

DIVERSITY

EQUITY

INCLUSION

2021 REPORT

SOM

In January 2022, SOM's Equity Action Committee shared the firm's first-ever Diversity, Equity & Inclusion Report, presented internally to SOM's global team. We're proud to now share this report publicly, both to hold ourselves accountable and to continue to urge progress across our industry.

January 2022

To our SOM Colleagues,

We are excited to present our first annual Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) Report. This is a compilation of the work being done across our global SOM community, focused on furthering our collective commitment to greater DEI-centered work and culture at SOM.

It is vital that we report our progress annually to hold ourselves accountable and identify areas that require greater focus in the future, while still celebrating the progress we have made.

We believe every action matters, big or small, and know that each step we take toward greater Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion is a step in the right direction. The efforts presented are a sample of our colleagues' great work. This dedicated work is imperative to the future of our firm, our industry, and the communities we serve.

Equity Action Committee

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Who We Are
Our stance on Diversity,
Equity, and Inclusion, where
we are today, where we're
headed, and our long-term
goals for building equity
across our industry.

SOM's Commitment

Dialogue around Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion has been ongoing for many years at SOM. These essential conversations paved the way for the establishment of our Employee Resource Groups and our Talent, Equity, Diversity, and Development (TEDD) Committee.

In 2020, the senseless murder of George Floyd emboldened us to take more significant action and was the catalyst that led to the creation of our 34 point Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) Action Plan.

Since our DEI Action Plan was released in July 2020, we have been inspired by progress made in advancing equity within SOM and throughout the architecture, design, and engineering industries. We know there is more work to be done. The continued underrepresentation of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color in our industry and offices is a clear sign that we must continue our collective pursuit to create a truly equitable and diverse culture at SOM.

Over the past year and a half, we have steadily advanced the 34 goals set out in our original plan, but we know that true equity takes time. We're in the early stages of a process that will continue for years to come. This report is the first of many updates to hold ourselves and our industry accountable as we continue this vital conversation designed to help move our industry forward.

Diversity, Equity + Inclusion Action Plan

Our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan was created to bring meaningful change to our profession, starting with our own culture and practices.

Building a safe and equitable work environment

01

Reviewing and strengthening our global ethics guidelines and code of conduct training.

02

Rethinking the onboarding and orientation process for all new hires to establish an understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion, including fully revising our employee handbook.

03

Implementing flexible workplace policies to allow our colleagues to address their needs through flexible schedules and remote work.

04

Expanding the range of avenues for reporting discriminatory practices, including an anonymous third-party reporting platform, with clear protocols for follow-up.

Expanding training programs to support equitable career growth

01

Creating a holistic, global standard for training, development, and growth, inclusive of a broad spectrum of topics and ideas that enhance our work.

02

Conducting regular training on unintended bias and cultural sensitivity for everyone at SOM

03

Committing to personal training plans to catalyze growth and build specific skills, including design training, public speaking, team management, project leadership, and more

Recruiting talent that reflects the diversity of the communities we serve

01

Reexamining and overhauling existing hiring practices to establish an inclusive hiring process at all levels, including leadership positions

02

Developing and strengthening relationships with Historically Black Colleges and Universities and an expanded group of institutions

03

Expanding the role of Summer Internship and Year One programs to attract diverse talent equitably to SOM and the profession

04

Increasing recognition of our Employee Resource Groups—SOM NOMA, Pride, Women’s Initiative, Asian Alliance, Arquitectos, and more—internally and externally, to represent the many voices and experiences at SOM.

Mentoring and championing talent to become leaders at SOM

01

Providing greater access to tools for success at SOM, including transparent criteria for evaluation, promotion, and compensation

02

Evaluating existing career paths and supporting new, unconventional paths to success at SOM

03

Creating a dedicated mentorship program for BIPOC employees, pairing mentees with mentors across all disciplines.

04

Celebrating our BIPOC colleagues’ contributions to the industry.

Cultivating dialogue on equity and social justice

01

Expanding our global task force on TEDD to include representatives from our Employee Resource Groups, including NOMA, Pride, Women’s Initiative, Arquitectos, and more.

02

Convening quarterly Equity Roundtables to foster dialogue with a cross section of our community at SOM.

03

Creating opportunities for reflection, learning, and conversation for significant dates and moments in history, including the anniversary of Whitney Young’s monumental speech at the 1968 AIA convention, and more.

04

Establishing online forums for more frequent, informal conversation on equity, social justice, and action.

05

Providing dedicated annual budgets for equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives and employee resource groups.

Advancing equity and inclusion in design

01

Proposing, supporting, and advocating for equity initiatives in the AEC industry through our involvement in professional organizations including the AIA, NOMA, RIBA, NCSEA, NCARB, AICP, NCIDQ, and more.

02

Encouraging and actively supporting team members to take leadership roles in industry organizations and nonprofits focused on advancing equity.

03

Demonstrating thought leadership around issues of equity in design at conferences, in interviews, white papers, and in other forums

04

Continuing to partner with and expand support of the National Organization of Minority Architects, including annual sponsorship of the NOMA Student Design Competition and more.

05

Expanding upon our two-decades-long commitment to the ACE Mentorship program and other student-focused organizations to creating access and mentorship opportunities for young people entering the AEC industry, including NOMA’s Project Pipeline, and others.

Reporting back to the SOM community

01

Reporting annually on our demographics, progress with ongoing initiatives, philanthropy, and investments and partnerships with minority, BIPOC, and women-owned businesses and organizations.

02

Sharing progress quarterly within each studio about ongoing initiatives, training, volunteering, events, and community partnerships.

03

Creating a direct channel for ideas and suggestions to leadership, led by our Chief People Officer and our global task force on Talent, Equity, Diversity and Development

Pursuing projects with high social impact

01

Launching SOM EQ Lab to establish and promote criteria for pursuing projects with equitable outcomes and develop best practices for including justice, diversity, equity, and inclusion in all of our designs.

02

Expanding our commitment to taking on projects with meaningful social and civic impact and pro-bono community-focused projects

03

Supporting BIPOC-owned businesses by expanding our commitment to working with minority, women, and veteran-owned businesses as partners, consultants, and collaborators.

Promoting civic action in our communities

01

Advocating for positive change and equity in our communities by joining local community boards and neighborhood organizations, and playing an active role in community-led initiatives

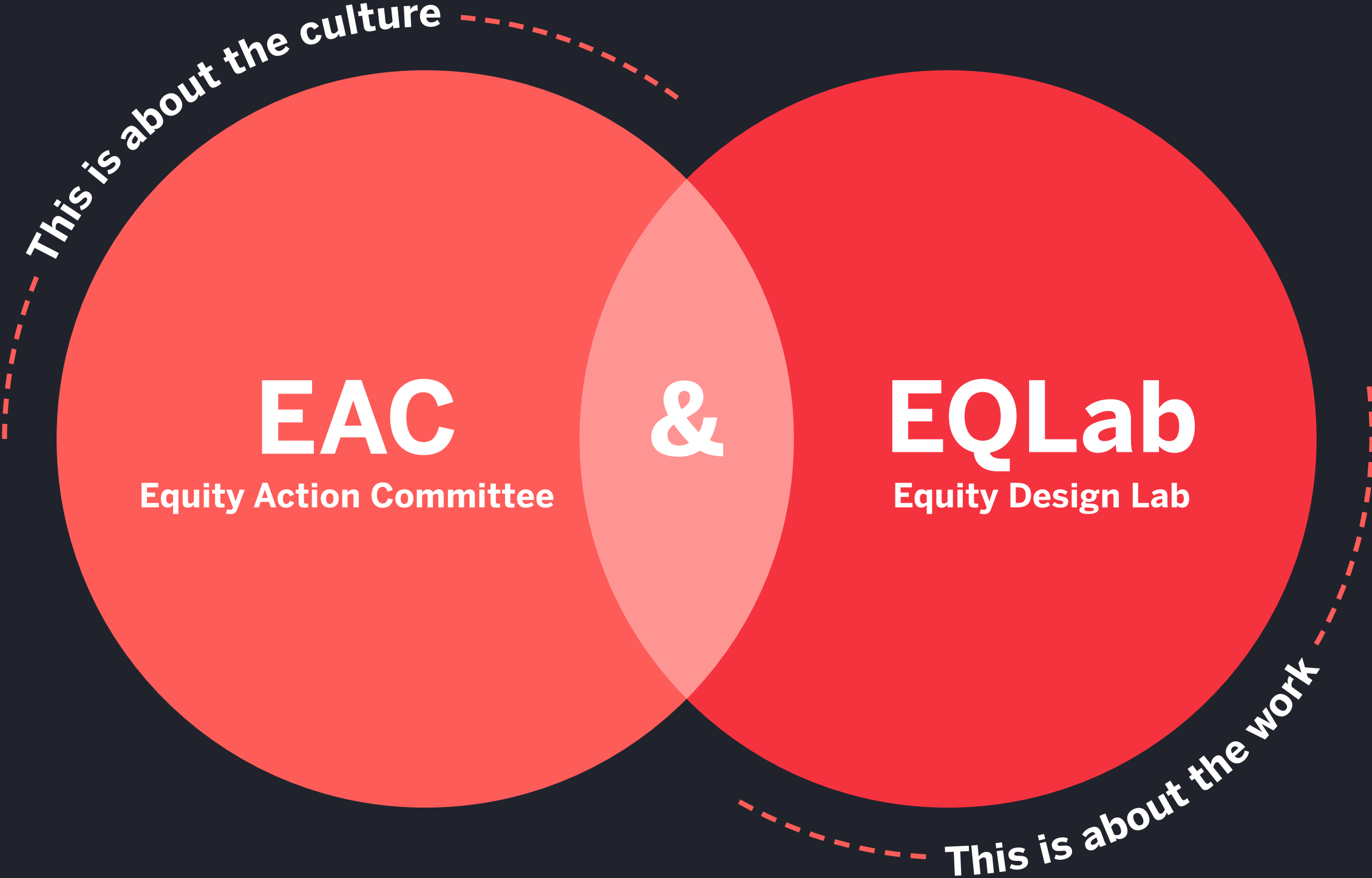
02

Emphasizing the importance of civic participation to drive positive change, and reinforcing SOM’s paid time off policy for voting.

