

PLACE MEMORY & CULTURE INCUBATOR

AT THE SPITZER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Dean Marta Gutman, Spitzer School of Architecture (Co-PI)
Prof. Jerome Haferd, Spitzer School of Architecture (Co-PI)
Chair Sean Weiss, Spitzer School of Architecture

PMCI Mid Grant Overview

2023-2025

NEW YORK CITY'S FLAGSHIP PUBLIC SCHOOL FOR ARCHITECTURE

Creating a just, sustainable, and imaginative future. Come to dream, design, and build at City.

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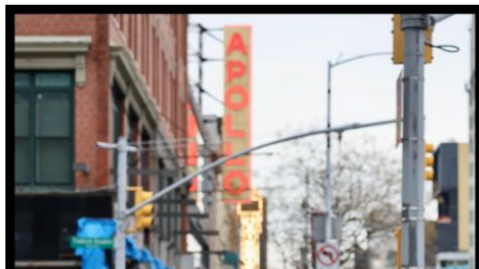
Join us for our scheduled tours and info sessions!

[UNDERGRADUATE](#)
[GRADUATE](#)

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THE PLACE, MEMORY, AND CULTURE INCUBATOR



CENTERS

J. Max Bond Center for Urban Futures

The Place, Memory, and Culture Incubator

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Want to know what's on at Spitzer?

Join our email list!

What is the Place, Memory, and Culture Incubator?

The Place, Memory, and Culture Incubator (PMCI) is a new initiative within the Spitzer School of Architecture. Funded by a grant from the Mellon Foundation, it seeks to redefine the role of preservation in the face of ongoing urban transformations in Harlem. The Incubator aims to interact with Harlem communities to transform the ways in which students engage and connect with their deep-seated histories. Design studios will record, visualize, and preserve heritage while projecting innovative, resilient cultural and spatial futures.



FAST FACTS



Humanities in Place

How and where we tell our stories matters.



[ABOUT](#) [ACADEMICS](#) [ADMISSIONS](#) [FINANCIAL AID](#) [RESEARCH](#) [COLLEGES](#) [NEWS](#)

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Mellon Foundation Awards Spitzer School \$1.5M For Multidisciplinary Community-Based Incubator

August 21, 2023

The City College of New York is the recipient of a three-year \$1.5 million grant from the Mellon Foundation to support a new multidisciplinary Place, Memory and Culture Incubator (PMCI) in the [Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture](#). The incubator's focus will be community-based partnerships and projects in Harlem that engage built-environment design and the humanities through a social-justice lens.

[City College President Vincent G. Boudreau](#) thanked the Mellon Foundation for the grant and lauded the Foundation's long-running support of CCNY [programs, faculty](#), and [students](#). This is the first Mellon grant for the Spitzer School.

"This latest project recognizes the historic positioning of the Spitzer School of Architecture in the Harlem community as well as our commitment, in the architectural field and elsewhere in the college, to acknowledging, preserving and democratizing access to the important physical and cultural legacies of this place," said Boudreau.

The incubator, he added, will provide a space and a methodology for members of the CCNY community — academic and neighborhood — to engage with one another in the production of more representative and authentic histories.



CCNY Spitzer student presentation workshop with National Negro Opera House, Pittsburgh, Unit 24 : Marronage, Jerome Haferd (lead faculty), A.L Hu (co-faculty)

PLACE MEMORY & CULTURE INCUBATOR

AT THE SPITZER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

WHAT IS THE PLACE, MEMORY AND CULTURE INCUBATOR?

The Place, Memory, and Culture Incubator (PMCI) is a new initiative within the Spitzer School of Architecture at The City College of New York funded by the Mellon Foundation. It seeks to redefine preservation in the face of ongoing urban transformations in **Harlem**.

The Incubator works closely with communities across Harlem (east-west) and their **deep-seated histories**, and at the same time, it transforms how architecture students engage the past, present, and future. Design studios (spatial practice-oriented classes) record, visualize, and preserve the heritage as community members understand through media, exhibitions, symposia, a **living digital archive**, public art, and education programs.

Rooted in a commitment to change how preservation is taught at the Spitzer School of Architecture, a crucial part of the PMCI is diversifying faculty and **integrating the humanities and its various art forms**. Ultimately, the PMCI aims to support and cultivate more **resilient and just spatial futures in Harlem**.

The Place, Memory, and Culture Incubator Team:

PI's & Co-Directors: Dean Marta Gutman, and Prof. Jerome Haferd

Co-PI: Chair Sean Weiss

Program Coordinator: Aminata Diop

Comms and Engagement Associate: Pedro Cruz Cruz

Research Associate: Jah elyse sayers

PMCI Goals:

Engage & Support Community Ecosystem
Diversify Faculty + Staff
Expand Ideas of Preservation Practice
Change How We Teach & Support Students

Some current and potential PMCI partners :

Harlem Arts Alliance
While We are Still Here
Harlem African Burial Ground Initiative
Harlem OneStop
Broadway Malls Association
Maysles Documentary Center
Harlem YMCA
Harlem Stage
Voza Rivers' New Heritage Theater
Harlem Mothers and Fathers S.A.V.E
National Black Theatre
Marcus Garvey Park Alliance
Harlem Needle Arts
Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Inst.
Brotherhood Sister Sol
Children's Arts Carnival
Friends of St. Nicholas Park
Save Harlem Now!
Harlem School for the Arts
Uptown Grand Central
....local artists, memory and cultural workers

PMCI By The Numbers :

PEOPLE

- ✧ 3 staff hires
- ✧ 3 faculty hires
- ✧ 132 students served
- ✧ 4 faculty involved (advisory committee)
- ✧ 12 anchor partners
- ✧ 5 supporting partners
- ✧ 12+ guests engaged
- ✧ 4 interns in progress

IN-PERSON ENGAGEMENTS

- ✧ 1 advisory committee established
- ✧ 9 studios taught
- ✧ 10+ sites engaged
- ✧ 3 Harlem activations
- ✧ 6 Spitzer gatherings / reviews
- ✧ 9 PMCI lectures / recorded for the archive

RESOURCES DISTRIBUTED

- ✧ 11 microgrants in process, 5 more to be disbursed
- ✧ 6 microgrant related projects initiated w/ partners

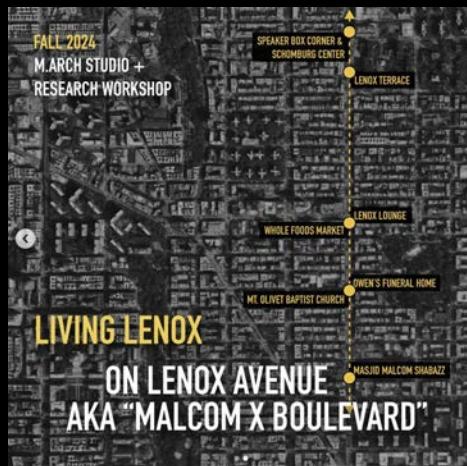
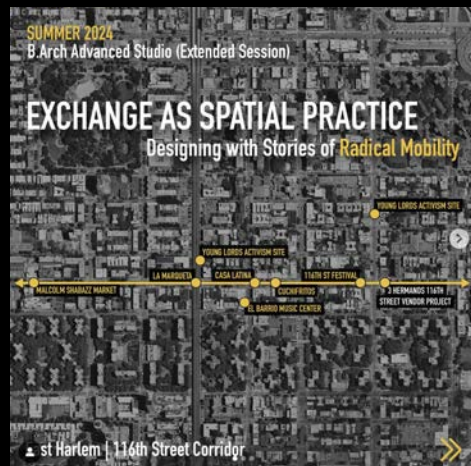
OTHER MILESTONES

