

PROMOTION RECOMMENDATION

The University of Michigan

A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

Anna G. Sirota, assistant professor of architecture, A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, is recommended for promotion to associate professor of architecture, with tenure, A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.

Academic Degrees:

M.Arch.	2008	Harvard Graduate School of Design, Boston, MA
M.C.A.	1996	Université Nouvelle de la Sorbonne, Paris, France
B.S.	2003	Georgia Institute of Technology, Atlanta, GA

Professional Record:

2017 – Present	Director, Michigan Architecture Prep Program, A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan
2014 – Present	Co-Founder and Project Director, O.N.E. Mile, Detroit, MI
2011 – Present	Assistant Professor of Architecture, A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan
2008 – 2011	Lecturer, A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, University of Michigan
2008 – Present	Partner and Design Principal, Akoaki, Detroit, MI

Summary of Evaluation:

Teaching: Professor Sirota's many contributions to teaching in Taubman College have included and cultural conservation. Her pedagogical approach is classified into the three inter-related categories of undergraduate and graduate design studios and seminars in architectural and urban design, representation, collaboration, engaged learning, and interdisciplinarity. Bridging the realms of theory, practice and social concerns, her approach has been incorporated into the architecture curriculum. The discipline of architecture is teaching intensive, with its studio model of project-based learning and its close ties to cities as laboratories for engagement. In this environment, Professor Sirota is a consistent leader in both passionate and innovative teaching and in connecting teaching to her own creative work. Student response to Professor Sirota's approach has been very positive, as demonstrated by consistently high scores on her teaching evaluations. She is highly respected by her students and among the top teaching faculty in the college. In 2013, Professor Sirota was recognized by Design Intelligence (which is the leading source of annual design school ratings) as one of the 30 most admired architecture educators. In 2010, she was the recipient of the Donna M. Salzer Award for Teaching Excellence, awarded by Taubman College students to one faculty member in each program each year. Additionally, she has garnered grants from UM's Center for Research on Learning and Teaching and the Transforming Learning for the Third Century program to advance the work of her teaching and pedagogy.

Research: Professor Sirota is an architectural designer and researcher whose work, while at the scale of architectural interventions, yields urban cultural impact. Her collaborative design studio

Akoaki has created a distinct synthesis of aesthetics, social enterprise, and event planning. This approach has received international recognition and funding both for its products and for its novel processes. Professor Sirota's record for obtaining grants is truly outstanding, with over a million dollars secured in the past seven years, including repeated contributions from such competitive institutions as ArtPlace America, the Knight Arts Foundation, and Ford Foundation.

Professor Sirota's work also has garnered significant recognition, and has been widely disseminated in architecture-specific journals as well as in the general press. In 2016, Professor Sirota and her partner, Jean-Louis Farges, were invited to curate the 10th edition of the Saint-Etienne International Design Biennale in France. Their 10,000 square foot carte blanche exhibit, *Out of Site*, sought to return to Detroiters the benefits of the international attention to which their city has been subjected over the past decade. Several installations were reconstructed in the principal courtyard of the Biennale, and were activated by the presence of thirty Detroit artists, musicians, farmers, activists and residents who spent ten days engaging in public conversations and performances, transforming the exhibit into a cultural platform. There have been many exhibits and publications featuring the work of Akoaki, including exhibitions in Los Angeles, New York, Chicago, France and Switzerland, as well as the local Charles H. Wright Museum of African History and Henry Ford Museum. Professor Sirota has been in demand to lecture on her work. In addition to academic papers at conferences, she has participated in over a dozen panel discussions in the past year alone. Many of these symposia benefit from greater visibility, such as Austin's SXSW conferences, which she attended twice and at which the *Mothership* won a 2015 Place by Design Art + Interaction Award. Other panel discussions include such cultural venues as the MOCAD, FRAC in France, and International Venice Biennale.

#### Recent and Significant Publications, Exhibitions, and Awards:

- Sirota, Anya, and Farges, Jean Louis, 2018. *Almost Architecture*. In J. Eisenbrand (curator), *Night Fever*. Weil am Rhein, Germany: Vitra Design Museum.
- Sirota, Anya, and Farges, Jean Louis, 2017. *On Site*. Detroit UNESCO City of Design Summit, 2nd edition. Detroit, Michigan: Detroit Creative Corridor.
- Sirota, Anya and Farges, Jean Louis, 2017. *Out of Site*. In O. Peyricot (curator), *Working Promesse*, 10<sup>th</sup> edition of the Saint Etienne International Design Biennale.
- Association of Collegiate Schools of Architecture Faculty Design Award for *Electroform(alism)*, 2016.
- South by Southwest Eco: Place by Design Art and Interaction Award for *The Mothership*, 2015.
- Architect Magazine Research and Design Award for *Electroform(alism)*, 2013.

