At Home with the Collective: A Summit on Communal Housing

Curated and Organized by
Alexander Eisenschmidt

UIC/SoArch - Fall 2023

While housing could be described as one of the primary forms of architecture and one of today's most crucial tasks, spatial practices have been slow in rethinking established forms of living and the politics and economies surrounding it. Indeed, escaping the pervasive models of profit-based homeownership seems increasingly difficult when dominated by neoliberal market values. This summit, therefore, posits a radical shift from house to housing and from the single to the collective as a mechanism to shift attention and refocus housing as a community-building, solidarity-building, and city-building project.

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Golnar Abbasi is an architect-artist, researcher, curator, and publisher from Iran, whose research focuses on politics of domesticity, anti-colonial space, practices of resistance, and historical narrative. She is a Ph.D. candidate at Faculty of Architecture, TU Delft, a co-founder and editor of WORKNOT! and Sarmad Platform, and an educator at Piet Zwart Institute and Willem de Kooning Acadmie, Rotterdam.

b+ is a collaborative architecture practice based in Berlin. They work in various formats, from buildings over time-based media to initiatives, aiming for the social-ecological transformation of the existing building stock.

Tiff Beatty is a cultural organizer, arts administrator, poet, and host. She is the current Associate Director at the National Public Housing Museum and co-owner of House of the Lorde, a Black feminist arts space. In 2022, she received the Roberta "Bobbie" Raymond Leadership & Innovation Award from The Oak Park Regional Housing Center.

Neeraj Bhatia is the founder of the design practice THE OPEN WORKSHOP as well as an Associate Professor at the California College of the Arts where he also directs Urban Works Agency, an urbanism research lab. Select honors include the Architectural League Young Architects Prize, Emerging Leaders Award from Design Intelligence, and the Canadian Prix de Rome.

David Brown established The Available City, NFP this summer, continuing his research that engages community organizations, residents, architects, and the city in thought and construction of city-owned vacant land as a landscape of collective space. Its first effort is "1(8) of a Kind," an exhibition and construction of a small performance space (a bench, a platform, or a canopy) in each of the 18 neighborhoods with high numbers of vacancy.

Kathleen Day is Senior Project Manager for Preservation of Affordable Housing, Inc. (POAH), a non-profit affordable housing developer with a strong presence in Chicago. Born in France and raised on the West Side of Chicago, Kathleen has over ten years of experience in affordable housing and has lived in the U.S., France, Morocco, and Canada.

Penelope Dean is Professor of Architecture at UIC's School of Architecture. She holds a Faculty Fellowship at UIC's Institute for the Humanities for the 2023–2024 academic year.

Sarah Dunn is a professor in the School of Architecture at the University of Illinois at Chicago and co-founder with Martin Felsen of UrbanLab, an architecture and urban design firm. UrbanLab has been recognized with the American Institute of Architects' Latrobe Prize; their work was exhibited in both the Venice and Chicago Architecture Biennials as well as at MoMA PS1; and in 2017 they published *Bowling: Water, Architecture, Urbanism*.

Julie Dworkin is the Director of Policy at the Chicago Coalition for the Homeless. Over her 27 years at the organization, she has led the policy department in its work to address the many issues impacting homelessness including the need for affordable housing resources, criminal justice reform, youth homelessness, education, health care, and systemic racism.

Zvi Efrat is partner at Efrat-Kowalsky Architects and was Head of the Department of Architecture at the Bezalel Academy of Arts and Design, Jerusalem. He has taught and lectured worldwide, curated numerous exhibitions, and published extensively. His books include *The Israeli Project: Building and Architecture 1948-1973* (2004) and *The Object of Zionism: The Architecture of Israel* (2018).

Alexander Eisenschmidt is Associate Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago's School of Architecture. He directs the Visionary Cities Project; is author of *The Good Metropolis*, among other volumes; and has curated and exhibited in venues such as the International Architecture Biennale in Venice.

Lahbib El Moumni is an architect based in Casablanca, Morocco and a doctoral candidate at the Chair of the History and Theory of Urban Design at the ETH in Zurich, Switzerland. He is the co-founder of MAMMA, an NGO dedicated to researching, archiving, highlighting, and preserving the modern heritage of Morocco.

Valeria Esteves is a cooperativist at a 50-apartment housing block since 2010 and an architect with the Centro Cooperativista Uruguayo (CCU) since 2011, where she is currently supervising constructions and advising groups during their building period. In addition, she is professor at the Facultad de Arquitectura y Urbanismo de la Universidad de la República at the Instituto de Tecnologías, Montevideo, Uruguay.

Cristina Gamboa is a chartered architect and teacher. She is co-founder of Lacol, a non-profit cooperative of architects, where she focuses on researching and developing cooperative housing projects. Gamboa currently teaches at the AA in London and the ETSAB in Barcelona.

Grant Gibson is a Clinical Associate Professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago's School of Architecture. He is a registered architect and the founder of CAMESgibson, a nimble operation that undertakes a variety of professional commissions and speculative provocations typically concerned with domestic life.

Christopher Hawthorne is Senior Critic at the Yale School of Architecture, with a secondary appointment in English. A regular contributor to the *New York Times*, *New Yorker*, and other publications, he is the former architecture critic for the *Los Angeles Times* and from 2018-2022 served as the first Chief Design Officer for the City of Los Angeles.

Andrew Herscher is a co-founding member of a series of militant research collaboratives including Detroit Resists, the Settler Colonial City Project, and the We the People of Detroit Community Research Collective. He works at the University of Michigan.

