

GRAHAM FOUNDATION

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Where If Not Us? Participatory Design and Its Radical Approaches
A Visual Journey by Mathias Heyden & Ines Schaber
June 27 - August 24, 2013



Mathias Heyden and Ines Schaber, *North Lawndale revisited* with Roberta Feldman 2011, Chicago, Illinois, USA, 40 x 55 cm, 2011.

Chicago, June 24, 2013 — The Graham Foundation is pleased to present *Where If Not Us? Participatory Design and Its Radical Approaches*, an exhibition of visual research by architect Mathias Heyden and artist Ines Schaber. Focusing on the work of seven U.S.-based community design architects and planners and their projects, the exhibition presents the findings of a multi-year research project funded by the Graham Foundation.

Rarely documented and not yet comprehensively researched, the participatory design movement—a socially engaged architecture and planning practice that cultivates citizen involvement and empowerment—began in the 1960s and grew out of a common concern to democratize design by actively involving all stakeholders. Thousands of projects have been realized throughout the U.S. in the past 50 years by community design centers and professionals who advocated for those without representation in the development process. Recording the history of the work of these pioneering practitioners is crucial as a new generation of architects and planners begin to re-imagine contemporary public interest design.

Acknowledging the difficulty in capturing this legacy using traditional methods of architectural documentation, Heyden and Schaber's research method is designed to suggest how participatory architecture and planning is actually used and how that use develops over time. In addition to photography and interviews, multiple site visits were intrinsic to their research methodology—revisiting them with the protagonists that lead the projects sometimes decades after their initiation. Through these case studies, the exhibition reexamines the development of the participatory design movement and provides an alternative visual strategy for better understanding the social impact of architecture and the role that it plays in building communities.

Presented for the first time, the exhibition brings together Heyden and Schaber's findings in the form of a dialogic installation consisting of in-depth video interviews with the projects' protagonists, color photographs of exemplary projects visited and revisited throughout the five-year research period, a series of posters, and booklets that include detailed accounts of each project while offering an investigation of each protagonist's position on questions about radicality in the field of community design. Additionally, there is a reference table with publications significant to the history, theory, and development of the participatory design movement and documentation from a previous publication and exhibition project that Heyden completed on the subject in 2008 with German architecture magazine *Ar*

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Architektur. Seen as a whole, the project does not simply document rarely visualized participatory design projects, it also puts forth a new mode of investigation that utilizes oral histories alongside visual research to both record and activate this under recognized history.

Mathias Heyden is a Berlin-based architect, activist, organizer, author, curator, and co-founder of community project K 77. Currently, he is an assistant professor of urban design and architecture at the Institute of Architecture, Technical University Berlin. Heyden is the author of numerous publications including *Hier entsteht. Strategien partizipativer Architektur und räumlicher Aneignung (Under Construction, Strategies of Participatory Architecture and Spatial Appropriation)* with Jesko Fezer, 2004 and the exhibition and magazines *An Architektur 19-21: Community Design. Involvement and Architecture in the US since 1963* (with An Architektur, 2008).

Ines Schaber is an artist and writer based in Berlin, Germany. She holds a master in fine arts from the Academy of Fine Arts in Berlin and a PhD in research architecture from Goldsmiths College in London. Her work has been shown at the Storefront for Art and Architecture (New York); the Brussels Biennial (Brussels); Centre d'art Passerelle (Brest); Art Sheffield (Sheffield, UK), Kunsthall Mucsarnok (Budapest); and Documenta 13 (Kassel). Previous Graham-funded projects include *Movers and Shapers* (2001) in collaboration with the architect Jörg Stollmann, which investigated the visual politics of master-planned communities in Arizona, and *Picture Mining* (2006). Her recent publications include *The Workhouse* (with Avery Gordon) and *Obtuse, Flitting By but Nevertheless There—Image Archives in Practise*, both forthcoming.

PROTAGONISTS AND PROJECTS

Graham Adams is an architect, landscape architect, and president of Adams Group Architects. Projects visited include: *Creating New Housing in a Post-Industrial Neighborhood, 1979-1980, revisited 2010* (Edgemont, NC); and *Floor Plans for a Different Form of Learning, 1992-1994, revisited 2010* (Davidson, NC).

Roberta Feldman is co-founder of the City Design Center, Chicago, and a Professor Emerita in the School of Architecture at University of Illinois at Chicago. Projects visited include: *Working with a Community for Years, ongoing since 1996, revisited 2011* (Wentworth Gardens, Chicago); *Strategies Against Gentrification, 2004-2010, revisited 2011* (North Lawndale, Chicago); *Housing as a Human Right, ongoing since the late 1990s, revisited 2011* (Public Housing Museum, Chicago).

