

Building Resiliency

Anchoring Prattsville Center and Artist Residency—Prattsville, NY

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Activating World Garden Commons—Fargo, ND

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Building Resiliency: Anchoring

Author: Nancy Barton

Organization: Prattsville Art Center and Residency

Program: Creative Main Streets

Location: Prattsville, NY

At a Glance

The Prattsville Art Center builds resilience in a small New York State community devastated by flooding from Hurricane Irene in 2011. It helps lay the groundwork for recovery in Prattsville through its Creative Main Streets initiative, and by supporting reconstruction efforts among painters, designers, builders, and other creative professionals. In the months following Irene, artists connected knowledgeable professionals from outside the community with rural residents' local expertise.

Prattsville and the surrounding area have little access to culture, entertainment, or other creative outlets. Located in the middle of this very small town, the art center offers arts education and programming designed to help the town "build back better than before." By combining its own resources with the generosity and do-it-yourself spirit of rural residents, the center was up and running within months of the disaster, and is now poised to operate year-round.

Overview

The Prattsville Art Center is a community art space and residency located on Main Street of a Catskill Mountain town that is rebuilding from scratch following Hurricane Irene in 2011. The center is the region's first public social space and an anchor for a developing Main Street cultural district. The center welcomes the local rural community as well as second homeowners, tourists, and artists-in-residence from diverse urban centers. It encourages residents to engage one another on the town's Main Street as the community reinvents its identity and recovers from devastating flooding. The center's newly restored building provides free community art classes, exhibitions, and events. It also plans to offer a computer lab with high-speed Internet access, an espresso bar, and community meals.

Prattsville's new Creative Main Streets initiative is part of the town's award-winning NY Rising Flood relief plan, which emerged from the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)-directed Long Term Community Recovery Planning Process. The center operated seasonally in its flood-damaged building from summer 2012 until 2014 when additional funding provided structural repairs, heating, electricity, plumbing, and year-round operations support. The center is now the cultural centerpiece of a walkable hamlet plan that includes the Zadock Pratt homestead, new streetscaping, a new riverwalk, a restored Town

Green, hiking trails, an antique store, a hotel, and restored local businesses. It represents Prattsville's first strategic approach to sustainable rural tourism.

Context for Creative Placemaking

Prattsville once housed the world's largest tannery but that prosperity has largely faded, as it has in many northeastern farm and factory towns. By the time Hurricane Irene hit in 2011, Prattsville was struggling economically, with 30 percent of households classified as low income, and more than 14 percent of residents living in poverty. Irene devastated this already vulnerable community, destroying 40 percent of the homes and business on Main Street. Rivers rose 16 feet in a few hours, washing homes, businesses, and 30 trailers into the current rushing through the town faster than the water flowing over Niagara Falls. By the time the waters receded, many residents had lost everything. The community recognized that rebuilding Main Street from scratch offered a chance to imagine a new future.

Prattsville is home to many artists in the summer and on weekends. This offered an opportunity to strengthen the town's appeal to prospective residents and tourists by linking Prattsville to the creative economies taking root in the region. By placing Creative Main Streets at the center of its recovery, Prattsville has capitalized on the increasing appeal of this beautiful and affordable region, attracting more artists and art lovers from New York City, Albany, and Boston, and creating an exciting new mix of rural arts and culture.

How Creative Placemaking Helps

In the weeks and months following Hurricane Irene, Prattsville's residents came together to lay out an extensive recovery plan. Professionals who had worked in New Orleans after Hurricane Katrina joined FEMA-led town halls and workshops. Artists, who are constantly engaged in problem-solving and the search for nontraditional solutions, filled the knowledge gap between urban professionals and rural residents with local expertise. By combining the skills of planners and grantwriters with the generosity and do-it-yourself spirit of rural residents, the center was up and running within months of the disaster. The center's long-term vision for the community is to build a genuine connection between urban and rural populations and bring access to creativity and new ideas to this historic American town.

Implementation

The center is made up of resident artists, visiting artists-in-residence, volunteer teachers, visiting students, and paid local interns. The center's board mixes local teachers, writers, and community leaders with artists from nearby New York City. To date, the center has brought more than two dozen artists with Mexican, Korean, Iranian, African American, German, French, Canadian, Chinese, Taiwanese, and both rural and urban American backgrounds to this largely white rural community. This diversity has been particularly inspiring to young people in Prattsville. Since repairing the center and beginning to offer classes in

computer art, painting, and drawing, participation has been intergenerational, with students' ages ranging from 14 to 60.

