in Santa Fe, Argentina, where he studied architecture, urbanism and worked in the studio of Castellitti Bertoni Arquitectos y Asociados. He then pursued a professional Master of Architecture at the Virginia Tech Washington Alexandria Architecture Center (WAAC). While at WAAC, he also participated in a research abroad program studying the Urban Ecology of Curitiba, Brazil.



NICOLE VLADO TORRES

AIA, NOMA
SHAKESPEARE GORDON VLADO
ARCHITECTS

“While my interest in the CLP is rooted in my dedication to creating and preserving affordable housing in NYC, it extends to the greater goal of promoting strong and healthy communities, where residents, old and young, can express their needs and contribute to their own well-being.”

Nicole Vlado Torres is an architect committed to enhancing the quality and experience of public space and the built environment. She believes that collaboration and community engagement are critical to the successful execution of projects and has enjoyed working closely with clients and creative teams throughout her career on architectural and site-specific public arts works. As a principal of Shakespeare Gordon Vlado Architects, a Brooklyn-based WBE, Vlado devotes special focus to the firm’s work in affordable housing, including the design of spaces for families, seniors, and formerly unhoused New Yorkers. Born and raised in affordable housing in New York City, Vlado’s lived experience informs her understanding of the importance of this work, as stable housing provided her the opportunity to focus on her education and professional development. She is eager to combine these skills and experiences to advocate for tenants and inform housing policy. Vlado is currently a co-chair of the AIANY Housing Committee and the nycoba|NOMA Professional Development Committee.

2023 LEADERS



K. KENNEDY WHITERS

AIA

wrkSHäp | kiloWatt

“While development and new construction support the innovative spirit of humans, it is important to balance this innovation with supporting people who have lived in and supported the local economy for centuries.”

k kennedy Whikers is an architect based in Queens, NY. She is a graduate of the Master of Architecture and Master of Urban Planning programs at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, where she completed concentrations in history, preservation, and social justice. kennedy is the founder and owner of wrkSHäp | kiloWatt, a boutique design studio that specializes in historic preservation and owner's representation/construction project management. She has been featured by the Advisory Council of Historic Preservation and on the UK-based podcast The Allusionist podcast. She has also interned with the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

kennedy has experience working on historic buildings of all scales, both in the private and non-profit sectors, from schematic design through construction administration. As an owner's representative and capital project manager, clients, colleagues, and managers have praised her for her enthusiasm and organizational skills.

She is also the founder of several historic preservation initiatives that support equitable practices in heritage conservation, including (un) Redact the Facts, which advocates for narratives and interpretations of historical sites that foster racial equity and healing from historical trauma; Beyond Integrity in (X), which advocates for landmarking processes that go beyond architectural integrity to focus on cultural significance and Black in Historic Preservation, which highlights the contributions of Black people to heritage conservation.

kennedy, a published writer and independent researcher on redacted grammar and language, has earned licenses to practice architecture in New York State and Washington State.

AIA NEW YORK LEADERSHIP TEAM



JESSE LAZAR

Executive Director



SUZANNE MECS

Hon. AIA NYS
Managing Director



JENNA REICHBERG

AIA
AIANY CLP Consultant



IYABO BABATUNDE

Development Coordinator



EVELYN SERRANO

Membership & Special
Projects Associate

2023 ADVISORS



**IYATUNDE
MAJEKODUNMI**

NOMA



KASEY MOTLEY
AIA, LEED AP BD+C, ENV SP



ANKITA NALAVADE
Assoc. AIA



HARRIET PROVINE

Assoc. AIA



BRADLEY SHERBURNE

AIA

PROGRAM KICKOFF

Guest Speakers and Panelists:

Matthew Bremer Founder and Director at Architecture in Formation
Active President at AIANY

Gregg Switzer Managing Principal and CEO, SWITZER Architecture
First Vice President, President-Elect at AIANY

Allison Lane Sr. Associate/Multifamily Studio Lead at AECOM
President at nycoba | NOMA

