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UNIVERSITY	DEPARTMENT OF	348 GOULD HALL	COLLEGE OF
OF	LANDSCAPE	BOX 355734	BUILT
WASHINGTON	ARCHITECTURE	SEATTLE, WA 98195-5734	ENVIRONMENTS

## NOMINATION FOR MARTHA SCHWARTZ FOR ASLA DESIGN MEDAL

ASLA Design Medal Nominations  
c/o Honors and Awards  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear ASLA Board of Trustees

I am honored to submit this nomination of Martha Schwartz, landscape architect for the ASLA's 2020 Design Medal. As principal of Martha Schwartz Partners, she has been engaged in the designing of our built environment for near to four decades as a landscape architect, urbanist and artist on diverse projects located around the world. Schwartz's practice as a landscape architect deeply embedded in the art of design has shaped the field and discipline in multiple ways. The beauty and thoughtfulness of her designed landscapes have inspired generations of young designers as they discover the power of design as an art.

Interested in landscape as an art and cultural medium, Schwartz's works have been described as "assemblages of everyday objects and materials" serving as "a form of built criticism and construction, simultaneously challenging existing norms and imaging new landscape worlds." (Elizabeth Meyer, 1977: 5) There are her enduring landscapes for Exchange Square in Manchester, England, Minneapolis Court House Plaza, the Grand Canal Square in Dublin, and Mesa Arts Center. These designs offer cultural narratives and natural histories woven into vibrant and meaning-filled public spaces. When she is wry - as at Javitz Plaza, Splice Garden, and Garden Ornaments at Schloss Dörentrop - her work amplifies quotidian landscapes as she confronts the mundane, When her work is solemn and temporary, such as the billowing white sheets hung on clotheslines at the Spoleto Festival, her work is biting critical. And when her work is temporary and humorous - at the infamous Bagel Garden, Necco Garden, and others - she brings a pop art sensibility to the work, creating vivid tableaux. In all of this her designs are pioneering, they are beautiful, and they inspire. Schwartz has expanded what it means to be a designer and landscape architect in a contemporary world. It is remarkable that this Medal has yet to be awarded someone who has been such a leader of landscape architecture as a design practice.

Schwartz holds a Bachelor of Fine Arts degree from the University of Michigan's School of Architecture and Design (1973) and an MLA degree (1977). Schwartz opened her first office in 1980 in Boston moving the firm to New York in 1983. In 1987 she joined with Peter Walker to launch The Office of Peter Walker/Martha Schwartz Inc. in San Francisco. In the early 1990s she worked in collaboration with Ken Smith and David Meyer. Martha Schwartz Partners (formerly Martha Schwartz, Inc.) was founded in 1990 has offices in New York,

London, UK. and Shanghai. MSP is engaged in projects and consultation around the globe with design projects in over 40 countries and six continents.

Schwartz's first published design was the Bagel Garden that played with the language of a parterre embroidery in which purple gravel strips backgrounded shellacked bagels. The garden was featured by Grady Clay on the front cover of *Landscape Architecture Magazine*. A list of subsequent works include: Stella's Garden, Necco Garden, Whitehead Institute Splice Garden, Center for Innovative Technology, Rio Shopping Center, Turf Parterre Garden, Kunsthal Museumpark Competition, Biosphere Competition, Los Angeles Center, Columbia Center, Moscone Center Competition, Fukuoka International Housing, Dickenson Residence, The Citadel, Snoopy's Garden, HUD Plaza Improvements, Jacob Javits Plaza, Federal Courthouse Plaza, Baltimore Inner Harbor Competition, Landschaftspark Munchen-Riem, Miami International Airport Sound Wall and many others. In 2005, Schwartz created a new public landscape in a deprived former coal-mining village in Castleford in Yorkshire, England.

Schwartz is also an academic and advocate for landscape architecture and design research. She is a tenured Professor in Practice of Landscape Architecture at the Harvard University Graduate School of Design, where she has taught since 1990. Her teaching advances design for climate change mitigation fully engaged in exploring how art and science contribute to a healthier future. She is a founding member of the Working Group of Sustainable Cities at Harvard University and an engaged member of the Landscape Architecture Foundation's Climate Change Task Force. She has lectured both nationally and internationally about sustainable cities and the urban landscape, and her work has been featured widely in publications as well as gallery exhibitions. Schwartz has also taught at the University of California at Berkeley, Rhode Island School of Design, Ohio State University, City College in N.Y. C., and Melbourne University in Australia. Through her teaching and design practice, she has brought the very serious challenges of climate change and resilience to the art of design- a feat few can claim to have done with such power and influence.

