KIM TANZER
University of Virginia
Throughout my career I have been fascinated with the tension between flow—humans motion, the emergent behaviors of communities, the literal fluidity of water—and form—the vessels that constrain flows and the forms that are shaped by flows.

As an architect I have spent my career resisting form’s persuasive appeal. As a feminist I have become attuned to the fraught role of the visual, and have sought to counter visual evidence with a visible demonstrations, mindful that things in motion are especially difficult to represent.

As a teacher I have introduced my students to a collection of compelling flows—embodiment, community, water—as sources of inspiration and constraint for their design efforts.

As a scholar I have written about these flows, proffering evidence of their importance in the design of flexible, sustainable, just human environments.

As a servant-leader I have tried to give form to processes that can be ambiguous, complex, and singular, by establishing forums to ritualize flows. The creation of the Florida Community Design Center, results of my ACSA presidency, and the National Academy of Environmental Design, are several examples of this decades-long goal. More recently, as Dean of the University of Virginia’s School of Architecture I have worked with faculty to construct Research Themes, hosted a semester-long series of dialogues demonstrating what I term the practical imagination, taught Design Entrepreneurship, and a targeted focus on internationalizing the curriculum are examples of this decades-long goal.

Throughout my career, I have sought to balance the beautiful and the practical, and to direct my efforts toward the creation of just, sustainable futures.
Love is lak de sea. It’s a movin’ thing, but still and all it takes its shape from de shore it meets, and it’s different with every shore.

Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God

300-box hopscotch game designed, executed, and played by Lucia Alday and other faculty children at Dean’s Spring Party, May 5, 2013
EMBODIMENT

Embodiment—humans in motion—has been central to my work as an architect, always. I see architecture as the vessel that choreographs movement, and movement as the irritant that challenges inadequate architectural form. Humans in motion problematize all form—humans come in different ages, genders, and sizes, with differing cultural expectations. Without human bodies, we would need no architecture. Through my writing and teaching I have attempted to complexify our understanding of human action, to challenge universals in order to create humane, spaces sensitive to difference.
“My full-scale studio problems have been attempts to move the lush variability of the studio object toward the architectural object, to avoid the deadening finality of all those built projects with ‘scale problems.’ In my simple-minded desire to design in full scale I believe I have accidentally uncovered repressed operations of practice, and challenged the dominating visuality of the miniature.”

from “Scale Problems” (1992)

Full scale drawings, Design 2, University of Florida, Spring 1990
“One reason I would like to thingify the method of production, the technique of the practice of architecture, is to recover the joy of the everyday. Another is to loosen our collective fixation on a fetishized end form... We might benefit by relinquishing the desire to control the end, to appreciate the process of getting there, to accept changes beyond the boundaries of our own figural condition.”

from “Releasing the Form to the Making: Womenswork is Never Done” (1992)
Community is collective, evolving embodiment. Communities perform their shared values, aspirations, and fears, through their actions, through their use of, and design of, shared spaces. My particular focus has been African-American community practices, and a specific neighborhood in Gainesville, Florida. In this neighborhood and in my understanding of African American community more generally, I find rich evidence of fluidity. Meanings and forms change strategically, playfully, cannily. Oftentimes, meaning is understood in different ways by different audiences, a phenomenon Henry Louis Gates describes as “signifying.” My teaching and research in this area have allowed me to connect my professional work with pressing social issues of our time, and to bring an often unfamiliar spatial perspective to students and academic audiences.
“What is the goal of this elaborate ongoing performance of community? This urbanism stands in stark contrast to the strategy of the master plan, in which all elements are foreseen before construction begins. This is not to suggest the diminution of the creative power or importance of individual urban artists. Quite the opposite, it is the energetic commitment of a number of artists that leads to this dazzling community project.”

from “Dressed Yards and the Performance of Community” [2006]
“Walking is a solitary activity, anatomically speaking…But this efficiency is compromised by the act of sharing. A tilted head or a twisted torso, inflected in conversation toward a companion, reduce, if only slightly, one’s forward momentum. These actions turn “I” into “we.” This chosen loss of autonomy is one of walking’s great virtues. It signifies a desire to elect the company of another, with the assumption that the loss in efficiency will be matched by some kind of gain.

from “The Virtues of Walking”
“The Shared Realm” offers the hope that globalization might help us understand and appreciate the riches of the world’s diverse cultural capital, that we might recognize the value in knowledge unlike our own and that our built world might increasingly reflect the intelligence of all members of our human community.”

from The Green Braid (2007)
SCHOLARSHIP


2004  Kim Tanzer, “Florida's Phenomenal Landscape,” Architrave 12, Composite, School of Architecture, University of Florida, about junior design studio held Fall 2004

1996  Kim Tanzer, Tom DeSimone, Dori Raskin, Marc Schaut, “Reading the Body Littorally: Wet Areas” ACSA Northeast Region Proceedings, Fall 1996