The center has partnered with the Mainly Greene Arts initiative, which has received a \$150,000 New York State Council on the Arts (NYSCA) grant to bring the arts to the main streets of rural towns along 50 miles of the northern Catskills. The center works closely with Prattsville's town board and has recently aligned with the town on a \$150,000 USDA Community Foods grant and a \$2.5 million New York State Regional Economic Development Council (REDC) grant. Other pending grants include a design-build proposal for a raised, flood-proof "treehouse," garden, and entertainment complex on the center's property, which has been covered by 10 international architecture writers in online journals.

Progress to Date

The center plans to hold community roundtables twice a year to assess its progress and determine new goals. Success can be measured in many ways. Despite lacking heat and electricity initially, the center has hosted more than one thousand visitors. Programs have featured 10 exhibitions, including two expansive installations created through collaboration with local community members and interns, New York University, and the Paris Sorbonne. The center's collaborators have established a nonprofit corporation, purchased the art center property, and renovated more than 3,500 square feet of flood-damaged historic space. They have created paid internships for more than 20 local low-income youth, as well as 10 local construction jobs and by hiring and buying locally, they have returned more than \$185,000 to the area's economy, nearly the entire amount of award funds spent to date.

Nancy Barton is an artist, educator, and director of the Prattsville Art Project. She teaches in New York University's Steinhardt Art Department, which she also chaired, and works in creative placemaking, rural revitalization, and contemporary art. Working collaboratively with individuals, organizations, and institutions around the world, she has created lasting positive change in both academic and community settings. Her artwork has been shown and reviewed internationally. She curates and speaks on art, education, and placemaking in the US, Asia, Africa, and Europe, most recently at the "Art of Care" conference at the Sorbonne, Paris.

Building Resiliency: Activating

Author: Nicole Crutchfield

Organization: The Fargo Project

Program: World Garden Commons

Location: Fargo, ND

At a Glance

The Fargo Project (TFP) is transforming an 18-acre barren stormwater collection facility into a multifunctional community space called World Garden Commons (WGC). TFP aims to foster a sense of shared ownership and responsibility in a community of long-time residents and newly established immigrant and refugee populations from around the globe. A team of local artists has engaged environmental experts, government agencies, nonprofit organizations, and area residents to determine community needs and to develop arts- and place-based programming that encourages the exchange of cultural values and traditions. TFP measures users' participation in these programs over time and asks them what they think through semi-structured interviews, gathering important information about how the space could be used. In late 2014, WGC produced a workbook that captures lessons learned from the process, offering a guide for others to integrate arts and culture into ecological infrastructure design.

Overview

WGC is the pilot program of TFP. It aims to shape public infrastructure through a combination of ecological restoration, multifaceted community programming, and artist-led initiatives. A team of local artists has collaborated with area residents, environmental experts, government agencies, and nonprofit organizations to transform an existing stormwater facility into a community commons. WGC identifies local needs by enlisting partners to transform and provide programming in the space, seeking out specialized knowledge of ecological restoration practices, and building bridges between constituencies. The project was launched in 2011 with an Our Town grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

Context for Creative Placemaking

WGC offers people of all ages and backgrounds a chance to envision, design, and build a place where they can connect with others and celebrate Fargo's rich natural and cultural diversity. Fargo is home to Native Americans from many different nations. The city also has a diverse population of recent immigrants and refugees from more than 20 countries including Bhutan, Somalia, Sudan, Liberia, Iraq, and Bosnia.

TFP began with community conversations, which revealed that if a curated, arts-oriented public space were available at Rabanus Park, the current site of WGC, residents and nonprofit groups would be more inclined to pursue goals that overlapped with public interests: local neighbors would expand their gardening initiatives; the state university would experiment with new planting practices; and residents would be more likely to participate in public gatherings.

How Creative Placemaking Helps

TFP began in 2010 with a participatory community project to retrofit a local pond. Five local artists were part of the project team, whose goal was building local capacity for the artist community to take on more community projects in the future. By partnering with the Fargo Park District, Lutheran Social Services, River Keepers, the Plains Art Museum, the Arts Partnership, the Fargo-Moorhead Visual Arts, the Fargo School District, West Fargo School District, North Dakota State University, the YMCA, and countless volunteers, TFP encourages artists to consider the role that their work can play in the community more broadly. These partnerships have allowed TFP to adapt its goals to the specific needs of the community and implement them at WGC.

