



## **DESIGNING A BETTER CHICAGO ANNOUNCES RIVERWALK DESIGN TEAM AND GRANT PROGRAM FOR 2020 LAUNCH**

(Chicago, IL, November 2019) Designing a Better Chicago, a collaborative initiative organized and supported by NeoCon and theMART, the Chicago Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events (DCASE), and the Design Museum of Chicago, is pleased to announce the selection of the design team for its large-scale Chicago Riverwalk installation. Chicago-based design firms Kwong Von Glinow and UB Studio will unveil their project in June 2020. Aimed at highlighting, leveraging and supporting Chicago's vast design legacy, talent and resources, Designing a Better Chicago will also include the Design Impact Grant Program, which will recognize individuals or organizations using design for civic good. The annual initiative will be complemented by a series of special talks and events coinciding with NeoCon next June.

*Give me a minute, please!*, the inaugural Chicago Riverwalk installation by Kwong Von Glinow and UB Studio for Designing a Better Chicago, will visually anchor the 2020 edition. The award-winning Chicago architects and designers will bring their unique creative vision to the project site, a space which will feature a new installation each year and is set to become a hallmark of the program.

Situated on the Chicago Riverwalk between Franklin and Lake Streets, the 6,000-square-foot-area is located at the confluence of the North, South and main branches of the Chicago River. "The question we asked ourselves when approaching the request for proposal was, 'What more can we give to this site as architects?'" explains Alison Von Glinow, Founding Partner at Kwong Von Glinow. "We proposed a design that incorporates the idea of time and space in everyday life. As its name *Give me a minute, please!* suggests, our installation offers a space for contemplation: a respite—even if knowingly momentary—where visitors will pause, delight, and enjoy their surroundings." The proposal gives a second life to the existing structure of Robert Burnier's artwork by building on top of it a lightweight pyramidal structure. Marking the western-most entrance to the Riverwalk, the hovering pure form of the pyramid will draw visitors underneath its canopy. Offering a covered area that houses several furniture-scale follies, *Give me a minute, please!* will activate both formal and informal programming opportunities along the Riverwalk.

Since its inception in 2001, the Chicago Riverwalk has quickly become one of the city's most popular destinations for art, music, dining and the enjoyment of natural habitats. Beloved by Chicagoans and visitors alike, it continues to offer new ways in which to enjoy the city's waterfronts and architecture. The Riverwalk design commission for Designing a Better Chicago provides an opportunity to celebrate this beloved amenity while also telling a compelling story

about the intersections of art, architecture, and design. *Give me a minute please!* will debut this June during NeoCon and be in place through October 2020.

The newly established Design Impact Grant Program, another key component of Designing a Better Chicago, will offer annual project-specific grants to individuals and organizations using design or design principles to directly address pressing issues in Chicago communities. Grant amounts will include up to \$25,000 in funds, with two to four grants set aside to be given out per year based on the quality of applications and available funds.

“Chicago has long been the center of great design — from the incomparable World's Columbian Exposition in 1893 to NeoCon's enduring influence each year since 1969, and with so many accomplishments in between. Through this grant, we are thrilled to help bring Designing a Better Chicago to life. As a platform, we hope to expose and bolster the type of design that continues to make Chicago a better place,” comments Tanner Woodford, Founder and Executive Director of the Design Museum of Chicago. Nominations for the 2020 program are being accepted now through December 31, 2019 at [designchicago.org/dbc](http://designchicago.org/dbc). Candidates will then be selected to submit applications January 7 through February 17, 2020, with awards announced in April 2020.

Designing a Better Chicago will engage Chicagoans as well as those visiting the city. Lisa Simonian, Vice President of Marketing, NeoCon, comments, “We are thrilled to work alongside our City of Chicago and Design Museum partners to begin telling a Chicago design story to the more than 50,000 international design professionals who attend NeoCon each June. We want them to fully experience, enjoy, and support design throughout our world-class design city.”

“We hope that everyone who travels to Chicago for NeoCon will make time to experience iconic Chicago design and the exceptional design talent of our beautiful city,” adds Mark Kelly, Commissioner of DCASE. “At the same time, we are thrilled that this collaboration will introduce new Chicago audiences to the power of design and ensure that great design impacts all of our neighborhoods.”

