



***Liberation in
Landscape
Education means
to change not only
what we do, but
also how we do it***

DuSable (North Chicago), Living Tracks (South Chicago), Hosting Life (North Chicago), Monterrey (Latin America), and Vineyard of Change (Chile, Napa, Barcelona) prove that communities, public agencies, NGOs, private actors, and academia—across ages, languages, and regions—can collaborate without competition, hierarchy, or the urge to standardize methods, aesthetics, or outcomes. These works show how landscape architecture can hold difference, urgency, and care—without compromise.

They intervene in real soil, entangled with botany, culture, emerging technologies, and community-led ambitions. Threads in a broader, more turbulent curriculum, where design justice is a current—coursing through core studios, experimental electives, and transdisciplinary collisions. We begin in the streets, enter the classroom with dirt and love on our hands, build triangular solidarities, then return to the streets to grow, test, and disrupt.

Our urban pact and impact reclaim the profession after decades of prioritizing wealthy geographies and colonizing agendas. Rooting justice is our method—restoring land, memory, and the right to belong. This is about pragmatic good. We work with clarity, depth, and care. Receiving this award will honor our ambition—and signal what landscape architecture education must become.

Illinois Institute of Technology
College of Architecture
Master of Landscape Architecture +
Urbanism Towards Design Justice

The five projects representing the IIT Master of Landscape Architecture + Urbanism are declarations—living embodiments of Towards Design Justice, a pedagogy grounded in care and the belief that landscapes prioritize people over property, ecology over extraction, and joy over compliance. Each project was chosen for conceptual clarity, engagement with justice through design, and ability to spark collective action across language, territory, and difference.

“Hosting Life cultivates a resilience model based on the strength of an “Already There” urban district whose carbon footprint is already largely amortized.”
ChartierDalix



Country/City

United States, Chicago.

University / School

Illinois Institute of Technology, College of Architecture, Master in Landscape Architecture and Urbanism. Towards Design Justice.

Academic year

2023-2024

Title of the project

Hosting Life

Authors

Mohammad Arabmazar, Cameron Carter, Juliana Cardozo Chamorro, Jincheng Chen, Zhicong Fang, Maurice Gaston, Lauren Geske, Caleb Hadley, Jorge Mayorga

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Authors	Mohammad Arabmazar, Cameron Carter, Juliana Cardozo Chamorro, Jincheng Chen, Zhicong Fang, Maurice Gaston, Lauren Geske, Caleb Hadley, Jorge Mayorga
Title of the course	LA 543 Hosting Life
Academic year	2023-2024.
Teaching Staff	Ron Henderson
Department / Section / Program of belonging	Master in Landscape Architecture and Urbanism. Towards Design Justice.
University / School	Illinois Institute of Technology, College of Architecture.



Written statement, short description of the project in English, no more than 250 words

The studio is a collaboration with the Parisian architects and urban designers, ChartierDalix, as part of the ongoing Chicago/Paris City/Cité collaboration between the Landscape Architecture + Urbanism Program and the French Consulate of Chicago. ChartierDalix outlines their exploration of the La Defense district of Paris, and a correlation with Chicago's Loop, as "...a reflection for a resilience model based on the strengths of an 'already-there' whose carbon footprint is already largely amortized. "Making a system" is to stimulate this heritage through the creation of a network with a collective dimension, it is to reconnect this set to the constituted city, and to reinvest ... in order to reveal the infinite potential of the place."

Sites should not only be silent and still; they shall be active and activated through programs and interaction. Our work should speak to and address a plurality of publics and generations, its' becoming a site-specific vessel for "testimonies" for emotions and thinking, and for democratic discourses.

Barcelona International Landscape Biennial

Contact via email:
biennialadm@coac.net

Venue:
COAC - Col·legi Oficial d'Arquitectes de Catalunya
Carrer Arcs 1-3, 08002 Barcelona - Spain

GARDEN OF CLAY

JINCHENG CHEN (MLA / MARCH '24)

GARDEN OF CLAY redefines the connection between the city and earth of the Chicago Loop - hosting life in a sculpted clay realm that transforms public parking spaces and abandoned subterranean freight tunnels into a park and botanical boardwalk. The park's greenery not only creates habitats for wildlife and plants but also allows people to step into the clay, experiencing vibrant life with each footfall.



BOTANICAL PARASITES

JULIANA CARDOZO (MLA '24)
ZHICONG FANG (MLA / MARCH '24)

Botanical Parasites reimagines Chicago's rooftop and surface parking systems at Wabash Avenue and Van Buren Street into dynamic landscapes that invite social and botanical experiences in four winter gardens, connected rooftop gardens, and connecting walkways. By providing year round microclimatic people spaces to reconnect with living things in a series of public gardens "parasite" onto existing buildings. A forest and snow gardens enrich the ground level, the rooftops are planted to establish an open prairie. Botanical Parasites introduces a new garden sequence framework and "parasitic" structures for winter gardens.



HANGING GARDENS

MOHAMMAD ARABMAZAR (MLA / MARCH '25)

CHICAGO HANGING GARDENS envisions transforming Chicago's Loop skyscrapers into spaces that host life, with a special focus on the Chase Bank Building. This proposal includes incorporating vertical gardens to boost biodiversity and heliophilism in the urban landscape. Approximately 35% of the building is designed to support life, featuring sky gardens and native plants across different levels to cultivate varied micro-climates. The Sky Garden, strategically located for maximum sunlight, will foster the growth of fruits and nuts, while Prairie Hanging Gardens intertwine natural spaces with office environments. This initiative also extends to the ground, transforming the Chase Plaza into a seamless extension of the city's landscape, highlighted by Marc Chagall's "Four Seasons" mosaic.



URBAN REWILDING

JORGE MAYORGA (MLA / MARCH '24)

The "Grand Axis" of Chicago - and introduced in Burnham and Bennett's 1909 Plan for Chicago - stretches west from Lake Michigan to western suburbs. Throughout the last 120 years, this axis has embodied the principles of Chicagoans and reflected the broader cultural shifts. Urban Rewilding regenerates the urban fabric to reconnect a biomass-rich corridor between Lake Michigan and the Des Plaines River while also restoring the fragmented neighborhoods broken by the construction of the Eisenhower Expressway / I-290. The Loop will be a pivotal point of an extensive ecological network that will connect rich patch mosaics and allow a continuous vegetative system.

