

Build the Future ANNUAL REPORT

The Spitzer School of Architecture, the flagship public school of architecture in New York City, is committed to creating a just, sustainable, and imaginative future. Through innovative research and interdisciplinary collaboration, the distinguished faculty educate the diverse student body in degree programs in architecture, landscape architecture, urban design, urban studies, and urban sustainability. Students are invited to design, to build, and to dream; they weigh in on (and intend to solve) the crises of our time; they learn the fundamentals of the craft of the professions of architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design. As designers, builders, developers, public servants, leaders, and innovators, graduates of the Spitzer School reflect and enrich the complex communities in which they live, practice, and work; they become skilled, committed, and engaged professionals who advocate for a better city, a better country, and a better world.

Our school is sustained by the mission of the City College of New York, which has enabled working-class, moderate-income, and immigrant New Yorkers access to the American dream for more than 175 years. At Spitzer, we act in the spirit of City College's historic Ephebic Oath in that we are determined, "to transmit the city, not only not less, but greater, better, and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us."

The City University of New York is the nation's largest urban public university, a transformative engine of social mobility that is a critical component of the lifeblood of New York City. Founded in 1847 as the nation's first free public institution of higher education, CUNY today has 25 colleges spread across New York City's five boroughs, serving 243,000 degree-seeking students of all ages and awarding 55,000 degrees each year. More than 80 percent of the University's graduates stay in New York, contributing to all aspects of the city's economic, civic and cultural life and diversifying the city's workforce in every sector. The University's historic mission continues to this day: provide a public first-rate education to all students, regardless of means or background.

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2024-2025



The City College
of New York



The Bernard and Anne Spitzer
School of Architecture



Spitzer

The Bernard & Anne Spitzer
School of Architecture

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Dear Friends and Supporters,

The Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture at the City College of New York is a jewel box division, dedicated to developing the talent of our students to meet the needs of the City and beyond. As New York's premier public school of architecture, the Spitzer School has a specific mandate to train students who will think deeply about the needs of our communities and respond to those needs.

In these pages, you will read of some of the school's most notable current accomplishments, including the development of a state-of-the-art robotics facility to prepare our architects for digital design in the era of AI, a memory and place incubator, designed to curate and preserve the history of our Harlem neighborhood, and to enshrine that history in the construction of new futures. In these ways and many more, the Spitzer School is developing the resources to prepare architectural practitioners for relevant roles in a rapidly changing environment.

You'll also read our student accomplishments, faculty research, and how the school, as an institution, is making its mark on the New York cityscape. The report tells the story of a school where students, faculty, and staff think deeply about their responsibility to our communities and translate that sense of responsibility into concrete work.

I hope you enjoy learning more about the school's work over the past year, that you will find ways to contribute to our success, and that you'll keep an eye out to find opportunities—in our various exhibition or lectures—like our Mumford and Sciamé lectures—to come to CCNY and visit the remarkable Bernard and Anne Spitzer School of Architecture.

Thank you for your interest and for your support!

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'V. Boudreau'.

Vincent Boudreau, PhD
CCNY President



Greetings from the Spitzer School of Architecture!

It's been a busy year at Spitzer, with preparations for the visit from the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB) taking center stage. The visiting team came to Spitzer in March, and together, students, faculty, and staff welcomed the group and facilitated its rigorous review, which is conducted every eight years and is essential for maintaining accreditation for two of our professional degree programs: the Bachelor of Architecture and the Master of Architecture. The next step in this process is for the NAAB board of directors to assess the team's report, and we're waiting for their response, as we go to press.

"Build the Future," the central theme of this report, describes key initiatives and accomplishments of the past year. Faculty, staff, and students are building a legacy of impact and leadership by securing grants, publishing new research, and bringing innovative student designs to fruition. Design-Build is thriving at Spitzer, with the newest example being the Concrete Masonry Project Advanced Studio. Through generous funding received from industry and union partners, this project teaches students that architecture is an applied art that requires hands-on knowledge and expertise. The Place, Memory, Culture Incubator (PMCI) continues to win accolades for integrating community engagement with historic preservation and architecture education. The exhibit "Generative Histories Harlem" filled the first floor of Spitzer with stunning examples of PMCI's accomplishments.

More innovation in design and construction is on the horizon, supported by capital improvements. The construction of the Robotics Lab has just been completed. This new lab is part of state-of-the-art research facilities, a consortium I've called City Labs, which aims to push the frontiers of architecture and urbanism and prepare students for a rapidly changing world. In tandem with the Living Systems Lab and the Advanced Building Construction Lab, the Robotics Lab will enable experimentation with new materials and technologies and encourage hands-on engagement with artificial intelligence and materials science. Fundraising for City Labs is advancing, and I invite you to join me in supporting this vital project. The Sorkin Reading Room, dedicated to the late distinguished professor Michael Sorkin, is open and being used as a space for research and community engagement. The long-awaited renovation and restoration of the Atrium Gallery and the Roof Amphitheater were completed over the summer.

