

**2021 ACSA Collaborative Practice
Award Submission**

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and Urban Design
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Carnegie Mellon University



AN ATLAS OF COMMONING

A travelling exhibition as collaborative platform for exchange,
mutual learning and community engagement



EXHIBITION VIEW with the Atlas in the center

AN ATLAS OF COMMONING

A travelling exhibition as collaborative platform for exchange, mutual learning and community engagement

Commoning the City is a research-based urban design studio at Carnegie Mellon University School of Architecture, exploring the negotiation between top-down planning and bottom-up transformation of cities. While the year-long studio culminates in individual thesis projects, the Fall semester taught by Stefan Gruber is structured around collective case study research on practices and spaces of commoning. The research focus of the studio, now in its fourth iteration, has led to the travelling exhibition 'An Atlas of Commoning' by ifa (Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen), and curated in collaboration with ARCH+, the German journal for architecture and urbanism.

The Atlas assembles grassroots initiatives in which citizens come together, pooling resources in order to transform and claim their right to the city. In response to the growing realization that neither the state nor the market support the even distribution and access to resources, communities around the world are taking matters into their own hands in pursuit of a more sustainable, open and solidary life. Together the projects demonstrate how citizen-led projects, rendered seemingly marginal by contemporary forms of domination (class, gender, race), are nonetheless instrumental in building community resilience. More importantly, these projects show that these alternatives are already in the making, and together, when seen as a network, already constitute a critical mass. Their collective spatial practices outline the possibility of reframing the city as commons.

The long-term project is collaborative in several ways: On the one hand, the practices and spaces of commoning assembled in the Atlas render visible the collective power citizen-led initiatives can have in shaping the built environment. On the other hand, the exhibition itself acts as a connector and enables mutual learning and exchange. It aims to support commoners in scaling up, out and deep as they aspire to systems-level change. Finally, the production of the exhibition itself represents a huge collaborative endeavor to which many stakeholders contributed: from ordinary citizens or commoners sharing their insights and experiences, to professional designers, editors, exhibition makers and artists helping to frame the research in such a way as to make it accessible to a wider audience. Thus, the studio both practices and reflects critically on collaboration.

The exhibition opened in Berlin and had its international premier at Carnegie Mellon's Miller ICA in Pittsburgh. Post-Covid, it will continue travelling around the world for ten years. The Atlas is conceived as a growing knowledge archive to which new case studies are added in each host city. In the studio, students analyze and document selected case studies by means of field work, interviews and secondary research. The research is then synthesized in drawing-collages and short portraits that in conjunction with photos constitute the Atlas display at the center of the exhibition. The exhibition also serves as event space for workshops, seminars and discussions. Thus,

beyond a mere exhibition the project is conceived as platform for exchange between architects, community groups and citizen-led initiatives. It serves as facilitator for conversations between grass-roots initiatives seeking agency in transforming their right to co-producing the city, access and share ideas and experiences. Many events are hosted during the exhibition ranging from open space meetings, to salons, from tours to local initiatives to symposia. When shown at Carnegie Mellon University, the exhibition contributed to bring a broader audience to campus, and vice versa taking the academy to the streets. The wide range of media from large scale interactive models and installations to films aims to provide plural entry points to the commons debate for a diverse audience. Accordingly, the design of the exhibition is also an attempt to diversify how we learn and engage with ideas.

The exhibition is both a venue to present the studio's research as well as a vehicle for new knowledge production. During the show, classes took place in the exhibition, students referenced the Atlas and a small satellite library on the commons. Students participated in the co-production of a space that thereafter becomes a site of collaborative learning and exchange, as in a closed positive feedback loop that amplifies itself.



EXHIBITION VIEWS at Carnegie Mellon University's Miller ICA, Summer 2019.





