

Dean's Newsletter 1.9

02.01.2021

Dear friends,

How could we not begin this new semester with exhilaration and hope, after listening to the spellbinding words of National Youth Poet Laureate **Amanda Gorman** at the Presidential Inauguration of President **Joseph R. Biden** on January 20? In her poem, “The Hill We Climb,” she refers to a “nation that isn’t broken, but simply unfinished”—a line that deeply resonates with the purposeful work we do at SA+P.



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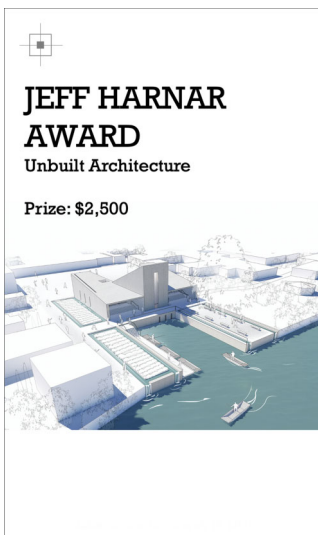
Jeff Harnar Awards

Check out the awards and jury below. Submissions are due on March 15th, 2021. [Read More...](#)

As Gorman states, the task isn’t about striving for perfection but about identifying purpose. SA+P faculty members have devoted their lives to preparing the minds who will be able to take on this challenge. We are determined to create the activist-architects, activist-planners, and activist-landscape architects of the future.

In our Conversation Series this Spring semester, our guest speakers will address this very charge. We begin with an exchange about our universities: where they stand in response to the global pandemic, and the renewed fights to end racism and structural inequality. I am honored to kick off the semester as host and moderator, in dialogue with **Lesley Lokko**, of the African Futures Institute, and **K. Wayne Yang**, of the University of California, Davis. This virtual segment, entitled “The University,” will take place on February 8, 2021.

We will also continue to host Faculty + Student Dialogues. The first one, which took place on January 20, featured Visiting Assistant Professor of Community and Regional Planning, **Elsbeth Iralu**, who presented a talk entitled: “What Nagas Eat: Sovereignty and Kinship Under Lockdown.” On February 3, Visiting Associate Professor of Architecture, **Jeffrey Nesbit**, will present a talk on “NASA’s Invisible Wilderness.” If you are interested in joining in, please contact **Elizabeth Castillo** for an invitation link. Please check out the series poster below for other events this semester.



SA + P

UNIVERSITY OF NEW MEXICO
SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE + PLANNING

Spring 2021

CONTESTING
CONVERSATION SERIES

In response to the global pandemic and the renewed fights to end racism and structural inequality, the 2020-21 lecture series committee at UNM's SA+P has opted for a "conversation" series rather than a "lecture" series.

Now is the time for critical dialogue, difficult discussions, and debate. Join us.

MODELS

03.08 5:30pm

Peter Nabokov

UCLA

+ Bob Easton

Bob Easton Architect

Rinker/Crego Block Lecture

THE UNIVERSITY

02.08 5:00pm

Lesley Lokko

African Futures Institute

+ K. Wayne Yang

UC Davis

George Anselevicius Memorial Lecture

PRACTICE

04.19 5:00pm

Bryony Roberts

Bryony Roberts Studio

+ Danna Walker

Built By Us & Public Practice

FACULTY + STUDENT DIALOGUES

02.22 5:30pm

Tau Sigma Delta Honor Society
Award and Lecture

01.20 12pm

Elspeth Iralu

02.03 12pm

Jeffrey Nesbit

04.12 5:30pm

Jose Castillo + Saidee Springall

a/311

Marjorie Mead Hooker Memorial Lecture

04.15 5:30pm

Deliberating Awards

A Conversation with the Jury of the Jeff Harnar Award

04.16 5:30pm

Craig Dykers + Elaine Molinar

Snahetta

Jeff Harnar Lecture

02.07 12pm

Alex Webb

Robert J. Stamm Professorship Lecture

03.03 12pm

Janet Abrams

For more information and virtual event registrations visit: <https://saap.unm.edu/news-events/events.html>

