

# ASLA2022

DESIGNING A BETTER

# FUTURE

## Making and Meaning Today: How Offices are Adapting & Reinventing Creative Process

### Speakers

David Fletcher, ASLA, Fletcher Studio, + Lauren Ewald

Gina Ford, ASLA, Agency LP

Nate Cormier, ASLA, RIOS



Agency  
Landscape + Planning

**RIOS**



American Society of  
Landscape Architects

# Learning Objectives

- Understand how to foster re-imagined, collaborative workplaces that promote excellence in design quality.
- How to create an equitable, positive, creative work environment.
- New ability to implement 'co-creation' techniques into external projects and community engagement tactics.
- Understanding of how to build meaningful synergy in the creative process, especially with other landscape architects, designers and communities.

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# agenda:

- 1) **introduction** (5 min.)
  - a) asla 2022 taking stock
  - b) who we are
- 2) **THEN –**  
**what external forces are offices adapting to?** (10 min.)
  - a) how is work changing?
  - b) how are we changing?
- 3) **NOW –**  
**what does creative collaboration look like today?** (35 min.)
  - a) inside our offices
  - b) outside of our offices
  - c) new business practices
- 4) **TOMORROW –**  
**what commitments can we make for the future?** (10 min.)
- 5) **discussion** (15 min.)

**ASLA**2022  
DESIGNING A BETTER  
**FUTURE**

Olmsted & Beyond:  
Practice in Progress

zas brezar: *“/imagine frederick law olmsted sr taking selfie”*

ASLA 2022 *“Landscape Architecture Beyond the Olmstedian Narrative by Claire Napawan*

*“A time of reflection...”*

*“A time of reconciliation...”*

# ASLA2022

DESIGNING A BETTER  
**FUTURE**

**Changing the  
Culture in Practice**

**Design and the  
Creative Process**

**Design  
Implementation**

**Leadership, Career  
Development, and  
Business**

**Olmsted & Beyond:  
Practice in Progress**

**Planning, Urban  
Design, and  
Infrastructure**

**Resilience and  
Stewardship**

**Technology: Trends  
and Workflows**

# ASLA2022

DESIGNING A BETTER  
**FUTURE**

## PRACTICE

Changing the  
Culture in Practice

Design and the  
Creative Process

Design  
Implementation

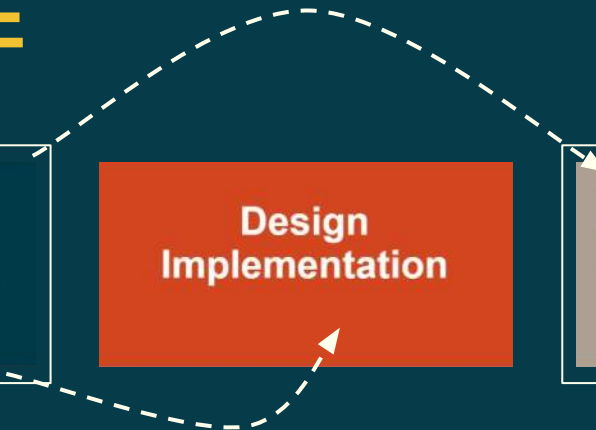
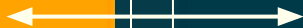
Leadership, Career  
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Planning, Urban  
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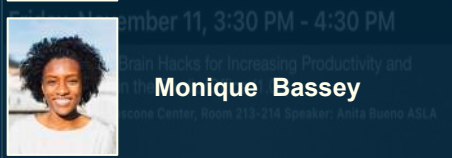
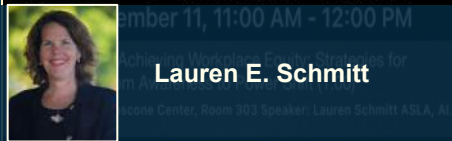
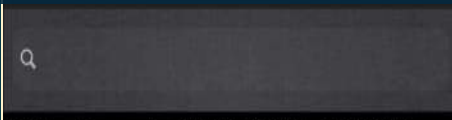
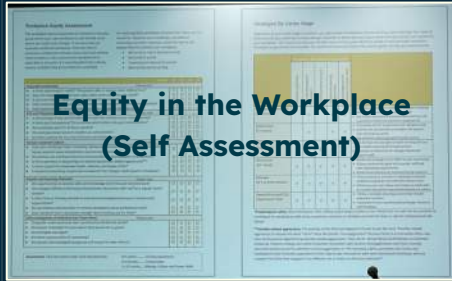
Technology: Trends  
and Workflows





## PRACTICE:

### Changing the Culture in Practice



## Achieving Workplace Equity: Strategies for Moving from Awareness to Power Shift

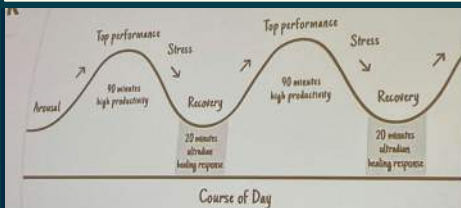
*“The Power Has Shifted: Staying Relevant as an Organization”*

*“The workplace is a place of culture...”*

- + Surveyed LA Offices
- + Equitable Workplace Framework
  - + impactful leadership
  - + fair and transparent investment
  - + human centered culture
  - + growth and learning potential
- + “Psychological safety: Create Space for Courageous Conversations”
- + “Encourage Feedback and Reflection” “Systemic Institutional Self Reflection”
- + “Value Everyone’s Time”
- + “Make Respect for All a Core Value”
- + “Build opportunities for growth into the Work”
- + “Acknowledge people’s efforts and accomplishments often”
- + Retention and Relevance are not the issue: An organization’s motivation for change should be ethical/moral

