

Melanie R. Ball
mrb5488@my.utexas.edu
melanierball@gmail.com

linkedin.com/in/melanierball/
+1 310.633.3482

Education

- 2021–2026 PhD, Architecture, University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture (ABD)
Dissertation: “‘More Than Houses’: Operation Breakthrough and the Evolution of Urban Crisis”
- 2021 MA, Modern & Contemporary Art History, School of the Art Institute of Chicago
Thesis: “An Air of Serenity: Chicago’s Carl Sandburg Village and the Construction of Middle-Class Desire, c.1962”
- 2015 BA, Art History, University of California, Santa Barbara

Teaching and Professional Appointments

(forthcoming) Mellon Postdoctoral Fellow. Fox Center for Humanistic Inquiry at Emory University, Atlanta, GA. August 2026–.

Instructor of Record, ARC342R: Housing for Tomorrow: A History. Spring 2025. UT Austin School of Architecture, Austin, TX.

Research Assistant, *Building the New South Database* digital humanities project. Center for American Architecture and Design at UT Austin, Austin, TX. May–August 2025.

Academic Assistant, UT Austin School of Architecture, Austin, TX. August–December 2024. Course assisted:
ARC 387G: World Architecture: Industrial Revolution–Present for Graduate Students, Dr. Bryan Norwood.

Research Assistant, *Building the New South Database* digital humanities project. Center for American Architecture and Design at UT Austin, Austin, TX. May–August 2024.

Teaching Assistant, UT Austin School of Architecture, Austin, TX. August 2022–May 2024. Courses assisted:
ARC 318K: World Architecture: Origins–1750 (Spring 2024, Spring 2023), Dr. Charles L. Davis II.
ARC 318L: World Architecture: Industrial Revolution–Present (Fall 2023, Fall 2022), Dr. Bryan Norwood.

Research Assistant to Dr. Bryan Norwood. UT Austin School of Architecture, Austin, TX. March–August 2023.

Research Assistant to Dr. Mirka Beneš. Austin, TX. June–August 2022.

Researcher, Department of Historic Preservation, UT Austin School of Architecture, and the National Park Service, Austin, TX. June–September 2022.
Project: “Historic Structure Report for Camp Round Meadow, Catoctin Park, Maryland.”

Research and Teaching Assistant to Professor Mary Jane Jacob. SAIC Galleries (formerly Sullivan Galleries), Chicago, IL. February 2020–June 2021.
Courses assisted: ARTHI 6110: Advanced Curatorial Practice I & II (Spring 2021, Fall 2020).

Teaching Assistant, Department of Art History, Theory & Criticism. School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL. August 2019–May 2021.

Courses assisted:

ARTHI 1002: Modern to Contemporary Art History (Spring 2021, Fall 2020, Fall 2019), Dr. David Raskin.

ARTHI 4372: Minimalism and Related Movements (Spring 2021), Dr. David Raskin.

ARTHI 4873: Art Institute of Chicago Collections Seminar (Winter 2021, Summer 2020), Dr. David Raskin.

ARTHI 1002: Global Modern to Contemporary Art History Survey (Spring 2020), Drs. Delinda Collier, David Raskin, and Nora Taylor.

Department of Engagement, Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara, Santa Barbara, CA. 2015–2019.

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Engagement and Visitor Experience Manager, June 2018–June 2019.
Coordinator of Engagement, June 2016–June 2018.
Community Engagement Representative, August 2015–June 2016.

Fellowships and Awards

Harrington Fellowship. The Donald D. Harrington Society of Fellows, UT Austin, Austin, TX. 2025-2026.

Boone Powell Family Prize in Urban Design. UT Austin School of Architecture, Austin, TX. 2025.

Research Grant. The Rockefeller Archive Center (of the Rockefeller Foundation), Sleepy Hollow, NY. 2025-2026.

Graduate School Summer Fellowship. The Graduate School, UT Austin, Austin, TX. 2025.

Professional Development Award. The Graduate School, UT Austin, Austin, TX. 2025.

Graduate School Recruitment Fellowship. The Graduate School, UT Austin, Austin, TX. 2024.

Alice Ross Carey Fellow. UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design, Berkeley, CA. 2024.

Graduate School Summer Fellowship. The Graduate School, UT Austin, Austin, TX. 2024.

