

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Close to the Edge: The Birth of Hip-Hop Architecture
to open at the Center for Architecture in NYC
October 1, 2018 – January 12, 2019



Proposal for JXTA Arts Center, 4RM+ULA

*“Don’t push me ‘cause I’m close to the edge.
I’m trying not to loose my head.
It’s like a jungle sometimes it makes me wonder
why I keep from going under”
- from “The Message,” Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five*

New York, NY, September 10, 2018 – The Center for Architecture is proud to announce the opening of *Close to the Edge: The Birth of Hip-Hop Architecture* on **Monday, October 1 at 6:00 pm, with an exclusive press preview from 5:00 – 6:00 pm**. The exhibition, curated and designed by **Sekou Cooke** of the Syracuse University School of Architecture with graphic design by **WeShouldDoltAll** and graffiti by **David CHINO Villorente**, exhibits the work of 21 practitioners, academics, and students at the center of this emerging architectural movement.

“We are excited to debut the first extensive exhibition on Hip-Hop Architecture,” said AIANY and Center for Architecture Executive Director **Benjamin Prosky, Assoc. AIA**. “Since Sekou first

gave a [lecture on the topic at the Center for Architecture in January 2016](#), we have wanted to offer our audiences the opportunity to learn more.”

Hip-Hop Architecture embodies the collective creative energies of one of the dominant cultural movements of our time. Hip-Hop Architecture’s ideals have primarily been tested by a loosely organized group of pioneering individuals, each using hip-hop as a lens through which to provoke and evoke architectural form. Over the last five decades, hip-hop’s primary means of expression—deejaying, emceeing, b-boying, and graffiti—have become globally recognized creative practices, and each has significantly impacted the urban built environment.

Close to the Edge: The Birth of Hip-Hop Architecture exhibits the work of these pioneers at the center of this emerging architectural revolution. It includes work by 21 participants representing five countries, with projects ranging across a variety of media and forms of expression: from experimental visualization formats and installation strategies to façade studies, building designs, and urban development proposals.

"Hip-Hop Architecture is as hard to pin down as it is vibrantly challenging and relevant to consider," said Center for Architecture board president **Barry Bergdoll**. "The assembly of practices brought together here could not be more timely in directing energy towards conversations we urgently need to advance."

Pioneering Graffiti artist David CHINO Villorente will provide the first layer of intervention for the Center for Architecture’s main gallery, with full-scale murals and tags on the interior walls. The next layer is a repurposed 40-foot shipping container sliced into sections and hung on the gallery walls, partially covering the graffiti below. "Shipping containers have represented creative reuse and appropriation for architects over the last several years," says Cooke. "Since repurposing, sampling, and appropriations are dominant themes within hip-hop, many Hip-Hop Architecture projects use them as a starting point. For the exhibition, this shipping container becomes a three-dimensional 'tag' on top of the already graffitied wall surface."

Layering as a process continues throughout the show with vinyl lettering, paper labels, paint-pen tags and arrows (by CHINO), wheat-pasted posters, and name tag stickers. A grid of framed images and drawings from the exhibition’s many participants forms the final layer of intervention to the main gallery. "This is the only color used in the show," Cooke explains, "leaving everything else black, white, or gray. Jonathan (of WSDIA) and I believe this will bring more focus and attention to the main content of a very dense show."

"I Know You Seen Me on Your Videos," a multi-screen video collage of lectures, music videos, and other footage of events relevant to Hip-Hop Architecture, completes the content in the main gallery. The exhibition continues in the lower gallery with "On Form," a series of 3D printed models presented as blank formal objects divorced from their contexts; "B-Sides," a series of images and statements about other architectural movements related to Hip-Hop Architecture; and "Black Noise," an audio booth used for listening to additional lectures, interviews, and clips

from architecturally inspired rap music. According to Cooke, “the entire experience will be sensorially stimulating, highlighting the totality of Hip-Hop Architectural space.”

“Syracuse Architecture is proud to support this timely exhibition curated and designed by Assistant Professor Sekou Cooke, among the most important voices in an architecture movement associated with and influenced by hip-hop,” said Dean of Syracuse University School of Architecture **Michael Speaks**, “Professor Cooke, with the support of WeShoudDoltAll and Chino, has not only done the hard work of documenting the emergence of what he and others have designated ‘Hip-Hop Architecture,’ but has done so in an exhibition that expresses in its design the very characteristics of hip-hop they seek to document. A truly outstanding achievement!”

“On behalf of AIA New York, we are proud to support this exhibition as part of our President’s Circle,” said AIANY President, **Guy Geier, FAIA**. “2018’s presidential theme at AIANY, Architect|Activist, hopes to encourage designers to advocate for matters that concern and inspire them. The works on view in *Close to the Edge* engage via design and architecture with issues of identity and place that are at the core of the cultural movement of hip-hop.”

RELATED PROGRAMS

Members of the press are invited to all related programming. Please RSVP to cschaulsohn@aiany.org.

Opening

Monday, October 1, 6-10pm

Press Preview: 5-6 pm

Hip-Hop Architecture Symposium

Saturday, October 6, 1-6pm

With Sekou Cooke, Syracuse University School of Architecture; Nina Cooke John, Cooke John Studio; James Garrett, Jr., AIA, 4RM+ULA; Andres L. Hernandez, Assoc. AIA, School of the Art Institute of Chicago; Craig Wilkins, PhD, University of Michigan; Ifeoma Ebo, The Mayor’s Office of Criminal Justice; Peter Robinson, Parsons School of Design

Family Day: Build to the Beat

Saturday, November 10, 11am-1pm or 2-4pm

The Birth—Part 1

Monday, November 26, 6-8pm

With Mitesh Dixit, Syracuse University; Tajai Massey, Sabi Design-Build/Hieroglyphics; Nathan Williams, Artist

The Birth—Part 2

Wednesday, December 5, 6-8pm

With Lawrence Chua, PhD, Syracuse University; Lauren Halsey, Artist; Stephen Slaughter, University of Cincinnati

Close to the Edge: The Birth of Hip-Hop Architecture is made possible with support from:

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About the Center for Architecture

The Center for Architecture is the premier cultural venue for architecture and the built environment in New York City, informed by the complexity of the City's urban fabric and in dialogue with the global community. The Center shares a home with the AIA New York Chapter and has the unique advantage of drawing upon the ideas and experiences of practicing architects to produce thought-provoking exhibitions, informative public programs, and quality design education experiences for K-12 students. It also leads New York City's annual month-long architecture and design festival, Archtober. The Center for Architecture's aim is to further public knowledge about New York City architecture and architects, foster exchange and collaboration among members of the design, development, building, scholarly, and policy sectors, and inspire new ideas about the role of design in communities by presenting contemporary and practical issues in architecture and urbanism to a general audience.

www.centerforarchitecture.org