# THE INDIVIDUAL:

## Design and the Creative Process



Friday, November 11, 11:00 AM - 12:00 PM

★ (FRI-B01) Achieving Workplace Equity: Strategies for Moving from Awareness to Power Shift (1.00)

Location: Mesone Center, Room 303 Speaker: Lauren Schmitt ASI A AI

Friday, November 11, 3:30 PM - 4:30 PM

Brain Hacks for Increasing Productivity and Creativity in the Studio/Office

Anita Bueno

Mesone Center, Room 213-214 Speaker: Anita Bueno ASLA



## Brain Hacks for Increasing Productivity and Creativity in the Studio/Office

Neuroscientific and creativity/productivity practices that can be incorporated into studio space, culture, and practice.

- + Challenging the culture of our profession
- + Type A+ driven relentless perfectionism
- + Challenging a culture that equates suffering with value
- + “Research on creativity is in the relative stone age, hard to quantify”
- + Understanding the work environment and how it affects wellbeing and creativity (i.e. high ceilings vs low ceilings)
- + Understanding temporal mind/body/environment relative to circadian Rhythms (i.d. walks and light exposure)
- + Individual Corporeal practices that can improve productivity, well being, and creativity. (i.s. forced resetting and recalibration)
- + Sympathetic and Parasympathetic stress slider.

### Diurnal Succession

#### 3 Stages

Stage 1 (“Morning” 3:00 am - 11:00 am) Analytical technical  
Optimal for RFI’s, Contracts, Technical Documentation, etc

Stage 2 (“Afternoon” 1:00 pm - 9:00 pm) Design Focused  
Optimal for Design, Charettes, etc.

The Work Day can be redesigned as a pattern or rhythm to optimize aproductivity/creativitysuccessional facilitation.

# THE STUDIO:

Leadership, Career  
Development, and  
Business

# TERRE MOTO

Thu Fri **Sat** Sun Mon

3:45 PM

(SAT-C01) Inside the LA Studio — Terremoto

Location: Moscone Center, Room 213-214 Speaker: David Gaddshall ASL

(SAT-C02) Affordable Housing as a Driver for Equitable



Inside the LA Studio — Terremoto

Location: Moscone Center, Room 213-214 Speaker: David Gaddshall ASL

## Inside the LA Studio —Terremoto

### OFFICE STRUCTURE + CULTURE

- *We pay hourly! Every hour over 40 hours is paid as time and a half*
- *Full benefits (health + dental + 401k) We work out with the team what benefits they want.*
- *Mega Soft Hierarchy! Everyone has a seat at the Table!*
- *Everyone does everything*
- *Yearly Retreat!*
- *40 hours a year volunteer time*
- *Side/Pet Projects are basically wholly supported (sometimes \$\$ too!)*
- *Community Action Fund*
- *Mentoring Program*

### QUESTIONS WE ARE WRESTLING WITH

- *Growth*
- *Systems of management or lack thereof*
- *Private vs Public Work*
- *Company ownership is presently 2 white guys\*
- *Balancer working for the ultra wealthy with projects that are mission-oriented / grounded in the community*

**fletcher studio**



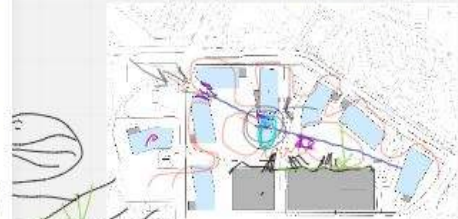
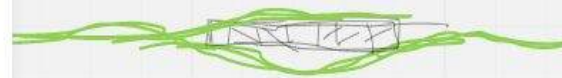
# agency landscape + planning



**rios**



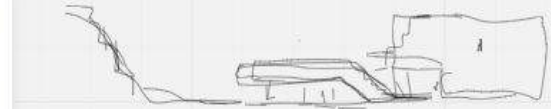
# external forces offices are adapting to...?



changes  
in... **technology**

changes  
in... **workplace culture**

changes  
in... **self-identity**



# how is work changing?

## then

- + office is **static** – employees adapt to the office, or they can leave
- + 2008 recession – employees were looking for **stability** in work
- + **little to no ‘voice’** afforded to employees – no social media, few platforms to gather
- + work is what you do to **get your paycheck** & support your lifestyle

## now

- + office is **flexible** – responsive to employee needs (amenities, growth-focused, work-life balance)
- + COVID-19 – employees are looking for **work-life balance** and **personal well-being** from their employers
- + **more equal playing field & representation** on social media; increased scrutiny & accountability (e.g. Dank Lloyd Wright instagram)
- + **greater demand for personal fulfillment** tied to personal, professional and global goals (solution-based practice, pro-bono)

## tomorrow

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# how are we changing?

## then

## now

## tomorrow

- + **little to no transparency** regarding office finances
- + standard industry benefits for some, **meet minimum expectations** no expectation to go beyond
- + employee reviews for the sake of **“checking a box”** for the HR department
- + **few feedback loops** or ability for employees to critique their employers

- + offices are experimenting with **fiscal transparency** and even **salary transparency**
- + employers are starting to go beyond the basics (health, dental, 401k), and providing **“grace days,” “flex Fridays” or “free days”**
- + employee reviews are **growth-centered** specific to individuals and their contributions
- + leaders are creating **forums for feedback** e.g. “how are things going? how can we do things better as an office?”

