

DANIEL PHILLIPS, PhD, FAAR

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Daniel Phillips is an urban ecologist, and landscape practitioner. He studied Environmental Design at **Otis College of Art and Design**, and earned a **PhD from the University of Michigan's School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS)**. From 2020-24 he served as an assistant professor of landscape architecture at **Texas Tech University**, where he established the **Green Infrastructure Landscape Lab (GILL)**. Daniel is also a regular contributor to [The Nature of Cities](#), and a former Fulbright-Nehru scholar. [COMMONStudio](#), his collaborative creative practice has been widely recognized for its experiments in public installations, interventions, and initiatives that operate at the intersection of **art, design, and science**. His research has been published in a variety of peer-reviewed journals across design, hydrology, engineering, and urban planning disciplines. Along with a revolving cast of grad student collaborators, Daniel co-hosts the [Post Wild Pod](#), with sporadically released episodes engaging creative practitioners and thought leaders on the meaning and potential of working with and within "Novel Ecosystems".

Dr. Phillips's highly collaborative research and design critically and curiously examines the **performance and perception** of marginalized urban ecosystems at multiple scales, from the **gutter to the watershed**. Projects span many disciplines, contexts and cultures, and are focused on topics ranging from the dynamics of **Spontaneous Urban Plants (SUP)** in the American rustbelt, developing strategic urban afforestation initiatives for semi-arid climates, and using **computer modelling (SWMM)** to improve the cumulative impacts of tactical **green stormwater infrastructure** in collaboration with local communities.

EDUCATION

BFA, Environmental Design

Otis College of Art & Design (2008)

MLA, (Coursework equivalent)

University of Michigan, School for Environment and Sustainability (2019)

PhD, Environment & Sustainability

University of Michigan, School for Environment and Sustainability (2021)

CREATIVE PRACTICE

COMMONSTUDIO, Co-Founder 2009-Present

COMMONSTUDIO is a collaborative practice between myself and my partner Kim Karlsrud (a land-based artist). We employ a broad understanding of "Commons" and create collaborative initiatives, interventions and installations exploring the complexities of urban

WORK EXPERIENCE

ecosystems and their inhabitants. See more at

thecommonstudio.com

University of Oregon, 2024-Present

- Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture (tenure track)

Texas Tech University, 2020-2023

- Assistant Professor of Landscape Architecture (tenure track)

Unity College, 2019-2020

- Graduate instructor (online), Urban Sustainability

New School of Architecture and Design, 2015-18

- Instructor, Design Thinking (virtual)

Jana Urban Space Foundation, 2016-17

- Consultant, Urban Watershed Initiatives

Greenaid Seedbombs, 2010-14

- Founder and Director

COMMONgood, 2012-14

- Co-Founder and Community Coordinator

Otis College of Art and Design, 2010-12

- Instructor, Integrated Learning Department.

FletcherStudio, 2009-11

- Landscape Architect

Roger Sherman Architecture and Urban Design

- Project Architect

Project H Design

- Los Angeles ChapterHead

AWARDS & HONORS

Headlands Residency recipient, 2017

- Headlands Center for the Arts
- San Francisco, 2 weeks

Designer in Residence, 2016

- Salmon Creek, Albion, CA

Fulbright-Nehru Fellowship, 2016-17

- Project title: "Biodiver(city) in Bangalore"

Prince Charitable Trusts Rome Prize in Landscape Architecture, 2014-15

- The American Academy in Rome

Top Eco-Entrepreneur Award, 2015

- GreenMatch.com

Community Bridge Award, 2013

- Social Venture Network

Finalist, Buckminster Fuller Challenge, 2009

- Project: (C)urban Ecology

DESIGN COMPETITIONS

WPA 2.0 (2009)

- Terrabank (submission with Fletcherstudio)

Buckminster Fuller Challenge (2009)

- Semi-finalist, (C)urban Ecology

Core 77 Design Awards (2012, 2014)

- Runner up in Educational initiatives

EXPERTISE AREAS

SKILLS
*=Basic
**=Intermediate
***=Advanced

GRANTS & FUNDING

- D3-Design Thinking for public schools

Geographic Information Systems

- Using various software and data sources to answer questions related to regional development, natural resource planning, spatial + ecological design. Can conduct complex spatial analysis at multiple scales and present findings in visually compelling, accessible ways to diverse stakeholders

Urban Hydrology

- Multiscale modeling of water quality + quantity using EPA's Stormwater Management Model (SWMM 5).

