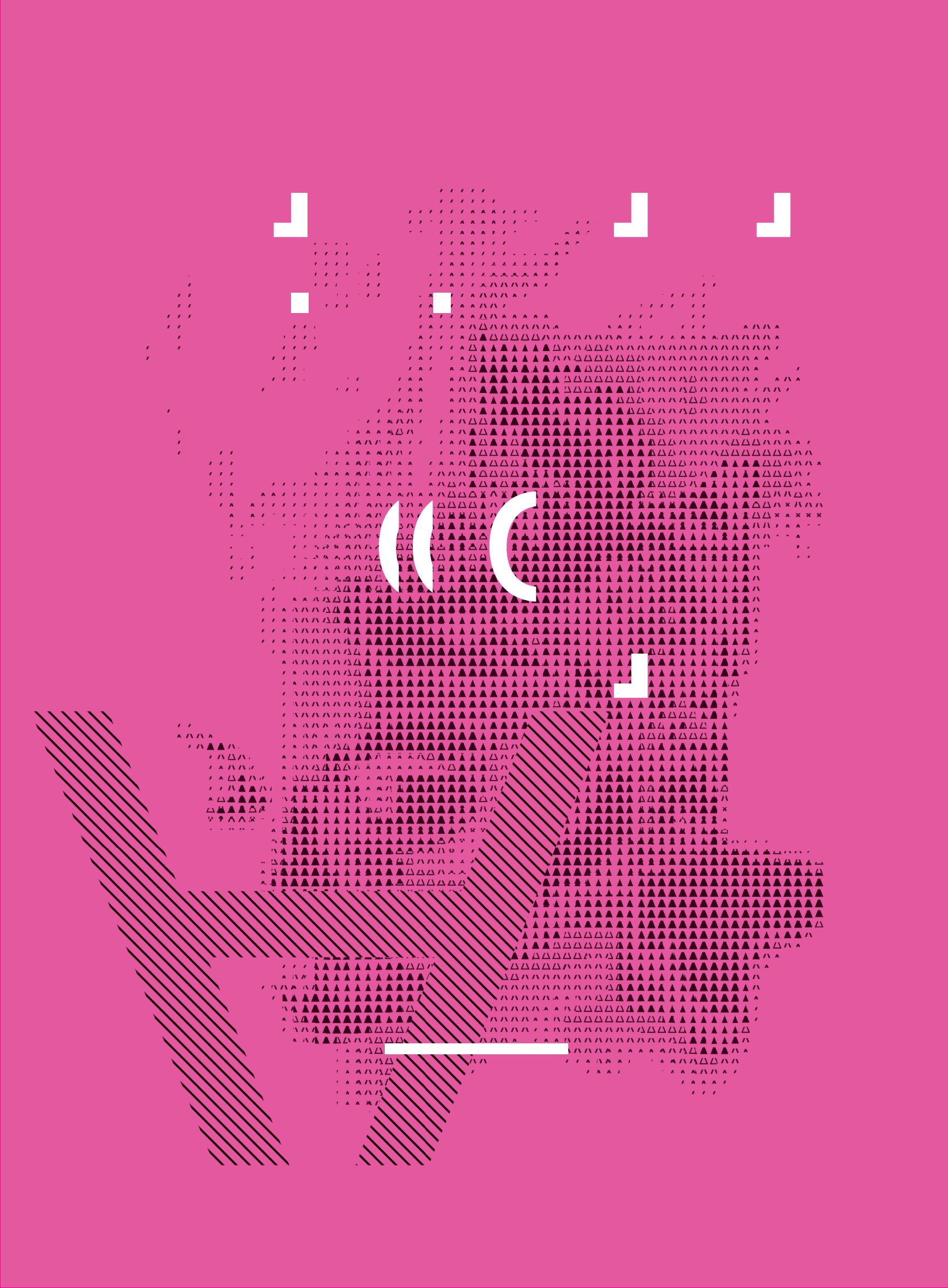


Speeches from the Summer Show

COVID — 19
& summer
2020



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of New York

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Host:

Co-hosts:

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Nikki Paporello

June Williamson
Lance Brown
Alan Feigenberg
Bradley Horn
Denise Hoffman Brandt
Jeremy Edmiston
Nandini Bagchee
Catherine Seavitt Nordenson
Julio Salcedo-Fernandez
Mohammed Gueye
Nicolas Losi
Tamar Plotzker
Eliana Dotan

Introduction by Dean Lokko

Good evening everyone and a very warm welcome to the first-ever Spitzer Virtual Summer Show! I have to confess that when I imagined back in November what this year's show might look like, I wasn't expecting it to take this format. I'm sure we haven't seen the last of Zoom, and despite my immense gratitude that the technology exists in the first place, I very much hope that any future shows will include the virtual as a matter of choice, not necessity. Like most other summer shows I've been involved with, I imagined the intense build-up that usually takes place in the last, few frantic days before the opening to be an opportunity to get to know students and faculty in a very different and more informal way. Amongst many other things I did in early March, I bought a new pair of summer sandals in anticipation of the great weather and the show opening night, which are now sitting in a box in the campus mailroom as Michael Miller can attest!)

