

Mabel O. Wilson to Deliver the 2020 Sekler Talk at the SAH Annual Conference

SEATTLE (November 19, 2019) — Scholar, curator and designer Mabel O. Wilson will deliver the 2020 Eduard F. Sekler Talk at the Society of Architectural Historian's [73rd Annual International Conference](#) in Seattle, Washington.

Titled **“The Home of the Oppressed’: Democracy, Slavery and America’s Civic Architecture,”** the talk will explore how the United States’ early civic sphere formed within a landscape of chattel slavery whose laborers built and maintained the architectures of democracy. It is critical to consider that enslaved black people, humans classified as property who lacked the proper political subjectivity to be literally (and legally) self-possessed, built several of the nation’s important civic buildings—the Virginia Capitol, the White House, and the US Capitol. These edifices stand today as Enlightenment monuments to the power of reason and the virtues of equality, justice, and freedom.

The Sekler Talk will take place on Thursday, April 30, at Town Hall Seattle from 8:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Registration for the Sekler Talk is free and will open to the public on March 4, 2020.

Mabel O. Wilson is the Nancy and George Rupp Professor at Columbia University GSAPP and a professor in the African American and African Diasporic Studies Department. She is trained in architecture and American studies, two fields that inform her scholarship, curatorial projects, art works and design projects. She is the author of *Begin with the Past: Building the National Museum of African American History and Culture* (2016) and *Negro Building: Black Americans in the World of Fairs and Museums* (University of California Press, 2012). She is a designer/historian on the architectural team for the Memorial to Enslaved African American Laborers at the University of Virginia, opening in spring of 2020.

In 2011 Wilson was honored as a United States Artists Ford Fellow in Architecture and Design. In 2019 she received the prestigious Arts and Letters Award from the American Academy of Arts and Letters for her work with Global Africa Lab (GAL). She also received a Women in Architecture Award from Architectural Record, recognizing her influential work as an educator and mentor.



The Eduard F. Sekler Talk was established in 2018 by a gift from Patricia Sekler in honor of her late husband, architectural historian and longtime SAH member Eduard F. Sekler (1920–2017). The Sekler Talk brings a notable speaker to the SAH membership each year to address a topic related to architecture, urbanism, preservation, the state of the field of architectural history, or a combination thereof. For more information, visit sah.org/2020/sekler.

The Society of Architectural Historians is a nonprofit membership organization that promotes the study, interpretation and conservation of architecture, design, landscapes and urbanism worldwide. Founded in 1940, SAH serves a network of local, national and international institutions and individuals who, by profession or interest, focus

on the history of the built environment and its role in shaping contemporary life. SAH promotes meaningful public engagement with the history of the built environment through advocacy efforts, print and online publications, and local, national and international programs. Learn more at sah.org.

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High-resolution images available upon request.