



SERVICE LEARNING AND CIVIC ENGAGEMENT THROUGH HIGHER EDUCATION

NATACHA POGGIO | UNIVERSITY OF HOUSTON - DOWNTOWN

THE BAYOU AT YOUR DOORSTEP: VISUAL STORYTELLING AS A PATHWAY TO ENVIRONMENTAL ENGAGEMENT

ABSTRACT:

Houston's 22 bayous shape both ecology and culture. At the University of Houston–Downtown, the Bayou at your Doorstep project engaged graphic design students in visual storytelling to highlight the importance—and vulnerabilities—of these waterways. Culminating in a public Earth Day exhibition with over 31,000 attendees, the project bridged classroom and community through environmental education, design activism, and zero-waste initiatives. This presentation explores lessons learned, community partnerships, and strategies for replicating civic engagement through design.

THEMATIC FOCUS:

Convergence and Intersections: How increasing or decreasing hyperconnectivity can impact community engagement.

Floods and Droughts: Too much of one thing, not enough of another. How complimentary partnership can fill the gaps.

BIO:

Natacha Poggio is a US Fulbright Scholar, TEDx speaker, educator, and advocate for design for social change. As Associate Professor of Design, she teaches at the University of Houston–Downtown in Texas, where she hopes to inspire more socially responsible citizens in the world. In 2008, she founded Design Global Change, a collaborative focused on designing planet-centered solutions to global health, environmental, and social justice issues. Her work has reached hundreds of communities in Latin America, Africa, and Asia. She has been honored as a three-time recipient of Sappi's "Ideas that Matter" award. Natacha speaks on social impact, judges competitions, and volunteers her expertise for the Winterhouse Institute Council. She holds an M.F.A. in Experience Design from the University of Texas at Austin, USA, and a B.F.A. in Graphic Design from the University of Buenos Aires, Argentina. A native of Argentina, Natacha considers herself a citizen of the world.