

## **Chronology of the Public Interest Design Field**

*Research by John Cary, PublicInterestDesign.org & University of Minnesota College of Design*

### **1964**

The Architects' Renewal Committee in Harlem (ARCH), regarded as the first community design center, is founded by C. Richard Hatch.

The Pratt Institute Center for Community & Environmental Development (PICCED), the longest-running community design center, is co-founded by Ron Shiffman and others.

### **1967**

The Vlock Building Project, through which first-year graduate architecture students design and build a home each summer, is established at the Yale School of Architecture.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) launches its Regional/Urban Design Assistance Team (R/UDAT) charrette program, aimed at strengthening communities.

### **1968**

American civil rights leader Whitney M. Young Jr. addresses the AIA National Convention.

“As a profession, you are not a profession that has distinguished itself by your social and civic contributions to the cause of civil rights, and I am sure this has not come to you as any shock. You are most distinguished by your thunderous silence and your complete irrelevance.”

### **1977**

The Association for Community Design is founded as a network of community design center leaders.

### **1981**

Architects/Designers/Planners for Social Responsibility (ADPSR) is founded, initially to fight for nuclear disarmament, and now focused more broadly on social justice.

### **1982**

The International Development Enterprise (now iDE) is founded by Paul Polak, to create income and livelihood opportunities for poor rural households.

### **1983**

The Richard H. Driehaus Foundation is established, going on to become a quiet, but significant funder of built environment and public interest design efforts in Chicago and nationally.

### **1986**

The Rudy Bruner Award for Urban Excellence is created by Simeon Bruner, recognizing built projects that “transform urban problems into creative solutions.”

## **1988**

The Howard S. Wright Design/Build Studio is established at the University of Washington, headed by Steve Badanes.

## **1991**

The Community Design Collaborative of Philadelphia is established by a group of young architects, going on to connect legions of designs with nonprofits, totaling over 600 projects in the next 20 years.

Design Corps is founded by Bryan Bell “to provide the benefits of architecture to those traditionally un-served by the profession.”

## **1993**

Auburn University’s Rural Studio design/build program is co-founded by Samuel Mockbee and D.K. Ruth.

Archeworks, an alternative design school that creates solutions for social and environmental concerns, was co-founded by Eva Maddox and Stanley Tigerman.

## **1994**

The Detroit Collaborative Design Center is established by Terrance Curry at the University of Detroit-Mercy.

Hale Empowerment & Revitalization Organization (HERO), focused on housing and community building in rural Alabama, is established.

## **1995**

The Design Trust for Public Space, focused on “improving public space for all New Yorkers,” is founded by Andrea Woodner.

The Van Alen Institute: Projects in Public Architecture is established in New York, building on an organizational history that dates back to 1894.

## **1996**

*Building Community: A New Future for Architecture Education & Practice*, by Ernest Boyer and Lee Mitgang, is published by the Carnegie Foundation for the Advancement of Teaching.

“Perhaps never in history have the talents, skills, the broad vision, and the ideas of the architecture profession been more urgently needed. The profession could be powerfully beneficial at a time when the lives of families and entire communities have grown increasingly fragmented, when cities are in an era of decline and decay rather than limitless growth, and when the value of beauty in daily life is often belittled.”

Work on what would become the Bayview Rural Village on the eastern shore of Virginia, designed by Maurice Cox of the firm RBGC, commences.

## **1997**

*Learning by Building: Design & Construction in Architectural Education*, by William Carpenter, is published.

The Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) is founded by Damon Rich, using design to “improve public engagement through civic education.”

## **1999**

“Community & Professional Service” is added by the National Council of Architectural Registration Boards (NCARB) as the sixteenth training area of the Intern Development Program (IDP).

The Frederick P. Rose Architectural Fellowship program (now Enterprise Rose Fellowship) is established, through which young architects work on affordable housing and community development projects for three-year terms.

Freedom by Design is founded by Brad Buchanan, and now a community service program of the American Institute of Architecture Students (AIAS) to make homes more accessible.

Architecture for Humanity, focused initially on architectural solutions to humanitarian crises, is co-founded by Kate Stohr and Cameron Sinclair.

The Berkeley Prize Essay Competition, encouraging writing and critical thinking on the social art of architecture, is established by Raymond Lifchez.

Friends of the High Line is co-founded by Joshua David and Robert Hammond to save the High Line rail line on New York’s West Side, and ultimately turn it into a public park.

