SUMMARY:

The thrills and terrors of launching firms are rarely discussed candidly and are quickly forgotten once firms become more established. This panel assembles founders of three promising partnerships less than five years old for a frank discussion of current challenges and successes in the competitive arena of public-realm design.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES:

1. Learn steps practitioners are taking to establish and grow successful new firms.
2. Understand the personal challenges and opportunities within young firms.
3. Gain insight into specific work experiences prior to launch that have proven valuable.

TOPICS:

1. Taking the Plunge - on the initial steps involved in launching the firms.
2. Joining Forces - on the role of partnership in firm establishment.
3. Being the Boss - on adjusting to the roles of boss and owner.
5. Building Momentum - on pacing and managing growth.
Matt Donham, ASLA

In 2012, Matt launched Brooklyn-based RAFT, a collaborative partnership that guides clients to discover unexpected ecological, social, and financial value within discreet landscapes. Recent projects include Queens Boulevard with New York City Department of Transportation, Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian Design Museum with Walter Hood and Diller, Scopidio + Renfro, and Heroic Food Farm with Ennead Architects.

Matt has taught at Rhode Island School of Design and lectured widely on his work on the National 9/11 Memorial. Matt holds a Masters of Landscape Architecture from UC Berkeley’s College of Environmental Design and a Bachelor of Arts in Urban Studies from Vassar College.

RAFT Landscape Architecture, D.P.C

LAUNCHED: May 2012
FIRST PROJECT: Jeff Koons’s Split-Rocker
CURRENT SIZE: 2 Full-time, 1-3 Part-time
IN A NUTSHELL: RAFT builds landscapes that make a difference.
Laura Crescimano

Laura is Principal and cofounder of SITELAB urban studio, a San Francisco-based strategic design firm focused on using research and visualization to create great places through big plans and small interventions. SITELAB’s work operates at the intersection of analysis and inspiration.

Laura’s projects range from the Kendall Square Public Realm Plan for Cambridge, MA to Pier 70, a 28-acre mixed-use development on San Francisco’s waterfront. She has written and lectured on temporary urbanism, design entrepreneurism and public space. She currently teaches on Design and Activism at UC Berkeley. Laura earned her Masters of Architecture from Harvard.

SITELAB Urban Studio

- **LAUNCHED:** July 2012
- **FIRST PROJECT:** 5M Project
- **CURRENT SIZE:** 6 Full-time
- **IN A NUTSHELL:** SITELAB urban studio is committed to making urban places that tell endless stories.
- **CLIENTS/SUPPORTERS:**
  - AECOM
  - BKF Engineers
  - Community Solutions
  - County of Napa
  - David Baker Architects
  - Destination Home
  - Drexel University
  - EHDD
  - Fehr & Peers
  - Forest City
  - Grimshaw Architects
  - Intersection for the Arts
  - James Corner Field Operations
  - KPF Associates
  - Land Collective
  - Lennar
  - Nelson/Nygaard Consultants
  - Port of San Francisco
  - Portola Urban Greening Committee
  - RAMSA
  - RHAA
  - RWDI
  - Strada Investment Group
  - Tom Leader Studio
  - West 8
David G. Gregory Jr., ASLA

Founded in 2010 by David Gregory, Oxbow Design Collaborative is a multi-disciplinary design practice located in Denver, Colorado that is focused in the areas of site planning, environmental design, and landscape architecture for a diverse range of clients across the public and private sectors. In 2014, the firm added John Young as a partner following a successful collaboration on a large urban park where a mutual approach to practice and design was discovered.

Our interest is focused on a systems approach to design that engages the community as well as the processes inherent and unique to the site. Current projects include an urban park in downtown San Diego, planning and urban design for a large T.O.D. project in Denver, and design of public plaza on Broadway in Denver, Colorado.

David is a licensed Landscape Architect in Colorado and holds a Masters of Landscape Architecture and Urban Planning from The University of Colorado’s School of Architecture and Planning.

Oxbow Design Collaborative

LAUNCHED: June 2014

FIRST PROJECT: Boulder Residence

CURRENT SIZE: 2 Full-Time

IN A NUTSHELL: Oxbow loves to design and build beautiful, functional landscapes.

CLIENTS/SUPPORTERS: University of Denver
Trailbreak Partners
Aurora Water
T.O.D. Properties
City of Lakewood
The Kentro Group
John Portman Associates
Denver Water
Wonderland Homes
Collins Engineers
MODERATOR:

Kevin Conger, FASLA

Kevin has served as President and CEO of CMG Landscape Architecture, which started initially with 3 partners and over 15 years has grown to a staff of 35 working on a variety of projects. Through that time, the firm and projects have received numerous national awards, weathered recessions, and navigated issues of growth, management, and leadership.

Kevin was recently awarded a Seed Fund Fellowship for his commitment to more vibrant, democratic space in San Francisco, and is a Fellow of the American Society of Landscape Architects.

CMG Landscape Architecture

LAUNCHED: 2000
FIRST PROJECT: Crack Garden
CURRENT SIZE: 38

IN A NUTSHELL:
CMG is a mission oriented studio working to increase social and ecological wellbeing through artful design. CMG works on a wide range of initiatives, project scales and types, with the philosophy that all of our work accrues as the single overarching project of improving communities. With utility and aesthetics as drivers, CMG creates urban landscapes that explore the democracy of public space and ecological function.

CLIENTS/SUPPORTERS:
- Annenberg Trust at Sunnylands
- Bay Meadows Land Company
- City and County of San Francisco
- City Slicker Farms
- Facebook
- Golden Gate National Parks Conservancy
- Lennar Urban
- Marin Country Day School
- National Parks Service
- Neighborhood Parks Council
- Pfau Long Architecture
- SPUR Urban Center
- SMWM
- Steinberg Architects
- The Presidio Trust
- Treasure Island Community Development
- University of California, Berkeley
- Wilson Meany
- Yerba Buena Community Benefit District