Service: Professor Sirota has actively contributed to a range of academic and professional initiatives in service to the college, the university, and the city of Detroit. She has been an advisor to the Detroit Creative Corridor Center, served on the advisory board of the Detroit Design Festival, and was a member of the board of the Peer Advisory group for the Detroit City of Design task force. Professor Sirota has also consulted with Creative Many Michigan, a statewide non-profit advocacy group for the creative sector, and contributed research on best practices for community engagement. Additionally, Professor Sirota has offered recommendations to the Belle Isle Task Force and Conservancy for the conservation and reactivation of Detroit's defunct Belle Isle Safariland Zoo. Professor Sirota has worked with the Michigan Arts League's Carr Center, an African-American cultural institute in downtown

Detroit and participated in a peer-driven advocacy and support network through which she routinely consulted with artists and activists regarding space making projects in Detroit. Professor Sirota's most significant service at the university has been in the development of courses with engaged learning outcomes, about which she has lectured to various university-affiliated audiences. At the Taubman College, Professor Sirota has served on admissions committees and numerous faculty search committees. She served for two years in the Post-Professional Advisory Committee and is a member of the Master of Urban Design Advisory Committee. This year, Professor Sirota was named director of Taubman College's Michigan Architecture Prep Program, a pipeline college preparatory initiative created to introduce students in Detroit's public high schools to architecture, urbanism, and design-related fields.

#### External Reviewers:

Reviewer A: "...Professor Sirota is a highly accomplished educator and creative practitioner whose highly specific abilities and accomplishments can support and extend a professional program's mission within a major research institution."

Reviewer B: "The installations and community engagements of Professor Sirota participate meaningfully in the public discourse and rank among some of the most significant work I have seen nationally or internationally in the past decade...Professor Sirota's interdisciplinary practice serves as an excellent example to which the architectural profession should aspire."

Reviewer C: "Sirota's fresh perspective on agency in architecture, and her commitment to public discourse as an educator and a professional, will help to redefine the profession in years to come. Sirota's staggering record of achievement, on all levels, during her tenure-track period at the University of Michigan stands on its own, and shows promise of continuing..."

Reviewer D: "All of her work is very inventive and I would even say path breaking in the breadth of its formal innovation...she seems to me to be far more original in her approach than most [junior] faculty members, successfully combining what are typically seen as two opposing poles: socially based concepts and programs and daring and innovative forms."

Reviewer E: "These community-engaged projects demonstrate a much-too-rare capacity to see that creativity goes beyond form-making into the design of operational procedures and the strategic use of power. This type of work warrants all the support – like tenure – that an academy can bestow."

Reviewer F: "...I am impressed by the quality and quantity of her scholarship, research, and creative practice; as well as her innovative approaches in teaching. The strength of Sirota's work lies in her often seamless integration of professional practice, research and design education."

Reviewer G: "Sirota's intention in 'amplifying architecture's agency' through consideration of 'both the instrumental and less entrepreneurial manifestations of arts and culture within strategies of urban regeneration' has led to a highly imaginative and consequential interdisciplinary practice. Her work is a search for intelligence and productivity within the temporary urban economy."

Reviewer H: "...Professor Sirota has created an impressive, diverse, and unique body of creative work...Professor Sirota and her practice Akoaki have made significant contributions to local communities as well as advanced a new model of practice for future scholars."

Summary of Recommendation:

Professor Sirota is an architectural designer and researcher whose work, while at the scale of architectural interventions, yields urban cultural impact. She is a consistent leader in both passionate and innovative teaching and in connecting teaching to her own creative work. She has provided important service to the college, university, and Detroit community. It is with the support of the Taubman College Promotion and Tenure Committee and the Executive Committee that I recommend Anna G. Sirota for promotion to associate professor of architecture, with tenure, A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning.



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Jonathan Massey  
Dean and Professor  
A. Alfred Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning

May 2018