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2023 CFA Lab Residents: Kholisile Dhlwayo, A.L. Hu, and Karla Andrea Pérez.

Three Residents Selected to Participate in 2023 Center for Architecture Lab

Kholisile Dhlwayo, A.L. Hu, and Karla Andrea Pérez will develop installations around the concept of the home, which will be presented at an exhibition opening at the Center for Architecture in November 2023.

August 1, 2023, New York, NY – The **Center for Architecture** is excited to announce the three residents for the 2023 cycle of the **Center for Architecture Lab**, a multi-month, multi-disciplinary residency program that offers new voices in architecture and design full authorship over dedicated areas of the Center for Architecture’s platforms, allowing them to develop and share compelling and provocative content meant to elevate underrepresented perspectives. The work of the three residents will be featured in an exhibition at the Center for Architecture, which will open on **Thursday, November 16, 2023**.

Created in response to the destabilizing forces of the global COVID-19 pandemic and reinvigorated racial justice movement in the United States, Center for Architecture Lab programming invites a greater diversity of professionals to participate in the fields of architecture and design and encourages our community to consider new perspectives, critical questions, and innovative solutions to systemic problems.

“In 2021, the CFA Lab’s inaugural year, the [Indigenous Scholars of Architecture, Planning and Design \(ISAPD\)](#) and the [Community Design Collaborative](#) created digital exhibitions and took

over the Center for Architecture’s digital platforms,” noted **Jesse Lazar**, Interim Executive Director, AIA New York | Center for Architecture. “We are excited to continue and expand the program in 2023, allowing our residents the opportunity to create physical installations in our home at LaGuardia Place.”

2023 THEME: Seeking Refuge and Making Home in NYC

In April 2023, the Center for Architecture launched an open call inviting individuals and collectives to participate in this year’s cycle of the CFA Lab. Applicants were asked to respond to the idea of “home,” a concept that can take on many different forms and meanings, especially in post-COVID New York City. Since the onset of the pandemic, our relationship with domesticity has changed, as our homes took on multi-functional roles, blurring the lines between residential and professional spaces. But while the pandemic made universal the collapsing of domestic and public spaces, for many communities, especially marginalized groups, the boundaries between home and the outside world have always been in flux. For these groups, home may not be a guaranteed place of comfort and domesticity; they may have to search outside the confines of a traditional residence to find a sense of home.

This year’s three residents, who were selected from over 50 applicants, will each explore the domestic sphere through their own unique lens and install their work at an exhibition opening in November 16, 2023, which will be curated by **Vyjayanthi V. Rao, PhD**, Visiting Professor, Yale School of Architecture, and Editor in Chief, *Public Culture*, with **Matthew Bremer, AIA**, 2023 President of AIA New York. The residents will also have opportunities to continue the dialogue around their work through public programs during the length of the exhibition and beyond.

“My AIANY presidential theme, ‘Our City, Ourselves,’ is both a love letter to New York and a call to action to engage personal politics for social justice and equity, inviting us to celebrate and explore our city in its public and private realms— as a nexus for both social and personal expression,” said **Matthew Bremer, AIA**, 2023 President, AIA New York. “Having spent most of my career exploring residential designs for a wide range of New Yorkers—from the formerly homeless to the highly privileged—I understand how deeply the notion of home matters to all New Yorkers, even though individual conceptions of home are as varied as our city. I’m thrilled to work with three brilliant and deeply committed individuals to explore what home means to three distinct groups who have sought and fought to put down roots and make home within our concrete jungle.”

MEET THE RESIDENTS

Making Home: Affirming Black Diasporic Agency **Kholisile Dhlwayo**

New York City is a vibrant tapestry of diasporic and Indigenous cultures. As individuals migrate here, they bring with them their cultural practices and knowledge systems. We often acknowledge the impact of diasporic cultures on the culinary landscape, but we rarely consider their profound influence on shaping the physical spaces around us. *Making Home* is a counter-

narrative oral mapping project that celebrates the creativity and ingenuity of BIPOC communities as active agents that shape the city, often by circumventing and subverting Eurocentric top-down hierarchical approaches and structures. By centering BIPOC voices across the five boroughs, the project prompts conversations about how to collectively create more inclusive and equitable cities—fostering relationships and frameworks that look to new ways of practice beyond the lack of diversity in built environment professions and making New York City a home that is reflective of the diversity of its the people.