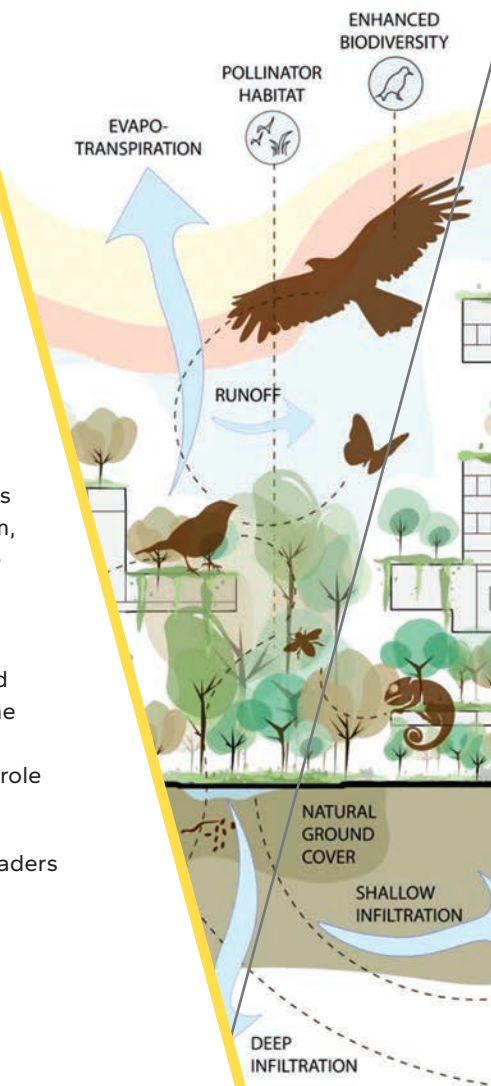
Our faculty continue to earn awards, publish research, and take on leadership roles. I am pleased to announce that the faculty elected Associate Professor Frank Melendez as the new Chair of the Architecture Department. He is dedicated to preparing students for today's social, political, and ecological challenges. He is joined by Associate Professor Ahu Aydogan, who has accepted the role of Deputy Chair. I am also happy to share that Fran Leadon has been promoted to full Professor.

I encourage you to explore this report to see how we continue to prepare a new generation of leaders to shape a better, more equitable, more sustainable world.

Sincerely,

Marta R. Gutman

Marta Gutman, PhD
Dean and Professor



Dear Spitzer Community,

Hello! I hope you all had a restful and restorative summer. We are now a few weeks into the fall 2025 semester and already we are seeing exciting things happen in our classrooms, hallways, student clubs and Spitzer committees. I'm pleased to share some updates about our ongoing commitment to fostering wellness and community within the school.

In my role as Associate Dean, I have the immense pleasure of working alongside our faculty, students, and staff to develop comprehensive support systems that extend beyond traditional academic programming. The world is increasingly chaotic and unstable for many people for many reasons right now; I am hopeful that we provide some refuge and relief, albeit briefly, for those here at Spitzer through our work. The JEDI (Justice, Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion) Committee—soon to be transformed into the JEDI/Wellness & Community Collective—continues to implement and offer initiatives and activities that prioritize both individual wellbeing and collective flourishing.

This past year, we brought several wellness programs to the community that have now become integral to the Spitzer experience. Through our partners, New York Therapy Animals, Inc., we continue our therapy dog visits that provide moments of comfort and joy during stressful periods for both students and staff. We have five more visits scheduled for the 2025-2026 school year! The "Food of All Nations" potlucks celebrated our diverse community through shared meals and cultural exchange. The "Ambient Atrium" initiative established a permanent space for meditation, contemplation, and community gathering on the second floor—stop by, put in your headphones, and relax to our curated playlist designed to melt stress away and provide focus and peace. Additionally, our Spitzer Demographic and Climate survey, now in its third year, will continue to provide crucial feedback that informs programming decisions and insights into the lives of the people who study and work here.

Fall 2025 will bring expanded wellness frameworks with exciting new initiatives. Our new book club will stimulate intellectual community outside the studio environment and expose our students to works they have yet to discover and enjoy. We are launching a partnership with the CCNY Wellness and Counseling Center to focus on stress identification, crisis intervention training, and cultivating communities of care. This work is really about equipping our community with tools to support and care for one another effectively. Most significantly, we will begin offering confidential therapy and wellness support groups for students who have experienced trauma or violence as well as expanding our student emergency funding initiatives.

I am incredibly proud of these programs; they reflect our philosophy that authentic wellness emerges from community-driven initiatives rather than top-down mandates. I believe that approaches to wellbeing need to be regular and sustainable—like a heartbeat that supports the entire community. Our student organizations support this work too; their own programming is an investment for themselves as much as for the continued, long-term health of Spitzer.

I must acknowledge and thank my transformative partners on the JEDI committee as well as Sandra Allen and Rache'l Oatis with Almora Advisors for their continued support and commitment to Spitzer's ongoing success.



As we continue this work, I am reminded that our strength lies in our collective commitment to one another—that we can create an environment where every member of our community can thrive academically, professionally, and personally.

Onward,

Dr. Michael Miller
Associate Dean

Scan to listen to our
"Ambient Atrium"
curated playlist:



* Golden Rule
* Coffee before class
* Work Smart and hard
* REMEMBER TO BREATHE
* Do You
* Actively Include O
* LISTEN
* Check your Cityme
* Respect Others
* If you're on tim
* Get enough sl
* Stay Hard
* Be Creative ↓
* Stay Hydrated
* Manage your
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YEAR IN REVIEW



Summer 2024

Summer Career Lab

The four-week Summer Career Lab gave high schoolers, college students, and professionals a dynamic introduction to the architecture field, equipping them with valuable skills and industry insights. Led by Prof. Paul Ruppert, participants immersed themselves in architectural practice through interactive lectures, hands-on workshops, site visits across New York City, and lively design critiques. The curriculum focuses on digital fabrication, computer-aided design, sustainability, interdisciplinary research, and architecture as cultural discourse. Through scholarships, Spitzer supports students in receiving this amazing experience.

Fall 2024

Sciame Lecture Series

The fall 2024 Sciame Lecture Series, "Design Matters: The Housing Question Revisited," examined innovative solutions to the global housing crisis, reframing Friedrich Engels's critiques from the 1800s by placing design, architecture, and planning first. The series expanded beyond cities in Western Europe and explored places damaged by the devastating consequences of war, the climate emergency, and other catastrophes. In the face of extraordinary challenges, architects, planners, and providers are collaborating to produce humane, affordable solutions to the housing crisis, suggesting that architecture is needed to provoke political change.



