



Newark Riverfront Park's orange recycled PVC boardwalk under construction in Newark, New Jersey, called "a giant highlighter" by the *New York Times* and also commemorating the fight for environmental justice against the river's contamination by Agent Orange.



Survival 3000 Climate Change Shelter built by middle-school students & Hector as part of a week-long reality television production at the Canadian Centre for Architecture in Montréal, Canada.

PUBLIC PROGRAMS

OPENING NIGHT RECEPTION

FRIDAY, JUNE 30, 2017, 6-9 PM
SCREENING ROOM & YOUTH ARTS LOUNGE
Free w/ gallery admission

Celebrate the opening of *Space Brainz—Yerba Buena 3000*. The program begins at 6PM when designers Damon Rich and Jae Shin will be in conversation with Jeremy Liu and Janette Kim. They will discuss the exhibition and dissect how forces of power manifest themselves through physical spaces.

YERBA BUENA 3000

As part of the City Initiative Fellowship, Damon Rich will work with YBCA Youth Fellows and students from CCA in July and September to explore the question: How can Yerba Buena be redesigned to spur and support social movements? Through interviews with decision-makers, visits to significant sites, and the creation of drawings and models, the students will imagine how Yerba Buena can be adapted for the Bay Area in the year 3000.

Damon Rich and Jae Shin: Space Brainz—Yerba Buena 3000 is part of *The City Initiative*, a series of case studies by architects, designers, planners, and artists creating provocative work in the urban environment. It is curated by Lucía Sanromán, Director of Visual Arts, and organized by Martin Strickland, Exhibitions Associate. Damon Rich is the first City Initiative Fellow at Yerba Buena Center for the Arts.

Yerba Buena 3000, a workshop and art project for the exhibition *Damon Rich and Jae Shin: Space Brainz—Yerba Buena 3000*, is organized by Yerba Buena Center for the Arts, in collaboration with the Urban Works Agency and Center for Art and Public Life at the California College of the Arts and YBCA's Youth Fellows.

YBCA Exhibitions are made possible, in part, by The Andy Warhol Foundation for the Visual Arts, Meridee Moore and Kevin King, and United Airlines. YBCA Programs 2017-2018 are made possible, in part, by The James Irvine Foundation. Additional Funding for YBCA Programs 2017-2018: National Endowment for the Arts, Abundance Foundation, Grosvenor, and members of Yerba Buena Center for the Arts. Yerba Buena Center for the Arts is grateful to the City of San Francisco for its ongoing support.



Yerba Buena Center for the Arts (YBCA) is one of the nation's most innovative contemporary arts centers. Founded in 1993, YBCA's mission is to generate culture that moves people. Through powerful art experiences, thoughtful and provocative content, and deep opportunities for participation, YBCA is committed to creating an inclusive culture that awakens personal and societal transformation. YBCA presents a wide variety of programming year-round, including performing arts, visual arts, film/video and civic engagement. YBCA venues include the Forum, Screening Room, Galleries and the Yerba Buena Center for the Arts Theater. For tickets and information, call 415.978.ARTS (2787).

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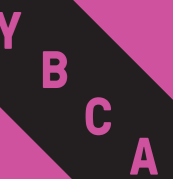
DAMON RICH AND JAE SHIN SPACE BRAINZ— YERBA BUENA 3000

YERBA BUENA
CENTER FOR
THE ARTS

JUN 30, 2017–
JAN 28, 2018

2ND FLOOR
GALLERIES

YBCA.ORG
#SPACEBRAINZ
#YERBABUENA3000



HECTOR AND LUCÍA SANROMÁN IN CONVERSATION

This interview was conducted on June 5, 2017 between Damon Rich and Jae Shin of Hector and Lucía Sanromán, Director of Visual Arts at YBCA.

LUCÍA SANROMÁN: You two describe Hector as an urban design, planning, and civic arts studio. How do you orient your practice with respect to these different fields?

DAMON RICH: We have learned tons from two traditions just outside, but right next to, architecture and urban planning: community organizing and popular education. In the United States, some of the relevant names are Ella Baker, Septima Clark, Saul Alinsky, Cesar Chavez, Myles Horton, Gale Cincotta, and lots more: that's what makes it a tradition! These lessons, which have come to us by way of people like Sister Carol Johnson, Damaris Reyes, Junius Williams, Mindy Fullilove, Shel Trapp, Joseph Heathcott, Nancy Zak, and many more, have helped us look for ways where people with our skill sets—drawing, visually analyzing, designing, building—can be helpful for people in these lines of work: design for organizing.