03

Developing a clear framework for volunteering for teams and individuals, including promoting internal philanthropic initiatives and explore introducing volunteer hours to encourage giving back to our communities

The Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan paved the way for establishing two equity-driven groups: The Equity Action Committee and The Equity Design Lab.

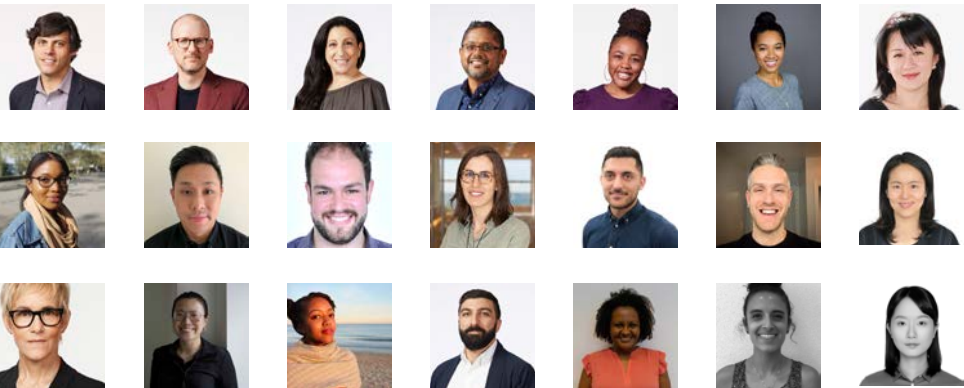


Equity Action Committee

One inclusive committee, grounded by SOM's unique culture, with a focus on making SOM an equity leader in our industry.

The Equity Action Committee began in January 2021 with an open call for interested colleagues across the firm. Of those interested, 18 people with different backgrounds, disciplines, offices, and career stages were chosen as members.

Members lead initiatives, support subcommittees, and collaborate with our Employee Resource Groups (ERG) and business operations teams, providing expertise in advocacy, engagement, recruitment, and retention.



The EAC primarily focuses on:

- Strategizing SOM's DEI commitments and actions to create a culture in which everyone belongs.
- Contributing expertise to advocacy, engagement, recruitment & retention.
- Developing benchmarks and measuring tools for SOM's DEI strategy.
- Collaborating with global teams to develop best practices.

Milestones Roadmap

Year 1: Establish

- Goals:
- Establish committee structure
 - Engage in individual office culture tours
 - Work with leadership and officers to develop a unified approach to equity
 - Map out the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan
 - Establish metrics and monitoring strategies with HR
 - Evaluate options for DEI services
 - Forecast, manage, and allocate the EAC budget

We are here

Year 2: Execute

- Goals:
- Continue Goals from year one
 - Report Equity Action Committee updates
 - Revisit DEI strategy progress and update accordingly
 - Survey our efforts
 - Attend conferences to expand SOM's DEI network
 - Update and analyze metrics with HR
 - Revisit and revise budget as needed

Year 3: Evaluate

- Goals:
- Continue goals from year two
 - Report findings, and adjust our efforts accordingly
 - Survey our efforts
 - Employ interns to work on DEI research
 - Use metrics for research
 - Compare our efforts to external DEI standards
 - Revisit and revise budget as needed
 - Continued evaluation and evolution

Years Ahead: Evolve

EAC Subcommittees
The EAC is comprised of three subcommittees, each focusing on different aspects of the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan.



The **Recruitment & Training Subcommittee** promotes equitable, inclusive, and transparent hiring practices and promotion strategies to increase diversity and retention.

We address recruitment strategies across offices, support a framework that nurtures and supports our careers, and ensure an equitable staff review process that provides equal growth opportunities.



The **Mentorship & Dialogue Subcommittee** fosters and celebrates a culture of excellence in mentorship that encourages a continuous, open dialogue to inform, engrain, and advance equity within our culture and practices.

We are working closely with HR to develop a firmwide mentorship program. We host an Equity Roundtable each quarter, furthering open, honest dialogue around equity.



Our **External Engagement Subcommittee** empowers the firm to establish and maintain strong relationships with professional organizations and civic agencies and cultivate a culture with deep connections to our communities.

By developing reciprocal, holistic connections with professional organizations, non-profits, and community boards, we are engaging our local communities, leaders, and governments, furthering our individual and collective impact.

Quarterly Equity Roundtables
Our Quarterly Equity Roundtables engage subject matter experts from around the firm in open dialogues centered on challenging the status quo and bringing greater equity to our industry and communities.

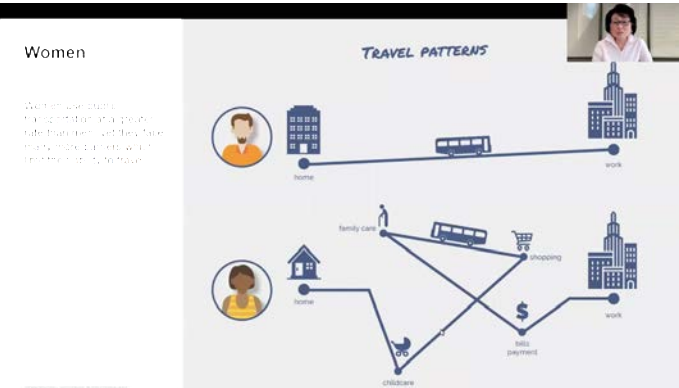
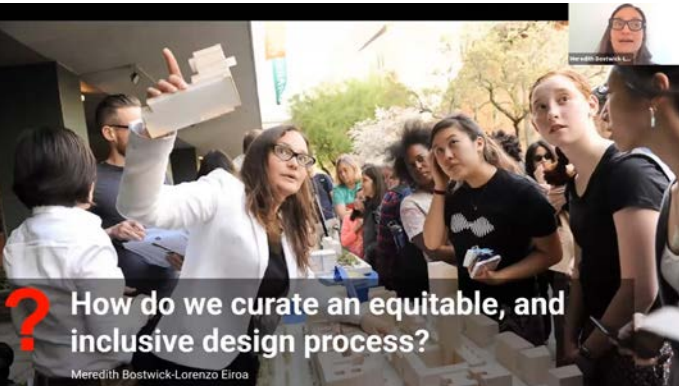
So far, we've explored COVID-19, Climate Action, Historic Preservation, Mobility Infrastructure, and Housing through an equitable lens. Soon, we hope to invite industry and equity experts from beyond SOM, enriching these powerful and impactful conversations.

450
SOMers Engaged

5
Equity Focused Roundtables

330
Minutes of Conversation

Reporting Back
In our Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Action Plan, we commit to reporting annually on our demographics, progress with ongoing initiatives, philanthropy, and investments and partnerships with minority, BIPOC, and women-owned businesses and organizations. Starting in 2022, we will publish our Diversity, Equity, Inclusion Report annually in January around Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

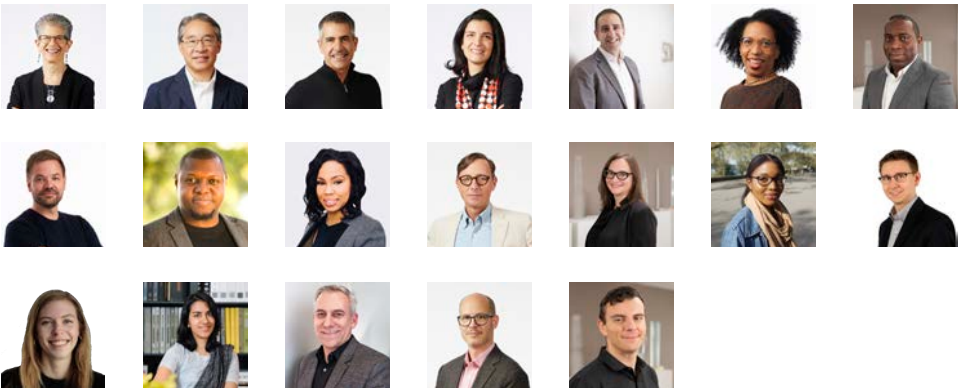


Equity Design Lab

The Equity Design Lab was created to define and develop SOM's framework around equitable design with our community in response to continued environmental and social urgency.

The strongest evidence of a design firm's commitment to social equity is its work. The creation of the Equity Design Lab (EQLab) is testament to SOM's commitment to equity and justice.

Recognizing the urgency with which we must tackle injustice in design, The EQLab was developed to critique, question, and improve our design work under the lens of equity. The EQLab is working to create a framework within SOM for practitioners and designers centered around community-driven development projects which promote equity and justice, facilitate access and upward economic mobility, and spark community revitalization through strategic, equitable, sustained partnerships.



EQLab Values

- Bottom-up, community-driven collaborative projects
- Equitable design solutions
 - Social Equity - celebrating and amplifying local cultural heritage
 - Environmental Equity - health and wellness at heart
 - Economic Equity - locally sustained economic opportunities
- Measure and prioritize the impact of community on the design, and design on the community

EQLab Initiatives



EQLab Goals

- Encourage research and thought leadership
- Win community mission-driven projects
- Build a database of partner relationships (MBE/WBE, SBE, BIPOC, VOB)
- Establish and promote a firmwide Equitable Design Toolkit
- Assist business development and project pursuit criteria with equity as a primary driver
- Increase and exceed industry baseline percentage participation of MBE/WBE, BIPOC, and VOB partners in project pursuits
- Measure and record equity as a metric for all projects
- Facilitate Hackathon sessions with practice groups
- Add Charter Schools to project portfolio
- Create a global framework for ProBono work - Partnership recommendation with Article 25
- Achieve equity-focused certification and develop firmwide expertise in community engagement and social equity work

Hack-a-thons

The Equity Design Lab facilitated work sessions with all practice groups at SOM to host Hack-a-thons and share the journey of equity within projects.

These Hack-a-thon meetings were Pecha Kucha Style presentations where practice and design leaders shared projects, processes, and findings where they included equity within the design.

