



TISHMAN CENTER · JUNE 10, 2021

# 2021 Faculty Grant Presentations: Part 1

The Tishman Environment and Design Center supports innovative, interdisciplinary research designed by New School faculty with a core focus on social justice, climate change, and urban systems. In 2020-2021, five faculty projects received grants. On June 3, 2021, faculty members presented on the progress of two projects so far.

**“Mindfulness in  
Sacred Ecologies” by**

# **Latha Poonamallee, Milano, Associate Professor & Cotter Christian, Parsons, Assistant Professor**

The intent of the project is to further develop the graduate course “Mindfulness in Sacred Ecologies” as an interactive Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality experience. Latha and Cotter partnered with the New School’s virtual reality XReality Center. The project outcomes are a scalable Augmented Reality (AR)/Virtual Reality (VR) model, videos about environmental psychology topics such as place attachment and diaspora communities, and also 3D meditation videos. The AR/VR models would explore significant physical locations/ecologies such as the Great Barrier Reef, Grand Canyon, Amazon, and Outer space through 3D immersive activities and practice.

Latha intends to use these models to teach this course in Fall 2022. Additionally, Latha would like to invite students to share their personal sacred ecologies via AR/VR as an experiment in empathy. With their digital models, they hope to explore the research question “What mediates the diasporic relationship,

Latha, Cotter, and two research assistants: Charisse Serrano and Zoljargal Mendbayar presented on how much progress they have made in terms of unpacking the research question and mapping out pedagogical techniques to scale the AR/VR models.



**“Dream Garden in  
the Anthropocene”  
by Beau Rhee,  
Parsons, Lecturer**

This project focused on creating an artistic garden on a 7,000 square foot non-buildable Long Island lot, which is a remediated brownfield. The intent is to question the human relationship to land during the Anthropocene. Two zones were planned that reflect important ecology: mycelium & fungi (mushroom) and pollinator (flowers). This project is meant to be an extension of sorts of the Sustainable Systems course (which all Parsons undergraduate students take), which Beau teaches wherein she asked students to design a dream garden while considering social and environmental justice. The garden serves as a powerful hands-on teaching tool, a rarity for our urban campus. Beau plans to continue working with students and foster community with this garden.

On June 3, Beau shared pictures of the progress in her garden after seven site visits this calendar year, including her vegetable bounty. To decolonize her relationship to land, Beau explored her own relationship to land via her family and created some inspirational prose in a love letter to the land.



**Beau's typical weekly harvest during Aug 2020**



**Part of Beau's garden during magic hour**



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