**so... why are we the ones  
talking about this topic?**





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Landscape + Planning

**RIOS**



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Landscape + Planning

**RIOS**

Location (geographic)	San Francisco, CA	Cambridge, MA	Los Angeles, CA + 7 more
Office Size	10	20	300 (75+ LAs)
Structure (in-person/ remote / hybrid)	In-person	Hybrid	Hybrid
Weekly Meetings (format, frequency)	2 staffing /wk + 2 PM /wk	1 staffing /wk + 1 PM /wk	Nested (studio, practice, RIOS for all + various leadership level mtgs)
Leadership/ Structure	1 principal + 1 studio director	4 principals + 2 directors	6 CDs, 3 MSDs, 15 SDs, 4 DDs, 4 TDs
Timekeeping/ Equity	12 "Free Days" /yr (+PTO, Holiday, Sick)	no timesheets + pain index	grace days for over 44 hrs
Baseline Benefits	Health, dental, 401k Bi-annual bonuses, professional development	Health, dental, 401k Annual bonus, 4 weeks remote/remote	Health, dental, 401k, annual bonus, education stipend, office swaps



Agency  
Landscape + Planning

# RIOS

Priorities:			
- Work-life balance	X	X	-keep designing ourselves
- Comfort of home		X	-stay curious
- Flexibility (in schedule)	X	X	
Salary/ Bonus Transparency	no	yes	no
Team Events	2x/mo. Design Forum 2x/mo. Project Overviews Individual Birthday Parties Off-site Christmas Party + Studio Mixer	Weekly IRL 2x/mo. Happy Hours 2x/mo Sharing Summer + Holiday Event Internship	Offsite retreats Summer & winter parties Polling station Open houses Lecture series
Employee Reviews	90-day & annual, focused on growth and advancement	90-day plus two conversations per year	90-day check-ins and annual review, lots of tea
Studio Initiatives	Hope+Space, Resource Sharing, Public Art. Green Infrastructure	Task Forces (design/communications, culture, management)	Social Impact Initiatives Climate Action Committee
Goals for 2023	Develop creative culture More team events!	Focus on mentorship Round out team skills!	RIOS+ More offices, more leaders

## IMMACULATE HEART COLLEGE ART DEPARTMENT RULES

- Rule 1** FIND A PLACE YOU TRUST AND THEN TRY TRUSTING IT FOR A WHILE.
- Rule 2** GENERAL DUTIES OF A STUDENT: PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR TEACHER. PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR FELLOW STUDENTS.
- Rule 3** GENERAL DUTIES OF A TEACHER: PULL EVERYTHING OUT OF YOUR STUDENTS.
- Rule 4** CONSIDER EVERYTHING AN EXPERIMENT.
- Rule 5** BE SELF DISCIPLINED. THIS MEANS FINDING SOMEONE WISE OR SMART AND CHOOSING TO FOLLOW THEM.  
TO BE DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A GOOD WAY.  
TO BE SELF DISCIPLINED IS TO FOLLOW IN A BETTER WAY.
- Rule 6** NOTHING IS A MISTAKE. THERE'S NO WIN AND NO FAIL. THERE'S ONLY MAKE.

**Rule 7** The only rule is work.  
IF YOU WORK IT WILL LEAD TO SOMETHING.  
IT'S THE PEOPLE WHO DO ALL OF THE WORK ALL THE TIME WHO EVENTUALLY CATCH ON TO THINGS.

**Rule 8** DON'T TRY TO CREATE AND ANALYSE AT THE SAME TIME. THEY'RE DIFFERENT PROCESSES.

**Rule 9** BE HAPPY WHENEVER YOU CAN MANAGE IT. ENJOY YOURSELF. IT'S LIGHTER THAN YOU THINK.

**Rule 10** "WE'RE BREAKING ALL OF THE RULES. EVEN OUR OWN RULES. AND HOW DO WE DO THAT? BY LEAVING PLENTY OF ROOM FOR X QUANTITIES." JOHN CAGE

HELPFUL HINTS: ALWAYS BE AROUND. COME OR GO TO EVERYTHING. ALWAYS GO TO CLASSES. READ ANYTHING YOU CAN GET YOUR HANDS ON. LOOK AT MOVIES CAREFULLY, OFTEN. SAVE EVERYTHING-IT MIGHT COME IN HANDY LATER.  
THERE SHOULD BE NEW RULES NEXT WEEK.

By Corita Kent

# new rules for the design studio...

## CHAPTER 1

**Creative process  
within a studio...**

**...create a place  
to be risky**

## CHAPTER 2

**Creative process  
outside the studio...**

**...collaborate with  
chaos**

## CHAPTER 3

**Creative process within  
business practice...**

**...change is inevitable,  
look forward to it**

# creative process within a studio..



add questions/ insights to our  
shared google doc  
<https://bit.ly/making-and-meaning>



