SPEAKERS / KEYNOTE
Can public spaces both reclaim the past and embrace the future? Landscape architect Walter Hood has explored this question over the course of an iconic career, with projects ranging from Lafayette Square Park in San Francisco to the upcoming International African American Museum in Charleston, South Carolina. Walter Hood is the creative director and founder of Hood Design Studio in Oakland, California. He is also a professor at the University of California, Berkeley and lectures on professional and theoretical projects nationally and internationally. Hood Design Studio is a tripartite practice, working across art and fabrication, design and landscape, and research and urbanism. The resulting urban spaces and their objects act as public sculpture, creating new apertures through which to see the surrounding emergent beauty, strangeness and idiosyncrasies.

His work spans the range from local, community-based projects—such as Splash Pad Park, a converted traffic island alongside Interstate 580 in Oakland, California, to large-scale garden designs like the grounds for the new M. H. de Young Museum in San Francisco with Swiss architects Herzog & de Meuron (2005). Hood’s innovative public spaces are known for the way they embrace the essence of urban environments and for their links to urban redevelopment and neighborhood revitalization. He is currently designing the landscape for the Autry National Center Southwest Museum in Los Angeles, designing an archaeological garden within the context of the South Lawn Project at the University of Virginia, and developing a set of monuments and markers for a six-mile waterfront trail in Oakland, CA.

Hood’s published monographs Urban Diaries (Spacemaker Press, 1997) and Blues & Jazz Landscape Improvisations (Poltroon Press, 1993) illustrate his approach to the design of urban landscapes. These works won an ASLA Research award in 1996. His essay “Macon Memories” is included in Sites of Memory: Perspectives on Architecture and Race (Princeton Architectural Press, 2001).

Hood has been praised as a “community whisperer,” creating spaces that have elements the residents want before they even know it: “Through his pioneering work as an ‘urbanist,’ Hood has integrated architectural features such as playgrounds, plazas and squares into city sites whose pasts are vibrant but forgotten. By reflecting the shifting cultural composition and respecting the evolving nature of neighborhoods throughout San Francisco and Oakland, he has created an oasis in these areas, and through his close involvement with the local communities, he developed tailored solutions for Bay Area based parks while retaining a cohesive artistic vision. Near Chinatown in Oakland, he created a communal square for women’s tai chi practice while adults and children gather year round to take advantage of their newly revived local park.”[4] He is the winner of a public art competition to design the 1.1 megawatt solar array that will be constructed by New York Power Authority this year on the University at Buffalo’s North Campus.
Kona Gray, FASLA, PLA
EDSA

Kona Gray, FASLA, is a Principal at EDSA. With over 25 years of experience, Kona has been involved in many planning and landscape architectural projects, ranging from large-scale planning to detailed site design with emphasis on hospitality, community planning, parks, urban districts, healthcare and campus planning. Site heritage, history, community interface, implementation, and sensitivity to each property’s unique cultural, physical and environmental characteristics factor strongly into his work. Currently, Kona is leading a team of design professionals on projects in Florida, Virginia, China, The Bahamas, Puerto Rico, Saint Lucia, Saudi Arabia, Morocco and Egypt. In addition to leading a design studio, he has contributed his time and expertise to organizations such as the American Society of Landscape Architects, The Landscape Architecture Foundation and the Urban Land Institute. Kona’s leadership involvement with ASLA has included the Professional Awards Jury, chairing the Student Awards Jury and participating in the Diversity Summit. He is also the president of the Landscape Architecture Foundation. Kona studied architecture at the Boston Architectural College, Savannah College of Art and Design and received a BLA degree from the University of Georgia School of Environmental Design in 1997.

