

2020-21 Exhibit Columbus J. Irwin and Xenia S. Miller Prize Installations Captions/Credits

New Middles Graphic: Some All None

2020-21 J. Irwin and Xenia S. Miller Prize Recipients
[Headshots Folder](#)

Dream the Combine (Minneapolis)

Jennifer Newsom and Tom Carruthers

Columbus Columbia Columbo Colón

Columbus, and the places named after him, together form a series of associations—of American identity, capital, and property—that have considerable momentum. *Columbus Columbia Columbo Colón* is an investigation of these relationships. The installation in Mill Race Park is designed to make the invisible visible, through an overlay of material, texts, and discursive narratives that represent this system we negotiate every day. The installation consists of 58 vertical elements that represent the 58 distinct places named “Columbus” in the world. By navigating between each of the poles, visitors are invited to become curious about what Columbus, as a system, props up, and how this founding narrative pervades our understanding of what constitutes our collective story. Columbus, Indiana is not just a city, it is part of a larger complex of meaning and signification—the persistence of its continuing legacy is one that we all must grapple with.

Image Captions

[01](#)



(image credit: Dream the Combine)

Ecosistema Urbano (Miami and Madrid, Spain)

Belinda Tato and Jose Luis Vallejo

CLOUDROOM

Today, as teaching and learning are forced by pandemic conditions to explore new formats, *Cloudroom* aims to rethink how education can take place through the physical space itself. Situated on the grounds of Central Middle School, the proposed installation is designed as a host and physical support for learning, as well as a compelling artifact to raise awareness about today's environmental challenges.

An inflatable “cloud” floats over a wooden structure, creating an inviting atmosphere and an environment with a comfortable microclimate to carry out a variety of activities between the school and the public space, encouraging learning through direct experience. The physical object, located at an intermediate scale between the school and the city, acts as a mediating space between school users and a broader Columbus community.

The design is based on two approaches: social and ecological. The installation is a place for learning, playing, connecting, and interacting. The inflatable can be used as part of the teaching process, becoming an immersive experience. *Cloudroom*'s architectural expression evokes the elements of a dome and oculus, reminding visitors and students of historic architectural features. Its visible supports demonstrate the forces that act upon it, from gravity to wind, allowing a better understanding of physical structures.

To express an ecological approach, *Cloudroom* is connected to real time environmental sensors, and illumination within the inflatable changes colors accordingly. The aim is to raise awareness among visitors and users about their immediate environment, and how Columbus conditions are linked to broader issues of climate change. Additionally, the installation is made of materials (printed fabric, ropes and wood) which are meant to be reused and recycled at the close of the exhibition.

01

[CLOUDROOM Elevation](#)

(image credit: Rendering courtesy Ecosistema Urbano)



02

[CLOUDROOM Overview](#)

(image credit: Rendering courtesy Ecosistema Urbano)

Future Firm (Chicago)

Ann Lui and Craig Reschke

Midnight Palace

Columbus is a city of night owls: 39% of the population works in manufacturing, compared to 9% nationwide. Among this group, many second and third shift workers begin their “days” in the evening and finish work in the morning. Other residents also burn the midnight oil: restaurant workers, truckers on I65, parents of newborns, dedicated stargazers, residents with families overseas. However, many civic and amenity spaces only serve the sunlit-hours. *Midnight Palace* asks: How can we design for the midnight city?

Midnight Palace is inspired by the atmospheric qualities of nighttime and designed for the city’s night owls. Located at the Cummins Sears Building, it features a “wall of light” made from the historic light-bulbs from Columbus’ streetscape: old high-pressure sodium fixtures, contemporary LEDs, signal lights for the adjacent train. Built from a lattice-work of electrical conduit, its method of construction highlights the elegant and often invisible craft of trade electricians. The pavilion will feature a series of “drive-in” and “walk-by” screens for gatherings of different scales, including partner programming with community organizations. Additionally, the screens will present a participatory work, “Night Owl Map of Columbus,” highlighting the interviews with residents and the city’s nighttime wonders, past, present and future.

01

[Midnight Palace Elevation](#)

(image credit: Rendering courtesy of Future Firm)

02

[Midnight Palace Interior](#)

(image credit: Rendering courtesy of Future Firm)



Olalekan Jeyifous (Brooklyn)

ARCHIVAL/REVIVAL

The Cleo Rogers Memorial Library had its official open house in December, 1969. One of the very first exhibits to take place in the new building was an African Art exhibit which opened in late January, 1970, in the library's gallery on the plaza level. The exhibit was part of a two-month long program developed by the Human Relations Commission called "Africa and Black and White America". In the fall of that same year the Human Relations Commission then organized the "Columbus Black Arts Festival", which took place over six weeks. All but one event was held at the Cleo Rogers Memorial Library.

Archival/Revival revisits these inaugural and transformative exhibitions through a series of engaging, interactive, and programmable "thresholds/moments" that allow visitors to explore their historical significance to our present and future realities. The installation is both sculptural, with elements representing key figures revived from the archive, and virtual. Augmented reality (AR) documents and artworks can be viewed via a mobile phone or tablet.

[01](#)

(image credit: Rendering courtesy of Olalekan Jeyifous)

[02](#)

(image credit: Rendering courtesy of Olalekan Jeyifous)

Sam Jacob Studio (London, England)

Sam Jacob

Alternative Instruments

High readers, heraldry and other figures of speech for Washington Street

Alternative Instruments attempts to respond to Columbus as a site, place, a history but also a fiction. It recognizes the achievements of mid-twentieth-century history of Columbus, driven by J. Irwin Miller's belief in the ability of architecture and design to improve the life of its citizens. His ambition



recalled both the earlier European Modernist project and the utopian impulse of early European settlements in America.

Yet Utopia itself is bound up with European expansionism and colonialism. The novel Thomas More published in 1516— that coined the term “utopia”—was itself styled as a travelogue. His story of a fictitious New World island was modeled on the accounts of European voyages. More’s imaginary “good place” and the visionary ideas of communitarian life it expresses are intertwined up with the history of colonialism.

The design proposals for Washington Street respond to this dual history. They add a new layer of civic design to the city. These are formed by combining multiple references: The original maps from More’s book, as well as the Utopian alphabet that it also contained. It takes references from typical Americana roadside signs as well as more ancient communication devices like weathervanes. Its symbols include the measuring chains used by the British to claim territory. Quilts (recalling the vernacular traditions of the US) with phrases taken from *Utopia* (and written in Utopian) will be hung along the street. Familiar, optimistic yet also explicitly alienating. Symbolism from sailing ships combines with Venturi and Scott Brown’s study of Las Vegas. Neon and gold leaf are used together, bridging multiple civic design languages. Robert Indiana is translated into Utopian, Henry Moore is remade as a backlit sign.

The project aims to make present how histories of place are interconnected. It aims to acknowledge how central narratives are to the ways in which (and for who) we design. It uses design to excavate and propose new narratives that can help shape how we imagine the future.

[01](#)

(image credit: Rendering courtesy of Sam Jacob Studio)

[02](#)

(image credit: Rendering courtesy of Sam Jacob Studio)