Sandi Hilal is the Lise Meitner Visiting Professor at Lund University's Department of Architecture and the Built Environment. She is also the co-founder of Campus in Camps and the Co-Director of DAAR (Decolonizing Architecture Art Research), which in 2023 was honored with the Golden Lion at the 18th International Architecture Biennale in Venice.

Lúcia Lotufo is an associate at Usina CTAH, a collective of architects that provides leadership, advice, training, and support to community-led housing projects across São Paulo and throughout Brazil. She graduated in Architecture and Urbanism at the Universidade Presbiteriana Mackenzie and conducted her post-graduate degree in Management and Technology of Building Production at the University of São Paulo USP.

Clare Lyster is an architect and professor at the University of Illinois at Chicago's School of Architecture. Her work sits at the intersection of architecture, landscape, and infrastructure, with emphasis on how metabolic and socio-technical systems territorialize the built environment and the implications of this for design.

MENG Yan is founding partner and lead architect of URBANUS Architecture & Design. He served as the chief curator of the 2017 Shenzhen-Hong Kong Bi-City Biennale of Urbanism\ Architecture and was a visiting professor at Syracuse University and the University of Hong Kong.

Florencia Rodriguez is Director of and Associate Professor at the UIC School of Architecture. She has founded publications such as *PLOT* and *NESS*, and is the editor of *MCHAP The Americas 2, Territory & Expedition*. Her theoretical work is focused on the exploration of alternative forms of design criticism, and discussions about the idea of contemporariness in architecture.

Hilary Sample is an architect, co-founder of MOS based in New York, and the Columbia University GSAPP IDC Professor of Housing Design. Her work has received the National Design Award in Architecture from the Smithsonian Cooper Hewitt Museum, the American Academy in Rome Fellowship, and was presented in the Chicago Biennial in 2015, 2017, and is held in The Art Institute of Chicago.

Ivonne Santoyo-Orozco is Assistant Professor of Architecture at Bard College, where she also co-directs the Architecture Program. Her research has been published widely and attends to histories of spatial resistance against the privatization of collective welfare and common lands.

Martino Tattara is Associate Professor at KU Leuven (Belgium), Faculty of Architecture and co-founder of Dogma. Together with Dogma, over the last ten years, he has been working on a research by design trajectory that focuses on domestic space and its potential for transformation. The office has recently published *Living and Working* (2022).

Jaime Torres Carmona is Principal and Founder of Canopy, a leading social impact architecture practice in Chicago. His firm's body of work include award winning projects and publications such as Oso Apartments in Albany Park, the Enlace Community Center in Little Village, *Between the Leaves: Book on Housing* as well as design juries and lectures with local and national design associations such as the Chicago Architecture Biennial.

Felipe Vera is an urbanist who works as an academic as well as senior specialist on Housing and Urban Development at the Inter-American Development Bank in countries across Latin America, where he leads programs to improve slums, urban revitalization, metropolitan governance, and sustainable housing and infrastructure. He has written, edited numerous books, and curated award-winning exhibitions on housing and informality.

Laura Weathered is the Executive Director of the Near NorthWest Arts Council, an artist-directed non-profit organization and co-founder of Artists Design the Future, which is directed by 3 artists, all professional women. Trained as a visual artist with MFA from University of Southern California, Laura is dedicated to cooperative strategies that empower artistic activity as sustainable community development.

DAY 1
OCTOBER 19

10:00 am

**Welcome by
Florencia Rodriguez**

**Introduction by
Alexander Eisenschmidt**

10:15 am
FORM & URBANISM

Neeraj Bhatia
Forming Life in Common

MENG Yan
Mini, Hybrid, and Collective:
Alternative Urban Dwelling
in Chinese Megacities

Martino Tattara
An Architectural Quest for
Communal Housing: Ideas on
Typology, Property, Construction,
and the City

Respondents:
Sarah Dunn + Jaime Torres Carmona

12:30 pm - Break

1:30 pm
HOME & REFUGE

Golnar Abbasi
Domesticities of Displacement,
Extraction, and Revolution

Sandi Hilal
Learning from Living Room

Andrew Herscher
Humanitarianism's
Housing Question

Respondents:
Clare Lyster + Julie Dworkin

3:45 pm
VALUE & PROPERTY

Hilary Sample
Housing and Communal Gardens

b+
Legislating Architecture:
The Demolition Drama

Felipe Vera
Reimagining Housing
in Times of Uncertainty

Respondents:
Grant Gibson + Gené Moreno

DAY 2
OCTOBER 20

10:00 am
EXCHANGE & COMMUNITY

Ivonne Santoyo-Orozco
Housing and Social Reproduction

Zvi Efrat
Amateurism and Total Design:
The Architecture of the Kibbutz

Cristina Gamboa
Cooperative Housing as
Infrastructures for Sustainable Living

Respondents:
Penelope Dean + Laura Weathered

12:15 pm - Break

1:15 pm
ORGANIZATION & ADVOCACY

Lahbib El Moumni
From Paper to People:
The Living Transformation of
Casablanca's Historic Homes

Valeria Esteves
Cooperative Housing: Collective
Homeownership and Assisted
Self-Management Experience

Lúcia Lotufo
Building Self-Management
Housing Practices in Architecture

Christopher Hawthorne
Housing the Third Los Angeles

Respondents:
David Brown + Kathleen Day

4:00 pm
ROUNDTABLE WITH
CHICAGO PUBLIC AND
CULTURAL LEADERS

5:30 pm
UIC PARTY

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