

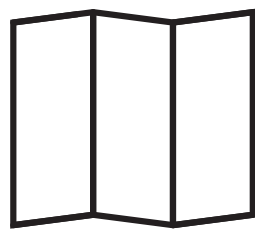
CYCLE
03

THE
WORLD
AROUND



YOUNG CLIMATE PRIZE

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ABOUT

Founded in 2022 by The World Around, the Young Climate Prize is a biennial mentorship and awards program celebrating a new generation of climate leaders working to address the world’s most urgent social and environmental challenges.

Every two years, a cohort of climate advocates under the age of 25 are selected through a global open call, then matched with world-class mentors across a range of related disciplines. Over a three-month design academy, finalists participate in training sessions, lectures, and workshops structured to help develop the resilience, impact, and scalability of their projects.

The extraordinary work of these young people often stems from stories that involve floods, extreme heat, pollution, and lack of access to clean air, water, and healthcare. Their projects span ecological restoration, material and product innovation, direct action and advocacy, and so much more, displaying profound creativity and resilience of a generation born into the climate crisis.

I am deeply grateful to The World Around’s board of directors for their steadfast belief in this initiative, the Young Climate Prize Design Partner, MillerKnoll, for their impactful support, Young Climate Prize Initiative Partner, Obel, and, Young Climate Prize Academic Partner Architectural Association, as well as the Young Climate Prize team, advisory board, jury and this cycle’s Mentors and Masterclass Leaders.

I hope you enjoy reading about the remarkable Young Climate Prize cohort as much as we do.

Beatrice Galilee
Founder and Executive Director
The World Around

YOUNG
CLIMATE
PRIZE

“The Young Climate Prize is a gold standard example of how a new generation of architects, designers and thinkers is mobilising to address the most urgent crises of our time. I have no doubt it will become one of the most important initiatives in shaping and empowering the next generation of architects.”

Joseph Grima
Cycle 03 Mentor

CYCLE 03 TIMELINE



JUNE 30, 2026 **APPLICATIONS CLOSE**

The application period closes, and The World Around begins reviewing submissions from the next generation of climate leaders.

SEPTEMBER 2026 **MENTORSHIPS & DESIGN ACADEMY BEGINS**

Cohort members begin three months of one-on-one mentorship alongside workshops and lectures led by international architects, designers and experts.

DECEMBER 2026 **PROGRAM CONCLUDES**

Cohort members submit updated project materials demonstrating how their work has developed over the course of the program.



APRIL 2027 **WINNERS PRESENT AT THE WORLD AROUND SUMMIT**

The cycle culminates with the winners presenting their projects at The World Around Summit 2027 in New York City.

APRIL 22, 2026 **APPLICATIONS OPEN**

Cycle 03 opens for applications on Earth Day.



SEPTEMBER 2026 **COHORT 03 ANNOUNCED**

During New York Climate Week, 25 young changemakers are announced as the Cycle 03 cohort.



JANUARY 2027 **JURY CONVENES**

An international jury reviews each project's development and impact and selects three prize winners.

DESIGN ACADEMY

A fundamental component of the Young Climate Prize mentorship program is the Design Academy, which invites the entire cohort of under 25s to enroll in a three-month intensive program of participatory group lectures, workshops, and discussions hosted by The World Around's global network of leading architects, artists, curators, scientists, and storytellers. Supplementing the cohort's individual mentoring sessions, this bespoke world-class educational program was designed to cover a broad range of topics that would help all of these young thinkers and makers to further expand their knowledge, and share ideas and reflections with professionals and peers alike.

This Cycle, The Architectural Association is supporting the Young Climate Prize as an Academic Partner and will provide the cohort with resources to empower their work as designers living and working on the front lines of the climate crisis. The Architectural Association Library holds a globally significant collection of books, representing almost 48,000 volumes on history of architecture, architectural theory, contemporary architectural design, building types, interior design, landscape design. Beyond the collections, the Librarians offer years of expertise supporting the fields of architecture and design, providing a library service ranked as one of the best in UK Higher Education.

YOUNG CLIMATE PRIZE

EMERGING ECOLOGIES CARSON CHAN

Carson Chan is Chief Curator and Director of Curatorial Affairs of the new Museum of Architecture and Design in Helsinki, where he leads the museum's curatorial vision across exhibitions, collections, research, publications, and public programming. Previously, Chan was the inaugural director of the Emilio Ambasz Institute for the Joint Study of the Built and the Natural Environment at MoMA, where he also served as a curator in the Department of Architecture and Design.

STORYTELLING ALICE RAWSTHORN

Alice Rawsthorn is an award-winning design critic and author, whose books include *Hello World: Where Design Meets Life* (Hamish Hamilton, 2013), *Design as an Attitude* (JRP Ringier, 2018), and *Design Emergency: Building a Better Future*, co-written with Paola Antonelli, senior curator of architecture and design at MoMA, New York (Phaidon, 2022). Rawsthorn's weekly design column for The New York Times was syndicated worldwide for over a decade.

CONTEXTUAL ARCHITECTURE SAMEEP PADORA

Architect Sameep Padora established his Mumbai-based practice (sP+a) in 2007. Across a portfolio of diverse public, cultural, and residential projects, the firm has established an approach based on context and collaboration, aiming to expand the definition of "preservation" to allow tradition to evolve. The firm's work has been widely published both in India and internationally.

SPATIAL JUSTICE MARIAM ISSOUFOU

Mariam Issoufou is an architect from Niger. In 2014, she founded Mariam Issoufou Architects, a research-based practice whose designs emerge as creative responses to identity, place, and history. With offices in Niamey, New York, and Zurich, the firm's completed projects include the Hikma Community Complex, Niamey 2000, and Dandaji Regional Market in Niger; and Gourmega, in New York. Upcoming projects include the Yantala Office in Niger, the Ellen Johnson Sirleaf Presidential Center for Women and Development in Liberia, and the Bët-bi Museum in Senegal.

SETTING & PRESENTING GOALS WILL HUNTER

Will Hunter is a New York-based British entrepreneur, educator, designer, writer, and editor whose work explores the intersection of cities, design, technology, and people. He founded the London School of Architecture in 2015, a fully accredited alternative model for architectural education in the UK, which merged with the University of the Built Environment in 2025.

GOOD SHOUT PUBLIC SPEAKING TRAINING AMY KEAN

Amy Kean is a creative sociologist, bestselling author, and the CEO and creative director of Good Shout: a social L&D company that helps people find their voice. Her 20-year advertising career featured leadership innovation roles in some of the world's biggest agencies for some of the world's most culturally relevant brands, but now she spends her time helping people communicate in a way that's real, confident, and completely unforgettable.

DESIGN AND COMMUNITY ARIC CHEN

Aric Chen is director of the Zaha Hadid Foundation, the London-based cultural foundation established by the late architect Zaha Hadid. American-born, Aric previously served as general and artistic director of the Nieuwe Instituut in Rotterdam; professor and founding director of the Curatorial Lab at the College of Design & Innovation at Tongji University in Shanghai; curatorial director of the Design Miami fairs in Miami Beach and Basel.

“The Young Climate Prize is an important endeavour, that puts the future of our planet in the hands of the generation that will inhabit it in the years to come.”

Sameep Padora
Masterclass Leader

MEET TOMORROW

Meet the new cohort of young climate designers, innovators and changemakers selected for the third cycle of The World Around's Young Climate Prize.

