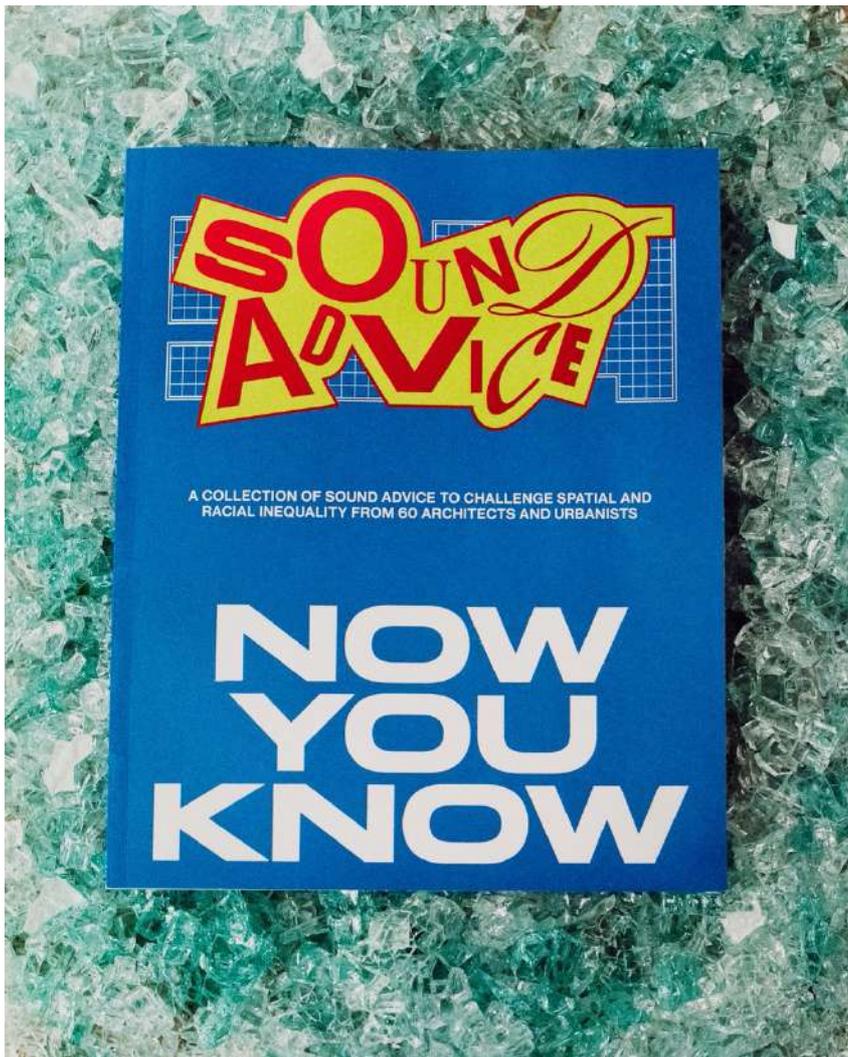




Sound Advice publishes **Now You Know** 60 architects address discrimination in the built environment



All photography by Timi Akindele-Ajani.

Exclusion and racial bias are built into our cities. In its debut publication **Now You Know**, Sound Advice – the platform exploring spatial inequality in architecture – has gathered the thoughts and reflections of more than 50 architects and urbanists of colour in an



extraordinary compendium of essays, poems, interviews and, yes, advice on how to address the discrimination baked into our built environment.

Crowdfunded to the tune of £19,500 by 418 supporters, the 180-page paperback is designed by Joel Antoine-Wilkinson and edited by Sound Advice's co-hosts, the urbanists Pooja Agrawal and Joseph Henry. Its contributors range from MBEs to architecture students, artists to urban policymakers – each one accompanying their piece with a concise tip of the kind that has made the Sound Advice Instagram feed such a compelling resource, paired with a music recommendation.

“Now You Know is an incredible platform for people of colour working and studying across architecture and urbanism to make their voices heard. Giving those who are often overlooked in conversations about the built environment a chance to express how we would redesign our cities, spaces, institutions and societies is a powerful step towards tackling racial inequality.

