This work presented in this portfolio is organized according to three intersecting sets of coordinates, each set itself a triad:

- A larger agenda of contemporary design education: the international, the sustainable, and the place-based;
- A specific emphasis of my academic and professional work: on the design cultures of Finland and the Nordic region, on the design potentials of forests, timber and wood products, and on the design essentials of place, purpose and phenomena;
- An expression of those emphases in the academic assessments of teaching, creative practice and research, and service to the discipline and the public.

Each slide after this introductory collage is identified by a combination of these coordinates. However, the labeling is not absolute or categorical. The inter-relationships and overlaps between all projects shown and the range of coordinates are best understood as a composite laminate of ambitions and outcomes.
Over a twenty year period, in faculty appointments across two schools of architecture, I instructed or co-instructed a succession of design studios with the city of Helsinki as a central focus and the cultural context of Finland as a general framework. These studios occurred in fall, spring and summer semesters, making climate and light demonstrable issues of design concern, and emphasized further the necessity for responsive and responsible design in material, constructional and cultural terms. Studio methodologies always structured collaborative and inter-disciplinary approaches, and a holistic understanding of design, “from the spoon to the city,” to quote Eliel Saarinen. A consistent thread was that of architecture’s capacity for intensification of place, and for representation of identity - whether personal, municipal or national. Studio outcomes ranged from the conventional drawn and rendered projections of architectural design to full-scale material constructions in the streets, marketplaces and shorelines of the city. Over the course of those twenty years, over the course of at least thirty studios, approximately 300 students participated in these Helsinki/Finland design studios.
Helsinki is a city of many layers, personas, characters and qualities. Many are visible, tangible, palpable, sensual. Many are invisible, below the surface, shaped and hidden by time, water, geology and construction. The city’s geography balances its land form with its water form; it is a peninsula that has emerged from an archipelago of islands. The city’s urban structure positions a series of civic squares and parks throughout its interior gridded street patterns, and a skein of civic harbors along its irregular coastal shoreline. This pair of civic “archipelagos” - Helsinki’s squares and Helsinki’s harbors - intrinsically complements each other. The city’s immediacy, graciousness and intimacy is sustained by these linked public spaces. Helsinki’s South Harbor embodies this essential character: it is both civic harbor and civic square. This character must be reinvigorated, however, through the provision of a condensed “archipelago” of experiences, spaces and constructions.
This seminar examines the two signal architects of the late 20th century, through focused examinations of their biographies, written
statements and significant buildings: the Salk Institute and the British Art Center, among others, by Kahn and the Saynatsalo
Town Hall and the Villa Mairea, among others, by Aalto. The course structure will intertwine the progress of each architect's career
and production with the other's, and place them both as well in their historical and theoretical contexts. Thematic issues of site,
tectonics, purposes, and formal principles will be addressed, and the subsequent critical interpretations of the built works will be
reviewed. Selected works will be the subject of analysis through surveys of archival drawings and constructed models. An overview
of the legacy of Kahn and Aalto as represented in contemporary architectural culture will conclude the seminar. Field trips to
selected buildings of Kahn in the United States are planned; an optional field trip to Finland for the experience of Aalto’s works is
also envisioned.

This seminar examines the current vigor of architecture practice in the Nordic countries - Finland, Sweden, Norway, Denmark and
Iceland - through focused studies on significant and emerging architects, built and projected works, and historical and theoretical
frameworks. Beginning with overviews of the significant 20th century architects and works that conventionally characterize the
Nordic architectural reputation - Aalto and Pietilä in Finland, Asplund and Lewerentz in Sweden, Jacobson and Utzon in Denmark,
Korsmo and Fehn in Norway, among others - the seminar will address the late 20th century legacy of these architects, and move
rapidly to survey and assess the succeeding generation before turning directly to the architects and works of the last 20 years.
Studio Granda in Iceland, Snohetta, Jarmund/Vigsnaes, and Jenseen/Skodvin in Norway; BIG, Lundberg & Tradgaard, and Gehl
Urban Design in Denmark, Johan Celsing, Gert Wingardh, and Tham & Videgard in Sweden; and Lahdelma & Mahlamaki, JKMM,
and K2S, among many practices, will be assessed. Issues of regionalism, urban and housing design, tectonics and materials,
environmental design and sustainability, social responsibility and national representation will all serve as thematic filters for
discussion and evaluation.
I directly curated and designed the LIGHT HOUSES exhibition at the Nordic Pavilion for the 13th Biennale of Architecture in Venice (August – November, 2012), working at the invitation and appointment of the Museum of Finnish Architecture, the 2012 commissioner of the Pavilion. LIGHT HOUSES is an international travelling exhibition now on view at the Museum of Finnish Architecture in Helsinki and due to be on view at the Center for Swedish Architecture and Design at the Moderna Museet, Stockholm, in the fall, 2013. At the Biennale, this exhibition was viewed by 150,000 visitors.

