



# Environmental Activism by Design

**Coleman Coker**  
**Sarah Gamble**  
**Katie Swenson**  
**Thomas Fisher**

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- **Environmental Activism by Design** challenges designers to actively engage the environmental crisis through their work, while articulating an optimistic, tangible means to pursue community good and environmental justice through first hand activism and engagement

“Whether you’re sunbathing at the beach, killing time waiting for the subway, or flying abroad for summer vacation, AN editors have compiled new architecture and design titles for you.”— **The Architect’s Newspaper**

**Environmental Activism by Design**, a monograph by architects and educators Coleman Coker and Sarah Gamble, challenges designers to actively engage the environmental crisis through their work, while articulating an optimistic, tangible means to pursue community good and environmental justice through design activism and engagement. The authors assert that in addition to greener buildings, cheaper housing, and technological fixes, we must rethink pedagogy and praxis so that every single architecture graduate can define equity and transform the profession.

**Environmental Activism by Design** centres on the award-winning Gulf Coast DesignLab at the University of Texas, which works directly with clients and stakeholders to produce spaces for the public to learn and researchers to undertake their environmental work. **Environmental Activism by Design** asks readers to challenge themselves, as agents of social equity, environmental justice, and climate action, to pursue operative practices and transformation rather than mere keywords and consensus.

**Coleman Coker, RA** is the Professor of Practice at the University of Texas at Austin School of Architecture and director of the Gulf Coast DesignLab there. He is a Loeb Fellow in Advanced Environmental Studies at Harvard University Graduate School of Design and a Rome Prize recipient from the American Academy in Rome. Coker is an Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture (ACSA) 2019 Architectural Education Award Winner for his community-outreach work with the Gulf Coast DesignLab. Coker has practiced architecture for over thirty-five years, much of that in partnership with Samuel Mockbee as Mockbee/Coker Architects and later as head of buildingstudio. He has received numerous awards including National AIA Honor awards, Architectural Record, and P/A Design Awards. His work has been highlighted at MoMA, SF MoMA, Wexner Center for the Arts, the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, and is in the National Building Museum permanent collection. In his twenty-five years as an architectural educator, Coker has taught at numerous schools of design. He is past director of the Memphis Center of Architecture, a design program focused on urban ecologies through the art of building. He holds a Master of Fine Arts from the Memphis College of Art and received an honorary Doctor of Fine Arts from there in 2008. **Sarah Gamble, RA** is an Assistant Professor at the University of Florida School of Architecture, following teaching at the University of Texas at Austin from 2011 to 2018. Gamble’s academic research focuses on context and how the design process is catalysed by the surrounding environment and designers’ understanding of it. Gamble previously served as Architect for the Texas Historical Commission’s Main Street Program, Principal at GO collaborative, and Architect at the Austin Community Design and Development Center. **Katie Swenson** is a Senior Principal of MASS Design Group, an international non-profit architecture firm whose mission is to research, build, and advocate for architecture that promotes justice and human dignity. Katie received the 2022 AIA Award for Public Architecture and is the co-author of *Growing Urban Habitats: Seeking a Housing Development Model* and author of *Design with Love: At Home in America*, and *In Bohemia: A Memoir of Love, Loss and Kindness*. **Thomas Fisher** is a Professor in the School of Architecture, Director of the Minnesota Design Center, and former Dean of the College of Design at the University of Minnesota. The former Editorial Director of *Progressive Architecture* magazine, he has written or edited 11 books, 70 book chapters or introductions and over 450 articles in professional journals and major publications. He recently completed a book on the post-pandemic world for Routledge, which will be published in 2022.

