



SAT-C04:

The Lives and Afterlives of Urban Landscapes: Three Personal and Disciplinary Perspectives

Session Overview

Designers are increasingly being asked to take on more and more complex issues as they navigate new projects and design processes in cities—from the current and impending effects of climate change, to those of social and racial inequities, public health, rapid economic redevelopment, potential displacement, homelessness, increasing cultural and ethnic diversity, and new forms of social and cultural life. In doing so, we must question who we are designing for, and how we design (i.e. what are the design processes and informants that might better address a more inclusive set of starting points?). Part of this process could involve a radical expansion of the voices and perspectives that inform the work, reaching beyond typical public engagement processes and expansive technical consultants. Deeply insider, on-the-ground viewpoints from folks that could offer both their expertise as artists, for example, alongside their very rooted life experiences on the ground and living in and as part of communities, as part of project teams is one way. But, perhaps, so could complete outsiders, particularly those with a keen eye and sense for connecting to people in their everyday lives and documenting them all as part of better understanding the pre- and potential post-lives of projects.

This panel is a conversation between a photojournalist, an activist / artist, and a designer about the social lives of contemporary cities and the people who live in them—and the urban, social, political, cultural, and environmental contexts in which they are situated. It is meant to document, interrogate, and tease out the issues, tensions, joys, everyday activities, celebrations, and intimate moments of people—people who are getting by, looking for opportunities, looking for social interactions of various sorts and for moments to explore and to be liberated, or looking just to be themselves.

Learning Objectives

1. Learn about ways in which documentary photography may be utilized at early stages of site research to reveal the everyday lives of people and environmental dynamics already in place.
2. Gain insights about how embedded, on-the-ground perspectives may reveal alternate readings of places and cities, in particular readings that register muted BIPOC histories, cultures, and inequities that are at work.
3. Discuss ways in which radical outsider and radical insider viewpoints, from unusual collaborative disciplines (photojournalism, activism), might lay groundwork for different kinds of design processes and outcomes.
4. Learn about inter-related environmental and social/racial issues in cities, in particular how low-income, largely BIPOC communities feel the effects of climate change and corresponding public health issues disproportionately across populations.

Speakers



De J. Nichols – Google, Design as Protest

De Nichols currently serves as a Senior Product Inclusion UX Researcher at Google and Core Organizer of the national Design As Protest collective. She is a 2020 Monument Lab Fellow and 2020 Loeb Fellow of Harvard University's Graduate School of Design. Her first book, *Art of Protest*, releases in fall 2021.



Mike Belleme – Mike Belleme Photography

Mike Belleme is a documentary photographer and photojournalist living in the mountains of Western North Carolina where he was born and raised. Belleme uses the camera as a medium to seek connection, but the camera is secondary to the goal of learning and exploring curiosities in the world. Belleme is a regular contributor to *The New York Times*, *The Guardian* and *TIME* and has worked for a range of other publications such as *National Geographic*, *New York Times Magazine*, *Rolling Stone* and *Esquire*.



Chris Reed, FASLA – Stoss / Harvard GSD

Chris (BA, MLA) grew up in a working class family in the port city of New Bedford, on the US East Coast. Chris is a landscape architect, urbanist, founder of Stoss (Boston and Los Angeles), and professor at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design. He is especially interested in inclusive urban landscapes for diverse audiences.

Chris Reed and Mike Belleme recently collaborated on *Mise-en-Scène: The Lives and Afterlives of Urban Landscapes*—available for the first time at the ASLA Conference bookstore. De Nichols, along with Mimi Zeiger, Julia Czerniak, Nina-Marie Lister, and Sara Zewde, all contributed essays to it.

Notes