The exhibition celebrates the jubilee of the Nordic Pavilion designed fifty years ago by the Pritzker Prize winning architect Sverre Fehn. Thirty-three architects born after 1962, the year the pavilion was designed – eleven each from Finland, Sweden and Norway – have been invited to create a model of a conceptual “house” that reflects their personal philosophy of architecture. The exhibition also highlights topical social and environmental themes, looking at the sobering economic constraints and diminishing environmental resources that challenge architects of all nations in their efforts to achieve maximum quality in their designs. Contemporary Nordic architectural culture offers both exemplary approaches and significant constructed works addressing these most challenging circumstances of our time. The classic hallmarks of Nordic architecture – simplified form, frugal use of materials and sensitive treatment of daylight and the natural setting – embody the basic principles of responsible, sustainable architecture.

The Nordic Pavilion at the Venice Biennale is Sverre Fehn’s distilled, elegant version of a Nordic “house” – a design evoking sensations of light, material, structure, space, nature and atmosphere. It embodies what might be called a metaphysical “house of the North”, one of specific primary architectural images, elements and details. The Nordic Pavilion is a physical and metaphorical “common ground” for Finland, Sweden and Norway.

Visitors will encounter an exhibition that can be viewed nowhere else, and in no other format. The works have been commissioned specifically for the Venice venue from Nordic architects new and established, urban and rural, less-renowned and widely celebrated. The exhibits are displayed as installations, forming a “chorus” of contemporary Nordic architecture in polyphonic dialogue with Fehn’s iconic pavilion. The exhibits are mounted on pedestals designed by Professor Juhani Pallasmaa, Fehn’s colleague and personal friend. The show is curated by Professor Peter MacKeith and organised by the Museum of Finnish Architecture in collaboration with The Swedish Museum of Architecture and The National Museum of Art, Architecture and Design (Norway).
Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future

Mildred Lane Kemper Art Museum
January 30 - April 27, 2009

I initiated and produced, working with the Kemper Museum staff, the St. Louis/Washington University installation of the Finnish Cultural Institute’s Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future, an international travelling exhibition shown in Helsinki, Oslo, Brussels, Cranbrook Academy, the Walker Art Center, the City Museum of New York, and the Yale School of Architecture. In alliance with the Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future exhibition, in 2008-09 I worked with Professor Eric Mumford and Senior Lecturer Don Koster, and a team of graduate students, to initiate, conceive, research, fund-raise, design and install a parallel exhibition of immediate St. Louis relevance, entitled On the Riverfront: St. Louis and the Gateway Arch. This exhibition, installed in Steinberg Hall’s 2,000 square foot gallery, surveyed the urban history and design of St. Louis up until the 1947 Jefferson National Expansion Memorial Competition, and then presented the Competition to the public for the first time since 1947 in a comprehensive and comprehensible way through a researched selection of competition entries and jury assessments. Eero Saarinen’s entry boards for the Competition were presented as part of this exhibition, making it an important adjunct to the presentation of the St. Louis Arch in the concurrent larger exhibition.

Eero Saarinen: Shaping the Future is organized by the Finnish Cultural Institute in New York; the Museum of Finnish Architecture, Helsinki; and the National Building Museum, Washington D.C. with the support of the Yale University School of Architecture. The exhibition is curated by Donald Albrecht in conjunction with an international consortium of Finnish and American scholars.