This semester, we are also excited to welcome **Jose Castillo** and **Saidee Springall**, founding partners in the award-winning Mexico City-based firm **a|911**, as our 2021 Marjorie Mead Hooker Professors. Among their built projects are the expansion of the Spanish Cultural Center in Mexico City, the transformation of the Sala Siqueiros in Mexico City, and the Monterrey Center for Higher Learning of Design. They are recipients of the Mexico National Housing Award (2011), the Bronze Medal of the Holcim Awards for Sustainable Construction in Latin America (2011), the Emerging Voices Award from the Architectural League of New York (2013), and the Audi Urban Future Award (2014). In 2015, a|911 was recognized as the most visionary architectural firm in Mexico by the national publication *Obras Mexico*. They will be collaborating with professors **Cesar Lopez** and **Jeffrey Nesbitt** in a series of coordinated graduate design studios, and Castillo and Springall will present their endowed lecture, via Zoom, on April 12, 2021.



In this newsletter, I'm also delighted to present the expanded **Jeff Harnar Awards** program, for which submissions are now being accepted. I want to give our sincere thanks to The Thornburg Foundation's Executive Director **Allan Oliver**, and Administrative Director and Community Funding Officer, **Leslie Garcia**, for working with us on this new set of awards, and for enabling us to broaden the scope of this important program.



Meet the JHA Jury



Marlon Blackwell
University of Arkansas



Deborah Burke
Yale University



Rene Davids
UC Berkeley



Andrés Jaque
Columbia University

Most importantly, we want to thank Chairman of the Board, **Garrett Thornburg**, and the Board of Directors for their generous support of the disciplines of architecture and landscape architecture.

The most important part of the award program's expansion is that five of the six awards will now be open to architects and landscape architects based anywhere in the world who have produced work in the Four Corners states: Arizona, Colorado, New Mexico, and Utah. Until now, the program was limited to projects built in or designed for New Mexico only. With this change, we extend the geographic range of our meditation on the Southwest and its regional cultures, through the lenses of contemporary architecture.

One of this year's significant changes is that applicants for the award for Contemporary Architecture in the Southwest will be asked to commit to using the \$10,000 prize money to support issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion within their firm.

We are especially excited that the awards in the student category are now open to all university programs in the Four Corners states. Students of architecture and landscape architecture at **Arizona State University, University of Arizona, University of Colorado, University of Colorado, Denver, University of New Mexico, University of Utah**, and **Utah State University** are now eligible to submit entries.

I want to thank our fearless awards program director, Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture, **Anthony Fettes**, for heading this charge. A special thanks as well to graduate student of architecture **Rym Naji**, who joins us in this effort this year.

To submit to the 2021 Jeff Harnar Awards program, please visit <https://jeffharnaraward.slideroom.com>. To learn more about the award and review past winners, please visit www.jeffharnaraward.com. We encourage all who are eligible to apply to do so, and please help us spread the word about this opportunity. A Jury Roundtable will take place on Thursday, March 15 at 5:30, and a virtual Award Ceremony will take place on Friday, March 26, 2021 at 5:30.

I would like to make a special shout out to **Elizabeth Furu**, who joins the SA+P as a Faculty Research Support Officer. She will be working jointly with our School and the UNM College of Fine Arts. She will be taking on administrative services for pre-award sponsored research projects for the School. Welcome Elizabeth!

These are some of the projects and developments now underway at the School. I should note as well that we are nearing the end of the submission period for the **On the Brinck Award + Lecture** program, the award program that the SA+P launched this year. To learn more about this award or to submit a book nomination, please go to [On the Brinck](#). You may also contact Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture, **Kathleen Kambic**, director of the award



Carlos Jimenez

Rice University



Pheobe Lickwar

UT Austin



Elaine Molinar

Snøhetta



Frederick Steiner

University of Pennsylvania



Thaisa Way

Dumbarton Oaks

program, for more information. The deadline for submissions is February 15, 2021.

We would love to invite you to join us a collaborator, partner, and/or supporter. If you are interested in supporting a specific department or one of our research centers, or in contributing to student scholarships, please visit our [Give to SA+P](#) webpage. You can also contribute directly to our [Dean's Fund](#), which will allow me to continue to enrich SA+P with new programs, as well as faculty and student support. This year, we will also be soliciting sponsorships for our inaugural **Architecture and Design Summer Academy** for high school Juniors and Seniors, taking place this coming July and August. If you are interested in learning more about this summer program, please contact Visiting Associate Professor and ADSA director [Janet Abrams](#).

