

Shaping Contemporary Realities:

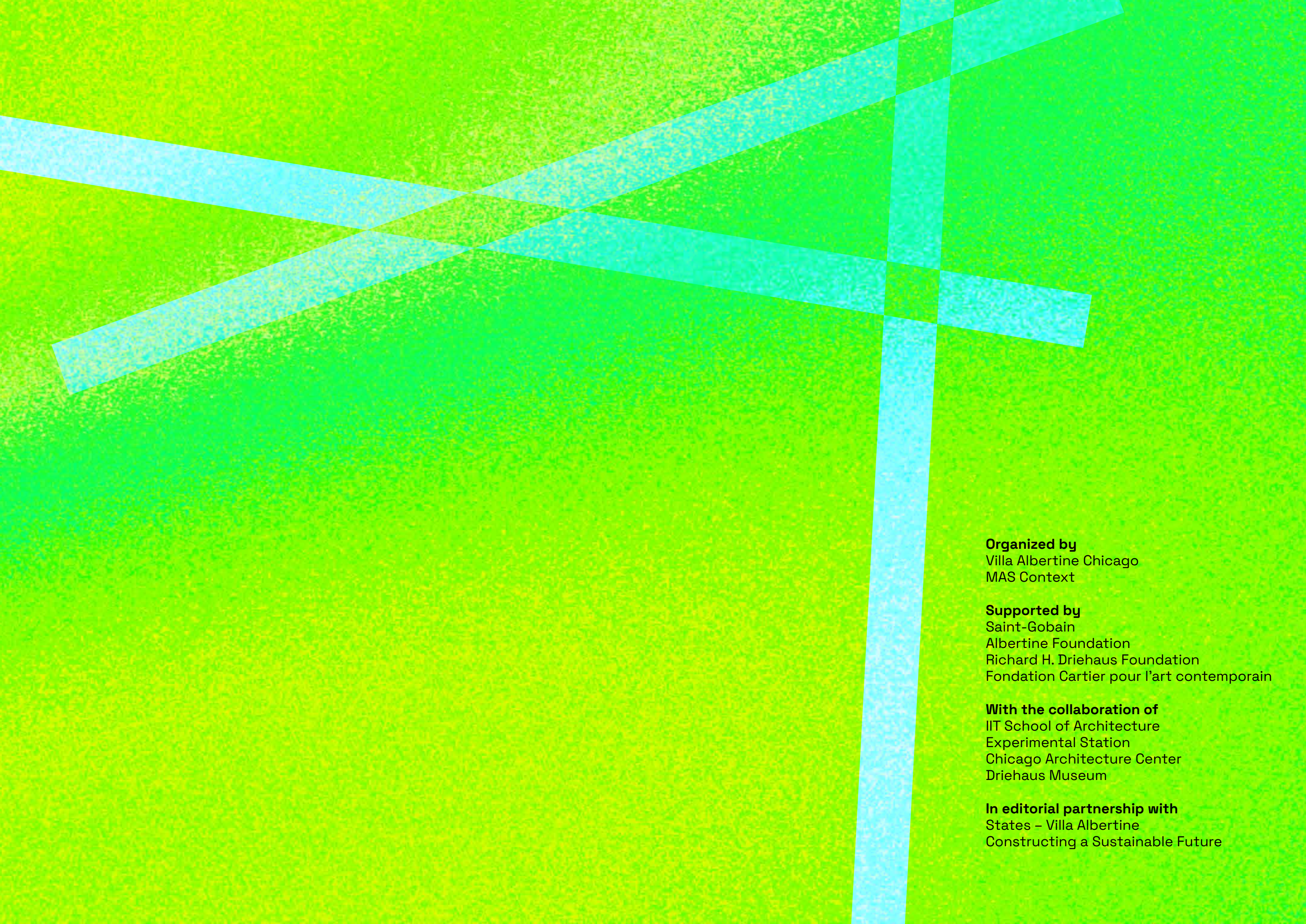
Architecture and Beyond

Shaping Contemporary Realities: Architecture and Beyond

Shaping Contemporary Realities: Architecture and Beyond is an international symposium that transforms Chicago into a platform for French-US dialogue on the future of architecture, innovation, and the built environment.

The symposium is structured to foster lively transatlantic exchanges through the perspectives of architects, landscape architects, urban planners, curators, artists, scientists, researchers, philosophers, industry, and leading experts exploring three key themes: Innovative Adaptation, Civic Changemaking, and Flourishing Environments.

The three-day symposium celebrates architecture not only as the art of building, but also as a catalyst for cultural dialogue, scientific innovation, and civic imagination. It positions Chicago as a critical meeting point to discuss ideas, build partnerships, and share innovations that are shaping the future of our built world.



Organized by

Villa Albertine Chicago
MAS Context

Supported by

Saint-Gobain
Albertine Foundation
Richard H. Driehaus Foundation
Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain

With the collaboration of

IIT School of Architecture
Experimental Station
Chicago Architecture Center
Driehaus Museum

In editorial partnership with

States – Villa Albertine
Constructing a Sustainable Future

Innovative Adaptation

September 24

Day

1

Through exemplary case studies, “Innovative Adaptation” explores how architectural heritage can not only be preserved but also positioned to address current and future needs through innovative thinking and new technologies. Pressing global and local environmental challenges, new material and programmatic requirements, and evolving ways of living require the use of forward-thinking approaches that serve heritage restoration and repositioning.