- ✧ Digital archive in progress
- ✧ Oral histories project started
- ✧ Website created
- ✧ Instagram created

Studios + (Harlem) Activations

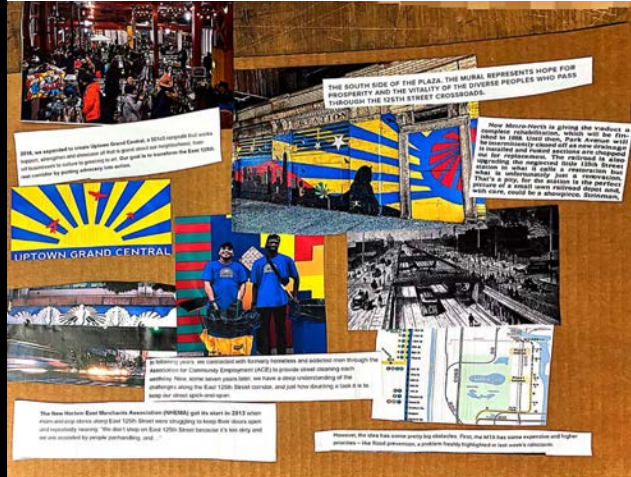
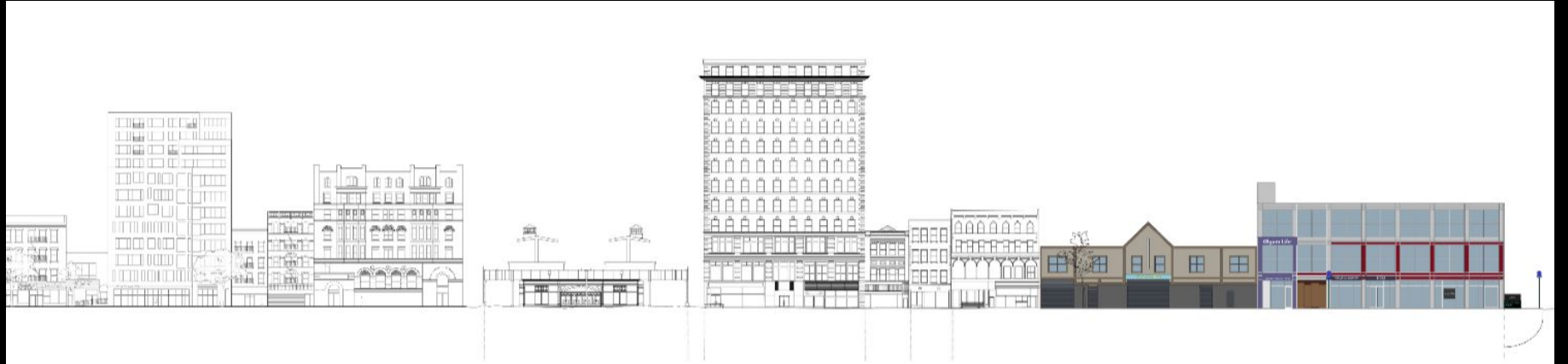


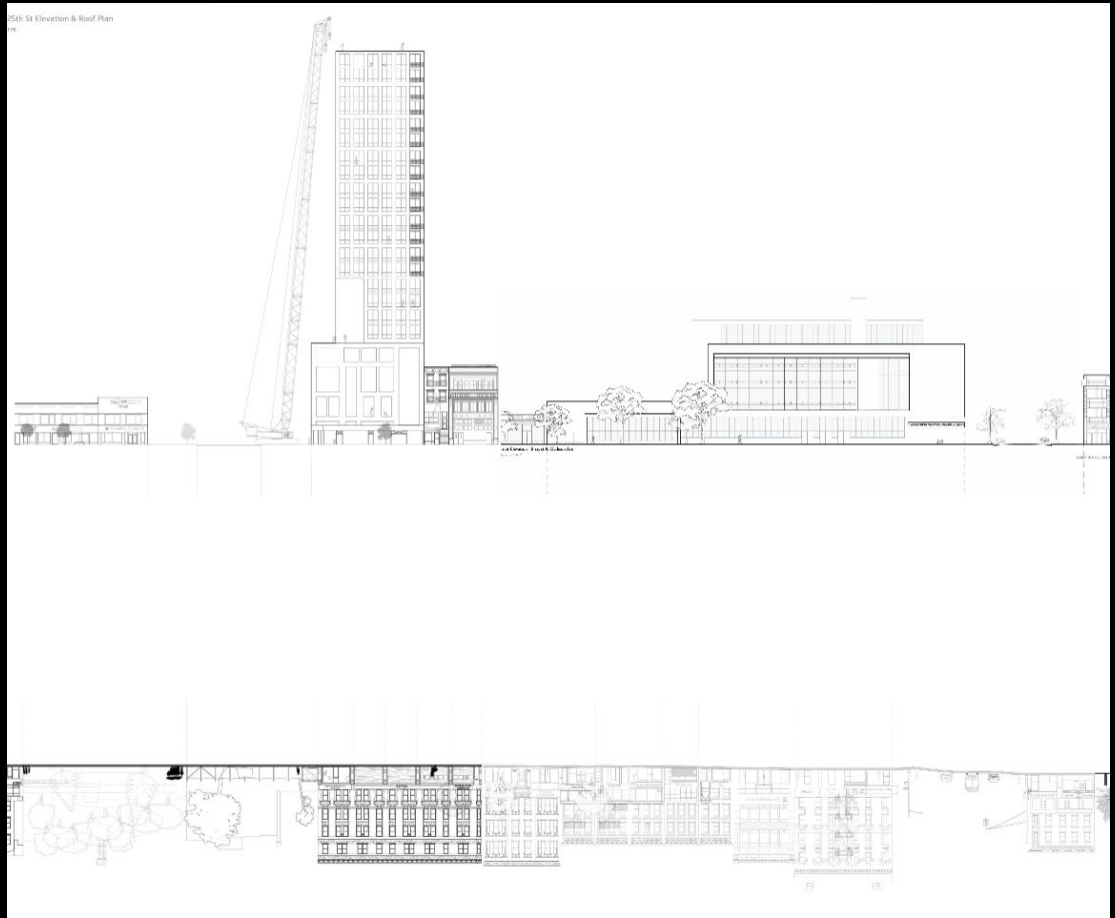
Studios + (Harlem) Activations





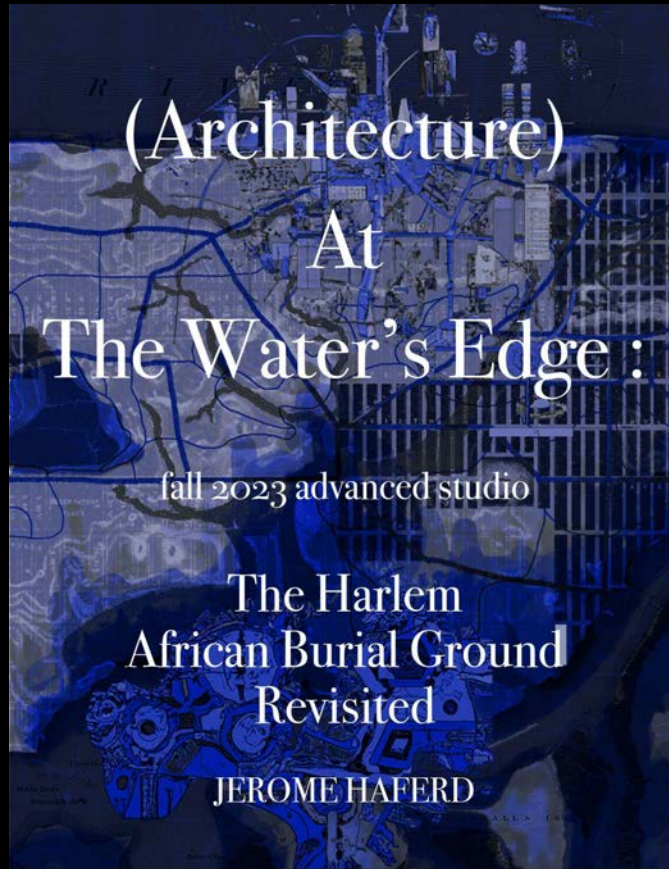
Fall 2024 116th St. Studio Walkthrough







Spring 2025 135th St. Studio Walkthrough



(Architecture)

