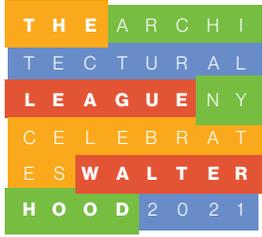


For immediate release

The Architectural League Awards 2021 President's Medal to Artist and Landscape Architect Walter Hood

Medal presented in joyful multi-arts ceremony in Marcus Garvey Park



July 29, 2021, New York, NY--At a free, public celebration on July 21 at Marcus Garvey Park in Harlem, Architectural League President Paul Lewis awarded the League's 2021 President's Medal to Walter Hood, at the first in-person event held by The Architectural League since March 2020. "Walter Hood is one of the most influential designers of public space of our time, an artist who sees his work as a cultural practice, creating beauty in everyday environments, revealing hidden histories, renewing connections, guiding the way to co-existence in all our multiplicity and difference. There could be no more fitting person to honor at the moment of our reengagement with public life," the League noted in its invitation to the event.

The President's Medal is The Architectural League's highest honor. It is bestowed at the discretion of the League's President and Board of Directors in recognition of extraordinary achievements in architecture, urbanism, art, design, and the environment.

The festivities at Marcus Garvey Park included a procession from the Acropolis in the park to the lower level. The event featured performances by Mfouambila Kongo Dance Company, The Marching Cobras of New York, and saxophonist Jason Marshall; a poetry reading by Tonya M. Foster; and remarks in tribute to Mr. Hood by Mario Gooden, Mabel Wilson, and Sara Zewde. The event took place in a production and installation design by Harlem-based architecture studio BRANDT : HAFERD, Jerome W. Haferd and K. Brandt Knapp, with Coleman Downing. Fabric panels designed by BRANDT : HAFERD functioned first as heraldic banners during the procession; then as backdrop for speakers and performers; and finally as canopies over specially-designed tables offering refreshments, plants, and printed matter about Walter Hood and Hood Design Studio.

Of Walter Hood and the installation design, Mr. Haferd writes "The design for this gathering is both an ode to Walter's work and an ode to Marcus Garvey Park and Black landscapes he invites us to "see" and understand: the idea of the quilt and the bush arbor; of new ground and the extrusion of space from plan into three dimensions; of the interdependence of landscape, bodies, food, and water. Conjuring an archaeology of spaces that harbor a diaspora of Blackness and celebrating that living history in real time is the defining quality we see running throughout Walter's work and legacy."

Professor of Architecture and Director of the Institute for Research in African American Studies at Columbia University Mabel O. Wilson said: "Great migrations. Border crossings. Diaspora. These are the sites where Walter Hood makes work. Over the past three decades Walter has crafted everyday, commemorative, socially relevant landscapes through a creative process that takes measure of where are people are going? From where have they come? Who has been here before? Who and what is here now and in the future?"

Mario Gooden, founding principal of Huff + Gooden Architects and professor of professional practice at Columbia University, stated: "This imagination of landscape as a site for liberation is not only reflected in Walter's brilliance as a landscape architect and artist, but also as a teacher, scholar, and writer... It's been my pleasure to work with Walter over the past two decades but more importantly to learn from Walter and to see liberation in the landscapes that he imagines."

The Architectural League
of New York
594 Broadway, Suite 607
New York, NY 10012
info@archleague.org
archleague.org

Media contact:
Anne Carlisle
Communications Manager
carlisle@archleague.org

Landscape architect Sara Zewde, founding principal of Studio Zewde, said: “While his practice has been around for over 25 years, Walter’s legacy is ushering in an entirely new generation of landscape architects, as his work is ahead of its time. Though he has already accomplished so much, tonight’s award is only a sign that much more is to come.”

In his presentation of the Medal, League President Paul Lewis read the following citation: “As artist and designer, as deeply engaged observer, listener, educator, and theorist, Walter Hood has transformed understanding of how to see and create meaning in landscapes and public spaces. He shows and teaches how to unearth suppressed histories and make connections visible, to see value in the unremarkable and create beauty in the mundane. Particulars, specifics and idiosyncrasies guide his creative process. Walter and his studio shape bold, inventive places, responding to imperatives of memory, community, and ecology, combining poetry and science, embracing difference.

Through his research, writing, and design, Walter has compelled attention to the centrality of Black landscapes in our collective culture. He has radically reshaped the agency of and expectations for landscape architecture. With deep admiration, The Architectural League awards its President’s Medal to the contemporary prophet of landscape and public space Walter Hood.”

The President’s Medal of The Architectural League is presented to recognize extraordinary contributions to architecture, design, art, the environment, and urbanism. Recent recipients are Andrew Freear, Director of the Rural Studio of Auburn University; Darren Walker, President of the Ford Foundation; Christiana Figueres, negotiator of the 2015 Paris Agreement on Climate Change; architect Henry Cobb; and Richard Serra, artist. Earlier recipients of the medal include historian Kenneth Frampton, critic Ada Louise Huxtable; designers Massimo and Lella Vignelli; and architects Tod Williams and Billie Tsien.

Learn more at archleague.org/presidents-medal

About Walter Hood

Walter Hood is Creative Director and Founder of Hood Design Studio in Oakland, California, a cultural practice working across art, fabrication, design, landscape, research and urbanism. He is also the David K. Woo Chair and Professor of Landscape Architecture and Environmental Planning at UC Berkeley. Hood Design Studio’s current and recent projects include the landscape for the International African American Museum in Charleston, SC; “Black Towers/Black Power” in *Reconstructions: Architecture and Blackness in America* at the Museum of Modern Art; Lift Ev’ry Voice and Sing Park in Jacksonville, FL; gardens for the Oakland Museum of California; the Broad Museum Plaza in Los Angeles; and the Rosa Parks Neighborhood Master Plan in Detroit. Hood was elected to the American Academy of Arts and Letters in 2021, and is the recipient of a 2019 MacArthur Fellowship and 2019 Dorothy and Lillian Gish Prize. His most recent book, *Black Landscapes Matter* (edited by Walter Hood and Grace Mitchell Tada), was published in 2020.

About The Architectural League

The Architectural League is a non-profit cultural organization that nurtures excellence in architecture and urbanism, and stimulates thinking and action on the critical design and building issues of our time. As a vital, independent forum for architecture and its allied disciplines, the League strives to create a more beautiful, vibrant, innovative, sustainable, and just future. www.archleague.org | www.urbanomnibus.net



Photos by Michelle Garcia, bottom right photo by Jerome Haferd

**For a suite of hi-res images, please contact
Anne Carlisle, Communications Manager
carlisle@archleague.org**