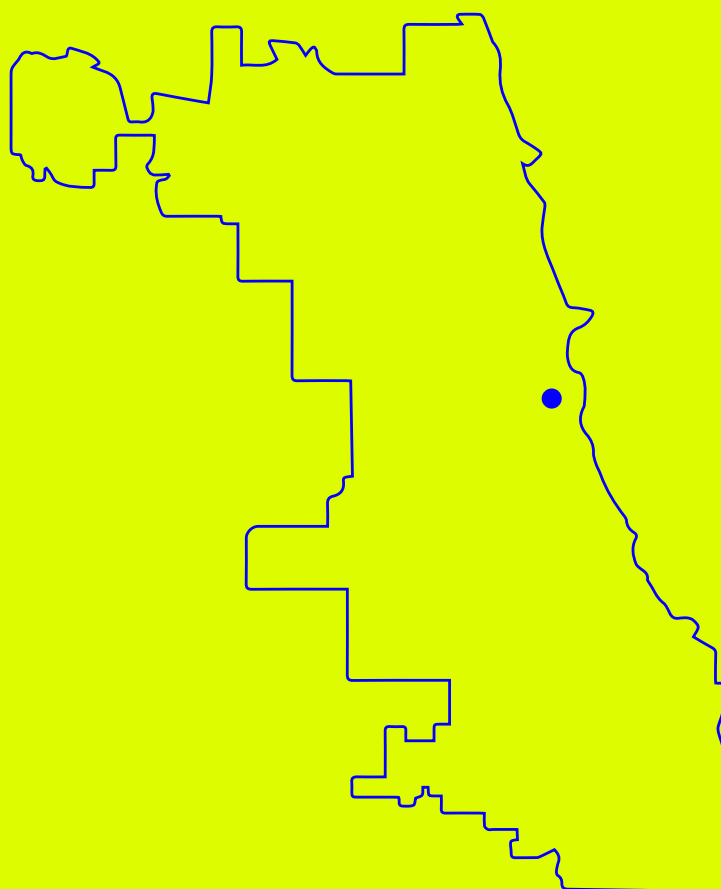


ABOUT THE VENUE

Illinois Institute of Technology is a private research university in Chicago known for its historical impact on modern architecture and engineering. Its School of Architecture continues to be a global center for architectural education. The school emphasizes a rigorous, technology-driven approach to design, urban planning, and landscape architecture, fostering research that addresses contemporary challenges in the built environment, sustainability, and urban resilience.

LOCATION

Illinois Institute of Technology
School of Architecture
S. R. Crown Hall
3360 South State Street
Chicago, IL 60616



1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Opening remarks by the organizers:

Nathalie Filser, director of Villa Albertine Chicago
Iker Gil, founder of MAS Context
Julie Michiels, editor of MAS Context

Welcoming remarks by the host of the day:
Reed Kroloff, dean of the School of Architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology

Presentations by:
David Lo Buglio
Professor at the Université libre de Bruxelles (ULB), Faculté d'architecture La Cambre Horta, co-director of AliCe lab

Justin Félix
Project manager for architecture and urbanism at Institut Français

Donna Robertson
Professor Emerita and former dean of the School of Architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology

Mark Sexton
Founding partner at Krueck Sexton Partners

Cesar Constantino
Senior director innovation at Chryso North America

Béatrice Grenier (recorded video)
Strategic and international director at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain
Cyril Desroche and **Mathieu Forest** (recorded video)
Architects and Project Directors, Ateliers Jean Nouvel

Conversation and Q&A with presenters led by:
Reed Kroloff, dean of the School of Architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology
Iker Gil, founder of MAS Context

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Tour of the Illinois Institute of Technology campus with:
Lynda Dossey, director of Jahn
Sarah Dunn, cofounder of UrbanLab
John Ronan, founding principal of John Ronan Architects
Cynthia Vranas, director of the Mies van der Rohe Society

Throughout the day

Immersive sound experience for individuals or small groups: a sensory experience of each place initiated by a sound artist **Stefania Becleanu**.

Day 1: Thursday, September 24

Innovative Adaptation

Participants

Host & Moderator:

Reed Kroloff



Reed Kroloff is the dean of the School of Architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology. A leader in architecture and design for over thirty years, he previously directed the Cranbrook Academy of Art and served as dean of the Tulane University School of Architecture, guiding it through Hurricane Katrina. He is also the former editor-in-chief of *Architecture* magazine and a frequent speaker at major events like TED.

Moderator:

Iker Gil



Iker Gil is the founding partner of MAS Studio and the founder of the nonprofit MAS Context. Iker has edited or coedited several books, including *Radical Logic: On the Work of Ensamble Studio* and *Shanghai Transforming*. He has curated multiple exhibitions, including *Nocturnal Landscapes*, *Poured Architecture: Sergio Prego on Miguel Fisac*, and *BOLD: Alternative Scenarios for Chicago*. He was cocurator of Exhibit Columbus 2020–2021 and associate curator of the US Pavilion for the 2018 Venice Architecture Biennale. Iker was the 2024 Victor A. Morgenstern Family Visiting Chair in Architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology along with architect Michel Rojkind.

