

# Alex Gilliam

Director, Public Workshop 917.335.5518 alex@publicworkshop.us

## Professional Work

**Co-Founder**, Department of Making + Doing *Fall 2012-Present, Philadelphia, PA*

- Working with NextFAB, the Hacktory, and Breadboard to create a civic innovation workshop and STE(A)M laboratory in Philadelphia.

**Senior Lecturer**, University of the Arts Design Department *Fall 2011-Present, Philadelphia, PA*

- Helping develop the Design Department's social entrepreneurship track.

**Engagement & Curriculum Consultant**, Franco Montalto & Drexel University *Winter 2012-2013, Philadelphia, PA*

- Developing a curriculum and supporting tools to launch a National Science Foundation funded 'Citizen Scientist' program to measure the impact of green infrastructure projects in Philadelphia and New York City.

**Adventure Playground Builder**, Pennsylvania Horticultural Society *Fall 2012, Philadelphia, PA*

- Led hundreds of youth, young designers, and families in the designing and building of a pop-up adventure playground and outdoor tinkering space in the very heart of downtown Philadelphia.

**Youth Engagement Consultant**, Open House New York *August 2012, Austin, TX*

- Developed an NEA funded design leadership program for 7th grade public school students in the Bronx that empowered them to hack their learning experience and redesign their educational spaces.

**Youth Engagement & Program Consultant**, Demoiselle 2 Femme *July 2012-Present, Philadelphia, PA*

- Helping create a design-build community leadership program that puts teenage women in the Roseland neighborhood of Chicago at the forefront of stimulating change in their neighborhood.

**Program Developer**, Tiny WPA *June 2012-Present, Philadelphia, PA*

- Working with the Village for Arts and Humanities, the Science Leadership Academy and others to launch a program in Philadelphia's schools and neighborhoods in which young adults inspire a larger movement of change by re-designing and re-building the City's micro-infrastructure.

**Community Engagement Consultant**, Old Bakery Block Master Plan *September 2011-Present Austin, TX*

- Designing and facilitating a series of participatory place-building events to engage Austin residents in re-imagining the use of a series of under-used lots and buildings on Congress Ave. This also includes developing complete branding and web presence for the process; leading the design-building of temporary structures; and creating a nation-wide design competition around the spaces.

**Youth Engagement Consultant**, Holly Shores Master Plan *August 2012, Austin, TX*

- Created and led a chocolate cake community master planning event that helped engage youth and their families in the creation of park master plan led by Michael Van Valkenburgh Associates.

**Designer & Founder**, Build-It! & Be A Building Hero! *October 2011-Present, Everywhere*

- Designed and developed an architectural building toy--Build-It!--that allows people to create fantastic structures that challenge possibility on playgrounds, vacant lots, in classrooms and your very own backyard: [www.beabuildinghero.com](http://www.beabuildinghero.com)
- Design and facilitate participatory building workshops for youth and communities all over the United States.

**Field Fellowship Recipient & Design Consultant**, National Building Museum *November 2010-Present, Washington, DC*

- Developed a series of design-build workshops for uniquely engaging Museum visitors and an architectural building toy--Build-It!--that allows children and their families to create temporary playgrounds in under-used public spaces.

**Engagement & Programming Consultant**, Open House New York *August 2010-Present, New York, NY*

- Currently helping Open House New York develop programming for better engaging youth and communities in discussions about New York's public spaces, infrastructure and architecture.

**Youth Engagement & Programming Consultant**, Chicago Architecture Foundation *July 2008-Present, Chicago, Illinois*

- Creates and leads innovative community design-leadership programs and events for K-12 students, designers and educators.

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## Professional Work

**Community & Youth Engagement Consultant**, Landon Bone Baker Architects *December 2009-March 2011, Chicago, Illinois*

- Designed and managed an innovative program in which young adults gather data and stories that helps the architecture firm, its community partners, and city leaders make better decisions about how they can improve the health, well-being and efficiency of their neighborhoods through design.

**Program Designer and Coordinator**, Hester Street Collaborative *June 2005-August 2006, New York City*

- Developed and directed the Citizen Designer Internship Program, a unique intergenerational community design-build workshop and think-tank. This also included creating and leading a multigenerational design charrette of local experts, community members, teachers and students to create an outdoor classroom at PS 134.

**Rural Studio Outreach Fellow** *2003-2004, Greensboro, Alabama*

- Created and directed "Sunshine Builds", a program to empower its K-12 students through the redesign, and rebuilding of their neglected school.

**Director of Design**, Charter High School For Architecture and Design *August 2000-June 2003, Teacher August 1999-June 2003, Philadelphia*

- Managed the School's department chairmen from all academic programs.
- Wrote, developed and implemented the Design Department curriculum.
- Recruited, interviewed and recommended Design faculty for hiring- shaping the Department into a highly motivated team.
- Created a series of design-centered community-building events, including student-led exhibitions and design field days.

