

CHICAGO  
ARCHITECTURE  
BIENNIAL

...AND OTHER  
SUCH STORIES

**Chicago Architecture Biennial Concludes Successful Third Edition on January 5**

*A city-wide exploration of architecture and the built environment, the Biennial welcomed hundreds of thousands of visitors from the city and worldwide, and engaged 125 partner organizations across Chicago to offer over 300 public programs*

**CHICAGO (January 15, 2020)** – The third edition of the Chicago Architecture Biennial closed last week after a season of engaging the city in a discussion on architecture and the built environment. This year’s biennial, titled *...and other such stories*, ran from September 19, 2019 through January 5, 2020 and brought together more than 80 contributors from over 20 countries to explore the way architecture shapes, and is shaped by, culture, history, and nature around the world.

The contributors — selected by the Biennial’s curatorial team, Graham Foundation Artistic Director Yesomi Umolu, and co-curators Paulo Tavares and Sepake Angiama — presented works that reflect on architecture as it relates to social, political, and environmental issues worldwide, including issues around property and social housing, the harmful impacts of natural resource extraction, and civil rights and systems of power.

**Mayor Lori E. Lightfoot** remarked, “The Chicago Architecture Biennial is a cornerstone of our city’s cultural programming and underscores the type of conversations and explorations that are truly meaningful to us here in Chicago -- conversations about our shared past, present, and future. The Biennial brought together some terrific contributors from here in Chicago and around the world to address the issues facing us today, and the result was an exhibition that not only garnered interest nationally but engaged us locally.”

Many of the commissioned works that met with critical acclaim, including those by MASS Design Group and Forensic Architecture, focused on critical urban issues, while demonstrating how architectural tools and techniques can be galvanized to promote social change. These design projects and others, including the Settler City Colonial Project and FICA, addressed a range of timely movements in collaboration with community groups, activists and families working to create equitable housing, to decolonize cultural institutions, and to address the crisis of gun violence, mass incarceration and climate change, among others.

One of these projects -- The Gun Violence Memorial Project -- will remain at the Chicago Cultural Center until early February before travelling to Washington DC for exhibition at the National Building Museum later this spring. A piece that provided a forum for the community to come together, share experiences, and mourn the victims of gun violence, the houses will remain a space for reflection, and StoryCorps will still accept appointments to share experiences until the end of January.

"We are proud to have unraveled the complexities and potentialities of Chicago's architecture and urbanism with people from all over the city and further afield, who collectively embraced the ideas and projects presented across the 2019 edition of the biennial," noted **Graham Foundation Artistic Director Yesomi Umolu**. "Together with over 80 contributors, we brought the diverse perspectives of architects, urbanists, social movements and everyday citizens to the fore and reflected on what constitutes the city today while imagining our built and natural environment in more inclusive and expansive ways."

The emphasis on engaging a diverse cross-section of Chicago sites and issues in a global conversation was foregrounded in the constellation of off-site venues -- including (former) Anthony Overton Elementary School, the National Public Housing Museum, the School of the Art Institute at Homan Square, and the Jane Addams Hull House Museum, where contributors from South Africa, Turkey, England, Romania, Puerto Rico, Poland, and Chicago engaged the concerns of a local public through exhibitions, performances, workshops and community celebrations. These curatorial sites, along with the Chicago Cultural Center, once again the Biennial's main venue, received 246,415 visitors through the exhibition's run.

The Biennial also activated over 120 partner sites and 125 partner organizations across Chicago, producing over 300 exhibitions and public programs in over 50 neighborhoods and communities. This included the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events and Chicago Department of Planning and Development, Art Institute of Chicago, Design Museum of Chicago, Farnsworth House and MAS Context, Garfield Park Conservatory, Graham Foundation, MPEA, Wrightwood 659, Signature Education Partner Chicago Architecture Center, and Aligning Partner EXPO CHICAGO, as well as six Community Anchors: Beverly Arts Center, DePaul Art Museum, Hyde Park Art Center, DuSable Museum of African American History, National Museum of Mexican Art and National Museum of Puerto Rican Arts and Culture. Select partner sites contributed another 237,000 in core attendance, extending the Biennial platform throughout the city and region. The Biennial's total audience across three editions since 2015 is just over 1.5 million visitors, and in 2019, it generated an estimated \$42 million in total economic impact to the city.

"The exhibits and programs presented by the 2019 Biennial attracted a wide array of audiences— at the Chicago Cultural Center, at neighborhood venues, in schools across the city," said **Biennial Board Chairman Jack Guthman**. "Focusing on the intersection of architecture and the social issues affecting the built environment, the exposition gained widespread, favorable media coverage. We are proud that the Biennial, only in its third iteration, continues to position Chicago at the center of the global dialogue about the profession."

The Chicago Architecture Biennial empowered students, teens and families, as well as educators, to use architecture and design as tools for change through engagement at the Chicago Cultural Center, at community sites and in classrooms. In 2019, the education program reached 180 schools and youth organizations through a variety of workshops, tours, youth studios, and other hands-on programming. Nearly 500 students across 81 zip codes participated in two BP Student Ideas Competitions — an opportunity for creative youth in elementary and high school to explore

the built environment through design and also the humanities, visual and performing arts, and STEM fields.

Learning Initiatives engaged nearly 10,000 visitors of all ages, including through field trips and guided tours for K-12 and university students, public tours, and family-friendly weekend activities. Learning Initiatives staff and volunteers also worked to make the Biennial accessible by offering tours in Spanish, Mandarin and Portuguese; providing interpretive assistance to blind and low vision audiences; and developing educator tools and family guides to help visitors identify common themes within the exhibition.

