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Press Release: AIA Baltimore Announces Opening of the Baltimore Center for Architecture and Design

Ribbon cutting and virtual celebration to be held on October 30, 2pm

Baltimore, MD (October 21, 2020)

AIA Baltimore is pleased to announce the [virtual opening and ribbon cutting of The Baltimore Center for Architecture and Design on October 30 at 2pm](#). The virtual event will be live streamed and open for public participation.

Baltimore's Newest Design Hub

The Center will convene timely and vital conversations about the architecture and the built environment in Baltimore, and the role of design in creating equitable, just, healthy, sustainable and resilient communities. It will include flexible program, event, and gallery exhibitions space. Programs will include lectures, tours, workshops, and activities for the design community, students, and the general public.

“Our goal was to create a welcoming and accessible space for Baltimore's design community. Using only a few elements – movable walls and metal screens - we wanted to create an adaptable, dynamic and engaging space that invites visitors in to test out bold design ideas,” says Mark Nook, AIA, of Quinn Evans, the winning Baltimore firm of the national design competition for The Center.

The Center will be the new headquarters for AIA Baltimore and the Baltimore Architecture Foundation, and will provide collaborative administrative and program space for allied professional industry, advocacy, and education organizations, including the Baltimore Chapter of the National Organization of Minority Architects (Bmore NOMA), Baltimore Heritage, Inc., the Baltimore Chapter of the Urban Land Institute (ULI Baltimore), the Maryland Chapter of the American Society of Landscape Architects (ASLA Maryland), and the Charles Street Development Corporation.

Says Scott M. Walters, AIA, 2020 AIA Baltimore Chapter President, and Principal at Hord Coplan Macht, “the Baltimore Center for Architecture and Design was conceived to scale the influence of architecture and design. The Center will be where neighbors, civic leaders, institutions, and all design professions come together to collaborate, inspire, learn, listen, and most importantly, to act. Here we hope to find common values and work towards shared goals. The Center will celebrate Baltimore's architectural treasures and will be a platform for discussing the future of design and the profession.”

Kathleen Lane, AIA, Executive Director of AIA Baltimore and Baltimore Architecture Foundation adds: “Baltimore's design and creative communities are among its greatest assets, and the Center will be a place to bring a higher level of public awareness and engagement for our community, as a place for collaborative dialogue and solutions to social, economic and environment issues through design.



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About the Baltimore Center for Architecture and Design

The Center is located at One Charles Center, a landmark building designed by world-renowned modern architect Mies van der Rohe in 1962. The design of the Center was completed by [Quinn Evans](#), as a result of an AIA Baltimore design competition with a national jury held in 2019. The 3,600 square foot space is located at the retail level fronting onto Fayette Street, and adjacent to Center Plaza. The former retail space was vacant for over 15 years. A primary goal of the project is to revitalize and bring renewed energy and activity to the space at the street level, and to contribute to public programs in Center Plaza.

“Having the AIA Baltimore in the heart of Downtown Baltimore, in one of the country’s first urban renewal districts, underscores the importance of the Baltimore’s built environment,” reflected Shelonda Stokes, President of Downtown Partnership of Baltimore. “It’s exciting, particularly now, to have an underutilized retail space come back to life. I can’t wait for the programming and scholarship that will emerge from the Baltimore Center for Architecture and Design.”

Upcoming Program Highlights

[Doors Open Baltimore](#) is being held during the entire month of October as a series of virtual tours and presentations on architectural treasures throughout the city. All programs are free to attend/donation-based.

[Society’s Cage](#) is a timely interpretive design installation exhibited at Baltimore’s War Memorial Plaza at 101 North Gay Street, and open to the public October 19 - 30, 2020, 9 AM - 9PM daily.

The bold interpretive pavilion is sculpted to symbolize the historic forces of racialized state violence. The experience educates visitors and functions as a sanctuary to reflect, record and share personal thoughts as a mechanism for building empathy and healing.

Society’s Cage is brought to Baltimore in partnership with the Baltimore Office of Promotion & The Arts (BOPA) as a signature event for their 2020 [Free Fall Baltimore](#) festival.

AIA Baltimore advocated to bring the installation to Baltimore as the first location on a global tour, after the National Mall in Washington, DC, and is promoting related programming.

[AIA Baltimore and Baltimore Architecture Foundation Design Excellence Awards](#) will be held virtually on October 23, at 4pm . The event will feature design award winning projects located in Baltimore or designed by Baltimore architects. The event is open to the public, and is free to attend/donation-based.

[SAY IT LOUD](#): as the Center’s first major exhibition in 2021, SAY IT LOUD will offer a virtual and gallery display of the work of Black and minority architects and designers of all disciplines in Baltimore and Maryland.

AIA Baltimore 150th Anniversary in 2021. As one of the oldest chapters of The American Institute of Architects in the country, AIA Baltimore celebrates its 150th birthday in 2021 with yearlong programs.



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The Center Fund

In conjunction with the Center opening, and its 150th anniversary in 2021, AIA Baltimore seeking to raise \$1,000,000 to support costs of design and construction, and ongoing operations of The Center for Architecture and Design. The Center Fund was seeded with \$500,000 from the organizational funds from the membership and former leadership of AIA Baltimore. Additionally, the Center has been the recipient of a \$75,000 capital projects grant from Maryland Heritage Areas Authority and \$5000 Storefront Improvement Grant from the Baltimore Development Corporation. Additional sponsorships have been received from design firms and individuals, and in-kind contributions have been offered for furniture, and equipment for the new space by companies in the design and construction industry.

The remaining goal of approximately \$250,000 in sponsorships through The Center Fund will allow AIA Baltimore to develop innovative new programs, curate unparalleled exhibitions on the built environment, and give space to designers to gather and network, and a place where all Baltimoreans can engage and learn something new about our city.

Additional info on the Center Fund:

<https://www.aiabaltimore.org/the-center/>

About AIA Baltimore

Founded in 1871, the Baltimore Chapter of The American Institute of Architects is one of the oldest AIA chapters in the country.

AIA Baltimore serves as the voice of the architecture profession in the Baltimore metropolitan area. The chapter consists of nearly 1,300 architects, emerging professionals, and allied industrial members united to demonstrate the value of architecture and design.

As a professional organization, the most important service the AIA provides is unifying the efforts of individuals and firms to improve our profession and the built environment. We do this at local, state and national levels through proactive legislation and public awareness campaigns. The AIA also provides timely and relevant continuing education and knowledge resources for architects in professional practice. Finally, the AIA offers individuals the opportunity to network with other architects, elected officials, community leaders and allied professionals.

By advancing our shared values of community, knowledge and advocacy, AIA Baltimore strives to make the Baltimore region a better place to live, work and play.

About Baltimore Architecture Foundation

The Baltimore Architecture Foundation (BAF) celebrates design and the built environment. Launched in 1987, BAF encourages people to explore Baltimore architecture: to be mindful of the area's history, recognize Baltimore's architectural heritage, and appreciate its design innovations.

Through its tours, lectures, educational programs for adults and kids, exhibitions, research, and publications, the BAF demonstrates how ideas are manifested in the built environment and urban design of the city.