Novel Urban Ecosystems, spontaneous vegetation

- Urban botany, biodiversity
- Field ecology methods for cities
- Qualitative/perception studies of urban environments

Adobe Suite

- Photoshop***
- Illustrator***
- Indesign***
- Premiere**

Spatial/Geographic/Hydrological analysis

- ArcGIS Desktop Pro***,
- QGIS*
- SWMM 5.0 (EPA)***

Statistical + Data Analysis

- R*
- SPSS**
- Excel***

3D Modelling

- Rhinoceros 3D**
- Sketchup***
- Autocad/Civil 3D***

Online Learning and Instruction Platforms

- Canvas**
- Blackboard**
- Bluejeans***
- Zoom***
- Google: Drive, slides, hangouts, sheets, docs***

Physical Modelling (wood, cardboard, metal)***

Rapid prototyping (2D/3D)**

Sketching/Analog landscape representation**

National Endowment for the Arts NEA: The Mesquite Mile

- \$30,000

- Implementation of pilot sites in Heart of Lubbock Neighborhood

Texas A&M Forest Service: The Mesquite Mile

- \$50,000 for public art & urban placemaking in west Texas
- With Co-PI Travis Need (College of Visual and Performing Arts)

Interchange Grant (Project Title: Mesquite Mile)

- Mid-America Arts Alliance
- With Travis Neel, Erin Charpentier, Kim Karlsrud
- \$25,000

William D. Drake Prize, 2020

- Matthaei Botanical Gardens, University of Michigan
- \$1,500 for botanical specimen collection and preservation

Rackham Research Grant, 2018-2019

- Horace Rackham Graduate School, University of Michigan
- \$4,500 for international research

Arts Engine Microgrant, 2019

- University of Michigan
- \$1,000

Catalyst Grant, 2019

- Project title: Mow Town (Co-PI's Daniel Phillips, Mark Lindquist, Anton Reznicek)
- Graham Sustainability Institute, University of Michigan
- \$10,000

Fast-Track Grant recipient "Rustbelt Herbarium", 2018

- Graham Sustainability Institute
- \$2,500

IISF Award, 2017

- International Institute, University of Michigan
- \$3,600 for international ecological research in India

Pollinator Grant, 2017

- Project Title: STRAINS
- Harnisch Foundation
- \$1,000

Awesome Without Borders Grant, 2017

- Awesome Without Borders Foundation
- Project Title: STRAINS
- \$1,000

SCHOLARLY PUBLICATIONS

Phillips, D. (2026). Expanding the Framework: Relational Practice and Contemporary Service Learning in Landscape Architecture. Council of Educators in Landscape Architecture (CELA), 14(Process + Impacts), 478–488.

**PUBLICATIONS: PRINT &
ONLINE**

Phillips, D., & Farrow, G. (2026). *Using VR in conjunction with Biometric Sensors to Assess Public Perception of Urban Biodiversity.* *Frontiers in Virtual Reality*, 7(1780297), 1780297.

Phillips, D., Hasan, Z. (2026). *Local Treatment, System Response: Anticipating Sediment Forebay Performance within a Stormwater Greenway Design Using 2D SWMM.* *Journal of Water Management Modeling*.