Exhibition team: Peter MacKeith, Associate Professor/Eric Mumford, Professor, Co-Curators; Mary Brunstrom, PhD. Candidate, Research; Don Koster, Senior Lecturer, Research and Exhibition Design and Installation
Beginning in 1991 - within a year of my first arrival in Finland - I began reporting on contemporary buildings and events in architectural culture there; my first article profiled Finland’s presence at the 1991 Venice Biennale for architecture. Since 1991, I have written over 40 such specific building profiles. The initial focus on contemporary Finnish architecture has expanded to include profiles of contemporary buildings in Iceland and Norway (while I have identified buildings of quality in Sweden and Denmark, sadly these have not been commissioned as articles). These building profiles have appeared in significant professional journals in the United States, Great Britain, Italy, the Nordic countries, Estonia, and the former Soviet Union. The profiles average between 1,500 and 3,000 words in length, and include building description, building assessment and formal criticism. The building types range from exhibitions to houses to civic and religious structures, and include urban sites and open landscape sites. The architects included in this ongoing survey are the most prominent now working in the Nordic countries; each profile is accomplished on the basis of an on-site visit over two or more days with the architect, an interview, and a review of the design and construction documents. The ongoing series constitutes a survey of the best of Nordic architecture in the last twenty years. Excerpts from two such recent profiles are included here.
BOOKS AND CRITICAL ESSAYS


2012 – 2015 Artek and the Aaltos: Design, Domesticity and the Public Sphere (Commissioned introductory essay) (in conjunction with 2014-15 exhibition as noted below) Yale University Press / Bard Graduate Center joint publication

2012 Encounters II: Architectural Essays (by Juhani Pallasmaa)

2002 Archipelago: Essays on Architecture

2006 Archipelago: Essays on Architecture


2012 LIGHT HOUSES: The 2012 Nordic Pavilion Exhibition at the Venice Biennale

2012 – 2015 Artek and the Aaltos: Design, Domesticity and the Public Sphere

2010 - 2014 The SOM Journal, numbers 8 (published 2013), 9 (for 2014), 10 (for 2015) / Editor

2005 The Dissolving Corporation: Contemporary Architecture, Corporate Identity in Finland


Editor / 400 pages, 400 illustrations.

Helsinki, 2005: Rakennustieto, Building Information Ltd.

2005 Encounters: Architectural Essays (by Juhani Pallasmaa)

Helsinki, 2005: Rakennustieto, Building Information Ltd.

2005 Encounters II: Architectural Essays (by Juhani Pallasmaa)

Fumihiko Maki, author / Peter MacKeith, editor (2nd edition) / 68 pages, 25 images.

Helsinki, 2005: Rakennustieto, Building Information Ltd.

1994 Estonian Architecture: The Story of a Nation

Helsinki, 1994: Rakennustieto, Building Information Ltd.

1993 THE FINLAND PAVILIONS: Finland at the Universal Expositions 1900 – 1992

Helsinki, 1993: City Kustannus Publishers Ltd.

2004 Investigations in Collective Form

Helsinki, 2004: Rakennustieto, Building Information Ltd.

2002 Primary Architectural Images: Seminar Documents 1

Co-author Kerstin Smeds, 184 pages, 191 photographs.

1993 THE FINLAND PAVILIONS: Finland at the Universal Expositions 1900 – 1992

Helsinki, 1993: City Kustannus Publishers Ltd.


Co-editor David Thompson. 176 pages.