For example, older immigrants who have recently relocated to Fargo often have a hard time finding opportunities to connect with other residents, which can exacerbate feelings of homesickness and lead to depression. Therefore, the first activity at the WGC site was an expansion of the Growing Together program, which resulted in the first community-managed garden on publicly-owned land, encouraging Fargo's newcomers to come together and cultivate a shared space.

Implementation

TFP instituted WeDesign in 2012, a community-wide gathering for residents to imagine how the WGC site could and should be transformed. The event opened with a blessing given by the Native American community and featured a day-long design workshop, as well as a Native-American-hosted community meal. Approximately 200 people attended the event.

TFP's team of local artists spent three months raising awareness about WeDesign, especially among new immigrant communities, neighboring businesses, and church groups. At the pilot site in the West Acres Neighborhood, there was no collective community space, and local solicitation laws forbade team members from approaching residents directly. In response, artists and team members developed a unique outreach program that included puppet shows in public places, riding on public transit routes with art pieces, and networking through word of mouth. At a "bowl-a-thon," a group of local ceramists gathered to make more than 400 ceramic soup bowls. These bowls were given to area families along with placemats illustrated by local grade school students, which served as invitations to join the WeDesign gathering.

From the outset, TFP realized that its staff and volunteers would require intermittent training on managing ecological restoration. FTP's artists and project managers connected faculty members at the local university with community volunteers by developing a citizens' eco-lab at WGC. Scientists and researchers teach practitioners, developers, and volunteers about appropriate land management practices on site.

Progress to Date

This project has been fairly slow to develop, which makes measuring the effectiveness of the community outreach difficult. Intermittent progress is evident, however. Volunteers from the local university developed a survey to ask artists and community members about the team building exercises used throughout the WeDesign gathering. Their responses were analyzed and adopted as part of a "lessons learned" dialogue before further outreach activities.

Nicole Crutchfield is a licensed landscape architect and a certified city planner. Currently, she is the planning administrator for the City of Fargo and was previously a principal planner for Round Rock, Texas. She started her career in Kansas City Missouri where she worked for ten years in multi-disciplinary architecture firms. She holds both a bachelor's degree of landscape architecture and a certificate in community and regional planning from Kansas State University. She is currently completing a master's degree of science in natural resources management at North Dakota State University.

Building Resiliency: “Fixing”

Author: Lisa Hoffman

Organization: McColl Center for Art + Innovation

Program: Art and Ecology Campus at Brightwalk

Location: Charlotte, NC

At a Glance

The McColl Center for Art + Innovation is an urban artist colony that matches artists who have specific social agendas with government and nonprofit partners working in economically and environmentally vulnerable areas across Charlotte, North Carolina. The center engages a wide array of partners and residents in the process to promote a sense of stewardship. Since 2013, the McColl Center’s Art and Ecology Campus at Brightwalk has aimed to reverse ecological, social, and economic problems along Charlotte’s Statesville Avenue corridor, which has suffered myriad challenges. The McColl Center evaluates its service to artists based on whether they believe the center helped them achieve their goals, whether the experience has enriched their artistic practice, and whether the artist gained specific technical knowledge they can apply in the future.

Overview

McColl Center for Art + Innovation’s mission is to give artists tools to support their communities and positively impact lives through art and the creative process. Through the years, the center has built strong partnerships that enable artists to collaborate with various social service organizations, education providers, and cultural institutions throughout Charlotte. As an urban artist colony and residence program, the center recognizes that its most significant contributions occur when artists interact with groups who may not ordinarily visit the center, or who may not see themselves as patrons of contemporary art.

Guided by artist and community input, the center has identified 10 issues that are critical to Charlotte’s future: the environment, social justice, health, education, science/technology, international affairs, business innovation, beauty, craft, and design/architecture. The center adopted these “spheres of impact” to guide how it curates residencies, exhibitions, and experiences through public practice. The center actively seeks out artists who have a defined studio and social practice in one of the 10 spheres.

