
SUSAN MELSOP

Associate Professor

Interior Design Program Coordinator

Co-Director, DESIS Lab

<https://desis.osu.edu/>

Department of Design

EDUCATION

Master of Architecture
University of Illinois at Chicago, Chicago IL

Bachelor of Science in Architecture
The Ohio State University, Columbus, OH
International Studies - Rome Program & Oxford, England Study Program

Post Graduate Course Work, The Ohio State University
The Hermeneutics of Sacred Space, Comparative Studies Department, OSU
Traditional Religions of Japan, Comparative Studies Department, OSU
Cultural Studies of Japan, Asian Studies Department, OSU
Buddhist Art and Architecture, Asian Art History Department, OSU
Tantric Buddhism, Asian Art History Department, OSU
History of Asian Art, Asian Art History Department, OSU
Art and Architecture of Japan, Asian Art History Department, OSU
Cultural History of Japan, History Department, OSU

RESEARCH AND TEACHING INTERESTS

Community-engaged design-build pedagogy, social justice design, co-design and participatory design methods, environmental and sustainable building practices, hermeneutics of place making/meaning making, sacred space and East Asian/Buddhist philosophy

ACADEMIC and ADMINISTRATIVE EXPERIENCE

Associate Professor, Department of Design
Coordinator, Interior Design Program, Department of Design, 2022-present
The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio
September 2008 – to Present / Visiting Scholar 8/2021- 6/2022 (UC Denver)

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Teaching experience: Community-engaged Design-Build, Service-Learning, Interior Design, Architecture Design

Co-Director, DESIS Lab

Design for Social Innovation toward Sustainability

In 2018, I led the initiative to launch a DESIS Lab in the Department of Design. In so doing, the Department joins an international network of university and colleges leading in Social Innovation and Sustainability through community engagement, design activities, and co-creative processes.

Please visit: <https://desis.osu.edu/>

Visiting Associate Professor, College of Architecture and Planning, University of Colorado, Denver.

In 2021, I was invited to serve as a visiting professor. This experience provided me opportunities to design and launch (2) new programs and expand my community-engaged design-build scholarship. The new academic curricula created for the College of Architecture and Planning include an undergraduate interior design program and a graduate level certificate in interior design.

August 2021- June 2022

Visiting Scholar, School of Architecture and Urbanism (FAU)

Mackenzie Presbyterian University, São Paulo, Brazil

During my sabbatical, I was invited to teach, conduct research, and organize community-based workshops for graduate and undergraduate students at the School of Architecture and Urbanism, São Paulo, Brazil. Spring 2019.

Resident Program Director: International Service-Learning: *Design Matters in Brazil*

I initiated an academic partnership with Mackenzie Presbyterian University and the National Movement for the Street Population (Movimento Nacional da População de Rua) “PopRua” in São Paulo, Brazil. 2017-present (On hold since COVID-19).

Please visit: <https://www.designmattersbrasil.com/>

Adjunct Professor, Knowlton School of Architecture

The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

September 1996–2008

Teaching experience:

Architecture Design Studios (all undergraduate levels), and Sacred Spaces of Asia (graduate level design build studios and seminars)

Honors and Scholars Program Leader

The Ohio State University, Columbus, Ohio

London Honors 294: Honors Study Abroad Program, 2004

London Scholars: Architecture Scholars Study Abroad Program, 2005

AWARDS, GRANTS, FELLOWSHIPS and SCHOLARSHIPS

Grant: Drake Institute for Teaching and Learning Grant (\$4000)- Course Development 2026

This is a Course Development grant to develop an honors course for Interior Design students.

Scholarship: Moving Boundaries, Japan Symposia 2025

This scholarship was awarded by Moving Boundaries an international learning community integrating neuroscience and architecture/interior spaces. This two-week place-based academic program brings diverse scholars from across the world to collaboratively research dynamics of space, place and ritual through the lens of neuroarchitecture.

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Award: Community Engaged Scholar 2023

University Office of Outreach and Engagement (\$1000)

Award given in recognition of two service-learning courses *Design Matters with TRANSIT ARTS* and *Design Matters in Brazil*. The local service-learning course engages urban youth in design-build activities for urban revitalization and the renovation of a new community art center. *Design Matters in Brazil* addresses the needs of the PopRua (National Movement for the Street Situation) through co-design activities and collaborative building processes for the renovation of a community resource center. These academic-community engagement projects reflect a commitment to education for citizenship, care ethics and social justice first by extending education to urban youth and second by advocating for human rights for a homeless population in São Paulo, Brazil.