September

ACSA /AIA Intersections Research Conference: New Housing Paradigms

Twelve graduate architecture students and two faculty members attended the Intersections Research Conference: New Housing Paradigms, a three-day event held in Austin, TX, sponsored by the Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) and the American Institute of Architects (AIA). The conference brought together diverse voices from across academia and the profession to examine housing as a process, a product, and a place. Prof. Laura Wainer's presentation won accolades in The Architect's Newspaper.

October

ASLA Conference

Over 20 MLA students attended the ASLA national conference in DC. The conference included informative sessions, interactive workshops, and discussions led by leading experts and innovators. Students explored pressing challenges and emerging opportunities, charting a course toward a more resilient and equitable future.

November

CSU Urban Thinkers Campus

The Consortium for Sustainable Urbanization's Urban Thinkers Campus: Housing Decarbonization Lab was held at Spitzer. This event convened urban researchers, professionals, and policymakers for thought-provoking discussions on how urbanization can be a catalyst for positive change, particularly in addressing the dual challenges of the housing and climate crises. Special thanks to the World Urban Campaign (A UN-HABITAT Initiative) and the AIA New York for their generous support.



November

ARCH @ 60 Symposium

The ARCH @ 60 Symposium at the J. Max Bond Center for Urban Futures marked 60 years since the founding of the ARCH, created to empower Harlem residents in shaping the

future of their community. The event gathered professionals, researchers, and residents to discuss Harlem's transformation, the future of nonprofit design centers, and the fight for affordable housing amid rising market pressures. The event was supported by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts and the West Harlem Development Corporation and was co-sponsored by NOMA and the AIANY Diversity and Inclusion Committee.

Spring 2025

Sciame Lecture Series

The spring 2025 Sciame lecture series, "Still Making Space for Gender," centered women and LGBTQIA+ individuals in the built environment. As gender discourse evolves and identities grow more intersectional, core challenges persist. Women and LGBTQIA+ communities still face systemic inequities. This lecture series brought together trailblazing design practitioners, scholars, and activists working across architecture, landscape architecture, and urban design who asserted that gender must remain a critical focus in shaping equitable and just built environments.



March

AIAS CCNY Urban Acupuncture

Students participated in the Urban Acupuncture Exhibit and Panel Discussion at the Center for Architecture, an engaging event that brought together architects, designers, and community leaders to celebrate the power of small-scale urban interventions. Held in collaboration with the AIAS design-build program Freedom by Design, teams from the Spitzer School and from across the city participated. The exhibit highlighted projects from concept to construction. The event concluded



with a panel of industry experts and local voices sharing insights on how micro-interventions are shaping the future of our cities.

March

Accreditation Visit

The Spitzer School of Architecture facilitated a highly successful accreditation visit by the National Architectural Accrediting Board (NAAB), marking the school's continued commitment to excellence in architectural education. This rigorous review process, which occurs every eight years, is essential for the continued accreditation of Spitzer's professional architecture programs: Bachelor of Architecture (B Arch) and Master of Architecture (M Arch).

April

Rising Urbanists – Landscapes Reimagined

The City College ASLA-NY Student Chapter presented its 8th annual Rising Urbanists conference, titled "Queering Landscapes." Spotting queer perspectives, works, and spaces in landscape architecture and related fields, the conference delved into the many meanings of queerness through social space, ecology, design, aesthetics, and more. This conference encouraged transdisciplinary dialogue bridging the gap between designers and the social and ecological systems we work with.

May

Award Ceremony / Graduate Toast / Commencement

Spitzer threw its End-of-Year Celebration, honoring graduating students with an exhibition of their work, an awards presentation, and a celebratory toast. The Class of 2025 gathered on the South Lawn for the 172nd Commencement Ceremony at the City College of New York, honoring 98 students who earned their degrees. Graduate students also celebrated at the Graduate Convocation in the Great Hall.



Studio Travel Roundup

Studio travel transforms the theoretical to tangible. Students continue to get out of the classroom, explore exciting places, and take on real-world design challenges. This year, the school funded studio trips to diverse locations, including Houston, TX; Palm Springs and Salton Sea, CA; varied locations in Arizona; Ghent, NY; PS 321, Brooklyn, and Barcelona, Spain.

Build the Future

CITY LABS: THE FUTURE IS BUILT HERE

City Labs is the new name for the cutting-edge research facilities at the Spitzer School of Architecture, which put the school at the forefront of architecture and design education. City Labs includes three state-of-the-art research facilities: the Robotics Lab, Living Systems Lab, and Advanced Building Construction Lab. These labs will drive innovation in the curriculum, enable groundbreaking research for faculty, and provide students with interdisciplinary experience essential for careers in architecture, robotics, and related fields.

City Labs aims to advance the frontiers of architecture and urbanism through research in adaptive construction, living systems, and responsive technologies. The labs are dedicated to building a sustainable, high-tech future by focusing on integrating robotics, environmental sensing, and digital design. Through pioneering construction practices and strategies for reducing carbon emissions, City Labs addresses the urgent challenges of climate change. This initiative also fosters collaboration across The City College of New York and the broader CUNY system.

City Labs is a bold step forward in reimagining architectural education. This collection of facilities blends research, design, and technology to prepare students for the complexities of a changing world. Faculty will have the ability to explore bold ideas and pursue cutting-edge research. A capital campaign is underway to support this vital work. To learn more or to contribute, please contact Dean Marta Gutman (see page 23). Together, we can shape a high-tech, sustainable future.

Robotics Lab

The Robotics Lab is one of the most advanced in any architecture program in the United States. The lab includes four compact robots, two of which are fully collaborative; a large robotics research bay housing two large, high-capacity advanced robotic arms, one of which is track-mounted; and many supporting equipment, such as mid-sized 3-D printers, spatial scanners, photo and video capabilities, electronic workstations, and advanced computation equipment.