But here we are, still halfway — or quarter-way, or three quarters of the way — through the storm. As a school community, and like almost everyone in this city, we've sustained losses in the past few months. I would like us to take a moment to remember those losses, from Michael Sorkin, to close relatives of our staff, faculty and students, some of whom we know or know about, and those who were mourned privately.

Today's show it's not a conventional show by any means. Usually these events are about student work and this is clearly not that. Over the summer, we will embark on an ambitious archiving project to document this year's work, some of which has been captured in our publication, [Slide 06] but which will also form the basis of the way we archive in this school. We'll be producing a much more comprehensive document of this year's work, so for all the students whose work wasn't included in *Antidotes I*, everyone's work will be included in the second volume, which will be ready at the start of the next academic year. The students and faculty who put together this year's publication will say something about it a little later on in tonight's event but I'd just like to thank Isabella Joseph, this year's salutatorian, for her great suggestion of 'antidote' as the title of our publication, and Nicolas Losi's fine suggestion that we make it plural — and I hope tonight's event and tomorrow's special toast to our graduates will act in some small way as antidotes to the fear, uncertainty and despair that have gripped the world — but especially this city — over the past few months. Next year's show will be a biennial, showcasing work from two years, not one. Like this year, next year will also be a time of deep reflection and questioning, but it must also be a year of action, of concrete and lasting change, not words or promises. It's been said many times in the past few months but it's worth saying again, and again.



Image: Entrance Lobby. © Sirin Samman

So, that's the end of the Welcome Note. A couple of housekeeping rules — first up is our Zoom Etiquette disclaimer. It's pretty straightforward — no unauthorized recording, mute your media and treat each other with respect, tolerance and dignity. We will record this event and make it available on our website and YouTube for post-event viewing, once we've complied with all the regulations around display and recording. Lastly, our program is attached and is available as a download if anyone would like to download it. The link is shared in the chat. I'm now going to hand over to the Chair, Prof June Williamson, to share her thoughts and words.

Prof June Williamson

Department Chair

Hello everyone, I'm Professor June Williamson, current chairperson of the Architecture Department. The honor falls to me this evening to recognize the recent retirements of three long-serving professors: Lance Jay Brown, Alan Feigenberg, and Peter Gisolfi. Each served the department over many decades, through several permutations of leadership, organization, and reorganization, as it evolved from a program in Engineering, into the Spitzer School of Architecture we know and love today.

Lance Jay Brown joined the nascent faculty as an Assoc. Prof. in 1973, after serving as a Fulbright Scholar in Paris (where he worked for Shadrach Woods), and a teaching stint at Princeton. He took a hiatus in Washington to serve in the NEA, was President of the NY-AIA, and is currently President of the Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization. When I landed on the faculty at City in 2008, Lance was comfortably ensconced as Coordinator of the year-long, 5th year Thesis Studio, for a long time a distinctive feature of the City College B Arch Program, as any alumni with us this evening will attest!

Peter Gisolfi is both an accomplished architect and landscape architect, with a thriving eponymous office up the river in Hastings-on-Hudson, which he founded in 1976, a year after he came to City College. He was the Dept. Chair when I arrived. I ended up teaching closely with Peter, in the 4th year B Arch studios, where he retained the role of Coordinator. In Peter's own words, his firm's work "addresses the connection between landscapes and buildings" and is "contextual, designed to "fit gently into ... natural and man-made settings," in a manner that is "intrinsically sustainable."

Alan Feigenberg came to City in 1981, joining the full-time faculty the following year and also becoming Director of Education for the Salvadori Center which, if you don't know about it is something to look up. A hint: Mario Salvadori wrote the book "Why Buildings Stand Up." In addition to his

role in Education, Alan was also an affiliate professor in the Environmental Psychology Program at the CUNY Grad Center, collaborating on courses such as "Architecture and Food." And, while he IS retired, he's not really gone from campus. Alan continues union activism with the Professional Staff Congress of CUNY.

Peter couldn't join us this evening. Alan and Lance are both here, and I ask them each to share just a few words: Alan; Lance.