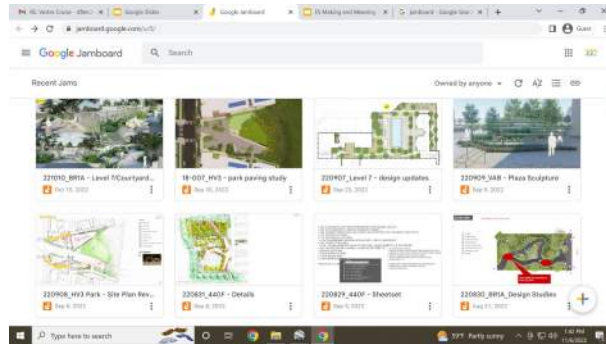


# fletcher studio

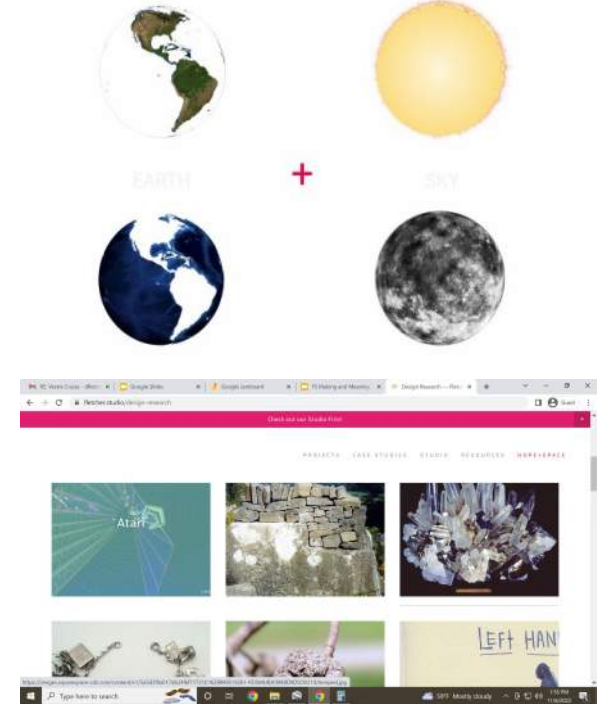


**physical workspace**

**MAKING + MEANING TODAY:**  
HOW OFFICES ARE ADAPTING AND REINVENTING CREATIVE PROCESS

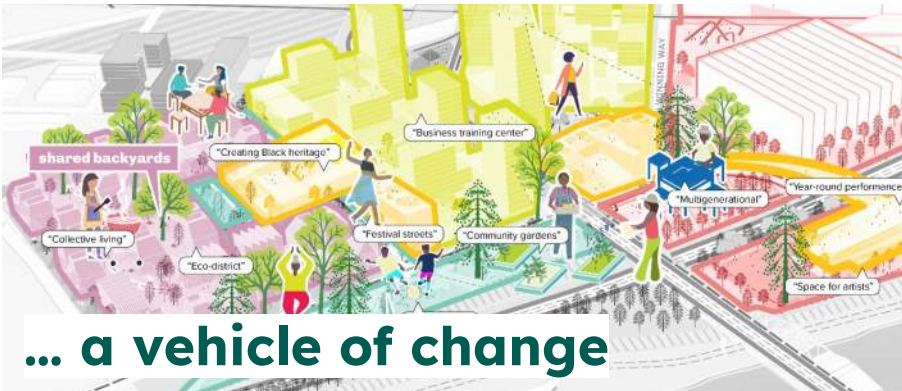


**interactive +  
supportive**



**concept-driven**

# agency as...



# rios



Audacity



Attunement



Inclusivity



Resiliency



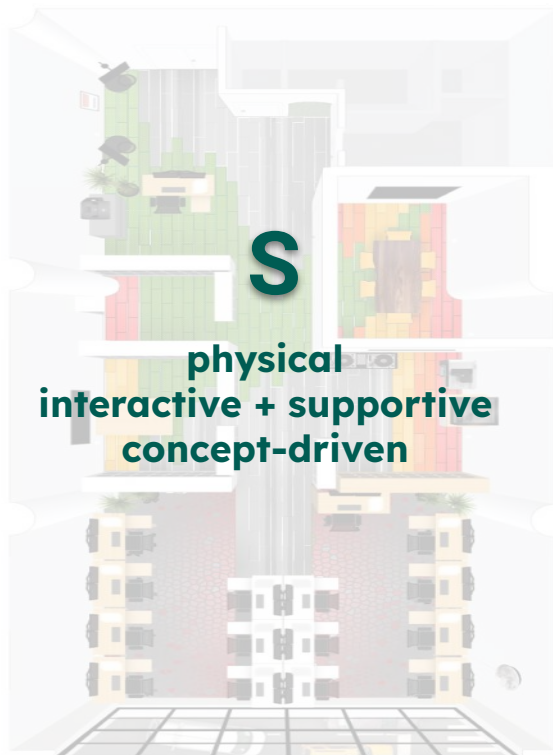
Joy & Optimism

## clear language around shared values

# open discussion: creative process within a studio...



add questions/insights to  
our shared google doc



# S

physical  
interactive + supportive  
concept-driven

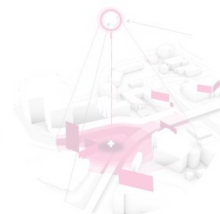


# M

agency as...  
“an amplifier”  
“nurturing”  
“a journey”  
“a tool for connection”



Audacity



Attunement

# L

clear language around  
shared values



Inclusivity



Resiliency



Joy & Optimism

# creative process outside of the studio...



add questions/ insights to our  
shared google doc  
<https://bit.ly/making-and-meaning>