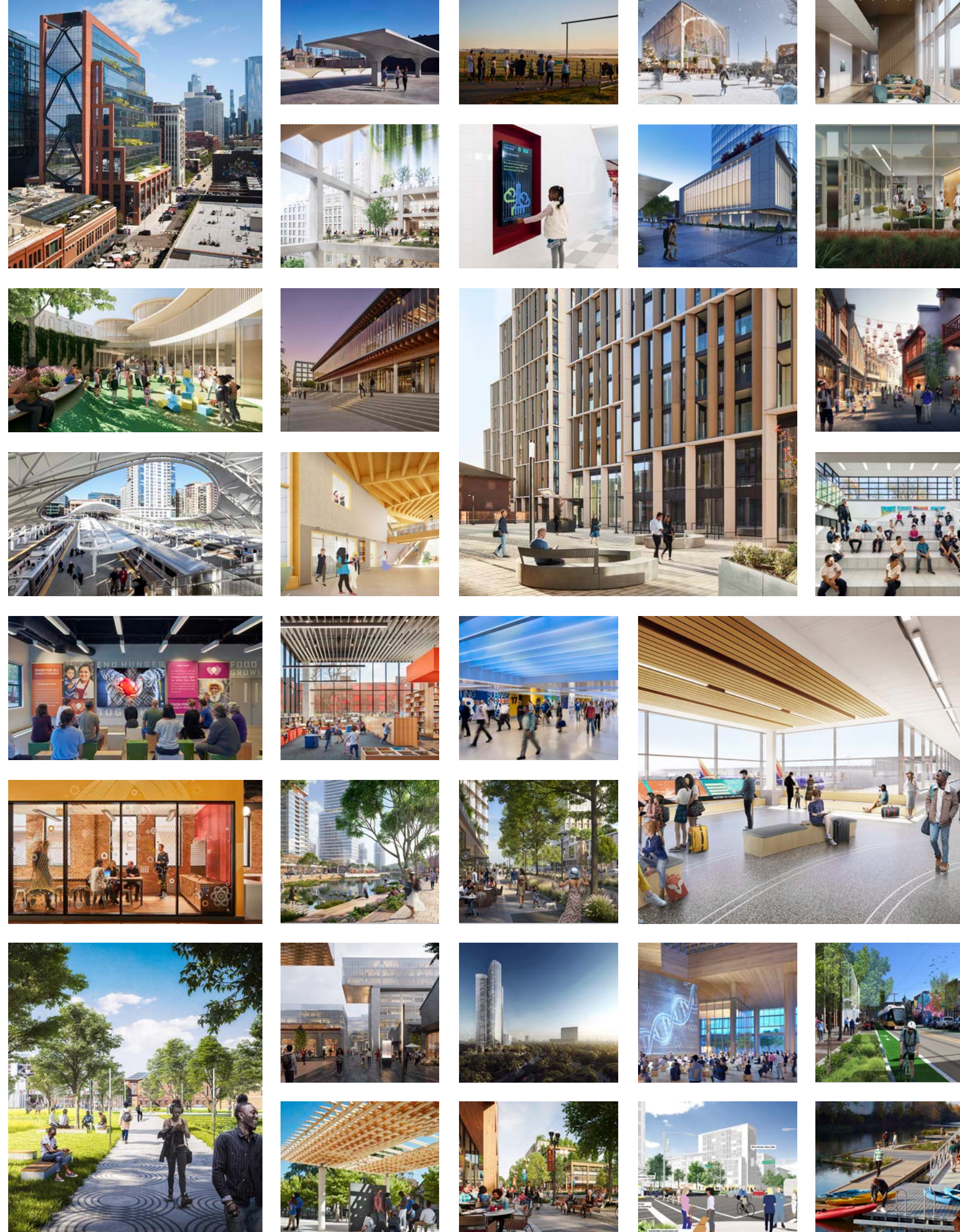
The framework encouraged designers to review each project's program, process, design strategy, planning and site strategy, health and wellness strategy, sustainability, and socio-economic impact.

Through these firmwide Hack-a-thon sessions, we will develop a firmwide approach to equity in our work and toolkit to support project pursuits.

140 14

Participants

Practice Groups



Employee Resource Groups

As we continue to evolve our culture, new groups celebrating our colleagues' identities and backgrounds have formed in our offices worldwide. Building community from the ground up, these diverse employee resource groups foster greater equity and inclusion.



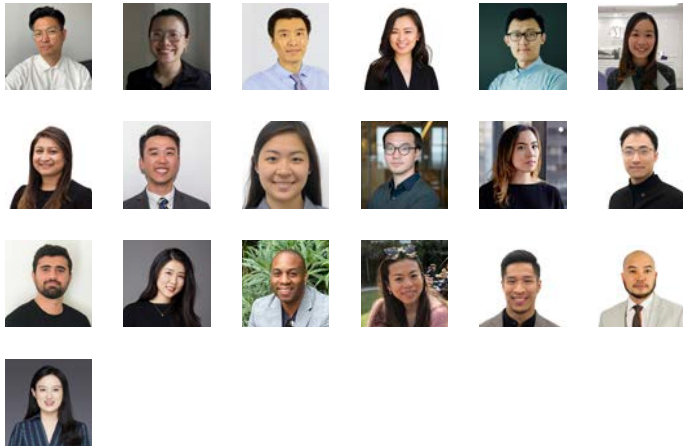
The Asian Alliance

In September of 2020, during a tumultuous year of the pandemic and rising Asian hate crimes, individuals from the NY and DC office gathered to contemplate our identities as Asians and create a critical support network for the Asian community at SOM.

Through a series of listening sessions, we unpacked the challenges faced by Asians within and outside of our organization and brainstormed ideas on how we can better support our Asian colleagues. Critical to this effort was drafting a mission statement that would be the foundation of this newly formed group.

The SOM Asian Alliance was formed in March 2021. The group advocates for fostering community, leadership and amplifying the presence and identities of all Asians at SOM. Asian Alliance is a collective of individuals from diverse backgrounds, languages, and cultures united in the shared endeavor to empower Asians not just within SOM but throughout the AEC industry.

The Asian Alliance has come out strong, with too many accomplishments to share here. 2022 is full of more wonderful things to come.



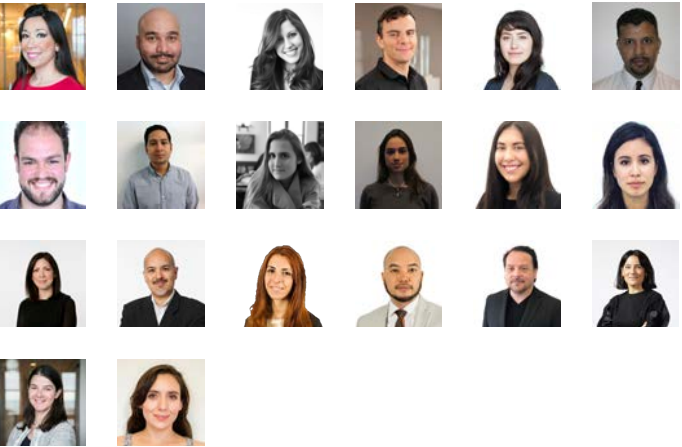
Arquitectos

Arquitectos was established in 1992 by a small group of Latino professionals in Chicago. Their goal was to become a valuable resource for Latino & Latina architects, offering career and professional development opportunities.

Today Arquitectos strives to provide professional development, mentorship, and community assistance. We aim to enrich the architectural profession further through different cultural views and practices and are committed to providing a framework that supports a path to licensure, and scholarship assistance to help sustain latino/x professionals in architecture."

Arquitectos members are architects, engineers, designers, contractors, landscape architects, and urban planners from all backgrounds and nationalities. The organization continues to provide mentorship and professional development to support a path to licensure.

Ingedia Sanchez, Senior Technical Designer in our Chicago office, is the standing president. Together, Arquitectos + SOM are working on increasing minority representation at all levels of the firm, providing support to their members by assisting the path to licensure, increasing the number of Latinx architects, and supporting and advocating for leadership positions minorities within the industry.



NY Mid Autumn Festival



2021 Diwali Celebration



SOM History Project



Arquitectos Fundraising



Student Tours



Territory Caer Day



LA Mid Autumn Festival



AAPI Heritage Month



City Colleges NY Office Tour



Arquitectos Holiday Party



SOM Annual Shadowship

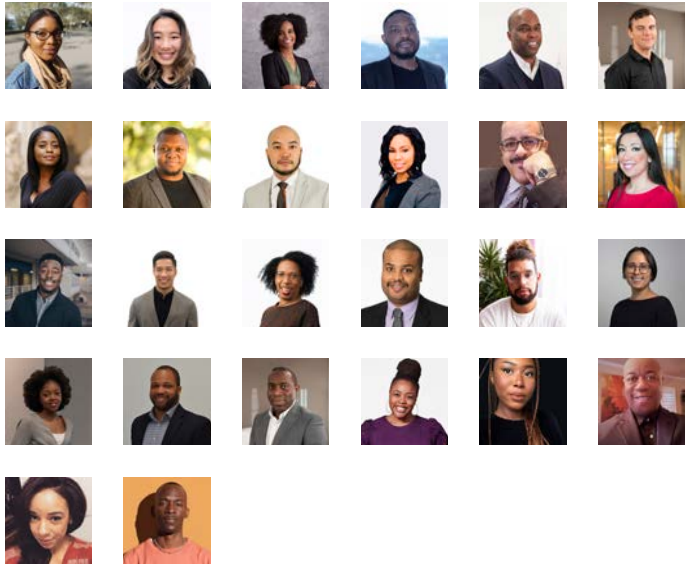
National Organization of Minority Architects (NOMA)

NOMA's mission, rooted in a rich legacy of activism, is to empower local chapters and membership to foster justice and equity in communities of color through outreach, community advocacy, professional development, and design excellence.

In 2020, SOM NOMA collaborated with SOM's partners to develop a 34-step action plan that seeks to bring pivotal change within our firm and the industry.

SOM NOMA's major initiatives include:

- Increase minority representation at all levels and continue to build on SOM design excellence and innovation by fostering a workplace with diverse and unique perspectives unlike any other in the field.
- Strengthen SOM's connection with the local and national NOMA.
- Provide support to our members by assisting with their career pipeline. Minority architects still make up a small percentage of practicing architects and leadership.
- SOM NOMA aims to increase minority representation involvement and leadership.
- Engage in local and national efforts to build a stronger and more diverse firm.