The Biennial also hosted a wide range of performances throughout the run. Opening weekend kicked off with performances by CAMP, Alexandra Pirici, and Jimmy Robert. Regular programming throughout the Biennial included free public programs such as the opening “Land Acknowledgement” with Heather Miller (Wyandotte), Les Begay (Navajo) and Fawn Pochel of the American Indian Center with artists Feather Marsh (Ojibway) and Santiago X (Choushatta); and conversations like “Bauhaus: Through Other Stories” moderated by Art Institute of Chicago curator Alison Fisher and foregrounding the work of Biennial contributor Wendelien van Oldenborgh and artist Barbara Kasten; additionally, the Biennial, coinciding with EXPO CHICAGO, presented the opportunity to explore the intersections between contemporary art and architectural practices through its Dialogue Series.

“We were thrilled to see the enthusiastic reception of the Biennial this fall, and to have been a part of so many compelling discussions on the future of the field,” noted **Biennial Executive Director Todd Palmer**. “We will keep all of these conversations top of mind as we look to the future, and plan for our next edition.”

### **About the 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial**

The Chicago Architecture Biennial’s 2019 edition, titled *...and other such stories*, formed an expansive and multi-faceted exploration of the field of architecture and the built environment globally. Developed through a research-led approach, the biennial addressed the potency of space, architecture, and the natural world as they relate to four areas of inquiry: (1) **No Land Beyond**, which draws inspiration from indigenous approaches to nature, ecology, and landscape that transcend property ownership; (2) **Appearances and Erasures**, which explores both shared and contested memories in consideration of monuments, memorials, and social histories; and (3) **Rights and Reclamations** and (4) **Common Ground**, which foreground aspects of rights, advocacy, and civic purpose in architectural practice, including affordable and equitable housing.

The third edition of the biennial was particularly inspired by Chicago, moving beyond the grand narratives of the city’s architectural heritage to explore the history and conditions that have and continue to shape its urban development. This approach has inspired a broader view on the field of architecture to embrace practices that span building, design, planning, visual art, policymaking, education, and activism. *...and other such stories* created a program that addressed the four areas of inquiry from these varied frames of reference — together exploring the changing and challenging conditions of our societies and environments. Emanating from the central exhibition at the Chicago Cultural Center and extending into the city, the 2019 Biennial featured a series of new commissions, residencies, partner projects, and public programs.

## **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 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, 2017 and 2019 editions of the Biennial collectively engaged over 315 contributors in architecture and art from more than 90 cities spanning 45 nations. For more information, visit [chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org](http://chicagoarchitecturebiennial.org).

## **Sponsors and Special Partners**

Support for the 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial was provided through Founding Sponsor BP America and Presenting Sponsors Exelon and Old World Industries, with the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events serving as Presenting Partner. The 2019 edition aligned with EXPO CHICAGO, The International Exposition of Contemporary & Modern Art. Chicago Architecture Center was the Signature Education Partner.

The 2019 Biennial was made possible with lead support from Principal Sponsors Alphawood Foundation, Bluhm Family Charitable Foundation, Chicago Community Trust, Clayco, Graham Foundation, Joe and Rika Mansueto, Lendlease, Magellan Development Group, National Endowment for the Arts, Zell Family Foundation and gifts from Allstate Insurance Company, Choose Chicago, John D. & Alexandra C. Nichols Family Foundation, Loewenberg Charitable Foundation, The Revel Group, Samuel M. and Ann S. Menco Foundation, Taft Stettinius & Hollister LLP, Terra Foundation for American Arts, Thornton Tomasetti, Walsh Foundation, Chicago Loop Alliance, Comcast, Crown Family Philanthropies, Elizabeth Morse Charitable Trust, John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, Joyce Foundation, Polk Bros. Foundation, Sara Szold, Susan & Robert Wislow Charitable Foundation, Ms. Sylvia Neil and Mr. Dan Fischel, Anne Kaplan, Jack & Sandra Guthman, Kovler Family Foundation, Onni Group, Robert R. McCormick Foundation, Barrett Murphy and Lynn Lockwood Charitable Giving Fund, Edlis-Neeson Foundation, Helen Brach Foundation, Helyn Goldenberg and Michael Alper, Irving Harris Foundation, John H. Hart Foundation, Kingsley H. Murphy Family Foundation, Krueck + Sexton Architects, Lefkowsky Family Foundation, Melody Hobson and George Lucas, Metropolitan Pier and Exposition Authority, Neisser Family Foundation, The Peninsula Chicago, Philip H. Corboy Foundation, Segal Family Foundation, and Mr. and Mrs. William L. Hood. In-kind support was provided by Intelligentsia, Koval, Eli's Cheesecake, Spring Mountain, Revolution Brewing, and R4 Services. Chicago Cultural Center furnishings by Vitra. Special thanks to visitor experience enhancements from HAY and COS.

Media partners for the 2019 Chicago Architecture Biennial included AD PRO, ArchDaily, The Architect's Newspaper, Architectural Record, CS INTERIORS, Dezeen, Frieze, Metropolis, PIN-UP, SURFACE, Time Out Chicago, and WBEZ91.5. Hotel partners included Chicago Athletic Association, Kimpton Gray Hotel, Kimpton Hotel Palomar Chicago, and Hotel Julian.

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