Chosen from 490 applications spanning 83 countries, these exceptional young people aged between 16-25 impressed us with the ambition, ingenuity and impact of their self-initiated projects, each already creating meaningful change within their communities and beyond. From cellulose-based batteries and mycelium materials to coral restoration, carbon removal, wildfire recovery, and clean-air technologies, this year's cohort is reimagining how we design, repair, and relate to our world.

Guiding them as their mentors for this cycle, are leading voices across disciplines, including designer Bruce Mau; MoMA curator Paola Antonelli; landscape architect and 2019 MacArthur Fellow Walter Hood; architects Tatiana Bilbao, and Xu Tiantian; Pentagram partner Harry Pearce; filmmaker Fernando Frías; and many more. They will also participate in the Young Climate Prize Design Academy, a three-month program of talks, workshops and strategy sessions designed to help them develop their ideas, strengthen their skills and expand their impact. At the end of the program, an international jury will select three prize winners who will present their work and their visions for a more resilient future at The World Around Summit 2027.

“The deeply impressive work by this year's cohort is a reminder that some of the most rigorous and relevant design solutions won't come from the top down, and many of our future climate leaders are just getting started.”

Beatrice Galilee
The World Around

CYCLE 03 COHORT



AHMED SAJIDAN
JARJIS RAFSAN
(23)
BANGLADESH



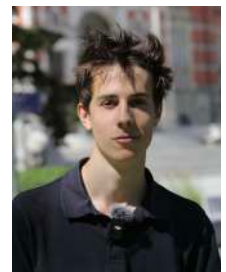
AJ
RAYMUNDO
(23)
PHILIPPINES



ARIANA AGARWAL &
VIVAAN CHHAWCHHARIA
(16)
INDIA



CARLA GHEORGHE &
RAREȘ GHEORGHE
(16)
ROMANIA



BOLESŁAW
JACASZEK
(18)
POLAND



CARLO
CHARLES
(25)
SINGAPORE



CLÉUSIA
CARDINA
(24)
MOZAMBIQUE



CRISTIAN JOSSIAS
BEKER QUINTERO
(18)
PANAMÁ



DENISE
AYEBARE
(23)
UGANDA



ELLA
CSUKA
(25)
USA



EMA
POPOSKA
(18)
CHINA



GAURI
GAUTAM
(25)
INDIA



JANET DETE &
DAMARIS KURIA
(25)
KENYA



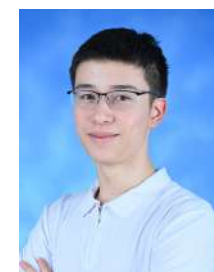
PYNBHAIROH SNIDVONGS
KRUESOPON &
CHARLOTTE KHOO
(19)
THAILAND



ROBYN
CAMILLE MIJARES
(25)
PHILIPPINES



RUSHIL
HARI KOPPAKA
(24)
INDIA



RYAN
MURPHY
(16)
THAILAND



SOFÍA
MÉNDEZ ROCA
(19)
BOLIVIA



SUMAYA
SAIDI
(21)
AFGHANISTAN



VELDESEN
YAPUTRA
(24)
INDONESIA



WILLIAM
TAN
(15)
USA



PROTECTING PUBLIC HEALTH

Meet the young climate leaders
designing for healthier, safer and
more resilient communities.



**AHMED SAJIDAN
JARJIS RAFSAN
(23)**
HUMANITARIAN AID &
HEALTHCARE INNOVATOR
BANGLADESH



**ARIANA AGARWAL &
VIVAAN CHHAWCHHARIA
(16)**
CLEAN WATER
ENTREPRENEUR
INDIA

SHIRIN SAJMILA INTERNATIONAL FOUNDATION (SSIF)

Rafsan's work spans humanitarian response, medical design, and climate research. He founded the Shirin Sajmila International Foundation (SSIF) as a humanitarian and health systems nonprofit in 2016, named for his mother and sister. Today, SSIF reports reaching more than 700,000 people in over 10 countries, supporting 200,000 flood-affected families, treating 25,000 patients and distributing 15,000 menstrual-hygiene kits to date. In Bangladesh, its more than 20 flood shelters host preventive-health workshops and specialized training in maternal healthcare during floods. In 2023, he launched ApexStride, a medical technology venture building repairable prosthetic and biomedical systems for humid, flood-prone settings. Rafsan also co-runs the Caribbean Studies Network, which trains island-community researchers and develops climate-adaptation curricula, with work presented at Yale- and Harvard-affiliated forums.

@sajijarjis | www.ssifglobal.org



**DANIEL
PERLIN
MENTOR**

Daniel Perlin is the founder of Make_Good_, an experience design studio dedicated to planetary design, and the Global Lead of Experience Design at Accenture Song Sustainability. As a designer and artist, he has produced a wide range of works—from screen-based experiences to objects, installations, and spaces for some of the world's biggest artists and brands.

PLAS-STICK

Plas-Stick is a low-cost, biodegradable material designed to remove microplastics from drinking water. Made from discarded tamarind seeds and magnetic nanoparticles, it binds tiny plastic particles into visible clumps that can be pulled from the water with a simple magnet. The process requires neither electricity nor complex filtration infrastructure, making it particularly useful in rural and water-stressed settings. By turning food waste into a water-treatment material, the project connects two forms of pollution within a single circular system while working toward cleaner drinking water for students and families.

[in/ariana-agarwal](#) | [in/vivaan-chhawchharia](#)



**BRUCE
MAU
MENTOR**

Bruce Mau is a designer, author and educator who co-founded Massive Change Network with Bisi Williams. His life-centered design methodology treats design as a systems practice connecting human and ecological well-being. He has designed more than 250 books, including S,M,L,XL with Rem Koolhaas, and co-authored The Nexus. His life and work are the subject of the documentary Mau (2021).



**CARLA GHEORGHE &
RAREȘ GHEORGHE
(16)
CITIZEN SCIENTISTS
ROMANIA**

LICHENARY

Lichenary is a citizen science platform using lichens as bioindicators to measure air quality and make atmospheric pollution visible. Working with a global volunteer network, the project has documented over 800 lichens across more than 15 countries, translating them into an interactive online map. An identification guide, workshops, webinars and public campaigns allow participants without formal scientific training to contribute observations with just their phones. The siblings are now expanding the project from monitoring pollution to mitigating it, developing moss-based biofiltration panels designed to absorb urban pollutants.

@lichenary.ro



**MICHAEL
WANG
MENTOR**

Michael Wang is an artist examining climate, ecology, extraction and capital through regional and planetary systems. Projects include Extinct in the Wild, on species surviving only under human care; First Forest, a reconstructed Carboniferous forest; Carbon Copies, tracing art's greenhouse-gas emissions; and 10000 li, 100 billion kilowatt-hours, using Shanghai hydropower to freeze a facsimile of Yangtze headwater glaciers.

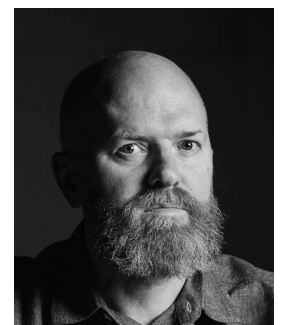


**RYAN
MURPHY
(16)
AIR PURIFICATION
INVENTOR
THAILAND**

AIR PURE PROJECT

While teaching violin in Khlong Toei, Murphy saw students struggle with nosebleeds and asthma in music rooms exposed to heavy particulate pollution. After more than 100 hours of research and 15 prototypes, he built a HEPA purifier from locally available components for less than \$30, with airflow approaching that of commercial units. Working with the Bangkok Community Help Foundation, he has placed more than 60 purifiers in the music school, nearby schools and family homes. A fourth version combines air filtration with a mosquito trap, extending the design around two everyday health pressures.