Publications: Articles and Essays

1991 – ongoing Articles on contemporary Finnish and Nordic architecture and design published in: architecture, architectural record, arkitehtti-lehti (The Finnish Architect's Review), architectural review, casabella, competitions, form function finland, korean architecture review, monument, progressive architecture, spazio e societa, world architecture
Having lived, taught and practiced architecture and design in Finland and in the United States at length, I conceived an exhibition to coincide with the 100 Year anniversary of Finnish independence to celebrate the strong presence of Creative Finland – Finnish architecture, design and industry – in American culture, since at least the mid-twentieth century. The contemporary design relationships between the two nations are equally notable and worthy of illustration in the Embassy of Finland, Washington, DC, on the occasion of the centenary celebration of Finland’s independence. The exhibition, titled ‘THE ICONIC AND THE EVERYDAY,’ proposes an explicit condensed assertion of the contemporary presence and influence of Finnish design, industry and identity in the United States. Two exhibition displays are interwoven, each of which can be seen simultaneously as both “iconic” and “everyday” in character. The most clearly “iconic” is the distilled exhibition of the primary architectural works Finnish architects have contributed to American life, either in built form or in projected form; the built works by Eelis Saarinen, Alvar Aalto, Eero Saarinen and Mikko Heikinen and Markku Komonen have also become part of the “everyday” life of those who inhabit them. The most clearly “everyday” is the exhibition of the objects, tools, furniture, and implements of Finnish design and industrial production that populate and activate the daily lives of American citizens – a density of Finnish identity often without any acknowledgement. But these objects, too, possess an “iconic” character in the clarity and purposefulness of their design. The exhibition ambition is to produce a composite understanding of the presence and strength of Finnish architecture, design and industry in the lives of everyday Americans – and to benefit both nations’ mutual appreciation and understanding. The exhibition’s installation components are lightweight, simply assembled, made primarily of wood, and suggestive of a landscape: a forested shoreline, perhaps. The iconic images of architecture are organized and incorporated into four panels punctuating the sinuous rhythm of the installation cabinets and shelves. The everyday objects of Finnish design and manufacture are composed into both singular and serial displays of the actual things – available for both the eye and the hand.
This advanced undergraduate design studio, intended for students in all disciplines, will examine and articulate the inter-related issues of personal identity and public engagement, working in design through the transformative material medium of wood. The studio will consist of a series of researched visual and verbal investigations, scaled material constructions, and tectonic architectural designs. The individual identity and voice of each student and the diverse and inclusive identity of the national community will be drawn out over the course of the semester: the proposition of the studio is that the material laminations of timber and wood products can be analogues for the layered identity of an individual and the layered character of the United States. The studio will be committed to the reality of material and the reality of contemporary life: a constant emphasis, based upon the current mode of design education under pandemic conditions, will be the mediation between "the virtual" and "the real" in design and construction, between the mind and hands of the designer and the mind and hands of those fabricating and constructing, between the means of representation and the means of material realization, between the means of constructing and the constructed meaning. The studio is to be understood as a "design-build" studio, in that as much as possible a 1 to 1 scalar emphasis in design and construction will be the prevailing mode of design development and realization. All projects assigned during the semester will possess a three-dimensional, constructed quality, across a range of time-frames, sizes, techniques, and materials. These projects will be achievable in any mode of teaching and learning. Project time-frames will range from one day research exercises to a six-week detailed design to semester-long assignments.
This advanced undergraduate design studio, intended for students in all disciplines, will examine and articulate the inter-related issues of personal identity and public engagement, working in design through the transformative material medium of wood. The studio will consist of a series of researched visual and verbal investigations, scaled material constructions, and tectonic architectural designs. The individual identity and voice of each student and the diverse and inclusive identity of the national community will be drawn out over the course of the semester: the proposition of the studio is that the material laminations of timber and wood products can be analogues for the layered identity of an individual and the layered character of the United States. The studio will be committed to the reality of material and the reality of contemporary life: a constant emphasis, based upon the current mode of design education under pandemic conditions, will be the mediation between "the virtual" and "the real" in design and construction, between the mind and hands of the designer and the mind and hands of those fabricating and constructing, between the means of representation and the means of material realization, between the means of constructing and the constructed meaning. The studio is to be understood as a "design-build" studio, in that as much as possible a 1 to 1 scalar emphasis in design and construction will be the prevailing mode of design development and realization. All projects assigned during the semester will possess a three-dimensional, constructed quality, across a range of time-frames, sizes, techniques, and materials. These projects will be achievable in any mode of teaching and learning. Project time-frames will range from one day research exercises to a six-week detailed design to semester-long assignments.
The design competition is funded in large part by a grant from the U.S. Forest Service and the U.S. Endowment for Forestry and Communities. Six architecture firms from around the world were selected as finalists for a Design Competition to envision the future Anthony Timberlands Center for Design and Materials Innovation at the University of Arkansas. This innovative process was fully public, bringing a spotlight to Arkansas, its timber industries and its future in wood product research and development.