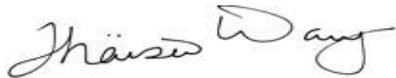
Schwartz has been well recognized both within the profession and by others. She has been a resident at the America Academy in Rome and is a member of the Mayor of London's Design Advisory Group. She was awarded an Honorary Fellow of RIBA (Royal Institute of British Architects) (2004) and was received an Honorary Degree of Doctor of Science from University of Ulster in Belfast, Northern Ireland and most recently a Doctor Honoris Causa from the Boston Architectural College. Other awards include the Woman in Design Award for Excellence from Boston Society of Architects (2004), the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Award 2006, the Chicago Athenaeum Award for Best New Global Design 2007 for Leamouth Peninsula, and the 2007 ASLA Honour Award and the 2006 Urban Land Institute Award for Excellence for Mesa Arts and Performance Centre, Arizona, USA. Clearly her design work inspires and awes the world.

While there are hundreds of articles on the work of Schwartz and her influence, two monographs address the remarkable depth and breadth of her practice: Meyer, Elizabeth K., Heidi Landecker, *Martha Schwartz: Transfiguration of the Commonplace* (Spacemaker Press, 1997) and *The Vanguard Landscapes and Designs of Martha Schwartz*. (Thames and Hudson, 2004). Each of these books reflect the far reach of Schwartz's design work and her importance as a leader. They provide the narratives that allow one to explore beyond the surface of her work to understand the critical role of art, design, and critical thinking in her

practice. It is for these reasons that we know it is time to award Martha Schwartz the ASLA Design Medal.

Quoting my colleague Ron Henderson: "When I was faculty at Tsinghua University, we invited Martha to deliver a public lecture at the school. As the time of the lecture approached, the main hall in the School of Architecture grew more and more crowded. Students, faculty, and professionals were standing in the aisles and some were barely able to poke their head through the door. After a few quick phone calls, the lecture was spontaneously moved across the quad to a larger lecture hall. Hundreds of landscape architects marched across the Main Quad at Tsinghua and shuffled into the larger hall in the Business School. Martha had followed far behind the throng and made a timely entrance from the rear of the auditorium after most of the audience had settled in. As she walked down the aisle, the audience leapt to their feet with rowdy applause, uncharacteristic whistles and whoops from a normally reserved Chinese student body, and palpably enthusiastic admiration. I have never seen a similar show of delight by a group in the presence of a landscape architect. Yes, Martha is the closest we have to a rock star."

Sincerely,



Thaisa Way PhD, FASLA, FAAR  
Director, Garden & Landscape Studies, Dumbarton Oaks, Harvard University  
Professor, Landscape Architecture, Urban@UW, University of Washington

Contact Information:

Martha Schwartz  
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COLLEGE OF

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# G G N

February 6, 2019

The Board of Trustees  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3736

Dear Trustees,

I am writing in support of the nomination of Martha Schwartz for the ASLA Design Medal. Through the evolution of her work and her active role as an educator and speaker, she has consistently led the profession of landscape architecture onward into the future and outward to a broader public.

Martha's work has influenced the profession and made it more public as a profession. Her designs are serious fun. Accessible to a general public her designs are still thoughtful compositions of qualities -- spatial, visual and sensual -- that challenge as they charm us. She has pushed the role of landscape design beyond just plants into an active critical participant in urban design. Provoking yet practical, her designs are always grounded in the particular nature and history of a site while reaffirming the important role of public urban space. Martha has expanded the boundaries of landscape design and extended our collective palette of tools, materials and inspirations. She has made modern art, with its conceptual thinking, big ideas, and considered beauty, a part of the landscape design process. Through this she has led the profession in reconsidering ideas about ecology, nature, and public space. In much of landscape architecture that is 'new' today, we can see that Martha was already there first testing, questioning, and prodding us along.

In the past five years Martha has risen as a leader in tackling climate change and environmental health. In this as with all of her work she has brought a deep belief in the power of design as an art and science. She has inspired a new generation to pursue landscape architecture as a means to a better future.