Richard Swett, FAIA and Former Congressman

Michael Haggerty Principal, Urban Planning and Design at Starr Whitehouse

Christina Brown Environmental Performance Specialist at KPF

Steven Corsello Job Captain at Gensler

Esteban Reichberg Principal of EAR Architecture

Motoko Shoboji Design Lead at NYC Department of Design & Construction

The seventh year of the AIANY Civic Leadership Program (CLP) began on Saturday, June 17. Bringing together the selected ten leaders for a day of introductions and inspiration, the kickoff started with key introductions from AIANY and nycoba|NOMA leadership. Through these presentations, the CLP cohort began to understand how their leadership is critical for our profession and recognized their duty as citizens to advance innovative ideas and support policies that address today's societal, environmental, and technological challenges.

The morning continued with introductions by the advisors, and concluded with a Pecha Kucha-style presentation by each leader. The class shared their inspirations, favorite books and movies, stories from childhood, and the best advice they have received, among other personal stories and anecdotes. Their presentations revealed their unique qualities that the 2023 CLP will be another stellar class.

As the day's programming continued into the afternoon, five CLP alumni shared their experiences with the program, delving into how their participation in the program enhanced the work they do today. It was exciting to see a small portion of the 70+ alumni bond over their common passions. The kickoff also featured several icebreakers and a Q&A session, allowing the participants to come together and discuss how they hope to address social inequities in our larger society. The common good we are collectively working towards became a cornerstone of the day's conversations. To conclude the kickoff, Richard Swett, FAIA, addressed the class as a third-time keynote speaker for the CLP. Swett is the only architect that has ever served in the United States Congress. His dedication to the CLP remains a testament to the importance of advocating for architects and design professionals pursuing public service. As a cohort emerging from the pandemic, who can now gather in person for the entirety of Kick-Off Day, the planning of upcoming sessions and events immediately began at the day's end, ensuring an insightful and encouraging six-months ahead.





DEVELOPMENT SESSION #1

URGENCY, EMERGENCY, EMERGENCE

David Polk and Nicole Vlado Torres

Guest Speakers:

Delma Palma, AIA, VP of Design and Construction Management, Empire State Development

Rob Robinson, Special Advisor, Partners for Dignity and Rights, Adjunct Professor, New School

Rebecca Zangen, Director of Policy and Planning, Supportive Housing Network of New York

Iliya Azaroff, FAIA, Director of Design +LAB Architects, AIA Member Board of Directors

Andrew Knox, Partner, ESKW

Amy Mielke, AIA, Associate Principal and Director of Ennead Lab, Ennead Architects

Don Weinreich, FAIA, LEED AP, Managing Partner Ennead Architects

On Friday, July 14, the AIANY Civic Leadership Program class discusses sheltering asylum seekers during a housing crisis.



With New York City in an asylum-seeker-fueled State of Emergency since last October—amidst an ongoing housing crisis—how are the City's needs identified and prioritized to allow its residents to function and thrive? For its first development session of 2023, the AIA New York Civic Leadership Program met at the Center for Architecture on July 14, 2023 to engage in a conversation on the topic.

The two-panel event Urgency, Emergency, Emergence: How to Shelter Asylum Seekers During a Housing Crisis was organized and led by David Polk, AIA, and Nicole Vlado Torres, AIA, NOMA. Using the City's current housing and humanitarian asylum crises as the framework, this event engaged professionals working in and around housing to explore how they identify urgency, how it's impacted by emergency events, how the emergence of solutions take form, and what (if any) role architects have in these processes.

In the first panel, Urgency and Emergency: Architects in Response, panelists were invited to discuss how their already urgent work is impacted by overlaid or superimposed emergencies, and what is gained and lost during these emergencies. They included an architect working in the public sector with experience at NYCHA, a formerly homeless individual working as a housing rights activist and educator, and an urban planner working in a non-profit dedicated to supportive housing and services.

The panel discussion dove into frustrations of policy and funding, yet returned to positive perspectives: “We are the government, we are the system. We can fix this.” It was suggested that emergencies offer opportunities for unique partnerships to help resolve problems, and not only to remedy but also future-proof. They highlight that we are less afraid to make mistakes during emergencies; yet we sometimes lack the boldness to maintain existing systems that work, as one of our panelists said: “If it works, don’t defund it”.