JAE SHIN: “Building with roots in organized communities” is one way to express this goal. How can we connect the choices involved in designing to these larger networks of accountability? How can we understand enough about a design to align it with the slow and fragile work of organizing—knocking on doors, flyering, setting up democratic governance, staying on top of government officials—all the patient labor of putting people together to create a political force? Trying to design in this way centers on how design objects take on social qualities and vice versa: how social relations and conflicts materialize through the design process.

LS: So there is an ethics in the way that the process of designing, and the object that is created, are imbricated in this work with community organizing and popular education, such that the projects themselves are relational objects in a sense—they are the process and also speak to or represent the process.

DR: Show me a non-relational object and I've got a bridge to sell you! Like most designers, our work makes us familiar with how objects and social relationships create and maintain each other, for better and worse. All *Space Brainz* pieces involve conflicts over space and who gets to use it for what: stories of oppression and liberation built into the landscape.

JS: Setting up and maintaining networks of accountability that discipline our design work is indispensable. For example, we use the WPTT test, which stands for “Who put that there?” Once something is built and becomes another concrete fact in somebody's space, what are the stories that will be told about the powers that put it there and why? It leads you to think about how the design and planning process might create shared understandings, in other words also serve as an opportunity for popular education. Our favorite projects always end with authorship and credit in a fog, but a clear and certain feeling of successful self-determination in the face of long odds.

DR: For example, one of the signs at Newark Riverfront Park talks about a fight in the early 2000s when a neighborhood coalition organized by Ironbound Community Corporation defeated a proposed baseball stadium that was to take the place of a park. This was the beginning of the movement that eventually led to the creation of the city's first riverfront parks and mandatory public access to the water. Our collaborators, clients, and constituents who had pushed through that long effort told us that they didn't want just a beautiful park that would let everyone forget the struggle that produced it. We were excited to work on ways to embed that story into the landscape.

LS: One of the remarkable things to me about that project is the multiple institutional roles you both played in it: civil servant, design consultant, boat tour guide, event planner. I could go on.

JS: Working within institutions, trying to push and extend what they do, and understanding their powers and constraints has been a theme in both of our careers. My most recent case was with the New York City Housing Authority, where I was charged with extending their recently reformed high-level policy goals to the hands-on design standards used

in renovating buildings that house half a million New Yorkers.

DR: From working inside of institutions, in my case the New York City Department of Parks and Recreation, the Center for Urban Pedagogy, and most recently the Newark Planning Office, we've had the chance to see firsthand how something actually happens—how a park design or a zoning plan gets pushed, pulled, and shaped by money, politics, and other forces. Those experiences make us skeptical of the growing “participation industry” and generalized calls for participatory or responsible design. For us, the real question is, responsible to whom?

LS: I read into the term “space brainz,” which titles this exhibition, a humorous way to describe the reactive intelligences of the forces that make a city. But for you two, where does “space brainz” come from?

JS: It started as a reference to the architectural term “space frame,” which is both a structural system used in wide-span buildings like the Moscone Center as well as a spatial metaphor heavily used in a strain of architectural history that includes Constant, Cedric Price, Archigram, Superstudio, Archizoom Associati, and more. Their speculative models and drawings often presented immense multilayered structures that might provide either complete liberation or total alienation for the humans that inhabited them.

DR: With the *Space Brainz* exhibition, one modest addition we wanted to make to this tradition was the role of collective action and conflict. In an imaginary building like Cedric Price's Fun Palace (which makes a cameo in our *Space Brainz* poster), where inhabitants pull levers and press buttons to rearrange the environment to their liking, what happens when one person dials up a shag carpet and another orders a hot tub? When people start throwing all those movable chairs into privately managed public spaces? And beyond individual points of disagreement, we want to emphasize the roles of explanations, arguments, and evidence to justify agendas: these are space brains at work. So down with dreams of a push-button future where conflict evaporates, whether through Fun Palace or Uber, and up with the radical democracy of negotiating in public.

A final spin on the normal pejorative use of the term is the sanctioned ignorance that oppression requires to continue. Like designing a shopping center as if people only move by private car in a city where half of families depend on walking and public transportation, which appears inside the space frame.

