



Tishman Environment
and Design Center



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A Warm Welcome to our Program Coordinator, Anna Yulsman



Although this post is a bit late, we would like to highlight our Program Coordinator, Anna Yulsman (MA, Parsons, '19) who works on a number of projects and is a valuable member of our team at the Tishman Center.

What did you study at the New School and why?

I attended the Theories of Urban Practice MA program at Parsons School of Design Strategies. In my undergrad, I studied environmental studies and sociology and began to learn of the interconnectivity between environmental/sociological issues and urbanization, or more

broadly, the way land is developed. After graduating, I got a campaign organizing job for a mainstream environmental organization in New York that was working towards decarbonization. The work felt siloed and I began to realize that through the job, I was promoting “solutions” that lacked an interdisciplinary approach as well as an approach that centered social and environmental justice, particularly one that centered the *people* who are affected most by climate change and industrialization.

What drew me to the Theories of Urban Practice program was the critical lens The New School is known for, as well as the opportunity to develop an understanding of design strategies. I was excited to learn from radical and alternative perspectives which I felt was likely a gap for other urban planning programs.

Share with us a bit about your new position at TEDC

I am so excited to be at the Tishman Center because it is really a space of allyship with the movements and organizations that I admire and that are leading the way in the climate and environmental justice arena. Environmentalism has historically and continues to be a very sensitive

space. Coming from a white, middle-class background, I try to continuously reflect on the ways that I take up space. To me, The Tishman Center is a place where connections are drawn between large academic institutions and communities, in a way which centers communities and their existing work.

I began as a research assistant in my second year of graduate school. I loved the team and the opportunity to put all the things I had been learning at school into practice. During that time, we were working on the [“U.S. MSW Incinerators: An Industry in Decline”](#) report as well as a sort of [archival project](#) of an initiative in the Gulf Coast post-Katrina. As of this summer, I was hired full-time as the Program Coordinator. As the Program Coordinator I get to wear many different hats in my work and continue to do the things I love, from research and writing to design and data visualization.

What are some of the initiatives you are currently working on at the Tishman Center?

Over the past year, the Tishman Center worked on a landscape assessment which analyzed the misalignment between philanthropy and the environmental justice

movement. Ultimately the findings aren't anything new, but what exists is the ultimate contradiction! The existing philanthropic space has made its achievements thanks to capitalist accumulation and growth, whereas many in the environmental justice movement aim to get rid of this system and its injustices. In turn, the environmental justice movement is severely underfunded. Instead, money flows to large mainstream environmental organizations which keep the wheels of capitalism turning. This explanation is pretty reduced, there are definitely so many different ways in which there exists a misalignment between philanthropy and the EJ movement, but it is clear that this is a major one. Definitely keep an eye out for this landscape assessment to get a more detailed explanation!

What is something you would like to accomplish or see the Tishman Center/The New School accomplish?

Well most immediately, I would love to see the New School declare a climate emergency! As for myself, I was a dancer growing up, and I always enjoyed thinking about different ways of communicating outside of speech and writing. I am drawn towards things that incorporate multiple mediums of communication, especiallu thinas

that teach visually. So I want to continue to incorporate those things into my professional practice and life in general. More recently, I have been learning a lot about film, and I love the power of film to build compassion and empathy. I think that things like film would be a useful tool for the Tishman Center in continuing to bridge the gap between academic institutions and local communities/grassroots organizations.



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