

#### Prepared Questions for Kona-

- How do you approach different types of projects? Such as urban design vs. themed entertainment
  - Each project is approached based on the goals on the assignment. Ultimately, it is about creating spaces for people that respect the environment, culture and history of a place. I love working on a variety of elevations from large scale master planning to detail site design with the understanding the effort must positively transform the place.
- What considerations do you take to avoid negative impacts on surrounding neighborhoods?
  - This question is very relevant as we are continuing to learn that our work can create problems. The acknowledgement and restoration of this fact is our responsibility. I have learned over the years that we need to be very empathetic and not present our expertise as “all knowing” when the community is always right. We also need to do our homework and embed ourselves in the place to truly understand what solutions will benefit the people.
- How is it different working internationally?
  - Working internationally is different in a good way. Like working in other States. You get a chance to learn about new cultures and meet new people. I love the exchange of ideas and thoughts across different regions because you learn how to incorporate unique perspectives.
- How would you define your graphic style at EDSA?
  - I would define the EDSA Graphic Style as artistic. It can be loose or detailed. But is unique. I can spot an EDSA drawing very easily. Over the years we have developed a style that utilizes a palette of colors and line weights that are remarkably legible and engaging.
- What kind of design process do you adapt?
  - Our design process is iterative and inclusive. Everyone has a seat at the table when we design. The method is meant to be collaborative allowing for ideas to be shared and refined. All egos are checked at the door and we are open to learning as we design.
- Which software do you usually use?
  - Regarding software we utilize the Adobe Suite (Photoshop, Illustrator and InDesign) for refining plans, sections and renderings. We also use Rhino for modeling. Then, we utilize AutoCAD Infraworks for large scale planning, then Civil 3D for detail design and Revit for final models.
- Do you believe hand drawing is a dying art in this field? Is it often used in your firm?
  - Hand drawing is not a dying art for us. We believe it is essential for understanding the essence of the design. Hand drawings connects you to personally to the illustration and allows for so much more flexibility.

#### Asked Questions

- How do you conduct the community engagement process in this virtual era? What were the kinds of challenges you faced? How has your process developed and are there any strengths that can be found in this new system?
  - The virtual world has allowed us to connect to more people. We set up websites, virtual workshop rooms and real time polling plus surveys to gather information. It has been challenging because we must rely on the “technology” working. There is also user error and unfortunately not all people have access to a computer. I see a hybrid future that allows us to be virtual and in-person. Also, we have embraced low-tech including the flyer and mailer to engage as well.
- When designing/planning in under-served or low-income communities, how do you deal with the often inevitable "green gentrification" of the area
  - We deal with this often. Unfortunately, many areas that have been improved raise the property values so much they price out the original community. An activist at a public meeting once said to me that they want “development without displacement.” This is the only way to make it work in my opinion. Everyone wants nice things, but we do not want to move because we cannot afford to have nice things.
- What is the biggest challenge that you ever faced in your career? Have you ever thought about quitting your profession? What did you do to overcome the challenge and keep moving?
  - I have faced many challenges in my career, but I see challenges as opportunities and problems to solve. However, I have faced racism and micro-aggressions in my career. Fortunately, my parents

taught me how to be graceful and not get caught by negative energy. I always stay positive and rise above all low situations.