After envisioning a new design and materials innovation center for the Fay Jones School, I secured an initial private donation of $7.5 million and matching funds from the University of Arkansas which allowed the project, no known as the Anthony Timberlands Center for Design and Materials Innovation, to begin in earnest. With Project Representative Jonathan Boelkins, a faculty member in Architecture, I wrote the Request for Qualifications which received four times as many responses from architects around the world (69 firms from 11 countries) and resulted in six finalists being selected for a Design Competition. This innovative process was fully public, with each finalist presenting their design proposals not only to our students and faculty, but were open to the broader community and published online. Ultimately, the Pritzker Prize winning firm of Grafton Architects of Dublin, Ireland, were selected as the winner.
As the Executive Sponsor of the ongoing Anthony Timberlands Center for Design and Materials Innovation, I direct the design process (currently in Design Development,) facilitate interaction of the Design Team with students, staff, faculty, and other administrators, and continue to raise funds for the project. Conceived from the beginning as an important didactic opportunity, members of the Design Team have regularly interacted with students in my courses and in those of other faculty. For example, during the LAMINATE studio I taught with Andrew Waugh of Waugh Thistleton of London (one of the finalists in the Design Competition for the Anthony Center) we invited Kelly Harrison, an engineer with Whitby Wood, also from London, the structural engineers for the Anthony Timberlands Center. In this way, our students are already benefiting from the innovative design of the building, before construction has even begun.
As a step towards forward progress, even in these constrained conditions, we have worked together to frame this consortium conference as a virtual conference to be held still within this current year. We write now to invite your participation as a panelist and presenter on behalf of your school or program’s design and education research in timber and wood. For this first step towards an ongoing discussion and collaboration, we have a simple goal: for each of us to bring our work to a common table in collegial discussion, so as to understand the current state of timber and wood design education and research in North America.

To this end, we have envisioned a series of focus group panel discussions, all occurring across the same day: Saturday, December 5th, 2020. The format of the day, and the format of these presentations, is intended to be low-key, informative and productive, and does not require much advance preparation. Participants are being invited from all regions of North America and selected programs in Europe.
The Fay Jones School of Architecture + Design University of Arkansas
70th Anniversary Symposium
“New Languages of Wood”
August 26-27, 2016
Friday, August 26
6:30 pm
Faulkner Performing Arts Center
“Telling the Beauty and Mystery of the 2 x 4”
Billy Frank Felicchio/Architect / Space/Timbers, Philadelphia
“Coda: Study + Design Building”
Andrew Lee / Future Research and Associates / Boston
Frank Lloyd Wright: An Architecture of Wood
Robert McCarter / Taliban, University of Washington / Seattle, Washington
Saturday, August 27
9 am
Shoemaker Hall, Vol Walker Hall
Projects
Thomas Robinson / Miller Hull Architecture / Portland
Anne Shanks / Smith + New York
Jeffrey V. Brumfield / Rice University / Houston
Research
Lilitch-Dangel / University of Texas at Austin
“Raising the Roof on Timber Construction”
Kaarina Mars / University of Washington
“Walling Out the Grit”
Alan Organiz / Tulia University / Tulia City
Bartosz Jakubiak / ASD Research in Structural Design
“The Tall Premiere Building”
Education
Enny Chang / University of Oregon
Katie Silberman / Clemson University
Rahma Siddiqui / Arizona University
Zain Mitola / Architected Association
Registration info: For information, visit fayjones.uark.edu
The New Languages of Wood Symposium focused on “new languages of wood” in contemporary architecture and engineering design. The symposium intends to educate, demonstrate and inspire an audience of students, professionals, timber and wood industrialists, state and federal agencies, and the larger public.

The Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design hosted a professional education seminar, “Mass Timber: Design, Construction and Production,” in the Ken and Linda Sue Sholmier Hall inside Vol Walker Hall on the University of Arkansas campus on Dec. 15. The seminar featured professionals from all aspects of the timber industry discussing the rapidly expanding field of mass timber design and construction. More than 100 architects, engineers, contractors and developers from the region attended the daylong seminar.

The University of Arkansas Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design and the U.S. Forest Service hosted a symposium and workshop October 4-6, 2019, in the Ken and Linda Sue Sholmier Hall inside Vol Walker Hall on the University of Arkansas campus.

Further information and conference program forthcoming on July 15
Information and conference program forthcoming on July 15
Information and conference program forthcoming on July 15
Information and conference program forthcoming on July 15
Information and conference program forthcoming on July 15
Information and conference program forthcoming on July 15
This advanced undergraduate design studio examines and articulates the many-layered material identity of the lower Mississippi River - from the Cahokia Mounds to the Delta - through a series of researched visual investigations scaled material constructions, and tectonic architectural designs located at significant river transects and urban sites along this nearly 1,000 mile length of flowing river water. The centrality of the River to the identity of the larger regional and national contexts (historical, geographical, and cultural) as well as to the individual identity of each student, is drawn out over the course of the semester.

As Visiting Professor at the Faculty of Architecture at the University of Ljubljana, Slovenia, for the second time, I had an opportunity to provide 15 students with a combination of teaching in design studio and an architectural theory seminar. Given Slovenia’s then recent independence from the former Yugoslavia, my own lack of knowledge about Slovenia and its capital city, Ljubljana, and my reflections of cultural identity, architecture, urban design and design-build teaching, I determined to ask the students to design and construct a series of “identifiers” for themselves, their school, and the city.
A SOUTH FORTY

Contemporary Architecture and Design in the American South
European Cultural Centre
Venice, Italy
May - November, 2021
Exhibition Curator: Peter MacKeith, Dean and Professor at the Fay Jones School of Architecture and Design at the University of Arkansas
Exhibition Architecture: Jonathan Boelkins Architect
Graphic Design: DOXA Vantage

Based on my essay originally published in OXFORD AMERICAN, and now featured in an exhibition as part of the “TIME SPACE EXISTENCE” exhibition for the 2021 Venice Architecture Biennale at the European Cultural Center, ‘A South Forty: Contemporary Architecture and Design in the American South’ tells a contemporary story, centered on the development of architecture and design in the American South over the last generation (from 1990 forward) as the region undergoes rapid economic and population growth, withstands and recovers from multiple natural disasters, and discovers a more complex and diverse identity amidst the historical societal traditions and conventions. Such a mapping of the American South in these terms opens new and essential territories for work in architecture – more positive, empowering, engaged, sensitive and aware work altogether. Geographically, A SOUTH FORTY is organized along the armature of US Highway 40, running west from the North Carolina Atlantic seacoast through the southeastern states to an inflection point in Oklahoma. Approximately forty participating practices in the exhibition are drawn from the larger southeastern region along this latitude.

The “story” of A SOUTH FORTY is also one of place-based design, attentive to the necessities of climate, materials, labor, and purpose, but also attentive to overlooked or undervalued typologies, constituencies, and locales. While there is the surge of new urban centers and suburban peripheries as conditions to address in the region, there is also a new appreciation for the smaller communities and rural or even wilderness landscapes as productive sites for distinctive work. As well, while design excellence has been achieved by many practices at the residential scale, the greater emphasis in the exhibition is to be seen at the public scale, in the civic realm, through the accomplishment of buildings and projects of strength, durability and value for the communities in which they are situated.
Radical Practice: The Work of Marlon Blackwell Architects, presents a layered understanding of a practice thirty years in the making, through a sequencing of fourteen projects, fourteen commentaries, and fourteen singular images, bounded by several evocative essays. The book possesses multiple vantage points, multiple perspectives, and multiple interpretations, all intended to stimulate a comprehension of the richness of the work, its methods, and its consequences, and to suggest an open-endness, at once generous and provocative, to the practice’s trajectory. To be clear for the reader: the book’s projects, commentaries, essays and images are arranged with deliberate intention, with specific adjacencies and sequences, but the projects are not presented in a chronological order of their completion, or in an ascending hierarchy of typological importance. Consonant with the openness of the practice itself, the reader is encouraged to explore the work of Marlon Blackwell Architects through the pages of the book otherwise, entering at will through any project, any commentary, any image, in the knowledge that any such encounter will be an equivalent threshold into an essential, resonant understanding of the practice as a whole.

