Max stearns

Sector Experience
Design Research; Design Strategy; Systems Design; User Experience (UX) Design; Media Innovation; Civic Design, Technology, and Innovation; Participatory Design and Co-Design; Education and Learning Design; Democratic Innovation; Community Organising.

Country Experience
Azerbaijan, Belarus, Belgium, Bulgaria, Canada, France, Germany, Greece, Hungary, Italy, Poland, Russia, South Korea, Spain, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, USA.

Languages
English (C2), French (A1)

Citizenship
Canada, USA, France (Visa)

Education
Ohio State University,
Columbus, OH, USA
BA. Political Science and Economics
Big Ten Medal of Honour Recipient

Ohio State - Moritz College of Law,
Columbus, OH, USA
Doctor of Law (JD), Incomplete
Finished first-year legal course work

Parsons - The New School,
New York City, NY, USA
MFA. Transdisciplinary Design
Presidential Scholarship

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Experience

SENIOR DESIGN LEAD +
INTERIM DESIGN DIRECTOR | DEMOCRATIC SOCIETY
Remote | 2021 - Present

- **Led design, prototyping, and launch** of five digital products, five services, and two information wayfinding systems in order to enable 112 European cities achieve 2030 Climate Democracy Goals. (Horizon Europe - NetZeroCities Mission)
- **Translate research insights** related to "Accountable AI" to structure and facilitate a series of internal ideation workshops and design of a "Digital Democracy Lab" with engineering team. (Knowledge Technologies for Democracy)
- **Direct and manage research and design team** as interim design director for Democratic Society. (Internal)
- **Contribute to strategic decision-making** for the financial and resource management of a 40+ person NGO. (Internal)
- **Develop strategies and liaise with potential clients** to generate new business worth over €2M in revenue. (Internal)

PROGRAM MANAGER | REBOOT
New York City | 2020 - 2022

- **Translated insights from 15 interviews and six co-design workshops into a set of** operating values **and an actionable design brief** for a tool to enhance the organization's movement building approach. (Mozilla Foundation)
- **Led design of a user-friendly digital tool - including creation of wireframes and multiple iterations of prototypes -** which resulted in a 32% increase in team's effectiveness related to supporting aligned social movements. to enable strategic decision-making aligned with theory-of-change. (Mozilla Foundation)
- **Designed, facilitated, and produced assets for co-design workshops with Executive and Senior-Level staff** to facilitate strategic decision making and digital service design. (Mozilla Foundation & Leading Social Media and Social Networking Service)
- **Synthesised and communicated complex insights,** and proposed strategic next steps with visual and written summaries. (Mozilla Foundation)
- **Developed and executed research strategies** including interviews, user-research, usability testing, and focus groups to inform the design of DesignWith, a toolkit for genuine co-design. (Internal)

ADJUNCT FACULTY | PARSONS SCHOOL OF DESIGN
New York City | 2020 - 2022

Designed the curriculum, prepared and presented class lectures for 125 students, invited and coordinated presentations from nine guest experts, administered three projects, and managed a four-person team composed of junior faculty and teaching assistants.

PROGRAM DIRECTOR | CITY OF BOSTON, MAYOR'S OFFICE OF NEW URBAN MECHANICS
Boston | 2017 - 2018

Built and led a portfolio of work focused on civic and participatory innovation, contributing with cross-disciplinary research and design, strategic planning, project management, and storytelling.

INNOVATION FELLOW +
INTERIM DIRECTOR | HOUSING INNOVATION LAB
Boston | 2016 - 2017

Managed a team of three project managers and a portfolio of over 15 projects to explore innovative opportunity areas and foster innovative digital and physical solutions and partnerships between city officials, entrepreneurs, and the community.

Teaching

- **Lecturer,** Master of Arts in Design Engineering, Brown University and Rhode Island School of Design, 2022. Providence, USA.
- **Lead Lecturer,** Innovation, School of Design Strategies, Parsons School of Design — The New School, 2022. New York City, USA.
- **Lecturer & Workshop Lead,** Master of Arts in Design Engineering, Brown University and Rhode Island School of Design, 2021. Providence, USA.
- **Instructor,** Innovation: Discussion, School of Design Strategies, Parsons School of Design — The New School, 2021. New York City, USA.
- **Instructor,** Design of Business, School of Design Strategies, Parsons School of Design — The New School, 2020. New York City, USA
- **Instructor,** Innovation: Discussion, School of Design Strategies, Parsons School of Design — The New School, 2020. New York City, USA.
- **Instructor,** Innovation: Discussion, School of Design Strategies, Parsons School of Design — The New School, 2019. New York City, USA.
- **Advisor,** Design in Government (with Sabrina Dorsainvil), Kennedy School of Government - Democracy, Politics and Institutions Program, Harvard University, 2018. Cambridge, USA.
- **Advisor,** Integrated Design Lab (with Sabrina Dorsainvil and Susan Nguyen), Integrated Design and Management Program, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, 2017. Cambridge, USA.

Panels & Presentations

- **Speaker,** "*Biodiversity+ Design Toolkit: Designing Pathways for Sustainable Futures,*" SF Design Week, 2023.
- **Speaker,** "*Errant Design - Design Unbounded*" Commons in Design Conference, 2023.
- **Speaker,** "*Designing Democratic Infrastructure: From One-Off Deliberations to Resilient Democracies,*" Democracy R&D Annual Conference, 2022.
- **Speaker,** "*Strategies for a Networked Approach,*" DISCOVER & UNTITLED - Open Talks, 2022.
- **Speaker,** "*The Playful Designer,*" NYCxDesign Design Week, 2020.
- **Speaker,** "*Playful Boston: The Civic Power of Playfulness,*" Paris Design Summit, 2019.
- **Speaker,** "*Civic Innovation and Smart(er) Cities,*" Global Leader Experience, 2018.
- **Panellist,** "*Citizens and Their Cities,*" Feedback Summit, 2017.
- **Speaker,** "*Civic Experimenters: Innovation with People, Places, & Things,*" Local Government Conference, 2017.
- **Speaker,** "*City Government and Civic Media,*" Allied Media Conference, 2017.
- **Panellist,** "*Social Innovation in the Public Sector,*" Northeastern Law Review - Social Innovation and Law, 2017.
- **Speaker,** "*Meet the Mayor's Housing Innovation Lab,*" HubWeek - Housing the Hub, 2016.

Publications

- Attallah, Nathalie and max stearns. (2023). "Errant Design: Design(ing) Without Solutions." In Christine Schranz, Ed. *Commons in Design* (pp. 139-157). Amsterdam; Valiz with Swiss National Science Foundation.
- Bastiaensen, Hanne and max stearns. (2022). "Designing Democratic Infrastructures: From One-Off Deliberations to Resilient Democracies." Accepted for presentation at the Democracy R&D Annual Conference, Berlin, Germany.
- López-Aranguren, Juan, Nadja Nickel, and max stearns. (2022). "Strategies for a Networked Approach: Building intentional relationships and processes to achieve transformational change." Accepted for presentation at the Discover & UNTITLED Open Talks, Online.
- stearns, max. (2019). "Civic Fables: Developing New Language of Failure in Local Government Innovation." Mayor's Office of New Urban Mechanics.