As a person Martha is as important as her work. She has concurrently been an active and inspiring teacher, lecturer, and practitioner. She has been a role model for young women. She has given voice to the landscape profession as a design profession reminding clients, colleagues, and collaborators that landscape architecture is not just a technical service.

I have known Martha for 20 years and, like her landscapes, she is remarkably resilient and a worthy recipient of the ASLA Design Medal. I give her my strongest endorsement.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Gustafson, FASLA PLA, Founding Principal, Gustafson Guthrie Nichol

Date: February 8, 2019

Re: ASLA Medal: Martha Schwartz

Dear Selection Committee,

As a young man growing up in rural Maine in the late 1970's and early 1980's with interests both in sculpture/art and natural systems/forestry, my earliest recollections of the notion of 'landscape' as a design medium were rooted in the National and State Park systems and the science of forest and wetlands management, which was all good. However, I vividly recall what was for me a game-changing moment in the spring of 1980. My high school art teacher, Ms. Pratt, presciently introduced to me what at the time seemed to me to have been an 'off the wall' new idea about design in the landscape. It came in the form of the now infamous *Bagel Garden*. Consequently, the flood gates to a bold new world of landscape as a hyper visual, experiential, material and cultural place-making medium were immediately opened to me. The Bagel Garden only the beginning, my trajectory adjusted and my decision to study art/sculpture/landscape (as one) at RISD was confirmed. Decision made. This is how I came to be on the path to becoming a landscape architect. This was in 1980. Way back when.

This brief anecdote is sited as a heretofore invisible (though most certainly not unique) example of the impacts of the deeply abiding influences of the breadth and longevity of both the work and persona of Martha Schwartz.

As one of several people writing on behalf of Martha with respect to this prestigious award, I have no doubt that the jury will have already read innumerable instances of Martha's profound impact within the discipline of Landscape Architecture and upon the discourse of design writ large.

Therefore, the tact of this brief letter of unmitigated support for Martha (though she certainly shouldn't/doesn't need my support) has been constructed upon personal interactions and observations having to do with the work and process of Martha Schwartz as practicing landscape architect, artist and teacher (in no particular order, as I reckon that she makes little distinction between them. *It's all about design*).

My earliest personal interactions with Martha began in 1992 when I elected to attend the GSD. The decision to attend the GSD was largely predicated on the fact that she and her contemporaries comprised the nucleus of the faculty there at the time. Later ('94 or so), I was invited by Martha to join her newly christened office in the Broom Factory in Cambridge, where soon thereafter I became 'Senior Designer' ('Senior Designer' defined in large part as 'a person watching and learning from a great thinker'). In 1998, I was given a position within the faculty team at the GSD and had the honor of my lifetime to teach with and learn from Martha for about another 12 years.

In each of these three contexts, there was always only one Martha: a person intensely committed to the creation and nurturing of new ideas; not caring so much where the ideas were originating, but rather voraciously staying true to concept and intensely evolving those ideas. Her insights and approach,

despite how fantastic and sometimes even whacky, were always administered through the lens of real world applications, constructability and innovation. *How is this project new? What new experience has been created? How can this project impact inform and inspire?*

Her 'why not?' risk-taking approach to design (she never blinks) has been an inspiration to those around her for years and has begat a lineage of projects otherwise unimaginable by many of us. Fresh, innovative and provocative, the work of Martha Schwartz (and Martha herself, for that matter) has the uncanny ability to simultaneously inspire and piss off. There is seldom middle ground, which is lovely. However, in each case there's usually a buzz, and in all cases for sure, the advancement of Landscape/public realm discourse has been made front and center. Her work exceeds the bounds of what is conventionally considered 'Landscape' and, more so in recent years, has unapologetically taken on Urban Design, Public Art, and even Architecture.

Simply put, Martha is a true original. In her design DNA is a need to keep moving forward, to keep adjusting and evolving, even as the context within which she is working is transforming. In so doing and in her wake, she keeps moving the bar for the rest of us: pushing/pulling/transforming designers around her and the profession itself. She had been sustaining this amazing cadence for OVER 4 DECADES and shows ZERO sign of letting up.

There has simply been no other more influential and prolific Landscape Architect practicing over the past 40+ years. A formal acknowledgement of this life-long contribution needs to be made. The ASLA Medal is a step in the right direction. Martha Schwartz is owed this.

