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Content Warning: References to Racial Violence

FORT WORTH COALITION ANNOUNCES ARCHITECT AND DESIGN TEAM FOR THE TRANSFORMATION OF FORMER KKK AUDITORIUM INTO AN ARTS AND COMMUNITY HEALING CENTER

FORT WORTH, TEXAS — [Transform 1012 N. Main Street \(Transform 1012\)](#), a Texas-based non-profit coalition, is thrilled to **announce [B-arn-S Architects](#) + [ch_studio](#) as their architect and design partners** to transform the former Ku Klux Klan Klavern No. 101 Auditorium in Fort Worth into The Fred Rouse Center for Arts and Community Healing in an act of reparative justice. The design team's goals for the building reflect Transform 1012's sentiments when acquiring the building in 2021—the space should not be demolished, it should instead be transformed through adaptive reuse to represent and serve the communities targeted by the KKK and to promote community healing.

Transform 1012 received 27 design applications from across the country and the B-arn-S Architects + ch_studio team was chosen among three other teams to travel to Fort Worth for the Design Week from October 15-18, 2023, where they engaged with the community and publicly presented their approach for The Fred Rouse Center. The Selection Committee and Transform 1012 Board decided on this team following the presentations, community feedback, and a final review of the Statement of Values and Commitments, which was submitted in lieu of a Request for Qualifications. This statement expressed how the team's work and plans align with Transform 1012's mission and their commitment to the communities served by The Fred Rouse Center. The Statement of Values was a significant factor in the selection process, ensuring that the architect team prioritizes community, equity, and collective healing in the re-imagining of the space. The architecture and design team for The Fred Rouse Center includes the following people:

Germane Barnes, Principal, B-arn-S Architects
Jennifer Bonner, Principal, B-arn-S Architects
Dennis Chiessa, Principal, ch_studio
Christian Stayner, Principal, B-arn-S Architects

Each team member brings a unique perspective to the project, whether it's previous experience with cultural institutions, creative use of materials, expertise in racial equity in design, or a deep-seated connection to the Fort Worth Community. Dennis Antonio Chiessa grew up in Fort Worth's Northside, where the building is located and was previously used as a tool to intimidate the largely Latino population living there. Chiessa's personal connection to the area, as well as his work as an architect and professor, makes him an invaluable part of the team and he can continue his advocate work for the underrepresented communities through this project.

"We look forward to embarking on this transformative journey with ch_studio and B-arn-S Architects," says **Carlos Gonzalez-Jaime, Executive Director of Transform 1012**. "Their collective expertise, environmentally-minded design, and commitment to community engagement align perfectly with our vision for The Fred Rouse Center as a beacon of healing and creativity."

The design architect selection process commenced in November 2022, with a virtual "Redesigning the Design Competition" event to crowdsource community knowledge. On July 24th, 2023, more than 100 participants joined the "Pre-Submission Webinar" in collaboration with MASS Design Group to discuss the history of the building and the project's overall scope. These public events attracted a wide range of architects and firms—local, national and international—to apply to the open call to submit a Statement of Values and Commitments on August 25, 2023.

The Fred Rouse Center for Arts and Community Healing will honor the life and memory of Mr. Fred Rouse, a Black butcher and father who was lynched by a white mob in Fort Worth in 1921. Adaptive reuse plans include transforming the space into a vibrant cultural hub with state-of-the-art performance and rehearsal spaces; arts training and programming; services for LGBTQQ2SPIAA+ and other resilient youth; exhibit spaces dedicated to social justice and civil rights; a maker space and tool library for local DIY classes; meeting spaces for racial equity and leadership workshops and community events; an outdoor urban agriculture and artisan marketplace; and affordable live/work spaces for artists- and entrepreneurs-in-residence.

"We are thrilled to work with ch_studio and B-arn-S Architects. Their thoughtful participation in design week, deep listening to the members of our constituencies, commitment to spacial justice, and connection to the city and people of Fort Worth make them ideal partners to advance our mission of returning resources to the communities most negatively impacted by the KKK. I am confident that we have an inspiring journey ahead," says **Daniel Banks, Board Chair of Transform 1012 and Co-Founder/Co-Artistic Director of DNAWORKS**.

Transform 1012 plans to break ground on The Fred Rouse Center in 2025, providing adequate time for the design and architecture team to engage with the many impacted constituencies and practice careful consideration, thorough research and comprehensive planning that aligns with all stakeholders. The Fred Rouse Center is slated to open in 2026.