Outstanding Teaching Assistant Award. UT Austin School of Architecture, Austin, TX. 2024.

Professional Development Award. The Graduate School, UT Austin, Austin, TX. Spring 2025 and Spring 2024.

Jean and Bill Booziotis Endowed Graduate Fellow in Architectural History. UT Austin School of Architecture, Austin, TX. 2023–2024.

John Greene Taylor Family Graduate Fellowship. UT Austin, Austin, TX. 2023–2024.

Doctoral Research Residency. Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, QC. 2023.

Garden and Landscape Studies Summer Residency. Dumbarton Oaks, Washington, D.C. 2023.

Graduate School Recruitment Fellowship. The Graduate School, UT Austin, Austin, TX. 2021–2022.

Jean and Bill Booziotis Endowed Graduate Fellow in Architectural History. UT Austin School of Architecture, Austin, TX. 2021–2022.

Mohn Family Fellow. School of the Art Institute of Chicago, Chicago, IL. 2020–2021.

Publications, Public Scholarship, Manuscripts in Progress

(forthcoming) “What Mexico Built: Mediating Modernist Tension at Nonoalco-Tlatelolco, c.1966.” In *Comparative Urbanisms: The Changing Urban in the Global South*, eds. Kamran Asdar Ali and Martina Rieker, 2027.

“Urban America Inc. and Housing’s Nonprofit Turn in the 1960s.” [PLATFORM](#) online, March 2026.

“Co-production in Los Laureles Canyon, Tijuana, MX: Cross-Border Community Stations Foster Civic Architectures.” [Critical Perspectives in International Planning](#), ed. Bjørn Sletto (UT Austin Department of Community and Regional Planning, 2022).

Colloquia, Panels, Scholarly Presentations

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Society of Architectural Historians Annual International Conference. Atlanta, GA. May 2025. Paper: “Operation Breakthrough: Housing for a Racial Liberal Era c.1970.”

Buell Biennial Dissertation Colloquium. Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture at Columbia University. New York, NY. March 2025. Paper: “General Contractor, General Motors: Architects’ Experiments in the Manufactured Housing Industry, c.1970.”

Alice Ross Carey Fellow Talk. UC Berkeley College of Environmental Design. Berkeley, CA. November 2024. Paper: “Housing as Testing Ground, Housing as Training Ground: Experiments in Postwar Architectural Pedagogy.”

Forms of Environmentalization. Columbia University Graduate School of Architecture, Planning and Preservation and the Buell Center for the Study of American Architecture, New York, NY. April 2024. Paper: “Defining Territoriality: Low-Rise High-Density Housing for the Urban Environment, c.1972.”

DocTalks x CCA: Collectivity. Canadian Centre for Architecture, Montréal, QC, and online. March 2024. Invited speaker, with Eun-Jeong Kim and Inês Nunes. Research presented: “Housing and Expertise.”

Doctoral Research Residents Symposium. Canadian Centre for Architecture. Montréal, QC. July 2023. Paper: “Between Crisis and Experiment: Housing as Pedagogy at the Institute for Architecture and Urban Studies c.1972.”

Comparative Urbanisms: The Changing Urban in the Global South. The Institute for Gender and Women’s Studies, American University in Cairo. Cairo, Egypt. June 2023. Paper: “What Mexico Built: Mediating Modernist Tension at Nonoalco-Tlatelolco, c.1966.”

CROSSROADS: Uncovering the Histories of the Built Environment in the Americas and the Global South. UT Austin School of Architecture. Austin, TX. February 2023. Roundtable Moderator.

Department of Art History, Theory & Criticism MA Symposium. School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Chicago, IL. May 2021. Panelist. Paper: “An Air of Serenity: Chicago’s Carl Sandburg Village and the Construction of Middle-Class Desire, c.1962.”

MFA Program in Performance, Departmental Critique Week. School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Chicago, IL. December 2020. Invited panelist.

MFA Program in Art and Public Space, Departmental Critique Week. Oslo National Academy of Arts (KHiO) in collaboration with the School of the Art Institute of Chicago. Oslo, NO and Chicago, IL. November 2020. Moderator and panelist.

Drawing the Line: Exploring the Boundaries in Art Institutional Practices. Graduate Symposium, York University. Toronto, ON. March 2020 (cancelled, COVID-19). Invited speaker.