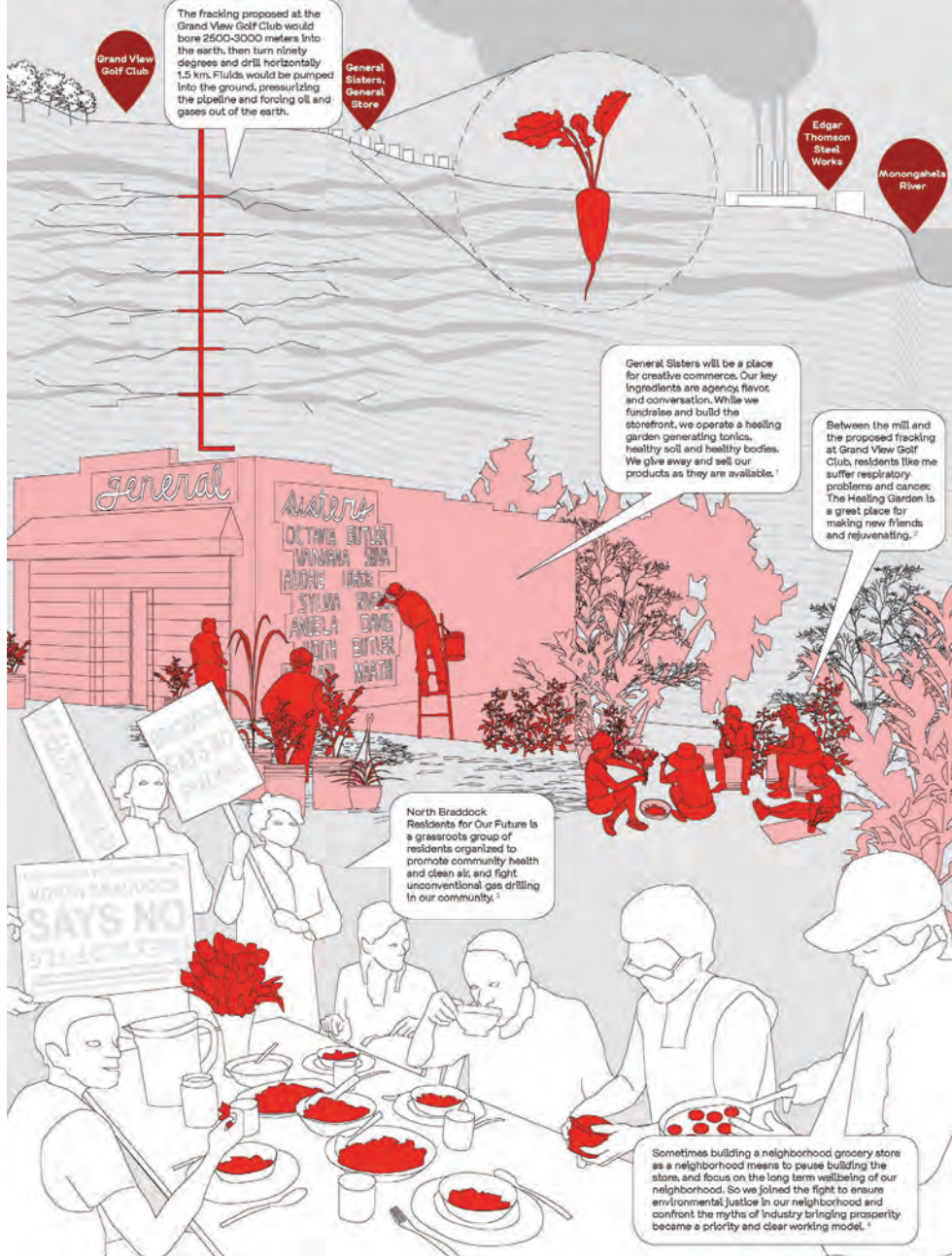
The COMMONS LIBRARY offers a place of study during the duration of the exhibition



FIELD WORK in Berlin, Hamburg, Zurich, Vienna and Pittsburgh.