The lab not only enables cutting-edge research but also provides an accessible and hands-on environment for students to develop critical robotics skills. Prof. Gordon Gebert describes that, "within an hour or two, students are working with the robots."

We immediately puncture any kind of reluctance and any kind of concern they have about just jumping in and working."

Living Systems Lab

The Living Systems Lab explores co-creation and co-evolution in the natural and built environments. The lab consists of two spaces: the urban farm on the Spitzer roof and an indoor lab that is still in development. The Living Systems Lab is equipped with one air-quality monitor, vacuum forming machinery, temperature and humidity sensors, two Farmbots, sensors and microcontrollers, and a kiln. Funding is needed to complete the transformation into a fully equipped wet lab, supporting experiments in architectural and environmental sustainability.

According to Prof. Ahu Aydogan, the Living Systems Lab provides students with "hands-on opportunities that extend beyond traditional classroom learning" and also supports faculty in conducting cutting-edge research. "Architecture today is no longer just about design; it's interdisciplinary. It encompasses engineering, science, and research. Spitzer School of Architecture students are special. They don't limit their creativity. They think outside the box."

Advanced Building Construction Lab

The Advanced Building Construction Lab provides a hands-on space for innovation in advanced building materials and fabrication techniques. This lab opens the door for faculty research and student exploration. Students are able to engage directly with the tools and methods that shape how buildings are constructed today and how they could evolve in the future.

Students, Prof. Damon Bolhassani points out, "can see what we are theoretically exploring in the classroom, and go to the lab and actually see what it means, explore it themselves." While the lab already includes essential mixing, fabrication, and testing equipment, additional funding will help support the vision to expand it into a full-scale testing facility that can support the next generation of construction practices and be at the forefront of construction labs. Having the ability to create at full-scale would allow students to "understand the challenges of building at scale and allow the next generation to be better prepared to enter the real world."



CURRICULAR INNOVATION

Concrete Block, Real-World Results

In the Concrete Masonry Project Advanced Studio, led by Prof. Christian Volkmann, students collaborated with New York's masons, experts in concrete block construction, and other industry partners. Fourth- and fifth-year students had an immersive experience in concrete masonry. Prof. Volkmann emphasized, "Architecture is not meant to be abstract. It is an applied art that requires hands-on knowledge."

Students participated in a design competition, where the top two concepts were brought to life with the support of four skilled union masons: David Lievre, Carlos Figueroa, Jason Saia, and Joe Friscioni. Volkmann explained, "The projects became so strong because the masonry industry brought their masons, contractors, and fabricators to our pin-ups. They said, 'That's not really how it works.' This sparked a valuable friction between good design and practicality that was beautiful." This project was sponsored by the Concrete Masonry Check-Off program, the Associated Brick Mason Contractors of Greater New York, and the Bricklayers and Allied Craftworkers Local 1 New York & Long Island & Labor Management Committee.

The winning teams were Team "Meridian," consisting of Allyson Cromwell (team captain), Fernada Cadenillas-Torres, Nicholas Archacki, Juan Jimenez Giraldo, Fion Li, Sidney Mauricio, and Matthew Le Rouzic; and Team "Breathing Wall," led by Rustam Domullojonov (team captain), with Aiman Gualdrón, Richard Hsu, David Stinga, William Smith, Richard Duval, and Giovanni Paez.

Cromwell described, "This project has made me a different designer: With this project I have learned about flexibility: the idea of change and adaptation, by developing new solutions, given the constraints and real world implications, based on the material of concrete brick and block and their common and sometimes innovative strategies of assembly."

Domullojonov added, "This studio has been one of the most eye-opening experiences of my architectural education so far. It has helped me understanding how our 'paper designs' begin to take shape in the real world, through valuable feedback from contractors, bricklayers, and masonry supply specialists."

This studio will again be offered this coming year.

"This [Concrete Masonry Project] studio has been one of the most eye-opening experiences of my architectural education so far."

Rustam Domullojonov B Arch '25 (team captain)



Mach Spaß

Students in the Bachelor of Architecture Advanced Studio Design Build: A Merzbau for the North Atlantic Center, guided by Prof. Jeremy Edmiston, worked to design and construct a new, innovative space within CCNY's NAC building. Commissioned by Dean of Humanities and Arts Renata Miller and supported by the Career Awareness and Pathways at City College (CAPACity) initiative, the project aimed to promote experiential, interdisciplinary learning in a space designed to foster collaboration.

The studio gave students hands-on experience in design, construction, and installation. This project was featured in this year's Dezeen School Show. Students involved in this project include Lolita Bogdanova, Junior Chamorro, Luis Espinal, Stephanie Gonzalez, Elan Grabarnik, Richard Hsu, Alba Hysaj, Wyatt Kuebler, Bardh Maraj, Maria Manukovskaya, Abram Morris, Justin Rivera, Endrit Sopa, and Mateo Penafiel.

Generative Histories Harlem

The Spitzer School's Place, Memory, Culture Incubator (PMCI) organized the exhibition "Generative Histories Harlem" curated and designed by Prof. Jerome Haferd. The exhibition was built and installed by Spitzer students and showcased their work from PMCI-affiliated design studios and seminars. Woven throughout the exhibit were documents, clips, and other ephemera that index the collaborations with a growing ecosystem of Harlem community partners and interlocutors.

Launched in Fall 2023 with support from the Mellon Foundation, the PMCI seeks to engage the rich culture, history, aesthetics, imagination, and sense of place in Harlem. Its mission is to foster interdisciplinary collaboration among stakeholders to explore emerging concepts of preservation. The incubator's goal is to integrate these evolving ideas into architecture, using them as a generative tool for teaching and practice in both design and the built environment.



STUDENT SNAPSHOTS



Great Grad 2025: Mouhamadou Dieng's Impact Through Design

Mouhamadou Dieng B Arch '25 was selected as a CCNY Class of 2025 Great Grad. As a Harlem native and the child of Senegalese immigrants, Dieng is thankful to have attended college in his hometown. "Being in New York City grounded the work we were doing in class and gave it a sense of realism for me," said Dieng.