David Lo Buglio



David Lo Buglio is a professor at the Université libre de Bruxelles, Faculté d'architecture La Cambre Horta, where he codirects the AllCe lab. His research addresses the digitization and characterization of built heritage and the critical role of digital representation, the subject of his book *Numériser l'architecture* (2026). The lab is known for its 3D reconstructions of major heritage, including Victor Horta's Maison du Peuple (1899–1965). His own work on Josef Hoffmann's Palais Stoclet (1911, UNESCO World Heritage) produced the film *Stoclet 1911*, seen by close to 75,000 visitors, and received the FNRS Wernaers Prize for science communication in 2025. Cofounder of DéDal architectes, he chairs EAEA17 (Brussels, 2026).

Justin Félix



Justin Félix is the Project Manager for Architecture and Urbanism (Chargé de Projet Architecture et Urbanisme) at the Institut Français. Operating within the visual arts, architecture, design, and fashion division, he plays a key role in the organization's international artistic dissemination programs and the 2026 Cultural and Creative Industries (PICC), focusing on architecture, urbanism, and landscape. He also coordinates the "Résonances" program in architecture for the French Pavilion at the Venice Architecture Biennale, fostering cross-country connections and debates. Prior to his current institutional role, he worked as an urban planner at SPL Val de Seine Aménagement, where he led the execution of a public art walk designed to promote industrial heritage.

Donna Robertson



Donna Robertson is a Professor Emerita in the College of Architecture at Illinois Institute of Technology. She stepped down recently after forty years in academia. Her focus is on the political and social benefits of design excellence. When Dean of IIT Architecture (1996–2012), she played a key role in IIT's comprehensive program of physical renewal, resulting in new designs by Rem Koolhaas/OMA, Helmut Jahn, Michael Van Valkenburg, and restoration of Mies's masterpiece S. R. Crown Hall and the IIT Chapel, following on her career interest in building "adaptation." The resultant transformation to programs, enrollment, fundraising and campus vitality has been widely recognized. Her partnership in macrodesign has projects throughout the USA, such as restoration and addition to a Neutra house in the Hollywood Hills. When Dean at Tulane (1992–1996) she served on the New Orleans CBD-Historic District Landmarks Commission. She has been a Board member of DoCoMoMo Chicago, and a Peer Reviewer for the GSA.

Mark Sexton



Mark Sexton is a founding partner at Krueck Sexton Partners and is integral to the design and management of all the firm's work. His dedication to design, detailing, and responsible project delivery ensures firm-wide quality and consistency of all projects. Whether designing a US embassy or reimagining an existing building, Mark brings both curiosity and experience to his work. He embraces the ideas of colleagues, investigates possibilities, and engages with community, constantly evolving and advancing projects.

Cesar Constantino



Cesar A. Constantino is Senior Director of Innovation for Chryso North America, a Saint-Gobain company. A recognized leader in sustainable construction materials and resilience, he serves as chair of the International Finance Corporation's Building Resilience Index Technical Advisory Panel, a member of the ACI Foundation's Concrete Innovation Council, and a board member of the Resilience Action Fund. His work focuses on helping create a more sustainable, resilient, and people-centered built environment.

Béatrice Grenier



Béatrice Grenier, Director of Strategic Projects and International Programs at the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain, is a Paris-based curator, author, and editor working at the intersection of art, architecture, and cultural policy. From 2020–2025, she served as lead curator for the expansion project of Fondation Cartier in Paris. In 2025, she curated a monographic exhibition of Jean Nouvel as part of the 19th Venice Architecture Biennale and cocurated *Exposition Générale*, the inaugural exhibition of the Fondation Cartier Collection in its new spaces. In 2026, she curated *The Louisiana Manifesto: 20 Years at the Louisiana Museum of Modern Art*, an international symposium on the legacy of the eponymous text. She is the author and editor of books and essays on contemporary architecture and art, including *Architecture for Culture: Rethinking Museums* (Rizzoli, 2025), *Tashkent: A Modernist Capital* (Rizzoli, 2024), and *Infinite Memory* (Lenz Press, 2024). Her new book, *New Natures*, coauthored with Emanuele Coccia and Jeanne Gang, was published by Park Books in 2026. She is the Paris desk editor of *ArtAsiaPacific* and a regular contributor to publications including *Domus*, *PIN-UP*, and the *Journal of Curatorial Studies*.

Cyril Desroche



Cyril Desroche joined Ateliers Jean Nouvel in 2000. He participated in numerous projects during their phases of conception, study, and construction, such as the Nantes Law Courts, the Musée du Quai Branly – Jacques Chirac Museum in Paris, the Danish Radio Concert Hall in Copenhagen, the Le Havre Aquatic Complex, and Bucklersbury House in London, a 150,000 m² project directed by the Atelier Foster Nouvel, an agency that teamed Jean Nouvel and Norman Foster, created specifically for this project. In 2005, Cyril left the Ateliers Jean Nouvel for California, where he joined Frank Gehry's studio. For six years, he worked principally on the development of the Louis Vuitton Foundation, and then on projects for the Luma Foundation in Arles and the Guggenheim Museum in Abu Dhabi. In 2011, he returned to Ateliers Jean Nouvel and joined the team for the Paris Philharmonic Hall project. In 2015, he was appointed project director in the team for the creation of new exhibition spaces for the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain in Paris.

Mathieu Forest



Mathieu Forest joined Ateliers Jean Nouvel in 1997. He has participated in numerous projects, such as the Zlatý Anděl building in Prague, the Danish Radio Concert Hall in Copenhagen, the Archipel Theatre in Perpignan, the Nouvel KLCC in Kuala Lumpur, as well as various competitions, among them the redevelopment of the Halles district in Paris and the new Gazprom headquarters in St. Petersburg. From 2007 to 2015, he was project director for the construction of the Paris Philharmonic Hall, then for the preliminary studies and competition for the National Art Museum of China in Beijing and the Museum of Art Pudong in Shanghai. Since 2015, he has been the studio director in charge of the transformation of the Palais-Royal building for the Fondation Cartier pour l'art contemporain.