GENERAL SISTERS, GENERAL STORE

BRADDOCK, UNITED STATES



AN ATLAS OF COMMUNITY

GENERAL SISTERS, GENERAL STORE

Fighting for food equity and environmental justice by exchanging goods, nourishment and perspectives

MONING

GENERAL SISTERS, GENERAL STORE

Braddock, United States, since 2012

The ground is contested in Braddock, Pennsylvania. General Sisters is the process of building a grocery store as neighbors with the intent to cultivate the ground, and "make healthy eating and gathering around food available within walking distance for the neighborhood." Instead of consumerism, General Sisters encourages collaborative production, sharing skills and resources taking the neighborhood's environmental and economic realities as a call to action. When proposed fracking operations upstream threatened the community's health, the store's founders paused production to enter into legal battle against the frackers. The community solution—a new zoning ordinance protecting the contested property from industrial use—would also rezone the property of General Sisters as residential. The fight continues as nearby U.S. Steel plant Edgar Thompson has agreed to host fracking pads. The cycle resumes: resources in the ground are leveraged against the struggle for food equity, racial and environmental justice.

For more information, visit: www.generalsisters.com

* Photo: This drawing collage by Rebecca Lohmertz is based on interviews, secondary sources and material that has been approved, modified and rearranged. The permissions, edited and rearranged photos are based on interviews with stakeholders and from secondary sources.

1. generalsisters.com
 2. Based on interview with neighborhood residents by Rebecca Lohmertz, October 2016.
 3. Based on local newspaper Post-Courier article: <http://www.postcourier.com/story/news/2016/01/28/braddock-fracking-protesters-prepare-for-new-year/404201>
 4. Data Science First: www.data-science-first.com, accessed on October 10, 2016.
 © Photo: © Chris Ziegler

The research was supported by the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts, as well as by ODU's School of Architecture, Margaret S. Granger Fund, the Bertram Faculty Development Fund and the Fund for Research and Creativity of the College of Fine Arts.

An Atlas of Community: Places of Collective Production in the Transition to a Post-Industrial World
 - The Institute for Architecture + Urbanism in Germany's oldest university organization for international academic relations, having established its campus in 2017. It is supported by the Federal Foreign Office of the Federal Republic of Germany, the state of Baden-Württemberg and its capital Stuttgart. www.iaa-berlin.de
 - AOC in Germany's leading publication for discourse in the fields of architecture, urbanism, and related disciplines. www.aaanews.net
 - Topographic Design Network - Schwaning, Berlin © 2016. Institute of Architecture, Gieseler-Matthies-University, address: art@iaa

A research project by the Master of Urban Design program led by Brian Charles at Carnegie Mellon University. www.iaa-berlin.de

COMMON GROUND

General Sisters has an expansive bottom line:

1. Our investment transforms an unusable building into a building with equity that will remain in the hands of our neighbors.
2. From the foundation, to the roof, to its contents, General Sisters is built from the generous and active redistribution of resources, manifesting a tangible practice for re-thinking capitalism, and consumer agency; while emphasizing the intersectionality of the economy, the environment, the social and quality of life.
3. People want to be healthy and nourished regardless of income. Not one of us is healthy until all of us are healthy.
4. General Sisters is a catalytic space for regional and neighborhood food enterprises as well as a common, safe place for neighborhood residents to gather, exchange and learn together.

Copyrights from generalsisters.com/2016/05/02/generalsisters-expansive-bottom-line/, accessed October 1, 2016.





AN ATLAS OF COMMONING display with take-away posters



AN ATLAS OF COMMONING display with take-away posters

BREATHE PROJECT

PITTSBURGH, UNITED STATES

COLLECTIVE DATA

- Collecting data about air quality from sensors, weather stations, and existing air quality data.
- Using data to identify hotspots and areas of concern.
- Using data to inform policy and advocacy.

ENGAGING CITIZENS

- Using data to engage citizens in environmental activism.
- Using data to inform policy and advocacy.

TAKING ACTION

- Using data to inform policy and advocacy.
- Using data to engage citizens in environmental activism.

