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Center for Architecture Announces the Recipients of the 2021 Stewardson Keefe LeBrun Travel Grant

Five New York City-based early and mid-career architects were awarded a total of \$50,000 to pursue research and travels.

February 10, 2022, New York, NY – The Center for Architecture is proud to announce the 2021 recipients of the [Stewardson Keefe LeBrun Travel Grant](#):

- **Daisy Ames**, “Designing Houses for a Changing Climate: Nomadic Living and Unseen Environmental Elements”
- **Timothy Carey**, “Some Assembly Required: Performing Arts Architecture and the Idea of Audience”
- **Dennis Chiessa**, “The Maya and Garifuna Coast of Mexico and Central America”
- **Laura Greenberg**, “School’s Out: District- and Building-scale Strategies for Equitable Public School Re-use”
- **Deona Swager**, “The Intimacy of Place”

The purpose of the LeBrun Grant is to further the personal and professional development of early- and mid-career architects through travel. In December 2021, the Center for Architecture awarded a total of \$50,000 for the grant’s 2021 cycle, distributed across five recipients, to allow them to complete their research and travels.

2021 LEBRUN RECIPIENTS

Daisy Ames

Project: “Designing Houses for a Changing Climate: Nomadic Living and Unseen Environmental Elements”

Award: \$7,000

Many global cities are experiencing pervasive housing affordability crises that limit access to decent living conditions. This dire situation is compounded by resource scarcity and climate change-induced migration, problems that will only increase in severity in the coming years. Because these predicaments are due, in part, to the ways in which we build, tackling them requires architects to rethink architectural production, not just at the level of spatial form, but through the lens of the unseen elements of architecture—labor, waste, water, energy, and air. Daisy Ames’s project will take her across the world, studying the nomadic architecture of Morocco, Finland, Indonesia, and the American Southwest. Ames will record how nomadic communities create architecture that responds to these unseen elements in order to inform a design practice that responds to domestic housing needs.

Ames is a graduate of Brown University and holds a Master of Architecture from Yale University. She is the founding principal of Studio Ames, founded in 2017, and currently holds positions at the Yale School of Architecture and the Irwin S. Chanin School of Architecture at the Cooper Union.

Timothy Carey

Project: “Some Assembly Required: Performing Arts Architecture and the Idea of Audience”

Award: \$13,000

The past century has brought about the technological means to consume culture outside of the auditorium, dispersing the “audience” of previous eras into a more casual “public.” Discourse on the performing arts building usually involves discussions on how to “crack open” the typology to address this divide, but during the COVID-19 shutdowns these institutions were only able to address their dispersed public. Following a time of crisis when these largely virtual efforts became pivotal, how might that aspiration be reframed and reevaluated? Timothy Carey’s project will take him, both virtually and in-person, to performing arts spaces in northern Europe to investigate how architecture can accommodate a shifting idea of audience.

Carey is a graduate of Brown University, where he received the Buxtehude Premium for Musical Excellence. He earned a Master of Architecture from the Harvard Graduate School of Design. Carey is currently a project architect at Selldorf Architects. His previous projects include the design of a new performing arts center for Brown University while at REX.

Dennis Chiessa

Project: “The Maya and Garifuna Coast of Mexico and Central America”

Award: \$10,000

Dennis Chiessa’s research project will investigate the ancestral roots of the Central American Diaspora, including the indigenous people (and descendants) of the Maya, Garifuna, Lenca, Miskito, and Bay Creoles. Chiessa will visit major archeological sites and important villages in Mexico’s Yucatan Peninsula, Guatemala, Belize, the Honduran coast, and the Bay Islands. His research will document the effects of corporate development and climate change on these communities in order to develop culturally relevant design strategies to address these challenges.

Chiessa received a Bachelor of Science and Master of Architecture from the University of Texas, Austin. He is the founder and principal of Ch_Studio, which focuses on providing affordable, single-family housing for people of color in the Dallas-Fort Worth metroplex. He is also a full-time faculty member of the University of Texas, Arlington, where he teaches graduate-level design studios.

Laura Greenberg

Project: “School’s Out: District- and Building-scale Strategies for Equitable Public School Re-use”

Award: \$10,000

Public school closings have become common in certain US cities as populations decline and disinvestment compounds. Closings tend to disproportionately affect Black and Brown communities, eliminating associated educational and community benefits. “School’s Out” explores equitable re-use strategies that prioritize community input and retain public benefits from former public school sites. The project will focus on district-scale processes (how re-use decisions are made, who is involved, how

information is communicated transparently, etc.) and building-scale outcomes. Laura Greenberg will travel across the American Midwest and Northeast to examine the transformation of former public schools.

Greenberg graduated from the University of Miami, later completing a Master of Architecture in Urban Design with distinction from the Harvard Graduate School of Design, where she is currently a Research Fellow. Greenberg also works as a Planning Associate for Urban American City and recently collaborated on the Chicago Architectural Biennial.

Deona Swager

Project: "The Intimacy of Place"

Award: \$10,000

Since the 1990s, Norway has been transforming 18 of its major highways into tourism destinations. Through the Norwegian Scenic Routes program, the country has developed architectural interventions on sites along these highways to enhance how users experience nature. Deona Swager's project will take her through Norway and northern Scandinavia, examining the relationships between space, which allows for movement, and place, which allows for a pause in movement. Her research project will investigate the rest stops of the Norwegian Scenic Routes, examining how seemingly utilitarian spaces can mediate emotional interactions between the built and natural environment.

Swager holds a Bachelor of Science in Architecture from the University of Idaho, from which she also received a Master of Architecture and held teaching assistant positions. She currently works as a project designer for Pivot North Architecture in Boise, Idaho, where she has designed both public- and private-sector projects.

ABOUT CENTER FOR ARCHITECTURE GRANTS AND SCHOLARSHIPS

The Center for Architecture, in partnership with AIANY, awards scholarships and grant awards throughout the year for architectural students, architectural student journals, and practicing architects. Scholarships are open to New York city and grants are open to applicants nationwide.

To find out more about our upcoming deadlines, please visit:

www.centerforarchitecture.org/scholarships-grants.

2021 grants and scholarships were awarded by the 2021 Scholarship Committee:

Barry Bergdoll, Hon. AIANY, Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning & Preservation

Catherine S. Seavitt Nordenson, AIA, Catherine Seavitt Studio

Carol Loewenson, FAIA, LEED AP, Mitchell Giurgola

Eve B. Klein, Assoc. AIA, User Design Information Group, The Graduate Center, CUNY

Gia Wolff, AIA, NOMA, NCARB, Cooper Union

Hilary M. Sample, FAIA, MOS Architects, Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning & Preservation

Kimberly Yao, AIA, Architecture Research Office, Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning & Preservation

Nina Cooke John, AIA, Studio Cooke John, Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture,
Planning & Preservation

Sara Lopergolo, FAIA, Selldorf Architects

Sharon E. Sutton, FAIA, PhD, Parsons School of Design

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