Prof Alan Feigenberg

Retiring Faculty

Greetings and congratulations to you graduates of our CCNY school of architecture! I retired last year after 40 wonderful, challenging, meaningful educational years here at CCNY. My mother and my uncle were students here in the 1930's & 40' while this was a free university—no tuition, which I believe should still be. I have appreciated and learned much from a variety of positions I have had the honor to experience here: teaching, administrative work & faculty organizing . . . the focused human commitment made by faculty, administration & staff to you and to all our CCNY students here on our campus. Ultimately, for many of us, the most dynamic, diverse & challenging education was initiated by you and the other students who came before you.

I have learned many things from teachers

I have learned many things from friends

and I have learned even more from students

The Talmud

I appreciate being here this evening to see and congratulate you, an important aspect of a more positive future. We need you for our future understanding and guidance; for our mutual goal for an inherent beauty of our physical and emotional environments (built and natural) with viability and respect for all peoples of all cultures, ethnicities, genders. What is needed currently is a rethinking, redesigning & rebuilding of our current conditions, and needing to think, design and build for a necessary and more creative visual, emotional and humane future. Our goal is with impassion to design and construct a humane and environmentally focused world!

The future is bright

the road ahead is tortuous

Mao

Prof Lance Brown

Retiring Faculty

Congratulations to the 2020 graduating class and greetings to Dean Lokko and all the members of the faculty, staff, alumni, and friends of the Spitzer School of Architecture. The following are my thoughts for today.

Creativity in the service of humanity, architects, urban designers, landscape architects, sustainability experts, you are the silver lining, you run towards trouble, we, you, are prepared for the challenges, we can promote the interconnectedness of things, we understand the hardware and software of both humanism and technology.

We are not alone in our appreciation of the blue skies, the wildlife now strolling through our downtowns, and the super clear waters of the Venice lagoon, and we must read the signals they convey.

The challenges of today, the catastrophic phenomena of the deadly plague that afflicts the globe, are greater than any humankind has faced in a hundred years. The world we have worked so hard to create, for better or worse, can be so easily eclipsed by fear, fueled by knee-jerk reactions. The design professions, our collateral colleagues and we now need to redouble our efforts to build an ever more sane and humane environment. We need to work to make healthier choices about the environment, our relationship to the natural world, our understanding of and pursuit of equitable, sustainable, and resilient global urbanization, the pursuit of healthy, walkable, mixed-use communities, and appropriate forms of mobility, the sane use of natural resources, the conservation of our remaining wilderness

We are the public school of the profession. We must guard the public realm. we must work for the whole people. we must not only work with policy makers, we must become policy makers. We are all losing family, friends and colleagues. we all know essential workers. we need to work lighten their burden and reward their service.

You, all, the silver lining, can bring light to darkness, sanity to chaos, and in these most perilous times love to all.

Graduating students, I wish you the best as you move on, prepared to take on new challenges and make the very best of the opportunities ahead. And we, your mentors, your professors, your classmates and your colleagues are here to help. Let's call on each other. Let's all work together to build an inclusive, sustainable, resilient and better world.

Dean Lokko

Thank you, June and thank you, too, Lance and Alan for all your energy, commitment and dedication to the school. I very much hope that the direction that's being sketched out, however imperfectly, will result one day in the kind of school that will make you — and everyone who's associated with Spitzer — proud.

Change in leadership invariably brings with it many different and other kinds of change — organizational, structural, curricular or pedagogic and so on. When I was appointed, the first thing everyone said to me was, “*get rid of all the program directors — that has to be the first thing you do. Signal your intention to shake things up and sweep out the old.*” I still have many of those e-mails but change for the sake of change is never, in my opinion, a good thing. For me, at least, change has to be linked to a vision or a narrative. Narratives are only as good as the clarity with which they're presented on the one hand, and the appetite of those who will ultimately enact that narrative, on the other. I spent a lot of time in my first couple of months looking and listening, as well as wining and dining, which is usually a quicker way to get to know people a little better. What I discovered then, which hasn't changed substantially, is that there is appetite — perhaps not quite as much as I imagined — but there's also a great deal of hesitancy, some of which has to do with wider questions about education, the economy, and so on, which have been exacerbated by COVID but it has to do with questions about our disciplines, about their relevance and whether what and how we teach either prepares students for the ‘world outside’ (which is no longer quite as ‘outside’ the academy or the university as it once was) or resonates meaningfully with our students in the first place.