Lastly, we want to remind you that we are in the midst of a Chair Search for the Architecture Department. If you are interested in this position, or would like to help us share the advertisement, you can find the job posting [here](#). Candidates will be interviewed in March-April, and community forums will give everyone an opportunity to offer feedback. If you have any questions, please contact Search Committee Chair, [Nora Wendl](#), Associate Professor of Architecture.

This newsletter features a very special member of our community, senior lecturer III **Francisco Uviña-Contreras**. As director of both the Historic Preservation + Regionalism certificate and our new MS in Architecture degree area of focus in historic preservation, Francisco's passions and work represent another dimension of our SA+P *familia*.

Through his work, I believe we get closer to exemplifying Ms. Gorman's poetic reformulation: that our mission shouldn't be centered on "inherited pride," but should, instead, address "a past we step into and how we repair it." While Francisco literally repairs the structures of the past—and preserves them beautifully—his work also alerts us to the fact that we must constantly re-frame the past through these structures to better understand the present.

I wish everyone an excellent semester, as we continue to demonstrate fortitude and inventiveness in advancing the SA+P community despite the strictures of the pandemic. We all look forward—vaccines permitting—to a much-needed return to 'normal times.' Stay healthy!

My very best,

Robert Alexander González

Dean and Professor



Francisco Uviña-Contreras: Bringing Ruins Back to Life

Cindy Graff Cohen

The new year brings big news for Director of Historic Preservation at SA+P Francisco Uviña-Contreras—and a leap forward for the future of historic preservation studies at UNM. A new graduate program launches in the Fall 2021 semester: the Master of Science in Architecture with a focus area in Historic Preservation + Regionalism.

It's a major transition for the school's existing Certificate Program in Historic Preservation + Regionalism, which was founded in 2005 by Professor Emeritus Christopher Wilson, who served as its director for 13 years.

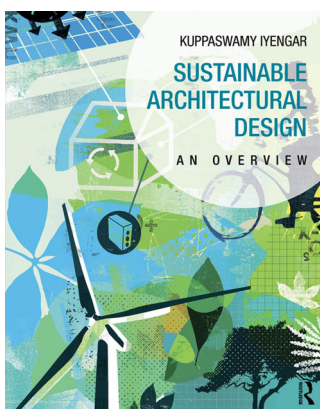
"Students are already asking about the degree program," says Uviña, who has directed the certificate program since 2018 and is a Senior Lecturer III and the J.B. Jackson Endowed Chair in Cultural Landscape Studies. "There are all these amazing possibilities for projects—and I am a man who says 'yes' to new opportunities."

The new M.S. program puts the University on a short list of architecture schools across the country to offer this degree. Uviña thanks new Dean Robert González for his enthusiasm and support for the new curriculum. "Robert is a true preservationist and regionalist at heart," he adds.

Uviña has no shortage of ideas for the first class of the M.S. program. "I have five grants on hold at the moment, waiting for the time when we can be out in the field again," he says. "I'm starting to look around at students' strengths and talents and see who would match up best with which grant!"

Announcements

New or not so new to UNM SA+P this year? Come and meet new and old friends at the **UNM SA+P Faculty-Student-Staff Mixer** on Thursday, Feb 4 @ 12:30–1:30pm. Please register [here...](#)



Congratulations to Professor of Architecture **Kuppaswamy Iyengar**. His book *Sustainable Architectural Design - An*

Overview has been adopted as a textbook at Humber University in Ontario, Canada.

Research

This semester, Associate Professor of Architecture **Nora Wendl** welcomes Visiting Artists **Brennan Gerard & Ryan Kelly** for a virtual workshop **Practices for Keeping Time: ARCH 402 Workshop with Gerard & Kelly**. This workshop studies links between architecture and dance; the design and choreography of everyday life; and contemporary questions of race, gender, and domesticity within the specific conditions of homebound work and virtual pedagogy. The workshop will take place on February 12, 15, and 17. They will also be working in collaboration with students from the CalArts School of Dance.