**Carpentry, Cabinet and Metal Fabrication Apprentice** *June 2004-November 2005, New York & Virginia*

- Apprenticed with a variety of skilled tradespeople to learn how to 'build' everything from cabinets to houses to custom doors

**Program Creator & Studio Instructor**, Pennsylvania Governor's School For the Arts, Erie, PA, 2001-2002

- Created and developed the school's first Architecture Program

## Education

**University of Texas**, 2006-2009, Master of Architecture

**University of Virginia** 1995-1997, B.S. Arch, minor in History

## Selected Honors

**Placemaking Contest-Grand Prize**, Metropolitan Planning Council Of Chicago *November 2012*

**Brightest Minds In Philadelphia**, Philadelphia Magazine *November 2012*

**Access To Artistic Excellence Grant**, National Endowment For The Arts *May 2011*

**Curriculum Special Recognition**, Association of Architectural Organizations *March 2011*

**Field Fellowship**, National Building Museum *November 2010*

**K-12 Design Education Think-Tank Member**, National Endowment For The Arts *November 2009*

**Graduate Teaching Award**, University of Texas *May 2009*

**Rural Studio Outreach Fellowship**, Auburn University *September 2003*

## Selected Presentations

Compost Modern, **'Prototyping The Behaviors That Adults Have Forgotten'** *March 2013, San Francisco, CA*

Ignite Philadelphia, **'TinyWPA'** *September 2012, Philadelphia, PA*

Temporary Urbanism Salon, **'How Do You Sustain Innovation?'** *April 2012, Philadelphia, PA*

RISD, **'Public Workshop'** *April 2012, Philadelphia, PA*

EduCon 2.4, **'How Do You Sustain Innovation?'** *January 2012, Philadelphia, PA*

McGill University School Of Architecture, **'Build-It! And Other Tools For Rethinking Design And Learning'** *November 2011, Montreal, Canada*

BMW Guggenheim Lab, **'#teendesignheroes And 'Doing' As Disruptive Civic Technologies'** *October 2011, New York, NY*

Association Of Architectural Organizations Conference, **'Build-It!'** *October 2011, Philadelphia, PA*

AIPP Symposium On Sustainability & Placemaking, **'Making As A Tool For Innovation And Collaboration'** *October 2011, Austin, TX*

Social Capital Markets Conference, **'Prototyping Behaviors For Social Innovation'** *September 2011, San Francisco, CA*

Urban Design Week, **'Chocolate Cake As A Tool For Better Engaging Community In Master Planning'** *September 2011, New York, NY*

EDRA 42 Conference, **'Architectural Freeze Tag And Adventures In Intuitive Building'** *May 2011, Chicago, IL*

UCDavis' Rob Thayer Lecture, **'Chocolate Cake And Other Tools For People Changing Cities'** *April 2011, Davis, CA*

Transcultural Cities Symposium, **'Youth Generated Tools For Community Design Engagement'** *February 2011, Seattle, WA*

Echoing Green Social Entrepreneurship Conf., **'Making And Doing As Tools For Innovation And Dialogue'** *January 2011, Austin, TX*

IDEA Series, **'Nine Ways You Can Better Engage Youth And Communities In Design'** *September 2010, Chicago, IL*

Association For Community Design Conference, **'Children Changing Cities'** *June 2010, Berkeley, CA*

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Selected Presentations Ripple Conference On Urban Education, '**Children Should Be The Architects Of Our Cities**' March 2010, Chicago, IL  
Building A Healthier Austin Symposium, '**Creating A Landscape Of Continuous Play & Exercise**' October 2009, Austin, TX  
Great Public Spaces Summit, '**You Can Change Your City: Make Austin Weirder**' June 2009, Austin, TX  
Drexel University, '**Five Tactics For Changing Your City**', June 2009, Philadelphia, PA

Selected Press The Smartest People In Philadelphia, **Philadelphia Magazine**, November 2012  
Temporary Playground To Turn Kids Into Planners, **Next American City**, October 2012  
Recasting Teachers And Students As Designers, **Mind Shift**, October 2012  
Four Lessons The Classroom Can Learn From The Design Studio, **Fast Company**, December 2011  
Cooper-Hewitt Program feature, **Metropolismag.com**, September 2006  
Hester Street Collaborative feature, **The Architect's Newspaper**, November 2005

As Founder and Director, Alex regularly writes on the Public Workshop website ([www.publicworkshop.us](http://www.publicworkshop.us)) about such things as design education, social entrepreneurship, playgrounds and rethinking how we engage people in making the places we live, work, learn and play.

His work regularly appears on a number of mainstream websites such as **Yahoo**, **Inhabitat**, **Kaboom!** and **Core 77** but is amazed when it's referenced in 'places' as far flung as [www.swissarmywife.com](http://www.swissarmywife.com) and [www.urbanpreschool.com](http://www.urbanpreschool.com).