EDUCATOR, CATALYST, AND INCUBATOR FOR TRANSFORMATIONAL DESIGN IN THE PUBLIC INTEREST.

Archeworks is a Chicago-based multidisciplinary design educator that advances design in the public interest and inspires collaborative action to shape more healthy, sustainable and equitable communities. Community design partnerships and field-based action-research are central to an Archeworks education. Since our founding in 1994, we have collaborated with over 50 partners and completed more than 80 design projects in communities throughout Chicago.

ARCHEWORKS HIGHLIGHTS: 2011-12

Building Sustainable Food Systems: Growing Power
Our multi-year collaboration with Growing Power Chicago is guided by the principle that design can play a greater role in building accessible and equitable local food systems. Archeworks designers are developing prototypes to improve productivity and community involvement at Growing Power’s Iron Street Farm and other farms across the city. Last year, we created a multi-purpose shade canopy to support urban farm infrastructure, and worked with Growing Power staff to build and install this design at Altgeld Gardens, a public housing community on the city’s far Southside. The simple structure provides shelter from the elements, creates a place to prep harvested produce, and serves as an anchor for community gatherings. The team also produced an illustrated manual for easy and affordable canopy construction at urban farm sites.

Placemaking for a New Creative Hub: EnVision Cermak
In 2011-12, an Archeworks team collaborated with the City of Chicago’s Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events to lay the foundation for a new cultural economic development initiative that transforms an industrial area into a vibrant hub for Chicago’s creative enterprises. Our team proposed placemaking and wayfinding strategies to build interest among entrepreneurs, artists, and visitors in the future Cermak Creative Industries District situated between Pilsen and Chinatown. We also produced a short film to raise awareness about opportunities to create a barrier-free district that is more easily navigated by people of all abilities. (See our film at archeworks.org)

Exhibit & Workshop in partnership with Chicago Architecture Foundation
The Chicago Architecture Foundation’s exhibit Unseen City: Designs for a Future Chicago features Archeworks’ model, website, short film, and self-guided tour of the proposed Cermak District. This show runs through May 2013. Drawing inspiration from our EnVision Cermak project, Archeworks designers also led a site-based workshop that challenged high school students to map seen and unseen boundaries in the proposed District.

Garlic & Greens: Accessible Soul Food Stories
This public program series and oral history project explored multisensory design and the intersections between migration history, culinary heritage, and healthy eating in the African-American community. Led by Archeworks Fellow Fereshteh Toosi, the program included a six-week tactile design workshop and panel discussions featuring artists with disabilities, food activists, historians and writers. A limited-edition multisensory book-in-a-box was unveiled this fall. (Please contact soulfoodstories@gmail.com to order your copy.)

Art Institute of Chicago Exhibit
Archeworks’ Bringing People to the Table tells the story of the collaborative design process that launched our Mobile Food Collective and traces our journey to the 2010 Venice Biennale. Now part of the Art Institute of Chicago’s permanent Architecture and Design collection, our book was featured last spring and summer in Rethinking Typologies: Architecture and Design. (See the publication on-line at archeworks.org/publications.cfm)

See reverse for news about our expanded programs...
Expanded Programming to Advance Our Public Interest Design Mission

Our expanded programs advance our work as an educator, incubator, and catalyst for transformational design in the public interest. These short-segment seminars and workshops are attracting a cross-section of emerging, mid-career, and senior-level participants seeking to bring greater meaning and impact to their work. Each of these multidisciplinary learning opportunities aligns with our thematic framework:

- New Practice & Civic Innovation
- Generative Placemaking
- Enabling Environments
- Sustainable Food & Community Health

New Practice & Civic Innovation Seminar Series

These peer-to-peer seminars explore emerging models of practice that more fully integrate socially-engaged work in the design professions. Our broad aim is to promote cross-disciplinary dialogue and encourage designers to expand their roles as collaborators, community builders, and civic innovators whose specialized expertise adds significant public value. The month-long seminars, held last spring and this fall, engaged over 35 mid- and senior-level designers across diverse disciplines. We will announce our spring seminar schedule soon.

Enabling Design: Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago

Accessibility and inclusive design are core tenants of our design education mission. Now in the sixth year of our universal design partnership with the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago, we are designing enabling environments, programs, and tools that promote greater experiential equity for people of all abilities. We continue to benefit from the insight of stroke survivors and staff therapists enrolled in our year-long Sustainable Urban Design certificate program.

Humanizing Technology: Design Research Project for Stroke

Since our founding, we have prototyped many human-centered design solutions for disability-related challenges. This year Archeworks Fellow, Patrick Cunningham, is exploring new approaches to interactive technology for stroke survivors. His research builds on our partnership with the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago’s Stroke Research Center.

Elemental Mud Workshop Series - Fall and Spring

Ecological systems designer and horticulturalist, Nance Klehm, is leading a three-part hands-on workshop series that explores soil and water as dynamic systems in our city’s biological infrastructure. Workshops culminate in the collaborative creation of a site-based working model. The first month-long SOIL workshop took place this fall at Inspiration Kitchens in Garfield Park. We improved an existing garden by designing a compost sourcing strategy, enhancing growing beds and installing a carbon storage and compost system. Next March, Nance will lead a WATER workshop exploring urban water systems design. (Please see our website for more details.)

Wastestreams Film Salon

In the spirit of community cinema, this fall we are hosting monthly film salons revealing the complex and disquieting nature of urban wastestreams. Nance Klehm, our salon curator, facilitates lively audience conversations following each screening. The fourth film salon takes place on Monday, Dec 10 from 6-9 pm at the Nightingale. Please join us!