- When you are designing, or simply working, is there any idea, fact, or opinion you keep center in your head, and therefore influences your work?
  - My life is fueled by design. I always consider people and the environment when I design. They both inspire me and allow me to expand upon the transformations that are being created. I always feel grounded knowing that what I design will positively help people and the environment.
- How do you think our profession can change to better find ways for funding inner-city reinvestment?
  - I believe our profession should be advocates for people and the environment. Whether the opportunity is urban or rural, we must work with that point of view in mind. Then, we need to work with the community and municipal leaders to affect change. We cannot sit on the sidelines and expect things to magically happen. It is up to us to promote positive change.
- What was one particularly impactful project you faced in your career? What project did you struggle with the most?
  - This is an easy question. The most impactful project in my career is the Gratigny Plateau Park in North Miami, Florida. It was a pro-bono assignment that introduced design to a community deserving of positive change. We transformed a vacant city lot into a dynamic multi-generational park. I witnessed people coming together to make a difference for the community. Also, I shared the profession with many people that were unaware of landscape architecture and certainly never met a person of color that is a professional LA. Regarding struggles, I find that every challenge is a design opportunity, However, you must struggle with difficult people on projects too. That is a fact of the business and the best way to work around it is to stay true to your values and not get caught up with people behaving badly.
- How have you been collaborating with other professionals in the time of COVID? How do you stay motivated and inspired for design in such a quarantined life?
  - We have been collaborating often during COVID. EDSA is a global firm, so we became accustomed to working remote around the world using VPN's, Skype, Go-To Meeting and Web-Ex before Zoom was even a thing several decades ago. But that was occasional not every day. Now, we have embraced working virtual and meeting safely in-person as well. I stay motivated by participating in virtual lecture series like LA Days, watching You Tube videos, reading, writing and painting. It is awesome when I can turn on some John Coltrane and get creative!
- What advice do you have for young LA's starting out in their careers? How can young LA's get more involved in similar collaborative workshops as you discussed in the beginning of your lecture (re: bringing minorities in the LA community together)
  - This is great question. Everyone is different, but we have common threads. One commonality is we love to design. So, I suggest that we all do what we love. Learn as much as you can. Take advantage of your relationships and have fun. I would suggest you volunteer your time at a Neighborhood Design Center or a Non-Profit to get involved. Young people need us, so adopt a K-12 school and share our profession with programs. It is all about awareness.
- What take-aways would you suggest for us to ensure that what we create is safe, inclusive, and inviting for everyone?
  - In order to fulfill this aspiration, you need to get engaged with the community. We are all the same even though we may differ. So, spend lots of time in the community and break bread. Strive to become friends with the people you are design with, and you will be a much more successful designer because your designs will be informed by the people.
- How has your involvement in ASLA affected you, and your career... and how has your involvement affected ASLA?
  - My career has been immensely impacted because of ASLA. The society is like family. We have so much in common and LAs are fun to be around too. Personally, I have learned so much from my colleagues and made several lasting friendships. Professionally, the society has offered an outlet to share and receive knowledge and skills necessary to be a very good professional. In my opinion, you are a better personally and professionally when you are a member.
- How do you see pandemic-related design evolving alongside today's discourse on race, justice and equity?