The second panel, Emergence: Architects in Action, explored the roles and actions of architects and the profession in contributing to solutions during times of need. Building on the previous panel, this panel sought to postulate the evolution of the architect’s Standard of Care and its relation to the AIA Code of Ethics. Polk prompted the panelists and CLP cohort: “What does it mean for architects to be on the offense – to go beyond reaction and to become proactive? Is the wicked problem of our time the profession itself?”



The discussion focused on two categories of emergence: new practice and increasing crises. The panelists agreed that emergence suggests new ways to work together—not as competitors. While optimistic, the panel questioned whether architects are outgrowing their traditional roles to take on more civic responsibility. They also question whether “design” in the traditional sense is the only solution.

Both panels concluded that the housing crisis, exacerbated by sudden increase in asylum seekers in New York City, is simply a symptom. The CLP cohort learned of examples of successes and stumblings within the housing response, yet took away principles to guide future actions. With a bias towards action, the panelists illustrated the need for systems thinking. The planet is changing faster than the profession, and that is a problem.



DEVELOPMENT SESSION #2

HISTORIC PRESERVATION: THE ARCHITECT'S DILEMMA

k. Kennedy Whitters and Adam Achrati

Guest Speakers:

Tiffani Simple, RA, Principal, Simple Design Studio, PC

AJ Pires, AIA, LEED AP, President, Alloy Development

Bill Millard, Editor, Musician, Writer; Contributor to The Architect's Newspaper's reporting on the Penn Station Redevelopment

Layla Law-Gisiko, Chair of the Landmarks and the Land Use Committees for CB5

For the first time in AIANY Civic Leadership Program history, the cohort discussed historic preservation on Friday, August 4.



For the first time in AIANY Civic Leadership Program history, the cohort discussed historic preservation. k. Kennedy Whitters, AIA, of wrkSHap kiloWatt and Adam Achrati, AIA, of Calvert Wright Architecture co-facilitated a two-part session on Friday, August 4, 2023.

The New York Public Library's Jefferson Market Library was a fitting setting for the topic. The library is a 1959 case study of community engagement to save a building, a former late-19th century courthouse in Greenwich Village, and the city's response that met their needs.

Historic preservation—a global, age-old tradition—can pose a dilemma for architects. Preserving the craftsmanship of the past and adapting existing structures to meet the needs of present and future uses is part of being human. Across the US, architects who practice preservation sometimes face the moral dilemma of meeting the needs of their clients and protecting culture. At times, these needs compete at opposing ends of society's spectrum of needs based on capitalism, economic development, and the protection of private property rights as seen in the AIA's 2020 Code of Ethics and Professional Conduct:

- representing the owner (Canon II-Obligations to the Client) and
- protecting culture (Canon I-General Obligations, E.S. 1.3 Natural and Cultural Heritage): "E.S. 1.3 Natural and Cultural Heritage: Members should respect and help conserve their natural and cultural heritage while striving to improve the environment and the quality of life within it."



Part One featured a panel discussion about preservation in broad terms, its value, and the pros and cons of preservation from the perspective of an architect developer within the framework of the AIA Code of Ethics, urbanism, and capitalism.

Whiters and Achrafi opened the conversation with an introduction to historic preservation, from the local to national scale, that covered the known early, national history of Mt. Vernon's Women's Association and the not-so-known preservation activity of Black women who saved Frederick Douglass' house in Cedar Hills, DC.

Simple, a registered architect, spoke to the finer points of research, assessment, and documentation of historic buildings, as well as her office's analysis of NYC's preservation policies and their intended and unintended consequences. Pires, a developer, reflected on his firm's development projects in historic districts, and their ability to work with preservation guidelines to complete projects and even protect landmark-eligible buildings while accomplishing their development goals. The conversation concluded with a primer about the afternoon's preservation case study: the second redevelopment and eminent domain occurrence at the Penn Station site in Manhattan. Millard, a journalist, presented a dual narrative of the competing visions to redevelop Penn Station and the history and enduring trauma of the previous station's demise.



