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CCA to launch new Gensler Center with symposium centered on sustainable design

Four eminent design practitioners will share creative approaches to building a resilient future in the face of climate change.

San Francisco, CA—March 23, 2023—The California College of the Arts (CCA) will launch its new **M. Arthur Gensler Jr. Center for Design Excellence** on **April 15** with **Climate as Praxis**, a symposium looking at how designers are addressing the social and environmental impacts of climate change. The event brings together four renowned practitioners, all of whom are creating new and innovative ways for design to directly engage with and mitigate the impacts of climate change. **Chris Cornelius** (studio:indigenous and University of New Mexico), **Billie Faircloth** (Kieran Timberlake and University of Pennsylvania), **Kate Orff** (SCAPE and Columbia), and **Boonserm Premthada** (Bangkok Practice Studio and Chulalongkorn University) will gather to share strategies and ideas to design and create buildings, landscapes, and communities that can support a more just and resilient future. The event will take place from 1 pm to 6 pm in the Nave Alcove on CCA's San Francisco campus (450 Irwin Street, San Francisco).

The event provides an opportunity for the community to engage with the newly founded Gensler Center, which was created thanks to a \$1 million gift from the Gensler family and a \$1 million gift from Gensler, the award-winning global architecture, design, and planning firm. The Center is embedded within CCA's Architecture Division and was created with the aim of making design education and practice more diverse, equitable, and inclusive, while supporting innovative teaching and research on the most pressing issues of the day—both social and environmental.

The Gensler Center, led by Dean of Architecture Keith Krumwiede, will support the academic and professional success of students from diverse backgrounds through tuition scholarships, mentoring, and career development support. A portion of the Center's funding will be dedicated to scholarships to encourage a more diverse student body, as well as to cultivate pathways for students from diverse backgrounds to pursue professions in architecture and interior design. The Gensler Center will also support ongoing research and initiatives within the Architecture Division at CCA, centered around issues of sustainability and social

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equity in design. The first cohort of Gensler Center scholarship recipients received awards this year.

CCA is committed to developing and promoting socially just and ecologically responsible design methods as central to educating the architects and designers of the future. The Climate as Praxis symposium offers the opportunity to delve into the many creative and innovative ways that preeminent leaders in the field are rethinking practice in response to climate change. As the urgency of the climate crisis becomes more apparent, it is imperative for architects and designers to find ways to bridge theory and praxis and to experiment with new strategies that can be implemented across scales. Attendees to the symposium will have the chance to learn about impactful ways that design is being used to address the climate crisis, and to create buildings, spaces, and environments that are resilient, environmentally sound, and have a positive impact on our world. The symposium amplifies the mission of both CCA's division of Architecture, and the Gensler Center as a whole.

The symposium will take place in the Nave Alcove in CCA's Main Building (450 Irwin Street) on its San Francisco campus and will be accompanied by an exhibition of work and research from the CCA Architecture Division. A reception will follow.

Participants

Chris Cornelius is the founder of studio:indigenous and chair of the Department of Architecture at the University of New Mexico. His experience growing up on an Oneida Indian reservation near Green Bay was formative to his practice. Today his design centers on Indigenous architecture, with a focus on creating spaces that are sustainable, functional, integrated into the environment, and reflective of the culture of the people for whom they are designed. Notable projects include the Indian Community School in Franklin, Wisconsin; The Wiikiaami Pavilion in Columbus, Indiana; and a prototype called "Not My HUD House," which was exhibited at the Crystal Bridges Museum of American Art.

Billie Faircloth is a partner at Kieran Timberlake and professor at the University of Pennsylvania. At Kieran Timberlake she leads a transdisciplinary group of professionals leveraging research, design, and problem-solving processes from fields as diverse as environmental management, chemical physics, materials science, and architecture. Through her collaborative work between disciplines, she aims to solve design problems for the built environment. She is the author of *Plastics Now: On Architecture's Relationship to a Continuously Emerging Material*.

Kate Orff is a founding principal and partner at SCAPE and professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation. She focuses on using the practice of landscape architecture to address the uncertainty of climate change, and to create spaces to foster social life. She is deeply engaged with using design to combat climate change and sits on the Commission on Accelerating Climate Action for the American Academy of Arts & Sciences as well as the Advisory Board for Urban Ocean Lab.

Boonserm Premthada is principal of Bangkok Practice Studio and a visiting professor at Columbia University's Graduate School of Architecture, Planning, and Preservation. His studio focuses on using local construction methods and collaborating with local people, while also engaging with the natural environment and drawing on the patterns of animals and the atmosphere to create architectural structures. Notable projects include Kantana Institute, Nakhon Pathom, Thailand; Elephant World, Surin, Thailand, 2015; and Wine Ayutthaya, Ayutthaya, Thailand, 2017.

About Gensler

Gensler is a global architecture, design, and planning firm with 52 locations across Asia, Europe, Australia, the Middle East, and the Americas. Founded in 1965, the firm serves over 3,300 active clients in virtually every industry. Guided by determined optimism, Gensler believes the power of design can spark positive change and create a future that promotes equity, resilience, and well-being for everyone.

About California College of the Arts

Founded in 1907, California College of the Arts (CCA) educates students to shape culture and society through the practice and critical study of art, architecture, design, and writing. Benefitting from its San Francisco Bay Area location, the college prepares students for lifelong creative work by cultivating innovation, community engagement, and social and environmental responsibility.

CCA offers a rich curriculum of 22 undergraduate and 10 graduate programs in art, design, architecture, and writing taught by a faculty of expert practitioners. Attracting promising students from across the nation and around the world, CCA is among the 25 most diverse colleges in the U.S. Last year, U.S. News & World Report ranked CCA as one of the top 10 graduate schools for fine arts in the country.

Graduates are highly sought after by companies such as Pixar/Disney, Apple, Intel, Facebook, Gensler, Google, IDEO, Autodesk, Mattel, and Nike, and many have launched their own successful businesses. Alumni and faculty are often recognized with the highest honors in their fields, including Academy Awards,

AIGA Medals, Fulbright Scholarships, Guggenheim Fellowships, MacArthur Fellowships, National Medal of Arts, and the Rome Prize, among others.

CCA is creating a new, expanded college campus at its current site in San Francisco, spearheaded by the architectural firm Studio Gang. The new campus design will be a model of sustainable construction and practice; will unite the college's programs in art, crafts, design, architecture, and writing in one location to create new adjacencies and interactions; and will provide more student housing than ever before.