Additional information about Designing a Better Chicago, including details on programming and events, will be announced early 2020. A Designing a Better Chicago website will go live mid-January at [designingabetterchicago.org](http://designingabetterchicago.org).

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**About NeoCon:** NeoCon is the world's leading platform and most important event for the commercial interiors industry, held each year at The Mart in Chicago. Since launching in 1969, NeoCon has served as the annual gathering place for the commercial design world's manufacturers, dealers, architects, designers, end-users, design organizations and media. The three-day event showcases game-changing products and services from both leading companies and emerging talent—providing unparalleled access to the latest and most innovative solutions. A robust educational program of keynote presentations and CEU sessions offers world-class expertise and insight about today's most relevant topics as well as the future of commercial design. [www.neocon.com](http://www.neocon.com)

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**About theMART:** theMART (formerly The Merchandise Mart), located in the center of the sought-after River North submarket, is interwoven into the fabric of Chicago as an innovator in business, technology, culture, art, media and more. As the largest privately held commercial building in the United States, it is one of the world's leading commercial buildings, wholesale design centers and the preeminent international business location in Chicago. Encompassing 4.2 million gross square feet, theMART spans two city blocks, rises 25 stories, and is visited by an average of 30,000 people each business day and nearly 10 million people annually. Offering continuous innovation and creativity from leading manufacturers and design forward showrooms, theMART serves as the home to Chicago's most creative and technologically innovative companies.

**About The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events:** The Department of Cultural Affairs and Special Events is dedicated to enriching Chicago's artistic vitality and cultural vibrancy. This includes fostering the development of Chicago's non-profit arts sector, independent working artists and for-profit arts businesses; providing a framework to guide the City's future cultural and economic growth, via the 2012 Chicago Cultural Plan; marketing the City's cultural assets to a worldwide audience; and presenting high-quality, free and affordable cultural programs for residents and visitors.

**About the Chicago Riverwalk:** The City of Chicago's award-winning Chicago Riverwalk, a 1.25-mile promenade through the heart of downtown, has quickly become one of the city's most popular destinations for art, music, dining and the enjoyment of natural habitats, beloved by Chicagoans and visitors alike. The Riverwalk is managed by the Chicago Department of Fleet and Facility (2FM) managing with programming from DCASE. Access to the space is free and open to the public daily from 6am–11pm.

**About Design Museum of Chicago:** A local, non-profit cultural institution, Design Museum of Chicago strives to meet people where they are, facilitating conversations around design comprised of a variety of voices, backgrounds, and viewpoints. They believe that design is not just a single discipline or process, but rather a persistent element present in our everyday environments and experiences. They believe design has the fundamental capacity to improve the human condition, and strive to make it accessible to everyone through free exhibitions in a public space in the Chicago Loop. Formerly Design Museum of Chicago, they have exhibited about a wide variety of topics, from architecture in Ireland to games in modern culture.

**About Kwong Von Glinow:** Kwong Von Glinow's projects are about clear ideas and compelling ideals. Their optimistic approach to design focuses on urban public space as places for cultural engagement and innovative housing solutions focused on sustainable living futures. The firm's work targets a wide audience by translating architectural concepts into playful designs that aim for broad appeal. Lap Chi Kwong and Alison Von Glinow (AIA) co-founded Kwong Von Glinow in Chicago in 2017. Since founding the office, they have received the 2018 Architectural League Prize of New York for Young Architects and Designers, a Graham Foundation Grant for their project "Smuggling Architecture" currently on view at the Swiss Architecture Museum, and have won five international design competitions. Current projects include a single family house in Chicago, the Swiss Consulate Offices at the Hancock Tower in Chicago, and a community center in New York. Prior to founding Kwong Von Glinow, the duo worked with Herzog & de Meuron in Basel, Switzerland and SOM in Chicago and New York. Both partners received their Masters in Architecture from Harvard University Graduate School of Design.

**About UB Studio:** UB Studio is a design and architecture practice led by Shinya Uehara and Chantelle Brewer. This husband/wife team has worked together since 2002 on several public projects, and with many design firms throughout the City of Chicago. Their work includes art installation proposals, interior design, transportation projects, and new construction.