



**LEFT**  
Purple blooms conjure domestic settings in XX, an installation by Agency Landscape + Planning.

**BELOW**  
Less a singular object and more a flexible kit of parts, XX creates a malleable forum for intimate interaction.

century design by celebrating the interstitial spaces of the city and “the spirit of the community.”

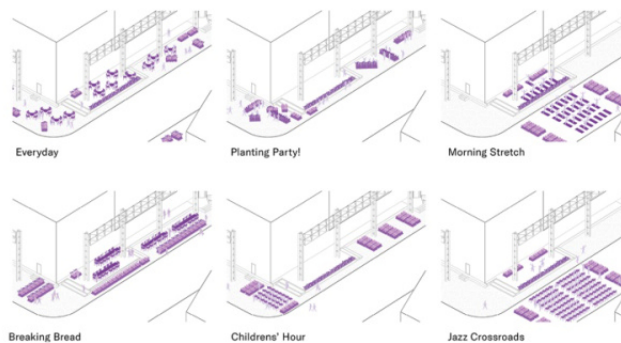
That led them right to landscape design. “Landscape architecture was a really important voice to include in the conversation,” says Anne Surak, Exhibit Columbus’s director of exhibitions, because the viewpoint is “so holistic and [aimed toward] long-term thinking.”

## INDIANA INVITATIONAL

**EXHIBIT COLUMBUS’S SECOND RUN ZOOMS OUT IN SEARCH OF THE “SPIRIT OF THE COMMUNITY.”**

BY ZACH MORTICE

The Miller Prize, named for Xenia and J. Irwin Miller, the latter the CEO of the Cummins diesel engine company that sponsored top-tier modernist architecture throughout Columbus, Indiana, is the centerpiece of Exhibit Columbus, a relatively new annual event that seeks to celebrate the modernist heritage of Columbus while making it relevant to contemporary audiences by inviting new work. For its inaugural exhibition, the Miller Prize focused on pavilion-scale installations that worked in dialogue with Columbus’s many modern architecture standouts. This year, organizers wanted the prize to address the notion of what makes this town of 47,000 in southern Indiana a singular center of mid-



AGENCY LANDSCAPE + PLANNING



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wanted XX to embrace mutability. "Because we're the first landscape and planning firm that's been invited to participate, I think that it was important to create a project that wasn't a singular object [at] a moment in time," Ford says. The installation offers a women-focused space in response to the mirror-glassed Indiana Bell (now AT&T) Switching Station building from

This year, four of the five entries are landscape-based, all invited by a curatorial advisory committee looking for installations that spoke to a theme of "good design and the community." Agency Landscape + Planning's proposal, XX, consists of stackable x-braced seating modules that can form bleachers, bandstands, and other flexible site furnishings and forms. Gina Ford, FASLA, a principal and cofounder at Agency, wanted to conjure a domestic setting "because our story is really about women and the community," she says. Planters filled with purple blooms such as lavender and catmint will adorn the site, and plant IDs, like care tags placed in soil at a nursery, will detail the history of important women in Columbus.

The installation is designed to create improvisational forums for intimate interactions that rectify the erasure of women from institutional memories. Ford and Agency cofounder Brie Hensold

1976 (where women's labor invisibly powered this critical communication network) and pushes back against this erasure. The planters reference a beloved trellis filled with wisteria that was removed from the site when the birds attracted to it became a nuisance.

Other projects by architectural firms take up the landscape as well. In a field next to a school, MASS Design Group's Corn/Meal will plant five different (edible and inedible) species of corn to illustrate that the vast majority of corn is never used for nonprocessed human consumption. On the plaza surrounding I. M. Pei's Cleo Rogers Memorial Library, Frida Escobedo will install a planted elevated terrace. Setting up next door to the town's other primary governmental edifice (the Bartholomew County Courthouse) will be SO-IL's Into the Hedge, where 150 to 200 burlap-wrapped arborvitae, connected via nylon mesh that's anchored to the ground at four points, will create a rippling network of foliage. When the exhibition is over, the trees will be planted at Dan Kiley's Miller House Garden. ●

**ABOVE**  
MASS Design Group's Corn/Meal creates a gathering space and playscape out of rows of planted corn and wood climbing structures.

MASS DESIGN GROUP