# fletcher studio



**generational-  
outreach**

**MAKING + MEANING TODAY:**  
HOW OFFICES ARE ADAPTING AND REINVENTING CREATIVE PROCESS



**creator-collaboration**

11:20 📶 LTE 🔋

🔒 fletcher.studio

## Hope +Space Application

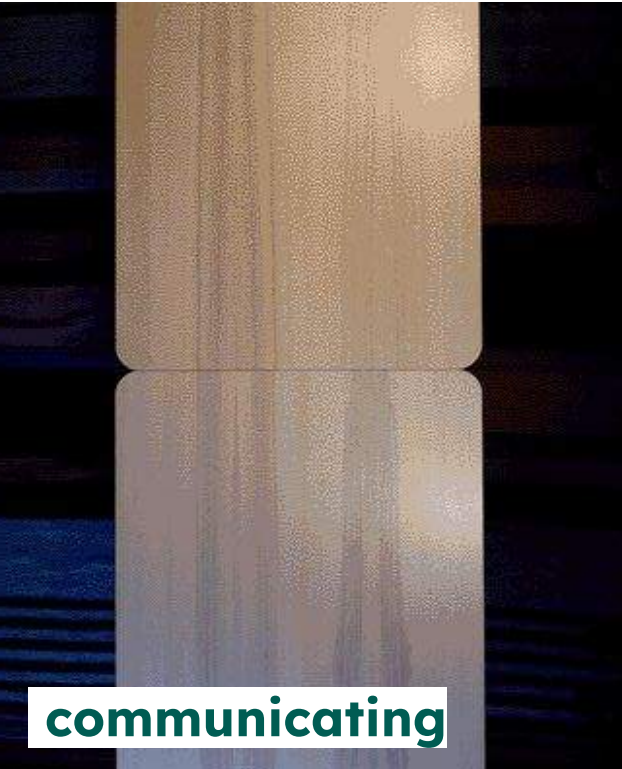
If you have a project in need, please provide information. We will review and contact you shortly...

Name \*

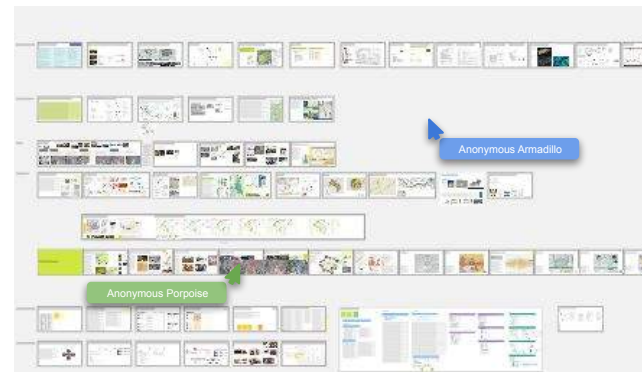
**give-back**

First Name Last Name

# agency



# rios





# open discussion: creative process outside of the studio...



add questions/insights to  
our shared google doc



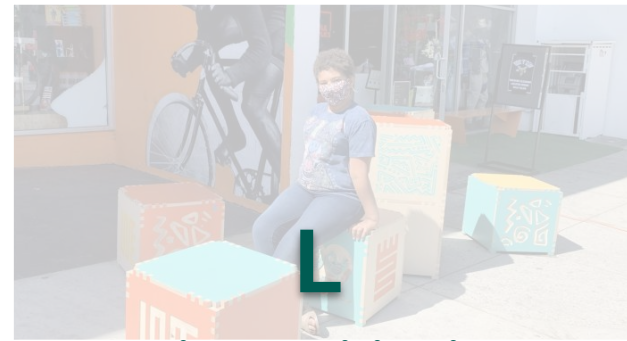
**S**

**generational-outreach  
creator collaboration  
give-back**



**M**

**communicating  
idea communities  
building coalitions**



**L**

**radical participation**



# new business practices



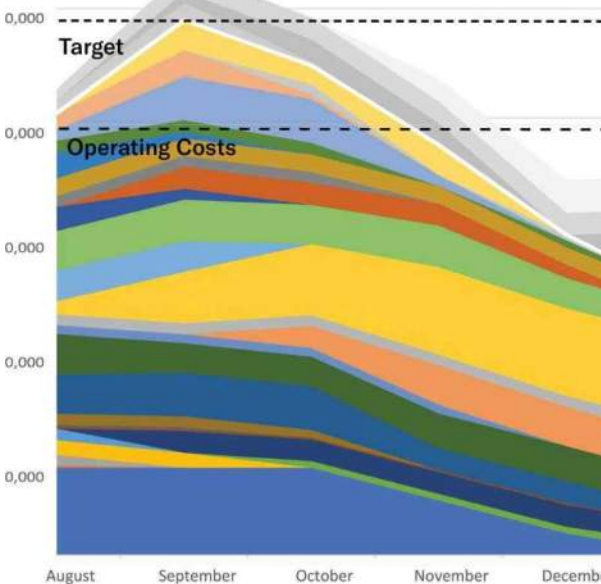
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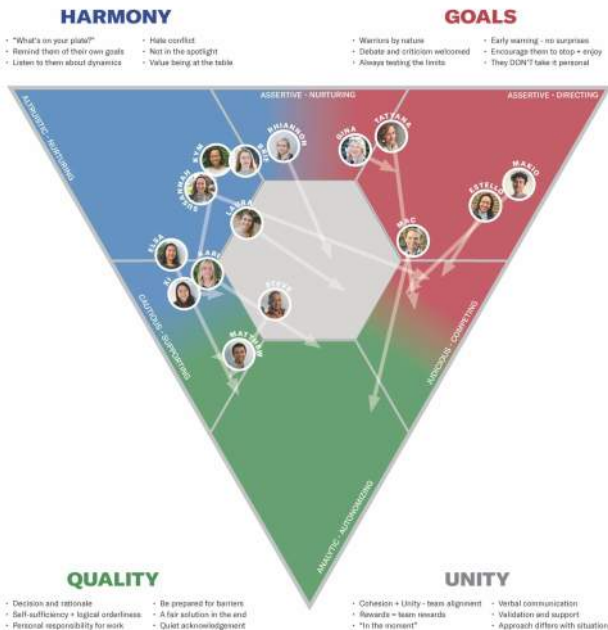