@airpureproject



**JON
MARSHALL
MENTOR**

Jon Marshall is a British industrial designer based in London. He is a partner at the design studio Pentagram. His work fuses product design with strategy, packaging and digital experiences. He studied design at Ravensbourne College and then the Royal College of Art and began his design career working for Ross Lovegrove and then Pentagram where he worked for Daniel Weil.



**RUSHIL
HARI KOPPAKA
(24)
CARBON REMOVAL
ENTREPRENEUR
INDIA**

ALKAMY CARBON

Alkamy Carbon is piloting wastewater alkalinity enhancement in Mumbai. The process adds alkaline minerals to treatment systems, accelerating a natural weathering reaction that removes carbon dioxide from the atmosphere and stores it in a stable dissolved form. By working within existing water infrastructure, the company aims to lower the cost of carbon removal while improving water quality and producing measurements that can be independently checked. The pilot reframes an ordinary municipal facility as a place where wastewater treatment, atmospheric carbon and ocean health can be addressed through the same operating system.

[in/rushilkoppaka](#) | www.alkamycarbon.com



**SOFÍA
MÉNDEZ ROCA
(19)
WILDFIRE ADAPTATION
INNOVATOR
BOLIVIA**

PYROGEL

PyroGel combines plant-derived polymers, silica and natural minerals in a coating designed to cool vegetation, insulate it from heat and slow ignition. Unlike water, which evaporates quickly, or some commercial fire gels, the material is intended to remain on the landscape longer without contaminating the soil. Méndez Roca began developing it after Bolivia's 2024 fire season burned 12.6 million hectares and after a park ranger from an Indigenous community described the need for a suppressant that would last without polluting the land. The project remains focused on formulation, testing and scientific validation.

[in/sofia-mendez-roca](#)



**BRIAN
BUTTERFIELD
MENTOR**

Brian Butterfield is an architect and exhibition designer focused on how museums and cultural spaces can respond to social, technological and environmental change. He has led teams at WHY Architecture, served as a senior design manager at The Metropolitan Museum of Art and taught at the Yale School of Architecture. He serves on the advisory board of Oaxaca nonprofit Pocoapoco.

INVENTING ALTERNATIVES

Meet the young climate leaders
rethinking materials, creating
new systems and transforming
the existing.





**CARLO
CHARLES
(25)**
BATTERY DEVELOPER
SINGAPORE



**ELLA
CSUKA
(25)**
MATERIALS SCIENTIST
USA

FLINT

Flint is developing a rechargeable battery made from agricultural waste and cellulose, without lithium, cobalt, nickel or other toxic materials. The company reports that the battery is fire-safe, composts within six weeks and produces up to 95 percent lower carbon emissions than a lithium-ion equivalent. Thus far, it has brought two products to market and reports \$2 billion in letters of intent from companies including Apple, Samsung, Logitech, LEGO and Belkin. The project asks whether energy storage designed for a lower-carbon economy can also reduce the extraction, toxicity and disposal problems associated with conventional batteries.

[in/company/flintpaperbattery](#) | [www.flintlabs.com](#)



**HARRY
PEARCE**
MENTOR

Harry Pearce is a graphic designer, artist and photographer and a partner at Pentagram, which he joined in 2006. Working across identities, installations and books, his clients have included the Guggenheim, Liberty, Abu Dhabi Cultural Quarter, PEN International and the United Nations.

ECOTUNE

Ecotune develops nature-inspired, bio-based textiles as alternatives to petroleum-derived materials. The company is working to turn renewable feedstocks into circular products for fashion, footwear, interiors, furniture and automotive applications, reducing both toxic inputs and carbon emissions. Its research has received funding from the U.S. National Science Foundation, the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency and Alexis Ohanian's 776 Foundation. Ecotune has also attracted interest from brands across the industries it hopes to serve, connecting laboratory research with the requirements of large-scale manufacturing and product design.

[in/ellacsuka](#) | [www.ecotuneinc.com](#)



**PAOLA
ANTONELLI**
MENTOR

Paola Antonelli is senior curator of architecture and design at The Museum of Modern Art and its founding director of research and development. Her exhibitions and R&D Salons examine design in relation to technology, society and the environment. With design critic Alice Rawsthorn, Antonelli co-founded Design Emergency, an Instagram platform, book and podcast documenting how design responds to crises and imagines different futures.



**GAURI
GAUTAM
(25)**
BIOMATERIALS DESIGNER
USA

MYCELIUS

Mycelius uses mycelium—the root-like structure of fungi—to transform agricultural and textile waste into low-carbon materials for interiors and other design applications. Growing new products from locally available waste streams, the company aims to replace more extractive or toxic materials while reducing emissions and keeping discarded matter in use. This work brings biotechnology, product design and circular manufacturing into the same development process, with an emphasis on creating materials that can move from laboratory experimentation into practical use in buildings and everyday spaces.

@mycelius.lab



**MARC
BENDA**
MENTOR

Marc Benda is a design gallerist who began working with Barry Friedman in New York in 2002. The two founded Friedman Benda in 2007, building a program spanning contemporary and historic design. In 2015, Benda and Thorsten Albrecht opened albertz benda, a gallery focused on contemporary visual art. Benda studied at Sotheby's Institute in London and the University of St. Gallen.



**JANET DETE &
DAMARIS KURIA
(25)**
CIRCULAR DESIGN
ENTREPRENEURS
KENYA

QUEENING AFRIKA

Queening Afrika addresses the growing waste stream created by non-biodegradable synthetic hair. Its digital collection system connects salons and households, gathering used hair that would otherwise be discarded and processing it into durable fibers. Those fibers become Afrocentric products including handbags and home décor. By linking collection, material recovery and production, the enterprise reduces plastic waste while creating paid work for women and young people in underserved communities. The model treats a familiar feature of everyday life—and an often overlooked source of pollution—as the starting point for a locally rooted circular economy.

@queening_afrika



**FERNANDO
LAPOSSE**
MENTOR

Fernando Laposse is a Mexican designer who uses natural fibers including corn husks, sisal and loofah to make furniture and material products, often with Indigenous communities. His work connects material experimentation with biodiversity loss, Indigenous rights, migration and global agricultural trade. It has been exhibited at the Milan Triennial, Cooper Hewitt and London's Design Museum.

REWILD, RESTORE & RADICAL REPAIR

Meet the young climate leaders
actively repairing damaged
ecosystems.