Design

Join us in congratulating The Open Workshop, as Assistant Professor of Architecture, **Cesar Adrian Lopez** and **Neeraj Bhatia**, Associate Professor (California College of the Arts), have been awarded a 2021 ACSA Faculty Design Award for their project "New Investigations in Collective Form." [Read More....](#)



Discovering Talents

Francisco Uviña-Contreras was born in Ciudad Juárez, and moved to the small town of Sunland Park, NM, with his parents, sister, and two brothers, at the age of seven. The Rio Grande River runs through the town, which borders El Paso on the east and Mexico to the south. Uviña, as one of the newer kids in town, remembers “being called ‘wetback,’ even from other Mexican kids!” He was to experience more serious instances of discrimination later.

His father, who still lives in Sunland Park in Doña Ana County, was a *bracero*, one of legions of farmworkers and manual laborers working in the Southwest under a U.S. agreement with Mexico that ran from the 1940s to the 1960s. He was a master blacksmith.

By the time Uviña was 13, he already knew his life goal: to be an architect. He had a natural talent for drawing and enjoyed drawing and sketching. He recalls the time in the Santa Teresa Middle School he was asked to paint a mural in the cafeteria window. He enjoyed being the school artist until he graduated from Gadsden High School in 1988.

In 1994, he graduated from UNM with a Bachelor of Arts in Architecture and a minor in Art History. He credits former emeritus professor Edie Cherry for recognizing his strengths and potential. Among his most memorable projects was documenting San Felipe de Neri Church in the Albuquerque Old Town Plaza. Uviña preserved the building’s architectural features in detailed drawings, drawings which are now housed in the Library of Congress as part of the Historic American Buildings Survey HABS, a WPA project launched in the 1930s.

In 2009, he earned his Master’s degree in Architecture with distinction and a graduate Certificate in Preservation and Regionalism from the University. He is grateful to former dean Geraldine Forbes for “taking me by the hand and pushing me through graduate school.”

Graduate school was a busy time as he combined his studies with working, teaching, traveling, and raising his family. He and his wife Claudia, who grew up in Chihuahua, have two daughters. Currently they are in college—one at NMSU and the other at UNM.

However, it was the one-of-a-kind education in the years between his degrees that let Uviña practice what he had learned in class to become one of the most respected and knowledgeable historic preservationists in the state.

From Dirt to Structure

From 1994 to 2008, Uviña criss-crossed the region for Cornerstones Community Partnerships, a Santa Fe-based nonprofit that helps regional communities preserve their historic buildings. Working in partnership with local residents, they “encourage traditional building practices, affirm cultural



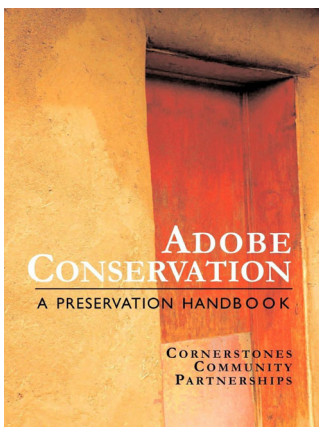
values, and foster the involvement of youth and elders.”

Uviña recalls that he knew right away the position would be different from other architecture jobs when two of director Barbara Zook’s interview questions were “Do you have a truck?” and “Have you ever worked construction?”

“I had considered a career in design, but this became my introduction to the world of preservation,” Francisco says. “When you can bring preservation and design together—that’s a huge passion of mine.”

As the organization’s architectural/technical manager, he assisted with field assessments, documentation of historic buildings, adaptive re-use design, and new design work utilizing traditional building methods. The scope of Francisco’s position grew as his expertise grew, thanks to a wide variety of hands-on projects and learning opportunities around the world.

His network of friends and fellow preservationists grew at the same time. In 1996 he served as the only North American representative to participate in an international five-week training program in Perú called the Pan-American Course on the Conservation and Management of Earthen Architectural and Archeological Heritage. The all-Spanish curriculum on the restoration, conservation, and new design of earthen buildings was sponsored by The Getty Conservation Institute in California and other major preservation organizations. Three years later, Uviña was invited back to the training program—as one of the instructors.