The Brazilian philosopher, Roberto Mangabeira Unger once wrote, ‘the trouble with contemporary architecture has three sources: one is artistic, the absence of any canonical set of forms; the second is in engineering, the failure of physical constraints to determine the shape of buildings and the third is social; the inability of any one group in society to get its anxieties recognized as the ones that count.’ I read that as a student of architecture in 1991. His last point was true then, and I believe it's still true now. What matters now? There are many ways to deal with uncertainty — you can attempt to make things more certain through regulation and control; you can attempt to predict and know as much as possible in the hope that knowing more will insulate you more or you can loosen control in the belief that most people, given the opportunity, will take ownership of their own uncertainty and work collectively, rather than in their own, often narrow, self-interest. It's a long shot and, to be really honest, it's a risky shot.



Change is often immediate. Culture, which ought to be the lasting result of result of change, takes time.

So, it's in that spirit — the longer-term building of a culture over time — that the changes in program directorship have been made. Both Professor Denise Hoffman Brandt and Professor Bradley Horn have been at the helm of their respective programs for a decade, and in that time have transformed the Graduate school. Together with Michael Sorkin, who handed over the reins of the Urban Design program to Julio Salcedo-Fernandez a year ago, they have shaped and steered their programs through accreditation visits, enrolment, exhibitions and publications and leave the incoming directors, Professors Catherine Seavitt Nordenson, Nandini Bagchee and Jeremy Edmiston, with the best gift ever — programs that are still in the process of being built, room to expand and grow, and room to experiment. I'd like to hand over to Brad and Denise to say something about their tenure and their experiences over the past ten years.

Prof Bradley Horn

Outgoing Program Director, M Arch & MScArch

First my sincere thanks to Lesley, Erica, Nicole, and Michael for bringing us together this afternoon. It's been way too long and it's a true pleasure to be here with all of you.

Over the last few days, I must have sketched two or three drafts of my few minutes up here which were filled with the accomplishments of the graduate architecture programs – only to put them aside. To be honest, it's been hard for me to summon a self-congratulatory spirit with all that we've faced as a school, a city, and a global community, and most particularly when our friend and champion, Michael Sorkin can't be here to celebrate with us.

So I decided that for this evening, I'd just like to briefly express my gratitude to all of those who have made and continue to make the graduate programs, and the school, the special places they are.

Gratitude first to the senior faculty including those who are retiring, for their mentorship over the years and for shepherding this school through its many locations and incarnations. That is a history that must be written.

Gratitude to our former Dean, George Ranalli, for his support, and for trusting me and so many of our colleagues, with leadership roles all those years ago.

Gratitude to Hannah Borgeson – for being so creative, professional, and committed to enriching all the graduate programs and students. I have often thought that if there was a Graduate Affairs Magazine, she would make the cover.

Gratitude to Gordon, Julio, and June for sitting in various hot seats. I don't think we can do enough to express how thankful we are to those among the faculty who serve in those challenging little offices in the administrative wing.

Gratitude to Erica, Michael, Camille, Amy, Nicole, and Carolina for working with all of us through thick and thin, a group of people who have the impossible task of having to see all sides of a situation at once, who often bear the brunt of our many challenges, large and small, and who somehow manage to retain a sense of humor. Something in retrospect, I've come to rely on and am supremely grateful for.

Gratitude to the faculty who I feel lucky to be able to collaborate with each day. Our school is fortunate to have one of the most creative and accomplished group of educators anywhere in this city. While there is no shortage of difference and disagreement among us, in the end we are made stronger by one another's positions.

Gratitude to the students who, as cliché as it sounds coming from an educator, do in fact renew the discipline of architecture every day. I am in awe of your creativity, your commitment to making positive change in the world, and above all, your deep empathy during these trying times. I've been your student all these years.

Gratitude to all those who have supported the graduate architecture programs and the school throughout the years – too many to name – certainly the Spitzer family and Cetra Ruddy – but also Vanesa Alicea and our school's amazing alumni network bear mention, and there are so many others.

Gratitude to the program leadership who will usher us into a new era at the school – June, Catherine, Jeremy, Julio, Nandini, Hillary and Shawn – superstars who will move the school into exciting and uncharted territory beginning next fall. It has brought me solace these past months knowing that this particular group of thoughtful and creative people is at the helm.

And finally, a very special thanks to Dean Lokko, who despite facing more than unreasonable odds in her first year, continues to guide us toward a speculative, inclusive, and collaborative future here at Spitzer. I am proud to be a member of this community and touched to be sharing this special moment with all of you tonight. Thank you.