Phillips, D., Jamwal, P., Lindquist, M., & Gronewold, A. (2022). *Assessing catchment-scale performance of in-stream Provisional Green Infrastructure interventions for Dry Weather Flows.* In *Landscape and Urban Planning* (Vol. 226, p. 104448).

Jamwal, P., **Phillips, D.**, & Gowda, R. (2022). *Assessing performance of local materials for the treatment of dry weather flows in open drains: Results of semi-controlled field experiment research in Bangalore, India.* *Ecological Engineering*, 175, 106506.

Phillips, D., & Lindquist, M. (2022). *Informal diffusion of green infrastructure innovations in Indian megacities: perspectives from innovators and potential future adopters.* *Urban Water Journal*, 1–18.

Phillips, D., & Lindquist, M. (2021). *Just weeds? Comparing assessed and perceived biodiversity of urban spontaneous vegetation in informal greenspaces in the context of two American legacy cities.* *Urban Forestry & Urban Greening*, 127151.

Phillips, D., Jamwal, P., & Biswas, D. (2020). *Waste Water Management in Cities: Notes from Bengaluru and Nelamangala.* *Economic and Political Weekly*, 50(23), 7–8.

Jamwal, P., & **Phillips, D.** (2019). *Assessing local materials for the treatment of wastewater in open drains.* *Water Science and Technology: A Journal of the International Association on Water Pollution Research*.

Phillips, D., Karlsrud, K, et al. “The Metropoliz Future Forest and The Case for Collaborative Ecology” (book chapter) MAAM: museum of the other and elsewhere in Metropoliz_città mestizo. De Finis, Giorgio, ed. Bordeaux, 2017

Phillips, D, Erdim, F. Karlsrud, K. *Assessing depaving potential within the Fourmile Creek Watershed in Des Moines, Iowa using classical suitability analysis.* (in development)

Phillips, D. [Species on the Move: Assisted Migration in an Era of Rapid Change.](#)
Thenatureofcities.com, September 2022

Phillips, D. [We're Not "Solving" Wicked Problems Through Design and Science, Is That OK?](#)
Thenatureofcities.com, July 2019

SELECTED PROJECTS

Phillips, D. *"In order to better shape urban biodiversity, let's reconceive the possibilities it already holds."*

Part of a global roundtable discussion via thenatureofcities.org
October 2018

Phillips, D. *["There's no such thing as a Vacant Lot"](#)*

Part of a global roundtable discussion via thenatureofcities.org
October 2018

Phillips, D. *["Bangalore Pile Study: Curiosity and Intervention in the Margins of a Megacity"](#)* thenatureofcities.com, July 2018

Phillips, D. *["Ecologies of Elsewhere: Giving Urban Weeds a 'Third Glance'"](#)*

thenatureofcities.com, September 2017

Phillips, D. *[It's a flower, it's a weed – it's an ecosystem!](#)*

Citizen Matters (Bangalore) May 2017

Phillips, D. *["Piranesi, Pasolini, and Punk Rock: Reflecting on The Meaning and Potential of Urban Wastelands"](#)*

Commonstudio blog, October 2016

Phillips, D. *"BeWilder: 5 Cases for Ecological Urbanism",*

Commonstudio Blog, April 2014

Phillips, D., Fletcher, D., 2010, "From Picturesque to Process: Post War Housing Landscapes in California."

The Mobile Urbarium (2024-Present).

- *Pop up exhibition space for public audience*
- *Examines the phenomena of novel urban ecosystems*
- *Exhibition planned spring 2025 at the Museum of Natural and Cultural history (Eugene, OR).*

The Mesquite Mile (2021-Present)

- Lubbock, TX
- Assisted migration of mature Mesquite trees (*Prosopis glandulosa*) from the rural context (where they are considered a nuisance), into tree-poor urban neighborhoods.

Mow Town: The Emergence and Management of Spontaneous Urban Vegetation in Detroit (2019).