The second part of the session featured a tour with Layla Law-Gisiko, Chair of the Landmarks and the Land Use Committees for Community Board 5 (CB5). The cohort visited Penn Station in CB5 and Law-Gisiko led an engaging tour of the Penn Station Redevelopment Area points of interest. During the tour, cohort members discussed the legal framework guiding proposed developments that would impact the existing historic buildings and cultural heritage.

The session provided opportunities for further research on community engagement with a topic that poses challenges and opportunities for the architect, the developer, the planner, the citizen, and their government at local and national levels.





DEVELOPMENT SESSION #3

ARE YOU READY?

Equitable Infrastructure and Emergency Planning

Dongzoo Han and Alexis Clarke

Guest Speakers:

Wil Jones, Senior Associate, Equity & Economic Opportunity, Rockefeller Foundation

Alexander Meeks, Director, HR&A

Rebecca Zangen, Director of Policy and Planning, Supportive Housing Network of New York

Johanna Lovecchio, Assoc. Director, Center for Resilient Cities and Landscapes, Columbia

Christopher Kennedy, Assoc. Director, Urban Systems Lab, The New School

On Friday, August 25, the AIANY Civic Leadership Program debates the equitability of New York City's emergency preparedness.

One of the most fundamental roles of the built environment is to protect society. Every member of society must be equally protected, especially under the most hazardous situations. Committed to the idea that everyone should be able to afford and access resilient infrastructure and emergency resources to secure their safety, the 10 fellows of AIA New York's Civic Leadership Program gathered to explore how to increase emergency preparedness and infrastructure for vulnerable communities.

Dongzoo Han and Alexis Clarke opened the topic by identifying the emergency typologies of underserved communities—low-income, BIPOC, unhoused, disabled, LGBTQIA+—and their needs as related to resilient infrastructure and emergency preparedness. The framework of affordability (financial equity/sustainability) and accessibility (universal design/usability) was set to determine the effectiveness and inclusivity of the city's readiness for emergency and disasters.

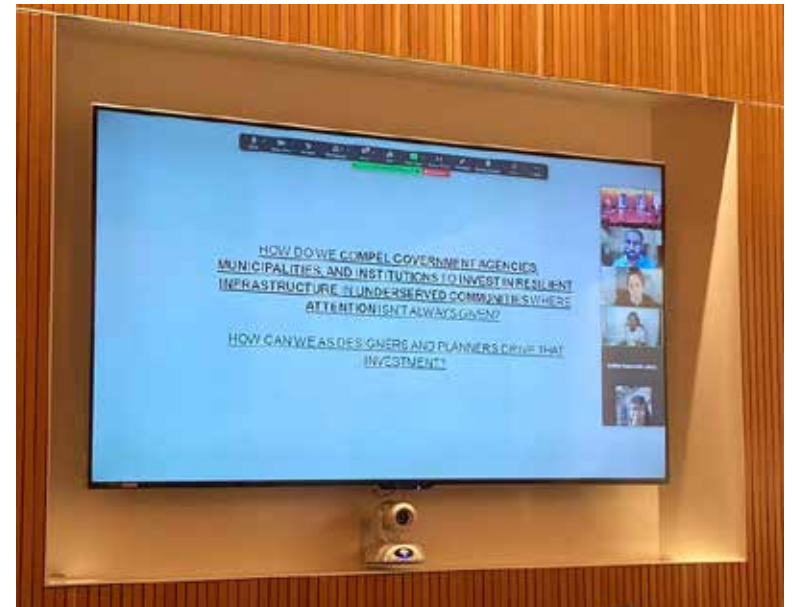
Four experts from various backgrounds with wide range of experiences in equitable design, research, urban planning and philanthropy were invited to speak.