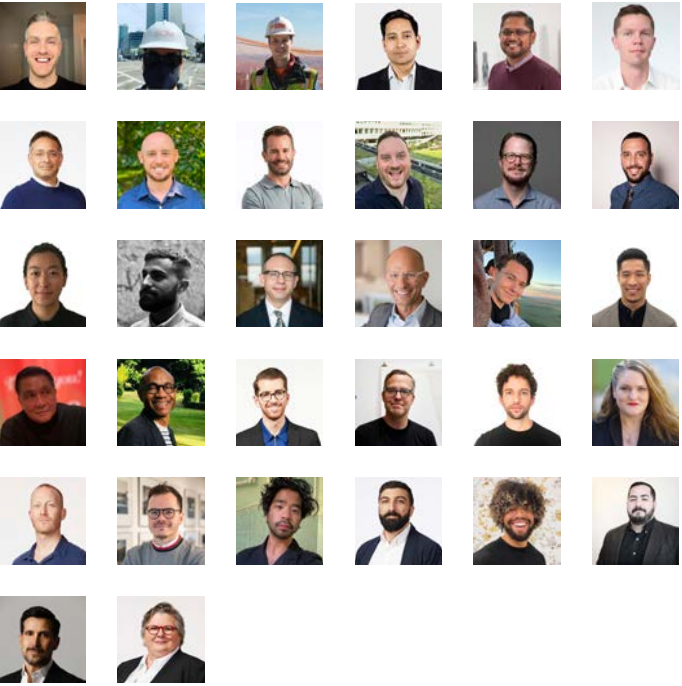


Pride

Launched in 2018, SOM Pride elevates and celebrates voices of the LGBTQIA+ community at our firm and in our industry. We're focused on building an open, inclusive, and equitable culture while bringing visibility to our community and allies. We affirm the importance of a safe space that is inclusive of gender, sexuality, race, and many intersecting identities in the architecture, engineering, and construction industries.

Pride is active throughout the year, with an emphasis on Pride Month. Throughout June, we engage in open conversation about critical topics, celebrate LGBTQIA+ figures, and engage in Pride marches and other forms of activism. In January, we took the Winter Shadowship Program on a virtual tour of the studio of artist and SOM collaborator Philip K Smith, sparking conversations on the role of architects in the public realm and their ability to collaborate with artists across mediums.

SOM was shortlisted to lead an interdisciplinary team to compete for Canada's LGBTQ2+ National Monument design located on Parliament Hill in Ottawa. The design team gathered input from SOM Pride members firmwide and collaborated with Anishinaabe artist Rebecca Belmore and filmmaker Noam Gonick. The winner will be announced in Winter 2022.



SOM at NOMA Conference



Project Pipeline Camp



SOM at the NOMA Annual Party



Chicago Pride Parade



SF AIDS Walk



Paul Rudolph Foundation Tour



Student Career Fair



Student Design Competition



Black History Month



Queer California Visit



New York Pride Toast



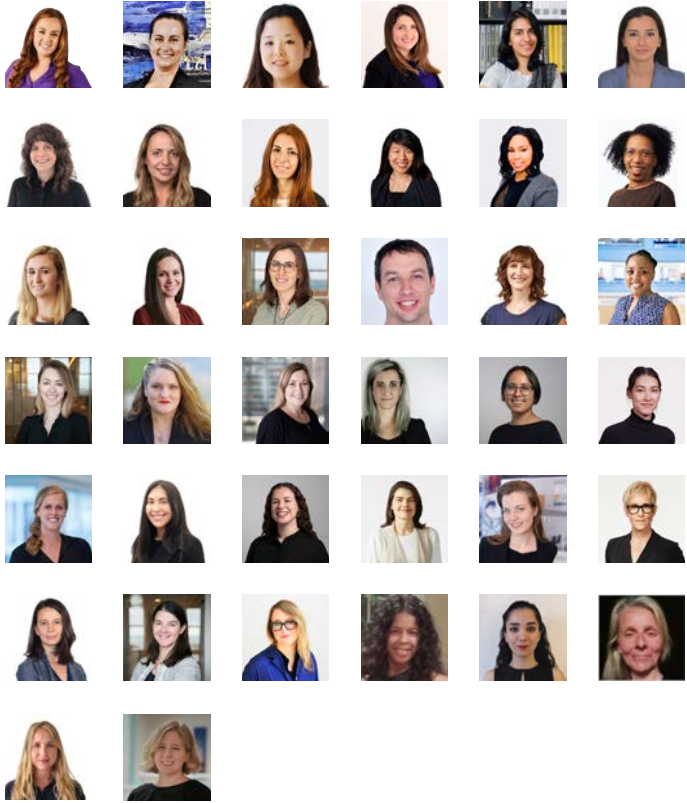
Chicago Pride Celebration

Women's Initiative (WI)

Founded in 2010, SOM Women's Initiative (SOMWI) creates a positive impact in the AEC industry by advancing women at all levels of SOM worldwide. We challenge institutional barriers to gender equity, bias, and systemic discrimination by promoting intersectionality and awareness, fostering mentorship and retention, and providing professional growth and development opportunities.

We are building the pipeline for women leaders at SOM by holding leadership accountable, leveraging metrics to pinpoint issues and target solutions, and diversifying our recruitment efforts. We promote an equitable and just workplace for not only women but for all identity groups, including our BIPOC and LGBTQ+ colleagues.

The Women's Initiative seeks opportunities to engage with future professionals and our peers in the industry and community organizations to promote the visibility of women in architecture. In 2021 the Women's Initiative rebranded as a firmwide group, collaborating across offices for its signature events such as Women's Month or the Shadowship Program. Each local chapter keeps working with their communities to advance the groups' mission at a local level.



**NY Visit to Historical Society
RBG Exhibit**



Anne Fougeron Lecture



Chicago Celebratory Lunch



SOM WI East Coast Summit

Winter

at

Shadowship

SOM

New York

London

DC

LA

Chicago

San Francisco

Sponsored by SOM's Pride, Architectos, NOMA, Asian Alliance, and Women's Initiative groups.

SOM is looking for outstanding undergraduate and graduate students in architecture, engineering, and related design fields to participate in an exciting five-day shadowship, from January 10-14, 2022. Selected students will spend time with various departments to gain a well-rounded perspective of the firm's work and the day-to-day of SOM designers. This program offers invaluable insights and experience to students of all backgrounds who are seeking future careers in architecture, engineering or design.

Visit som.com/about/careers to learn more and apply. Applications are due on December 5, 2021.