Landon Bone Baker Architects is a Chicago-based architectural practice. Projects visited include: *Working in an Area of Major Historical and Societal Struggles, ongoing since 2007, revised 2011* (Woodlawn Center South, Chicago); *Public Housing Rehab and New Mixed-Income Infill, 1999-2004, revisited 2011* (Archer Courts, Chicago); *Dotting Affordable Housing within a Distressed Neighborhood, 2005, revisited 2011* (Harold Washington Community Co-operative, Chicago).

David Perkes is the founding director of the Gulf Coast Community Design Studio, Biloxi, MS. Project visited: *Rebuilding Low-Income Neighborhoods in the Wake of Hurricane Katrina, ongoing since 2005, revisited 2010* (Biloxi, MS).

Michael Rios is an associate professor in the Department of Environmental Design and Chair of the Community Development Graduate Group at UC Davis. Formerly, Rios was the director of the Hamer Center for Community Design and the president of the Association of Community Design. Projects visited include: *Organizing Public Interest Design, 1997-1999, revisited 2010* (Union Point Park, Oakland); *A Public Transport Hub Becomes a Zócalo for Multiple Publics, 1995-1998, revisited 2010* (Plaza del Colibri, San Francisco).

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Henry Sanoff is the founder and former director of the Community Development Group, Raleigh, NC. Projects visited include: *Revitalization of a Small Town's Main Street, 1982, revisited 2010* (Selma, NC); *Neighborhood by Initiative, 1979-1980, revisited 2010* (Edgemont, NC); and *New Topologies for Teaching and Learning, 1992-1994, revisited 2010* (Davidson, NC).

Ron Shiffman is co-founder and former director of the Pratt Center for Community Development, New York City. Projects visited include: *Four Decades of Community-Based Empowerment, ongoing since the early 1970s, revisited 2011* (Brooklyn).

RELATED EVENTS

Opening reception with Mathias Heyden and Ines Schaber

Thursday, June 27, 6-8PM

Public Discussion with Mathias Heyden and Ines Schaber

Brief presentations by exhibition participants Roberta Feldman, Landon Bone Baker Architects, and Henry Sanoff will be followed by an open discussion about the past, present, and future of participatory design in Chicago and beyond.

Friday, June 28, 6-8PM

All events are free and open to the public. For more information, visit:

www.grahamfoundation.org/public_events.

FUNDING

Funding for *Where If Not Us? Participatory Design and Its Radical Approaches* has been provided by the Institut für Auslandsbeziehungen and the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.

ABOUT THE GRAHAM FOUNDATION

Founded in 1956, the Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts makes project-based grants to individuals and organizations and produces public programs to foster the development and exchange of diverse and challenging ideas about architecture and its role in the arts, culture, and society.

The Graham Foundation was created by a bequest by Ernest R. Graham (1866–1936), a prominent Chicago architect who was a protégé of Daniel Burnham.

THE MADLENER HOUSE

Since 1963, the Graham Foundation has been located in the Madlener House, a 9,000 square foot Prairie-style mansion located in the historic Gold Coast neighborhood of Chicago. The work of architect Richard E. Schmidt and designer Hugh M. G. Garden, the house was built in 1901–02. In its compact, cubic massing the house is related to the German neoclassical work of Karl Friedrich Schinkel and his followers in Berlin, but in many of its details clearly reveals the influence of Louis Sullivan and Frank Lloyd Wright.

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EXHIBITION LOCATION, HOURS & ACCESSIBILITY

Graham Foundation for Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts
Madlener House
4 West Burton Place
Chicago, IL 60610
www.grahamfoundation.org

Gallery Hours: Wednesday to Saturday, 11AM to 5PM. Group tours available. Admission: Free

The Graham Foundation will offer public tours of *Where If Not Us? Participatory Design and Its Radical Approaches* every Saturday at 2PM. Saturday tours do not require reservations and are free and open to the public. Tours begin in the foyer on the first floor and last approximately 30 minutes.

Accessibility: Galleries are located on the first, second, and third floors of the Madlener House. The second and third floors are only accessible by stairs. The first floor is accessible via an outdoor lift. Please call 312.787.4071 to make arrangements.

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For all press inquiries, including images and guided tours, please contact Ellen Hartwell Alderman:
312.787.4071/ealderman@grahamfoundation.org.

<http://www.grahamfoundation.org>