# agency

Possible Revenues in Grey



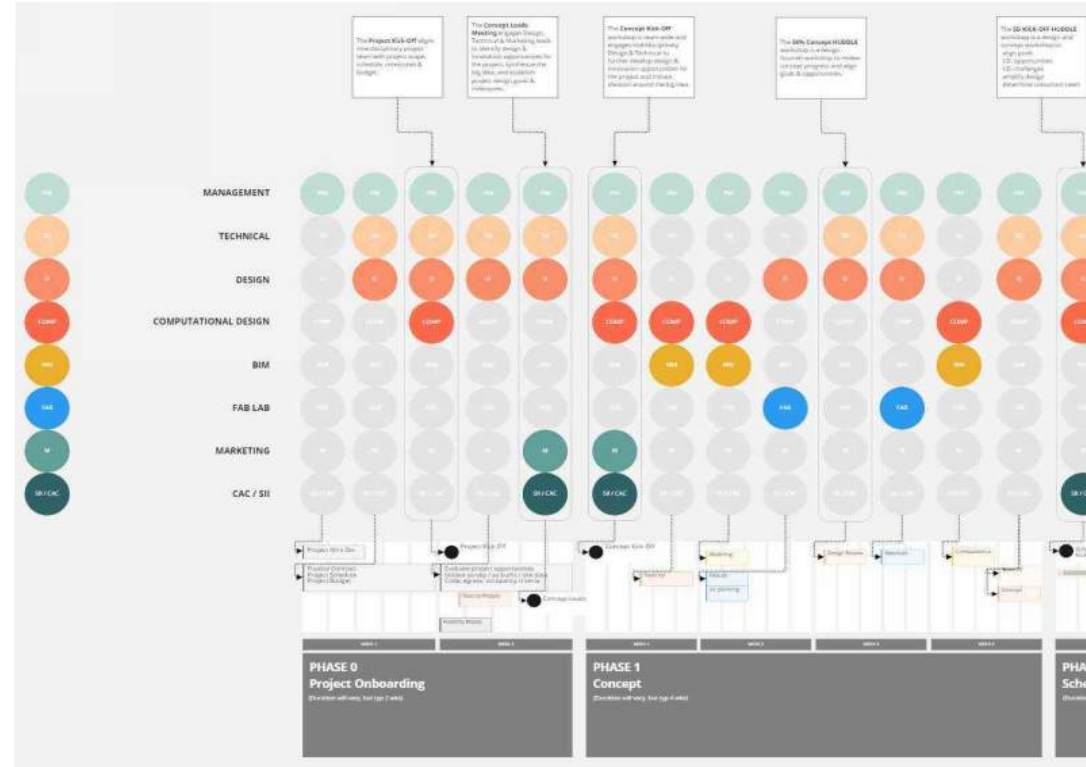
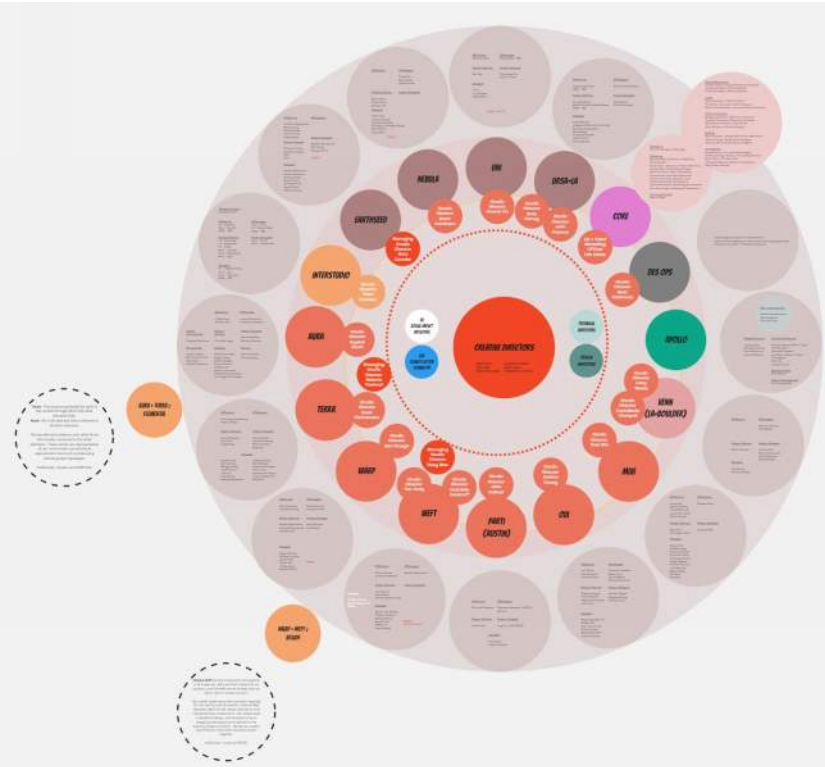
## open book



