

# CHICAGO ARCHITECTURE BIENNIAL

## Chicago Architecture Biennial Announces Robust Education Program for 2019 Edition Leveraging Curatorial Imperatives for Accessibility and Community Engagement

*Biennial Learning Initiatives provide ongoing educational opportunities, both deeply tied to the 2019 exhibition and extending across Chicago's 77 neighborhoods*

*Chicago Architecture Center returns as Signature Education Partner*

**CHICAGO (June 13, 2019)** - Today, the Chicago Architecture Biennial announced key features of the educational program for the 2019 edition, *...and other such stories*, expanding the reach of the citywide event through direct and consistent engagement with Chicago's youth. Inspired by the themes of history, inclusivity, and alternate narratives central to the 2019 Biennial and a curatorial imperative for inclusivity and access, the learning programs prioritize active engagement towards a deeper understanding of the built environment as it relates to the spaces where young people live and learn. Biennial [Learning Initiatives](#) focus on empowering educators and students ages 12-21 to use architecture and design as tools for change through engagement both in their classrooms and in their communities.

With the 2019 edition, the Biennial will launch the Learning Initiatives program that dovetails much more closely with the curatorial work than ever before, involving contributors to the main exhibition who will produce interpretive materials, workshops, and experiences meant to locate visitors within the exhibition and the context of Chicago. "Research and learning have been central to the development of this year's Biennial and continue through the education and public program here in Chicago this fall. The Biennial is creating many opportunities for contributors to share and exchange their practice not only through forms of display, but through devising site-responsive projects in local partnership that continue learning for our contributors and visitors alike," noted **Sepake Angiama**, one of the Biennial's co-curators.

"Education is at the heart of everything we do at the Biennial, which is really a citywide celebration and exploration of and for Chicago. This year, we will launch our Learning Initiatives, which will support local students as they unearth points of architectural history that illuminate the world we live in, and engage with the work of field leaders globally to envision a future of architecture that embraces the values of equity and diversity so critical to our city," noted **Biennial Executive Director Todd Palmer**. "We are thrilled to once again engage all 77 neighborhoods and over 15,000 students through the course of the Biennial and are looking forward to the perspective and energy they will bring to the broader conversation."

Learning Initiatives provide opportunities for students, educators, and families to explore architecture and design through visits to the Chicago Cultural Center and through programming in Chicago communities. Programs are available to students across Chicago with an emphasis on serving those from groups and communities that have historically been underrepresented in architecture. These programs include:

- **Interpretive Materials:** Free materials and activity guides targeted to different age groups will be available to enhance visits to the Biennial for students and families. Prompts to explore, discuss, and interact with the exhibition will inspire active interrogation and help visitors identify common themes.
- **School Partners Program:** The Chicago Architecture Biennial will establish ongoing partnerships with a select number of Chicago Public Schools high schools in an effort to bring

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architecture and design learning to schools without these programs. School Partners will engage with the Biennial through co-creating learning opportunities, visits to the Biennial, participating in programs with Biennial community partners, and entering competitions.

- **Youth Studios:** 15 creative youth studios will run in Chicago from July through December 2019. During these three-hour sessions, students will engage with the themes and topics of the 2019 edition through collaborative exploration, conversation, and creative production. Youth Studios are a space for young people to work alongside professionals and their peers as they create connections between local topics and experiences and the global conversations at the heart of the Biennial. Each studio will be hosted at a community partner site in neighborhoods across Chicago.
- **BP Student Ideas Competition:** A fall competition presented with the Chicago Architecture Center and aligned with the 2019 edition will launch along with the Biennial in September 2019. Annual competitions supported by BP America for middle and high school students encourage exploration of the built environment through design and also the humanities, visual and performing arts, and STEM fields. Winning entries are honored with prizes and displayed at the Chicago Cultural Center during the Chicago Architecture Biennial.

Active engagement and the spurring of new dialogue is core to the curatorial focus of this year's edition, and, as such, the educational program is uniquely dynamic and central. In particular, the engagement with students to envision the future of their own public spaces through the BP Student Ideas Competition embodies the spirit of inviting stories, perspectives, and ideas from across Chicago and around the world.