Shadowship Event

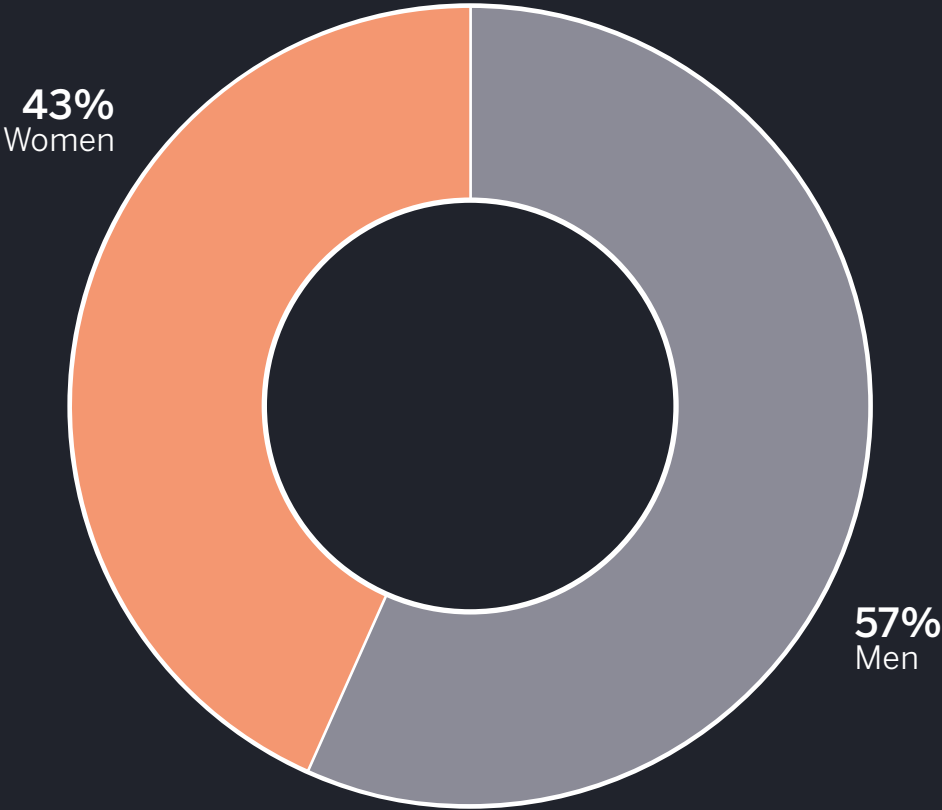


Diversity & Demographics

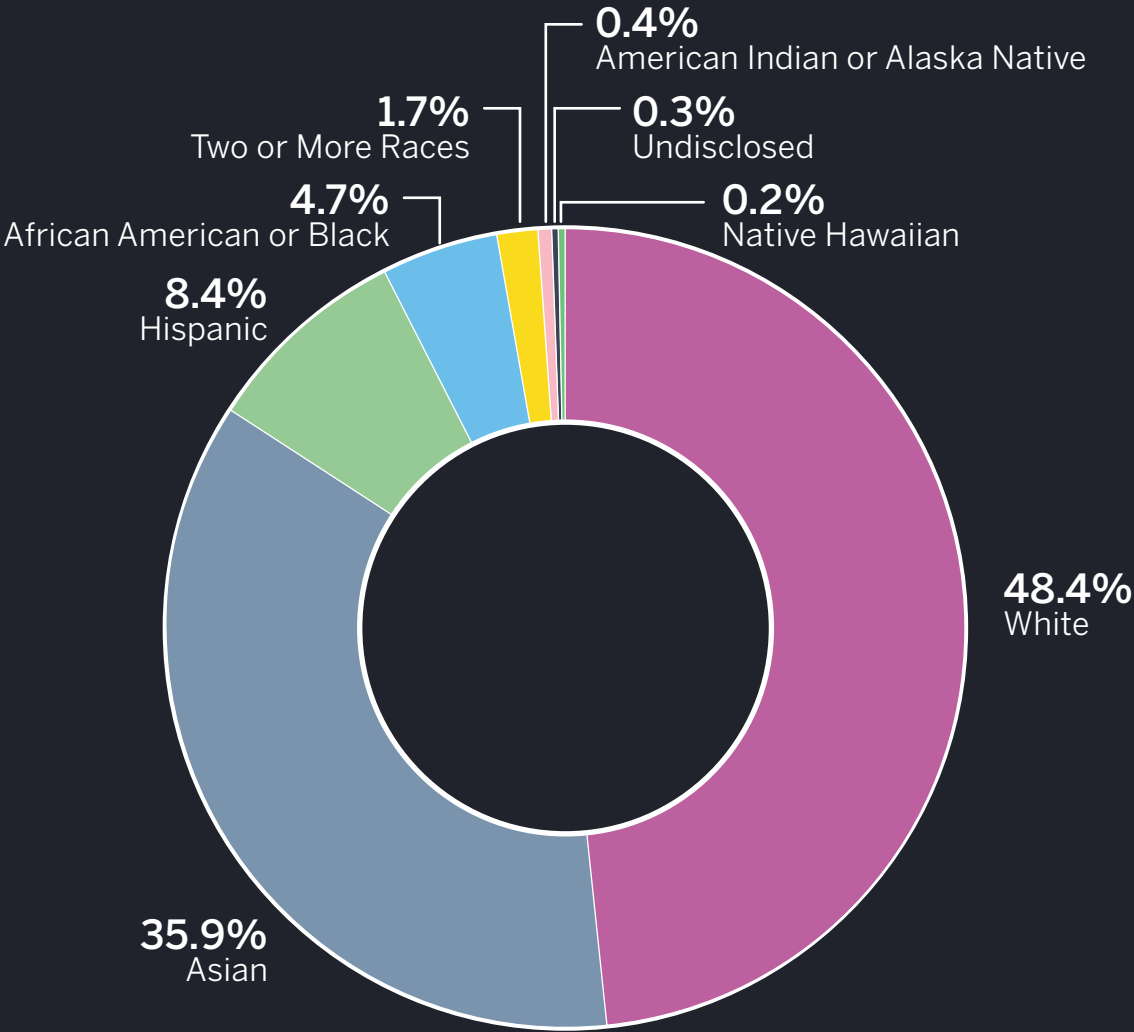
We are committed to attracting and retaining a diverse group of talent that reflects our unique experiences, perspectives, and identities. Together we strive to build a workplace that is inclusive and equitable - enriching our culture and communities.

Guided by our DEI Action plan, we commit to monitoring and sharing our demographics data annually, identifying areas of opportunity and growth, and making the necessary changes to create a more diverse workplace.

To increase the number of women and minorities throughout SOM, and particularly in leadership, we will focus on recruiting and developing individuals who better reflect our communities.



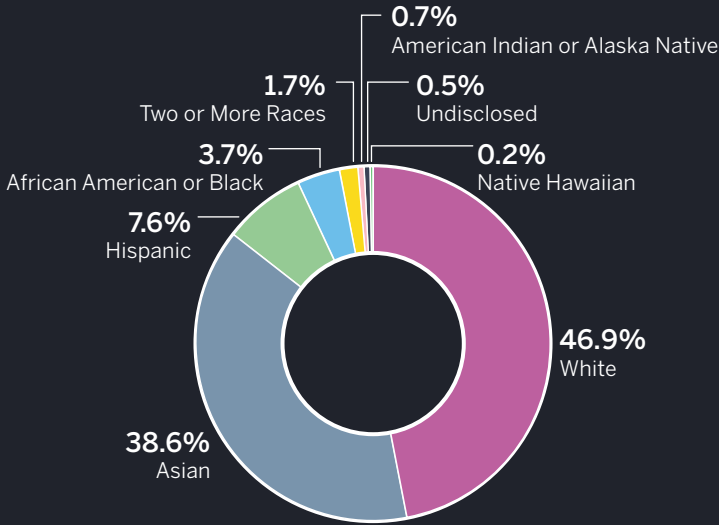
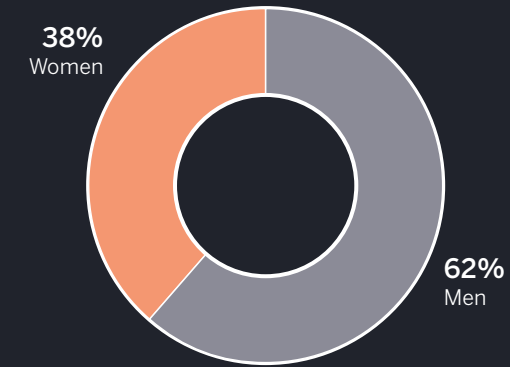
Gender - Global
as of October 2021



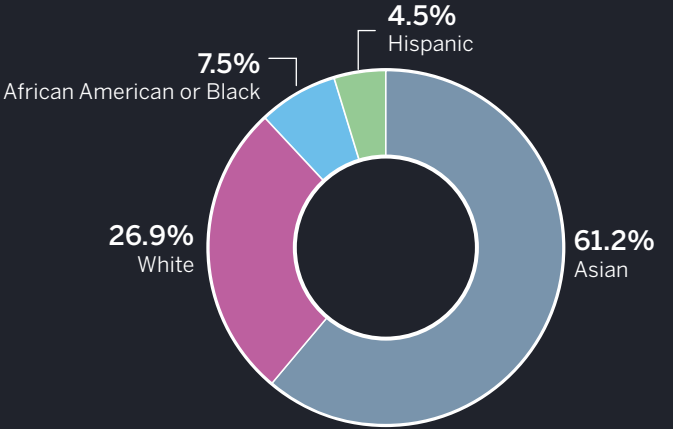
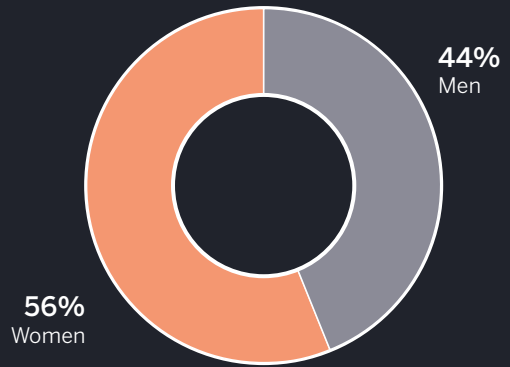
Race & Ethnicity - US Offices
as of October 2021

Diversity & Demographics - Communities of Practice

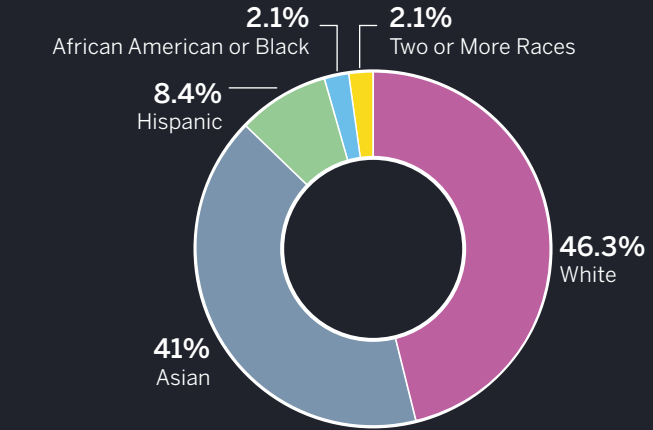
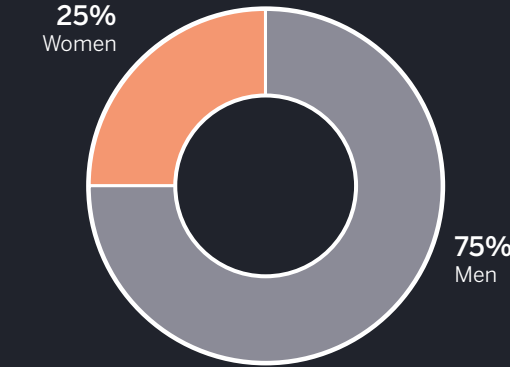
Architecture



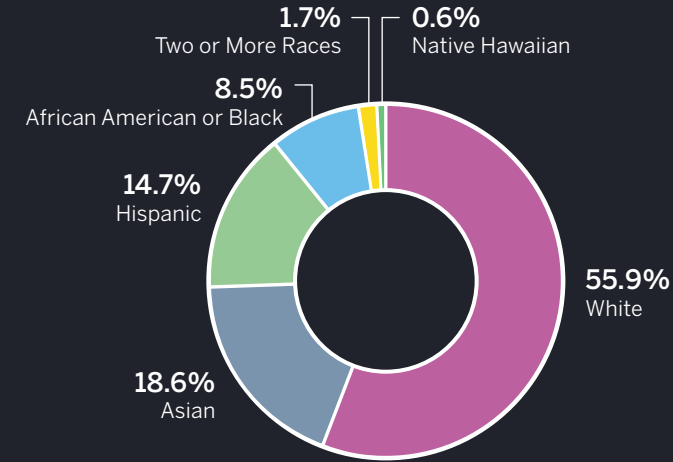
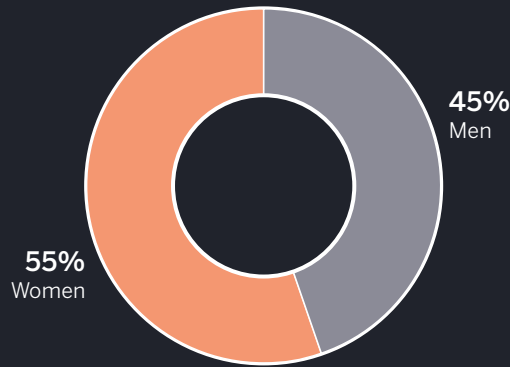
Urban Design