## **2000**

The Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) publishes the *Sourcebook of Community Design Centers*, edited by John Cary.

The first Structures for Inclusion conference is organized by Design Corps and hosted by Princeton University, addressing the theme “Design for the 98% without Architects.”

The Ideas that Matter grant program, providing grants of up to \$50,000 to graphic designers to undertake work for nonprofit organizations, is established by Sappi Limited.

## **2001**

Designmatters at Art Center College of Design is established to “engage, empower, and lead an ongoing exploration of art and design as a positive force in society.”

Samuel Mockbee is recognized posthumously with the AIA Gold Medal, the organization’s highest individual honor.

## **2002**

*University-Community Design Partnerships: Innovations in Practice*, edited by Jason Pearson of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), is published by Princeton Architectural Press.

*The Rural Studio: Samuel Mockbee and an Architecture of Decency*, by Andrea Oppenheimer Dean, is published by Princeton Architectural Press.

The Robin Hood Library Initiative, which would go on to redesign 56 of New York's more than 650 public school libraries, is launched and directed by Lonni Tanner.

Hester Street Collaborative is founded as a spinoff of Leroy Street Studio in New York, using "design as a tool for social change. HSC believes that youth and engaged residents are among a community's greatest assets.

Public Architecture is founded by San Francisco architect John Peterson, "to put the resources of architecture in the service of the public interest."

INDEX: Design to Improve Life, a biennial international award program (worth €500,000), is established by HRH The Crown Prince of Denmark.

## **2003**

*Design Observer*—a digital media group focused in part on design and social innovation—is co-founded by Jessica Helfand, Michael Bierut, Wililam Drenttel, and Rick Poynor.

Design that Matters is co-founded by Timothy Presterro and Neil Cantor as "a low-cost design company serving the developing world."

Project M is founded by John Bielenberg as an intensive immersion program, putting design to work for the public good.

*Good Deeds, Good Design: Community Service Through Architecture*, a collection of essays on community design, is edited by Bryan Bell and published by Princeton Architectural Press.

## **2004**

The Stanford d.school, officially known as the Hasso Plattner Institute of Design, is founded by David Kelley.

Global Studio is established by the United Nations Millennium Project Task Force on Improving the Lives of Slum Dwellers.

*Studio at Large: Architecture in Service of Global Communities*, profiling the work of the BaSiC (Building Sustainable Communities) Initiative, is edited and published by Sergio Palleroni and Christina Merkelbach.

## **2005**

Public Architecture launches The 1% program, asking architecture firms to pledge a minimum of one percent of their billable hours to pro bono service.

The Rural Studio launches its \$20K House project.

The Aspen Design Summit (formerly the International Design Conference at Aspen) is reconstituted by AIGA "to rethink the form and relevance of a design gathering in a world facing serious challenges."

*Proceed and Be Bold: Rural Studio After Samuel Mockbee*, by Andrea Oppenheimer Dean, is published by Princeton Architectural Press.

Park(ing) Day is launched in San Francisco by Rebar, encouraging people to reclaim car parking spaces as public space, sparking an annual global event involving hundreds of cities.

The Social/Economic/Environmental Design (SEED) Network, a name coined by Kimberly Dowdell, is established as an outcome of a convening of community design leaders through the Loeb Fellowship program at the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

The Tulane City Center, where “research is activated through design and construction and/or advocacy and education,” is established.

## **2006**

The Gulf Coast Community Design Studio (GCCDS) is founded as a program of Mississippi State University to rebuild homes and community in Biloxi, Miss.

Cameron Sinclair is recognized with the TED Prize for Architecture for Humanity’s humanitarian design work.

*design e2*, an 18-part, documentary-style PBS television series investigating social impact design and sustainable living, is produced.

*Design Like You Give A Damn: Architectural Responses to Humanitarian Crises* is edited by Kate Stohr and Cameron Sinclair, and published by Architecture for Humanity.

## **2007**

The Open Architecture Network (OAN), an online project platform and resource, is launched by Architecture for Humanity, as Cameron Sinclair’s TED Prize wish.

Designers Accord is established by Valerie Casey as a strategy and platform for designers to address environmental and social issues in their work.

DESIGN 21: Social Design Network, an online platform build in partnership with UNESCO, is launched.

Making Policy Public—“a poster series to make information on policy truly public—accessible, meaningful, and shared” is launched by CUP.

The Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum launches “Design for the Other 90%,” an exhibition showcasing products and environments for under-resourced populations, curated by Cynthia Smith.

d.light is co-founded by Stanford d.school graduates Sam Goldman and Ned Tozun to bring solar-powered light to households around the world living without reliable electricity.

Camp Firebelly, a 10-day, 10-person camp is launched to introduce the next generation of designers to social change work.

D-Rev is founded by Paul Polak to “design and deliver products that improve the health and incomes of the 4.0 billion people living on less than \$4 per day.”

Emerging Terrain, a nonprofit research and design organization in Omaha is founded by Anne Trumble “to get people to think about and really see our environment.”

MASS Design Group is founded by a group of Harvard Graduate School of Design students as a “Model of Architecture Serving Society.”

Project H Design is founded by Emily Pilloton as a nonprofit dedicated to “design, build, teach, and transform.”

The 1% program of Public Architecture introduces a new match-making website, welcoming nonprofits to apply for pro bono design assistance.

Perkins+Will launches its Social Responsibility Initiative (SRI), a firm-wide commitment paired with its pledge to The 1% program of Public Architecture.

The Make It Right Foundation of New Orleans is launched by actor Brad Pitt with a goal to build 150 homes in the Lower Ninth Ward.

The American Institute of Architects (AIA) revises its *Code of Ethics & Professional Conduct* to more explicitly encourage pro bono service.

## **2008**

*Expanding Architecture: Design as Activism*, a collection of essays on community design, is edited by Bryan Bell and Katie Wakeford, while published by Metropolis Books / DAP.

*Out of Poverty: What Works When Traditional Approaches Fail*, by Paul Polak, is published.

The Design for Social Impact Workshop is convened at the Rockefeller Foundation’s Bellagio Center in Italy.

MIT Professor John Ochsendorf receives the MacArthur Fellowship for his design/build work around the world.

Design for America (DfA) is founded as a studio at Northwestern University’s McCormick School of Engineering.

The National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA) launches its “NOMatters” community service program.

SCALEAfrica, “dedicated to the design and construction of vital school infrastructure projects in rural sub-Saharan Africa,” is co-founded by Erinn McGurn and Guy Baron.

buildingcommunityWORKSHOP (bcWORKSHOP) is established by Brent Brown to undertake work in under-resourced communities in Dallas, chief among them the Congo Street neighborhood.

Catapult Design is founded by engineer Heather Fleming to provide “engineering and implementation support to the thousands of organizations in need of technologies or products capable of igniting social change.

The Curry Stone Design Prize, recognizing social design pioneers, is established by Clifford Curry and Delight Stone.

## 2009

*Contract Magazine* recognizes John Cary and John Peterson with its Designer of the Year award.

The Inspirations Awards program, recognizing socially responsible design, are launched by Contract Magazine and sponsored by Tandus Flooring.

IDEO publishes the *Human-Centered Design Toolkit*, presented in the context of social impact design and innovation.

Design Ignites Change is founded by Worldstudio to engage students in multidisciplinary design projects that address pressing social issues.

*Design Revolution: 100 Products that Empower People*, edited by Emily Pilloton, is published by Metropolis Books / DAP.

Design Impact is co-founded by Kate Hanisian and Ramsey Ford to aid “organizations and the communities they serve to develop life-improving solutions.”

Firebelly University is established as “an entrepreneurial incubator program, teaching people with a social awareness and focus on design to make a more just society.”

Studio H, a high school design/build and education program is launched by Emily Pilloton and Matthew Miller of Project H Design in Bertie, N.C.

The Austin Center for Design is founded by Jon Kolko to teach interaction design and social entrepreneurship.

Cannon Design launches its Open Hand Studio, piloting what later became a firm-wide program in its Chicago office.

Section 1 of the High Line park in New York opens to the public.

desigNYC is founded to connect New York area nonprofits with communications and environmental design firms willing to give of their time.

## 2010

GRAFT is recognized by *Contract Magazine* with the Designer of the Year award in large part for its work with the Make It Right Foundation in New Orleans.

*The Library Book: Design Collaborations in the Public Schools*, edited by Anooradha Iyer Siddiqi, is published by Princeton Architectural Press.

*The Power of Pro Bono: 40 Stories about Design for the Public Good*, edited by John Cary and Public Architecture, published by Metropolis Books / DAP.

*Citizen Architect: Samuel Mockbee and the Spirit of the Rural Studio*, a documentary film, is produced by Sam Douglas.