Map of Pittsburgh:

- Area 1: High air quality
- Area 2: Moderate air quality
- Area 3: Poor air quality
- Area 4: Very poor air quality

Key Statistics:

- 10% of all pollution is from just 10% of all sources.
- 10% of all pollution is from just 10% of all sources.

For more information, visit: breatheproject.org

AN ATLAS OF COMMONING

BREATHE PROJECT

Enabling citizens in environmental activism through science and technology.

BREATHE PROJECT
Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, United States, since 2011

All water and soil are our most essential natural commons. National health experts say that better air quality is one of the most effective ways to improve health. Meanwhile, scientific research demonstrates that air pollution in Pittsburgh and southeastern Pennsylvania is still among the worst in the country. In response, the Breathe Collaborative brings together a coalition of citizens, environmental advocates, public health professionals and academics to improve air quality, eliminate climate pollution and make the region a healthy and prosperous place to live. The Collaborative powers the Breathe Project, a clearinghouse for information on air quality that makes the best science, technology and data available to citizens by increasing awareness, which enables them to engage and take informed action. Now air monitoring technologies, GIS systems and other interactive online tools make community-empowered air monitoring systems possible, including the SmartPoll app, the Breathe Cam and Meter, as well as a FrackTracker.

For more information, visit: breatheproject.org

GARFIELD COMMUNITY FARM

PITTSBURGH, UNITED STATES

Community Impact:

- 1. Provides fresh produce to local food banks.
- 2. Provides fresh produce to local food banks.

Map of Farm Area:

- Area 1: High air quality
- Area 2: Moderate air quality
- Area 3: Poor air quality
- Area 4: Very poor air quality

For more information, visit: www.garfieldfarm.com

AN ATLAS OF COMMONING

GARFIELD COMMUNITY FARM

Practicing cosmopolitan localism by cultivating and stewarding abandoned land

GARFIELD COMMUNITY FARM
Pittsburgh, United States, since 2008

John Casey and the Open Door Presbyterian Church have transformed three acres of previously neglected land in Garfield into the Garfield Community Farm, a fully operational permaculture farm with perennial food systems of fruit and nut trees, berry bushes, annual gardens, a vegetable grower garden, a herb garden and a picnic area, a high tunnel and Pittsburgh's first bio-dynamic grower garden. The bio-dynamic was designed with passive solar technology, a simple water storage system, and generates its own electricity using five solar panels. Permaculture produce is distributed through Community Support Agriculture (CSA) to people living within one mile of the farm on a pay-what-you-can basis. In the summer, the farm also supports a weekly farmer's market and donates produce to a nearby food bank while supporting its operation by selling microgreens to local high-end restaurants year-round. The farm actively cares for the earth as well as for people's physical, emotional and spiritual needs through its diverse ecological diversity and through projects to further advance the sharing of resources, education and faith.

For more information, visit: www.garfieldfarm.com

AN ATLAS OF COMMONING

PLANQUADRAT

Vienna, Austria

PLANQUADRAT
Gartenhofstrasse
Vienna, Austria, since 1973

Originally the area of Planquadrat consisted of 34 (E) court yards separated by walls, fences and leaded roofs. According to the zoning plan in the 1970s, the houses in MiG-lottery were to be demolished to make room for a wider thoroughfare.

The journalists Elisabeth Duggenberger and Helmut Vödl initiated the project, and created an ORF documentary on it. Although not approved by residents in the beginning, with a series of actions, the journalists gradually brought the residents together. They set down and reached consensus, and also negotiated with authorities to change the zoning for it. They founded Gartenhofstrasse and designed the courtyard as a recreational area, and took care for and maintained it. Many residents became members of Gartenhofstrasse. Now Planquadrat has become a beautiful garden that is a green oasis for young and old in the middle of the city.

AN ATLAS OF COMMONING

UHAB

Urban Homesteading Assistance Board

UHAB
New York, United States, since 1973

UHAB is a 45-year old affordable housing nonprofit that creates opportunities for resident empowerment by supporting low-income residents to take control of their housing solutions, and build their communities through cooperation.

