

## FRI-A02: EQUITY IN ACTION, ART IN PLACE: LAND-BASED ARTS ORGANIZATIONS MEET OUR MOMENT

### SESSION OVERVIEW

Art can be liberating and arts organizations can catalyze change in their communities. This panel presents emerging practices for advancing equity through art. Representatives from Storm King Art Center, LAND studio Cleveland, and Reed Hilderbrand compare the challenges and opportunities they have faced in promoting equity.

### Learning Objectives

1. Learn how arts organizations and institutions have responded to movements for racial and economic justice via novel approaches to investment, programming, engagement, and physical design.
2. Understand how historical inquiry, cultural acknowledgement, physical transformation, public programming sustain equitable and impactful arts-based partnerships and outcomes.
3. Identify some of the challenges that landscape architects, museum professionals, arts advocates, and community organizers have faced in efforts to advance equity in the built environment through art.
4. Consider what design practices need to be developed to overcome barriers between those who have been represented and welcomed in art spaces, and those who have not.

BEKA STURGES, ASLA, PLA, REED HILDERBRAND  
"Changing the Face of Art and Place"



**How can art- and place-based collaborations incite practices of landscape architecture that are more equitable, inclusive, and fair?**

The landscape architecture of Reed Hilderbrand brings together a fascination for the particularity of place and a commitment to building beautifully and durably for all. Over the years, the practice has grown to serve a number of arts organizations and public-facing clients. In her panel portion, Beka Sturges, ASLA, Partner and Principal of the firm's New Haven Studio, will discuss how Reed Hilderbrand leverages land-based art as a medium of possibility and liberation. She also will discuss several recent firm-wide initiatives to evaluate equity within the firm's business portfolio, and across client relationships.

top image: © James Ewing / middle: © Charlotte Leib /  
bottom: © Jeff Goldberg/Esto

AMY S. WEISSER, STORM KING ART CENTER

"The Continuous Process of Inclusion: Storm King Art Center"



top image: Storm King Art Center / middle: Photo by Jerry L. Thompson / bottom: Photo by Stephanie Powell.

**What strategies might a visual arts organization deploy to welcome an expanded audience?**

**How can a landscape express and facilitate access and inclusion?**

At Storm King Art Center, a 500-acre outdoor museum located in New York's Hudson Valley where visitors experience large-scale sculpture and site-specific commissions under open sky, inclusion efforts impact governance, operations, and programming. A capital project—particularly a new visitor entry landscape—supports efforts to increase access and accessibility across a broad spectrum of age, ability, background, and culture. Work on our physical infrastructure is coupled with a deepening of our commitment to diverse artists and audience members for our exhibitions and programs as well as, on the operational level, dedication to staff training, policies, and procedures.



DAVID M. WILSON, LAND studio

"Public Art as Vehicle for Equitable Development: LAND studio Cleveland"



top image: © Marisa Da'Shaune / middle: © Bob Perkosi /  
bottom: © Bob Perkosi

**How are public art organizations/design firms embracing outreach processes that promote true community empowerment rather than simply 'checking the box'?**

LAND studio has managed a wide range of public art installations, cultural programming, and civic space development projects throughout Cleveland for decades. LAND looks to engage the community in every step by working alongside residents, local leadership, and a network of partners. LAND acknowledges its role as a gatekeeper to public arts investment and looks for ways that its work can better reflect Cleveland's diverse neighborhoods and eliminate barriers to participation. As dialogue related to racial equity and inclusion continuously evolves, LAND is committed to creating opportunities for all, regardless of race, gender, ability, or community in which they live.

## PANELISTS



**BEKA STURGES, ASLA, PLA**

Beka Sturges is a Partner and Principal of Reed Hilderbrand and leads the firm's New Haven office. Since opening the New Haven office, she has led both private and public projects. Current work includes landscapes at Yale University, Storm King Art Center, and Dumbarton Oaks. Collaborating with the City of New Haven, she initiated the implementation of a linear park vision plan for the City's Mill River Trail. Beka served as the project landscape architect and manager for the award-winning expansion of The Clark Art Institute in the Berkshires. A committed educator, she teaches at Yale University.



**AMY S. WEISSER**

Amy Weisser is Deputy Director, Strategic Planning and Projects at Storm King Art Center, where she incubates capital projects focused on the institution's strategic growth. Ms. Weisser has spent 25 years supporting cultural institutions undergoing profound development. Prior to joining Storm King in 2018, Weisser led exhibition development for the National September 11 Memorial Museum from 2005 to 2017 and helped open the contemporary art museum Dia:Beacon and the American Museum of Natural History's Rose Center for Earth and Space. She has also taught Museum Studies at New York University. Weisser holds a doctorate in Art History from Yale University.



**DAVID M. WILSON, ASLA**

David Wilson is a Project Manager at LAND studio, a Cleveland, Ohio non-profit that manages public art and civic space development projects throughout the city. David's work is centered on urban design, public art coordination and community outreach. David is also Co-Director of the Black Environmental Leaders Association (BEL). BEL's members and allies are aligned as stewards of the natural and built environment through collaboration and partnership, to raise awareness and advocate for environmental and economic justice. David has a Master's degree in Landscape Architecture at Chatham University and serves on the Executive Committee for the Ohio Chapter ASLA (OCASLA).