

# CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE BIENNIAL

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

### Chicago Architecture Biennial Announces Citywide Partner Sites and Organizations for 2021 Edition *The Available City*, including Overton Business & Technology Incubator, Grow Greater Englewood, Community Christian Alternative Academy, ProjectHOOD, El Paseo Community Garden and Under the Grid

*Chicago neighborhood and community organizations partner with global design leaders to create shared, collective spaces through new and imaginative uses of vacant lots*

CHICAGO (June 16, 2021 ) – The Chicago Architecture Biennial (CAB) is excited to announce neighborhood and community partner sites and organizations to collaborate with contributing global design leaders and present installations and programs when the Biennial opens on September 17, 2021. These partnerships are part of Artistic Director David Brown's vision for *The Available City* that asks how design can foster collective engagement and agency to identify new forms of shared space in urban areas.

“The world looks to Chicago for innovative approaches to architecture, urban planning and the arts, and the contributors and partners assembled for *The Available City* carry that legacy forward,” said CAB founding board member Michelle T. Boone. “Chicago’s neighborhood and cultural leaders are eager to welcome the world back to Chicago in September 2021.”

Brown selected community-focused partner organizations to highlight a range of innovative approaches and ideas that can transform a vacant space into a community resource. An example of these partnerships is the team transforming Bronzeville’s former Overton Elementary School into a business and technology incubator.

“Overton’s vision is one of community empowerment,” said Ghian Foreman, president and CEO of Emerald South Economic Development Collaborative. “By collaborating with architects, designers and community organizations like Borderless Studio, the Biennial becomes a platform to tell the stories of the residents, neighbors, former students and teachers, artists, athletes, business owners, activists and all who are connected to the school.”

Below is a shortlist of CAB 2021 collaborations and their partner sites and organizations:

**Overton Elementary School** in Bronzeville and Washington Park Development Group is partnering with contributor **Borderless Studio** to build on previous work as a Biennial site for the 2021 edition. Overton has been activated as part of the Creative Grounds project in collaboration with community members and civic organizations via public art, design, and architectural interventions since 2017. Creative Grounds seeks to repurpose closed public school buildings through community-led and inclusive

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processes. This year, community activation days will occur throughout the summer leading up to the Biennial's official opening in September.

**Community Christian Alternative Academy's** (CCA Academy) PermaPark currently serves as a site for learning about food production and the environment as a part of CCA Academy's Holistic Wellness Program. As a CAB 2021 partner, CCA Academy will build on a CAB Youth Studio workshop in 2019, in which Brown and 2021 contributor design firm **The Bittertang Farm** worked with CCA Academy students to workshop ideas for outdoor learning spaces.

**Grow Greater Englewood**, which creates programs that support sustainable food economies and green businesses in Chicago's Englewood neighborhood, is developing a 2-mile stretch of abandoned elevated railway line in Englewood into a nature trail. For the 2021 Biennial, a group of local architects, artists, and community leaders including **Anton Seals, Bweza Itaagi, Andres Hernandez and Eric Hotchkiss** will partner with 2021 contributor Tokyo-based architecture firm **Atelier Bow-Wow** to design the entryway to the trail, the 58th Street Plaza, so that it encourages gathering, connectivity, and commerce, and can be a safe, inviting, and peaceful space for community residents.

**ProjectHOOD**, an organization based in the Woodlawn neighborhood, offers job training, essential resources, and tools to empower community members to become peacemakers, problem solvers, leaders, and entrepreneurs. Biennial contributors Chicago-based partners **Norman Teague** and **Ebere Agwuncha** of **Norman Teague Design Studios** and architect **Negin Moayer** from **BNMO Design**, will join **Pastor Corey Brooks Sr.** of ProjectHOOD to construct an installation for a vacant lot along the commercial corridor on the 6600 block of South Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Drive. The installation will highlight local artists and provide a space for performances as part of a long-term project to raise funds to complete the building of a permanent ProjectHOOD Community Center.

**El Paseo Community Garden**, a NeighborSpace site in Pilsen, will partner with 2021 contributors Netherlands-based firm **Studio Ossidiana** and Ohio-based **Outpost Office** to develop site-specific installations that embraces the balance between the civic and the domestic. El Paseo serves as a public green space with a mission to strengthen environmental stewardship and civic engagement while protecting equitable green space on behalf of the community.

**Under the Grid** and 2021 contributor **Open Architecture Chicago** are partnering on a proposed 15-block greenway under the Chicago Transit Authority's Pink Line between Kedzie and Kildare that seeks to provide a safe, fun, and engaging route through the community, bringing much-needed vibrancy to the area. Miami-based design contributor **Studio Barnes** is developing an installation on a hard surface lot managed by the Westside Association for Community Action (WACA) that will promote play and social gatherings and serve as a space for performances and programming.

**Southbank Park** in the South Loop, sponsored by Lendlease, will partner with **PORT**, a public realm and urban design practice based in Chicago and Philadelphia, on a site-specific installation that responds to the history of the Chicago River.

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“Lendlease is deeply committed to creating strong communities,” said Theodore Weldon Executive General Manager of Lendlease Development. “We’re proud to support this year’s edition, *The Available City*, and a program that is invested in building community through collaboration and innovative approaches to architecture.

*The Available City* will also have projects and programs at the Central Park Theater in North Lawndale and vacant storefronts in Edgewater, among other locations. The 2021 edition investigates how an institution can enable long-lasting change beyond a single exhibition through these installations and programs.

Additional detail on exhibitions, installations, performances, lectures, educational programs, workshops, and events being produced by the Biennial and over 100 local and global partners will be announced in the coming weeks.

For a continuously updated list of Chicago Architecture Biennial 2021 Partner Sites visit [www.chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org](http://www.chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org)

The Chicago Architecture Biennial is the largest exhibition of contemporary architecture, art and design in North America.

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.

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## Resources

[Chicago Architecture Biennial 2021 Digital Media Kit](#)  
PW: CAB2021

## 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.

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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 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 were 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*

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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 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.