Adobe Conservation: A Preservation Handbook (Sunstone Press, 2006)

“Perú opened my eyes to this wonderful material of adobe,” he recalls. “Just as my father could shape metal into different shapes, adobe can take different forms.” Repairing old adobe structures—and building new ones—has become a life’s work commitment for him.

The team at Cornerstones Community Partnership assigned him to survey research in adobe construction and draw examples of the process. The resulting project became the go-to manual for those working in the field. Uviña is co-author and illustrator of *Adobe Conservation: A Preservation Handbook*.

He has spent years looking at abandoned buildings and crumbling adobe structures on his forays through the Southwest and Mexico. “As a designer and preservationist, it is most compelling when a building is almost on the ground and you can bring it back to life,” he says.

Making New Preservationists

Looking back on the dozens of adobes and other projects he has worked on, from ancient structures in National Parks and nationally known historic buildings to neglected houses in villages, he thinks about the important role of each community to take on conservation and preservation. “If your parents,

grandparents, great grandparents took care of a church, now is the time for the current generation to get involved,” he says.

“It was the community involvement that got me more interested in preservation,” he recalls of his early years with Cornerstones Community Partnership. “When people want to help build, there’s no need to read a whole library of books.”

Within communities, he sees the complexities of historic preservation and the questions it brings out. Internal politics, the interplay of tradition and government, finances, bringing buildings up to current codes, and “the fine line between maintenance and changing” all shape a project.

He thinks of places like the older missions in New Mexico and the Palace of Governors in Santa Fe that need to be carefully and continually preserved for posterity. “Certain buildings are meant to be untouched,” he emphasizes. “However, every time we come up with new technologies, we find ways to be less invasive to a building.”

To prepare future leaders in historic preservation through the new Master’s program, Uviña is developing a well-rounded curriculum. The program will include the study of distinctive regions, along with New Urbanism, Smart Growth and sustainability planning approaches.

In the current Historic Preservation + Regionalism Certificate program, students choose from a rich curricular buffet of electives across campus, such as Navajo Design and Planning; Southwest Architecture and Cultural Landscapes; Gardens in the Sand: New Mexico’s Historic Landscapes; and New Mexico Literary Landscapes and Beyond.

Not too many years into the future, communities across New Mexico and the region could begin to see these new graduates’ impact on their historic neighborhoods. “Our students are so inspiring to me,” he says. “Sometimes you have to step back and take a good faith approach that people will make a difference.”

In years past, he has traveled to teach and take part in conferences around the world, with stays in Africa, Asia, South America and especially Mexico, but Covid-19 has stopped even local fieldwork. Completely bilingual, Uviña especially enjoys working with colleagues in Mexico.

His latest publication project, “AT&SF Firehouse: Re-envisioning a City’s Historic Site at the Rail Yards,” will be released in January 2021. It was a major effort by students in the Landscape Architecture Department in Associate Professor **Katya Crawford’s** class on Ephemeral Landscapes for Social and Environmental Change and Uviña’s class on Preservation Technologies and Adaptive Reuse, with special gratitude to **Damian Garduño, Magdalena (Maggie) Kerkmans** and **Joseph Daniel Erazo-Pazmiño**.

In addition to planning for the new graduate degree, he is preparing for SA+P’s Southwest Summer Institute in Preservation + Regionalism, a tradition that the program’s founder, Christopher Wilson, launched it in 2005.

Positive Energy

The next year holds challenges that Uviña faces with clear eyes, a health situation that he shares openly in matter-of-fact tones. Last May, after a seizure took him to the hospital, doctors discovered a brain tumor. He went into surgery the following week.

Now, after 28 sessions of radiation, he is about midway through a clinical trial for brain cancer and lengthy chemotherapy treatments. “Just like any other project, there is a positive energy I like to put in it,” he says.

He also has another advantage over his prognosis: positive wishes from the countless people whose lives he has touched, in class, on construction sites, throughout communities that have benefited from his expertise. The School of Architecture and Planning adds its support and gratitude.

Senior Lecturer III, **Francisco Uviña-Contreras** can be reached at fuvina@unm.edu

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