

Fatema Syeda Maswood

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ABOUT

Landscape + architectural designer, researcher, and educator. My work connects spatial and environmental design with climate and environmental justice. I have a particular focus in hydrological systems, carbon-capturing building materials, agroecology, and decentralized infrastructures.

EDUCATION

Master of Landscape Architecture, 2019
College of Built Environments
University of Washington, Seattle, WA

Bachelor of Arts in Architecture, 2015
Barnard College of Columbia University, New York, NY

TEACHING

Assistant Professor, Rhode Island School of Design
Department of Landscape Architecture (AY 22/23-present)
Department of Interior Architecture (AY 22/23-24/25)

I am full-time faculty in the Department of Landscape Architecture, where I teach studio courses, hydrological systems, design research, and bioregional materials courses. I have developed curriculum in material logic, research methods, anti-colonial design, and spatial justice in the context of design. Since 2023 I have contributed to developing bioregional materials research curriculum as part of the RISD Sustainability Lab. My courses include Models and Methods of Research in Landscape Architecture, Material Logic, Hydrological Systems, Site | Ecology | Design, Material Explorations, Research | Theory | Design, and the Thesis Studio.

PRACTICE

2021-present	Freelance Designer and Consultant
2022-2023	Designer, Jenna Yu Designs
2020-2021	Artist-in-Residence, Providence Office of Sustainability, Providence, RI
2020-2021	Cooperative Member, Building Circle, Providence, RI
Apr-Aug 2020	Horticulture Intern, Native Plant Trust, Framingham, MA
2019-2020	Landscape Designer, STIMSON Studio, Cambridge, MA
AY 2018-2019	Program Coordinator, Urban Environmental Justice Initiative, Urban@UW, Seattle, WA
Su 2018/2019	Instructor, Next City, University of Washington Robinson Center, Seattle WA
AY 2017-2019	Teaching Assistant, Fabrication Lab, UW College of Built Environments, Seattle, WA
Mar-Jun 2017	Intern, Groupement Écologique de Développement Durable Sidi Amor, Tunisia Intern, L'Ombre du Palmier Permaculture Center, Kairouan, Tunisia
Jan-Dec 2016	Design Educator, DownCity Design, Providence, RI
Sep 2015-Dec 2016	3D Modeling and Design Instructor, The Wheeler School, Providence, RI
May- Dec 2015	Alive Structures, Brooklyn, NY
AY 2014-2015	Research Assistant, Pop-Up Repair (now FIXUP), New York, NY
2012-2014	Intern, Amorphic Robot Works, Brooklyn, NY
AY 2013-2014	Research Assistant, Columbia University Media Center for Art History, New York, NY

PROJECTS + SERVICE

Re-membering Water: Mapping Providence's Historic Hydrologies

Developing educational resources around hidden, historical, channelized, buried waterways. Mapping and georeferencing historic waterways to reconstruct watery regions. Research assistant: Molly Lefanowicz. Web design and development: Reuben Rodriguez. Support from RISD New Faculty Research Grant.

Project Weber/RENEW (2024-2025)

Designed stormwater infrastructure, pollinator gardens, and native habitat garden for Rhode Island's center for harm reduction and recovery services in collaboration with Jacqueline Hall, Groundwork RI, and Providence Neighborhood Planting Plan. Work funded by SNEP and Bloom RI.

Public St. Shade Structure (2024-2025)

Shade structure designed and built as part of ongoing work towards public access to the Providence waterfront. A thatched reed roof, built from reeds harvested from along the Moshassuck and Seekonk River, shades members of the public visiting the only public access to the waterfront in South Providence. Commissioned as part of the Providence Commemoration Lab, in collaboration with Eli Nixon, Wesley Sanders and Yasmine Hassan. Installed Summer 2025.

Providence Seed Library (2021-present)

Living collection of free, culturally resonant, open-pollinated seeds distributed through the Community Libraries of Providence and other food justice organizations. I started this project in 2021 to distribute free seeds and develop educational materials and programming in partnership with library branches in Providence. We have built two library gardens, developed a free online series of workshops called Seedlings in 2022, and continue creating free community resources around seed growing and seed saving.

Critical Cartography Working Group (2022-2025)

Research collaboration with Mackenzie Waller (University of Arizona), Ariana Cantu (University of Washington), and Veronica Velez (Western Washington University) working on topics of counter-mapping, participatory research, and grassroots-led spatial justice and design work.

Rhode Island School of Design Social Equity & Inclusion Committee (2022-present)

Curricular assessment for university-wide initiative to develop SEI-tagged courses and expand offerings of classes centering BIPOC and decolonial art, design, and scholarship. Reviewed curriculum for courses across the Design Division (Interior Architecture, Architecture, Graphic Design, Landscape Architecture, Industrial Design).

Landscape Architecture Department Service (2022-present)

*Lectures and Exhibitions '25/'26
Admissions Committee '22/'23, '24/'25
Social Media '24/'25
Thesis + Graduate Show Coordinator '24/'25
Graduate Exhibition Design '24/'25
Departmental Research Assistant Supervision*

Southside Sustainability Hub Building Committee (2023-2024)

Committee with the Providence Racial and Environmental Justice Committee, developing a center for disaster preparedness at a property in South Providence recently acquired by the group.

Community gardener, Granja Sin Fronteras (2019-present)

BIPOC Farmer Working Group, Land and Sea Together (2023)

GRANTS, RESIDENCIES, COMPETITIONS, ETC.