Diane Jones Allen, D. Eng., ASLA, PLA
Design Jones

Diane Jones Allen has 30-years of experience in professional practice, research, and teaching, focusing on land planning, transportation planning, and urban design projects, as well as community development work. Diane was a tenured professor in Landscape Architecture, at the School of Architecture and Planning at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland. Her research and practice is guided by the intersection of environmental justice, and sustainability in African-American cultural landscapes, including “Nomadic” responses to “Transit Deserts,” places of increasing transportation demand and limited access. Jones Allen is the Director of the Landscape Architecture Program at the College of Architecture, Planning & Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Arlington, has 30-years of experience in professional practice, research, and teaching, focusing on land planning, transportation planning, and urban design projects, as well as community development work. Diane was a tenured professor in Landscape Architecture, at the School of Architecture and Planning at Morgan State University in Baltimore, Maryland. Her research and practice is guided by the intersection of environmental justice, and sustainability in African-American cultural landscapes, including “Nomadic” responses to “Transit Deserts,” places of increasing transportation demand and limited access. Jones Allen is the Director of the Landscape Architecture Program at the College of Architecture, Planning & Public Affairs at the University of Texas at Arlington.
Professor Boone focuses on the changing nature of communities, and developing tools for enhanced community engagement and design. Through scholarship, teaching, and extension service, Professor Boone works in the landscape context of environmental justice, and his research includes the use of new media as a means of increasing community input in design and planning processes. Professor Boone is the recipient of several awards including the Opal Mann Green Engagement Scholarship Award, the Department of Landscape Architecture Professor of the Year, and the Alumni Association Outstanding Teacher. Prior to joining the faculty at NC State University, Kofi was a studio leader at JJR (formerly Johnson, Johnson, and Roy) working on a wide range of interdisciplinary urban design and planning projects. He received his Master of Landscape Architecture and Bachelor of Science in Natural Resources from The University of Michigan. Focus Area – Urban design, design of public spaces, environmental justice, visual communication.
Christina Hite, PLA, ASLA

Dix.Hite + Partners

As President of Dix.Hite + Partners, Chris provides visionary leadership to an established and growing practice, and the firm is a model of diversity and empowerment. The firm’s work celebrates the unique characteristics of a place’s social and geographical context. Chris leads by example: through impactful holistic design, practice leadership that showcases empowerment and diversity; academic leadership that elevates landscape architecture; and by community service that places the landscape architect in a leadership role. Christina received her Bachelor of Landscape Architecture from the University of Georgia and her Master of Landscape Architecture from the University of Florida.

Emily O’Mahoney, FASLA

2GHO Gentile Glas Holloway O’Mahoney & Assoc.

Emily M. O’Mahoney, FASLA, is a partner with 2GHO, Gentile Glas Holloway O’Mahoney & Assoc. in Jupiter Florida. After 13 years in private practice apprenticeship (and bearing 3 children), Emily moved on to own her own business in the ’90’s and then became a partner with others in the current firm. She is energized by challenging design problems and loves to see the final product. From concept to detailed finishes, she pushes sustainability and regenerative design. Her leadership is most noted for her service to ASLA and emerging professionals (for licensing preparation) since the mid ’90s. She has served, with a passion for the profession, as Chapter President and the Florida Trustee. A 1980 graduate from the University of Florida, Emily has been in private practice serving public and private entities. Creating spaces for people, whether in parks, private homes or urban spaces, is what Emily loves to do.
Passion-Practice: The Creative and Strategic Drivers of Four Women-led Businesses

Gina Ford, FASLA  
Agency Landscape + Planning

Gina Ford is a landscape architect, co-founder and principal of Agency Landscape + Planning. Underpinning her two decades of practice are a commitment to the design and planning of public places and the perpetuation of the value of landscape architecture via thought leadership, teaching, writing and lecturing. Her work has received awards from the American Society of Landscape Architects, the American Planning Association and the American Institute of Architects, among others. She is on the board of directors for the Cultural Landscape Foundation and was the recipient of the Harvard Graduate School of Design’s Charles Eliot Traveling Fellowship and Wellesley College’s Shaw Fellowship.

Kimberly Garza, PLA, ASLA, LEED AP  
Founder + Principal, ATLAS Lab Inc.

Kimberly is Founder and Principal at ATLAS Lab, a landscape architecture, urban design and public art studio based in Sacramento, CA. Kimberly’s artistic works balance whimsy with architectural rigor, testing materials and technology. She is particularly interested in re-examining and re-conceiving traditional and mono-functional design typologies within cities as multi-functional platforms for engagement. Her work has been internationally recognized, published, and exhibited, including juried selection for the Market Street Prototyping Festival, International Garden Festival in Quebec, Canada and winning proposal for the Sacramento Capitol Mall design competition. She was named 40 Under 40 Urban Innovator by NextCity.org, and 40 Under 40 Honoree by the Sacramento Business Journal. In addition to her practice, she teaches advanced landscape architecture courses at the UC Davis. Kimberly holds degrees in landscape architecture from UC Berkeley and Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design.