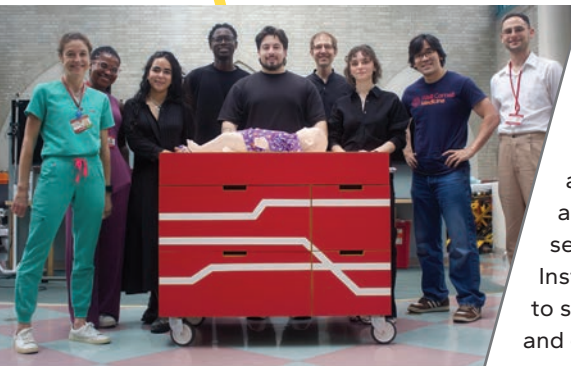
Dieng won the 2024 AIANY Interiors Committee's Recipe for a Room competition (Audience Favorite) for his project "METROSOFT," created with Nicole Vlado Torres of Design Trust for Public Space. His favorite CCNY memories include building the PMCI exhibit "Generative Histories Harlem," curating a Spitzer Wall exhibit of student work, and speaking at the ARCH @ 60 Symposium. In 2023, he presented "Regrounding Harlem" to the Caribbean Cultural Center as part of Prof. Jerome Haferd's Advanced Studio. Haferd served as a key mentor throughout Dieng's time at Spitzer.

Dieng plans to continue his education and become a licensed architect, always keeping people and communities at the heart of his design work.

Learning in Kerala

Sonia Uthuph MLA '25 was awarded the History and Travel Fellowship to travel to Kerala, India, to explore how design shapes culture and infrastructure in the region. Kerala's architecture is deeply influenced by its natural surroundings, a lush rainforest.

Uthuph will study Kalari Payattu, a traditional martial art often practiced in semi-underground clay structures that foster a physical and spiritual connection to the earth. She is particularly interested in the gendered history of the practice once restricted to men and will study with one of the few female teachers in Kerala today.



Built for Better Care

A team of B Arch students, with support from Prof. Steve Preston, designed a mobile learning workstation for the pediatric simulations team at Weill Cornell Hospital. This work was completed as part of Freedom by Design (FBD), a community service program sponsored by the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) that aims to solve everyday problems with modest design and construction solutions.

Asked to create a cart to support hands-on education for parents, the students designed a mobile system that functions both as a transport vessel and an interactive learning platform. Their solution addressed logistical and educational challenges faced by the hospital team. The workstation is now in active use, helping provide flexibility and efficiency in delivering care education.

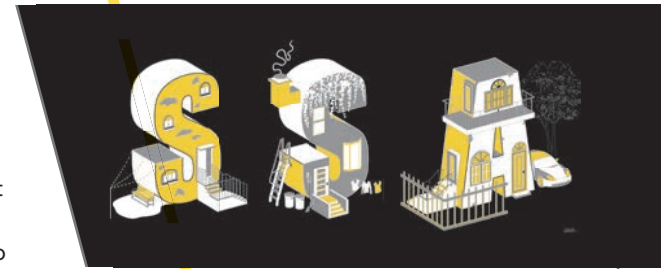
The team included Evelyn Krutoy B Arch '25, Juan Giraldo B Arch '25, Mouhamadou Dieng B Arch '25, Gildalis Torres B Arch '25, and Miriam Perel B Arch '25.

"Spitzer doesn't just teach you how to be an architect, but also how to think like an architect."

Ashley Gordon B Arch '25

SSA, Styled by Students

Ashley Gordon B Arch '25 won the school's internal competition to create new art for Spitzer School merchandise. She modeled the letters SSA with different visual elements that she thought represented the school. This art will be used on various apparel items. Gordon is excited to have left her mark on Spitzer. When reflecting on her time at the school, she shared, "SSA doesn't just teach you how to be an architect, but also how to think like an architect. The person that I was when I started school versus the person that I am now are two completely different people."



Blueprints for Professional Life After Spitzer

Amy Ho B Arch '24 MUP '25, in collaboration with CCNY's Career & Professional Development Institute Director Katie Nailler, won a Changemaker Scholarship to address a gap for students figuring out what to do after graduation. She decided to design a step-by-step guide for students, delineating what needs to be achieved to best prepare students for professional life after Spitzer. Her career development plan included portfolio review committees composed of alumni and professors who would meet one-on-one with students to support their career preparation and guidance.

Homegrown: Designing Housing as Carbon Storage

Students from Prof. Kaja Kühl's and Prof. Anoushae Eirabie's graduate architecture advanced studio and research seminar took part in an exhibition at SSA called "Homegrown: Designing Housing as Carbon Storage," which showcases their investigations into bioregional construction using landscapes, forests, and farms in the Northeast as sustainable sources for building materials.

Through their work, students explored the full lifecycle of plants and how natural materials can be transformed into innovative housing solutions that actively store carbon.

As part of the seminar, students collaborated with Tom Rossmassler to explore Hempcrete, a bio-based building material made from hemp fibers and lime. This hands-on engagement deepened their understanding of low-carbon construction techniques.



Architectural Record's Innovation Conference

Students and faculty participated in Architectural Record's Innovation Conference, where they engaged with leading voices shaping the future of the built environment. The conference explored innovative design across various scales, featuring inspiring projects from cultural facilities to creative residential models and cutting-edge sustainability solutions. After the conference, Spitzer supporter Carol Willis, Director of the Skyscraper Museum, generously opened the doors of her museum to a small group of attendees—a bonus to an already inspiring event.

Hacking Housing

Aneri Trivedi MS '25, Vraj Patel MS '25, and Harshit Shastri MS '25 won the People's Choice Award at Hack-A-House 2024 as part of The Yellow Elephant team. Hack-A-House is a 24-hour virtual hackathon for students to formulate and pitch innovative ideas to improve housing affordability.