The environmental sphere of impact, the most highly evolved of the ten, exemplifies how artists’ skills and vision, combined with community involvement, can lead to innovative solutions. The center selects environmental artists-in-residence who blend art, science, and social practice to address site-specific concerns by enhancing livability, promoting envi-

ronmental stewardship, improving infrastructure, and protecting natural resources—all while raising the site’s aesthetic and cultural value.

Context for Creative Placemaking

Although located only a mile away from uptown Charlotte, the Statesville Avenue corridor and site of the Art and Ecology Campus at Brightwalk lacks a sophisticated transportation infrastructure and adequate access to food and commerce for its residents. Its public schools consistently underperform. Recently, the area was known as the heroin capital of the Carolinas, plagued by blight, drug trafficking, and criminal activity.

Now the Brightwalk community is in transition, and four neighborhoods with industrial and commercial space are being revitalized. There is support for using art, education, and environment stewardship to drive economic development, attract newcomers, celebrate the place’s cultural vibrancy and create a community where people choose to live. Brightwalk already had green spaces, sidewalks, and a street connectivity index that exceeded the county average. Artists help make the environment even more inviting to pedestrians and bicyclists, as well as visitors from other areas of the city. These unusual spaces are dynamic and experiential—beyond what a typical landscape architect or designer might conceive. The new development serves as a catalyst for growth with improved infrastructure, green space, environmental art, and new spaces for education and public gatherings.

Why Creative Placemaking Helps

The center builds connections between artists and residents to alter the perception of the Statesville Avenue Corridor, drawing attention to its rich cultural history and natural resources rather than its collective dysfunction. The Art and Ecology Campus responds to the need for renewed pride, sustainability, and connectedness in the community, and has quickly become a destination for many community members. Events such as pop-up exhibitions, performances, and participatory art projects have attracted hundreds of visitors to the area. This new arts and performance platform allows residents to work together in a constructive way to develop a vision for addressing environmental issues while preserving the area’s unique cultural identity.

Guided by the center’s spheres of impact, site-specific art projects have garnered local support and helped the center meet its goal of fully integrating communities within the corridor. The projects encourage artistic excellence, provide creative agency, celebrate localism, and offer educational opportunities and civic involvement. They directly correlate to the quality of life indicators of the neighborhood profile area set by the Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership (a nonprofit housing development and financial corporation that expands affordable housing for low- and moderate-income families). These initiatives are also helping to attract new business entrepreneurs, recreational amenities, art venues, and a needed health care facility to the area.

Implementation

The center creates partnerships with organizations in the community working on their sphere of impact issues. Once partnerships are established, the center identifies artists whose practices align for potential pairing. Artists are selected who are keen listeners, comfortable in diverse audiences, have a demonstrated ability to be nimble and self-directed, can build relationships across community segments, and who can inspire stakeholders to work together to implement a creative solution to the relevant issue. Examples of partner organizations include the aforementioned Charlotte Mecklenburg Housing Partnership, the City of Charlotte, and Charlotte Mecklenburg Parks and Recreation.

As an intermediary agent, the center's three main priorities are ensuring operational excellence, maintaining stewardship of artist/community relations, and securing financial stability. Many artists are new to the communities they serve and require resources, time, and space to gain the technical expertise needed for their projects to succeed. Site-specific environmental interventions require an understanding of ecosystem problem-solving, which accounts for the ecological, social, and economic consequences of site-specific interventions. Disruptive innovation at the expense of the environment can introduce hidden costs or create psychosocial barriers that have a negative effect on community health. Navigating this complex landscape requires firm trust between the artist, the McColl Center, and community partners.

Progress to Date

The center has plans for eight completed installations by June 2015. Four neighborhoods are currently undergoing revitalization, replacing dilapidated structures with mixed-income, mixed-use projects. The new developments serve as a catalyst for growth with improved infrastructure, green space, environmental art, and spaces for education and public gatherings. They also spur new cultural amenities and opportunities for civic engagement. All of these efforts enhance economic competitiveness.

The center has developed a dashboard of metrics on safety, quality of life, access to cultural and recreational amenities, carbon footprint, and education and training initiatives. Where there are gaps in information, the center works with each partner to correlate disparate data. In addition, the center evaluates its service to artists by collecting responses to survey questions, such as: Does the artist believe the center helped achieve his/her goals? Has the experience enriched the artist's practice? Did the artist gain technical knowledge? These surveys combined with existing data sources allow the center to carefully monitor indicators of success and opportunity and recalibrate support when needed.