OAA Faculty Fellow for Arts Engagement 2023-2024

Responsible for Community of Practice for Arts Engagement

This faculty fellowship supports the Office of the Arts through internal and external partnership development to enhance impact of outreach and engagement across the arts and design disciplines on OSU campuses and beyond.

OSEP Grant: Design Activism for Sustainability 2023 (\$3500)

Funding provided for the development and creation of mobile pop-up wagons to serve as interactive, tangible tools (on wheels) for peer-to-peer learning about sustainability initiatives on Ohio State campus, zero waste, and composting food waste for regenerative agriculture.

Faculty Fellow for Global Arts and Humanities Discovery Theme 2019-2020

Responsible for Community, Creative Practice, and Civic Engagement Initiatives

This faculty fellowship was awarded with administrative duties to foster and support ongoing university initiatives to advance community-based research and pedagogy for social justice, environmental stewardship, and impact on campus and beyond.

Arts and Sciences GAHDT Grant: Summer Institute: “Community Engagement” 2020 (\$15,000)

“Voices of Franklinton, Amplifying Socially and Environmentally Innovative Change Agents in Franklinton” (2019-present)

PI: Susan Melsop. The Summer Institute was put on pause during summer 2020 due Covid-19, but resumed in autumn 2020 and spring 2021. The community-based projects are extensions of the DESIS Lab (Design, Social Innovation and Sustainability) engaging non-profits in design practices to foster environmental stewardship and cultivating social change in underserved neighborhoods in Franklinton, Ohio.

NIH P-30 Grant (National Institutes for Health) 2016-2019

Project member: Susan Melsop, PI: Susan Moffatt-Bruce, MD, PhD

This four-year long interdisciplinary effort focused on Patient Safety Learning Labs, implementing design thinking and innovative strategies for the design and development of an improved healthcare system at the OSU Wexner Medical Center. My role included the development of a series of design thinking workshops to foster community-building across sectors and transdisciplinary research.

Scholarship: Authentic Leadership Program, Naropa Institute, 2018

This ten-week course aimed to cultivate self-awareness, skillful communication, and compassionate action. The training integrated mindfulness practices and implicit bias awareness with practical application of innovative theories for social change. The leadership program provided skills and approaches to strengthen cross-disciplinary, collaborative projects with underrepresented community members.

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Award: Ronald and Deborah Ratner Distinguished Teaching 2015 (\$20,000)

The Ratner Award recognizes faculty for developing innovative coursework as well as for making a difference in students' educations, lives, and careers. Recipients are chosen for "innovative" teaching and for exemplary records of engaging, motivating, and inspiring students.

Scholarship: HERS, Higher Education Resource Services 2015 (\$7500)

This competitive scholarship enabled me to attend an intensive professional development program that aims to support women in higher education administration.

Award: Village Maker Award 2014

Central Community House, a central Ohio non-profit, awarded me this based on my development of service-learning courses engaging urban youth in design build education and on-going outreach educational programs.

Award: OSU Outreach Award (Inaugural) 2012 (\$2000)

The Ohio State University Arts & Humanities Office of Diversity & Inclusion awarded me this distinction based on my design build program engaging urban youth in the design and construction process.

Faculty Award for Excellence in Community-Based Scholarship 2012 (\$4000)

This Ohio State University Service Award recognized on my ongoing commitment to engage urban youth in design build pedagogy toward urban revitalization.

Scholarship: ALIA (Authentic Leadership in Action) 2011 (\$1000)

This competitive award enabled me to develop leadership skills and advance community outreach and engagement initiatives.

Scholarship: Emerging Engagement Workshop (EESW) 2010 (\$2000)

National Outreach Scholarship Conference (NOSC - now ESC). Raleigh, North Carolina. Scholarship awarded for development of community/university partnerships.

PUBLICATIONS AND SELECT PRESENTATIONS

Melsop, Susan. "Radical Pedagogy, Cultivating a Culture of Care for Advocacy and Action". Paper in *Cumulus, Ethical Leadership Conference* proceedings, 2025

Melsop, Susan. "Action and Compassion, A Pedagogical Framework for Design Activism". Paper presentation at the *AMPS, Architecture, Media & Politics* conference, 2025.

Melsop, Susan. "Co-designing with PopRua of Sao Paul, Brazil". Paper presentation at *DESIS Social Design Days*, Zaragoza, Spain 2024.

Melsop, Susan. "Integrating Inner and Outer Work, A Pedagogical Framework for Engaged Design". Paper in proceedings at the *Hawaii International Conference on Education*, 2023.