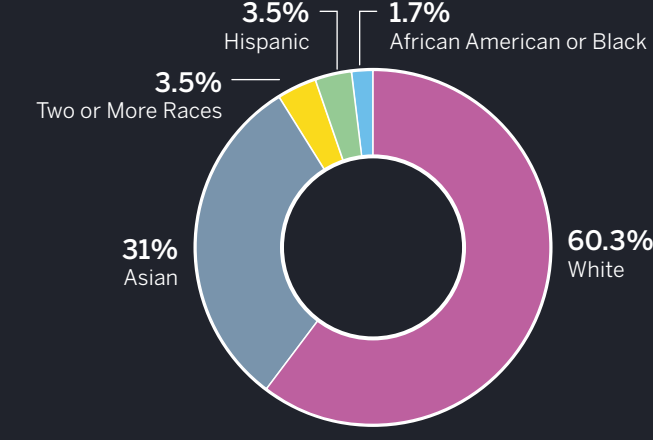
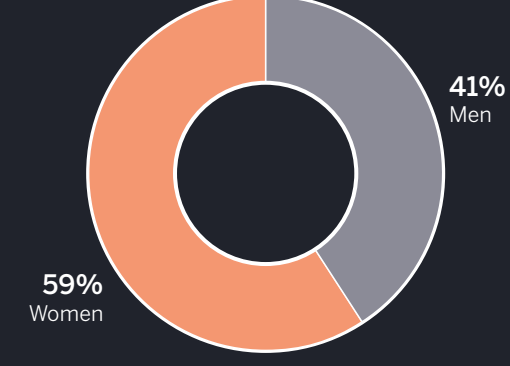
Engineering



Business Operations



Interiors



As we observe our demographics, we are committed to increasing diversity beyond race and gender. We intend to monitor this evolution and commit to transforming ourselves to reflect the communities in which we live and work.

Celebrating our People

Our spotlight series tells the unique stories of our colleagues, enabling us to share our contributions, ideas, and culture with audiences around the world.

Our teams bring together renowned experts in their respective fields, each of whom has a valuable story to tell. We celebrate our differences and aim to uplift each voice at SOM. By sharing our individual experiences and backgrounds, we forge stronger connections and improve our culture.

Through our ongoing spotlight series and cultural celebrations, we elevate our cultural makeup pushing us all to learn, grow and deepen our impact. We are excited to see these programs continue to grow and evolve.



"SOM has so many amazing and talented people. On a project team, you're working with colleagues with all levels of experience, from interns up to partners. I appreciate having a seat at the table and seeing how we tackle different challenges."

— **Jad Ismail**

"The culture of the office really fosters a sense of community. People want to support you to do your best work and to grow in your career."

— **Morgynn Wiley**



"When I started, there were not a lot of women working on supertall towers. Since I've been here, I've seen the numbers really go up — more women interns, more women in the architecture studio, women at all levels of leadership."

— **Ingedia Sanchez**



"I've established an internship program with my university—I get to bring in interns from Mexico to work with us...It's been so rewarding to see students and young architects coming here and making significant contributions."

— **Enrique Acosta**

"My teammates are amazing and understand an incredible amount about what we do. There's never shame or judgment when asking a question. Being able to ask questions openly is the best way to keep growing as an architect."

— **Hayley Saita**



"The teams create a safe space where you can ask all the questions you may have without fear of reproach. Supervisors ensure you are involved in the process as much as possible, and they empower you to make decisions."

— **Adede Amenyah**

"Representation matters. It's important to see other people like you who are celebrated and appreciated."

— **Ammee Snyder**



"Small studios are at the core of the experience here. Naturally, you learn a lot from the people around you, and there is tremendous talent and expertise in the office."

— **Lulu Li**

US Black History Month

In February, SOM celebrates U.S. Black History Month to share our colleagues' stories and inspire change in our industry.

It's no secret that the design profession has a persistent diversity gap: **African American architects today represent only about two percent of licensed architects in America.** What's more, the contributions of these designers are not often widely recognized.

Throughout February, we spotlight notable architects who have worked at SOM over the years — pioneering figures who broke barriers decades ago and leaders who continue to shape the future of the architectural practice.

"...Using our design expertise and analytical skills to stand for communities and enact real change"

—**Tiara Hughes**

"Empowerment, unity, and collective action can move towards justice and liberation."

—**Dawveed Scully**

"I am part of the 0.4% of licensed architects in the U.S who identify as Black and female."

—**Danei Cesario**

"I love the notion that a more equitable process yields equitable outcomes in exponential measure."

—**Ojay Obinani**



"I wish I was exposed to more black architects, visual artists, and designers growing up. That's definitely changing now and I intend to be as visible as possible to be a source of inspiration for the next generation of black designers and innovators."

— **Paul Bamson** (pictured left)

"As the NOMA representative for SOM, I get to elevate ideas and amplify the voiced of my colleagues."

— **Adede Amenyah**

"The work happening at SOM with our DEI Action Plan will help ensure my girls will thrive in an equitable, diverse workforce"

— **Anika Walker**

"Building a practice that reflects the communities around us begins by recruiting talent that is focused not just on design, but on justice, equity, and sustainability"

—**Trey Thomas**

Women's History Month

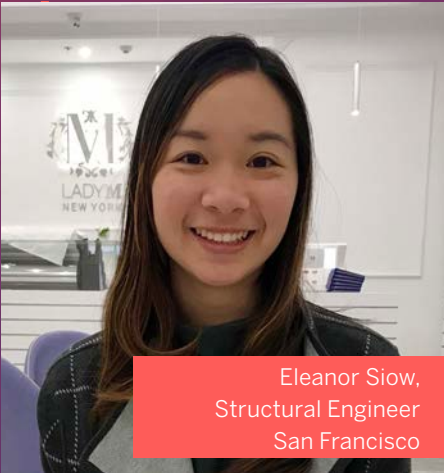
During March, SOM celebrates Women's History Month. In 2021, in addition to events in our offices worldwide, we asked our colleagues to tell their stories, and honor a woman who inspired them.

Through lectures, panel discussions, happy hours, and more, we highlighted the contributions, achievements, and aspirations of women architects, engineers, planners, designers, and those who inspire us from beyond the industry.

As we create a more equitable, diverse, and inclusive world, we continue to celebrate the women who have paved the way and the women who continue to shape our future.

"My mom. She is a tenured professor at the University of Manitoba researching kidney and cardiovascular disease. [...] In 2010 she won an award for Women of Distinction for Research and Innovation, and I realized how much of a difference my mom was making in her field - one that is also predominantly male - and it inspired me to do the same in engineering."

"Sheela Maini Søgaard, the CEO of BIG. She is incredibly smart, compassionate, strategic, and ambitious [...] She always made space for me at the table early in my career and showed me that a firm can be committed to design at the highest level, and still be strategic and profitable."



Eleanor Siow,
Structural Engineer
San Francisco



Iben Falconer
Global Marketing & Business Leader
New York

"Donna Dunay, my thesis advisor. She has an intriguing way of giving feedback, often with a quiet, abstract question that prompted deeper thought and better responses from me than a more direct comment. She is a petite woman, with perfectly tailored clothes and a steady, peaceful demeanor, who could hush a circle of opinionated architects with one short, carefully worded comment."



Emily Hope
Senior Technical Architect
Seattle

"Brenda Levin of Levin & Associates, located in Los Angeles. Early in her career, she struck out on her own and built her own firm. I was in my 20s when I went to work for her, and her independence and courage was an inspiration to me. I am often drawn back to the words Brenda said to me before I moved on to another position. She said, "You are talented. Don't be afraid to speak out and share your ideas." I have taken those words to heart ever since - they remind me that to realize my potential I must always speak up, share my ideas, and act as a voice for positive change."

"Alessandra Cianchetta, the founder and sole director of AWP London. She was invited to my graduate school as a visting professor for a research studio. I was impressed by how she led the discussion on research topics. Her open-minded and inclusive thoughts came from her creative practice in various disciplines, which was inspiring to me."



Lani Lee
Project Manager, Associate
Los Angeles



Mengdi Rao
Architect
Washington D.C.

AAPAPI Heritage Month

We celebrated Asian American Pacific Islander (AAPAPI) Heritage Month for the first time at SOM in May 2021. The Asian Alliance organized virtual events to share the voices of our AAPAPI Colleagues through a series of conversations which explored their heritage and the topics that matter most to their community.

WEEK 1: IDENTITY

What has been the most memorable moment of your career in the AEC industry?

How does your Asian identity inform the perspective you bring to work?



WEEK 2: COMMUNITY

The Asian community is so diverse and full of history and culture. What are the shared values that bring us together? How do you envision our path forward as a community after what has been happening?



WEEK 3: VOICE

How can we use design as a tool against bias and racism, and to help the AAPAPI community?

How do you want to say to the younger generations of AAPAPI architects, designers and engineers?



SPOTLIGHT: ANDY RAH

For New York-based architect Andy Rah, the pandemic has been a time to refocus and take the chance to get long-held ideas off the ground. He worked with his colleagues to launch the Asian Alliance, a group dedicated to uplifting and advocating for Asian communities at SOM worldwide.

"Equity has become critically important, and the past year has been an incredible time of change [...] it has also been a particularly challenging period for the Asian American community."



#STOPASIANHATE



Pride Month

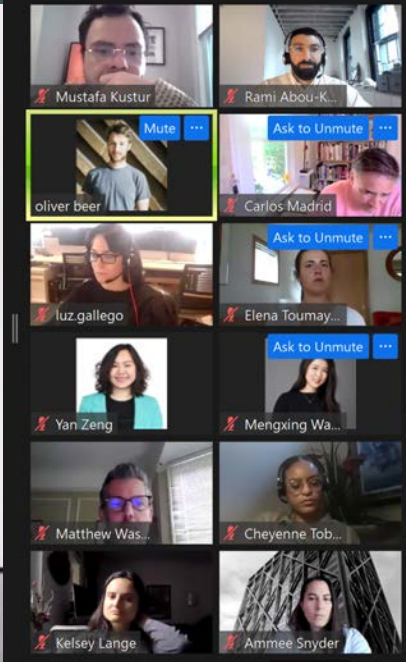
Every June, Pride Month is celebrated in cities worldwide and at SOM. The group honors the LGBTQIA+ community with events and talks all month long, hosted by SOM colleagues and community leaders from global organizations.