## valuing difference



## like a co-op



## mitosis    apollo's abacus

# open discussion: new business practices

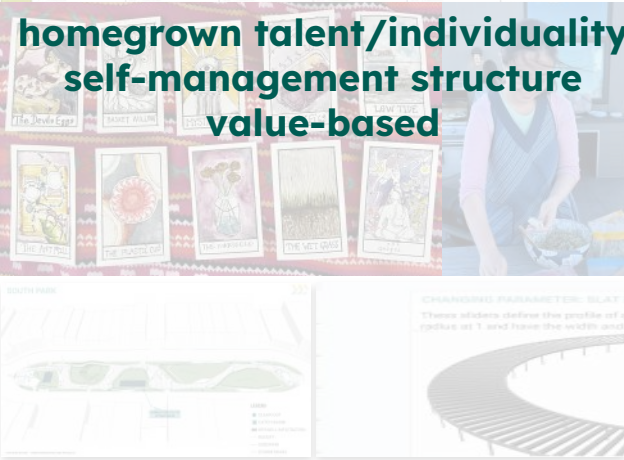


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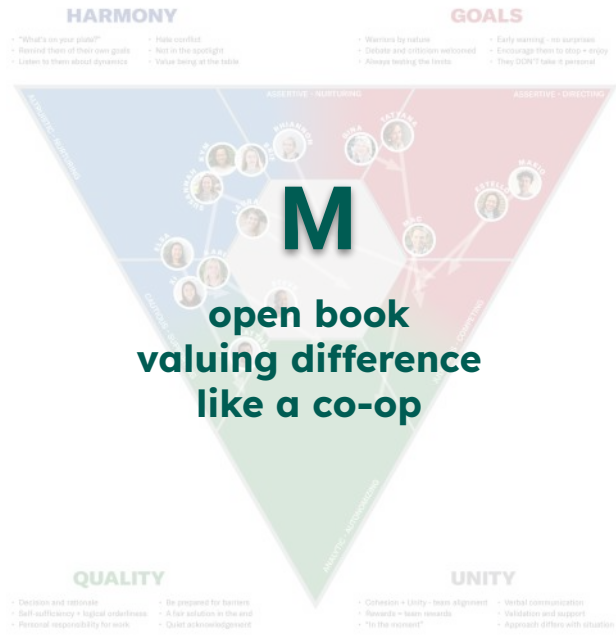
STAFF CHECK-IN: WEEK OF 10.11

MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY
<p>1. Morning meeting</p> <p>2. Design review</p> <p>3. Client meeting</p> <p>4. Project update</p> <p>5. Team meeting</p> <p>6. Design review</p> <p>7. Client meeting</p> <p>8. Project update</p> <p>9. Team meeting</p> <p>10. Design review</p> <p>11. Client meeting</p> <p>12. Project update</p> <p>13. Team meeting</p> <p>14. Design review</p> <p>15. Client meeting</p> <p>16. Project update</p> <p>17. Team meeting</p> <p>18. Design review</p> <p>19. Client meeting</p> <p>20. Project update</p> <p>21. Team meeting</p> <p>22. Design review</p> <p>23. Client meeting</p> <p>24. Project update</p> <p>25. Team meeting</p> <p>26. Design review</p> <p>27. Client meeting</p> <p>28. Project update</p> <p>29. Team meeting</p> <p>30. Design review</p> <p>31. Client meeting</p> <p>32. Project update</p> <p>33. Team meeting</p> <p>34. Design review</p> <p>35. Client meeting</p> <p>36. Project update</p> <p>37. Team meeting</p> <p>38. Design review</p> <p>39. Client meeting</p> <p>40. Project update</p> <p>41. Team meeting</p> <p>42. Design review</p> <p>43. Client meeting</p> <p>44. Project update</p> <p>45. Team meeting</p> <p>46. Design review</p> <p>47. Client meeting</p> <p>48. Project update</p> <p>49. Team meeting</p> <p>50. Design review</p> <p>51. Client meeting</p> <p>52. Project update</p> <p>53. Team meeting</p> <p>54. Design review</p> <p>55. Client meeting</p> <p>56. Project update</p> <p>57. Team meeting</p> <p>58. Design review</p> <p>59. Client meeting</p> <p>60. Project update</p> <p>61. Team meeting</p> <p>62. Design review</p> <p>63. Client meeting</p> <p>64. Project update</p> <p>65. Team meeting</p> <p>66. Design review</p> <p>67. Client meeting</p> <p>68. Project update</p> <p>69. Team meeting</p> <p>70. Design review</p> <p>71. Client meeting</p> <p>72. Project update</p> <p>73. Team meeting</p> <p>74. Design review</p> <p>75. Client meeting</p> <p>76. Project update</p> <p>77. Team meeting</p> <p>78. Design review</p> <p>79. Client meeting</p> <p>80. Project update</p> <p>81. Team meeting</p> <p>82. Design review</p> <p>83. Client meeting</p> <p>84. Project update</p> <p>85. Team meeting</p> <p>86. Design review</p> <p>87. Client meeting</p> <p>88. Project update</p> <p>89. Team meeting</p> <p>90. Design review</p> <p>91. Client meeting</p> <p>92. Project update</p> <p>93. Team meeting</p> <p>94. Design review</p> <p>95. Client meeting</p> <p>96. Project update</p> <p>97. Team meeting</p> <p>98. Design review</p> <p>99. Client meeting</p> <p>100. Project update</p>						