- Spatial analysis and community engagement
- ESRI [storymap](#)

The Metropolis Future Forest (2015-ongoing) (LINK)

- Rome, Italy

- Intervention in collaboration with Firat Erdim, Olivia Valentine, and the residents of MAAM, an informal community in the periphery of Rome.
- This long-term experiment explores the use of spontaneous urban vegetation (IE “weeds”) to transform a post industrial site into a novel forest ecosystem.

The Global Urbarium (ongoing)

- Global scope
- Multimedia research project comprising digital urbarium on [iNaturalist](#) and [Instagram](#)
- Bringing the traditional practice of “herbarium” specimen collection into the 21st century using citizen science and social media, the project attempts to reframe the conversation (and challenge negative stereotypes) surrounding “weeds” in cities.

A Roma, 2015

- Rome, Italy
- Interactive Installation
- Revealing alternative urban narratives through the ecology of scent in the *eternal city*.

Greenaid Seedbombs, 2009-2014

- Multiple cities
- Intervention
- Focused on playfully activating underutilized urban spaces through community engagement and tactical seed distribution.

Know your palms, 2013

- Los Angeles, California
- Intervention
- Encouraged Angelenos to take a closer look at their iconic flora.

Abject Object, 2012

- Los Angeles, California
- Initiative
- A series of products and workshops providing a means to skills, income, and a creative outlet for homeless women in the Skid Row district of Los Angeles.

(C)Urban Ecology, 2009

- Los Angeles California
- Intervention (speculative)
- Re-imagining the typical curb and gutter infrastructure as a site for micro-remediation of polluted storm water.

Come In, Los Angeles Architecture + Design Museum (A+D), 2016

INVITED TALKS

- Invited
- Curated by Danielle Rago

Cinque Mostre, American Academy in Rome, 2015

- Invited
- Curated by Peter Benson Miller

Gestaltung 1, Hamburg museum, 2014

- Invited

Spontaneous Interventions, Chicago Cultural Center, 2013

- Curated by Cathy Lang Ho

American Pavilion, Venice Biennale, 2012

- Curated by Cathy Lang Ho

Terra Obscura, U600 Pop-up Gallery, Los Angeles, 2011

- Curated by the Upper Six Hundreds Artists Collective

California Design Biennial, Pasadena Museum, 2010

- Invited

Post Penumbra, U600 Pop-up Gallery, Los Angeles, 2010

- Curated by the Upper Six Hundreds Artists Collective

The Alchemy Archives, U600 Pop-up Gallery, Los Angeles, 2009

- Curated by the Upper Six Hundreds Artists Collective

Project H, Recent Work, Artecnic, Los Angeles, 2009

- Invited

“Ecologies of Elsewhere”

- Vernon Stone Lecture Series
- Iowa State University, 2019

“There’s no such thing as a Vacant Lot”

- Duncan Anderson Lecture Series
- California State University Long Beach, 2019

“Collaborative Ecologies”

- Sonoma State University, 2017

“Downstream Defense”

- Asoka Trust for Research in Ecology & Environment (ATREE), Bangalore, 2017

“Lessons from The Metropoliz Future Forest”

- Museum of The Other and Elsewhere, 2016

“Creative Ecologies: A Shop Talk”

- The American Academy in Rome, 2015

“The Legacy of George Perkins Marsh”

- Villa Aurelia in Rome, 2014

“Salons for New Voices”

- Art + Design Museum Los Angeles, 2012

“The Power of Small Plans”

- Power Conference, University of Michigan Ann Arbor, 2011

“Social Design in Los Angeles”

- Pasadena Museum of California Art, 2010

“Project H LA”

- University of California Los Angeles, 2010

ACADEMIC CONFERENCES

“Design Evolution”

- Adidas Portland campus, 2009

CELA51: Processes & Impacts, 2024 (Portland)

- Presenter, design education pedagogy and service learning cohort

CELA “Align/Realign” Conference, 2023 (San Antonio)