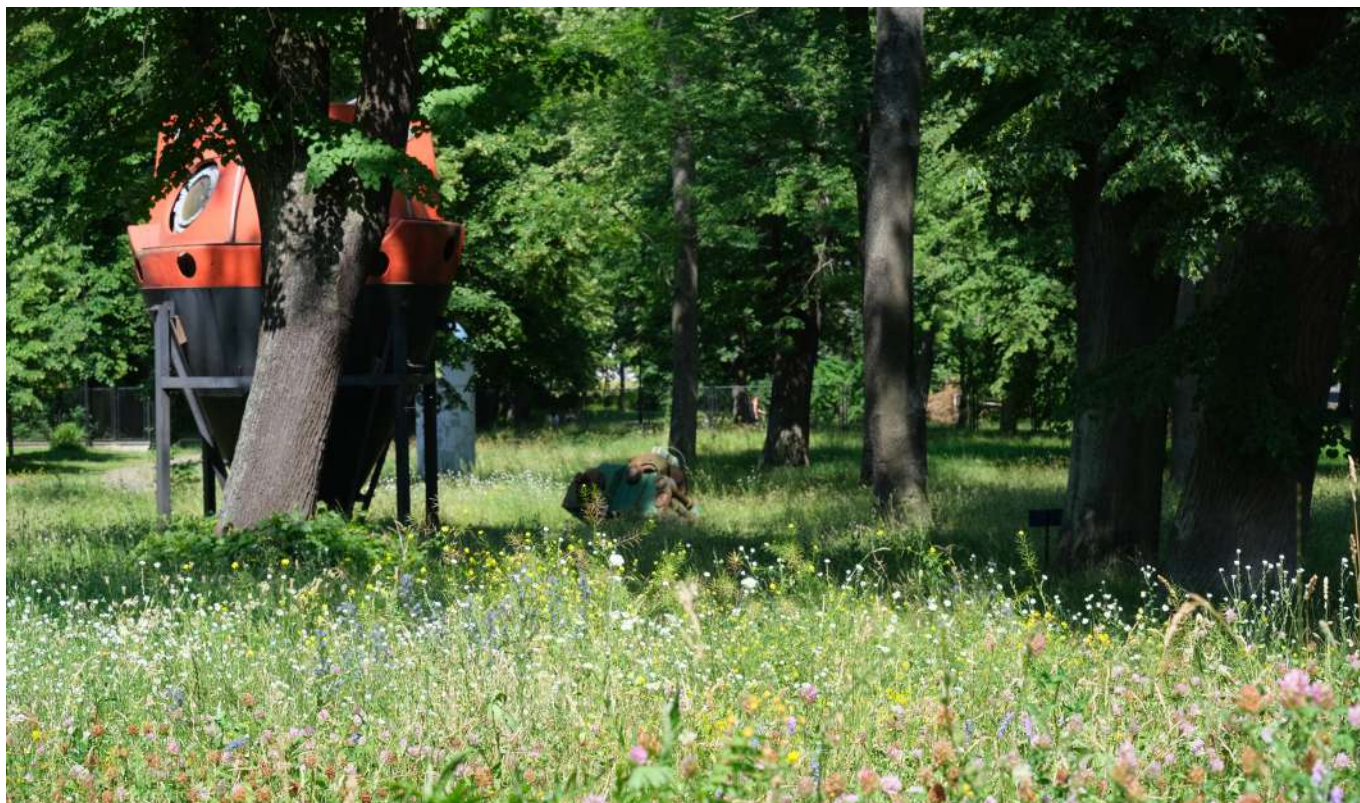


**BOLESŁAW
JACASZEK
(18)**
URBAN BIODIVERSITY
ADVOCATE
POLAND

MIEJSKA MIEDZA

Named for the Polish “miedza”—a biodiverse strip between cultivated fields—Miejska Miedza transforms conventional lawns at the Gdańsk University of Technology into semi-natural meadows managed for wild pollinators, offering a model for urban habitat restoration. Backed by seed funding from a regional environmental protection fund, the project has sown around 117 native species so far. Lectures on pollinator conservation and workshops teaching students to build nesting aids for wild bees run alongside monitoring of how the new habitats affect local insect populations. As Poland’s first integrated urban wild-bee protection system, the work also draws on posthumanist philosophy to consider how cities might support coexistence between human and non-human life rather than treating nature as a decorative backdrop.

fb/miejska-miedza



**CLÉUSIA
CARDINA
(24)**
ECOSYSTEM RESTORATION
ORGANIZER
MOZAMBIQUE

RIPARIAN RESTORATION OF THE NHATSONGO RIVER

Cardina’s project restores riparian habitat along a river in Chizombero, where declining rainfall and water scarcity have led farmers to cultivate and clear riverbanks. The work covers a 200-meter stretch on both banks, establishing a buffer more than 30 meters wide while helping farmers improve production on suitable land away from the water. A community tree nursery will supply seedlings for continued restoration and generate income by selling them to other projects. The program also introduces low-cost irrigation systems made with recycled PET bottles, linking watershed repair with practical support for local agriculture.

in/cléusia-cardina



**WALTER
HOOD
MENTOR**

Walter Hood is a landscape architect, artist and urbanist and founder of Oakland’s Hood Design Studio. His work draws on African American cultural practices to reshape public spaces while retaining their layered histories. Hood co-edited *Black Landscapes Matter* (2020). His honors include a 2019 MacArthur Fellowship, the 2024 Vincent Scully Prize and the 2025 Thomas Jefferson Medal in Architecture.

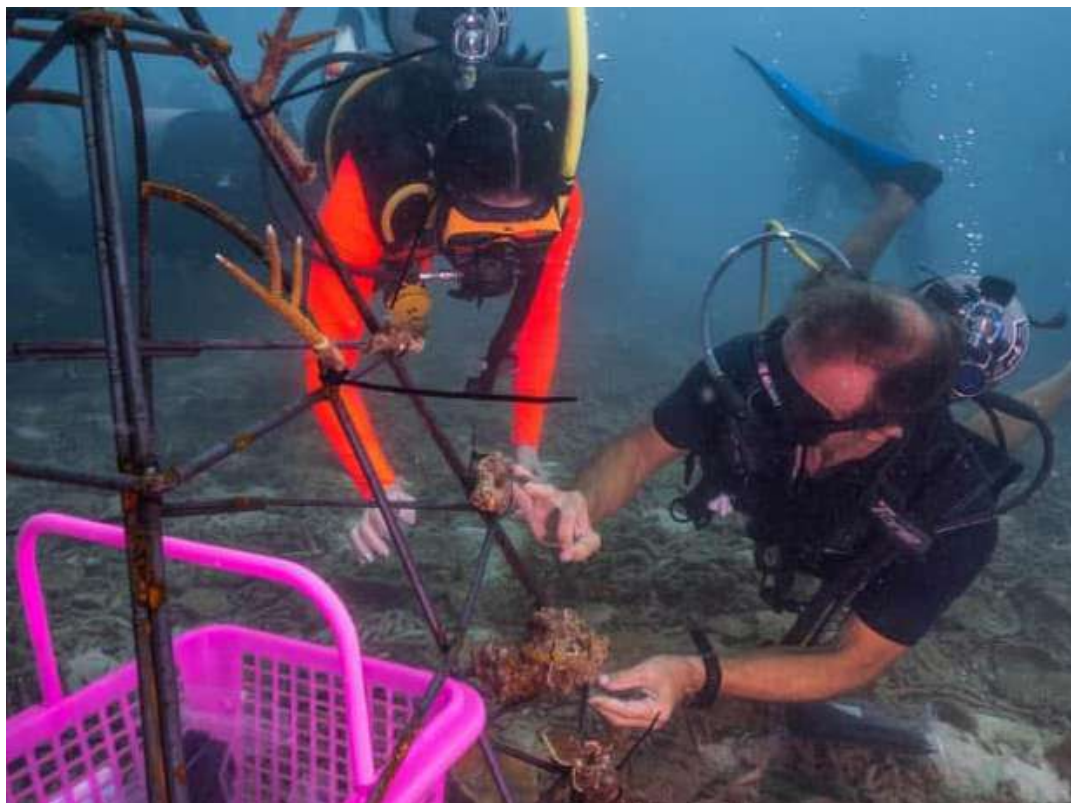


**PYNBHAIROH SNIDVONGS
KRUESOPON
(19)
MARINE CONSERVATIONIST
THAILAND**

CARE FOR CORAL

Care for Coral is a youth-led initiative combining hands-on coral restoration with environmental education, coastal cleanups and climate-resilience work in Thailand. Founded during the COVID-19 pandemic, it brings young volunteers into collaboration with local communities, scientists and government partners. The project treats reef restoration not as a stand-alone technical exercise but as a long-term form of coastal stewardship, connecting the health of coral ecosystems with biodiversity and protection from waves and storms. Its education programs are intended to make marine conservation accessible to young people and give them a practical role in sustaining the reefs.