Designing Hope

Jessica Nolasco M Arch '26 and Mouhamadou Dieng B Arch '25 won the 2024 Recipe for a Room competition organized by the AIANY Interiors Committee. Nolasco, with mentor Samantha Josaphat-Medina, earned the Judge's Favorite award for "In Bloom," while Dieng, with Nicole Vlado Torres, won Audience Favorite for "METROSOFT."

The model-making contest, which benefits Terra Firma—a NYC nonprofit supporting immigrant children and families in gaining access to quality healthcare and legal representation—challenged students to design safe, portable rooms for a parent and child using only personal belongings like bags, clothing, and photos. Two-person teams, each composed of a student and architect mentor, designed portable suitcase-size shelters.

FACULTY HIGHLIGHTS

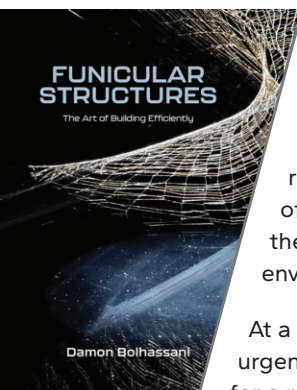
New Department Chair

Prof. Frank Melendez is the new Chair of the Department of Architecture at the Spitzer School of Architecture. Since first visiting SSA eleven years ago, he has loved “this great resource that we have; the building, the space, and campus.” He looks forward to “gaining a new perspective and working with everyone to collectively learn and grow our academic community.”

Melendez plans to build on the school’s legacy of engaging with architecture’s role in societal transformation, while expanding opportunities to explore interdisciplinary approaches to architecture, urban design, and landscape architecture. He sees the three-year rotation of the Chair position as a chance for faculty and staff to “revisit, redefine, and redesign our ambitions for the future of architecture and design.”

He is committed to empowering students with strong core design skills while preparing them to address today’s social, political, and ecological challenges. He also values SSA’s diversity, noting that it reflects New York City and includes many from historically underrepresented groups, and he will continue to champion initiatives for justice, equity, diversity, and inclusion.

Funicular Structures: New Book



Prof. Damon Bolhassani published his new reference book, *Funicular Structures: The Art of Building Efficiently* in April 2025. This reference and textbook is the result of over 10 years of groundbreaking research on funicular structures, a class of green architectural systems known for their efficiency, minimal material use, and low environmental impact.

At a time when the construction industry faces urgent calls for sustainability, Bolhassani argues for a return to material-efficient, low-impact structures. “It started with historical examples, all those beautiful, elegant benchmarks of architecture in the history of humanity since 3,000 years ago. Then, I focused on how we could bring those ideas in a modern way so we could not only build using the ideas, but save our environment as well.”

Housing as a Human Right

Prof. Laura Wainer has had an exciting year of achievements. She was selected for the newly created Urban Design Forum Global Exchange Fellowship, themed “Big Swings”, which built bridges between leaders in New York and other cities tackling their housing crises. Originally from Argentina, Wainer is known for her research on the intersection between housing policy, design politics, urban governance, and the experience of migrants in New York City. She also published “PATHWAYS TO HOME: Design Solutions for Immigrant-Center Housing”



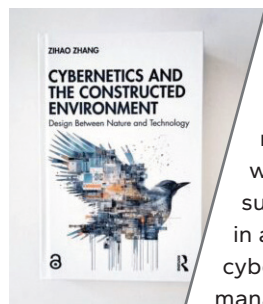
with her Spring 2024 B Arch Advanced Studio students, in collaboration with Make the Road New York. With contributions from students including Valeska Abarca B Arch '24, Lorraine Colbert B Arch '24, and Juan Jimenez Giraldo B Arch '25, the booklet highlights immigrant perspectives in the fight for housing justice.

Landscape Architecture Rewired

Prof. Zihao Zhang has been selected as the new director of the Graduate Program in Landscape Architecture. As director, he has initiated curricular and administrative innovations while continuing to teach, recruit new students, advance a research agenda, and more.



He also recently published a book, *Cybernetics and the Constructed Environment: Design Between Nature and Technology*. Grounded in contemporary landscape architecture theory and practice, his book explores the impact of cybernetics and posthumanism on the built environment, blending insights from art, design,



and engineering to examine how intelligent systems and more-than-human actors co-produce space. The book challenges traditional notions of control in design, asking whether posthumanist theories are sufficient to rethink ecological design in an era of algorithmic feedback loops, cyber-physical systems, and machine-managed ecosystems.

Spitzer Faculty Projects Win Grants

Four faculty members and one alumna have received \$10,000 Independent Projects grants from the New York State Council on the Arts and the Architectural League of New York. These year-long grants support design and research projects exploring the future of design. Out of 120 applications, 25 proposals were selected for the 2024 cycle.

From Spitzer, Prof. Zihao Zhang, with Shurui Zhang, was awarded for *Chinatown Is Chinatown; Flushing Is China*, a study of Chinese diasporic urbanism in emerging Chinatowns in Queens. Prof. Cassim Shepard, with Carsten Rodin, received support for *Self-Help Housing: An Atlas of Agency*, an interactive documentary mapping late 20th-century resident-led housing initiatives. Prof. Suzan Wines, with James Wines and Phillip Denny, was recognized for *What Else Could*



It Mean?, a book and video series on the work of architect James Wines. Prof. Kaja Kuehl earned a grant for *The Northeast Biobased Material Atlas*, investigating sustainable building materials and supply chains in the Northeast.

In addition, alumna Christine Facella (MLA '17), now a faculty member at Parsons School of Design, received a grant for *Warm, Fuzzy, Toxic*, a prototype bedroll made from milkweed fiber and garment industry textile waste.