Lynda Dossey



Lynda Dossey graduated from the University of Cincinnati and worked at KPF, DeStefano Partners, and Studio Gang before joining JAHN in 2011, where she is a director. Projects include 1000 Michigan, Thompson Center, 1900 Reston Plaza, and One Freedom Plaza. She has been an adjunct professor at the Illinois Institute of Technology and an External Monitor for Skyscraper Studio at the Oslo School of Architecture and Design. Lynda has served on crits, juries, and panels for universities, the AIA, and CAC. Lynda served at the AIA Chicago Board for six years, including being VP of Awards and President. She appeared on *Architectural Digest's* YouTube channel and the *PBS NOVA* "Build It!" episode.

Sarah Dunn



Sarah Dunn is the cofounder of UrbanLab and a professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois Chicago. After working at the Office for Metropolitan Architecture (OMA) in Rotterdam, she and partner Martin Felsen established UrbanLab, a collaborative architecture and urban design firm. UrbanLab blends design and research to produce progressive, site-specific buildings, spaces, and places. UrbanLab's projects set in motion new lifestyles, vibrant spatial experiences, and more sustainable environments. From large urban designs to small residential projects, built work to date includes mixed-use commercial buildings, housing, houses, restaurants, art galleries, large-scale resilient infrastructural projects, recreational landscapes, and cities.

John Ronan



John Ronan is the founding principal of John Ronan Architects in Chicago, founded in 1999. He serves as lead designer on all projects the office undertakes and is known for his abstract yet sensuous work which explores materiality and atmosphere. His firm has been the recipient of three AIA Institute National Honor Awards—for the Poetry Foundation, the Gary Comer Youth Center, and the Ed Kaplan Family Institute for Innovation and Tech Entrepreneurship at the Illinois Institute of Technology. John is currently the John & Jeanne Rowe Endowed Professor in Architecture at the Illinois Institute of Technology.

Cynthia Vranas



Cynthia Vranas is co-principal of Olsen Vranas Design, CEO and Executive Director of the Mies van der Rohe Society, and an adjunct professor at the IIT School of Architecture. She holds an education in architecture, interior design, furniture design, and architectural history and theory, and her Ph.D. research explored the influence of the arts on architecture in nineteenth-century France. This work reflects a broader understanding of how architectural forms and spaces were shaped by artistic movements, as seen in projects like the Palais Garnier, where the architect's design was deeply informed by the needs and aesthetics of theater, music, and dance. Her career has combined architectural practice with a commitment to preservation and education, underscoring the interplay between built environments and the arts.

Civic Changemaking

September 25

Day

2

A sustainable future requires strong collaborations across local communities, construction experts, and civic leaders. In “Civic Changemaking,” specific processes and initiatives focus on circular economies of resources and knowledge, adaptive reuse of singular places, thoughtful sustainable construction, and structural urban regenerations.



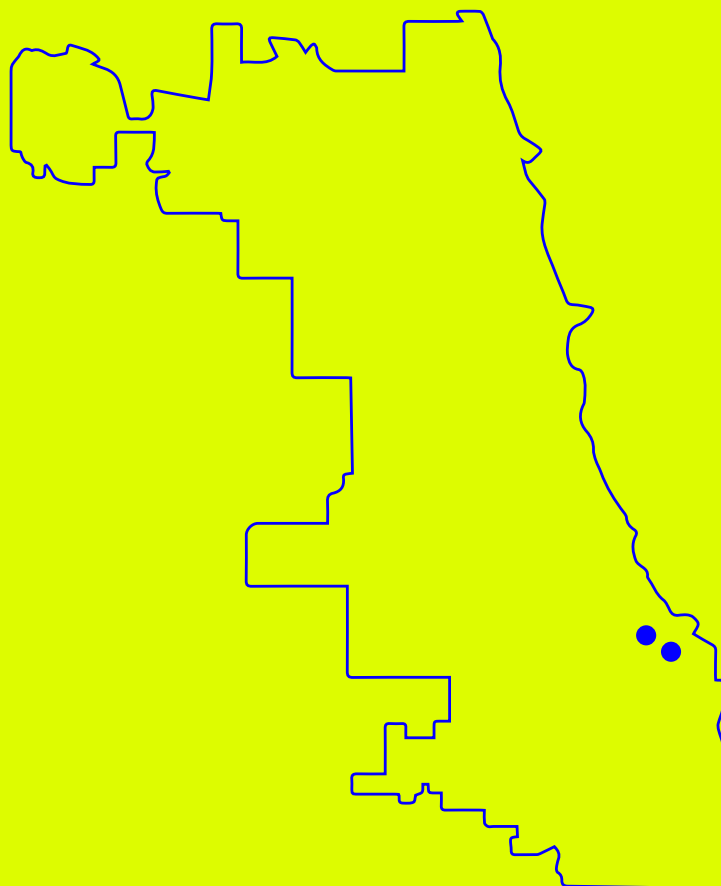
ABOUT THE VENUE

Experimental Station is an independent, nonprofit incubator based on Chicago's South Side, dedicated to building innovative cultural, educational, and environmental projects. By supporting small-scale enterprises and community-driven initiatives, the organization fosters local resilience and social infrastructure. It serves as a vital civic hub, intersecting with urban design and community development to address essential needs and create sustainable, equitable ecosystems within the city.