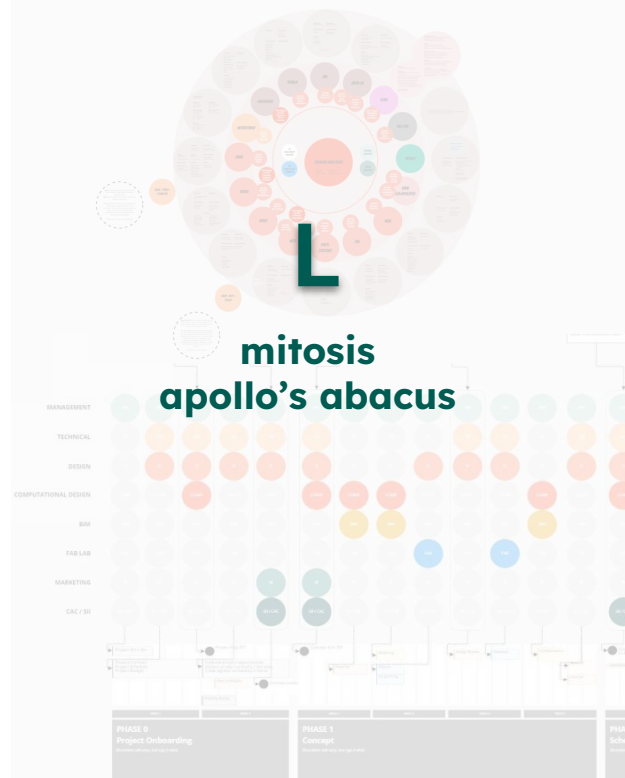
S



homegrown talent/individuality  
self-management structure  
value-based



open book  
valuing difference  
like a co-op



# tomorrow



add questions/ insights to our  
shared google doc  
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# how is work changing?

## then

## now

## tomorrow

+ office is **static** – employees adapt to the office, or they can leave

+ office is **flexible** – responsive to employee needs (amenities, growth-focused, work-life balance)

+ 2008 recession – employees were looking for **stability** in work

+ COVID-19 – employees are looking for **work-life balance** and **personal well-being** from their employers

+ **little to no ‘voice’** afforded to employees – no social media, few platforms to gather

+ **more equal playing field & representation** on social media; increased scrutiny & accountability (e.g. Dank Lloyd Wright instagram)

+ work is what you do to **get your paycheck** & support your lifestyle

+ **greater demand for personal fulfillment** tied to personal, professional and global goals (solution-based practice, pro-bono)



# how are we changing?

## then

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## tomorrow

- + **little to no transparency** regarding office finances
- + standard industry benefits for some, **meet minimum expectations** no expectation to go beyond
- + employee reviews for the sake of **“checking a box”** for the HR department
- + **few feedback loops** or ability for employees to critique their employers

- + offices are experimenting with **fiscal transparency** and even **salary transparency**
- + employers are starting to go beyond the basics (health, dental, 401k), and providing **“grace days,” “flex Fridays”** or **“free days”**
- + employee reviews are **growth-centered** specific to individuals and their contributions
- + leaders are creating **forums for feedback** e.g. “how are things going? how can we do things better as an office?”

# discussion: tomorrow – commitments for the future...



## fletcher studio

+ Outlets for individuals to grow

MODELER / DRAFTSPERSON	<b>1. TECHNICAL KNOWLEDGE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop a working knowledge of all software used to use in a professional design office.</li> </ul>	<b>2. DOCUMENTATION &amp; GRAPHICS</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Draft. Finishes tasks in an efficient, thorough and accurate manner.</li> <li>- Adherence to studio graphic standards and uses assigned templates to all production used.</li> </ul>
DESIGNER	<b>3. COMMUNICATION STYLE</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Under guidance of immediate and senior staff, study and begin to understand relationships between project objectives and design process.</li> <li>- Take notes during one-on-one meetings, team meetings and express feelings to cement knowledge of office workflow.</li> </ul>	<b>4. COMMITMENT TO QUALITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop ability to self-check work for spelling, grammar mistakes, graphic errors, legibility and clarity.</li> </ul>
PROJECT LEAD	<b>5. DESIGN CURIOSITY</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Begin to understand how long tasks take, and communicate call with senior staff providing progress updates while competing tasks.</li> </ul>	<b>6. PROJECT LEADERSHIP</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Begin to understand project budgets and how tasks fit within fees.</li> <li>- Begin to understand project schedules.</li> </ul>
PROJECT MANAGER	<b>7. ENTREPRENEURIAL MINDSET</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Develop working knowledge of studio business development efforts.</li> <li>- Begin to understand RFP/RFQ responses, assisting with proposal production.</li> <li>- Begin to understand office portfolio, as it relates to representing past work in proposals.</li> </ul>	

- + Quarterly deep check-in
- + Fiscal transparency
- + Agency's task forces
- + RIOS' clear language around shared values
- + Scheduling: diurnal succession

## agency

- + Focus on mentorship!
- + Round out team skills



## rios

+ RIOS+ non-profit



+ Follow our curiosity



+ SII supporting LAF DEI Fund

# ASLA2022

DESIGNING A BETTER

# FUTURE

## Making and Meaning Today: How Office are Adapting & Reinventing Creative Process

### Speakers

David Fletcher, ASLA, Fletcher Studio, + Lauren Ewald

Gina Ford, ASLA, Agency LP

Nate Cormier, ASLA, RIOS



Agency  
Landscape + Planning

**RIOS**



American Society of  
Landscape Architects