Architecture with Heart

Prof. Sara Jazayeri, the first woman president of AIA Bronx, is leaving her mark at the Spitzer School of Architecture. In 2020, she helped establish the AIA Bronx scholarship and the Bronx studio, which has since educated more than 30 students. “This community is the secret and beauty of New York. And we want to bring it to light,” she said.

At Spitzer, Jazayeri teaches Professional Practice and Ethics, focusing on communication, collaboration, and leadership. She connects classroom learning to real-world experience, recently organizing a visit to the international firm Snøhetta.

Beyond teaching, Jazayeri served as a juror for the 14th Annual Women in Architecture Recognition Award, honoring newly licensed architects of 2024. “I love my students,” she added. “I want them to feel proud to be at CCNY—and to receive an education no other New York City school offers.”

Vision in Practice

Visiting Prof. Curry J. Hackett, transdisciplinary designer and founder of Wayside Studio, connects culture, infrastructure, and public art through projects like his exhibition selected to join the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum’s “Making Home” Design Triennial. His installation, *So That You All Won’t Forget: Speculations on a Black Home in Rural Virginia*, transforms the Carnegies’ former dressing room with tobacco leaves, AI-generated images of Black life, and a painting commissioned by his mother, artist Penny Hackett. The work was featured in *The New York Times* and honors his family’s history on their farmland in Prospect, VA.



YouTube Sensation

Prof. Fran Leadon has become a regular guest on filmmaker Daniel Steiner’s YouTube channel, which focuses on the history of New York City. He has so far appeared in viral videos about

the history of Broadway and Brooklyn, and was an advisor for another video about Staten Island.

Community-Driven Design

Prof. Jerome Haferd has received a 2025 Fellowship from United States Artists, a national organization that honors the country’s most impactful artists and cultural practitioners. The award includes a \$50,000 unrestricted grant and access to resources that support artistic growth and impact.

Founder of the Harlem-based Jerome Haferd Studio, Haferd is known for his community-driven architectural work, which spans public art, civic spaces, and cultural infrastructure nationwide.

In addition to the fellowship, Haferd’s studio was selected to participate in the 2025 U.S. Pavilion at the 19th International Architecture Exhibition of La Biennale di Venezia. The pavilion, titled “Porch: An Architecture of Generosity,” featured 52 practices designing “windows” for a large, communal porch installation. Assisting on the project were Prof. Pedro Cruz Cruz M Arch '22, Gabriel Moyer Perez B Arch '25, and Violet Greenberg B Arch '22.

Sorkin Legacy Flourishes



The Sorkin Reading Room is now open as a center for research and community engagement. Featuring the late Distinguished Professor Michael Sorkin’s personal library, it was showcased during Open House New York Weekend 2024.

The inaugural Sorkin Lecturer, Prof. Marina Correia BS '06, has brought insightful lectures and workshops. An architect and educator, Marina exemplifies Michael’s commitment to creativity, activism, and community.

“She introduces new perspectives and diverse talents in keeping with the times and changing demographics of our field,” said Dean Marta Gutman. “She is eager to bring her perspective on cities, social justice, and equity to bear on urban design at Spitzer; and is dedicated to keeping Michael’s spirit alive at Spitzer.”

In addition, Correia brought Stan Allen, an American architect, theorist, and former dean of the Princeton University School of Architecture, to speak with Urban Design students about his publication, *Landform Building: Architecture’s New Terrain*.

The Room is open to visitors by appointment via ArchLibrary@ccny.cuny.edu.

ALUMNI ENGAGEMENT



Architect of the Capitol, Alan Hantman, Returns to CCNY as 2025 Rudin Scholar

Alan M. Hantman, FAIA, BS '65, B Arch '66, MUP '79, and current Spitzer School of Architecture Dean's Advisory Council member, returned to CCNY as the 2025 Samuel Rudin Distinguished Visiting Scholar. He discussed his book, *Under the Dome: Politics, Crisis, and Architecture at the United States Capitol*, offering insights into his tenure as the 10th Architect of the Capitol.

A member of the first graduating class of what became the Spitzer School of Architecture, Hantman earned his B.S., B Arch., and later a Master's in Urban Planning from CUNY.

The Samuel Rudin Distinguished Visiting Scholars Program, supported by the Rudin Family Foundation, brings prominent figures to CCNY to enrich campus dialogue and honor the civic legacy of Samuel Rudin, class of 1918.



Deborah Berke Receives Top Honor for Design Leadership

Esteemed alumna Deborah Berke MUP '84, a trailblazer in architecture and education, won the AIA Gold Medal, the profession's highest honor. The award recognizes individuals whose work has made a lasting impact on the theory and practice of architecture.

Berke's influential career spans decades, from founding the acclaimed firm TenBerke (formerly Deborah Berke Partners) to becoming the first woman to serve as dean of the Yale School of Architecture. Her work, grounded in design excellence, sustainability, inclusivity, and academic leadership, has shaped generations of architects. Through both her practice and teaching, Berke continues to redefine the role of architecture in society.

Frank Sciamè: Adding His Voice to the Foundation for City College

Frank Sciamè B Arch '74 is the new board chair of the Foundation for City College. A lifelong supporter of CCNY, Sciamè has served on multiple college boards and committees, funded the Sciamè Lecture Series at the Spitzer School of Architecture, and received an Honorary Doctorate of Fine Arts from the College in 2004.

Recognized citywide for his leadership and philanthropy, Sciamè received the 2023 Jacqueline Kennedy Onassis Medal. He holds leadership roles in several civic organizations, including the New York Landmarks Conservancy, New York Building Congress, and the U.S. Department of State's Industry Advisory Group.

Sciamè is the founder of F.J. Sciamè Construction Co., Inc., a major construction management firm with over \$1 billion in current projects, including the Frick Collection, Studio Museum in Harlem, and the Ronald O. Perelman Performing Arts Center. He also leads Sciamè Development, known for notable projects like the 80 South Street Tower and the restoration of 70 Pine Street.