All details for the architect design selection process can be found on Transform 1012's website www.transform1012.org.

ABOUT B-ARN-S ARCHITECTS

B-arn-S is an agent of change, deeply committed to creating hands-on, research-driven architectural responses. B-arn-S collective work is known for its conceptual research, material and construction logics and deep interest in architecture's connection to the arts, as noted in Germane and Jennifer's recently awarded 2022 and 2021 USA Fellowships. Its strength is in working with organizations that deploy the arts in service of broader social transformation. B-arn-S comprises approximately twelve talented designers working across three cities with multi-disciplinary backgrounds.

The leadership team is three-pronged: Miami-based principal Germane Barnes, whose work "mines the nexus of race and design" (Architectural Digest), Alabama-born Jennifer Bonner, a Portland-based principal, who is lauded for her investigations into materiality and hacking typical construction logics, and Los Angeles-based principal Christian Stayner, whose work focuses on the alignment of a building strategy with the client's institutional mission and budget, is a licensed architect in multiple states within the US.

ABOUT CH_STUDIO

Led by Dennis Antonio Chiessa, ch_studio is searching for authenticity in design through collaboration. The digraph, as a metaphor, illustrates the collaborative nature of the design process and the goal of creating together. Dennis is an Assistant Professor of Architecture at The University of Texas at Arlington. Through creative practice, research, and teaching, he examines the impact of design on underrepresented, underserved, and underinvested communities.

Dennis' work has been exhibited in Latinos in Architecture exhibitions across Texas, The Amarillo Museum of Art, The Fort Worth Community Arts Center, The Fort Worth Museum of Science and History, and the Venice Architecture Biennale. His work received First Place in the Tandy Hills Pavilion Design Competition and the Real Stories Design Competition, design Awards from AIA-Fort Worth, and Enlaces juried exhibitions in Dallas. Dennis received the Young Professional Award and the President's Award from AIA-Fort Worth and the Associate of the Year award from the Texas Society of Architects.

Dennis has served as Chair of Latinos in Architecture of AIA-Fort Worth and as a member of Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion committees at the Texas Society of Architects, the College of Architecture, Planning and Public Affairs at UTA, and AIA-Fort Worth. Through his advocacy for the Latino community, he has designed and organized exhibitions, lectures, and events that celebrate and promote Latino contributions to design practice, education, and the built environment.

ABOUT TRANSFORM 1012 N. MAIN STREET

When the Ku Klux Klan Auditorium, located at 1012 N. Main Street, opened in 1924, Fort Worth had one of the largest KKK memberships in the United States and the building was the KKK's

headquarters in Texas. The brick behemoth was designed and located to intimidate Northside Black, Hispanic, and immigrant residents returning home from the city center.

The former KKK auditorium was acquired by Transform 1012 N. Main Street (Transform 1012) in 2021, a non-profit coalition of local arts, grassroots, and service organizations as well as pro bono partners and individuals working to transform 1012 N. Main Street into The Fred Rouse Center for Arts and Community Healing. The coalition engages a pluricultural and shared leadership approach, with the Founding Board representing eight local organizations—DNAWORKS, LGBTQ SAVES, Opal Lee Foundation, SOL Ballet Folklórico, Tarrant County Coalition for Peace and Justice, The Welman Project, Window to Your World and the 1012 Youth Council. In 2022, Fred Rouse, III, joined the board, representing The Fred Rouse Foundation and the Rouse family and Carlos Gonzalez-Jaime was hired as the Executive Director of Transform 1012. The existing leadership structure represents local constituencies historically targeted by the KKK for violence and economic marginalization, namely Black, Catholic, Hispanic, Immigrant, Jewish, and LGBTQQ2SPIAA+.

The project has been featured in The Washington Post, NBC's Today Show, CNN.com, ARTnews, Telemundo, Univision, Hyperallergic, The Architects Newspaper, Dallas Observer, Fort Worth Star-Telegram, Fort Worth Magazine, D Magazine, KERA-NPR, Christian Science Monitor, and more. In October 2021, Transform 1012 received the Urban Land Institute of Dallas-Fort Worth's 2021 Next Big Idea Award, recognizing innovative ideas that can positively impact the region's quality of life. Additionally, the site of The Fred Rouse Center for Arts and Community Healing was designated as one of Historic Fort Worth's 2022 Most Endangered Places. Most recently, the project received the 2023 Citation of Honor Award from the Texas Society of Architects.