

CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE BIENNIAL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Chicago Architecture Biennial Announces Appointment of Artistic Director David Brown and Major Collaboration with the Danish Arts Foundation for Fourth Edition: *The Available City*

CHICAGO (October 21, 2020) – The Chicago Architecture Biennial (CAB) is pleased to announce the appointment of David Brown as the Artistic Director of the fourth edition. Brown is a designer, researcher, and educator based at the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago. The concept and title for the 2021 edition, *The Available City*, asks us to consider the impact collective space can have in cities today. Through a reinvented and responsive global platform, the Biennial will create opportunities for conversations about the intersection of architecture and design and such critical issues as health, sustainability, equity, and racial justice leading up to and throughout the run of the edition. The fourth edition of the Biennial will open in September of 2021 featuring free, public programming at sites in neighborhoods across Chicago and on digital platforms.

“Since I became Mayor, I made it my mission to uplift our historically underserved communities with resources and programs that help them thrive,” said Chicago Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot. “That is why I am especially thrilled that the 2021 Chicago Architecture Biennial will be focused and grounded in our neighborhoods that can benefit from it the most. I look forward to seeing how the Biennial enriches our entire City by amplifying and showcasing innovative ideas in design, community building and creative placemaking.”

A concept that was incubated during the inaugural Chicago Architecture Biennial in 2015, Brown’s long-term body of research forming the basis for *The Available City* began with an inventory of vacant city-owned lots across Chicago—currently numbering more than 10,000 sites concentrated on the city’s South and West Sides. Over more than a decade of work, Brown developed this research into an ongoing urban design proposal that connects community residents, architects, and designers to work together to create spaces reflecting the needs of local neighborhoods. For the 2021 edition, Brown will explore the framework of *The Available City* on a global platform, engaging both local and international projects and practices that reflect new concepts for shared space and collective agency in the city.

“Platforms such as the Biennial offer a unique space for exploring and experimenting with new ideas and projects,” shared David Brown, “Since 2015, collaborations with CAB have helped shape *The Available City* and I look forward to how this next phase of the project will bring new perspectives to my work with community organizations and residents while also broadening the conversation—as amplified by current issues—about the role that collective space can have in cities around the world today.”

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Over the course of the first three editions, CAB has supported projects created by more than 350 architects, designers, and artists from over 40 countries considering critical topics through the lens of architecture and design. As a platform designed to highlight and explore innovation in the field, CAB is poised to present a global event that responds to changes in the way we gather, engage, and learn. The fourth edition will imagine new and exciting possibilities for activating spaces throughout the city, expanding access to architecture and design, and engaging new voices.

Speaking for the leadership of the independent, non-profit organization that produces the Biennial, Chairman Jack Guthman stated “The Biennial board recognizes the challenges inherent in planning an event of this scale for a year as unpredictable as 2021. We are nevertheless confident that the support of the Biennial by the global architecture community and by the city’s civic, cultural and philanthropic communities will foster and sustain our efforts notwithstanding these uncertain times.”

As in past Biennials, the fourth edition will also feature a broad spectrum of local and global partners creating programs and content aligned with *The Available City*. Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE) will once again serve as the Biennial’s official Presenting Partner.

“DCASE is thrilled to work in partnership with the Chicago Architecture Biennial for the fourth edition. As the City continues to advance the INVEST South/West community improvement initiative that launched in October 2019, we believe the themes for the 2021 show will equally amplify and highlight the brilliant work taking place throughout our city’s neighborhoods,” states DCASE Commissioner Mark Kelly. “This is a remarkable time in Chicago to work together to highlight local priorities through the support of creative and innovative programming and exhibitions.”

CAB is also pleased to announce a major collaboration with the Danish Arts Foundation (DAF). The DAF previously partnered with CAB during the 2019 Biennial, promoting a mutual exchange between global cities about the role of architecture and design in shaping communities. For the 2021 Biennial, DAF returns to commission a work that responds directly to the themes explored through *The Available City*. The project will be developed by a Danish artist or artist team working in close collaboration with community-based residents and stakeholders in Chicago.

“We are thrilled to again be collaborating with the Chicago Architecture Biennial to create a project that connects the Danish design community with the people and communities of Chicago,” shared the Danish Arts Foundation. “Through this collaboration we hope to be able to learn from each other and inspire positive change.”

Biennial programs will kick-off on October 27 with a virtual talk featuring MacArthur Fellow and 2019 Biennial contributor landscape and public artist Walter Hood in conversation with David

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Brown. A schedule of in-person and virtual programming—youth workshops, conversations, and community events—will continue throughout the coming year. Through a new programming model, CAB seeks to engage audiences throughout the process of project development leading up to the opening of the 2021 edition and beyond. Over the coming months, CAB will continue to announce collaborations and initiatives being developed by local and global architects, artists, and designers.