LOCATION

Experimental Station
6100 South Blackstone Avenue
Chicago, IL 60637

Obama Presidential Center
6001 South Stony Island Avenue
Chicago, IL 60637



1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Opening remarks by the organizers:

Nathalie Filser, director of Villa Albertine Chicago

Iker Gil, founder of MAS Context

Julie Michiels, editor of MAS Context

Welcoming remarks by the host of the day:

Connie Spreen, cofounder and executive director of Experimental Station

Monica Chadha, founder of Civic Projects Architecture

Presentations by:

Sabina Bokhari

Director of Communications & Special Projects for the Rebuild Foundation and Theaster Gates Studio

Sonia Vu

Partner at Encore Heureux Architects

Faheem Majeed

Cofounder of the Floating Museum

Rebekah Coffman

Curator of religion and community history at the Chicago History Museum, founder of Sacred Shift Project

Anirban Ghosh

Senior manager strategy and business development for circular economy at Saint-Gobain North America

Conversation and Q&A with presenters led by:

Elizabeth Blasius

Cofounder of Preservation Futures

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Tour of the Obama Presidential Center campus (museum not included) with:

Monica Chadha, founder of Civic Projects Architecture

Nora Semel, Vice President, Obama Presidential Center Programs

Throughout the day

Immersive sound experience for individuals or small groups: a sensory experience of each place initiated by a sound artist **Stefania Becleanu**.

Host:

Connie Spreen



Connie Spreen is the cofounder and executive director of Experimental Station, a nonprofit community organization on Chicago’s South Side. She cofounded the organization in 2002 alongside Dan Peterman to build independent cultural infrastructure. Under her leadership, the organization operates several major community programs, including the youth cycling initiative Blackstone Bicycle Works, the 61st Street Farmers Market, and the statewide food access program Link Up Illinois, which she initiated in 2011.

Host:

Monica Chadha



Monica Chadha is the founder of Civic Projects Architecture advancing a participatory model of design rooted in community engagement, civic identity, and long-term public value. As an architect with more than twenty years of experience, Monica works across architecture, planning, and stakeholder strategy, with projects spanning cultural, educational, civic, and neighborhood-serving spaces, including the National Museum of Mexican Art and more recently, the Obama Presidential Center Museum. She is a trustee of the Graham Foundation and a former faculty member at the Illinois Institute of Technology. She holds an M.Arch from the University of Illinois Chicago and previously worked at the Vastu-Shilpa Foundation under renowned architect Balkrishna Doshi.

Moderator:

Elizabeth Blasius



Elizabeth Blasius is an architectural historian, writer, and cofounder of Preservation Futures, a Chicago-based firm exploring the future of historic preservation through research, action, and design. She works on preservation projects at the radical forefront of the preservation movement, including buildings designed in the 1980s, 1990s, and beyond. Elizabeth advocates to bring the recognition and resources of preservation into communities that have been historically overlooked. Prior to founding Preservation Futures in 2021, Elizabeth worked in natural disaster recovery and mitigation, providing guidance on the care of historic places in the aftermath of hurricanes, floods, and other acts of climate violence. She has been a monthly columnist for MAS Context since 2022.

Sabina Bokhari



Sabina Bokhari is Director of Special Projects and Communications at Rebuild Foundation and Theaster Gates Studio, where she leads external affairs strategy across Gates's multidisciplinary ecosystem of cultural, civic, and artistic enterprise. She collaborates closely with teams across the studio, foundation, and cultural sites, guiding brand strategy, communications, press, gallery relations, exhibitions, and strategic development. Previously, Sabina was a communications strategist at Rise Strategy Group, advising clients across politics, fashion, education, and real estate on community engagement, media relations, crisis communications, and equity initiatives.

Sonia Vu



Sonia Vu is an architect and partner at Encore Heureux Architectes. After graduating from the Grenoble School of Architecture in 2007, she began her career working alongside architect Patrick Bouchain, the 2019 recipient of the Grand Prix de l'Urbanisme. Serving as his assistant, she participated in the firm's first onsite architectural residency within the French Pavilion for the Métavilla project at the 2006 Venice Architecture Biennale. She joined Encore Heureux Architectes in 2008, officially becoming a partner in 2019. As a project director, she oversees a variety of cultural and social public facilities—with a strong focus on high environmental standards. Encore Heureux was recently awarded the project for a new location for the Ateliers Médicis in Clichy-sous-Bois/Montfermeil.

Faheem Majeed



Faheem Majeed is a Chicago-based artist, educator, curator, and arts administrator whose practice transforms overlooked materials, spaces, and histories into powerful platforms for reflection and engagement. Working primarily in sculpture and installation, he draws on his deep connection to the South Side of Chicago and a long-standing interest in institutional critique and community building. Faheem received his BFA from Howard University and MFA from the University of Illinois Chicago, where he currently serves as Assistant Professor of Art. He is cofounder and codirector of Floating Museum, an interdisciplinary collective that creates site-responsive works connecting art, architecture, history, and civic dialogue. Floating Museum curated the 2023 Chicago Architecture Biennial. Faheem also leads the Burroughs Residency through the collective, a Bronzeville-based pilot program that honors Dr. Margaret T. Burroughs and fosters cross-cultural connectivity.