Lisa Hoffman oversees programs and strategic initiatives, community engagement, and the flagship Environmental Program at McColl Center. Honored for her dedication in connecting children and families to the natural world; she is committed to place-based education, the improvement of schools in

marginalized communities and research in creative placemaking. The recipient of Charlotte Business Journal's 40 Under 40 Award, Lisa has served on the board of North Carolina Association of Environmental Education Centers, North Carolina Play Alliance, and regularly participates as a speaker at various community and national events including the National Innovation Summit for Arts and Culture. She serves on the board of the Alliance for Artists Communities. Holding an MS in biology and a BS in botany from Howard University in Washington, DC, Hoffman is dedicated to social practice and the convergence of art and science as a vehicle to improve lives and effect systemic change.

Building Resiliency: Planning

Author: Laetitia Wolff

Organization: American Institute of Graphic Arts,
New York Chapter (AIGA/NY)

Program: Design/Relief

Location: New York, NY

At a Glance

In 2013, Design/Relief, an initiative of the New York chapter of the American Institute of Graphic Arts, harnessed the expertise of the city's design professionals to tackle social issues, reimagine urban spaces, and build more resilient connections in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. Design/Relief selected outer borough urban communities in New York City known for their waterfront conditions, relative geographic isolation, and prevalence of low-income housing. Those selected were the Seaport in Manhattan, Red Hook in Brooklyn, and Rockaway in Queens. By October 2014, the teams had engaged in an ongoing collaborative process, creating participatory moments to invite diverse groups—including youth, arts leaders, small business owners, and local activists—to use design to share their visions for the future.

Overview

The American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) is the leading professional graphic design association in the United States. Founded in 1982, the New York chapter has a mission to demonstrate graphic design's impact and cultivate the future of design in New York City. AIGA connects professionals and students with ideas, information, and one another; leads collaborative projects with local communities; and champions excellent work and innovative practices. In fall 2013, AIGA/NY launched the Design/Relief initiative to spur cultural, community, and economic development through design in the wake of Hurricane Sandy. Design/Relief demonstrates how designers can help devise solutions that activate public space, foster relationships and collective identity, and positively transform the community.

Context for Creative Placemaking

Red Hook is a diverse and vibrant community in south Brooklyn. Geographically isolated, the neighborhood is surrounded by water on three sides and is a fair distance from any subway lines. As the site of the second-largest public housing project in New York City, Red Hook has suffered from serious socioeconomic issues, which reached their peak in the 1990s and received wide public attention in the aftermath of Sandy. In recent years, Red Hook has become a haven for artists looking for affordable warehouse-style studios and lofts.

The South Street Seaport in Manhattan suffered some of the heaviest destruction during Sandy, inundated with seven-foot floodwaters that caused extensive damage. Not only did the receding waterline leave in its wake a crippled neighborhood, but it also exposed the deep-rooted issues that have long plagued it. The Seaport is a 12-square-block area surrounded by Manhattan’s financial district and divided in half by Beekman Street, which separates a district of historic nineteenth century architecture from a shopping facility called Pier 17. Both draw radically different crowds, patrons, and tourists.

Rockaway, in Queens, is often neglected by city officials in part because of its lack of proximity to the rest of the city—it is located at the eastern-most stop on the A train, on a sliver of land just 11 miles into the water that separates Jamaica Bay from the Atlantic Ocean. Sandy brought unprecedented media attention to Rockaway as flood damage exacerbated existing problems in the area related to its high concentration of public housing and relative isolation.

How Creative Placemaking Helps

In the wake of the storm, each Design/Relief neighborhood team collaborated on a design concept to address livability, navigability, and vibrancy. A key component was promoting dialogue among community members, relief workers, and city government. To this end, each of Design/Relief’s projects drew on feedback at the three locations, giving voice to residents’ fears, needs, and desires.

The Red Hook team pursued an embedded approach, plugging in to existing community gatherings of New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA) residents. This resulted in the Red Hook “Hub,” a strategically located public information system that collects and displays information based on community needs during periods of crisis and non-crisis alike.