Image: Reviews, Feb 2020. © Sirin Samman

Prof Denise Hoffman Brandt

Outgoing Program Director, MLA

Almost exactly 10 years ago one of my students, Heather Furman, won a national ASLA planning award for her project on the Gowanus Canal—working with her drawing subsurface contamination plumes seems like half a lifetime ago. And I recall thinking then, that the award was a good sign that our new MLA program was starting to mature.

Shortly after that I was appointed program director, and I will admit it now, I was intimidated. I quickly realized that program directing is orchestration, and the actual music depends, largely, on others. I want future landscape architects to see watershed moments—like hurricane Sandy and COVID-19—as the tea leaves from which we read the amazing opportunities for creating an ecologically viable, just, and thrilling world. Achieving this “value-added” ambition within the framework of a professional degree has been a collective endeavor.

MLA program stalwarts: Lee Weintraub, Peter Gisolfi, Len Hopper; and Marcha Johnson have committed many years to preparing students for professional practice. And Andrew Lavallee contributes his expertise in green infrastructure. Seeing their achievements made clear to me that we could do more because we had such a solid groundwork already in place.

Within two years, our studios had expanded in scope. Catherine Seavitt Nordenson had joined the faculty and was leading student teams on grant funded research into coastal resilience. And a competition-winning studio that I instructed led to the program being named one of Cultural Landscape Foundation’s “Most Notable Things in Landscape Architecture for 2012.” We were not a well-oiled machine; we were, and remain an effectively rangy assemblage.

Twenty-first century landscape architects have to be polymaths. We work in a dynamic discipline that negotiates human ecology: a web of social relationships, cultural forces, and environmental processes. Our students have to develop a wide understanding and also the capacity to dig deep. Erika Svendsen and Lindsay Campbell at the USDA Forest Service Urban Field Station, and Mike Tantala, GIS-master, worked with me to integrate environmental philosophy, social ecology, and geography into the program’s unique ecology course-sequence.

Likewise, through the years I encouraged—and led studios—collaborating with the urban design and graduate architecture programs to explore the fuzzy edges of practice. I should not have been surprised when preparing my first interim accreditation report, I discovered that Urban Design program director Michael Sorkin was listed as landscape architecture faculty.

But of course, he was! No one could match Michael’s capacity for incisive observation of our entanglement in the city. I learned much from him.

I think students learn best when we are learning too, so I tested new ideas by constantly tweaking the curriculum. I hereby apologize to the successive years of students who had to tolerate being told that this year the first-year studio would be a pilot project! But then, landscape architects have to accept early on that everything changes, always. I knew things were working when the third-year students complained that they did not have the Sean Weiss’ history class or Elisabetta Terragni in studio. The introduction of the Unit System next year brings new opportunities for still more improvement to our evolving curriculum.

I often tell students that you get out of a class what you put into it. Mostly, they put a lot into it. Through their work, PLOT continues to be a cutting-edge student-edited publication and the student ASLA chapter’s annual conference is attended by academics and practitioners across the country. Our students have won countless national and international awards and have gone on to work in public and private sector design, planning, and policymaking roles. They are prepared to adapt to new modes of work and they are open to taking on challenges beyond disciplinary limits.

I saved for last a bit more recognition of Catherine Seavitt Nordenson, new program director and past collaborator in all of these initiatives. With her diverse interests—from Burle Marx to forested coastal buffer zones, she is polymathic. The excellence of PLOT, numerous student internships and grants are all part of the whirlwind of her working life. A surprising number of people have asked me if I won’t miss being program director. I can only answer that I am fortunate to be able to move on with new projects knowing that this big project is going to be in excellent hands. It is time for us all to enjoy another point of view.

Prof Jeremy Edmiston

Incoming Program Director, M Arch

All I can add to what has already been so beautifully said is that I only hope to have the dexterity to balance on the shoulders of those who have gone before. May I ask that we all unmute and make a delightful ruckus for a minute to show our appreciation and gratitude.

Prof Nandini Bagchee

Incoming Program Director, MScArch

The Master of Science in Architecture is a one year post Professional Degree Program begun not so long ago at the Spitzer School of Architecture. The program is intended for students that have a professional degree in architecture but wish to pursue further research in architecture.

My position as the director of the MS Arch Program is a new one created with the goal of having a global reach and trans-disciplinary agenda for design thinking. What this means is we will actively welcome our foreign students but to also build a local student base that is curious about other geographies. We will interrogate the interconnectivity of cities, buildings, and landscapes to develop a collective design ethos across nationalities and borders.