This year events included:
Virtual Artist Studio Visit with Oliver Beer: Hosted by Mustafa Kustur, artist Oliver Beer presented works at the intersection of architecture, sound and image, exploring connections between space, objects and acoustics.



Virtual Artist Studio Visit

Queer Backyards Virtual Cities Tour: Presented by SOMers Christopher Wollaston, Filippo Lorenzi, Fay Hoonsuwan, Carlos Madrid, Jeffrey Miner, Jon Buono, and Wagdy Moussa, the Virtual Cities Tours have become an annual tradition during Pride Month, transporting us to LGBTQIA+ neighborhoods around the world. This year we visited: London, Milan, Bangkok, Palm Springs, Provincetown and Cairo.



LGBTQ Secrets of New York's Metropolitan Museum by Professor Andrew Lear: In this virtual tour of the Met, Professor Lear unveiled LGBTQ references in the museum's masterworks, traveling across cultures and epochs, from ancient Greek statues to Picasso's Gertrude Stein to Caravaggio and Bis Pole from New Guinea.

Donations in Support of Pride Organizations As part of the Pride Month celebration, the Pride group made a donation to Build Out Alliance (NY), Stonewall UK (LO), Brave Space Alliance (CH), and True Colors United (SF). These organizations promote and advocate for the lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, and queer (LGBTQ) community.



Global Toast to Pride: Our annual celebration brings together SOMers as a global community. This year focused on racial equity and social justice. The event culminated in a video by drag performer Chiquitita, using our New York studio as a backdrop for a memorable performance.



Hispanic Heritage Month

This past year, from September 15th - October 15th we held our first global celebration of Hispanic Heritage Month. This important Month recognizes the achievements and contributions of Hispanic Americans who inspire others to achieve success.

To celebrate the work our colleagues are doing, we shared a series of spotlights and a firmwide presentation including Latinx design leaders from across SOM and the industry.

Ingedia Sanchez, from our Chicago office, hosted an external panel: "Celebrating our Latinx Colleagues," where Patricia Center, BAR Architects, and Irving Gonzales, G7A Architecture | Urban, joined us.

Hispanic Heritage Month

Celebrating our Latinx colleagues

An **external** panel on October 12th, 2020 | 12pm EST



SOM



PAULINA SANTOYO
Technical Designer, Chicago

"I came to realize then how fundamental inspiration and passion for your work are, as they are what leads to an obsession with details, and in turn great design."



RICARDO QUINTERO
Senior Mechanical Engineer, Chicago

"I wanted to make my parents proud and make them feel like their hard work and sacrifice has paid off by seeing the outcome of my professional career and my involvement in so many great projects. "



CARLOS TALERO
Associate Principal, New York

"It's important to understand the value you have to—and the responsibility you have towards—your community"

UK Black History Month

Every October, the UK celebrates Black History Month. The annual event recognizes and celebrates the value, achievements, and contributions of those with African or Caribbean heritage while providing an opportunity to break down harmful stereotypes and challenge racism.

For centuries, people from African and Caribbean backgrounds have been a fundamental part of British history. Still, their contributions to society have often been overlooked. Black History Month allows us to celebrate and understand the profound impact of Black heritage and culture.

The UK’s first Black History Month was organized in London in 1987. In the years since, the celebration has spread across the UK with special classes and celebrations in schools, themed exhibits at museums and galleries, educational TV and Radio programs, and more.



Content from the talk with Bola Abisogun at SOM

VOICE: DIVERSECITY

To address the current and longstanding imbalance across the profession Bola established the first RICS network for BAME surveyors 'DiverseCity Surveyors' in 2006, which was launched formally at RICS HQ in 2017. Bola discussed his successful trajectory as African man in the industry and how he has given back through mentorship. Bola was awarded an Order of the British Empire (OBE) by HM the Queen of England.



COMMUNITY: THE BRIXTON PROJECT

Guided by the race riots in the 1960's, The Brixton Project offers insight, consultation, and the commissioning of public creativity. They connect business, citizens and creative networks to bring the positive power of creativity to the heart of local communities. When people play an active part in shaping their world, it makes that world a better place for everyone.



CELEBRATION: COOKALONG

Julia Skeete shared a quick dish to prepare that is enjoyed in many Caribbean homes, Bajan Saltfish Fishcakes & Sweet Potato Pie.





Our Values
Engaging in the world beyond our studios is essential to building a better world. Through volunteering, charitable giving, and the efforts of the SOM Foundation, we worked to improve our communities while putting our expertise to work.

Do SOM Good

We deepen our connections to our communities, create positive change, and grow as individuals through volunteering. Countless SOMers dedicated their time this year to the organizations listed below.

Thank you for your hard work!

ACE Mentoring Program
Charnley-Persky House
CPS programming
Chicago Women in Architecture
Dress for Success
Englewood Community Events
EPIC Academy Interns
FAMU Design Studio, Guest Critic
Drury University
Territory
Illinois Institute of Technology
Juror, AIA IL 2021 Awards
Juror, NOMA Student Awards
Landmarks Illinois
LEAP Arts
Museum of Science and Industry
NOMA and the local chapter INOMA
NOMA Student Design Competition

One Treasure Island
Habitat for Humanity
LINK Unlimited Scholars
Rebuilding Together
San Francisco Housing Action Coalition
SF/Marin Food Bank
Society of Architectural Historians
Tenderloin Neighborhood Development Corporation
ULI RRC DEI
ULI RRC Panel, Englewood Connect
Wild Mile Community Planting Day

These are just some of the volunteering events in which our colleagues participated. Many of our colleagues volunteer beyond their work at SOM - an essential way to enhance our communities.



Charitable Contributions

Every year, SOM provides financial support to dozens of nonprofits and organizations around the world, each with a mission to enhance the communities they serve.

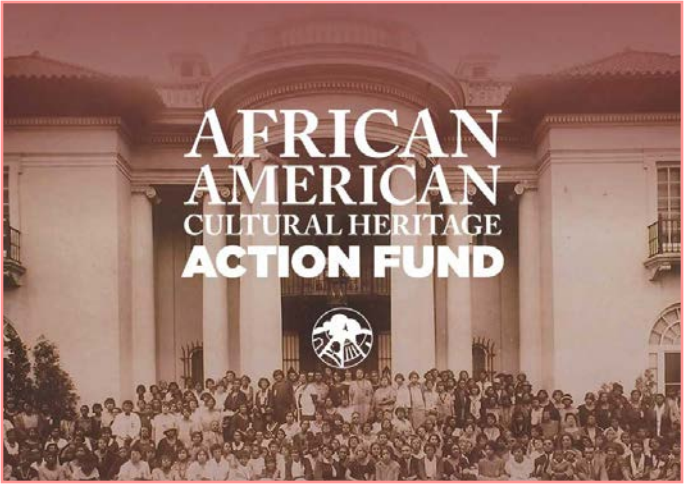
Giving back to local organizations through financial contributions is essential for SOM to support its local communities. SOM donated to over 100 charitable organizations as a part of our annual giving campaign.

As a part of our 2021 Fall Leadership Meeting, we prioritized making additional donations in three critical areas in response to global challenges: equity, hunger, and reforestation.

Equity: Too often, the places where significant African American history happened have been unrecognized for the critical role they play in the fabric of American society. The National Trust for Historic Preservation is working to fill this gap through their African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund. SOM donated to promote equity through the African American Cultural Heritage Action Fund.

Hunger: With COVID-19, Food Banks are experiencing an unprecedented need. SOM donated to non-profits supporting those facing food insecurity. City Harvest in New York, Greater Chicago Food Depository in Chicago, SF Marin Food Bank in the Bay Area, Los Angeles Regional Food Bank in Los Angeles, and The Trussell Trust in London.

Reforestation: SOM's donation to the National Forest Foundation matched every dollar donated by planting one tree. SOM's gift will make an immediate and tangible impact supporting forest recovery and restoring native ecosystems.



SOM Foundation

Founded in 1979, the SOM Foundation serves to advance the design profession's ability to address the key topics of our time, including equitable design, environmental justice, and social justice.

The SOM Foundation has supported the work of almost 300 emerging architects, landscape architects, designers, and engineers with over 2.8 million dollars in awards. Now more than ever, the SOM Foundation is committed to supporting, promoting, and advancing emerging professionals through our different initiatives.



In 2020, the SOM Foundation created the Robert L. Wesley Award-named in honor of the first Black Partner at SOM- to support BIPOC undergraduate students. Each year, a minimum of three students receive a \$10,000 award in addition to a year-long mentorship program that connects the students with leading BIPOC practitioners and educators. The 2020 and 2021 editions have been able to recognize five students.

Awards such as the SOM Foundation Research Prize, European Research Prize, Structural Engineering Fellowship, China Fellowship, and Robert L. Wesley Award are the backbone of the Foundation. The awards provide economic and institutional support to students and faculty of architecture, landscape architecture, interior architecture, urban design, and engineering to undertake interdisciplinary research - shaping our future.

We are excited to collaborate with our past and future fellows, and we look forward to sharing their remarkable research.

Read more about the 2021 Fellows here:



Robert L. Wesley Award (2020-Present)

The 2021 Fellows are Alexander Htet Aung Kyaw (Cornell University), Sanjana Lahiri (The Cooper Union), Xiluva Mbungela (Syracuse University). They will each receive a \$10,000 award and a yearlong mentorship program that connects the students with leading BIPOC practitioners and educators. In addition to the three fellows, the jury decided to expand two \$5,000 awards, given to Kevin Chow (The Cooper Union) and Viridiana Hernandez Sevilla (University of Oklahoma).



Research Prize Fellowship (2018-Present)

The Research Prize cultivates new ideas and meaningful research on critical issues of our time. Each year two \$40,000 prizes are awarded. The 2020 research topics were: "**Reclaiming Black Settlements:** A Design Playbook for Historic Communities in the Shadow of Sprawl" by Diane Jones allen, Austin Allen and Kathryn Holliday, and "**Public Space and Scrutiny:** Examining Urban Monuments through Social Psychology" by Tiffany Lin, Lisa Molix, and Emilie Taylor Welty.