The Rockaway team invited a handful of nonprofit organizations, local newspapers, and activists to visioning sessions that helped designers identify symbolic locations for the “Dear Rockaway” project. Dear Rockaway was developed to foster the spirit of goodwill and connectivity that emerged across the peninsula in the wake of the storm. A collection of 100 or more recorded interviews with residents provided content for outreach initiatives, which used wheat-pasted posters, sidewalk stencils, and newspaper inserts to reach the community. This arts-based outreach highlighted connections between neighbors and reacquainted them with places of local significance, amplifying existing recovery efforts while broadening the discussion about Rockaway’s future.

The Catch&Release installation at Manhattan’s Seaport literally captured—through a system of hooks and pulleys—the words and messages of gratitude on cards written by community members, passing tourists, and New Yorkers curious about the future of the Seaport waterfront. Manhattan’s Seaport has a different character altogether, and in recent years has been torn by ambitious waterfront plans including the refurbishment of Pier 17, which made neutral, constructive dialogue more challenging.

Implementation

The Design/Relief initiative was launched in fall 2013. AIGA/NY curated one team per site, each including a designer, a community engagement strategist, and a storyteller. Two filmmakers were hired to document the teams' process from start to finish. In total, more than 20 New York creative professionals participated in Design/Relief. They were chosen based on their experience with social design and their familiarity with the site they were assigned. As alliances formed between the teams and local organizations, AIGA/NY recruited residents to perform specific project tasks.

Design/Relief worked with local community leaders and social service nonprofits such as Red Hook Initiative and Rockaway Youth Task Force. It collaborated with local media such as *The Wave*, a weekly newspaper in Rockaway, as well as cultural organizations such as the South Street Seaport Museum. It also involved business district associations, such as the newly formed Old Seaport Alliance. Design/Relief also consulted with independent entrepreneurs with vested interest in the economic health of these neighborhoods. In the Seaport, where the conversation had been polarized around the future development of Pier 17, Design/Relief's Manhattan team aligned itself with Community Board 1, which championed its neutral, community-building efforts. The Red Hook team obtained the financial support of the new Red Hook Coalition and benefited from the area's strong activist culture, which had been reinforced by post-Sandy recovery efforts. Design/Relief also nurtured relationships with City Council, Community Board 6, and District 12 congresswomen.

Progress to Date

The Dear Rockaway guerrilla campaign and the Red Hook Hub project are completed, and the Seaport storytelling project culminated in a performance in October 2014. Each team had its own way of measuring participation, awareness, and community buy-in. As the organizing body, AIGA/NY was interested in visibility for the Design/Relief initiative. Therefore, each site needed to promote its specific project name, identity, and mission. The Catch&Release installation at the Seaport had a tangible measure of participation, with more than 200 written cards at the end of a three-month exhibit. The messages became the content of a booklet hand-delivered to local businesses. Regular feedback provided at Community Board 1 meetings helped contextualize the installation's modest impact during the winter months, when foot traffic was at its lowest.

In Red Hook, the number of individuals and organizations that joined community workshops demonstrated a growing interest in the project, and signaled that Red Hook had become a testing ground for post-Sandy recovery efforts. The fact that the project is anchored within the Red Hook Initiative Digital Stewards program is a sign of success, indicating that it will live on beyond Design/Relief's presence.

In a community as geographically divided as Rockaway, Design/Relief gained recognition mostly through word of mouth. Residents began sharing their opinions and were outwardly

proud to see their comments published in the local newspaper. Although handing off the initiative to local nonprofit partners has not yet taken place, the plan is for the Rockaway Youth Taskforce to take on the Dear Rockaway project and continue its street graphic tactics while adapting it to relevant messages and timely needs. The Rockaway team also helped build relationships between different organizations, notably Rockaway Artists Alliance and Rockaway Youth Taskforce, which are now planning to co-produce youth programs in the neighborhood.

Laetitia Wolff is a design curator, strategist and author, self-described as a cultural engineer, interested in design and the city. Her work focuses on creating projects that generate new discourses and question design practice as a tool for change and investigation. She joined AIGA/NY to direct Design/Relief, a creative placemaking program and leads other civic initiatives. She headed the nonprofit startup designNYC as its first executive director following her launch of expoTENTial, an urban intervention platform. She consulted for the City of Montreal on “Unsitely!” an international colloquium exploring design’s potential in mitigating the negative impact of construction sites. She teaches at SVA’s Impact! Design for Social Change.