- Presenter, Hydrological Modelling in Landscape Design process

International Conference on Stormwater Management Modelling (ICWMM), 2023 (Virtual)

- Co-presenter with Kamrul Hasan

The Nature of Cities Festival, 2020 (Virtual)

Environmental Design Research Association (EDRA51) April, 2020

- “Assessing Novel Ecosystem Biodiversity in Detroit’s Unmaintained Landscapes”
- Co-PI Mark Lindquist, PhD

ATREE Work Seminar, 2017

- “Downstream Defense: Tactical Interventions Within Bengaluru’s Urban Watershed”

TEACHING

The Overlook Fieldschool (SU25-26)

- 2 week summer practicum with small cohort of interdisciplinary students, selected via competitive application.
- Entails urban ecology fieldwork, multimedia storytelling, public exhibition
- 2 weeks in PNW (summer 2025), and Northeast (summer 2026). Supported by the Fuller Institute for Productive Landscapes (FIPL).

LA407/507: Working With Novel Ecosystems (Seminar) (W24), S23)

- Elective offered to grad/undergrad students at University of Oregon\
- Selection of student work showcased on the Post Wild Podcast

LA489/589: The Oregon Sequence (FWS 24-25)

- In partnership with the city of McMinnville, OR
- Re-imagining a 15 acre city park, which also houses a public library
- Anticipates the passing of a local bond measure (250M) for public amenity improvement

LARC4001/5001: Green Infrastructure in Action (S22, S23)

- Cross-listed within the environmental engineering department at TTU
- Students earn “Service learning” credit as they apply their knowledge toward neighborhood improvements in the Heart of Lubbock neighborhood.

LARC4416: Collaboration Studio VI (F21, F22)

- Texas Tech University's Department of Landscape Architecture (DoLA)
- Facilitated student engagement with stakeholders from the City of Lubbock, as well as the design firm HALFF & Associates
- Multi-scale analysis and trail design for the Canyon Lakes network

LARC4162: Novel Ecosystems (Seminar) (F21, F22)

- Developed a reading list that examines the complexities and opportunities of designing with and for Novel Ecosystems in the urban context.

LARC4417: Capstone Studio VII (S21, S22)

- Facilitated independent project development for a class of 18 senior undergraduates
- 2 students earned honor awards from the Texas ASLA

USEP 505: Sustainable Design: Green Spaces and Urban Nature (Fall 2020)

- Unity College (Remote Education Masters program)
- Faculty of Record
- Developed all course content and evaluation metrics

EAS741: Metro Studio, Winter 2018, Winter 2019 (2 consecutive terms)

- University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS), Ann Arbor
- Graduate Student Instructor, with Prof. Joan Nassauer
- Prepared weekly class materials, aided in the development of student design projects with verbal feedback and desk crits.

EAS687: Landscape Ecology and Planning, Fall 2019

- University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS), Ann Arbor
- Graduate Student Instructor, with Jennifer Lawson, CSW
- Helped administer course objectives related to Geodesign, Complex multi-scale GIS analysis
- Conducted desk critiques for individual student project development
- Troubleshooting and developing ArcGIS workflows (including model builder)

EAS571: Urban Design Studio, Fall 2018

- University of Michigan School for Environment and Sustainability (SEAS), Ann Arbor
- Graduate Student Instructor, with Dr. Mark Lindquist
- Aided in the development of context analysis and student design projects with frequent verbal feedback, tutorials in illustrator and Rhino 3D, and desk crits.

Depaving Des Moines (Master Class), 2019

- College of Design, Iowa State University
- Intensive undergraduate masterclass created and facilitated with 80 architecture students as a part of the core studio curriculum. Comprising site/context analysis, conceptual development and pavement removal to create a demonstration site within the floodplain of Fourmile Creek watershed in Des Moines (in collaboration with Daniel Phillips, and Firat Erdim).
-

Site, Non-Site, Website (symposium), 2019

- Stamps School of Art and Design, University of Michigan
- Brought together graduate students from across the region of southeast Michigan for discussion and sharing of methodologies related to site-specific practices in art.