Focusing on resilient infrastructure and disaster planning and recovery, the session investigated our roles and how to approach the following:

1. Detection of weakness in advance of contingencies, as related to systemic racism in planning and infrastructure
2. Identifying the vulnerable or at-risk communities
3. Integrating these communities into design and planning
4. Providing effective communication and translation of available resources and emergency preparedness plans

The discussion revealed the importance of policy and political will amongst designers, planners, policy makers, and community leaders to enforce regulations beyond the minimum standards to expand accessibility to resilient design and planning practices. The session emphasized efforts to meticulously and objectively analyze community issues, not only to recognize topmost tasks, but also to drive interest and financial investment from government and funding agencies.



Based on the framework and insights from the discussion, cohorts and advisors assessed and examined the city's readiness for emergency and disasters for underserved communities. Using the five boroughs as a case study, the group focused on the neighborhoods where environmental degradation and social economic inequalities and challenges frequently prevail. Then, each group examined severe disaster scenarios from the perspective of residents with different vulnerabilities: vision impairment, hearing difficulties, mobility difficulties, homelessness, and low-income. Even with digital fluencies, the workshop concluded that enough resources were not always provided or accessible.

After identifying those needs, fellows were assigned roles such as architects, urban planners, funding agencies, policy makers and community leaders. Possible solutions were discussed to enhance affordability and accessibility. However investments are allocated, collaboration between experts and communities will be the key to extend and expand resilient design and emergency preparedness to more communities for a safer society.



DEVELOPMENT SESSION #4

THE ARCHITECH: WHO ARE THE NEW DESIGNERS?

Ivan Himanen and Tiana Howell

Guest Speakers:

Sam Keene, Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering, The Cooper Union

James Piacentini, Product Manager, NYC Department of City Planning, CLP '22

Alejandra Zapata, LEED GA, Computational Designer, Delve @ Google, CLP '21

On Friday, September 15, the fourth AIANY Civic Leadership Program development session focused on data in architecture and planning.



Why Data?

The development session began with the civic leaders presenting a selected history of urban data use, from the advent of “smart cities” to NYC launching its Open Data platform in 2009 and the complex balance of insight versus privacy. Nowadays, a person is as likely to have access to millions of data points as they are to be a data point themselves.

Part 1: Data Literacy

The session began with Sam Keene, professor of electrical engineering at The Cooper Union, discussing his interdisciplinary pedagogy. His Data Science for Social Good course partners with NYC nonprofits, collecting their data and visualizing them to reveal insights. He also discussed a project that attempted to disrupt a facial-recognition algorithm. Keene then led a conversation with the cohort around identifying inherent biases in data.

Part 2: Data Implementation

Part 2 was a panel presentation by James Piacentini, digital product manager at the NYC Department of City Planning, and Alejandra Zapata, computational designer at Delve by Google. Piacentini showcased the Equitable Development Data Explorer (EDDE), an online map that visualizes displacement risk across NYC based on demographic and housing data available on the NYC Open Data Portal. EDDE is part of a larger citywide effort to embed inequality awareness

in planning, including new mandates for Racial Equity Reports under Local Law 78 of 2021. Piacentini then led a conversation about the use of EDDE to empower local stakeholders in the planning process, scaling the notion of inherent bias up to city government.

Zapata showcased the generative planning tool by Google called Delve, which generates dozens of schematic “massings” for a mid-size planning project based on user inputs like zoning rules, use types, sustainability goals, and financials, improving the efficiency of early stages in the real estate development lifecycle. Google is currently tailoring it for use in the private and public sector. The ensuing Q&A focused on the contrast between developing data-based tools by governments versus tech companies, and how these tools might impact the role of the architect and planner.



Part 3: Data Advocacy

For Part 3 the cohort split up into groups and tested the tools live using the following framework:

You are a planner with a +/-2-acre site in one of 5 recently rezoned neighborhoods in NYC: East New York (Brooklyn), Jerome Avenue (The Bronx), Inwood (Manhattan), Downtown Far Rockaway (Queens), and Bay Street (Staten Island). Use Delve to propose a development on the site. Use EDDE and DCP’s Rezoning Commitments for that area to inform which design scheme you select.