[in/company/careforcoral](#)



**TATIANA
BILBAO
MENTOR**

Tatiana Bilbao is a Mexican architect who founded her eponymous studio in 2004. Its work combines design, research, community-based methods and responsible construction. Bilbao previously advised Mexico City's Ministry of Urban Development and Housing and now teaches at Yale. She was named an AIA Honorary Fellow in 2025, when her studio's Sea of Cortez Research Center became an MCHAP finalist.

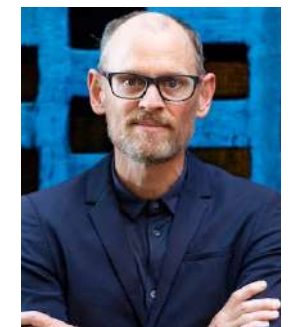


**WILLIAM
TAN
(15)
ARTIFICIAL REEF INVENTOR
USA**

BUILD A REEF

Build A Reef extends Tan's 3M Young Scientist prototype into full-scale artificial reef structures. Designed to provide shelter for fish and other aquatic life, the reefs also carry sensors that collect data on underwater conditions. The nonprofit pairs this technical work with student-led building and education programs, giving young people experience with reef design, environmental monitoring and practical fabrication. Through community partnerships, Tan is beginning to move the project from a competition prototype toward field installations, linking local habitat restoration with a model of climate education centered on making and observation.

[@buildreef](#) | www.buildareef.org



**EWAN
MCEOIN
MENTOR**

Ewan McEoin is the Senior Curator of the Department of Contemporary Design and Architecture at the National Gallery of Victoria in Melbourne (NGV), Australia's largest and most visited gallery. McEoin has nearly three decades of experience at the forefront of the international art, design, and architecture sectors, working in strategy, curating, and publishing.

LEADING THROUGH CULTURE

Meet the young climate leaders
mobilizing communities through
film, craft, education and
advocacy.





**AJ
RAYMUNDO
(23)**
ARTIST & RESEARCHER
PHILIPPINES

Photo by Czar Kristoff J.P.

ON THE EDGE

On the Edge is an ongoing artistic research project responding to the Laguna Lakeshore Road Network, a government expressway and dike project disrupting marine habitat and reclaiming hundreds of hectares of Laguna de Bay, the Philippines' largest freshwater lake. Since 2024, Raymundo has worked with coastal fisherfolk communities, beginning in Taguig City and extending around the lake's periphery. Through ethnographic research, community collaboration and artworks made with salvaged material, the project records how new infrastructure and ecological disruption alter both landscapes and everyday life, and how residents continue to live amid instability. Work from the project has been shown at Areté, the University of the Philippines, WHYNOT and the Rhode Island School of Design.

@ajraymundo_ | @on___the___edge



**FERNANDO
FRÍAS**
MENTOR

Fernando Frías is a Mexican filmmaker, screenwriter and director whose films include *I'm No Longer Here* (2019), *I Don't Expect Anyone to Believe Me* (2023) and *Rezeta* (2012). *I'm No Longer Here* won 10 Ariel Awards, including Best Picture and Director, and represented Mexico at the 2021 Academy Awards. A Fulbright Scholar, Frías earned a master's degree from Columbia University.



**CRISTIAN JOSSIAS BEKER
QUINTERO
(18)**
CLIMATE & HUMAN RIGHTS
ADVOCATE
PANAMÁ

BOCAS DEL TORO YOUTH FOR CLIMATE ACTION

Quintero is developing a youth engagement initiative in Bocas del Toro, where young people experience the daily effects of climate change but have historically had little access to decision-making. Through youth-led training, dialogue and advocacy, the initiative connects participants with public institutions, local governments and international organizations. Its purpose is not simply to solicit young people's views but to create an ongoing role for them in shaping policy and community responses, particularly for Indigenous youth and others whose experience of climate risk is rarely represented in institutional settings.

@bekercristhyan | @accionclimaticabocasj



**ANA MARÍA
GUTIERREZ**
MENTOR

Ana María Gutierrez is a Colombian designer and founder of Organismo, a research and learning center outside Bogotá dedicated to regeneration and intercultural knowledge. Working with earth, vernacular construction and local material traditions, she develops habitats connecting architecture with community practices and the more-than-human world. Her woven structures explore how infrastructure can hold new rituals and forms of dialogue.



**DENISE
AYEBARE
(23)
AGRICULTURAL
ORGANIZER
UGANDA**



**EMA
POPOSKA
(18)
FILMMAKER & OCEAN
ADVOCATE
CHINA**

BETTERLIFE INTERNATIONAL

At 19, Ayebare founded BetterLife International after her family fled Rwanda's civil war and encountered land scarcity, declining humanitarian support, and unpredictable weather in Western Uganda. Today, the organization works with refugee and internally displaced women across Uganda and neighboring countries, running demonstration farms and skills training—including a soil-monitoring app, Soilla—helping participants turn small plots into sources of food and income with techniques co-developed with the communities themselves.

@betterlife_int | in/denise-ayebare



**HENK
OVINK
MENTOR**

Henk Ovink is a Dutch water specialist and former Special Envoy for International Water Affairs. He developed and led Rebuild by Design for President Obama's Hurricane Sandy Rebuilding Task Force and previously served as the Netherlands' director general for spatial planning and water affairs. His work builds coalitions among public agencies, multilateral organizations, businesses and NGOs to address water risk.

MAKING WAVES CLUB

Poposka founded Making Waves Club at age 12 to give young people a role in conversations about ocean health and marine biodiversity. The initiative began with The Living Sea, a film about Hong Kong's corals, which then grew into the Ocean Youth Eco International Film Festival. Now in its fifth year, the festival has attracted 1,200 submissions from over 50 countries. Making Waves also offers creative workshops, talks and online tutorials in filmmaking for social change; the organization reports that these resources have reached more than 5 million young people worldwide.

@emaphotostory | @makingwavesclub



**KYLE BERGMAN
MENTOR**

Kyle Bergman is the director of the international Architecture and Design Film Festival. He has been involved with design/build education since 1994 when he created and moderated an architectural lecture series about the design/build process for the Smithsonian Institute.



**ROBYN
CAMILLE MIJARES
(25)**
ENVIRONMENTAL
EDUCATOR
PHILIPPINES

GROW SCHOOL PHILIPPINES

Mijares founded Grow School Philippines at 19, while still in high school. Its first campus—the country’s first bamboo farm school—was built entirely from bamboo and powered by solar energy, making the building itself part of lessons about food, land and resource use. The organization provides free environmental and agricultural education to public-school students from low-income communities and reports reaching more than 98,000 students nationwide. Beginning with what appears on a plate, its programs connect farming and food security to climate resilience. Mijares has since spoken at TEDx, been honored by Vogue Philippines, received UNDRR’s 2024 WIN DRR Rising Star Award and worked with UNDP, UNICEF Philippines and even Barbie.

