The pandemic has exacerbated existing crises and injustices. While the rich have got richer, populations historically marginalized through class, race, ethnicity and gender are hit hardest across the globe. As their living conditions and livelihoods have worsened, they have suffered environmental disasters, sickness, loss of jobs, displacement from home, criminalization, war, and even death. The deeper the crises, the greater the need to understand the historical, social and political context. Where do we stand in relation to the social structures, which (re)produce the injustices? How can our discipline address these contexts without falling back on conventional response, subsiding into ‘cruel optimism’, exceptionalism, quick solutionism, or elitist saviorism?

The deeper the crises, the greater the need for ‘educated hope’ and radical imaginary. In this plenary session, we will explore the political and social realities that brought us to this point, the alternatives, and possible implications such knowledge and imaginations brings to the universities and expanding field of landscape architecture.