At

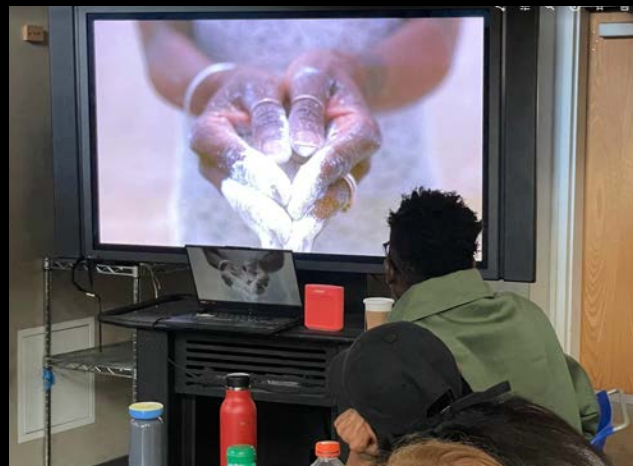
The Water's Edge :

fall 2023 advanced studio

The Harlem
African Burial Ground
Revisited

JEROME HAFERD





Water Stories (Architecture at Water's Edge), w/ partner nia love, 2023

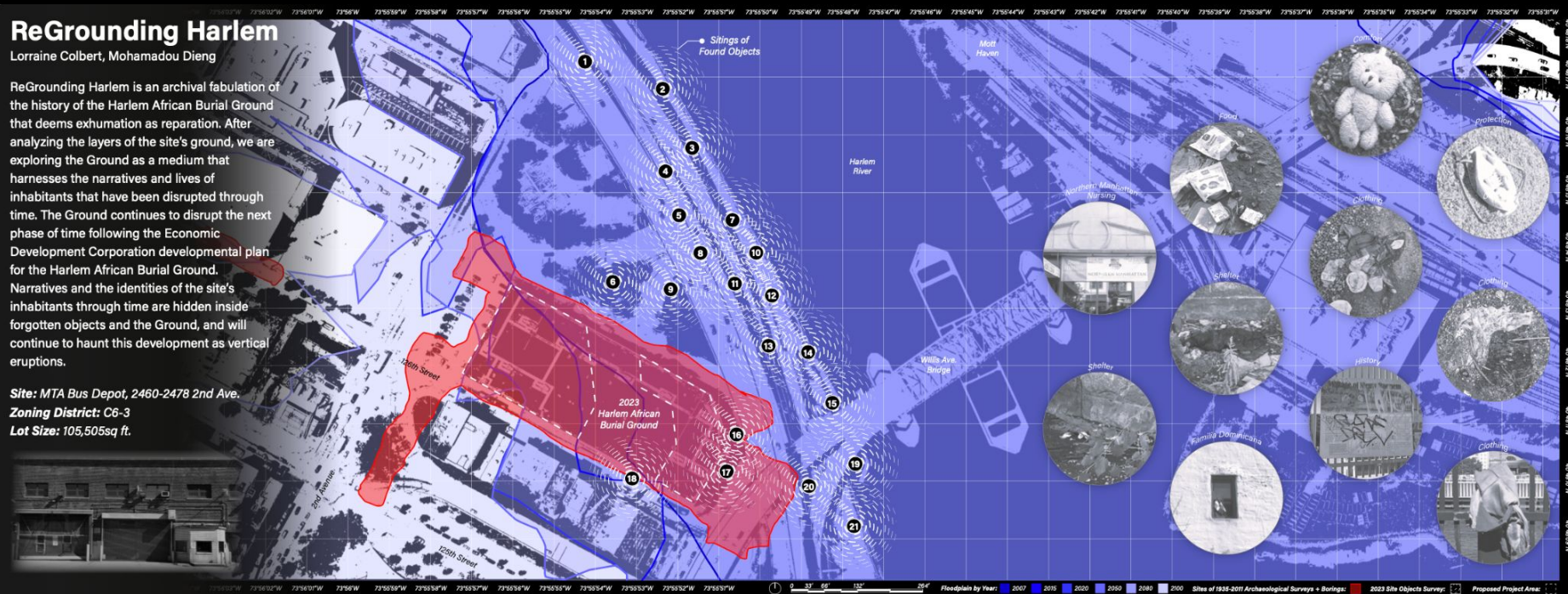
Lorraine Colbert, Mohamadou Dieng

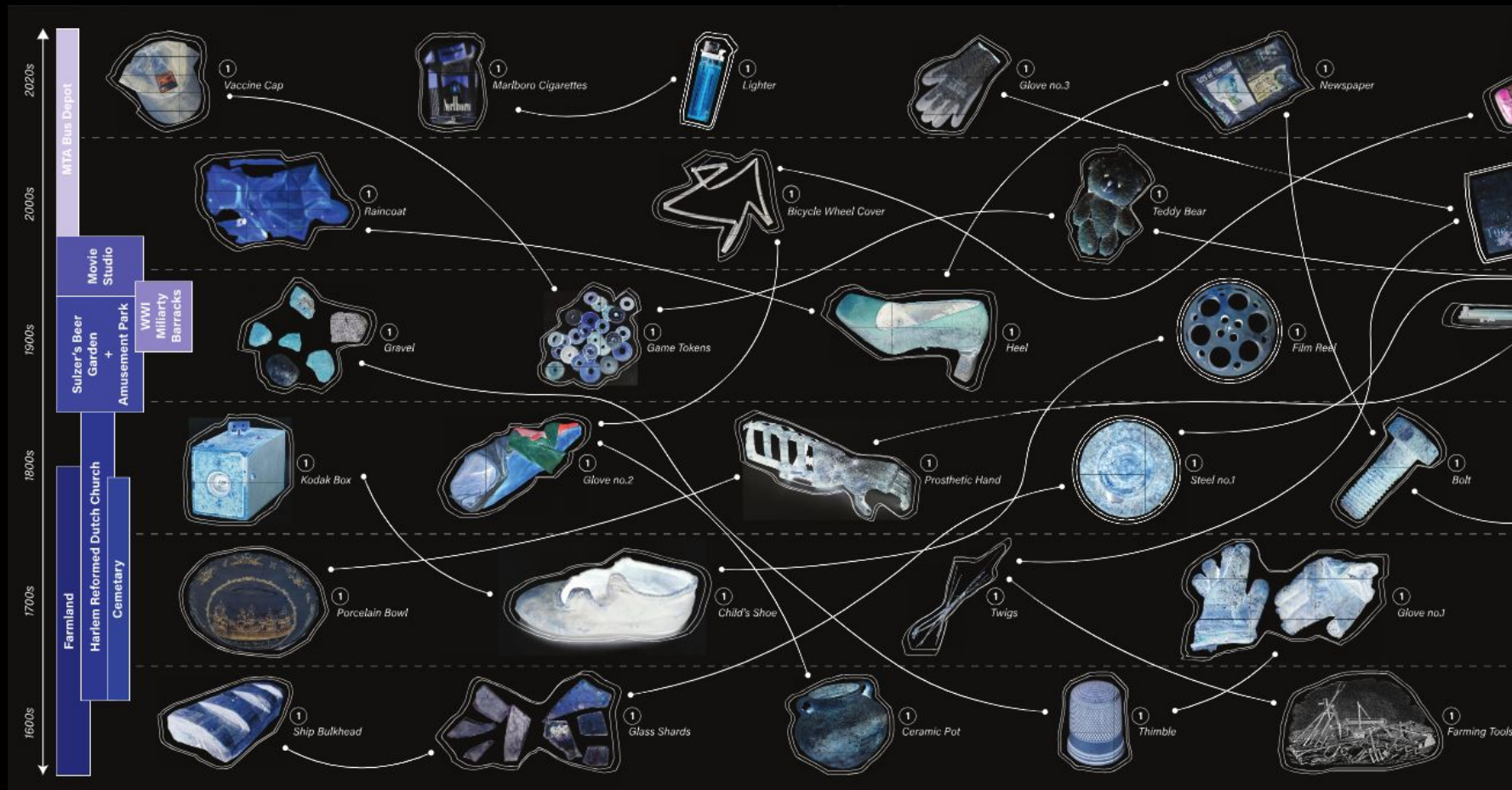
ReGrounding Harlem is an archival fabulation of the history of the Harlem African Burial Ground that deems exhumation as reparation. After analyzing the layers of the site's ground, we are exploring the Ground as a medium that harnesses the narratives and lives of inhabitants that have