

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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AIANY 2021 Presidential Theme - REFLECTION/INFLECTION

Incoming AIANY President Kenneth A. Lewis, AIA, invites members to work together to emerge stronger and more focused from these challenging times.

New York City, December 9, 2020 – On Tuesday, December 8, 2020, AIA New York welcomed its 2021 Board of Directors at the Board Inaugural. Executive Director **Benjamin Prosky, Assoc. AIA**, and Immediate Past President **Kim Yao, AIA**, began the evening by celebrating the chapter’s ability to quickly adapt to the unprecedented challenges of 2020, remaining a responsive, relevant, and essential platform for the NYC architecture community. Following the passing of the virtual gavel, incoming 2021 President **Kenneth A. Lewis, AIA**, discussed his presidential theme, “**REFLECTION/INFLECTION.**” While it is the nature as architects to look forward and design solutions, Lewis’s theme invites members take a moment to contemplate how we arrived at this present time—to understand our patterns of inspiration and creativity as well as our blind spots and complicities.

2021 PRESIDENTIAL THEME – REFLECTION/INFLECTION

Lewis began his speech by noting that 2021 marks the 20th anniversary of 9/11, a cataclysmic event that ultimately served as a moment of inflection. The devastating event forced the architecture community to envision new ways of looking at the city, ultimately allowing NYC to rebuild and come back stronger than ever.

“Here we are again at a cataclysmic moment,” said Lewis, referring to the challenges of 2020—from extreme weather events like firestorms, tornadoes, and hurricanes, to the devastating pandemic and related economic disaster, and the renewed call for racial justice following the murder of George Floyd and countless other Black Americans. Faced with all these difficult circumstances, Lewis invited the AIANY community to once again use this cataclysmic moment as a time for reflection and inflection. This is a moment, said Lewis, for “looking back and seeing where we’ve come from, and pausing for a second to see what we’ve done and what we can do—for inflecting and moving forward.”

As our profession, and our society at large, prepares to move forward, under Lewis’s leadership AIA New York will address a number of pressing issues for the community by reflecting, remembering, advocating, and leading and supporting. Lewis discussed the upcoming municipal elections, which are set to transform local city governance, and which will become a focal point of the chapter’s advocacy agenda. The chapter will also continue to work on issues related to climate and sustainability via its committees and also by supporting the implementation of Local Law 97, an ambitious climate legislation that requires existing buildings to significantly reduce their emissions.

While remembering the victims of COVID-19, the chapter will also continue to support its members during this economic downturn, focusing on providing resources for emerging professionals and firms, and acting as platform for community through its small and medium firm roundtables.

In 2021, AIANY will also focus on systemic racism. Using its criminal justice facilities statement, published in October, as a framework, the chapter will develop programming and address unconscious bias in the profession while further cementing its relationships with organizations like nycobaNOMA and Arquitectos. Lewis also committed to examining the chapter's governance and working to double the number of Black architects in the profession by 2030.

CHAPTER RECOGNITION

The inaugural also served as an opportunity to recognize members and projects of the architecture and design community for their contributions or impact. AIANY's Vice Presidents recognized the Chapter's program committees or their initiatives with Vice Presidential Citations for contributions in each of our mission areas: design excellence, public outreach, and professional development.

AIANY Vice Presidential Citations

AIANY Citation for Design Excellence: *Recipe for a Room: A Design Contest*, created by the AIANY Interiors Committee

AIANY Citation for Public Outreach: *The BQE in Context*, a project of the AIANY Transportation and Infrastructure Committee

AIANY Citation for Professional Development: AIANY Diversity and Inclusion Committee for their timely response to nation-wide calls for racial justice

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About Kenneth A. Lewis, AIA

Kenneth A. Lewis, AIA, is a partner at Skidmore, Owings & Merrill. He joined SOM in 1986 and has since worked on a diverse range of architectural projects across the globe, including large-scale, mixed-use developments; commercial and residential towers; hospitals; and corporate headquarters. Lewis has built a reputation for his ability to oversee projects of enormous scale and complexity, including One World Trade Center, 7 World Trade Center, Time Warner Center, 35 Hudson Yards, and Brookfield Properties at Manhattan West. He holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Rhode Island School of Design and a Master of Architecture from Harvard University.

About AIA New York

Founded in 1857, AIA New York is the oldest and largest chapter of the American Institute of Architects. The Chapter's members include 5,500 practicing architects, allied professionals, students, and public members interested in architecture and design. AIA New York is dedicated to three goals: design excellence, public outreach, and professional development. www.aiany.org