Kholisile Dhliwayo is an African-Australian creative working between Naarm-Melbourne and Manahatta-NYC. His work explores the symbiotic relationship between diasporic cultures and the built environment. His research and practice focus on modalities and frameworks that affirm community agency in place and space making. Dhliwayo works across multiple disciplines, including oral narrative, filmmaking, exhibition, interior design, the built environment, and mapping. He is in the final year of the Master of Design Studies research program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design. He is a registered architect in the District of Columbia and Connecticut State, as well as New South Wales and Victoria, Australia.

Queeries: Designing Reality Equitably and Madly (Q:DREAM)

A.L. Hu, NOMA, AIA, NCARB, EcoDistricts AP

Queeries: Designing Reality Equitably and Madly (Q:DREAM) will leverage the Center for Architecture’s physical and virtual properties to enact an emergent research-creation process that asks queer people: “What are your definitions of ‘home’?” The project will spotlight NYC’s queer architects, designers, organizations, and places at different scales, with a participatory component for folks to recognize and celebrate the spaces they call “home.” “Designing Reality” refers to the creation of space for imagining worlds where queer folks have autonomous agency over their lives, while “Equitably and Madly” expresses parallel principles of equity of access, pride, and extraordinary imagination. Multimedia storytelling and queer data analysis will expand the frame of “home” to encompass queer families, support networks, spaces of one’s own, privacy, security, and stability. Through the course of the residency, *Q:DREAM* will begin to build a living archive that documents and celebrates queer designers, their work, and their desires.

A.L. Hu, NOMA, AIA, NCARB, EcoDistricts AP, is a transgenderqueer Taiwanese-American architect, activist, and organizer. Their interdisciplinary practice synthesizes organizing for racial, class, and gender justice with world-building and spatial planning; queers the architect’s role in facilitating accessible spaces; and manifests in design, visual media, cartographies, events, and collaborative cultural work. Hu was a 2019-2021 Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellow and they are currently Design Initiatives Manager at Ascendant Neighborhood Development in East Harlem. They are a core member of Design as Protest and Dark Matter U. Hu provides brainpower and energy for Queeries, an ongoing community-building design-queering initiative for and by LGBTQIA+ architects and designers.

Undocumented

Karla Andrea Pérez

For undocumented immigrants, home has always been a complex reality rooted in politics, identity, and architecture. This population lives with the threat and expectation of removal and violence, where trespassing is legal because you're not. To be undocumented is to live between worlds, in a where fear becomes normal, knowing you cannot exist here. How is this reality reflected in the interiority and spatialization of the home, if at all? This project will document the existing homes of individuals who live with the status of "undocumented" in the New York City area through video, photography, and interviews. It aims to assist in recognizing these spaces within an architectural discourse that doesn't pretend to aestheticize or romanticize their homes, but rather to serve as a platform for self-advocacy.

Karla Andrea Pérez is a first-generation Mexican-American designer, researcher, and folkloric dancer. She received her BFA in Interior Design from the New York Institute of Technology and is currently pursuing her MS in Critical Curatorial and Conceptual studies in Architecture at Columbia University. Her work acknowledges the gaps in historic archival representation of overlooked, often misrepresented minority community spaces, with a particular focus on the Mexican immigrant and Mexican-American communities in New York City, drawing from her upbringing in Queens. She has focused on community programming experiences that reclaim public space by using dance and installations as tools of empowerment. Pérez is always looking for ways to collectively bring forward these narratives through active collaboration, community engagement, and cultural organizing.

Center for Architecture Lab 2023 is sponsored by:



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.

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