This means creating a network of people, places and ideas that extend beyond our immediate environment to articulate a broader base for us to operate as critical practitioners. We are at present confronted with a crisis that points to our connection to the wider world out there, but it feels as if we are trapped within the limits of our specific contexts and knowledge. I hope, with the participation of a creative faculty, administrative and student body to move in a direction that allows us to examine the threats and challenges we face with an expansive vision that is multidimensional and genuinely interdisciplinary.

Prof Catherine Seavitt Nordenson

Incoming Program Director, MLA

I'd like to say a few words tonight about Denise . . . Denise regards the contemporary urban landscape as so much more than genteel vest pocket parks and the ornamental shrubs and fountains at the base of towers. She sees a post-humanist urban landscape in nuclear waste, in bulletproofed schools, in robotic farmlands, in wild animal trafficking, in the perverse trophy hunting of the exotic. Denise will always insist that we humans are complicit in complex global webs, and that one of the roles of a program in landscape architecture is to develop activists seeking a new, parliamentary goal of equity and justice for both human and non-human species.

Denise, you have given us new vocabulary to accomplish this mission: indeterminate processes, non-human biota, bacteria that think. The stability, beauty, and balance of nature? No way. You have dashed this facile notion to pieces, and tasked our program with exploring the unknown, and perhaps the unknowable, complexity of our so-called "natural" world. What is

landscape architectural pedagogy, and how can we reimagine our research, our practice, and our project? You've held a mirror to ourselves, insisted that we look at the world through both the lenses of the microscope and the telescope, to attempt, perhaps, to unravel at least a few threads of these complex webs. Our radical program will continue to investigate, define, and challenge the expanded field of landscape architecture.

As I take on the mantle of leading the program that you have so skillfully shaped, I am committed to using the lenses of both the miniature and the panorama in thought and research, examining our complex role and responsibility as humans to assure multi-species justice. On behalf of the 128 students who have graduated under your directorship, it is my honor to thank you, Denise, for your ten years of incredible leadership of the Graduate Landscape Architecture Program at City College. Congratulations!

Erica Wszolek

Show Co-host & Executive Associate

We were just settling into Week 3 of distance learning and working from home when the proposal for a virtual summer show was sent out to the entire Spitzer community. The Dean's pitch was simple: a one-hour year-in-review show, complete with a DJ, a 5-minute video and a publication launch, all to be pulled together in a month and half's time. I believe 12 people responded to her open call; I was not among them. While it seemed like a wonderful idea I will admit, I feared the mechanics of such an ambitious, very public event organized entirely from our homes.

Lesley invited Nikki and I to join in as editorial associates and with some hesitation we agreed and did not look back. We worked with Lesley's incredible South African team and their fire and energy infected us in the best possible way. Together, we've managed to create something from very little, unless you count an endless amount of talent, perseverance and ingenuity, which Spitzer has in abundance.

Dean Lokko

The idea for *Antidotes* actually started much earlier, with an invitation from a student to contribute to a student publication, *Informality*. "You won't have your name mentioned and it's completely anonymous." Never believe anything a student tells you. But it was interesting partly because it was so low-key. I later discovered another publication, *Mashrabiya*, also by a group of students, and realized that there were a number of students who were using these student-led and initiated publications as a way to express themselves

— ideas, imagination, concerns, a whole range of things. Initially called (rather unimaginatively) *In The Time of COVID*, this year's salutatorian, Isabella Joseph, suggested the title Antidote instead, which Nicolas Losi expanded to become Antidotes. We absolutely loved the suggestions. With no money and no time — we decided that a two-part digital publication and an open call to students would be the most effective and probably most honest way of collecting the work that matters to the students themselves. Fred, my graphic designer in Johannesburg, who has never been to New York, and whom I would work with if I were living in Alaska, was really excited to work with us. We put out an open call for editors (faculty and students) and there we have it. It has been a real labor of love — we initially intended to have a 15-20 page 'teaser', which is now at 148 pages, and by the time the second part, *Antidotes II* is complete, it will be a 300-page archive of writing, projects, drawings and essays from this unforgettable academic year..

I'm terrifically proud of the commitment shown by the student editors, many of whom were editing for the very first time; by those who took the time to think about the work they wished to submit and selected work that they felt was pertinent or relevant to the topic; I'm immensely grateful to Erica and Nikki for their absolutely heroic control over concept and logistics and their generosity in dealing with all aspects of the publication equally.

Eliana Dotan
Faculty Editor

Hello all - it is so meaningful to gather at the end of this wild semester and be with you all. I've been so moved by the words that have been spoken thus far this evening. I'm here to say a few words about working as a faculty editor on *Antidotes I* — a profoundly collaborative and absolutely FUN process.