LS: So *Space Brainz* is a dystopic diorama, or the ideal representation of the un-idealized city, that follows the format of the large-scale model dioramas of the past that described the perfect modernist city. In this exhibition, we have this three-dimensional model, but it's also a kind of brain trust, described by showing and narrating the stories of the struggle that led to the building of a “generic” American city, often using Newark, where you live and work, as an example, along with Detroit, Philadelphia, New York, and Chicago. What do you hope the audience gains from going through this space?

DR: Well, we hope it's not pure dystopia, because we take to heart that we're on a long and worthwhile haul toward a world made by accountable development, toward the world we want, with the “we” an always unfinished project. We're not interested in replacing idealized images of visionary cities with sad news about “how it really turned out.” As my teacher Gayatri Spivak might say, let's not invert the opposition, but displace it! We want to hang on hard to some aspects of architecture's visionary tradition, in particular the rich set of tools for imagining different ways of living, and keep nurturing the roots of that in organized communities.

JS: There's a clear contrast in the exhibition between the abstract rainbow-colored grid of the display system and the rough and messy materiality of the projects it contains. Many of these drawings and designs were made in haste—in response to an urgent phone call, or waiting in the back of the mayor's Suburban, or in a real estate attorney's conference room. While they maintain some of that roughness, we've had the rare opportunity to look back and try to make sense of them for a different audience here in this exhibition. Cumulatively, we hope they convey how we at Hector approach the politics of living space and the role of imagination in making it. Rather than rely on the tired design idea of “reimagining” everything, we'd like to

take a moment to reimagine reimagining itself, turning around the abstractions often used to mask social conflict in cities—urban renaissance, redevelopment, repositioning—to serve accountable development.

Space Brainz features collaborations with organizations including the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), Ironbound Community Corporation, MIT Center for Advanced Visual Studies, Lower East Side Ecology Center, MDSAICA, MTWTF, Newark/Essex Foreclosure Taskforce, New Jersey Institute of Technology, Newark Municipal Green Team, Newark Office of the Urban Enterprise, Newark Planning Office, Newark Riverfront Revival, Mural Arts Philadelphia, SEAMAAC, SPARK, Friends of Riverfront Park, The Trust for Public Land, Unified Vailsburg Services Organization, Weintraub Diaz Landscape Architecture, Yendor Productions & students from City As School High School, Greater Newark Conservancy Junior Rangers, Philadelphia Youth Network, Saint Vincent Academy, Sussex Avenue School & UVSO summer camp.

Special appearances by Newark-based artists Manuel Acevedo, DJ Lilman, DJ Omar Abdallah, Kevin Darmanie, Jerry Gant, Gladys Barker Grauer, Kevin Sampson, Armisey Smith, Bisa Washington, Malik Whitaker & Jay Wilson.

Hector would like to thank the Graham Foundation for their support of the research for *Space Brainz* and the National Endowment for the Arts for their support of Newark Riverfront Revival and *People Power Planning Newark*.

ARTIST BIOS

Damon Rich is a designer, artist, and partner at Hector. He has previously served as Planning Director & Chief Urban Designer for the City of Newark and is the founder of the Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP), an internationally recognized nonprofit organization that uses art and design to increase meaningful civic engagement. His work has been recognized by the American Planning Association National Planning Award, Cooper Hewitt National Design Award, the Loeb Fellowship in Advanced Environmental Studies at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, the MacDowell Colony, and the United States Pavilion at the 11th International Architecture Exhibition in Venice.

Jae Shin is a partner at Hector whose work combines architecture, urban design, and exhibitions. She has recently served as an Enterprise Rose Architectural Fellow at the New York City Housing Authority (NYCHA), where she facilitated efforts to define and implement design principles for preserving and rehabilitating New York City's public housing. She holds degrees from Rhode Island School of Design and Princeton University and her projects have received support from the MacDowell Colony and the National Endowment for the Arts. Shin has led design studios at New Jersey Institute of Technology and the Harvard Graduate School of Design.

Hector is an urban design, planning, and civic arts studio whose recent projects include a memorial for an eco-feminist nun, a riverfront park, a fourteen-foot city model celebrating the 350th anniversary of the founding of Newark, New Jersey, and an experimental exhibition on mortgage finance. Hector's work has been exhibited at the Queens Museum, the Lisbon Architecture Triennale, the Newark Public Library, and the Philadelphia Mural Arts Gallery. Using the slogan “Design for Organizing,” Hector attempts to craft things so that people in the future will have a reasonable answer to the question, “Who put that there?” Hector's research into real estate development negotiations has been supported the National Endowment for the Arts and Graham Foundation for the Advanced Studies in the Fine Arts.