Since 1973 UHAB has assisted in the preservation of more than 1,600 buildings and created homeownership opportunities for more than 30,000 households.

Over the years, we have developed an intimate knowledge of New York City's low-income co-op community. We are experts in meeting the needs of that community. Our work is unmatched by any other organization. Today, New York City has the largest community of shared-equity housing co-ops in the country.

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URBAN HOMESTEADING ASSISTANCE BOARD

New York, USA

URBAN HOMESTEADING ASSISTANCE BOARD
New York, USA, since 1973

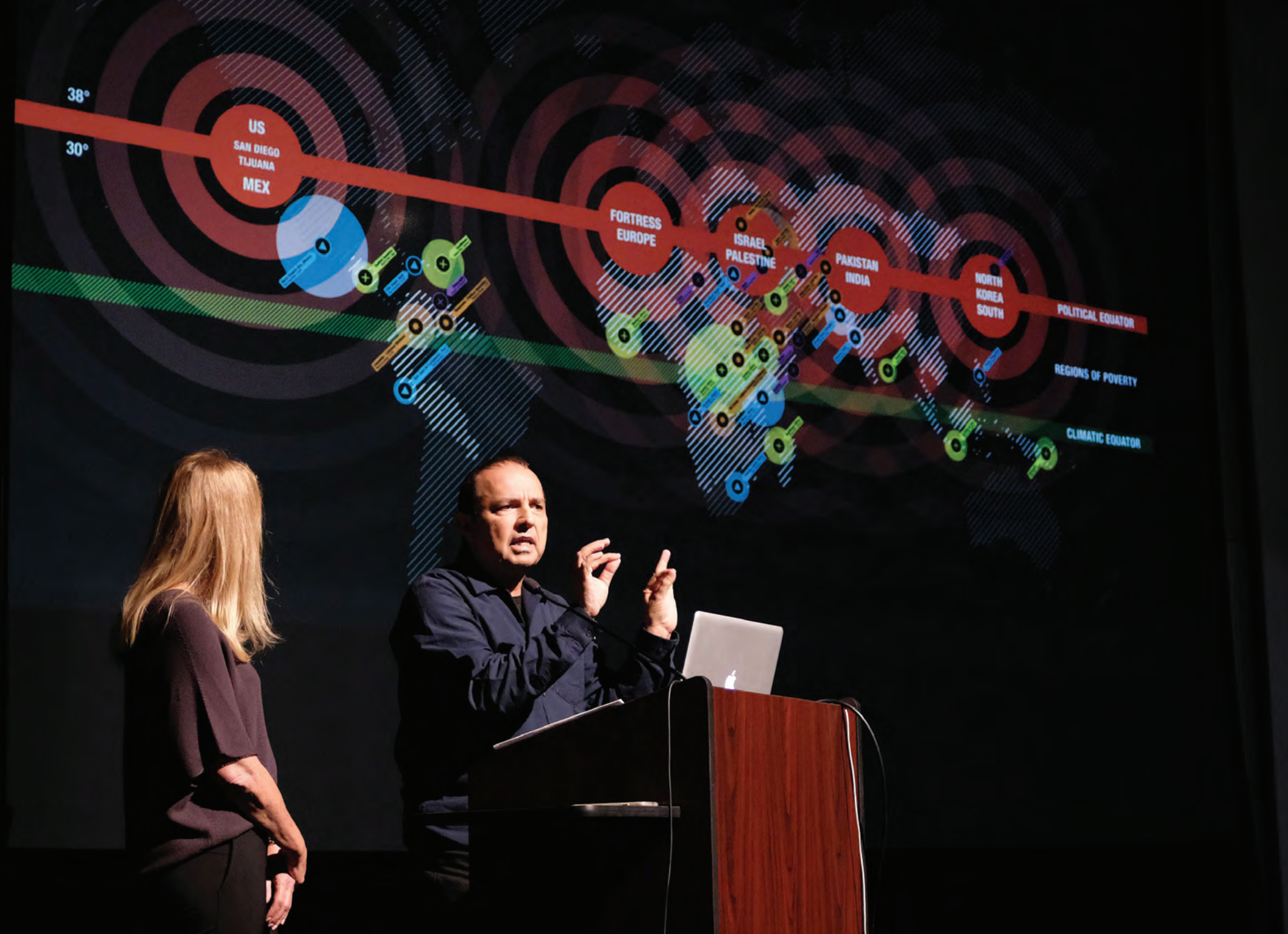
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DESIGNING FOR A COMMONS TRANSITION SYMPOSIUM