Structural Engineering Fellowship (1998-Present)

The \$20,000 Structural Engineering Fellowship is awarded annually to a structural engineering graduating student to conduct independent travel and research. The 2021 topic was "**Examining Social Justice in Urban Contexts.**" Michelle Chang's proposal, "Decolonizing Urban Landscapes: Reclaiming a Black and Indigenous Right to the City through Structural Design," aims to study exemplary structures that address race relations in both process and form.



FOOD FOR ALL



Our Impact
Building connections that help us better understand and serve our communities is foundational to our work.

We don't just design buildings; we explore solutions and hope to build a better tomorrow.

ProBono Work and High Impact Efforts

Our colleagues advocate to lend our unique set of skills and expertise to better our communities and make an impact on everyday lives.

Lower Eastside Girls Club

Led by the Women's Initiative in New York, designers dedicated their time and design skills to redesign a wellness center and public gallery for the Lower East Side Girls Club's community center.

The Lower Eastside Girls Club connects young women and gender-expansive youth of color throughout New York City to a healthy and prosperous future through free, innovative, year-round programming and mentoring.

This is not the first time the NY and DC WI groups offered their time and skills to the service of the community. In 2017, staff from SOM's offices in DC and NY partnered with the Bright Horizons Foundation for Child and the Virginia Williams Resource Center (VWFRC) to design a Bright Space for Children of Families Facing Homelessness.



Marin Food Bank

After first collaborating 25-years ago on the master plan and original San Francisco-Marín Food Banks (SFMFB), SOM was asked to create a new distribution hub to replace the organization's existing North Bay location.

Now operating in a modern yet unassuming warehouse, the facility is approximately three times larger than the previous building, allowing 50,000 volunteers to distribute more than 75 million pounds of food annually. SOM also designed the box stools that double as pantry crates and a new welcome center that features exhibits and infographics designed by SOM Graphics.

San Francisco - Marin Food Bank works to end hunger in San Francisco and Marin. They envision a just and equitable society that nurtures a resilient community.



Neal Marsh

In Chicago, we developed a concept design and fundraising collateral to provide public access to the Neal Marsh Wetlands. The design included Site Planning, an Observation Deck, and a Pedestrian Footbridge.

The site is within the Lake County Forest Preserve in Gurnee, IL, north of Chicago. The project aims to bring awareness to local landscapes with minimal interventions, natural materials, and a focus on attracting, inspiring, and educating.

The client, Wetlands Research Inc., is a 501-C3 non-profit organization dedicated to restoring Midwestern wetlands, researching improving flood control, water quality, wildlife habitat, and other ecosystems services.



Chicago Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities Field Office

Working with Chicago's Mayor's Office for People with Disabilities, the team was tasked with reimagining their space as a welcoming, accessible, clean, flexible, safe, and educational environment.

The project, delivered mainly by the Interior Team, focused on five areas of the existing building: Identify & Arrival, Consultation, Restrooms, All-Purpose Area, and the Outdoor Area.

The MOPD works to make Chicago the most accessible city in the nation on behalf of residents and visitors with disabilities in professional, social, and recreational settings.

Empowering Communities through Design

Through our work and in forming project teams, we prioritize collaborating with and empowering small businesses and minority, women, LGBTQ, and veteran-owned firms.

We are committed to assembling the right team for each project. We partner with local firms to bolster our strength and bring diverse perspectives to the design process. Over the years, SOM has enthusiastically collaborated with hundreds of Minority, Women, and Veteran-Owned Businesses.

In addition, the Equity Lab has hosted meet and greets with minority firms and is looking to establish strategic partnerships. On the right, you will find the certified firms we work with on an ongoing basis.

We will continue to strive to far exceed team diversity requirements when possible but also bring diverse consultants to the table even when not required.



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Equity through Design

Equity and social impact are at the core of our work. Through our process, we strive to engage and support local communities and build a more equitable future.



Great design extends beyond inspiring buildings, beautiful interiors, and feats of engineering. It is a process that both engages and uplifts our communities, uncovering needs and creating spaces that serve our clients and humanity as a whole.

Our holistic approach to design addresses social, environmental, and economic equity, utilizing a community-driven approach throughout the process. We work to

build synergy between our clients and our communities forging designs that address inequities and correct them.

While equity is at the forefront of our work, the following are a few projects that spotlight the importance of design equity and community engagement. As the bar of equity rises, we will continue to rise and meet it and look forward to demonstrating our commitment in future projects.





Social Equity

Billie Jean King Main Library Long Beach, California

The new Billie Jean King Main Library is more than a traditional library of decades past. Positioned at the heart of Downtown Long Beach, its design provides a welcoming and flexible environment that now serves more than 1,000 daily visitors.

The library features a variety of amenity spaces, such as a family learning center, children's reading room, veterans' resource center, and multipurpose rooms with individual entrances. The building also houses maker spaces for film editing, 3-D printing, and robotics. In addition, the library houses more than 300,000 books, including what Mayor Robert Garcia called "one of the largest comics and graphic novel collections in Southern California."

With an expansive wood-framed "porch" that greets the community, a diverse set of interior spaces and activities, and a name that pays homage to the local native and famed athlete known for the power of her serves and volleys, the Billie Jean King Main Library is an inviting beacon for the City of Long Beach.

"The public library is all about the people we serve in the community. They are at awe when they enter this building..."
Glenda Williams, Long Beach
Public Library Director

Environmental Equity

Yellow River Ecological Plan Jinan, China

For thousands of years, people have lived in an intimate relationship with the Yellow River. While several large-scale engineering projects over the past century have protected the surrounding city and villages from flooding, the redefined river edges have effectively disconnected the residents of the Jinan area from living in the context of the river's unique natural systems.

The Jinan Yellow River National Wetland Park Master Plan, designed by SOM, presents the opportunity to restore the Yellow River as a natural asset that will continue to shape the ecological and cultural future of Jinan. Conceptualized over 183 kilometers, the National Wetland Park will repair, reinvent, and renew the local ecosystems and create a natural, open-space heart for the fast-growing City of Jinan.

Responsive to the surrounding wetland, floodplain, farmland, levee, and village environments, the master plan introduces wetlands to improve biodiversity and transforms existing levees into parks that will host a spectrum of programs and serve as a tourism and economic resource for the area. Strategies include protecting the existing watercourses, increasing riverfront accessibility, reinforcing embankments, and connecting the urban and the natural environments around the river.





Economic Equity

Englewood Connect Chicago, Illinois

Part of Chicago's INVEST South/West initiative to uplift and revitalize underinvested communities on Chicago's South and West Sides, the SOM-led team is designing a mixed-use entrepreneurial and community hub in Englewood.

McLaurin Development, an African-American Chicago-based developer, assembled a diverse design and construction team comprised of mostly minority- and women-owned businesses that reflected the community. The Englewood Connect team works with local businesses, community organizations, residents, artists and makers to develop a program informed by Englewood's identity and designed to serve the community's changing needs.

The phased development begins with adaptive reuse of the historic landmark "castle" Firehouse station, originally built in 1929 and now vacant. It will be transformed into a multi-purpose venue and culinary incubator with commercial kitchen space for food-based businesses.

The proposed design also includes a dynamic mix of community spaces focused around a flexible public area called the Green Street Commons. The Englewood Living Room, a pavilion for markets, co-working spaces, exhibitions, and community gatherings, will activate the site year-round. The plan also integrates micro retail space for local small businesses and hoop houses will grow fresh produce from local vendors in all seasons.

Community Involvement

Kansas City International Airport, New Terminal Kansas, Missouri

Beginning in 2017, the SOM team fanned out across six city council districts and into neighboring Kansas. They met with thousands of citizens in the community center, police stations, and churches. These sessions provided the opportunity to hear directly from Kansas Citizens about their aspirations for the region's new one-millions square foot terminal.

At each of the dozens of community meetings our team at SOM attended, they fielded a bevy of requests and ideas for the terminal's design. Many asked for more charging stations, better restrooms, or that it be centered on a fountain, just like the ones adorning the boulevards for which the city is known. Above all else, participants called for the terminal to be comfortable, convenient and welcoming to all.

The result is a project that takes accessible terminal design to the next level. The building includes amenities such as all gender restrooms, sensory rooms for the families of children with autism, and an airplane simulation room to give first-time fliers the opportunity to experience travel before they fly.

All this was achieved while also bringing over 35% underrepresented firms to every discipline's design and construction process, impacting the region's economy not just with our future design but through an inclusive, equitable process.



Looking Forward

Our progress, renewed commitments, and the road ahead



As we look back at the past year, we are reminded of the power of community. We are proud of the determination of our colleagues, the resilience of our culture, and the evolution of our work. Striving to overcome the many challenges of a global pandemic, we remained steadfast in our commitment to diversity, equity, and inclusion while continuing to strive for design excellence, in all its forms.

We are optimistic about our progress, but we know that the journey towards creating true diversity, equity, and inclusion is ongoing, with much work still to be done.

Our responsibility is to challenge ourselves and our industry peers to create pathways of opportunity for diverse emerging professionals both in our design disciplines and business operations. Through this work, we can continue to create a more inclusive and diverse SOM, while advancing our commitment to social equity in our work.

-The SOM Partners

Equity Action Committee

Co-chairs:

Tiara Hughes
Preetam Biswas

Members:

Adede Amenyah
Andrew Leung
Enrique Acosta
Ines Llopart
Jad Ismail
Jon Baltycki
Joo Cho
Kayla Lim
Lani Lee
Lois Wellwood
Lulu Xu
Margaret Ndungu
Rami Abou-Khalil
Selam Gebru
Wenwen He

Leadership Sponsors:

Adam Semel
Colin Koop
Doryse Franco

A special thanks for their collaboration on this report:

Ines Llopart
Jon Baltycki
Murphy Zhang
Preetam Biswas
Tiara Hughes

DIVERSITY

EQUITY

INCLUSION

2021 REPORT

SOM