Melsop, S., Proulx, S., Nickley, W., "Developing a Design Lab for Social Innovation and Sustainability". Presented at the *Engagement Scholars Consortium (ESC)*, Michigan State University, 2023.

Melsop, Susan, VandenBurg, Jo. "Engagement Stations, Design-build Pedagogy for Social Justice". Presented at *The Research-Design Interface, Architectural Research Centers Consortium (ARCC)*,

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Texas Tech University, 2023.

Melsop, Susan., “Amplifying Community-engaged Design for Impact, The Evolution of a Design Department”. Presented (virtually) at the *Engagement Scholars Consortium (ESC)*, 2022.

Melsop, Susan., “Community Advocacy through Design Activism, Intersections of Art and Design”. Invited Keynote Speaker for College of Public Health. Presented (virtually) at the *6th Annual Advocacy Workshop*, March 2021.

Melsop, Susan., “Exploring Ethical Frameworks for Community-engaged Scholarship”. Presented (virtually) at the *Engagement Scholars Consortium (ESC)*, 2021.

Melsop, Susan., “Embedding Mindfulness Practices into Community-Engaged Learning to Advance Social Innovation Education”. In Proceedings of the *Hawaii International Conference for Arts and Humanities*, 2020.

Melsop, Susan, Bertolini, J., “Pedagogical Strategies for Social Impact Design, Designing with the PopRua”. In Proceedings of the *Cumulus Conference*, Universidad de los Andes, Bogotá, Colombia, 2019.

Melsop, Susan., “What Role Can Design Serve in Human Rights Advocacy?” Short entry in proceedings of *Design for Humanity Summit II*, Fordham University, NY, 2019.

Melsop, Susan, Klatt, M., Rayo, M. “Working Across Disciplinary Boundaries toward Patient Safety: Using Design Thinking Methodologies for Transdisciplinary Team-of-teams Collaboration”. *International Journal of Design Management and Professional Practice*, Vol. 13, Issue 3.

Proulx, Sébastien, Melsop, Susan. “Caution Roadblock Ahead: Hosting a Design Driven Social Innovation Lab in a Research-Intensive University”. Paper in proceedings of *Cumulus, International Association of Universities and Colleges of Art, Design, and Media*, 2018.

Melsop, Susan. “Educating the Next Generation of Social Impact Designers, Raising the Bar for Design Build Pedagogy”. *Making Futures International Research Journal*, Plymouth College of Art, UK, 2017.

Melsop, Susan., “Craft and Affective Domains of Meaning Making: Engaging hand, head, and heart for transformative sustainability learning”. *Making Futures International Research Journal*, Plymouth College of Art, UK, 2013.

Melsop, Susan. Gill, C., Chan, P., “Re-Envisioning a Design Curriculum”. Paper in proceedings of *Design Ed Asia Conference*, Hong Kong Polytechnic University, Hong Kong, China, 2013.

Melsop, Susan., “Design, Culture and Ecological Living”. The Ohio State University; 2011. ASIN: B009AOVOVQ.

Melsop, Susan., “Community Design Matters, A New Model for Learning”. *Design Principles and Practices: An International Journal*, Volume 4, Issue 6.

Melsop, Susan., Gill, C., Sanders, E.-B., “Design Education for Social Innovation: Preliminary Explorations”. Paper in proceedings of *Include Conference Royal Academy of Art*, London, UK, 2011.

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Melsop, Susan., “Engaging All Voices: Participatory Design Methods in Design/Build Outreach Studios”. Presentation and workshop at the *National Outreach Scholars Conference*, Michigan State University, MI., 2010.

PROFESSIONAL EXPERIENCE

Melsop-Bonn Design Büro, OH
Independent Architecture & Interior Design Practice, 2007-12
Architecture / Interior Design / Installations / Furniture / Community-engaged Design

KMA Architects and Design Partners, Columbus, OH
Design Partner, 2004-7
Architect / Community Liaison

Rakatansky Design, Chicago, IL
Installation Design & Design Research
Progressive Arch Citation (PA Citation)

Dan Wheeler Architects, Chicago, IL
Architecture Design & Graphic Design
Progressive Arch Award (PA Award)

PROFESSIONAL ASSOCIATIONS / VOLUNTEER WORK

Women in Design, Member, Denver, Colorado, 2021-present

Center for Architecture and Design, Columbus, Ohio
Advisory Board Member, (2017-2021)

City of Grandview Parks and Recreation, Columbus, Ohio
Advisory Board Member (Mayoral appointment), 2006-2016.