EXHIBITS AND EVENTS

2014  “Chesapeake River Basin,” National Academy of Environmental Design national workshop, co-chaired with Christopher Ellis, location to be determined

2013  “After the Deluge: Re-imagining Leonardo’s Legacy. A demonstration of the practical imagination applied to the ecology of water.” School of Architecture, University of Virginia


WATER

Water is pure fluidity, shaped, as Zora Neale Hurston describes, by adjacent forces. As it changes phase from solid to liquid to gas it shapes our planet, shapes and sometimes destroys our buildings, and even gives our bodies substance. For me water serves as a metaphor for change seeking form, and as a literal inspiration and challenge in the design of architecture. Because water is pervasive, it affects every aspect of life. At this time of environmental challenge, water’s ubiquity makes it a source of danger as well as a source of renewal and joy.

Love is lak de sea. It’s a movin’ thing, but still and all it takes its shape from de shore it meets, and it’s different with every shore.

Zora Neale Hurston, Their Eyes Were Watching God
“Everywhere the flow of water—rainfall, streams, underground rivers, and oceans—is a source of fascination and occasionally a source of worry... All architecture, including landscape architecture, must selectively shed or contain the flow of water.... [This fall’s] Hurricane Frances helped emphasize the importance of designing to consider the flow of water... By the semester’s end, the floodwaters had receded from Palm Point.”

from “Florida’s Phenomenal Landscape” (2004)
“Water defines the blue planet, Earth, but its distribution is uneven and unfair. Parts of the planet receive less or more rainfall, leading to deserts and rain forests, each with inventive human adaptations. Yet with today’s rapid changes—population increases and mass migrations, deforestation and erosion, and catastrophic weather events—water can amplify this destabilization. Many of the world’s poorest people live in flooding deltas; others drink polluted water; and millions walk miles daily to find it. Yet at the same time, hurricanes do not avoid wealthy communities, polluted or drying aquifers serve the rich and poor alike, floods ravage lakeside vacation homes, and tidal surges wash out everything at the water’s edge.

from UVa School of Architecture Website [2012]
HONORS

2009 ACSA Service Award
For service as president of the ACSA Board of Directors 2006-08

2006 Resolution of Appreciation
Presented by the University of Florida Board of Trustees
For service as a member of the Board of Trustees 2006-06

2006 Woman of Distinction Award
Presented by the University of Florida Association of Academic Women
to the faculty member who has served the caused of women at the university

2006 Morton Wolfson Faculty Award
Presented by the Division of Student Services to the Faculty member who has provided outstanding service to the student body

2005 American Institute of Architects Community Service Award
AIA Gainesville Chapter

2004 ACSA Service Award
For service on ACSA Board as Southeast Region Representative 2000-2003

2004 ACSA Service Award
For service as co-chair of the ACSA/AIA Teachers' Seminar
“Sustainable pedagogies and practices”
Co-chairs Jean Gardner and John McRae, FAIA
Cranbrook Academy, June 2003

2005 City Beautification Award
Given to the Florida Community Design Center
By the Gainesville City Beautification Board

2002 Community Service Award
Presented by the Gainesville Area Chamber of Commerce
For community service through to the Florida Community Design Center

2000 ACSA Service Award
For service as Annual Meeting Topic Co-chair
Spring 2000

1999 ACSA Service Award
For service as co-chair of ACSA/AIA Teachers' Seminar
“Architectural Space and the Electronic Apparatus”
Co-chair Mario Gooden, AIA
Cranbrook Academy, June 1998

1996 Certificate of Appreciation
Architecture College Council & Students of the College of Architecture
In appreciation for dedication and invaluable contribution to the College of Architecture

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

Florida Community Design Center
Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture
National Academy of Environmental Design
University of Virginia Deanship

“So does being cool make it difficult to lead in challenging circumstances? Are architects up to the task of speaking for those people who lack an effective voice, whether due to infirmity, poverty, or other forms of social injustice? Can those of us in the academy educate our students to make such leadership the new cool?”

SCHOLARSHIP

2010 Kim Tanzer, “From wheel to tree to web,” Reset 4, School of Architecture E-news, Summer 2010

2010 Kim Tanzer, “Teaching and Research and Research and Teaching,” Reset 3, School of Architecture E-news, Spring 2010


2008 Kim Tanzer, “Design is the new black,” President’s Column in the ACSA News, February 2008


2007 Kim Tanzer, “What is the nature of architectural knowledge,” President’s Column in the ACSA News, October 2007


“The paradigm of networked knowing, which has emerged in physics, ecology, and literary theory, among many other disciplines, prioritizes lateral linkages over vertical chains of command. Such linkages allow nonhierarchical networks-within-networks to flourish by complimenting deficits with strengths. Like an ecosystem, this paradigm relies on redundancy. Its organization is organic and flexible, responding to challenges quickly.”