@robynmijares | www.growschoolglobal.org



**AL
BORDE
MENTORS**

Al Borde is an architecture studio based in Quito, Ecuador, led by David Barragán, Pascual Gangotena, Maríaluisa Borja, and Esteban Benavides. Emphasizing local context and process, the studio’s work has been recognized with prestigious awards such as the Bancastato Swiss Architecture Award 2024, the Global Award for Sustainable Architecture 2013, and the Schelling Architecture Prize 2012.



**SUMAYA
SAIDI
(21)**
CLIMATE ACTION
TECHNOLOGIST
AFGHANISTAN

HAMRA GREEN

Hamra Green is a mobile application and digital platform for coordinating community environmental work across Afghanistan. Young people, local groups and organizations can use it to find learning materials, organize activities, document volunteer projects and connect with potential collaborators. Climate resources are translated into Dari and Pashto, making the platform useful beyond English-speaking professional networks. Its design gives particular attention to women, rural youth and communities with limited access to established climate institutions, while creating a shared record of locally led work that might otherwise remain scattered or invisible.

www.hamra.tech/en/green

HamraGreen

SCALE YOUTH-LED CLIMATE ACTION IN AFGHANISTAN

Act. Connect. Change.

Who we are?
Hamra Green is a youth-led digital platform that connects communities, young people, organizations, and local actors Awareness raising on climate risks and to take practical climate action.



**VELDESEN
YAPUTRA
(24)
CULTURAL DESIGN
ENTREPRENEUR
INDONESIA**

AMURTA

Amurta develops products, workshops, exhibitions and cultural projects with artisan communities, beginning with their existing materials, techniques and knowledge. The initiative connects co-creation with storytelling and market development, helping participating makers adapt their work for contemporary daily use while retaining the histories and relationships embedded in it. Amurta is currently exploring projects in China, Indonesia and Peru, bringing artisans, young people, designers, universities and local partners into exchange. The emphasis is on cultural continuity as a living economic and social practice rather than treating heritage as a fixed style.

@yaputraveldesen



**XU
TIAN TIAN
MENTOR**

Xu Tian Tian is a Chinese architect and founding principal of DnA _ Design and Architecture in Beijing. Her practice is known for “architectural acupuncture”: small, site-specific interventions that support rural economies, cultural continuity and ecological repair. Working with local materials, crafts and community knowledge, DnA uses architecture to reconnect villages with wider social and economic networks without erasing the character of place.

**YOUNG CLIMATE
STORIES**

Young Climate Stories is an ongoing multimedia series that follows the young people at the forefront of climate action. Each story centers on a different participant from the Young Climate Prize, exploring how the next generation is working to build a livable, equitable, and sustainable future. Alongside their mentors, these young innovators bring into focus the urgency of the climate crisis and share how they are using their voices, ideas, and designs to reimagine what’s possible for communities and the planet.

**YOUNG
CLIMATE
PRIZE**

“A GARDEN AGAINST ALL ODDS”

MOHAMED SALEM MOHAMED ALI AND BEATRICE GALILEE IN CONVERSATION

Mohamed Salem Mohamed Ali emerged as one of the most compelling voices from Cycle 02 of The World Around Young Climate Prize. While living as a refugee in the Sahrawi camp in Algeria, he has built a thriving garden that grows vegetables and herbs, supports animals like ducks and fish, and recycles water through a complex system of pipes and troughs. The project, which earned Ali the Young Climate Visionary Award, is the subject of *A Garden in the Desert*, part of a series of films produced by The World Around, 4Hawk and MillerKnoll documenting the extraordinary young people and projects supported by the prize.

On November 13, 2025, *A Garden in the Desert* premiered at a private screening at MillerKnoll’s New York flagship, followed by a conversation between Ali and The World Around Executive Director Beatrice Galilee. Ali described how the Nomad Garden began as a practical response to displacement and limited resources before evolving into a broader investigation of water scarcity, sustainable agriculture, and desert-based innovation. By documenting the garden on film, he found both a language to share his work and an unexpected global audience, further expanded through the Young Climate Prize’s mentorship and creative network.



Beatrice Galilee: *What made you first start planting and gardening? Can you share a little bit about those first moments?*

Mohamed Salem Mohamed Ali: When I started the garden in 2018, I was helping my family construct our house, because we were building with mud bricks. Every strong rain we have destroys the house and we need to rebuild it. I wanted to help my family with the construction, and at the same time I was going to an English course, which was an hour and a half per day. No one wanted to hire me for a job if I had an hour and a half off in the morning.

So I decided to keep studying English and not look for another job. We had this little space next to our house where the old house had collapsed. I made rows with vegetables and herbs, some small squares of mint and coriander. It was just a tiny business, to sell herbs in the market, that’s how I started the Nomad Garden.

BG: *When did you start to think, “I need to tell the story of this garden?”*

MS: After I had spent a couple of years working in the garden, I started to see things differently. When I first began, not many people believed in me, especially my friends, who made fun of me. But I accepted that. A couple of years in, I realized that we had a very basic view of agriculture: you put seeds in the ground, water them, and that’s it. But when I spent more time in the garden, I learned it’s not just like that. So I wanted to share this with my people, with my community. I wanted to share with them the story and what was happening in the garden.



BG: *In *A Garden in The Desert*, you shared that it only rains every five years in the camp. With water arriving in limited monthly allocations, how has that shaped your relationship to water and your sense of responsibility toward it?*

MS: In the refugee camps, we have a water distribution system. Internationally, the minimum amount of water per person is 20 liters per day. In the camps, if everything goes well—if the trucks are not broken and the filtration system is working—we have around 12 to 16 liters per person per day. That’s maybe not even enough to take a shower.

When you have such a small amount of water, you want to make sure you use it as much as possible. So I wanted to make sure to reuse every drop of water that goes into the garden several times, until it either evaporates or goes to the trees.

BG: *How has the story of the Nomad Garden spreading changed your view of the garden and what you do there?*

MS: When I started the garden, I was documenting the process by taking pictures. I didn't write, because I think we are an oral culture. All the knowledge my parents had was what they were told by their parents or their friends. So I thought it would be a good opportunity to tell my story through film.



“When you have such a small amount of water, you want to make sure you use it as much as possible.”
Mohamed Salem Mohamed Ali

I began documenting everything—every experiment, every process in the garden. At first, it was for local people, to show them what was going on, how successful it was. But it also has an international message, because the world is more connected than we think.

For example, industrial agriculture has consequences. What people might see are things like the extraction of natural resources or chemicals going into underground water. But there are other consequences they don't see. My films try to highlight at least one of the stories happening in other parts of the world because of certain actions.

BG: *The Young Climate Prize became a way for you to meet other young people who are not necessarily in similar situations, but who share your values. How did you first hear about the prize, and what made you apply?*

MS: A friend of mine sent me the link. I went through it, and honestly, I didn't think it was real. I applied anyway. When I got shortlisted for the first interview, it was really hot in the camps, around 48 to 50°C. The interview was at 4pm. We didn't have good internet in my house, so we needed to go outside the camp, to a place in the desert where there's good internet. But I couldn't do the interview there, because it was too hot.

So I went to the nearest town, which is about 47km from my camp, and I did the interview. Then I got shortlisted again, and later I received the email. I kept reading it again and again because I didn't think it was real. I thought, “There are so many interesting stories, how are they interested in this little project?”

It was really important to meet other young people, my age, with different stories and different backgrounds. At that time, I needed something to motivate me.

