

CARNIVAL SPATIALITIES:

Temporality, Social Infrastructure, and Caribbean Diasporic Space-Making in Chicago

FALL 2026 CHICAGO STUDIO

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This studio investigates how Caribbean diasporic communities make space through temporality, festival, and social infrastructure. Centered on the Chicago Caribbean Carnival at Midway Plaisance, students will examine how procession, music, costume, food, and performance temporarily transform urban space while sustaining deeper forms of cultural memory, belonging, and collective identity.

The studio asks what it means for a Caribbean carnival, (a form deeply tied to emancipation, anti-colonial expression, and collective self-fashioning) to occupy a site historically associated with colonial display and the staging of cultural difference at the 1893 World's Columbian Exposition. Working across three linked themes of temporality, social infrastructure, and carnival as living archive, students will develop design proposals that understand carnival not as a singular event, but as part of a larger cultural system of making, gathering, caring, and remembering.

Students will probe design interventions at multiple scales, from the body and costume, to the mobile unit, to the festival ground. This work will be grounded in site visits, sensory mapping, community conversations, and archival research across Chicago's broader Caribbean and diasporic landscape.