been disrupted through time. The Ground continues to disrupt the next phase of time following the Economic Development Corporation developmental plan for the Harlem African Burial Ground. Narratives and the identities of the site's inhabitants through time are hidden inside forgotten objects and the Ground, and will continue to haunt this development as vertical eruptions.

Site: MTA Bus Depot, 2460-2478 2nd Ave.

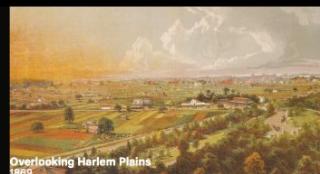
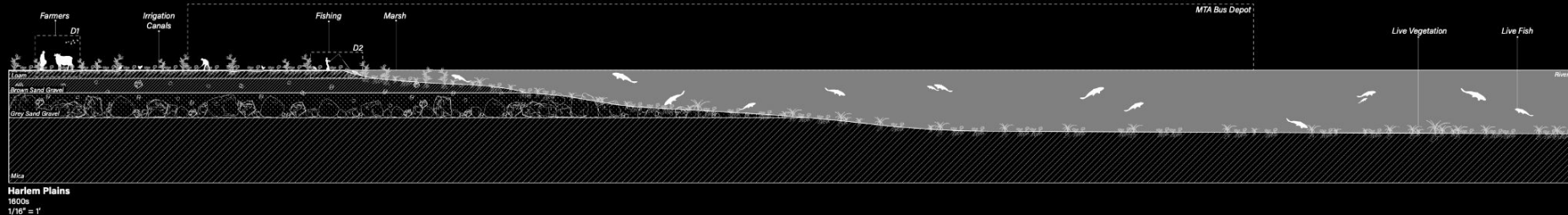
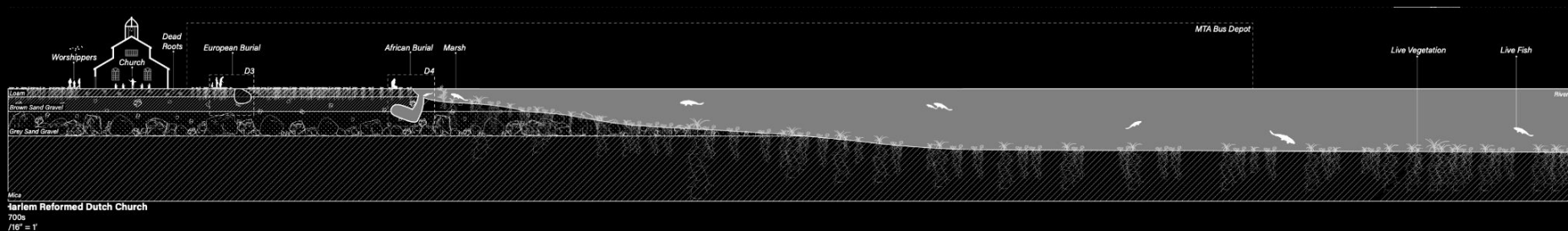
Zoning District: C6-3

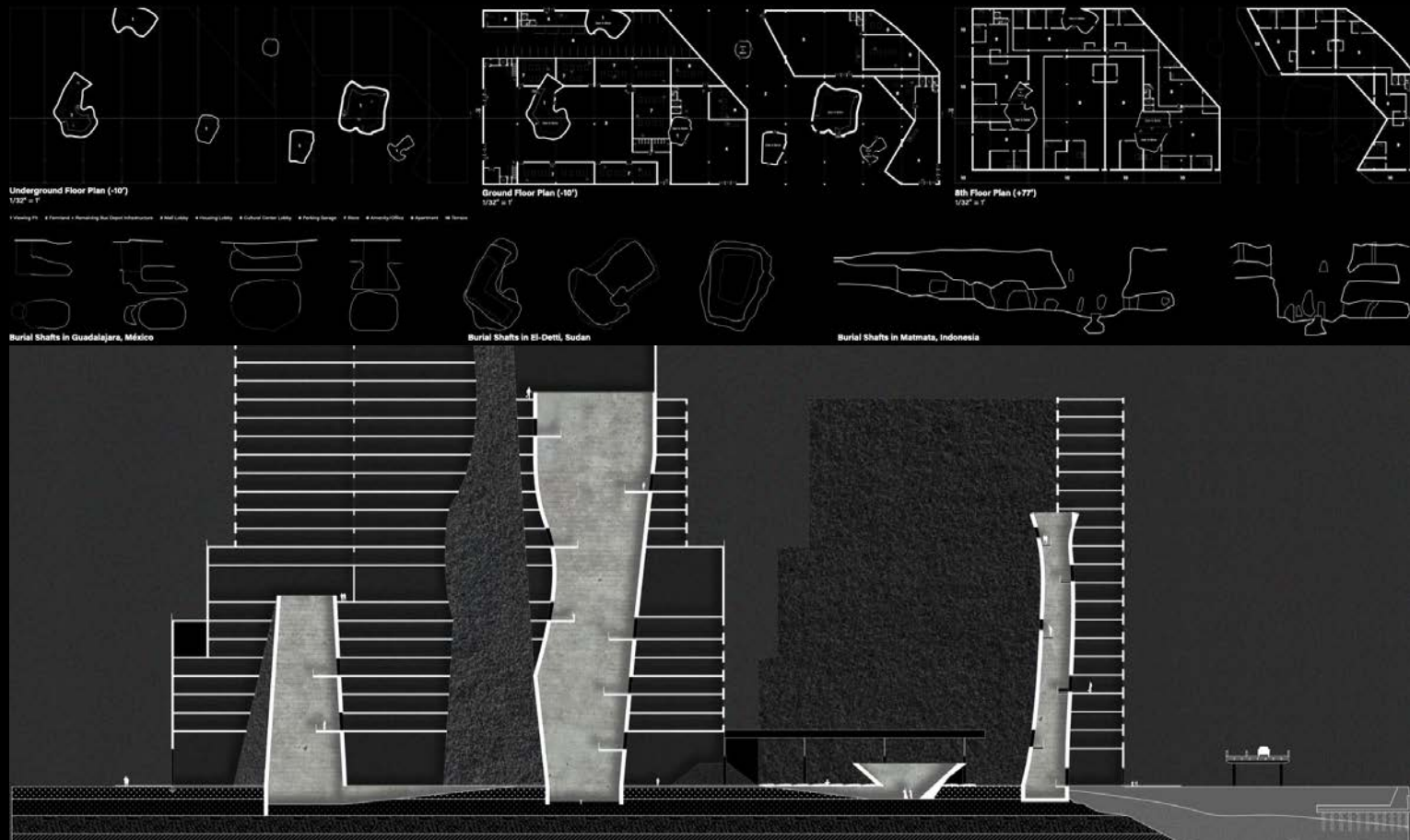
Lot Size: 105,505sq ft.