BG: *What do you remember about first meeting the cohort, and what has stayed with you?*

MS: I couldn't make it to the first meeting because I had borrowed my friend's Wi-Fi and brought it to my house, but it didn't work. So I missed the introduction of all the other participants. Then I went outside the camp again, to the good internet spot in the desert, and I started searching for these people online. I was really amazed. I wished that we could have a full session for each person, just to hear their stories. That felt very motivational for me.

“As a designer, thinking is a big part of the process: you think about the place, the shape, the function, the color, everything matters.”
Mohamed Salem Mohamed Ali

Then I got my mentor, Brendan McGetrick.

What I like about art is that artists are not just entertainers; they are discoverers, explorers. That's what I'm doing in the garden: I'm discovering, looking, searching. I had questions about art and what it means, because back home we have a traditional view of art—an artist is a singer or a painter.

So I was curious about art, and I had more questions than answers. When I was told the name of my mentor, I researched him and saw that he was a curator at a museum. I hadn't been to a museum before. I was really excited. I remember the first sessions were about art and design, and that's when I was first introduced to Design. I remember asking, “What is design?” And he said, “Design is everything, it's everywhere. Everything you are doing is design.”



I was kind of shocked, because in the garden I am always changing the places of the animals' houses, the systems; everything is connected. I started to think, "Oh my God, this is the missing piece of the puzzle."

As a designer, thinking is a big part of the process: you think about the place, the shape, the function, the color, everything matters. I'm really glad I had Brendan as a mentor, and I'm really thankful to The World Around for making such connections.

BG: *What were those conversations like? Do you feel that your relationship with Brendan changed when he came to visit?*

MS: To be honest, I felt more comfortable meeting him face to face, because I'm not used to online meetings. When I met him in person, I had more time to ask questions. It was really nice to meet him.

He helped with the design and everything, but he was also the first mentor I ever had. That makes this a very special relationship for me—one I'm going to remember for my whole life. I think it was a life-changing point for me.

**"I'm really glad I had Brendan as a mentor,
and thankful to The World Around for
making such connections."
Mohamed Salem Mohamed Ali**



"PLANTING ROOTS IN LAKE URU URU" DAYANA BLANCO QUIROGA AND SEBAS ACAMPANTE IN CONVERSATION WITH ANA MINUJIN

Bolivia's Lake Uru Uru, its ecosystem, and its local community are all at risk as a result of mining waste pollution and climate change. Young Climate Prize alum Dayana Blanco Quiroga, her Team Uru Uru, and the rest of the Aymara community are working tirelessly to restore the body of water for future generations, by combining indigenous knowledge and design thinking. The latest Young Climate Stories documentary, *How to Plant a Lake*, follows Blanco Quiroga and her mentor Sebas Acapante, a Mexico-based curator, designer and illustrator, as they implement natural heavy-metal extraction techniques to help address the various issues facing Lake Uru Uru. In this conversation with The World Around's Ana Minujin, the pair discuss the evolution of the project and the role design can play in climate action.



Ana Minujin: *Let's start with a brief introduction. Where are we, and why are we here?*

Dayana Blanco Quiroga: I'm Dayana Blanco, an indigenous Aymara woman from Bolivia. We're in New York with my mentor to present the work I'm doing in Bolivia with my community: we're restoring a lake that is very important to us, which we've lost due to mining pollution, plastic waste, and climate change. We're restoring the only home we have; we don't want to lose our roots, our hearts and souls are connected to that place. We want to leave it for future generations, and recover the harmony our grandparents had with everything that inhabits this world.

Unfortunately, some aim to destroy our home for the sake of extracting minerals. That's why we're fighting to save it. I'm here to share our struggle and how this deep community work is helping us move forward. This is the only thing we can leave for future generations. Although we've often protested and asked authorities for solutions, we haven't received a positive response from them.



**“This is the only home we have
and it's changing (...) That's why we're
taking action even when the odds are
against us.”**
Dayana Blanco Quiroga

AM: *Sadly, this is common across Latin America. What I find interesting about your project is that you're protesting, while you're also offering a way of thinking about repair. Why did you decide to take action in this manner?*

DBQ: Well, this is the only home we have and it's changing. It's very sad to see how the flamingos are disappearing. It's sad to wake up every morning and smell those heavy odors. It's sad to see that although there are many laws in Bolivia for natural rights, they aren't enforced.

That's why we're taking action even when the odds are against us. And it has worked! Many people said the totora reeds would die, but they haven't; they are restoring the lake, and that is a great joy for us.

AM: *At The World Around Summit 2025, you spoke with such a deep connection to your ancestors; it's like they were in the room with you.*

DBQ: I do feel the energy of our ancestors. We are a small community, but we can do a lot. We have faith that we can save what little remains. Even if it isn't possible, we will at least know we fought for our lake. We aren't the ones to blame, ultimately, the fault lies with human ambition.

AM: *Sebas, you occupy a space representing a group of designers. What is it about Dayana's project that makes you want to expand it?*

Sebas Acapante: I feel there is something there. There's a harmonious relationship between humanity and nature that is well-expressed in ancestral communities. Over the 15 years I've been working in curation, I've always tried to bring pre-Columbian knowledge to the forefront because I feel that is where the answers to current problems lie.

When you rewind the history of design, you find more consciousness of sustainability. That knowledge is extremely precious, and often ignored. Meanwhile, the voices that are amplified belong to a cultural and economic hegemony keeping us in a collective slumber, believing things are fine the way they are.



**“When you rewind the history of design, you
find more consciousness of sustainability.
That knowledge is extremely
precious, and often ignored.”**
Sebas Acampante

I had the privilege of working with the Wichi community, an Indigenous population native to the Gran Chaco region in northern Argentina and southern Bolivia, for the London Design Biennale. When we arrived, the interpreter introduced the team and myself. When they introduced me as the curator, there was a clamoring. The community went and brought back the community's shaman. They had confused "curador" (curator) with "curandero" (healer).

When I explained my role (working in artistic and design environments selecting relevant art for our people), the man thought for a moment and replied in Wichi. The interpreter explained: "Then we are both healers. My domain is nature. I understand its frequencies and know what to take from them to heal my people. Your field is art. You know what you need to take from art for your people to be well."

I realized that I needed to listen to these voices, to acknowledge what is ignored, and to amplify a message that isn't mine, but one I feel aligned with.

AM: *What do you feel the world can learn from these Indigenous projects and voices?*

SA: We must listen attentively and respectfully to voices like Dayana's. The Aymara community is lovely. They have so many expressions for affection. When you express affection in your language, you apply it to your work, making it more generous and empathetic. That is the kind of mentality that excites me.

DBQ: For me, words like Munaña (to want/to be able to), and Tiña (to do/achieve) are vital. We also have Suma Qamaña, which means "living well, in harmony" and Ayni, which is reciprocity. These principles connect me to my community and guide our work. They help us embrace each other when we feel we can't go on.

"Often, when people come to our community, they want to change things, but we want to lead our own work. Sebas is a friend who guides me, helps me, and pushes me forward."
Dayana Blanco Quiroga

AM: *Can you walk us through your first mentorship sessions? How did the first meeting between you two go?*

DB: From the beginning, Sebas was very attentive to my needs. He has helped me connect with other organizations like Cultural Survival that support these projects across Latin America. It's so important to learn from someone who truly stands with you. I felt that Sebas stands with our struggle; he isn't here to impose things. Often, when people come to our community, they want to change things, but we want to lead our own work. Sebas listens to what we need and how we want to address our challenges. He's a friend who guides me, helps me, and pushes me forward.