As integral as making is to design pedagogy, equally important is the process of stepping back and reading our work back to ourselves — we ask, what's really going on here, what can I learn from it? How do I reintegrate what I've learnt into my design process? But we don't only ask ourselves these questions, we ask them of our studiomates, our community.

This publication is more than a retrospective or a showcase — it is a synthetic document that is in and of itself participating in the feedback loop that is the basis of design pedagogy. It is a true creative collaboration between faculty, students, and administration, generating ideas and reflections together, in community.

In that spirit, I'll share an excerpt from the introduction to Section 2, "The In-Betweeners," which I worked on in collaboration with graduating student Isabella Joseph:



Image: Page from student-led publication, *Informality*

As a discipline, architecture has always offered more than answers to demands or solutions to problems — at its best, it creates space for the multiple meanings contained within human interactions to crystalize. One of architecture’s primary means or tools is scale. In Politics, Aristotle gave the space of democracy a scale — the Agora would be the length that the sound of a shout could carry. In Burkina Faso, West Africa, the roof of the debating chamber is held up by columns that will not allow the audience to jump up in anger without hitting their heads. Scale matters.

Although the radii of our activities have never been smaller, the radii of their reach has never been wider. The locus of the “shout” and the distance over which it carries span two distant ends of an almost unthinkable scalar spectrum — the home on one end, and an infinitely folded cyberspace on the other. Yet for the shout to land, the scale of encounter telescopically and instantaneously shrinks back to the scale of an individual, at home, alone.

What does the activation of scale as a means of producing meaningful architecture look like in today’s world, and in the future?

It has been a pleasure and a privilege to collaborate with all involved in this publication, with all involved in this school — faculty, administration, and most importantly students. I wish you all summers filled with unexpected ideas and experiences, and the space to let them unfurl. Thank you!

Nicolas Losi
Student Editor

Public School, Radical Antidote

In our society, structures and patterns of inequity occur at every scale and in every crevice, a fractal of moments where repair is needed. If architecture is to play a role as an antidote, we must have the capacity to identify such moments in ourselves and in our discipline. Whereas a conventional antidote derives from the original toxin, we are challenged with finding solutions that do not. And while it may be impossible to completely extricate ourselves from the systems and infrastructures that construct our world, we are nonetheless faced with the challenge of finding alternative tools and modes of operating in order to successfully critique our current ones. In a profession that inevitably relies on capital to function and to survive, the notion of a radical alternative feels like a distant possibility.

Academia, then, becomes the venue where we can safely examine, explore, and experiment in a space and on a timeline that is less subject to and reliant on these relentless cycles. The school of architecture is vital in

expanding the design discourse and suggesting revolutionary new ways we can interact and interrelate with the world around us, providing a discipline profoundly more capacious, critical, and transdisciplinary than the profession with which it shares its name.

To some — indeed, within this event, probably to many — the role of the school of architecture, and architectural pedagogy, is not a new or a radical thought, but I think it bears repeating. In a climate of inequity amplified and accelerated by COVID, by climate change, and by any number of crises both local and global, our search for a more diverse, inclusionary, empathic, and ethical discipline is paramount. I would argue, in this regard, that the public school of architecture, rather than a banal and bureaucratic entity, is critical for its core mission of affordability and accessibility, ideals that are, unfortunately, increasingly radical, especially in this country, and especially in a profession that seems unable to prove its value to more than a select, wealthy audience.

In this reading, I would propose the space of the public school of architecture, and public education at large, as an overarching antidote for the ones contained within the pages that follow. As within a fractal, it is a pattern that contains, structures, and provides an essential platform for additional patterns to emerge from. The publication “Antidotes” captures a crucial turning point in the Spitzer School of Architecture’s role in this process. Although I am just now graduating, I am excited and immensely hopeful for the ways in which it will expand and grow as a platform and as a catalyst for additional antidotes, not a single solution or a set of proposals, but a patient, determined, and unstoppable work in progress.

Tamar Plotzker
Student Editor

am I?

thinking to answer
not to create an answer
only to realize it

as the “I” emerges in the hunt
In realization
Invisible now visible
always existed

If a tree falls in the presence of none- was there sound?

posed as a question
asked rhetorically

of matter unrealized
of unwitnessed transformation
unprocessed

process, “the act of being carried
On”
Implying transfer
Imposing sequence

does answer always proceed
question
always reveal
answer

what, can exist simultaneously.
can it develop synchronously?