Rebekah Coffman



Rebekah Coffman is a curator and public historian whose work explores the intersections of religious heritage, the built environment, sustainability, and collective memory. As Curator of Religion and Community History at the Chicago History Museum, she leads the Chicago Sacred Initiative, which brings together archival repair, research, writing, community engagement, and exhibition-making to highlight Chicago's diverse religious and cultural histories. In 2019, she founded the Sacred Shift Project, an ongoing international survey of urban religious buildings adapted for ritual reuse by diasporic communities, with attention to intangible heritage and contested heritage amidst the changing lives of sacred spaces across cities. Rebekah also lectures in Heritage Studies and serves on leadership for the AIA National Interfaith Design Knowledge Community.

Anirban Ghosh



Anirban Ghosh is on a mission to make circular economy a cornerstone in the building materials industry. He is deeply passionate about decarbonizing the built environment and believes that sustainability and profitability are not mutually exclusive. Currently, he is a Senior Manager at Saint-Gobain where he leads strategy and business development for Circular Economy Solutions, one of Saint-Gobain's venture businesses in North America. Functioning as a start-up within a 360-year-old behemoth, he is accountable for developing value creation pathways centered on circular economy through new business models and innovative collaborations with value chain participants while leveraging Saint-Gobain's competencies. Prior to this he has excelled on product, lean engineering, and has three granted patents whilst working in US, Canada, India, and Singapore.

Monica Chadha



Monica Chadha is the founder of Civic Projects Architecture advancing a participatory model of design rooted in community engagement, civic identity, and long-term public value. As an architect with more than twenty years of experience, Monica works across architecture, planning, and stakeholder strategy, with projects spanning cultural, educational, civic, and neighborhood-serving spaces, including the National Museum of Mexican Art and more recently, the Obama Presidential Center Museum. She is a trustee of the Graham Foundation and a former faculty member at the Illinois Institute of Technology. She holds an M.Arch from the University of Illinois Chicago and previously worked at the Vastu-Shilpa Foundation under renowned architect Balkrishna Doshi.

Nora Semel



Nora Semel is the Vice President of Obama Presidential Center (OPC) Programs at the Obama Foundation. She oversees the strategic development and implementation of cultural, civic, and educational programming for the Center, a transformative hub located on Chicago's South Side. Her work is deeply rooted in community engagement, ensuring that the OPC not only preserves history but actively uses its spaces to inspire and empower the next generation of civic leaders.

Flourishing Environments

September 26

Day

3

Achieving a healthy urban biodiversity requires rigorous research and creative designs that foster the coexistence of humans and non-humans. It also requires establishing spaces for collaboration between architects, landscape architects, and scientists to achieve ethical, biodiverse, resilient, and joyful habitats. “Flourishing Environments” highlights short- and long-term approaches that gets us closer to that goal.

sistema...



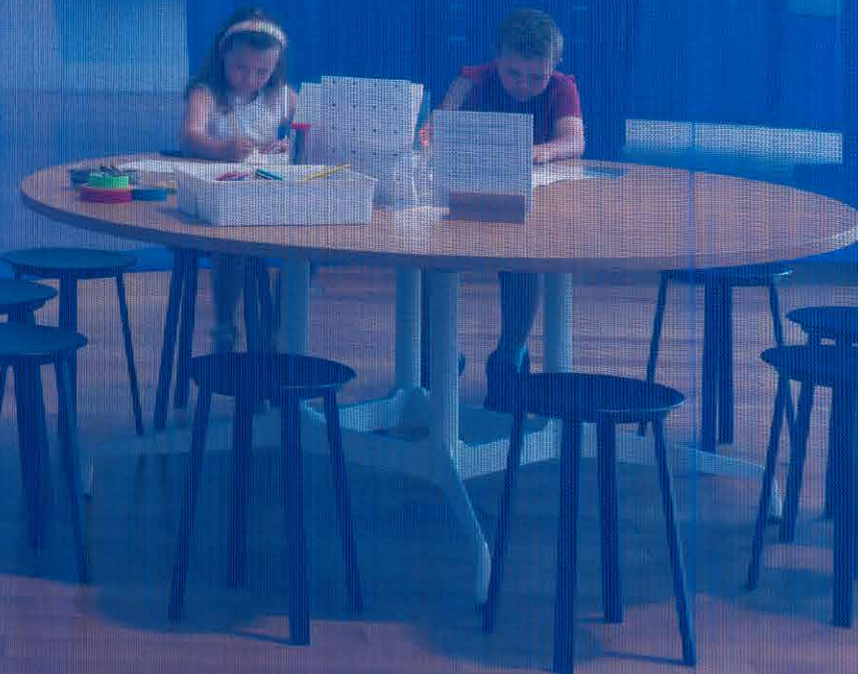
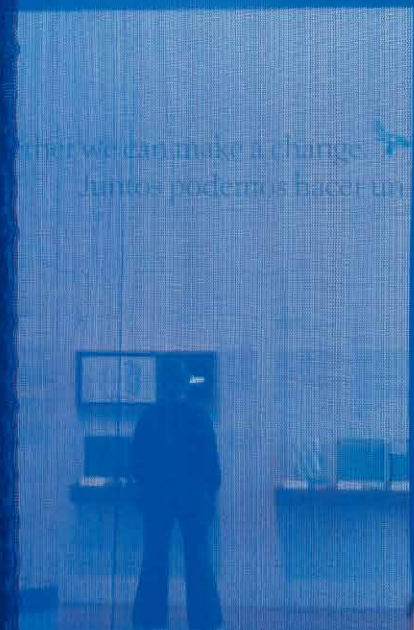
Podemos hacer un mundo mejor
pero no es seguro para todos.