Coming back together, the group discussed how the information from EDDE and the Rezoning Commitments changed each group’s preferred scheme compared to Delve’s Top 3. Howell and Himanen highlighted other NYC-based organizations that use data visualization to promote equity, including Transportation Alternatives’ Spatial Equity and BetaNYC’s BoardStat. The group reflected once again that “data” always reflects real people and communities, that generative tools always benefit from more context, and that learning the basic structure of datasets can help us insert ourselves into the process more proactively.



DEVELOPMENT SESSION #5

DESIGNING FOR QUEER PUBLICS RIIS BEACH AND BEYOND

Dean Labowitz and Ami Mehta

Guest Speakers:

Jah Elyse Sayers, Scholar, Artist, and Activist

Stefa Marin Alarcon, Vocalist, Composer, and Multi-media Performance Artist, representing Trans Equity Consulting

Matthew Bremer, AIA, President at AIANY, Founder and Director at Architecture in Formation

Tom Calahan, Technoqueers

The AIANY Civic Leadership Program discussed the case study of an iconic queer New York landmark, Jacob Riis Beach, as participants were taken on a multi-media journey to understand the complexities of a site in the throes of rapid development as the fifth development session held on October 19.



What is queer space? What would it take for architects to consider queer and trans people as critical stakeholders? How can architects find shared language with queer and trans folks? These were some of the large questions we tried to answer in the 2023 AIANY Civic Leadership Program (CLP)'s fifth Development Session, organized by the cohort's Dean Labowitz and Ami Mehta. Through a case study of an iconic queer New York landmark, Jacob Riis Beach, participants were taken on a multi-media journey to understand the complexities of a site in the throes of rapid and apathetic development.

To begin to understand the significance of Riis Beach to the queer community, the four-hour session began with an audio-visual workshop led by the scholar, artist, and activist, Jah Elyse Sayers. Sayers, who has done years of research (or "Riisearch") on the site, opened by leading the fellows through a somatic, grounding exercise, asking participants to visualize a place where they felt open possibility. The activity set the stage for Sayers' immersive audio experience: curated recordings from their oral history project. Over the course of two summers, Sayers has recorded Riis experiences from beachgoers, some who have attended Riis annually for over 30 years. To process the powerful audio, Sayers guided the fellows through small group discussions centered on Riis artifacts: archival photos, Reddit posts, Trip Advisor reviews and newspaper articles found in their research and by Mehta online.



After the break, Labowitz and Mehta brought the discussion beyond the scope of Riis, to the city's queer spaces more generally, building upon the reflections of the immersive workshop and introducing three guest speakers. Stefa Marin Alarcon, a vocalist, composer and multi-media performance artist born and raised in Queens, NY, represented Trans Equity Consulting, a group paving the way to establishing genuine equity in the workplace and beyond. Tom Calahan provided the broader perspective of queer nightlife based on his illustrious and far-reaching weekly newsletter of curated local electronic music events. AIANY 2023 President Matthew Bremer, AIA, provided a viewpoint from the organization and of an architect creating and advocating for LGBTQIA+ issues within the profession.



Along with Sayers' presentation, the panel discussion centered around ideas of agency, whether queer spaces are created or found, and what working with or against the system looks like as queer and trans people, advocates, and allies. Throughout the session, the fellows were asked to interrogate the role of the architect in including queer and trans voices in designing the future for Riis. These questions remained hypothetical as the firm hired to design the site, after not including queer and trans community members in their plans, declined an invitation to participate. Hopefully through this thoughtful session and movements for queer spaces generally, architects and designers can begin to better see queer and trans communities as vital stakeholders in the futures of these spaces.





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AIA New York



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has made you *feel*



(laughter / sadness / joyous / uncomfortable /...)