A Heartfelt Thank You and a Warm Welcome to Alumni Leadership

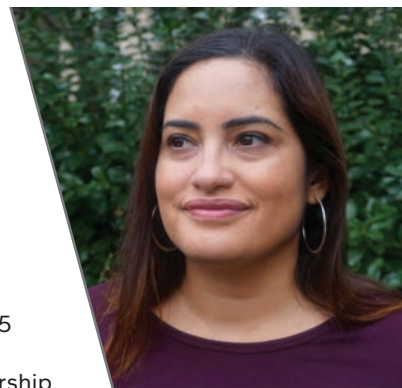
We sincerely thank Venesa Alicea-Chuqui B Arch '05 for her outstanding leadership as the outgoing President of the CCNY Architecture Alumni Group (AAG). Her dedicated service has greatly enhanced the Spitzer community through her engagement efforts.

We are thrilled to welcome the newly elected AAG Executive Board, which will help build an active and supportive alumni network:

President: Chitra Mamidela B Arch '17, MS SUS '19
Vice President: Estefano Torres B Arch '20

Treasurer: Zara Tamton B Arch '18
Secretary: Christina Hernandez M Arch '15

The Spitzer School is proud of these accomplished alumni and eager about the future under their leadership.



Spitzer Stars Project Unveiled

Spitzer recently unveiled a new exhibit on the ground floor and online, celebrating the outstanding achievements of esteemed faculty and alumni. From architecture and landscape architecture to urban design and community impact, these Spitzer Stars exemplify the power and purpose of a Spitzer education.

One Spitzer Star featured is Iman Ansari B Arch '08, who is an architectural historian, designer, and assistant professor of architecture at The Ohio State University's Knowlton School. He shared "At Spitzer, I found myself in an environment where diverse cultural identities and intellectual approaches couldn't be separated from one another, where different ways of seeing and thinking about the world constantly informed each other. As both a scholar and a practitioner, this fundamental understanding continues to shape my approach to architecture as a global discourse with rich interconnected histories and ideologies."



FUNDRAISING UPDATES

Eliot Spitzer Joins Board

Eliot Spitzer, one-time governor and twice-elected attorney general of New York, joined the Dean's Advisory Council of the school bearing his parents' names.

"I am delighted to welcome Eliot Spitzer to my Advisory Council," said Marta Gutman, Spitzer School dean. "Like his parents, he brings a lifelong commitment to public education. As Mr. Spitzer told me, 'Few things are more important than providing a public, low-cost education to those who want to learn, work, and move all of society forward.'"

Spitzer gained national recognition for his aggressive prosecutions in financial fraud, environmental protection, and civil rights, reshaping legal standards in those fields. He currently leads Spitzer Enterprises, the real estate firm established by his father.

Valmira Gashi M Arch '20 and Julian Legéard Give Back

Valmira Gashi M Arch '20 and Julien Legéard have donated \$22,500 to create the Valmira Gashi & Julien Legéard Scholarship, supporting students in the Master of Architecture program.

The scholarship included \$7,500 for Spring 2024, and \$15,000 disbursed during the 2024-25 academic year, along with two summer internships at Legéard Studio, where students receive mentorship and potential job opportunities.

The first recipient, Perparim Morina M Arch '24, joined the firm as a junior architect after completing the internship. The 2025 scholar is Tyler Hernton M Arch '25. "It's wonderful that Valmira is already in a position to give back to her alma mater in such a meaningful way," said Dean Marta Gutman.

Aaron Rand Scholarship: Gift in Memory of Elan Ganeles

Alumnus Aaron Rand B Arch '65 donated \$30,000 to help students in Spitzer School's Bachelor of Architecture Program. A total of \$25,000 of the gift will be used to establish the Elan Ganeles Endowed Scholarship Fund, and \$5,000 will be used as an annual award for a first-generation junior or senior to receive the Elan Ganeles Annual Scholarship Award. Both the fund and award are in memory of Rand's late grandson, Elan Ganeles.

The Elan Ganeles Endowed Scholarship Fund will be given to a first-generation junior or senior in the B Arch degree program who shows financial need.

"Few things are more important than providing a public, low-cost education to those who want to learn, work, and move all of society forward."

Eliot Spitzer

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Our commitment to achieving educational excellence is made possible by the unwavering support of our community of donors, alumni, and friends, whose contributions continue to enrich and advance the mission of our school.

Dean's Advisory Council

The school works closely with the Dean's Advisory Council on fundraising and many other initiatives. We are deeply grateful for their partnership.

Eliot Spitzer, honorary chair

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B Arch '66, co-chair

Carlos Cardoso BS '92, co-chair

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We maintain the Spitzer School of Architecture's financial health by working to keep a steady flow of revenue from the interest on our endowments, and a robust outreach program to garner scholarships for our students and contributions to our programs. We budget our expenditures at the end of the previous fiscal year for the new fiscal year; in this way we are able to monitor our expenses and so have few changes or surprises in our expenditures. Furthermore, the strong returns on the funds that the Foundation for City College (FCC) invests for us help to ensure that our cash balance grows at a moderate, but steady pace. We take the stewardship of our funds seriously. Based on current guidelines, the FCC has set a 4% annual spending policy for all endowments.

REVENUES		
	Inter-Departmental Transfer (Grants Received)	\$1,551,000.00
	Other Revenue	\$5,434.00
	Contributions	\$268,700.00
	Investment Return	\$2,997,409.87
TOTAL REVENUES		\$4,822,543.87

EXPENSES		
	Scholarships and awards	\$557,906.15
	Enrichment and development activities for students, faculty, and staff	\$1,212,389.79
TOTAL EXPENSES		\$1,770,295.94

BEGINNING NET ASSETS **\$33,168,825.74**

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