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## FoldStudio

### Winter Studio 2026 Speakers “Designing in Context”



**Louis P. Nelson** is Vice Provost for Academic Outreach and Professor of Architectural History at the University of Virginia, where his scholarship and teaching explore the built environments of the early modern Atlantic world, including the American South, the Caribbean, and West Africa. His work combines deep historical research with public engagement around architecture, landscape, and the interpretation of race, memory, and place, including contributions to scholarship on slavery and the University’s cultural landscapes. In his role as Vice Provost, Louis advances community-engaged learning and public service across UVA and beyond, fostering academic partnerships that connect rigorous research with societal impact.



**Gregg Bleam** is the principal of Gregg Bleam Landscape Architect (GBLA) in Charlottesville, Virginia, where he has led a diverse body of work for more than 30 years. His practice is known for thoughtful integration of modern architecture with landscape, using indigenous materials and attention to seasonal and spatial qualities. Gregg earned a Master of Landscape Architecture from Harvard University’s Graduate School of Design and previously taught landscape and architecture studios at the University of Virginia. His projects include residential, garden, campus, and master planning work that reflects a deep commitment to place and design rigor.



**Dr. Josh Yates** is a cultural sociologist and systems thinker dedicated to reimagining what it means for cities and communities to thrive. He is the Founder of *Thriving Cities Group* and Executive Director of the *Belmont Innovation Labs*, where he draws on more than two decades of research and practice at the intersection of sociology, civic innovation, and theology. Previously, Josh served at the University of Virginia,

where he founded the original Thriving Cities Project, and at Duke University, where he directed the Ormond Center focused on strengthening congregations and communities. A frequent speaker and collaborator across academic and nonprofit sectors, his work offers new frameworks for fostering human flourishing, institutional trust, and the common good in complex social systems.



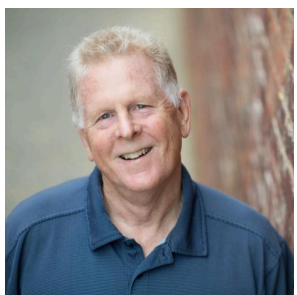
**Karen Wright Marsh** is an author, speaker, and the Executive Director and cofounder of *Theological Horizons*, a ministry centered at the University of Virginia that cultivates thoughtful, hospitable spaces for engaging faith, intellect, and everyday life. She holds degrees in philosophy from Wheaton College and linguistics from the University of Virginia, and is the author of *Vintage Saints and Sinners* and *Wake Up to Wonder*, as well as the host of the *Vintage Saints & Sinners* podcast. Karen lives

at the Bonhoeffer House in Charlottesville, Virginia, with her husband, UVA professor Charles Marsh, where they raised their three children. Through her writing and teaching, she invites audiences to recover wonder, faithfulness, and embodied belief in the midst of ordinary life.



**Christy Yates** is an artist and educator whose work explores the emotional and spiritual experience of landscape through layered oil paintings that move between representation and abstraction. Raised on the North Shore of Boston, she earned a B.A. in Political & Social Thought from the University of Virginia and later completed graduate studies in theology, art, and sustainable development at Regent College and Simon Fraser University in Vancouver, BC. Her work incorporates non-toxic

and occasionally locally foraged pigments as a way of honoring the land she depicts, and has been exhibited nationally and acquired by the University of Virginia and private collections. Christy lives and works on a small farm retreat at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains outside Charlottesville, where she continues to paint, host community, and shape formative programs at the intersection of faith, art, and place.



**Bruce R. Wardell** is the founder and principal of *brwarchitects* in Charlottesville and a respected civic leader whose work reflects a deep commitment to community, mentorship, and design excellence. A graduate of the University of Virginia, Bruce's career has been shaped by public service, beginning with his work as Assistant Government Architect for the Peace Corps in the Kingdom of Tonga. His projects include landmark urban and housing initiatives such

as The Belmont Lofts, The Crossings, and the nation's first LEED-Silver certified Women's Emergency Shelter, earning multiple AIA honors and the City of Charlottesville's Design Professional of the Year award. Through his leadership and mentorship, Bruce has helped shape both Charlottesville's built environment and a generation of Virginia architects.



**Katherine Alsdorf** is the Founder and Director Emeritus of *Redeemer Center for Faith & Work*, where she spent two decades helping cultivate a robust integration of Christian faith and professional life. Before her ministry work, Katherine built a distinguished career in the high-tech sector, serving as CEO of multiple companies in California and leading organizations at the intersection of technology, education, and management. She holds an MBA from the University of Virginia's Darden School and a BA in Psychology and Education from Wittenberg University, and has pursued theological studies at Regent College. Katherine also serves on the Steering Committee of the *Theology of Work Project*, contributing to global conversations about vocation, leadership, and faith in everyday work.



**Julia Kwolyk** is a versatile violinist, vocalist, songwriter, and improvisational musician whose performances span classical, folk, jazz, and bluegrass traditions—from the Tanglewood Symphony Orchestra and Boston Pops Holiday Pops tour to frequent festival appearances and local collaborations in Charlottesville. Her current work includes a solo album of original music reflecting her Christian faith and life's relationships, and ongoing projects with collaborators like Matthew McAllister and the bluegrass group Rare Bird Alert. Originally from Wisconsin, Julia began violin at age three and holds a B.A. in Voice from Furman University, with further vocal study at the New England Conservatory's jazz department. In addition to her musical career, she holds a Master of Architecture from the University of Virginia and has practiced architecture and design, bringing a keen eye for structure and pattern from her architectural training into her artistic expression.



**Lowland Hum** is the musical collaboration of Daniel and Lauren Goans, whose work is celebrated for its poetic lyricism, evocative harmonies, and finely distilled arrangements. Known for creating a warm, artful welcome on stage, the duo blends precision, storytelling, humor, and authenticity in performances that often blur the line between concert and

performance art. Embracing a deeply DIY ethos, Lowland Hum writes, arranges, produces, and records all of their music, pairing it with Lauren's visual artistry and Daniel's work as a producer and experimental composer. After years of extensive touring, they now focus on a steady rhythm of writing and recording, with nine albums released to date and a ninth currently in progress. Based near Charlottesville, Virginia, they continue to create music rooted in care for craft, community, and place.