

Cara Elizabeth Michell

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Urban planner and artist with a passion for strengthening sustainable and equitable communities.

Education

Harvard University,
Graduate School of Design, (2016)
Masters in Urban Planning

Princeton University, (2014)
A.B. in Art & Archaeology (Studio Art track); Certificate in Urban Studies
Magna cum laude

Honors

Forefront Fellow, Urban Design
Forum, "Cooperative Works" (2020)

Ideas City, Detroit Fellow, New
Museum (April 2016)

Doebele Fellow, Harvard University,
Graduate School of Design (Summer
2015)

Excellence in Visual Arts Award,
Princeton University Lewis Center for
the Arts (June 2014)

Alex Adam '07 Award for Summer
Research in the Arts, Princeton
University (March 2013)

Peter B. Lewis Fund International
Research Grant (Summer 2012)

**National Urban League Featured
Artist,** Washington, DC Art Expo
(2010)

Skills

Software

Skilled in:

Microsoft Office
Adobe Creative Suites
(Photoshop, InDesign, Illustrator)
GIS
AutoCAD

Experience with:

Rhino
SketchUp
Adobe Premiere Pro

Language

Academic French
Basic Portuguese

Professional Experience

WXY Architecture+Urban Design | New York, NY (March 2018 - Present)

Senior Urban Planner – Urban planning, design and community engagement for policy, landscape, urban design and architecture work in New York, Maryland and Cleveland. Current work includes:

- Managed a team of urban designers in developing an award winning project for the Downtown Revitalization Initiative in New Rochelle (2020 APA NYM Meritorious Achievement Award);
- Project managing the Red Hook Brownfield Opportunity Area Study. Successfully created a new, COVID-19 specific project plan which will be used as an example by New York State for other BOA recipients;
- Led stakeholder engagement and promoted stakeholder alignment across agencies and community groups for multiple urban design and education policy projects.

Past projects include the Cleveland Museum of Art Landscape Action Plan, The Downtown Brooklyn Downtown Revitalization Initiative and the NYC D16 (Bed-Stuy) School Diversity Plan Process.

BrookMcIlroy | Toronto, ON (September 2016 - February 2018)

Planner – Planning and design for waterfront master plans, TOD policy research, planning rationale, and urban design briefs. Developing city-wide urban design guidelines and spearheading Indigenous placemaking initiatives in the Toronto region. Selected project work includes:

- Collaborated with the Senior Urban Design Associate to write and coordinate adoption of the City of Vaughan's first City-Wide Urban Design Guidelines and Technical Manual. Revised and edited the guidelines with a focus on engaging and accessible language and visuals, which earned us the Canadian Institute of Planning 2020 Award for Planning Excellence.
- Conducted policy and best practice research, and provided graphic design and writing services for the 2017 Metrolinx Mobility Hub Policy Review, North Bay Downtown Waterfront Master Plan and Vaughan Zoning By-law Comprehensive Review.
- Facilitated workshops on Indigenous Placemaking for Canadian students, coordinated a cross-border tour of cultural placemaking case-studies for the City Councillor's Indigenous Business Incubator initiative, and presented ideas for Indigenous Placemaking in Ottawa to the National Capitol Commission.

Harvard Black in Design Conference | Cambridge, MA (2015)

Co-Chair - Led a small team of students to plan and execute the Harvard GSD African American Student Union's Black in Design Conference (the first conference at Harvard to recognize the contributions of African Americans in design professions and highlight the responsibility of designers to address structural inequality and institutionalized racism in their work).

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Professional Experience (continued)

Harvard Black in Design Conference | Cambridge, MA (2015 - continued)

- Crafted a social media campaign that brought 20 speakers and 500 scholars and practitioners to Harvard and garnered the attention of publications from The Atlantic City Lab to Metropolis Magazine.
- Designed wireframe for website and collaborated on the design for a print ad campaign.
- Curated a series of interactive workshops, performances, lectures and receptions for conference attendees.
- Collaborated with core committee members to raise over \$45,000 for conference expenses.

Theaster Gates' PlaceLab (University of Chicago) + Rebuild Foundation | Chicago, IL (Summer 2015)

Doebele Fellow – Selected by Director/Founder Theaster Gates to support culture-based programming for community and neighborhood revitalization in Gary, IN and Chicago, IL. Quickly integrated myself into a demanding, project-based work environment and eventually took leadership roles on multiple projects.

Selected Workshops, Lectures and Speaking Engagements

Alternative Presence Workshop Series (2019) – Developed a syllabus, secured funding and co-taught a creative learning workshop for high-school juniors and seniors with three landscape architects and designers, in partnership with the Manhattan YWCA. Culminating in a public exhibition inspired by the work of Octavia Butler, students interpreted survival skills, such as building shelter, creating interactive communication systems, resource mapping, wild edible plant harvesting alternativepresence.com

Making space for Voices of Color: The Legacy of the Black in Design Conference (2019) – Organized and moderated a panel on the legacy of the Black in Design Conference for Oslo and NYC based design practice Snøhetta's inaugural "Sandbox Series" event . This PechaKucha, followed by discussions with a group of experts in the field, addressed: the benefits of creating space for a diverse design workforce, and how to facilitate meaningful conversations about race and discrimination into the fields of architecture and planning.

"Collaborative Studio" Lecture, Parsons Design + Technology, BFA (2018) – Lecture on projects that bridge conceptual art and civic engagement for an interdisciplinary group of students with backgrounds in coding, video art, graphic design and interaction design.

Social Justice + Design, Northeastern University (2017) – Lecture titled "Performing Spatial Justice" for the Northeastern University School of Architecture Social Justice+ Design Lecture Series.

Designing Black Futures, Boston University Art Galleries (2017) – Panelist with Harvard 2016 Nasir Jones Hip Hop Archives Fellow Jon Jennings and Design Studio for Social Intervention founder Kenneth Bailey on art and black futurity.

Ethical Redevelopment in Chicago, University of Toronto (2016) – Lecture for University of Toronto Masters of Architecture students on tactics for ethical redevelopment and community-led design practices.

Selected Publications and Exhibitions

"Performing Spatial Justice", The SITE Magazine, Volume 40 (2019) – Article inspired by Masters Thesis research on cultural misreading and violent injustices in public space. The interdisciplinary project combines personal interviews, urban planning & design strategy, performance art and theoretical research to create interventions that can interrupt, illuminate and even subvert spatialized racial profiling. thesitemagazine.com

Occupancies, Boston University Art Galleries (2017) – Exhibited artwork with "Black Body Survival Guide" authors *Intelligent Mischief* as part of their installation for the Boston University 808 Gallery's group show. *Occupancies* selected artists from across the country to exhibit work that highlights the ability of collective and individual bodies to occupy space in resistance to systems of injustice.

Panama Canal, A Senior Thesis Exhibition, Princeton University (2014) – Multi-media exhibition exploring exclusivity and privatization in urban public spaces. Inspired by skateboarders' ability to democratize public spaces, the exhibition responds to two questions: How can the politics of public space be leveraged to address social inequalities? And how can the rest of us take back space to reap the benefits of an activity dominated by young men and boys? Exhibited at the Princeton University, Lewis Center for the Arts.