I think therefore I am therefore I think
or maybe I just think I am
but none saw
none heard
unprocessed

For *Antidotes*, Alicia and I wanted to collect work that asses “self”, how the ego perceives itself and its surroundings, to extract the colors of “frame of reference”, the staccato sentences I just presented. I don’t know if they are a poem, or just the process of conceiving a poem, but they’re are an investigation of how the self “becomes” and offers a perception of exchange but also of validation. Perhaps witness is our antidote. The soul of a body of work — its immortality — is reliant on witness, perhaps contrary to the essence of our theme. But life lives in paradox and, after all, *Antidotes* is venturing into the world to be seen.

Mohammed Gueye
Student Editor

Hi everyone, I am glad to see you all could make it to your bedrooms, living rooms and almost out of your pajamas. When I first got the email from Lesley about an end of the year show, it was no less than 24 hours since my team and I relaunched *Informality*, angering or delighting some folks. I still do not know.

Funnily enough, I would say the same reason I jumped onboard with *Antidotes I & II* is the same reason I wanted to produce *Informality*. I know what Spitzer possesses. It’s more than just architecture students, cad monkeys, commuter students, scholars, pseudo-philosophers, pseudo-professors, engaged professors and one Dean. They are all great, you know. Actually, I *don’t* know, but the stories, experiences, the memories we share and the knowledge we exchange are far more vital to encapsulate than just a simple Spitzer-branded IKEA catalog. We possess obsessively crafty students, those who could be triggered by the mention of a material or a detail. We have obsessively logical students, those who are incredibly articulate but never timid. They are attacking architecture like a maze, discovering the ins and outs, appreciating the journe, getting out. We have incredibly evocative students, producing work, architectural or not, that grabs hold of you. I believe that these students do not fit into a mold. The variety of inquiry and processes are inherently informal, lacking form, or a preconceived one at least. Working on *Antidotes* has given me the privilege to see informality in all of us. How do we operate without studio? How do we produce community without “program-driven spaces”? How do you measure up an architectural project when you cannot draw it out?

The way these questions have been answered, re-answered, and revised suggest there is informality in life when we are not under COVID. I hope this inquiry will revive the spirit of Spitzer from home [pause] to home and from Zoom screen to Zoom screen. While times may feel so troubling, it is important for me to ask: how could they not be? Informality is our strength and not our weakness. We are resilient and nothing without one another.

Dean Lokko

There are many graduating students here this evening and this is just a reminder that the advisors will be holding a special celebration specifically for the Class of 2020 tomorrow at noon, where we’ll be honoring and celebrating their success — please do join us then. For now, I’d like everyone to raise their glasses, wherever in the city or the world you are tonight, to wish them every

success and every opportunity as they go into a very different world.

We also have a list of awards and scholarships to announce this evening. I'm going to read out your names in the order in which they appear on the slides and I think Zoom allows for us to express our applause through an emoji — a sign of the times, if there was ever was one — so please do feel free to clap away with a click.

Isabella Joseph, Benjamin Akhavan, Joey Huang, Genesis Baque, Alejandra Zapata, Tania Jaquez, Ahmed Helal, Tiffany Gonzales, Sara Luna, Angela Njoroge, Martin Zanolli, Fernando Aparicio, Evan Craig, Gabriela Gonjon, Kenneth Marburg, Sonam Sherpa, Vickie Yuen, Nicolas Losi, Valmira Gashi, Pauline Dang, Kari Kleinmann, Mimi Liebenberg, Florence Methot, Henry Aguilar-Morales, Christian Coronel, Deidre Nolan, Giuliana Vaccarino Gearty, Evan Mirzakandov, Sarah Dornner, Anna McKeigue, Rujuta Naringrekar, Gabriela Garcia Pesantez, Nathalie Galarza, Catherine Prioret, Abigail Stein, Jeffrey Schneider, Lindsay Ruotolo, Annie Scott, Kayla Conroy, Kauser Dahegamia, Melek Kilinc, Selma Antoine, Daniela Friedman and Isaiaah McCullon. Congratulations to you all.

Nikki Paporello

Show Co-host & Events & Facilities Manager

The pandemic was — and still is — a crisis. Like every crisis, there's a beginning, a middle and an end. We're now in the middle phase, waiting anxiously for the end to begin. Our Summer Show and the launch of *Antidotes I* is the place to reflect and remember 2019–20, as well as think about and speculate — even tentatively — on the future.

Erica Wszolek

Show Co-host & Executive Associate

You have risen to the challenges thrown at you over the past two months with such spirit, courage and drive. Look after yourselves and one another. Be kind, be proud and give thanks to those who have supported you in ways great and small in getting through what has undoubtedly been one of the toughest challenges we have collectively faced. **Thank you and good night.**



Image: Vertigo. © Sirin Samman