"For more than a century, BP has been fueling innovation and growth in Chicagoland," noted Doug Sparkman, COO for BP's North American fuels business headquartered in Chicago. "We're proud to be sponsoring the Biennial's education programs and inspiring the next generation of big thinkers to see possibilities everywhere – so we can all keep advancing."

The Chicago Architecture Center (CAC) also returns as the [Signature Education Partner](#), a role it held in the previous two editions, broadening the Biennial's reach through programs that include:

- **Field Trips:** Field trips to the Biennial's primary exhibition at the Chicago Cultural Center will be led by 50 Chicago Architecture Center Education Guides, who will lead 90-minute interactive education sessions for grades 5-12. Field trips will run Tuesday to Friday each week in October, November, and December 2019. Free transportation by bus will be available to qualifying schools.
- **Teen Ambassador Program:** Through the Chicago Architecture Center Teen Ambassador Program, 30 Chicago Public Schools high school students will share their interpretations of the exhibits and their personal narratives with visitors to the Chicago Architecture Biennial on weekends and school holidays. They will encourage other young Chicagoans to become civically engaged and earn service-learning hours towards high school graduation requirements.
- **Curricular Materials and Teacher Trainings:** Educator materials offer a standards-aligned guide to the Chicago Architecture Biennial with an introduction to the 2019 curatorial framework

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and contributor projects, as well as preparatory and post-visit activities. Teacher trainings will introduce educators to these materials, the Biennial exhibit, and curricular opportunities.

- **Community Festival Days:** The Chicago Architecture Center will host two Community Festivals dates throughout the city, providing hands-on activities for families with children ages 6-12 that explore the Chicago Architecture Biennial's curatorial theme and exhibition.

"The Chicago Architecture Center is thrilled to contribute our expertise in design education for young students to extend the reach of the Chicago Architecture Biennial," said **Lynn Osmond, President and CEO of the Chicago Architecture Center**. "We're especially excited to have our CAC Teen Ambassadors connecting visitors to the Biennial in a personal and powerful way and have our CAC Education Guides provide an interpretation that will enable students to get the most out of exhibits and installations by architects, designers, and leaders from Chicago and around the world."

The Chicago Architecture Biennial is the largest architecture and design exhibition in North America. The Biennial, which is free and open to the public, will open the central exhibition in the Chicago Cultural Center on September 19, 2019 and run through January 5, 2020. Press and professional previews will take place September 17–18, 2019. The opening of the 2019 edition will again align with EXPO CHICAGO, the International Exposition of Contemporary and Modern Art. Founding sponsor BP America will renew its support in 2019 as a lead sponsor alongside the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events, providing a strong foundation for the event's return.

To keep up to date on all the latest from the [Chicago Architecture Biennial](#) follow @ChicagoBiennial on [Twitter](#), [Instagram](#), and [Facebook](#).

## About Chicago Architecture Biennial

The Chicago Architecture Biennial provides a platform for groundbreaking architectural projects and spatial experiments that demonstrate how creativity and innovation can radically transform our lived experience. Through its constellation of exhibitions, full-scale installations, and programming, the Biennial invites the public to engage with and think about architecture in new and unexpected ways, and to take part in a global discussion on the future of the field.

The Biennial is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization dedicated to creating an international forum on architecture and urbanism. The inaugural 2015 Chicago Architecture Biennial — presented in partnership with the City of Chicago and the Graham Foundation, and through the support of BP America — was the manifestation of Mayor Rahm Emanuel's vision for a major international architectural event and an outcome of the comprehensive cultural plan developed by the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events under the leadership of Michelle T. Boone.

The 2015 and 2017 editions of the biennial, curated by Joseph Grima and Sarah Herda (2015) and Sharon Johnston and Mark Lee (2017), collectively engaged over 250 leaders in architecture and art from more than 60 cities spanning 38 nations. For more information, visit [chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org](http://chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org).

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