Her work continues to make me smile.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Michael Blier". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Michael Blier, FASLA, RLA, Honorary BSA  
Director of Design, Founding Principal  
Landworks Studio, Inc.  
29 Stanhope Street, 3<sup>rd</sup> Floor, Boston MA, 02116  
83 North Street, Salem, MA 01970



State University of New York  
College of Environmental Science and Forestry  
Department of Landscape Architecture

February 6, 2019

Martha Schwartz nomination for the 2019 ASLA Design Medal

Dear ASLA Board of Directors,

I am honored to submit this nomination of Martha Schwartz, landscape architect for the ASLA's Design Medal in 2019. I first met Martha as a classmate at GSD in 1977. From the beginning I realized the special role she would play in the profession. Similar to an ecosystem for any profession to grow sustainably it requires diversity. Martha Schwartz has played two important roles in that diversity.

First, beginning with the Bagel Garden published on the cover of LAM in 19. The importance of this design is multifold. But the critical contribution was it challenged the status quo of largely aesthetically conservative and white male dominated profession in the 1980's. She became the lightning rod for a profession that desperately needed to make its own statements along with the other design professions as to what is the meaning (s) of contemporary design.

Secondly, Martha founded her firm in 1982. At that time Carol Johnson was possibly the only prominent female landscape architect and was certainly one of the only women owned and led firms. This fact needs to be acknowledged and understood in the context of the times. I taught for over 40 years and Martha was the role model for generations of female students. It was not necessarily that they agreed with her design aesthetics but rather that she had created a successful firm and that she was recognized as a leader in the profession. When she began her career there were few clients and minimal budgets. Her projects therefore had to be bold to be impactful. I would argue that her designs have had more impact per square foot of any contemporary landscape architect.

I support Martha Schwartz for the ASLA's Design Medal because without her presence and practice we would be a diminished profession.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Richard S. Hawks". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Richard S. Hawks, FASLA, FCELA  
SUNY Distinguished Service Professor  
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The Executive Committee and Board of Trustees  
The American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 Eye Street NW  
Washington, DC 20001-3236

Re: Support of Martha Schwartz for Design Medal

Dear Committee Members and Trustees:

It is my privilege to give my unqualified support to Martha Schwartz's nomination for the ASLA Design Medal. Given her decades of groundbreaking and award-winning design work, I was surprised to realize that she had not already received this honor. Because Martha's design work has been published and evaluated extensively, I will not revisit her projects in detail. Instead, I will speak primarily of her ability to translate her design wisdom to students through her teaching, lectures and interviews.

I have known Martha since the mid-1980s when we were both on a design review at Harvard's GSD. I was immediately impressed with her razor-sharp mind and her passion for landscape architecture. Although very pregnant at the time, she energetically responded to the students' work with precise, thoughtful critiques that were both tough and supportive. Her comments gave students useful insight into how inventive site-specific projects can also address ecological and human, as well as artistic concerns. Before that review I, like most Landscape Architects, knew her only for her advocacy for art in landscape architecture and for her widely discussed early work, particularly the Bagel Garden. I saw the debate that her work generated on the role of design in landscape architecture as crucial to our growth as a profession. However, her thoughtful critiques revealed someone with design wisdom well beyond the ideas and iconic images that brought her work to the profession's attention. Consequently, I gained an appreciation for the depth of her understanding of our discipline and her commitment to promoting it.

Based on subsequent reviews and conversations with Martha, I was proud to make her my first appointment as a visiting studio critic when I became Chair of Harvard's Landscape Architecture Department. And her teaching was superb. To engage students, she relied heavily on her knowledge of art practice and urban history as well as her experience in design practice. Her critiques covered all aspects of each student's proposal – from its intellectual underpinnings to the challenges of how to select materials and

detail their construction. She was open to a range of design approaches and often praised a thoughtful ecologically based, but formally subtle scheme as well as more adventuresome proposals. She regularly reminded students of the ordinary issues that all landscape architects must address, such as where and how to provide seating or how to facilitate movement and keep plants alive in tough urban settings. Since those early days, I have watched Martha's teaching talent extend well beyond the classroom through the lectures and interviews she has given across the globe. Her well-prepared lectures have attracted hundreds of students to our discipline and educated thousands of others on how landscape architects can improve our civic spaces as well as the broader environment. These extraordinary lectures, along with her exciting work and engaging personality, have continued her status as a "rock-star" among students and young professionals.