Podemos hacer un mundo mejor
pero no es seguro para todos.

Podemos hacer un mundo mejor
pero no es seguro para todos.



...but it's not safe for everyone.
...pero no es seguro para todos.



DO NOT

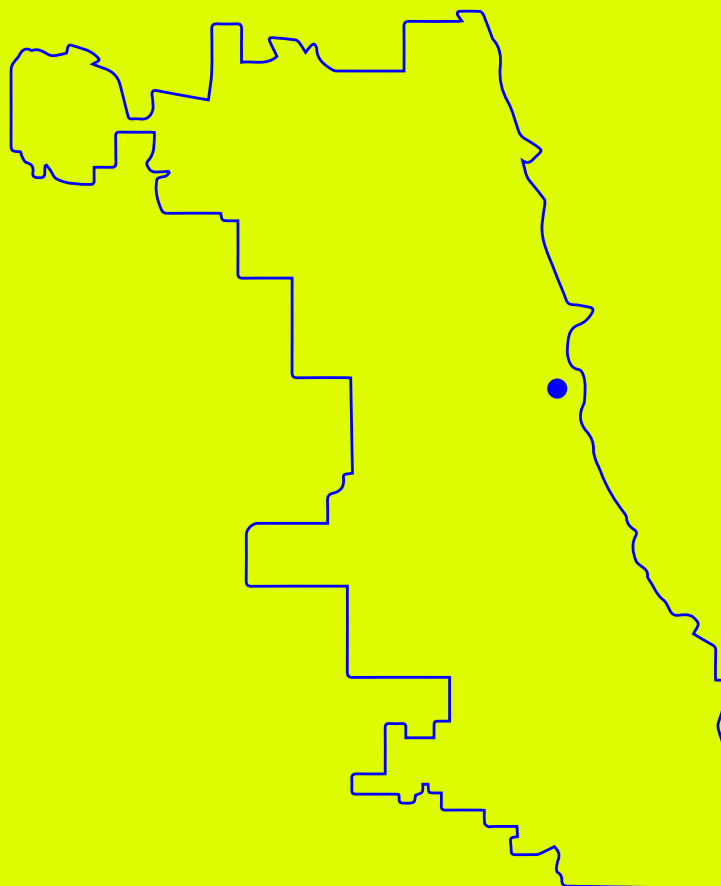
ABOUT THE VENUE

Chicago Architecture Center is a leading nonprofit cultural organization dedicated to showcasing Chicago and ideas from cities worldwide to inspire better living through design. Based in downtown Chicago, it offers globally acclaimed tours, exhibitions, and educational programs that highlight the city's profound architectural legacy and contemporary urban development. Serving as a vital public hub, the CAC fosters civic engagement and critical dialogue regarding the future of the built environment, equitable design, and sustainable urbanism.

LOCATION

Chicago Architecture Center
111 East Wacker Drive
Chicago IL 60601

Chicago Riverwalk - First Lady
112 East Wacker Drive
Chicago, IL 60601



1:00 pm – 3:00 pm

Opening remarks by the organizers:

Nathalie Filser, director of Villa Albertine Chicago
Iker Gil, founder of MAS Context
Julie Michiels, editor of MAS Context

Welcoming remarks by the host of the day:
Eleanor Gorski, CEO and president of the Chicago Architecture Center

Presentations by:

Douglas Voigt
Urban design and planning partner at SOM

Alissa Anderson
Principal of publications and exhibitions and partner at Studio Gang

Philippe Madec
Writer, teacher, cofounder and associate architect and urban planner at Associer in Paris, Rennes, and Montpellier

Stefania Becheanu
Sound and performance artist

Conversation and Q&A with presenters led by:

Filip Tejchman
Architectural educator and researcher at the University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee School of Architecture and Urban Planning

3:00 pm – 4:30 pm

Free reception at CAC Galleries, including visiting the exhibitions Flyway City: Architecture for a Flourishing Ecosystem and Chicago's Living Habitat.

5:30 pm – 7:00 pm

Tickets to be purchased by interested parties to continue the evening with a guided Chicago Architecture Center architecture boat tour.

Throughout the day

Immersive sound experience for individuals or small groups: a sensory experience of each place initiated by a sound artist **Stefania Becheanu**.

Day 3: Saturday, September 26

Flourishing Environments

Participants

Host:

Eleanor Esser Gorski



Eleanor Esser Gorski is CEO and President of the Chicago Architecture Center (CAC), the leading organization celebrating and promoting Chicago as a center of architectural innovation and education. A licensed architect, Gorski brings more than twenty-five years of experience in design, planning, and historic preservation. Since joining the CAC in 2022, she has broadened its focus to ensure its work benefits Chicago's diverse neighborhoods. Previously, Eleanor served as Acting Commissioner of the Chicago Department of Planning and Development and Executive Director of the Cook County Land Bank Authority. A fellow of the American Academy of Rome, she has received the Rome Prize, AIA Chicago's Distinguished Service Award, and the ULI Chicago Breakthrough Award. She was named a 2026 *Crain's Chicago Business* notable leader in Architecture and a 2026 Leadership Greater Chicago Daniel Burnham Fellow.