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Contact

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Related Event

Tuesday, October 27, 2020

5:00 - 6:00 PM CST

Walter Hood in Conversation with David Brown

Free, virtual event; registration required

Visit: https://chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org/engage/upcoming_programs

About the Chicago Architecture Biennial

The Chicago Architecture Biennial (CAB) is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to creating an international forum on architecture and urbanism. Through a diverse program including exhibitions, commissions, publications, workshops, performances, and more, CAB advances architectural innovation and thinking by engaging practitioners, students, and the public to re-imagine the designed environment both globally and locally. CAB's signature program—the largest architecture and design exhibition in North America—creates opportunities for emerging talent in architecture, design, and the arts to engage a wide public audience every two years in Chicago. CAB programming throughout the year engages global audiences in conversations exploring critical ideas and questions facing the field, and beyond.

The Chicago Architecture Biennial is committed to providing a platform to unite the global vanguard of architectural thought and practice with the city of Chicago's unique legacy of architectural innovation. Each edition of the Chicago Architecture Biennial takes as its core a theme that addresses the most compelling issues in contemporary architectural practice. The Chicago Architecture Biennial is a platform created to further our understanding, both globally and locally, of the ways architecture and design shape our lived experiences. The Biennial seeks to envision a future of architecture that is community-driven, sustainable, and equitable.

The inaugural 2015 Chicago Architecture Biennial was an outcome of a comprehensive cultural plan developed by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events. Titled *The*

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State of the Art of Architecture, the 2015 Biennial was curated by Artistic Directors Sarah Herda of the Graham Foundation and architect, critic, curator and editor Joseph Grima and centered on a 1977 conference organized by architect Stanley Tigerman. The inaugural Biennial expanded the spirit and scope of this 1977 event, inviting an international and intergenerational architectural network to Chicago to explore how visionary design can take on the most pressing issues of today. The 2015 Biennial encompassed an array of exhibitions, full-scale installations, and diverse programming, providing the public with an opportunity to engage with and think about architecture in new and unexpected ways.

For the second edition of the Biennial in 2017, the exhibition and programming was curated under the artistic and curatorial leadership of Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee from the Los Angeles-based firm Johnston Marklee & Associates, which also participated in the inaugural Biennial. The Artistic Directors developed a series of topics for their show titled *MAKE NEW HISTORY*, including image, material, building and civic histories and highlighted different modes of architectural production from the book to the city.

The third edition of the Biennial, titled *...and other such stories*, was led by Artistic Director Yesomi Umolu, a curator and scholar of spatial practice, with curators Sepake Angiama and Paulo Tavares. The 2019 edition traced narratives originating from its home city of Chicago and revealing connections between various practices and the questions they raise across global communities, cities, territories and ecologies. *...and other such stories* highlighted the ways that architecture and public space have been used as sites for collective action and social change.

Through installations, environments, programs and performances, more than 350 Biennial projects from across three editions reflect the ongoing significance of contemporary discourse that is founded in the myriad ways that history is invoked in the production of new forms of architectural thought.

About David Brown, 2021 Artistic Director

David Brown is a designer, researcher, and educator based at the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago. Brown investigates non-hierarchical, flexible, and variable approaches to urban design. For more than a decade, Brown's work has focused on *The Available City*, an ongoing speculation on the potential of Chicago's city-owned vacant land. Brown's work has been exhibited in the Venice Architecture Biennale (2012), the Chicago Cultural Center's Expo 72 (2013), the Chicago Architecture Biennial (2015), and received a grant from the Graham Foundation in 2011. In 2006, Brown curated the exhibition *Learning from North Lawndale: Past, Present + Future* at the Chicago Architecture Foundation (now the Chicago Architecture Center). Brown's writing includes the book *Noise Orders: Jazz, Improvisation, and Architecture* (University of Minnesota Press, 2006) and essays "Curious Mixtures" in *Center 18: Music in Architecture—Architecture in Music* (Center for American Architecture and Design, 2014, Michael Benedikt, ed.), "Lots Will Vary in The Available City" in *The Oxford Handbook of Critical Improvisation Studies* (Oxford University Press, 2016, George

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Lewis and Ben Piekut, eds.), “The Available City” in the journal *MAS Context*, and “Futures We Could Have Today” in *Flat Out*. Brown has lectured on his work at Columbia University’s Center for Jazz Studies and the Politecno di Milano and has taught at Florida A&M University and Rice University.

David Brown is a long-time collaborator of the Chicago Architecture Biennial, having been a participant in the inaugural 2015 Biennial and presenting two pop-up exhibitions and a series of youth programs for the 2019 edition.

About the Danish Arts Foundation

The Danish Arts Foundation (DAF) is Denmark’s largest arts foundation. The DAF works to spread the arts to a wide audience all over Denmark, to promote Danish art internationally, and to pave the way for talented artists. The DAF supports creative thinking and innovative ideas by funding more than 6,000 artists and art projects every year.

Through more than 60 different funding programs, the DAF funds the production and promotion of the visual arts, film, literature, music, performing arts, architecture, crafts, and design—and all that transcends the borders of these art forms. The DAF’s 16 expert committees are responsible for awarding grants to both Danish and foreign art projects, based on the 12,500 applications that they receive every year from artists, institutions, schools, organizations, and companies.

The Danish Arts Foundation previously collaborated with the Chicago Architecture Biennial and the Chicago Park District in 2019 to support *Cabbage Patch*, an installation of 10,000 planted cabbages along with an outdoor kitchen and related programming at the Garfield Park Conservatory.

DAF Press Contact

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