Socially Engaged Practice

Courses and projects that address systemic social, economic, and environmental issues
Collaboration

We work alongside communities to help spark change. Through longstanding partnerships with local organizations and grants like the CityStudioSTL Student Award, there are many ways for students to engage directly with others.

Public Lab River Rat Pack

*Led by associate professor Derek Hoeferlin*

In this architecture seminar, students utilized tools from the nonprofit Public Lab. Using camera rigs attached to balloons and kites, students took 27,000+ aerial photographs along the River des Peres, Mississippi, and Missouri rivers to educate local communities about the critical importance of our watersheds.
Apparel Strategy: Occupational Therapy and Fashion Collaboration

Led by associate professor Mary Ruppert-Stroescu
A team of interdisciplinary students, led by faculty from the Sam Fox School, the School of Engineering & Applied Science, and the School of Medicine’s program in Occupational Therapy, created prototype garments tailored to the needs of athletes with disabilities.

Segregation by Design

Supported by The Divided City: An Urban Humanities Initiative
Led by assistant professor Catalina Freixas and professor Mark Abbott of Harris-Stowe State University

Graduate architecture and urban design students from the Sam Fox School and Harris-Stowe State University researched how policy and planning decisions have led to urban segregation. They proposed specific interventions, which ranged from creating new services and development to community land trusts.

Content to Cover

Led by professor Ken Botnick
Undergraduate design students worked with alumni of the Prison Performing Arts program to produce an illustrated book of poetry, theater, and other creative work.

ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES

+ Baden Open Space Plan
+ Better Health Through Art
+ Interaction Design: Understanding Health and Well-Being
+ Mobility for All
Art, architecture, and design can change our perspective on where and how we live. Through site-specific installations, grassroots campaigns, and interventions, we design for a transformed world.

**PXSTL: A Way, Away (Listen While I Say)**

In this collaboration with the Pulitzer Arts Foundation, Chicago-based artists Amanda Williams and Andres L. Hernandez transformed a building slated for demolition into a site for dialogue and rethinking. Through a five-step process—marking, subtracting, translating, shaping, and healing—the community was brought together to consider how we might think differently about public spaces, vacancy, and loss.
**Voice Studio**

*Led by lecturer Scott Gericke*

Students in this undergraduate design course explored how messages can convince people to think about important issues in a new way. Working as a collective, they developed a campaign called “Vote, Dammit!” to encourage the WashU community to vote.

**Student Leadership and Training**

*Supported, in part, by the Gephardt Institute*

Through programs like Civic Scholars and the Design Futures Public Interest Design Leadership Forum, students develop civic leadership skills. Students can apply for grants to pursue internships or projects in community development, public art, local history, and more. Through these engagements, students develop an equitable foundation to design with—not just for—people.

**ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES**

+ University City Public Art Series
+ Design for Social Impact
+ Planting Design
+ Propaganda to Decoration: Public Expression, Individual Voice, and the Persistence of Hope
+ Social Ecologies of Harlem
+ Spectroplexus: St. Louis Lambert International Airport Art & Culture Program
A map from a new perspective. A vision of a new arts economy. A student’s first design experience. By working hands-on with our partners, we challenge each other to create a more equitable, sustainable, and beautiful future.

**The Alberti Program: Architecture for Young People**

Supported by PGAV Destinations and The Divided City: An Urban Humanities Initiative

This long-running program brings Sam Fox School students together with fourth- through tenth-graders from across the St. Louis region. Through workshop activities, they engage in the messy, creative process that expands their understanding of architecture, sustainability, and design thinking. The program is tuition-free.
UrbArts: Art Center in North St. Louis  
Led by visiting professor Jan Ulmer  
Graduate architecture students worked with the nonprofit UrbArts on transforming a long-vacant building—the Mullanphy Emigrant Home—into a 22,000-square-foot space for visual and performing arts. The studio focused on utilizing adaptive reuse techniques in St. Louis’ historic Old North neighborhood.

Tale of Two Cities: Documenting Our Divides  
Led by professor Denise Ward-Brown  
In this undergraduate art course, students from across the University created documentary videos about how modern segregation is being combatted in St. Louis. Each student selected a community organization to work with, and through interviews and recorded footage, they captured the immediacy of our current historical moment.

ADDITIONAL INITIATIVES  
+ Foodscapes: Art Food Space Activism  
+ Metamorphic Cities: Sustainable Strategies for Adaptive Reuse  
+ Radical Design  
+ Special Topics in Fashion: Fashion and Race  
+ Visual Journalism and Reportage Drawing
Get Involved

>> samfoxschool.wustl.edu/engage

PXSTL: A Way, Away (Listen While I Say), created by Amanda Williams & Andres Hernandez, in partnership with the Sam Fox School and the Pulitzer Arts Foundation. In the project’s marking phase, members of the community paint a building gold prior to its demolition. See inside for details.

Questions? Contact Liz Kramer, Associate Director, Office for Socially Engaged Practice at kramer@wustl.edu