The Noun Project, which creates graphic symbols for the public domain, is launched by Sofya Polyakov, Edward Boatman, and Scott Thomas.

IMPACT! Design for Social Change, a six-week intensive summer program, is launched by the School of Visual Arts in New York.

The AIA issues a first-of-its-kind contract for pro bono architecture and design services.

“Small Scale, Big Change” exhibition, curated by Andres Lepik, debuts at the Museum of Modern Art in New York.

The Surdna Foundation establishes a new set of community-driven design grants within its Thriving Cultures program.

## **2011**

The Butaro Hospital, by MASS Design Group in association with Partners in Health, opens its doors in Rwanda.

The Open Architecture Network merges with Worldchanging.com, an online publication focused on solutions for a sustainable world.

The Public Policy Lab is established to redesign the delivery of public services.

The Core77 Design Awards are established, with several categories recognizing design for social impact.

The NEA confers its inaugural Our Town grants, funding creative placemaking projects in 51 communities, across 34 states, and totaling \$6.575 million.

*PublicInterestDesign.org*, a blog-based website “profiling the people, projects, and promise of a movement in the making,” is launched by John Cary.

Public Interest Design Summer Program is launched by the University of Texas at Austin.

Section 2 of the High Line park in New York opens to the public.

The Public Interest Design Institute training program in social, economic, and environmental design is launched by Bryan Bell.

*Beyond Shelter: Architecture & Human Dignity*, edited by Marie Aquilino, is published by Metropolis Books / DAP.

IDEO.org is launched “to bring human-centered design to the people who need it most—those facing poverty every day,” co-led by Patrice Martin and Jocelyn Wyatt.

The Fetzer Institute launches its Advisory Committee on The Design Professions, to foster love, forgiveness, and compassion through design—backed by \$1 million in funding over the next two years.

AIGA launches its Design for Good program, aiming “to channel designers and their creative talent toward addressing community needs.”

Stanford University, based largely on work from the d.school, receives a \$150 million donation from Dottie and Bob King to create the Institute for Innovation in Developing Economies, known informally as “Seed.”



“Design with the Other 90%: CITIES,” the second in a series of social impact design exhibitions from the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, curated by Cynthia Smith, debuts at the United Nations Headquarters.

Architect and pro bono design advocate Jeanne Gang is honored with the MacArthur Fellowship.

ArtPlace America launches as a consortium of major funders committed to creative placemaking and arts-based development, conferring \$11.5 million in 34 grants during its first cycle.

*Bridging The Gap: Public-Interest Architectural Internships* is edited by Georgia Bizios and Katie Wakeford.

Michael Kimmelman is named architecture critic of *The New York Times*, debuting with a cover story on the Via Verde housing project in the Bronx.

“Public Interest Practices in Architecture”—a collaborative research project involving Roberta Feldman, Bryan Bell, Sergio Palleroni, and David Perkes—is awarded the \$100,000 Latrobe Fellowship from the AIA College of Fellows.

## **2012**

*Contract Magazine* names MASS Design Group as its Designer of the Year, recognizing how the organization is “leveraging its expertise and partnerships to reframe the design process” for the greater good.

*Architectural Record* dedicates its entire March issue to “Building for Social Change,” including an online inventory of public interest design awards, entities, events, fellowships, and university-based programs.

The Social Impact Design Summit is convened by the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum with the support of the Lemelson Foundation, NEA, and Surdna Foundation, uniting public interest design leaders and funders.

Proximity Designs is recognized with the Skoll Award for Social Entrepreneurship for its human-centered design work in Myanmar.

Public Architecture convenes a Design Access Summit, intended to “create a shared vision among leading decision makers for how to leverage design as a tool for social gain.”

IDEO.org launches the HCD Connect website, with the support of The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, creating an online platform for individuals to share stories about human-centered design.

Design Corps and the SEED Network launch “SEEDocs,” a short film series celebrating public interest design, sponsored by the Fetzer Institute.

*Design Like You Give a Damn 2: Building Change from the Ground Up*, edited by Cameron Sinclair and Kate Stohr of Architecture for Humanity, is published by Abrams Books.

Design that Matters wins National Design Award for Corporate & Institutional Achievement, joining previous honorees such as Apple, Aveda, and Target.

Tandus Flooring establishes a Socially Responsible Design Working Group, to guide the building industry's investment in infrastructure to grow the public interest design field.

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*Please email additions, corrections, feedback, or observations to [john@publicinterestdesign.org](mailto:john@publicinterestdesign.org).*