SA: The mentorship was a complete experience. I found a way to amplify causes and rethink my own role. I've worked in many institutions, such as the Centro Cultural de España and UNESCO, but suddenly I was finding spaces where my contacts were useful. I realized that my network could be used to solidify and empower this project.

I also realized my own limitations, especially regarding funding. I wanted to give more than I had, so I signed up for a degree in cultural and economic management. The mentorship taught me that if I want to save a lake, it's not something I can do alone. Adding my energy to the torrent that Dayana and her community have been working on for so long is so rewarding.

DBQ: For me, it's about the human side. Before we started working, Sebas would always ask "How are you?" in our language, which connected us and made me feel like I was in a safe space. I hope we can recover the peace and balance with everyone and especially with nature.

AM: *I'm really looking forward to seeing the rafts and the totora reeds.*

SA: Me too. I want to see how industrial design ideas can help. I asked Dayana to send me all the types of waste they find so we can design rafts using what they have, cleaning up while applying that process to technology. When you study design, everything revolves around pleasing institutions or companies. This is a path to redefine the meaning of design. Applying that design language to a home that truly has a purpose. That is what makes this project spectacular.

"This is a path to redefine the meaning of design. Applying that design language to a home that truly has a purpose. That is what makes [Dayana's project] spectacular."
Sebas Acampante

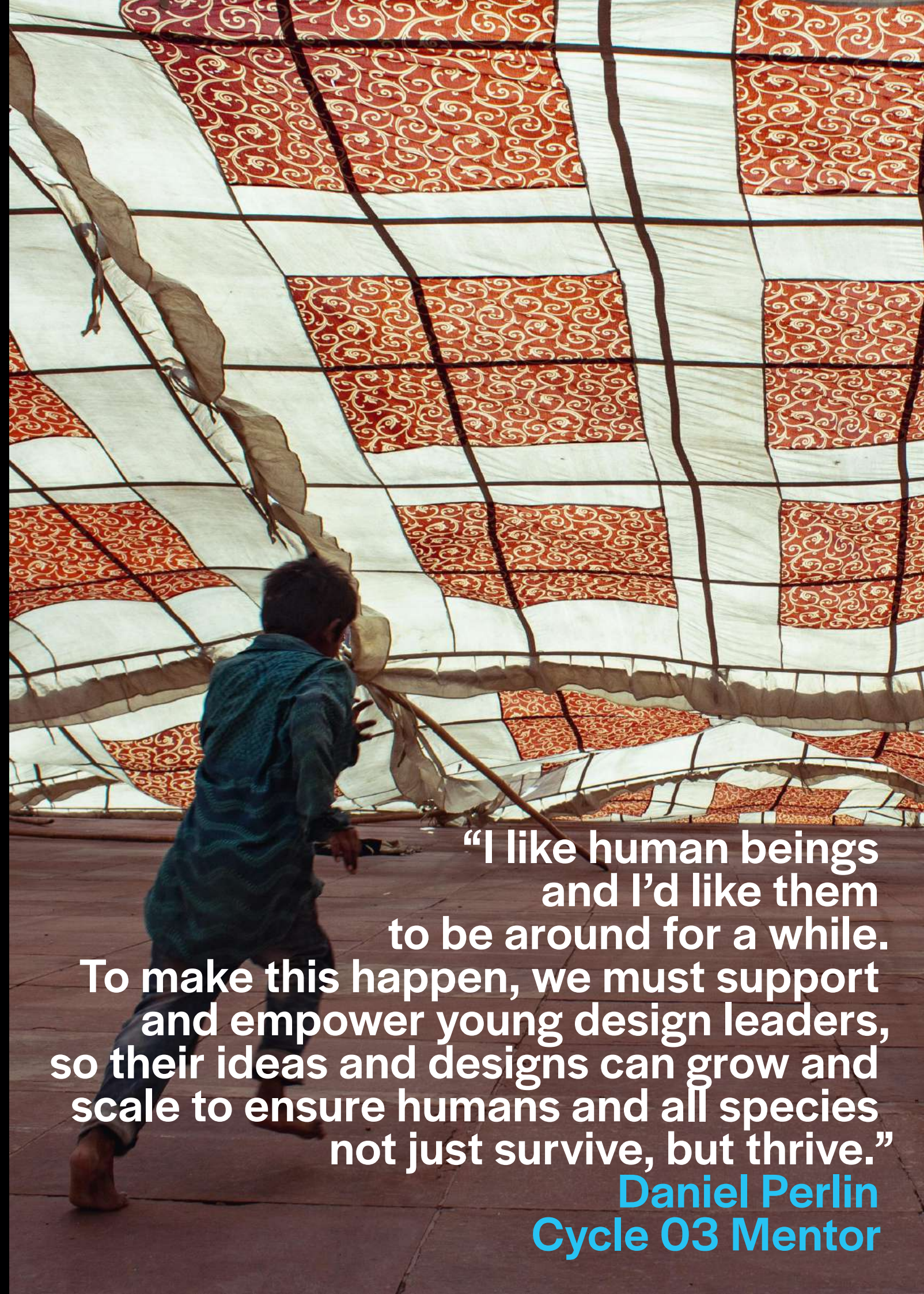


ABOUT

The World Around is an innovative nonprofit organization with a mission to connect, empower, and amplify exceptional new voices and ideas in global architecture. With a focus on and passion for social and ecological justice, we believe great design of all scales and by all people can be a catalyst for extraordinary change, which is why we collaborate with the world's leading arts and design institutions to curate and commission "must-see" conferences, events and climate initiatives.

Learn more at theworldaround.com and follow @theworldaround on Instagram.

THE WORLD AROUND



**"I like human beings
and I'd like them
to be around for a while.
To make this happen, we must support
and empower young design leaders,
so their ideas and designs can grow and
scale to ensure humans and all species
not just survive, but thrive."**

Daniel Perlin
Cycle 03 Mentor

JOIN OUR CIRCLES



The World Around is a 501(c)(3) registered charity.

Our work is made possible thanks to the support of our generous and engaged community. By joining our circles—as either an individual or a company—you ensure that our public programs, including our Annual Summit, and our educational initiatives, including Young Climate Prize can continue.

Circle members receive year-round invitations to private screenings, openings and studio visits. Give to The World Around and become part of a global network of forward-thinking creatives.

LEARN MORE:



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ABOUT MILLERKNOLL

MillerKnoll is a collective of dynamic brands that comes together to design the world we live in. The MillerKnoll brand portfolio includes Herman Miller, Knoll, Colebrook Bosson Saunders, Design Within Reach, Edelman, Geiger, Hay, Holly Hunt, Knoll Textiles, Maharam, Muuto, NaughtOne, and Spinneybeck|FilzFelt. MillerKnoll is an unparalleled platform that redefines modern for the 21st century by building a more sustainable, equitable and beautiful future for all.

Learn more at millerknoll.com and follow @millerknoll on Instagram.

ABOUT OBEL

OBEL is foundation recognising and rewarding architecture's potential to act as tangible agents of change that contribute positively to social and ecological development globally. Founded in 2019, OBEL values the plurality of architecture as a practice through expanding who and what defines our built environment. Through various activities, OBEL supports influential ideas and approaches that can spearhead and seed future developments, while driving architectural discourse and education.

Learn more at obel.foundation and follow @obelfoundation on Instagram.

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The Architectural Association (AA) School of Architecture is an internationally recognised, independent architecture school based in Bedford Square, London, and Hooke Park, Dorset. These two campuses support a wide range of academic and public programmes.

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