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November 9 | 5:30 - 8:00pm | Center for Architecture, 536 LaGuardia Pl

PUBLIC EVENT #1

STORYTELLING IN ARCHITECTURE

Alexis Clarke, Ivan Himanen, Ami Mehta, David Polk, and k kennedy Whitters

Guest Speakers:

Immanuel Oni, Artist, Co-Founder & Creative Director of Liminal

Sabina Sethi Unni, Fellow, Urban Design Forum's New City Critics

Cassim Shepard, Distinguished Lecturer, The Anne & Bernard Spitzer School of Architecture at City College, CUNY

On Thursday, November 9, the 2023 class of the AIANY Civic Leadership Program (CLP) hosted a public event, organized by Alexis Clarke, WEDG, ENV SP; Ivan Himanen, AIA; Ami Mehta, Assoc. AIA; David Polk, AIA; and k. kennedy Whitters, AIA. The centerpiece of the event was an open mic story slam, for which the Civic Leaders invited members of the public to share personal stories about how the built environment has impacted their lives. Afterward, a panel discussed the importance of storytelling in architectural practice. The two-part event curated a unique environment of listening and sharing.

Why Stories?

The Civic Leaders conceived this event while grappling with recurring, fundamental themes at the heart of the CLP and the profession:

- How can architects better listen to the diverse voices of the communities they claim to represent?
- What are the limits to architects' agency and influence?
- How can we lead unless we know how to listen and to follow?
- Architecture is a shared enterprise and design professionals do not always have all the answers.

The cohort decided to shake up the traditional expert-centric format of events at the Center for Architecture by yielding their platform to the public. Tafel Hall was arranged without a stage or podium, with chairs concentrically arranged like an amphitheater around a high-top table. Participants responded to the prompt:

"Tell us about a time a _____ (building/place/neighborhood/etc) made you feel _____ (laughter/sadness/joyous/uncomfortable/etc)."

Attendees heard stories about:

- Finding refuge
- Mentorship
- Basements
- Memories of fathers
- Views of New York
- Hidden stairways
- Governor's Island
- and more.

During the readings, attendees were free to roam about and view printouts of submitted stories that were posted on a wall.

The second part of the event convened a panel to reflect on and discuss the importance of storytelling to design practice and for panelists to share their own professional stories. Each panelist was invited for their broad experience engaging with the public through design, their unique definitions of community engagement, and their ability to disrupt traditional design practice through storytelling. Immanuel Oni is an artist, sculptor, self-titled “space doula”, and founder of the art non-profit Liminal. Sabina Sethi Unni is a writer, community organizer, theater artist, and recently a New City Critics fellow at The Urban Design Forum. Cassim Shepard is a filmmaker, urbanist, educator, and currently Distinguished Lecturer at City College.



The ensuing discussion began by addressing the notion of assigning value to certain voices over others. Recognizing architecture's power and privilege to shape public space as the current starting point, the challenge lies with building trust with communities by a variety of available means (gossip, acts of service, or time spent together). The panel mentioned their experience tapping into certain emotions in a community—like fear or grievance—in order to empathetically draw out prevailing narratives. Rhetorical questions like “how can we listen better?” or “who is best at reading communities?” were projected on the wall throughout the discussion in order for everyone to come away from the event with a motivating framework for future project work.

k. Kennedy Whithers, AIA, 2023 CLP cohort member, concluded the night with two calls to action: (1) For her initiative, (un)Redact the Facts, she asked attendees to complete a survey on the way grammar and language choices in stories about uncomfortable histories affect the way people feel and (2) To support pay equity in the architecture field, she asked attendees to sign a petition to ask AIANY to increase the budget for the Civic Leadership Program. She proposed this budget increase with revenue data on the non-profit's 2020 IRS reporting and provided context about the time commitments of the 2023 cohort and limited speaker stipends. In response, an AIANY CLP co-founder replied that AIANY is a non-profit and disagreed with Kennedy for making, in their opinion, a request that is one of economics for what is a rewarding opportunity to serve. The entire 2023 cohort continues to process the personal, programmatic, and institutional impacts of this final exchange.