Paper: “Expand, Contract, Disrupt: *Electric Earth* and the Future of Arts Institutions.”

Alumni in Museum Careers. History of Art and Architecture Department, University of California, Santa Barbara. Santa Barbara, CA. May 2019. Invited speaker.

Service: Conferences and Symposia Organized

(forthcoming) *Society of Architectural Historians Annual International Conference.* Chicago, IL. April 2027. Chaired panel: “Cultural History of the 2008 Housing Crisis.” Co-chair with Michael Moynihan.

Representing Cost and Profit in Planning, paper workshop series for the Costs of Architecture Network. June–August 2026. Online. Co-organizer with Lasse Rau.

CROSSROADS: Uncovering the Histories of the Built Environment in the Americas and the Global South. February 2023. Austin, TX. Co-organizer with Mónica del Arenal, Tolu Oliyide, and Irina Rivero.

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Queer Revolt: LGBTQ+ Studies Conference (postponed, COVID-19). Chicago, IL. Strategic Advisor, 2019–2020.

Symposium: Art from Guatemala: 1960–Present, part of the Getty’s *Pacific Standard Time LA/LA*. Santa Barbara, CA. September 2017. Co-organizer with Monika Molnar-Metzenthin.

Selected Exhibition Experience: production, coordination, and programming (additional upon request)

James Benning: Quilts, Cigarettes & Dirt (Portraits of America), curated by Abaseh Mirvali at Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara. May 16, 2019–July 14, 2019. Engagement & Visitor Experience Manager.

Lara Favaretto, curated by Abaseh Mirvali at Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara. February 12, 2019–April 28, 2019. Curatorial assistance and Engagement & Visitor Experience Manager.

Kota Ezawa: The Crime of Art, curated by Irene Hoffmann and organized by SITE Santa Fe at Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara. November 11, 2018–January 20, 2019. Engagement & Visitor Experience Manager, and co-curator of the Art Lab with Monika Molnar-Metzenthin.

Bloom Projects: Beatriz Olabarrieta, Ask the Dust, curated by Alexandra Terry at Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara. November 11, 2018–January 20, 2019. Engagement & Visitor Experience Manager.

Barry McGee: SB Mid Summer Intensive, curated by Alexandra Terry at Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara. July 1, 2018–October 14, 2018. Engagement & Visitor Experience Manager, and co-curator of the Art Lab with Monika Molnar-Metzenthin.

Cecily Brown: Rehearsal, organized by Claire Gilman at Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara. January 28, 2018–June 3, 2018. Coordinator of Engagement, and co-curator of the Art Lab with Monika Molnar-Metzenthin.

The Getty Foundation’s *Pacific Standard Time LA/LA: Guatemala from 33,000 km: Contemporary Art, 1960–Present*, curated by Miki Garcia and Emiliano Valdés of MAMM (Medellín, Colombia) at Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara, Westmont Ridley-Tree Museum of Art, and Community Arts Workshop Santa Barbara. September 17, 2017–December 17, 2017. Coordinator of Engagement, and co-curator of the Art Lab with Monika Molnar-Metzenthin.

Free Play, curated by Alexandra Cunningham Cameron with exhibition design by Sam Chermayeff Office at Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara. May 21, 2017–August 20, 2017. Coordinator of Engagement, and co-curator of the Art Lab with Monika Molnar-Metzenthin.

Rimini Protokoll: City as Stage, curated by Brooke Kellaway at Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara. January 22, 2017–April 30, 2017. Coordinator of Engagement; Co-curator of the Art Lab with Monika Molnar-Metzenthin; Production Coordinator for *Home Visit USA* performance series.

assume vivid astro focus: avalanches volcanoes asteroids floods, curated by Miki Garcia at Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara. August 14, 2016–January 1, 2017. Coordinator of Engagement, and co-curator of the Art Lab with Monika Molnar-Metzenthin.

Beyond 2°, curated by Brooke Kellaway at Museum of Contemporary Art Santa Barbara. March 13, 2016–July 24, 2016. Curator of the Art Lab.

Working Languages

English (native); French (reading and writing proficiency); German and Spanish (elementary proficiency)

Professional Affiliations

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Society of Architectural Historians
Urban History Association