Moderator:

Filip Tejchman



Filip Tejchman's research, teaching, and creative practice examine architecture as a cultural technology, engaging questions of energy, effect, ecologies, and social infrastructure—understood broadly as ritualized systems of use and meaning. His writing explores how these themes shape contemporary architectural practice and research. His professional experience spans projects of diverse scales and media—including sound, scent, theatrical effects, furniture, buildings, and landscapes—beginning at Diller+Scofidio/DSR and Joel Sanders Architect, with a brief period working in the art studio of Roxy Paine. Filip is the Principal of Untitled Office and a cofounder of ChChCh with Professor Debbie Chen (Rhode Island School of Design). At UWM, Filip teaches design studio and building systems, with an emphasis on the technical as well as the sensational and theatrical dimensions of lighting, acoustics, sustainability, and HVAC systems.

Douglas Voigt



Douglas Voigt is the Urban Design and Planning Partner at SOM. He is interested in the capacity of design to build community and connect people to one another, balancing conceptual thinking with a realistic, hands-on approach to creating spaces and cities. Voigt's work is distinguished by a passionate appreciation for each project's unique challenges and the need for a comprehensive and innovative response. Over the last two decades, he has been able to unite disparate stakeholders under a cohesive vision, transforming abstract ideas into physical realities. Doug has brought his expertise to large scale, complex and neighborhood projects for public and private sectors for decades, from the Detroit East Riverfront Framework Plan to the Wild Mile in Chicago. He is a member of the Executive Committee of the Chicago Central Area Committee and a Board Member of Openlands.

Alissa Anderson



Alissa Anderson is Principal of Publications and Exhibitions and a partner at Studio Gang. Working closely with Jeanne Gang, she leads the studio's research, writing, exhibitions, and additional "special projects" that use the skill set and perspective of design to engage critical environmental and social issues. Most recently, Alissa led Studio Gang's new exhibition on bird-safe design, *Flyway City: Architecture for a Flourishing Ecosystem*, a collaboration with the Chicago Architecture Center. Her past projects include exhibitions for the Venice Architecture Biennale and the MAXXI Museum in Rome, as well as books such as Jeanne Gang's *The Art of Architectural Grafting*.

Philippe Madec



Philippe Madec is a French architect, urban planner, and a recognized pioneer of eco-responsible design, which earned him the Légion d'Honneur for Ecology in 2008 and the 2012 Global Award for Sustainable Architecture. He has lectured around the world and, in 2000, founded France's first university department dedicated to sustainable architecture. Established in 1989, his practice has since evolved into the collective agency Associer, in Paris, Rennes, and Montpellier, which approaches architecture and urbanism through a multidisciplinary practice encompassing design, writing, and research. A prominent advocate for sobriety in public debate and coauthor of the Manifesto for a Happy and Creative Frugality, Philippe's work explores the transformation of human settlements and seeks to create environments that foster a harmonious coexistence between people and the living world.

Stefania Becheanu



Stefania Becheanu is a sound and performance artist and a laureate of the 2026 Villa Albertine Music Grant. Her work operates at the intersection of experimental music, field recording, visual arts, and contemporary dance. Emphasizing the concept of active and empathetic listening, she utilizes an array of raw sounds captured from cities and natural environments to "paint" immersive, multi-channel soundscapes. By breaking down the barriers between acoustic creation and spatial perception, her installations and performances invite audiences to physically feel vibrations and explore their emotional connections to the surrounding space.

Shaping Contemporary Realities: Architecture and Beyond is organized by Villa Albertine Chicago and MAS Context. It has been conceived and structured by Nathalie Filser, director of Villa Albertine in Chicago and curated jointly by Nathalie Filser, Iker Gil, founder of MAS Context, and Julie Michiels, editor of MAS Context.

The organizers warmly thank all the hosts, moderators, speakers, and expert guides who have contributed to making the symposium possible, as well as the following partners and collaborators:

Mohamed Bouabdallah, Villa Albertine et les services de Villa Albertine NYC
Flore Fouret, Albertine Foundation
Charlotte Montel, Consulat Général de France in Chicago
Laurence Geannopulos, Hugo Adranowicz, Réhane Fevre, Villa Albertine Chicago
Marcelle Rabinowicz, Université Libre de Bruxelles
Jean-Christian Agid
Marie Coudié, Sandrine Douilhet, Suzanne Loranc, Penelope Reider, Kenneth Seda, Saint-Gobain Paris et North America
Florence Manuguerra, Constructing a Sustainable Future
Brad White, Richard H. Driehaus Foundation
Dorothee Charles, Fondation Cartier pour l’art contemporain
Emmanuelle Dienga, Wallonie Export & Investment Agency in Chicago

Graphic Design
Elamine Maecha, BURO-GDS

Photography and Videography
Matt Goetz, Omni Media & Marketing
Hector Pacheco, OffGround Studio

Photography credit
Headshot Béatrice Grenier: Thibaut-Voisin
Headshot Philippe Madec: Florent Larronde
Headshot Faheem Majeed: Eric Perez

Support
The symposium is organized by Villa Albertine and MAS Context, with leading support by Saint-Gobain. Additional support is provided by Albertine Foundation, Richard H. Driehaus Foundation, Fondation Cartier pour l’art contemporain, IIT School of Architecture, Experimental Station, and Chicago Architecture Center. The Driehaus Museum is a collaborating institution. Editorial partners include States - Villa Albertine and Constructing a Sustainable Future.

Shaping Contemporary Realities: Architecture and Beyond