PUBLIC EVENT #2

(Re)group: Collective Practices of Architecture

Adam Achrati, Dongzoo Han, Tiana Howell, Dean Labowitz, and Nicole Vlado-Torres

Invited Guest Speakers:

Deena Darby, AIA, NOMA, Design as Protest, Dark Matter U

Lindsay Harkema, AIA, Cofounder, WIP Collaborative (Work in Progress/Women in Practice)

Adrienne Luce, Vice President DEI and Social Impact, HMC Architects



(re)group
collective practices of architecture

This event offers a platform for architects committed to mutual aid, political action, and community engagement to examine how their work can be sustained between crises and become more proactive than reactive.

In 2020, COVID-19 disrupted our daily lives, both personally and professionally, and created a crisis of authority that laid bare social injustices. From this moment of forced isolation, the world began to see a new definition of community and collaboration. Many began the practice of mutual aid, knowledge-sharing, and people-led movements and actions. The architectural community was not exempt—this new lens led to collaborations that crossed borders and disciplines. This focus on social impact allowed many to find purpose during a time of uncertainty.

With the declared ending of the nation’s public health emergency earlier this year, there has been a rapid return to “normalcy,” and with it, a decline in engagement in collective care and action. This disengagement may lead to the field of architecture losing the knowledge and perspective gained during the pandemic. This event is an effort to avoid such loss. In this critical moment in which the architectural profession is redefining itself, we ask:

- How do we help shape the “new normal” of architecture to include collective care and action?
- What can architects today learn from the histories of people-led movements?
- How do we create sustainable practices to avoid mental strain or burnout?

At the time of yearbook production, this event had been postponed.

Skill & Team Building



New York City Government Overview



RETI Center Day



2023 CIVIC LEADERSHIP GUEST SPEAKERS

Matthew Bremer Active President at AIANY, Founder and Director at Architecture in Formation

Gregg Switzer First Vice President, President-Elect at AIANY Managing Principal and CEO, SWITZER Architecture

Allison Lane President at nycoba | NOMA Sr. Associate/ Multifamily Studio Lead at AECOM

Richard Swett, FAIA and Former Congressman

Michael Haggerty Principal, Urban Planning and Design at Starr Whitehouse

Christina Brown Environmental Performance Specialist at KPF

Steven Corsello Job Captain at Gensler

Esteban Reichberg Principal of EAR Architecture

Motoko Shoboji Design Lead at NYC Department of Design & Construction

A.L. Hu, Ascendent Neighborhood Development

Delma Palma, AIA, VP of Design and Construction Management, Empire State Development

Rob Robinson, Special Advisor, Partners for Dignity and Rights, Adjunct Professor, New School

Rebecca Zangon, Director of Policy and Planning, Supportive Housing Network of New York

Illya Azaroff, FAIA, Director of Design +LAB Architects

Andrew Knox, Partner, ESKW

Amy Mielke, AIA, Associate Principal and Director of Ennead Lab, Ennead Architects

Don Weinreich, FAIA, LEED AP, Managing Partner Ennead Architects

Tiffani Simple, RA, Principal, Simple Design Studio, PC

AJ Pires, AIA, LEED AP, President, Alloy Development

Bill Millard, Editor, Musician, Writer; Contributor to The Architect's Newspaper

Layla Law-Gisiko, Chair of the Landmarks and the Land Use Committees for Community Board 5

Wil Jones, Senior Associate, Equity & Economic Opportunity, Rockefeller Foundation

Alexander Meeks, Director, HR&A

Rebecca Zangon, Director of Policy and Planning, Supportive Housing Network of New York

Johanna Lovecchio, Assoc. Director, Center for Resilient Cities and Landscapes, Columbia

Christopher Kennedy, Assoc. Director, Urban Systems Lab, The New School

Sam Keene, Associate Professor of Electrical Engineering, The Cooper Union

James Piacentini, Product Manager, NYC Department of City Planning

Alejandra Zapata, LEED GA, Computational Designer, Delve @ Google

Jah Elyse Sayers, Scholar, Artist, and Activist

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Sabina Sethi Unni, Fellow, Urban Design Forum's New City Critics

Cassim Shepard, Lecturer, The Anne & Bernard Spitzer School of Architecture at City College, CUNY

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

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Suzanne Mecs, Hon. AIA NYS, Managing Director

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