Richly photographed and packed with the architecture of Marlon Blackwell Architects, Radical Practice is a portfolio of national award-winning projects in all categories, emphasizing the public and civic realm, emerging from outside the established centers of architectural culture, and from an eponymous practice established over thirty years, engaging the talents and abilities of partners, assistants, consultants and collaborators.

The distinct and original voice of Marlon Blackwell Architects has produced iconic and award-winning designs across typologies, scales and budgets. Located in Arkansas, their critically-resolute merging of the universal language of architecture and the particulars of place have resulted in a distinguished body of work found outside the centers of fashion.

Celebrating thirty years of practice by the 2020 AIA Gold Medal-winning architect Marlon Blackwell, this survey of more than a dozen buildings pairs detailed drawings and the vivid photographs of renowned photographer Timothy Hursley with essays by leading designers, planners, and artists. Contributors include Tod Williams and Billie Tsien, architects of the Obama Presidential Center; Maurice Cox, Chicago’s city planning director; Pritzker Prize-winning architect Thom Mayne; James Corner, landscape architect of the High Line, and environmental artist Mary Miss among many others—all of whom attest to Blackwell’s reputation as a leading voice of his generation.
The Design Studio will engage students in the study of housing issues and precedents that incorporate the social, urban, and architectural agendas into a cohesive whole. Student work will be uploaded here throughout the semester.

The Regional Symposium will bring local and national experts together to address the current state of policy, design, and development in a public forum.

The Professional Design Competition will invite design professionals to present mixed-income and attainable housing solutions that embrace the local challenges, culture, values, and vision of Northwest Arkansas. Entries will be uploaded to the website at the end of the competition.

The Housing Northwest Arkansas Initiative is a three-tiered project consisting of an advanced design studio focused on education, a regional symposium focused on the community, and a national design competition for professionals focused on advancing the ideas of the studio and the discussions of the symposium into actual development. Each of these three components adds to the in-depth exploration of national and regional housing issues of design, zoning, finance, city planning, community development, and community education and engagement. Throughout this exploration, we continue to pursue the goals of educating Fay Jones School students, informing the Northwest Arkansas community, and building a better Northwest Arkansas.

THE CHALLENGE
Housing in Northwest Arkansas, like much of the United States, has become bifurcated into two housing types: single-family homes and apartments. Single-family homes in the U.S. now have a median size of 2,453 square feet and are often isolated from transportation options, making them unattainable for many families. The average size of apartments in the U.S. is less than 900 square feet, making them unlivable for many families.

Attainable housing addresses the needs of households making 60% to 120% of the median income. This demographic typically doesn’t qualify for government subsidized housing, yet may still struggle to find affordable, available housing options in Northwest Arkansas.
Since entering higher education in 1977, I have spent much of my learning, teaching and working life in five academic institutions, each of them notable for their campus plans and architectural quality: the University of Virginia, Yale University, the Helsinki University of Technology, and Washington University in St. Louis, and the University of Arkansas. Despite their apparent differences in appearance, and distinctions in historical and geographical terms, the common ground of these designed universities is their clear intention to provide an architectural form consonant with educational ideals. The universities physically embody their ambitions and identities, through form, material, detail and landscape.

Education is a process of self-identification, and architectural education is perhaps even more intense in this process. To work in architectural education within these significant institutional settings has been a privilege, but it has also been an ongoing education in the nature of education itself, in the teaching and learning mission of both students and faculty, and in achieving a deeper understanding of my own identity as a design educator.