FONNA FORMAN AND TEDDY CRUZ KEYNOTE: UNWALLING CITIZENSHIP

AN ATLAS OF COMMONING

SPACES
OF

COLLECTIVE
PRODUCTION

An exhibition by the ifa
(Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen)
in collaboration with ARCH+



**JUNE 29 –
SEPTEMBER
22, 2019**

RECEPTION
Sat. June 29, 5:30-7:30pm

SALON SERIES
Neither Public, Nor Private
Thurs. July 18, 6-8pm

SYMPOSIUM
Designing for a Commons Transition
Thurs. Sept. 19 – Sat. Sept. 21



**MILLER ICA AT
CARNEGIE MELLON
UNIVERSITY**

miller-ica.cmu.edu
Purnell Center for the Arts
5000 Forbes Ave.
Free + Open to
the Public

Summer Hours
Thurs.–Sun., 12-5pm
Regular Hours
Tues.–Sun., 12-6pm



SYMPOSIUM

CHAIRIED BY
STEFAN GRUBER & JONATHAN KLINE
CMU SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

FREE & OPEN TO THE PUBLIC

**DESIGNING FOR
A COMMONS
TRANSITION**

SEPTEMBER 20, 2019
9:00AM - 4:30PM
IN COLLEGE OF FINE ARTS 214, CMU

MORNING SESSION ON COMMONING THE CITY:

RENÉE TRIBBLE
PLANBUDE HAMBURG

**KRISTIN HUGHES +
MARY-LOU ARSCOTT**
LATHAM STREET COMMONS, CMU

TOBIAS ARMORST
INTERBORO, VASSAR COLLEGE

ANTJE STEINMULLER
URBAN WORKS AGENCY, COA

KAREN ABRAMS
THE HEINZ ENDOWMENTS

AFTERNOON SESSION ON COMMUNITY
DESIGN IN PITTSBURGH:

MATHIAS HEYDEN
ISPARA

ANNE-MARIE LUBENAU
BRUNER FOUNDATION

& A PANEL DISCUSSION WITH
TERRI BALTIMORE
COMMUNITY ACTIVIST

STEFANI DANES
CMU SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

CHRISTINA HOWELL
BLOOMFIELD DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION
WWW.SOACMU.EDU/EVENTS

SEPTEMBER 19, 2019
6:30PM
AT KRESSE THEATER, CFA, CMU

**TEDDY CRUZ +
FONNA FORMAN**

ESTUDIO TEDDY CRUZ + FONNA FORMAN, UCSD

SYLVIA AND DAVID STEINER LECTURE SERIES
IN CREATIVE INQUIRY

SEPTEMBER 21, 2019
AT MILLER ICA, CMU

**11:00AM CURATOR'S
EXHIBITION TOUR**

**12:30PM SITE VISITS TO
EAST END FOOD COOP,
CONSTRUCTION JUNCTION
& COMMUNITY FORGE**

BUS TOUR WITH RSVP

WWW.MILLER-ICA.CMU.EDU



OPEN SPACE WORKSHOP - COMMONING PITTSBURGH Workshop with community members from local citizen-led initiatives



OPEN SPACE WORKSHOP - COMMONING PITTSBURGH & DESIGNING FOR A COMMONS TRANSITION SYMPOSIUM



BUS TOUR TO LOCAL COMMONING INITIATIVES Construction Junction, the Food Coop, and Community Forge

STUDIO

Participating students from Carnegie Mellon's Master of Urban Design program, and the studio "Commoning the City" co-taught by Stefan Gruber (Fall) and Jonathan Kline (Spring):

Fall 2017

Ernest Bellamy, Tamara Cartwright, Yidan Gong, Paul Moscoso Riofrio, Chun Zheng, Lu Zhu.