Design Thinking (online lecturer) 2016-19

- New School of Architecture and Design (administered by Laureate Education)
- Developed and facilitated online educational content for multiple units of undergraduate students at UPES in Dehradun, Uttarakhand (India). Class focused on iterative creative processes and human-centered design methodology.

D3 (Dream It, Design It, Do It), Program manager, 2010-14

- The New Learning Institute (with funding from the Pearson Foundation)
- Developed project-based learning program for urban youth and toolkits for educators to incorporate creative methodologies into their classrooms. Pilot programs were deployed across a range of contexts in Los Angeles, CA and Minneapolis, MN.

“Collaborating with Catastrophe”, Spring 2012

- Otis College of Art & Design, Los Angeles, CA
- Co-Instructor of record, Integrated Learning Department
- Developed course material, facilitated student projects for this elective cross-disciplinary course. Working in teams, students designed various multi-scalar systems and strategies for disaster resilience in Los Angeles.

Design for Social Impact (Lecturer, Integrated Learning), 2010-12

- Otis College of Art & Design, Los Angeles, CA
- Developed original course materials and acted as faculty of record for the Integrated Learning Department. Students focused on interdisciplinary real-world projects in collaboration with local non-profit organizations.

Interview, [Landscape Architecture Magazine](#), with Timothy A. Schuler.
July 2025

Project Profile, [Southwest Contemporary Magazine](#), with Natalie Hegert 2022

**VOLUNTEERING +
COMMUNITY
ENGAGEMENT**

Interview, *Let It Grow*, Suzanna Knight, 2017

Interview, Project Spotlight (Greenaid Seedbombs). *My Green City*, R. Klanten, S. Ehmann, K. Bolhöfer, 2011

“Greenaid Fosters Johnny Appleseeds for the 21st Century”

- Fast Company online, 2010

“10 Ideas to Change the World”

- CNN online, 2010

“Greenaid arms the masses with Native Seeds”

- Metropolis Magazine, 2009

**Advisory Design Consultant, Habitat for Humanity
(2022-Present)**

- Advising on the development of supportive housing/landscapes for disabled veterans in the Lubbock community.

Advisory Design Consultant, City of Lubbock (2022-Present)

- Advising Green Infrastructure Development procedures and processes within the Heart of Lubbock Community

**Member, Heart of Lubbock Neighborhood Association
(2021-Present)**

- Directing the development of local community projects on private/public lands

Founding Member and consultant, 2009-12

- The Upper Six Hundreds, Los Angeles California
- The Upper Six-Hundreds is an Artist Collective that stages pop-up art exhibitions in unconventional spaces throughout the greater Los Angeles area.

LA Chapter Head, 2008-2012

- Project H Design
- Working directly with founder [Emily Pilloton](#), I founded this local chapter of Project H, a global non-profit, organizing interdisciplinary volunteers to work on a range of local projects, including a long-term initiative with the Downtown Women's Center, a homeless shelter for women located in the notorious “skid-row” district in LA.

REFERENCES
(additional letters
available on
request)

Joan Nassauer, FASLA, FCELA

- Professor, School for Environment and Sustainability
- Co-editor in Chief, Landscape and Urban Planning
- nassauer@umich.edu

- (734) 763-9893

Mark Lindquist, PhD, ASLA

- Assistant Professor, School for Environment and Sustainability (Landscape Architecture Program)
- Principal Investigator- Landscape Informatics Lab
- Marklin@umich.edu
- (734) 763-8650

Jennifer Lawson, C.S.M.

- Water Quality Manager, City of Ann Arbor
- jlawson@a2gov.org
- 734.794.6430 x43735

Harini Nagendra, PhD

- Professor, Azim Premji University
- Author of “Cities and Canopies” and “Nature in the City”
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David Maddox

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