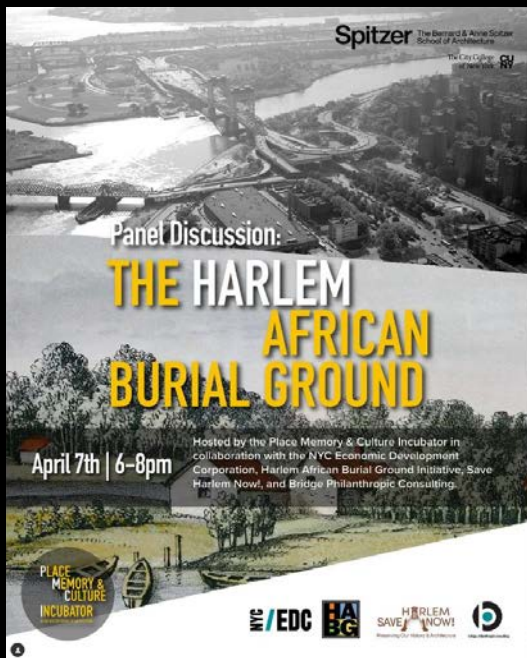


"Regrounding Harlem", by Lorraine Colbert & Moe Dieng





"Regrounding Harlem", by Lorraine Colbert & Moe Dieng



The Harlem African Burial Ground Panel Discussion Spring 2025



Franco the Great

Born to Live: The True Story of
The Man Who Made Harlem Beautiful



Franco "The Great" Gaskin Community Partner Lecture/Visit



"Franco's Gates", Christine Filipova BArch 2nd year



"Franco's Gates", Christine Filipova, Etty Jajati, BArch 2nd year



Spring 2024 125th Street Final Activation - Uptown Grand Central Viaduct



"Generative Harlem Histories" 135th street activation with NHT Luther "The Anubis" Isler performing
May 16, 2025



Spring 2025 135th Street Final Activation - Harlem YMCA + Harlem Hospital + Schomburg + New Heritage Theatre Lot

Lecture Series / PMCI Talks

franco gaskin

"franco the great"

The Harlem artist, known for his 125th street storefront gate paintings spanning decades, will share his work and legacy.

ssa
auditorium
room 107

Open to All

—02.27
2:00pm - 3:00pm



Place
Memory &
Culture Incubator
Harlem

Generative Histories Harlem
Spring 2024 Partner Lectures

karen taylor

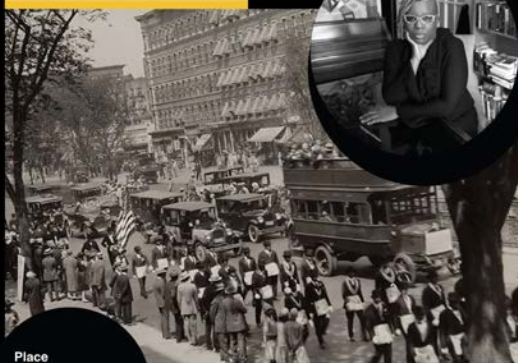
"While We Are Still Here"

Karen Taylor, the director of "While We Are Still Here", will share the organization's work on preserving both the well known and underrepresented histories in Harlem and 125th St.

ssa
auditorium
room 107

Open to All

—02.20
2:00pm - 3:00pm



Place
Memory &
Culture Incubator
Harlem

Generative Histories Harlem
Spring 2024 Partner Lectures

Michael Henry Adams

Tuesday
March 19th

2:00pm to
3:00pm



Michael Henry Adams is an activist, a local historian of Harlem and an LGBTQ+ history specialist. Currently he's at work on the forthcoming Homo Harlem, A Chronicle of Lesbian and Gay Life in the African American Cultural Capital, 1915-1995. He is a passionate supporter of historic preservation and helped start Save Harlem Now!



SSA
Auditorium
Room 107
Open to All



Place
Memory &
Culture Incubator
Harlem

Generative Histories Harlem
Spring 2024 Partner Lectures

Generative Histories

SSA
Auditorium
Room 107



04.16

Antoine Roney

Philadelphia-born tenor saxophonist with both alto and tenor sax studies. Antoine graduated from the Duke Ellington School of the Arts and attended college at the Hartt School of Music, where he studied with alto saxophonist, Jackie McLean. Antoine has released five albums as a leader, in addition to working with Donald Byrd, Jackie McLean, Clifford Jordan, Ted Curson, John Patton, Rashied Ali, Arthur Taylor, Jesse Davis, Ravi Coltrane, Michael Carvin, Geri Allen, Chick Corea, and Elvin Jones, to name a few.

Open to All
2:00pm to
3:00pm

Place
Memory &
Culture Incubator
Harlem

Generative Histories Harlem
Spring 2024 Partner Lectures

Generative Histories Harlem

SSA
Auditorium
Room 107

Nina Cooke John

Jamaican architect and founding principal of Studio Cooke John.



05.07



Gerardo Ciprian

Dominican-American visual artist whose work explores migration, diaspora, and mythology.

May 7th
2:00pm to
3:00pm

Open to All

Place
Memory &
Culture Incubator
Harlem

Generative Histories Harlem
Spring 2024 Partner Lecture Series

Generative Histories

Tuesday
April 2nd

2:00pm to
3:00pm

04.02

SSA
Auditorium
Room 107
Open to All

Place
Memory &
Culture Incubator
Harlem

nia Love

Dancer, Choreographer, Educator and Co-faculty, PMCI Sp24 Core IV Studio



Chat Travieso

Artist, Urbanist, Educator and Co-faculty, PMCI Sp24 Core IV Studio

Generative Histories Harlem
Spring 2024 Partner Lectures



Spring 2025 New Heritage Theater Group Visit

Community Partners

PMCI Harlem Map



Layanor
Layanor is a multidisciplinary artist, writer, and curator. She is the co-founder of the Harlem Cultural Heritage Council, a non-profit organization dedicated to preserving and promoting the cultural heritage of the Harlem community. She is also the author of the book "Harlem Cultural Heritage: A Guide to the Neighborhood's Rich History and Artistic Legacy."