Fall 2018

Yirui Wang, Alvin Wong, Chi Zhang, Yang Gao, Jianxiao Ge, Chase Kea, Rebecca Lefkowitz, Sai Narayan Ramachandran, Deepanshi Sheth, Sujan Das Shrestha, Gautam Thakkar, Aditi Thota.

Fall 2019

Srinjoy Hazra, Ghalya Alsanea, Rachel Park, Ryan Smith, Yilun Hong, Suprima Joshi, Jinhan Liang, Ryann McMahan, Abhinavv Singh, Xianfu Sun, Wenzheng Wu.

Fall 2020

Clover Chau, Sharleen Devjani, Cassandra Howard, Sameedha Mahajan Longney Luk, Bingjie Sheng, He Su, Yashasvi Tulchiya, Yiya Wang, Xiaoran Zhang.

EXHIBITION

Curatorial team:

Anh-Linh Ngo, Mirko Gatti, Christian Hiller, Max Kaldenhoff, Christine Rüb (ARCH+); Elke aus dem Moore (ifa); Stefan Gruber (CMU)

Research partners:

School of Architecture, Carnegie Mellon University Pittsburgh and Technische Universität Berlin, Institute of Architecture, Prof. Rainer Hehl

Curator of Pittsburgh edition:

Stefan Gruber (CMU)

With contributions from:

Morehshin Allahyari & Daniel Rourke; clemens krug architekten & Bernhard Hummel Architekt (Team: Oliver Clemens, Anna Heilgemeir, Bernhard Hummel, Emma Williams); Assemble & Granby Workshop; Iwan Baan; Brandlhuber + Christopher Roth; DAAR Decolonizing Architecture Art Residency; Theo Deutinger; Eureka; Manuel Herz; Sandi Hilal, Philipp Misselwitz & Anne Misselwitz; Immo Klink; Kotti & Co; Kuehn Malvezzi; Angelika Levi; Golan Levin (F.A.T. Lab) & Shawn Sims (Sy-Lab); Makoko Waterfront Community; Tukano Maloca; Miethäuser Syndikat; National Union of Sahrawi Women; NLÉ Architects; PlanBude Hamburg, Svenja Baumgardt & Sylvi Kretzschmar; Common Ground e.V. & Nachbarschaftsakademie; Quest – Florian Köhl / Christian

Burkhard; Martha Rosler; Harald Trapp / Robert Thum; Urban-Think Tank, Chair of Architecture and Urban Design ETH Zürich; WiLMA GmbH; Samson Young.

The "Atlas of Commoning" also includes works by:

Airbnb; ARGE ifau | HEIDE & VON BECKERATH; Atelier d'Architecture Autogérée; BARarchitekten; Bau- und Wohngenossenschaft Spreefeld Berlin eG; Carpaneto Schoeningh Architekten; City in the Making; FATkoehl Architekten; Die Zusammenarbeit; El Campo de la Cebada; Genossenschaft Kalkbreite; Genossenschaft Kraftwerk1; Go Hasegawa and Associates; IBeb GbR; Müller Sigrüst Architects; Refugee Accommodation and Solidarity Space City Plaza; Schneider Studer Primas; Stiftung House of One – Bet- und Lehrhaus Petriplatz Berlin; Gemeinde Yoshino; ZUS [Zones Urbaines Sensibles]. Pittsburgh initiatives include Breathe Project; City of Asylum; Community Forge; Garfield Community Farm; General Sisters, General Store; Latham Street Commons; Manchester Bidwell Corporation; The Braddock Carnegie Library.