“Now You Know celebrates plurality and the richness of not seeing the world in any one particular way. The range of ideas, careers and lives of all people of colour are frequently reduced to a singular ‘BAME’ experience. The wealth of contributors and topics covered in these 50 essays suggests otherwise. I feel grateful to have been given the opportunity to contribute to this important publication as an enduring resource and community where we can share pain, love, hopes, fears, music, and above all advice.”

– Manijeh Verghese, Head of Public Programmes, Architectural Association

Now You Know: the story

2020 was a difficult year for everyone, an alternate reality in which the lives we were used to living all but stopped. But although Covid-19 touched us all, its impact was disproportionately felt by people of colour, who have suffered and died in greater numbers than white people, often as a result of urban-planning issues such as overcrowded housing, lack of public space and poor air quality. Covid brought these inequalities into sharp relief, and things such as household density, proximity to neighbours, access to open spaces and essential services, and transport to work became indices of vulnerability. For people of colour, it has become clear that powers that create the urban frameworks in which we live have rigged the game.



Then in May 2020, the murder of George Floyd sparked demonstrations across the world, with people of colour taking to public spaces just to ask the system not to kill them. It also sparked trends such as #BlackoutTuesday, when millions posted black squares on Instagram in supposed solidarity with the Black Lives Matter movement. For Sound Advice, however, such gestures rang hollow – a performance of allyship that fell far short of driving genuine change.

'We got angry, hurt and frustrated and realised that we weren't the only ones. Totally fed up with how the built environment sector tackles (or doesn't tackle) race, we wanted to hear from people who are already fighting to make the changes. What was their response to this moment? Where do they think we can go from here? How can we disrupt the inertia of the profession?'

– Pooja Agrawal, Sound Advice

Determined to incite meaningful action, Pooja Agrawal and Joseph Henry reached out to their network, their friends, family and colleagues of colour and asked them what should change, and how. Over the next few months, they received a stream of considered personal and practical responses – which today form Now You Know, an insightful exploration of how architecture,



design, urbanism and technology could give us the tools to develop a more just built environment.

'Through Now You Know we wanted to explore a compelling alternative and more plural vision of the future in our voice and within our own space. The contributors have created an incredible manifesto so we really hope that people engage with the content in the book and don't just leave it collecting dust on a coffee table or to decorate a Zoom background.'

– Joseph Henry, Sound Advice

Now You Know is available to buy for £20 from Tate Modern Terrace Shop, DSouth London Gallery, AA Bookshop, Koenig at Serpentine Gallery, magCulture. Sound Advice also accepts orders at: nowyouknowshop.bigcartel.com

Sound Advice is working with [Urban Learners'](#) Celebrating Architecture Initiative to donate books to young and aspiring architecture students.

The accompanying Now You Know playlist is available on [Spotify](#).





Notes for editors

For more information about Now You Know, to request a copy, or to speak to Pooja and Joseph, please contact sabine@zetteler.co.uk.

Now You Know

215X270mm

10mm Spine

180pp Paperback

ISBN: 978-1-5272-8718-1

Publisher: Sound Advice

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Design: Joel Antoine-wilkinson

Printed by Pure Print

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Sound Advice

Co-hosted by urbanists Pooja Agrawal and Joseph Henry, Sound Advice is a not-for-profit platform exploring spatial inequality in architecture through music. Pooja and Joseph met while working at the Greater London Authority. They share their interests in fighting inequality both in the built environment and in the sector as a whole. Between them, they have designed buildings, funded regeneration projects, taught, mentored, founded social enterprises, and advocated for change. They also love music. Sound Advice was born out of these shared passions and takes a variety of different formats including visual podcasts, written articles and events. Sound Advice founded the Sound Advice Awards as part of Jayden Ali's Counter-Figures UAL: CSM autumn lecture series.

Instagram: [@sound x advice](https://www.instagram.com/sound_x_advice)

Joel Antoine-Wilkinson

London-based designer Joel Antoine-Wilkinson works in the fields of art, design, architecture, fashion, music and contemporary culture. Defined by his varied and versatile approach, his work is rooted in research and conceptual thinking. Having practised in both London and Berlin, he uses design as a space to communicate ideas, learn, inform and be enjoyed on multiple levels.

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