from The Green Braid [2007]
FLORIDA COMMUNITY DESIGN CENTER
A partnership of the City of Gainesville, Alachua County, the Gainesville Chamber of Commerce and the University of Florida.
Executive Director 1999-2002
Board member 2002-2009
Numerous exhibits, public charrettes, and presentations, from 1999-2009
BETWEEN FLOW AND FORM // SERVANT LEADERSHIP

ASSOCIATION OF COLLEGIATE SCHOOLS OF ARCHITECTURE

Southeast Regional Director, 1999-2003
President, 2007-2008
The Green Braid, Co-edited with Rafael Longoria
ACSA Presidency, Conferences: Preparing for the Inconvenient Truth, Seeking the City, Deep Matters,

Co-chair of ACSA-AIA Cranbrook Teachers Seminar 1998 + 2003
President of ACSA, 2007-2008

June 13–22, 2008;
Cranbrook Academy of Art
Bloomfield Hills, MI

Deep Matters
The path to meaningful and provocative architectural research
2008 ACSA/AIA Teachers Seminar

Program

Inaugural ACSA poster session University of Houston, 2008 (left), most recent poster session California College of Arts, 2013 (right).
National Academy of Environmental Design Releases Reports from First Set of Research Symposia

In early spring of 2009, an initial set of research symposia were held at major universities around the United States, with the purpose of identifying key questions and issues in areas such as water quality, sustainable materials, and sustainable sites. The outcomes of these symposia are linked below:

- Sustainable Sites Symposium
- Water Symposium
- Sustainable Materials Symposium

National Academy of Environmental Design Holds Second Annual Membership Meeting in Washington, DC

This year the USGBC will host the two-day event, starting at 1:30pm September 29 with a reception and keynote address by Ambassador Richard Swett, FAA. The symposium will close on the following day with a business meeting, guest speakers and discussions surrounding the future of multidisciplinary research on the built and natural environment.

Scheduled speakers for the second day include Charles E. Blumberg, FASLA, from the National Institutes of Health Division of Environmental Protec; Seh Hasegawa, PhD, director of the National Science Foundation Office of Emerging Frontiers in Research and Innovation; and Lawrence C. Bank, PhD, program director in the National Science Foundation Division of Civil, Mechanical and Manufacturing Innovation. James L. Wescott, chair of the NAED Research Committee and AIGA Professor at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, will lead a session developing a map of research areas across NAED member organizations and sharpening the organization's research agenda for the future.

“The NAED Annual Meeting is the opportunity for our member organizations to come together to plan the organization’s advancement for the coming year and beyond,” said NAED President Kim Tannenbaum, dean of the School of Architecture at the University of Virginia. “We anticipate the address by Ambassador Swett will orient our members’ thinking to the crucial role that innovation in research can play for the economic and social

NATIONAL ACADEMY OF ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN
Founding president, 2010-2012
UNIVERSITY OF VIRGINIA DEANSHIP

Establishment of Research themes and centers: Center for Design & Health, Community Design and Research Center; Ph.D. in the Constructed Environment

Establishement of International programs in Venice and the Veneto, India, China, Switzerland and Ghana as well as the Weedon Professor of Asian Architecture


Colonnade, Design and Health [2010]
Colonnade, Design and Public Service [2010]

Center for Design and Health founded 2010, Colonnade, “Design and Health” 2013
Community Design and Research Center founded 2013, Colonnade, “Community Engagement in the Civic Realm” 2012
How will our work at the School of Architecture help us develop good global citizens? Will our students be better able to understand other places through "local" eyes after participating in our programs? Will our students be better able to understand the United States, having traveled to or lived in other places? Will our faculty and staff be more prepared to educate our students, and will we, ourselves, become better global citizens in the process?

The School’s expanded global focus, detailed in this issue of Colonnade and integrated within our six research themes, provides an important opportunity to incorporate the most talented faculty and students from across the world into our own work. As we attract people to the School we also continue to learn from the world’s most exceptional cultures, past and present, and to provide professional service internationally where possible. It is worth remembering, too, that while global understanding is an important emerging priority for the University of Virginia, the School of Architecture has been a leader across Grounds for many decades. We continue to send a larger percentage of our students overseas than any other School, and we aspire to do still more.

To further our efforts, the School has received generous support from the Vice Provost for International Programs, Dr. Gowher Rizvi. This past year, the School hosted two international symposia. "Sea Crossings: Rethinking Mediterranean Architecture and History" focused on the Mediterranean Sea as a means of transport and communication, suggesting new cultural contacts across the centuries. "Turning Urban: Innovation in Megacities" provided the opportunity for speakers from around the world to discuss the challenges of emerging megacities, following UVa sponsored faculty visits to Dhaka, London, Cairo, Sao Paolo and the Po Valley in Italy.

This summer, again with support from the Office of International Programs, nine faculty members will visit specific sites in locations as diverse as Istanbul, Bucharest, New Delhi, and London, then return to share their knowledge with their students, the School of Architecture community, and their larger academic communities.
If I could tell you what it meant, there would be no point in dancing it.

Isadora Duncan