- The pandemic has just exacerbated the issues related to race, justice and equity. These scabs of our society continue to get peeled back during major disruptions. Now, our designs need to consider health along with the social and environmental opportunities. This is the new normal and we will need to educate ourselves to respond and be proactive to prepare for the future as well. It is good time to be an LA now because the world needs us more than ever. I strongly believe that pandemics could be avoided when good landscape architecture is in place. For example, if we simply carefully managed as well as preserved the natural environment, animals would have protected habitat and if we committed to designing of majestic parks in proximity communities, people would have places to get fresh air and sunlight.
- What do you think will be best practices for students, academics and professionals in the field to take on?
  - I believe we all need to focus on the aspirations from the Green New Deal. I do not believe it is about politics, it is about survival. We need to reduce carbon, heal society and create jobs to maintain peace in civility. And, we need landscape architects to turn the aspirations into realities.
- How do you balance and prioritize the needs of the immediate community with the economic goals of developers?
  - This is actually a very hard question. You will all face lots of ethical dilemmas in your work, but this is probably the hardest. When your Client is paying you, but you see suspect and unethical behavior occurring. This is when you need to walk away. We have fired Clients in the past and no one should work with someone that is not do the right thing.
- When you have a project in a neighborhood that is predominantly POC how would you suggest obtaining the most public input? Considering constraints like COVID keeping public input meetings/community workshops at bay, and neighborhoods that are economically hurting and unable to utilize technology, it has been difficult to obtain both quality and quantity feedback.
  - When working with a community of color, I always spend time getting to know people. Remember, they know more about their community than us as the professionals. You can make the most out of public input by relying on the church and neighborhood leaders. Go see people where they are and do not expect people to show up at your workshop just because you are providing food. Due to COVID, this is even more crucial. People are struggling and need solutions to “real” problems. The best approach we have embraced is seeking out people and making it easy for them to engage. Most people have smart phones, so texting a quick survey and offering solutions to easy problems goes along way to building trust.
- Do you think you will continue to involve digital responses in community engagement since it was so successful in obtaining participation?
  - Yes. We have had more participation because we make it easy to access engagement opportunities digitally. We keep surveys open for the entire planning process and give frequent updates because many people must work and may miss a meeting. So, set up a website and allow people to participate when they are available.
- Can you speak about where you see the future of green infrastructure/low impact development technologies in landscape architecture as it intersects with inclusivity?
  - Green Infrastructure and inclusivity are deeply connected. If you consider that POC have lived in places that are unhealthy due to poor planning, this demonstrates the need for green technologies. I think of cancer alley in Louisiana and Mississippi and wonder if all the factories were designed with green technology and neighborhoods were not adjacent on the other side of a fence, we would have different outcomes because we had health of people in mind not just profits.
- What is the book or project that was most impactful in shaping your design philosophy?
  - I read a lot of books, so here are a few that have recently shaped by point of view as a designer. Sean Kelly past president of ASLA gave me “Start with Why” by Simon Sinek and it changed my life, the book focuses on finding your purpose and it helped my designs focus on meaningful issues. Another book is “Creative Quest” by Questlove of the Roots. His book demonstrates the power of collaboration among creative people. There are so many projects too but Cross Waters Ecolodge is one of my favorite EDSA projects because it embraces the environment and we involved local people in the design process.

- Are there any design specific aspects that are key to inclusivity besides ADA/similar acts; or does it come down to city code and/or legislation to make sure everyone gets an equal opportunity to experience a space?
  - In my opinion, inclusivity is best accomplished when everyone has access to all opportunities. People need to be present to share their point of view. I believe designs will be unsuccessful when you do not include all stakeholders. People to write policy and codes, so we need to be involved in the process. What is more LA s are working in government in planning departments, landscape architecture departments and even the Mayor's office.
- You go into depth about collaboration with other designers. With the pandemic still underway (and for who knows how long) and so many people working from home, how can we still collaborate and communicate with the community to make the most impact? What is your approach nowadays?
  - Our work relies on collaboration. If we just sit by ourselves and draw, we are only drawing for ourselves. Fortunately, there are apps like Miro, StormBoard, BlueScape and InVision that allow real time collaboration virtually.
- What is a day in your professional life like during COVID? As well as pre-COVID?
  - COVID is the ultimate disrupter! Yet, disruption allows you to take a pause and recalibrate what is going on in your life. My professional life has changed dramatically Post COVID. I work remotely at my home studio to keep my family members with underlying health conditions safe. I do not travel as much as before. Also, I tend to work more because it is just easy to start early and stay later. Now, there is no commute or strange feeling of being alone at the office late at night. The coolest thing about it is that I can focus and design without interruption. And the silver lining is I get to spend more time with my family and my dog Astro. Pre-COVID, I traveled about 3 weeks out of every month. When I am in town, I would get to the office and balance design and management. Sometimes I felt like I did not accomplish anything because I was constantly putting fires for team members. I do miss the energy of being in the office environment. Also, the spontaneous collaboration can only happen at the office. I look forward to the hybrid future that allows for flexibility. We are so far past the industrial age so there is no need for 9-5 schedules. Finally, the technology age has embraced landscape architecture.
- How does the availability of quality healthcare fit into the plan for Landscape Architecture?
  - We all need quality healthcare. This question resonates with me because I believe landscape architects can affect positive health care. When we design with nature and provide opportunities for humans to interact with the environment, we are all healthier. I see an opportunity for LA's to combine forces with Docs and provide a way forward towards green healthcare.