A. Kennedy Spillers
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Cesaria Chiriac
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Curt J. Buckner
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Naila Zippi Johnson
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Claudene Brindley
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Jerome Buford
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Sabine Blazie
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Valerie Jo Bradley
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Aminata Dion
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Jah Olyse Sayers
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Pedro Cruz Cruz
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Caray Kim
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Kareemah Bolagun
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Franco Eschke
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GENERATION HISTORIES HARLEM, PART I

AT THE WATER'S EDGE:
THE HARLEM AFRICAN
BURIAL GROUND

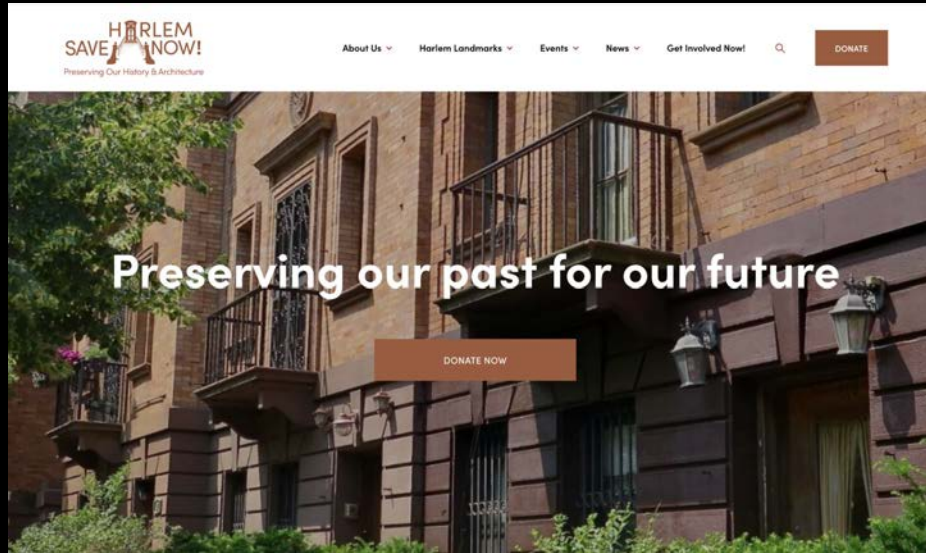
EXCHANGE AS
SPATIAL PRACTICE

Caribbean Cultural Center African Diaspora Institute, CCCADI

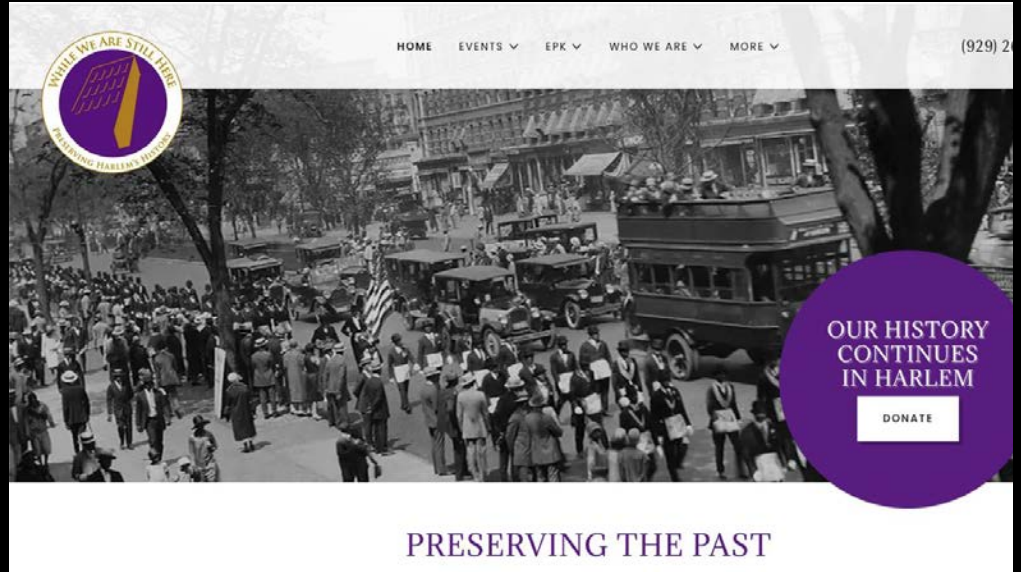


Fall 2023 Harlem African Burial Ground Presentations / Exhibit, CCCADI

Save Harlem Now!



While We Are Still Here / Karen Taylor



Uptown Grand Central



Spring 2024 Uptown Grand Central Plaza Activation

Maysles Documentary Center



Maysles Documentary Center Store Front



Fall 2024 Living Lenox Studio Student Presentations

LIVING LENOX:

Fall 2024 Graduate Studio +
prof. Jerome Haford and
Najha-Zigbi Johnson

CCNY Spitzer School of Architecture
Dec 12, 2024 Systems Exhibit + Presentations

Microgrants

Save Harlem Now!