April 2026	Creative Research Residency, eSseda.lab, Sousse, TN
Jan 2024	Resident Artist, Wedding Cake House, Providence, RI
2023-2024	Selected Team, "Shade as Social Justice" Shade Structure Competition, City of Cambridge, MA
2022-2024	Rhode Island Council for the Humanities Major Grant, Providence Seed Library
2022	New England Creative Community Fellow, National Artist Strategies
2018-2019	WASLA Academic Scholarship
2018-2019	Three-Sixty Fund Endowed Fellowship, UW Department of Landscape Architecture
2017	ScanDesign Travel Fellowship, Copenhagen, Denmark
2017-2018	Graduate Opportunities and Minority Achievement Program (GO-MAP) Fellowship
2014	Travel Grant, Design III Advanced Studio: Istanbul, Turkey
2013-2014	Living/Learning Community Grant: The Coop, Barnard College Residential Life
2013-2014	Internship Grant, Amorphic Robot Works, Barnard College

AWARDS

- * American Society of Landscape Architects National Graduate Merit Award (2019)
- * Landscape Architecture Foundation National Olmsted Scholar Finalist (2019)
- * Washington - American Society of Landscape Architects (WASLA) Merit Award: Master Plan for the Redondo Beach Dive Site (2019)
- * WASLA Merit Award: Ecological Urbanism | Greener Belltown: Bluer Sound (2018)
- * WASLA Special Mention: Neighborhood Resilience Series: Reframing Engagement and Participation (2018)

LANGUAGES

- * English (native), French (B1), Tunisian Arabic (B1), Mandarin (intermediate)

EXHIBITIONS, LECTURES, PUBLICATIONS, ETC.

- * Featured work, "[RISD's Sustainability Lab Focuses on Waste Wool and Other Waste Fibers](#)," Simone Solondz/RISD News, November 2025.
- * Featured work, "[Artist brings new life to polluted industrial waterfront at 'Public St. Beach'.](#)" Providence Journal, October 2025.
- * Featured work, "[Local Artists Use Beauty to Bring Attention to Port of Providence's Poor Air Quality.](#)" ecoRI News, August 2025.
- * [Providence Commemoration Lab, "Shade Structure"](#). June 2025.
- * Exhibition design and coordination, "*Patches, Entanglements, Unconformities: RISD MLA Graduate Thesis Work '24-'25*", May 2025.
- * Featured work, "[Yearlong Engagement with RISD Sustainability Lab Probes Many Uses of Wood](#)," Simone Solondz/RISD News, November 2024.
- * Co-facilitator, Providence Toxics Tour with Angel Ramos/People's Port Authority, July 2024.
- * Guest Instructor, Urban Growers Leadership Program, Northern RI Conservation District, July 2024.
- * Guest Instructor, Art Inquiry/Art in Nature Summer Program, New Urban Arts, July 2024.
- * Featured work, "Climate Futurism: visioning buen vivir" studio featured in forthcoming edited volume, "Urban Innovation for the Climate Crisis: Design, Policy, and Practice," edited by Gabriel Kaprielian and Julie Ulrich. Routledge, 2024.
- * Author, "[Cry if it Rains, Cry if it Doesn't](#)," Movements Journal, Brown Arts Institute
- * Co-facilitator, "Land Back and Food Justice," Design Justice Summit June 2023.
- * Featured work, Sara Jacobs & Taryn Wiens (2023) [Landscapes of care: politics, practices, and possibilities](#), Landscape Research.
- * Featured work, [The Last Straw Journal](#), No. 74, Spring 2023 (project in collaboration with Jenna Yu)
- * [Five Questions: Fatema Maswood](#)
- * [Community Mapping on Environmental and Spatial Justice](#)
- * [Public St. Waterfront Access Project](#), Site Analysis and Recommendations Report, Feb 2022
- * Contributor, [Our Red Book: Intimate Conversations About Periods](#), edited by Rachel Kauder Nalebuff, 2022
- * [New Providence Seed Library Offers Array of Growing Options with Cultural Resonance](#), EcoRI News, May 2021
- * [Artist-in-Residence: Providence Office of Sustainability, Dept. of Arts, Culture, and Tourism](#), 2021
- * Exhibitor, The Soil Is Where I Come From: Rainwater Harvesting Earthworks, Public Shop & Gallery, 2021
- * [Harvesting Stormwater: Traditional Ecological Knowledge and Drylands Stormwater Infrastructure](#), June 2019
- * Organizer, Claiming Space: Women of Color in Community Planning + Design, May 2019
- * Author, Urban Environmental Justice Initiative Faculty Highlights Report, May 2019
- * Exhibitor, Growing Equitably Together, Gould Gallery, May 2018
- * Invited panelist, Built Environments Ph.D. Symposium, "Tools for Community Power: Community Land Trusts, Reframing Engagement and Participation," April 2018
- * Featured work, Extents Magazine, Issue II: Materials + Matter, "An Octopus's Garden" and "Tools for Community Power: Resources for Design Justice & Neighborhood-Level Organizing," 2019
- * Featured work, "Deep Dive: Inside the Student-Led Redesign of Washington's Redondo Reef", Landscape Architecture Magazine, September 2018
- * Exhibitor, Studio X Istanbul: Portable Water Harvesting and Filtration Devices, November 2014