I assume others will critique Martha's built projects in detail, but I must address some misunderstandings that I once had about her work. Before seeing her projects first hand, I assumed their key impact would be memorable images that challenged my assumptions about what landscapes should look like. And yes, many are visually provocative. Yet, I also found every project that I have visited to be spatially and sensually delightful, thoughtfully detailed and grounded in the experience of the user. She clearly looks to the practicalities of daily life - comfortable places to sit, walk and enjoy the landscape - for her inspiration. She is unfailingly practical in her efforts to make every design move solve multiple problems. She crafts each project to get the maximum "bang for the buck," whether the budget is meager or generous. The ideas behind her most memorable projects – such as the spiraling benches of Jacob Javits Plaza or the beautiful, but narrow shady walks at the Mesa Arts Center - grew from her out-of-the box thinking that solved the seemingly unsolvable.

Those of us that have had the privilege of knowing Martha also admire her personal character, her integrity and her support for other professionals, particularly women. In short, Martha is not only an extraordinarily talented designer, but she is also a person of considerable wisdom who, as a woman, mother and outstanding professional, has been a role model for all design practitioners. It seems only appropriate that we, as a profession, recognize her with the ASLA Design Medal. Our profession not only owes this recognition to her, but also to the thousands of students and young professionals who admire her work and flock to her lectures where they are inspired by her passion and her humanity as well as her beautiful projects.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink that reads "Linda Jewell". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Linda" written in a larger, more prominent script than the last name "Jewell".

Linda Jewell, FASLA  
Emerita Professor of Landscape Architecture  
UC Berkeley

# mikyoung kim design

## ASLA Board of Trustees

Attn: Makeeya Hazelton  
American Society of Landscape Architects  
636 Eye Street, NW  
Washington, D.C. 20001

re: support letter for the ASLA Design Medal

Dear ASLA Trustees and Nominating Committee,

It is with great pleasure that I write this enthusiastic letter of support nominating Martha Schwartz for the ASLA Design Medal. Martha has been such a vital figure in the profession, challenging traditional boundaries while also asking us to look beyond an Olmstedian aesthetic towards future definitions of design in the twenty-first century. Her work is fearless, always experimenting with new materials in many different contexts (from private residences to urban parks), and expanding the definition of what it means to be a Landscape Architect.

Martha's body of work has had a global impact, appealing to a diverse demographic of communities. She has shown us that artistic visions for the landscape have the capacity to transform our everyday lives. From Exchange Square in Manchester, UK to the Grand Canal Project in Dublin, Ireland to the Splice Garden in Cambridge, MA, she has challenged us with new ways of engaging the landscape.

She has also shown us that one can craft a successful practice from a very personal vision—one that incorporates humor and whimsy, as she has shown in the aesthetics of her own work. Martha is one of the few landscape architects I know who dares to use color in her work to create places that feel recognizable and playful. Her work celebrates a pop-up conception of beauty, integrating a creative and artistic feeling in all her work.

Ultimately, Martha is not just a maker, but also a thought leader. She has built an extraordinary body of landscapes that are *places* that ask us to consider new ways of engaging each other and the world around us. Her powerful voice has resonated through both through her decades of teaching and her practice of a original vision for the

landscape. At every opportunity, she dares us to stop, pay attention and discover the power of play in our daily lives.

On a personal note, her work proved a key point of inspiration for me as a young college student considering graduate school for design. Her installations persuaded me that it was possible to practice as both a landscape architect and an artist – to make visible, tangible meaning within a broader cultural context that people could access and experience. Furthermore, Martha taught me to value my music background and guided me to find a pathway through that platform many years ago when I studied with her at Harvard. She is a unique role model to many of us, with her advocacy for the communal urban experience, showing us that design innovation is an integral part of cities' design challenges.

Giving Martha the ASLA Design Medal would be a signal to all young landscape architects to find your own unique voice and fight for it fiercely. Bestowing this honor would be an important acknowledgement of the groundbreaking contributions she has made as both a practitioner and an educator.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'Mikyoung Kim', written in a fluid, cursive style.

Mikyoung Kim, FASLA

