CCCADI

nia love dance

Uptown Grand Central

Franco Gaskin

Maysles Documentary Center

Michael Henry Adams

Maysles Documentary Center

Yoruba Cultural Center

New Heritage Theatre

YMCA Harlem

Harlem Cultural Archive

Generative Histories Harlem Exhibition





Generative Histories Harlem Exhibition Spring 2025



Summer 2024 Spatial Collage/Model



Fall 2024 Living Lenox Studio Student Model



Spring 2024 Interpretive Document



Whole Foods Site



Mt. Olivet Baptist



Lenox Terrace



Maysles



Lenox Lounge / Wells Fargo



St. Martin's Episcopal

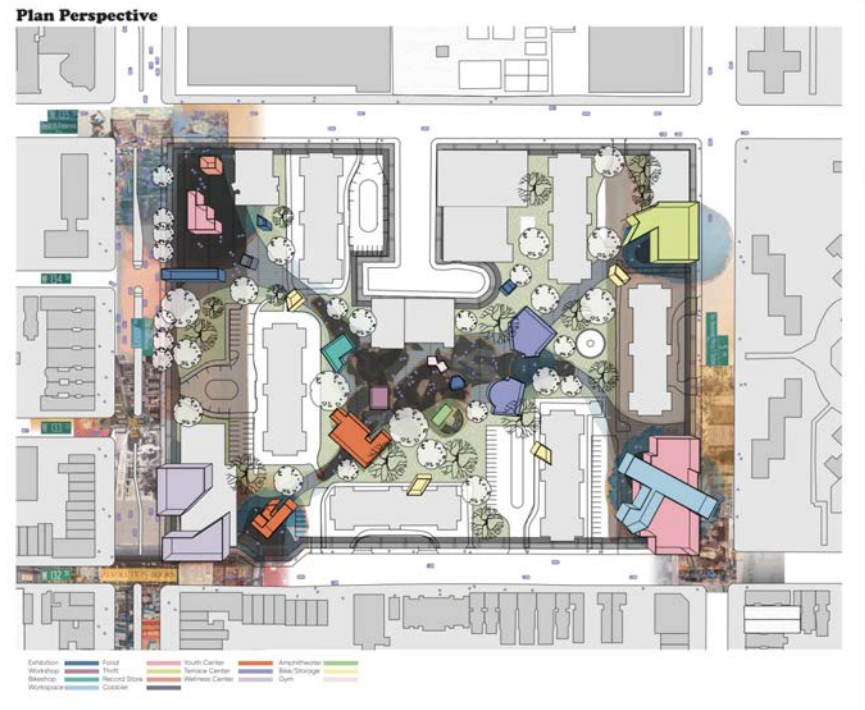
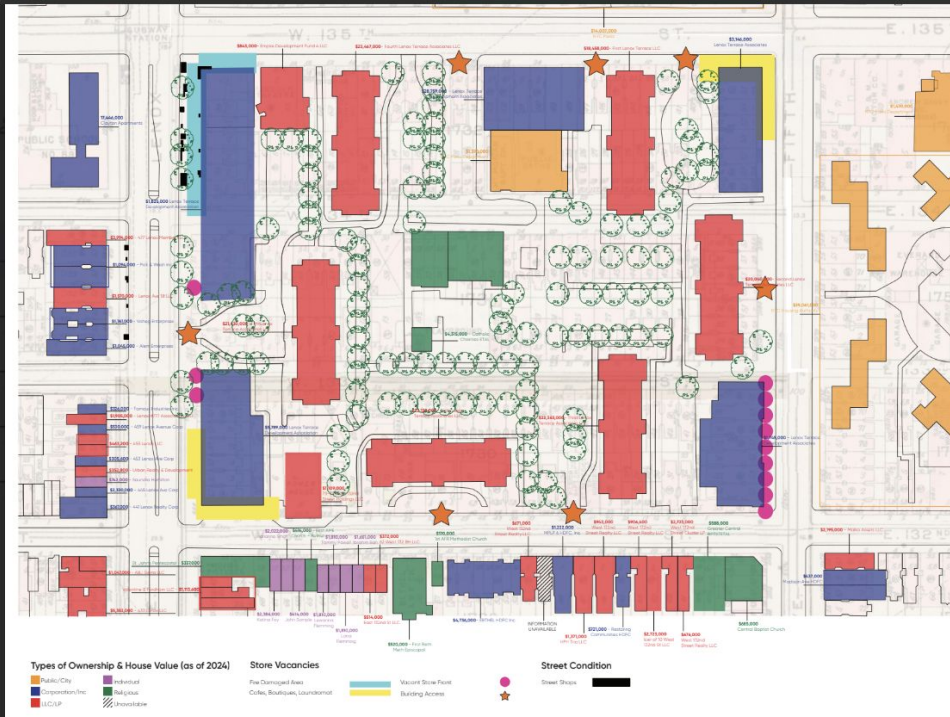


Masjid Malcolm X

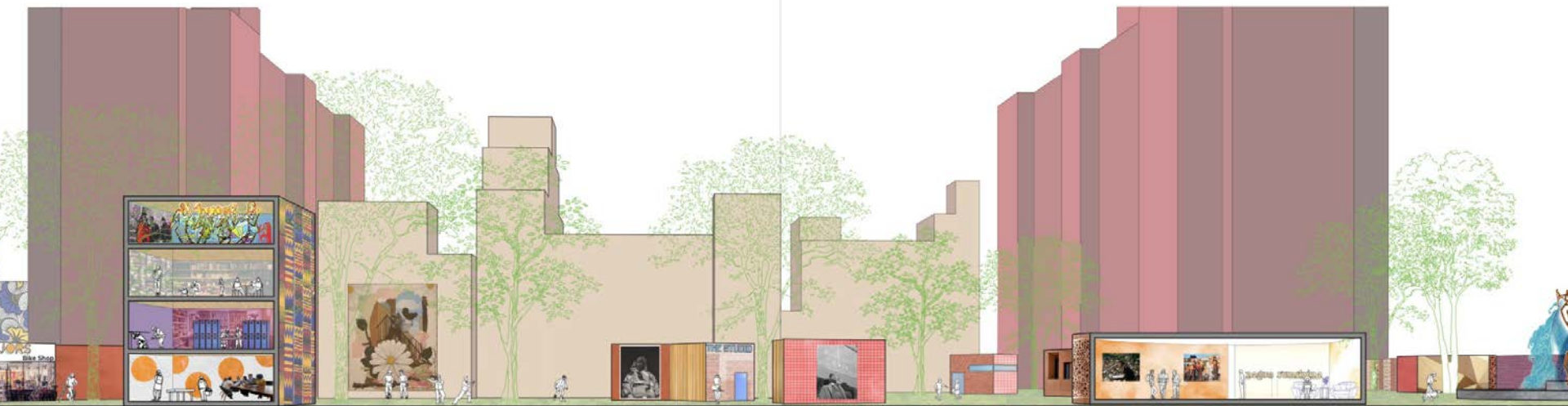
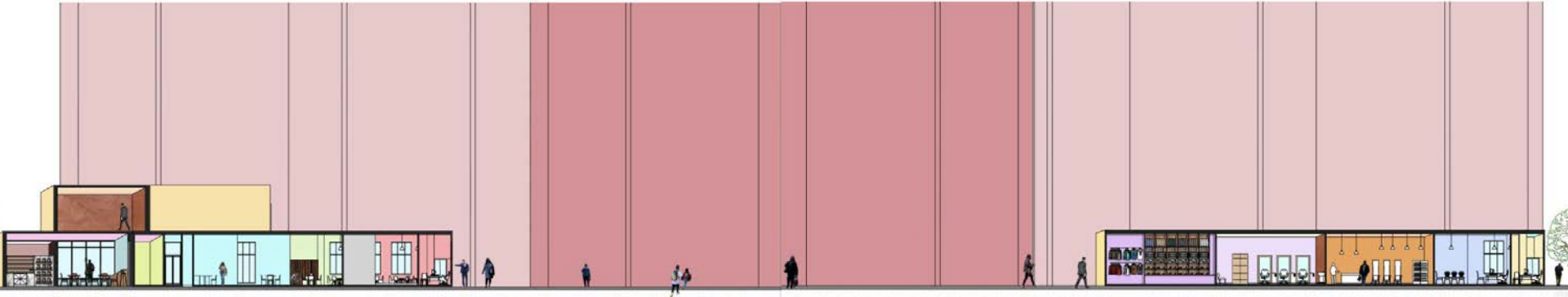


Lenox Terrace





Fall 2024 Living Lenox Studio, Lenox Terrace, Student Project



Looking Ahead_
Living Digital Archive
Toolkit



**Living Digital Archive Working Group
(as of May 2025)**

PMCI

Save Harlem Now

CCCADI

Harlem Cultural Archive

Uptown Grand Central

HARLEM

ARCHIVE

EXHIBITS

MAP

SUBMIT

ABOUT

CO-STEWARDS

DONATE



HARLEM DIGITAL ARCHIVE



HARLEM

ARCHIVE

EXHIBITS

MAP

SUBMIT

ABOUT

RESOURCES

DONATE

HARLEM HISTORY RESOURCES



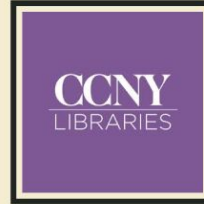
SCHOMBURG CENTER
FOR RESEARCH IN BLACK
CULTURE, NEW YORK
PUBLIC LIBRARY



HARLEM CULTURAL
ARCHIVES



NATIONAL JAZZ MUSEUM

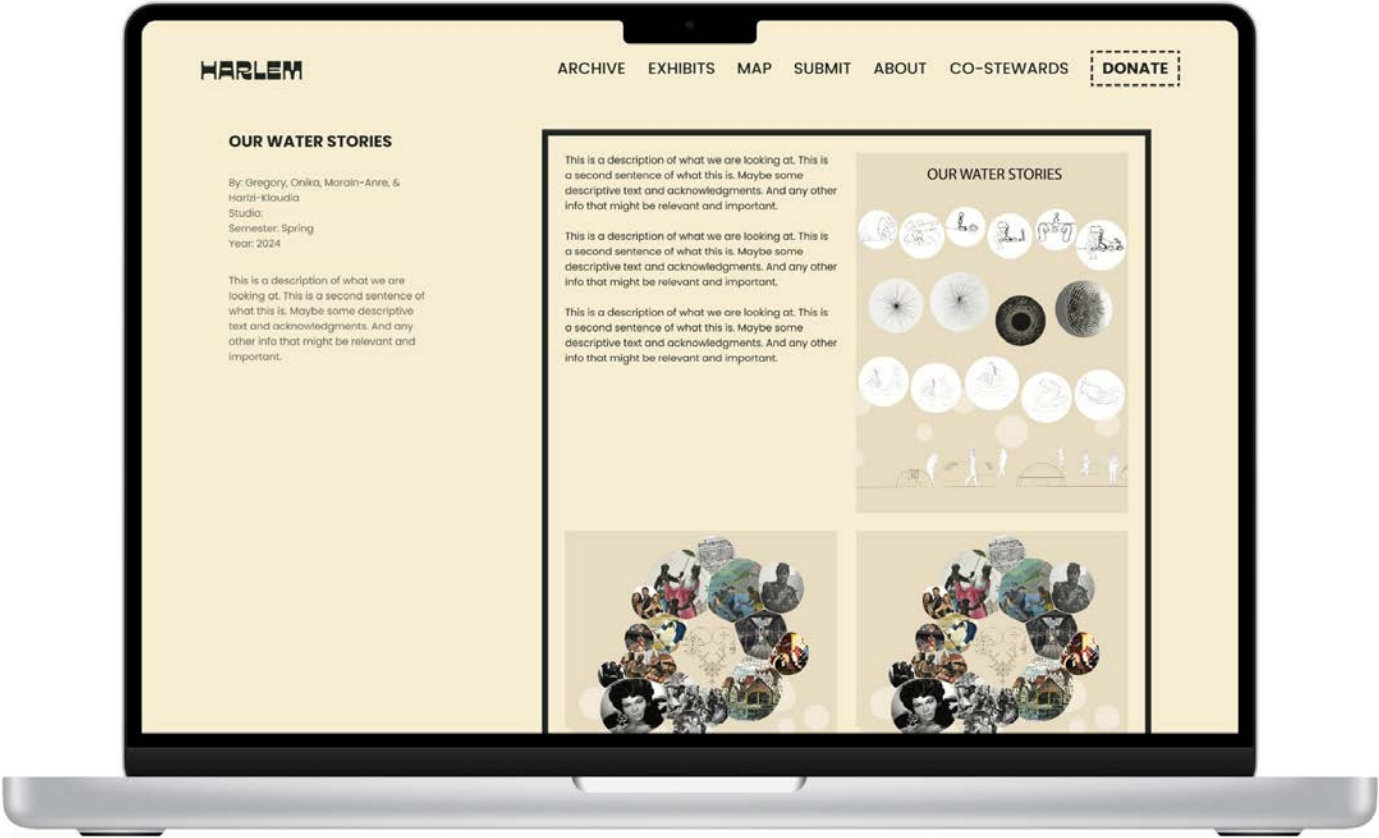


HARLEM DEVELOPMENT
ARCHIVE, CCNY



4. Flow: Resources

Additional deliverable:
Content templates



4. Flows: Content

HARLEM ARCHIVE EXHIBITS MAP SUBMIT ABOUT CO-STEWARDS **DONATE**

SUBMIT YOUR STORIES!

Contribute to the shared story of Harlem! The submitted content will add to the shared histories of Harlem.

The submitted images will add to the living archive of our communities. We want your photos, creations, writings, history, and everything in-between.

Want to upload a video? Email us at this.is.an.email@harlemda.org

PDF, DOC, JPEG, PNG, MP3 (Max 10MB) ⓘ

Drag or Choose your file

First Name Title

Last Name Description (0/150)

Add contributor

Email Address Alt Text (0/150)

Phone Number (Optional)

Affiliation (Optional) Date of Origin

Category ☐ Political ☐ Food ☐ Art/Culture ☐ Sports ☐ Housing ☐ Spiritual ☐ Business ☐ Other

☐ Let Harlem record, copy, edit, reproduce, broadcast, transmit, and/or exhibit your submission and the information you've shared about it.

Add another

Submit

Español

Bi-lingual interface

Want to upload a video? Email us at this.is.an.email@harlemda.org

Non-tech support

ⓘ

Long caption

Alt Text (0/150)

Commitment to accessibility

Multi-file submissions

Add another

Submit

4. Flow: Submit

HARLEM ARCHIVE EXHIBITS MAP SUBMIT ABOUT CO-STEWARDS **DONATE**

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Contribute to the shared story of Harlem! The submitted content will add to the shared histories of Harlem.

The submitted images will add to the living archive of our communities. We want your photos, creations, writings, history, and everything in-between.

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PDF, DOC, JPEG, PNG, MP3 (Max 10MB)

Drag or Choose your File

First Name Title

Last Name Description (0/150)

Add contributor

Email Address

Phone Number (Optional)

Affiliation (Optional)

Year of Origin

Category

☐ Political
 ☐ Food
 ☐ Art/Culture
 ☐ Sports
 ☐ Housing
 ☐ Spiritual
 ☐ Business
 ☐ Other

Let Harlem record, copy, edit, reproduce, broadcast, transmit, and/or exhibit your submission and the information you've shared about it.

Add another

Submit

Español

Want to upload a video? Email us at this.is.an.email@harlemda.org

Long caption

Alt Text (0/150)

Add another

Submit

Bi-lingual interface

Non-tech support

Long caption

Commitment to accessibility

Multi-file submissions

4. Flow: Submit



4. Responsive design

THEME

IN CONVERSATION

1-on-1s: Partners' LDA Contributions

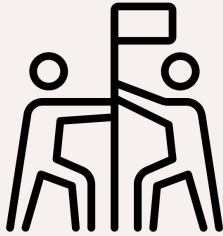
LDA Partner	Discussion Takeaways
CCCADI	Currently sorting through & digitizing 50-year archive
Harlem Cultural Archives	Existing oral history interviews; street co-naming events; PSAs made by students
Save Harlem Now	Existing interviews w/ gala awardees; potentially: LPC testimonies; church archives
Uptown Grand Central	Small Business Histories project
While We Are Still Here	"Community dig day"
PMCI	Interviews with partners (in this room and beyond) about their place-based cultural and preservation work

GOALS: SERIES



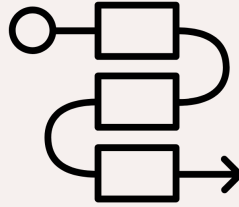
FEEDBACK

Generate critical feedback on the Living Digital Archive prototype thus far



PARTNERS

Identify & build relationships amongst Living Digital Archive stakeholders



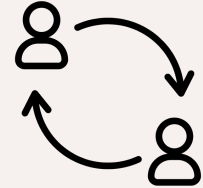
PROCESS

Co-develop processes, values, and criteria for archive submission, curation, and presentation



LONG-TERM

Identify sustainable long-term stewardship plan



TRANSFER

Begin transitioning the Living Digital Archive from PMCI incubation to community-based stewardship

PLACE MEMORY & CULTURE INCUBATOR

AT THE SPITZER SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

Thank You

