

Kate Orff

2024 Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medalists in Architecture

A UVA alumna and nationally recognized expert in landscape architecture, urban design, and climate adaptation, [Kate Orff](https://www.scapestudio.com/people/) (<https://www.scapestudio.com/people/>) has spent her career understanding how landscape architecture can aid and enhance areas being reshaped by a warming planet and rising seas. In 2007, she founded [SCAPE](https://www.scapestudio.com/) (<https://www.scapestudio.com/>), a landscape architecture and urban design studio firm in New York that employs more than 80 individuals who design parks, waterfronts, greenways and streetscapes, with a focus on ecological restoration and social engagement.

Among Orff's best-known works are the Living Breakwaters on the South Shore of Staten Island, created after Superstorm Sandy. The project is often heralded as a model for climate adaptation in vulnerable areas. Orff has been named a MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Fellow and was included in *Time* magazine's list of the 100 most influential people in 2023.



<https://monticello-www.s3.amazonaws.com/files/resources/orff-headshot.jpg>

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On the anniversary of Thomas Jefferson's birthday, April 13 (known locally as Founder's Day), the University of Virginia and the Thomas Jefferson Foundation at Monticello (<https://www.monticello.org/exhibits-events/founder-s-day-event>) join together to present the Thomas Jefferson Foundation Medals to recognize achievements of those who embrace endeavors in which Jefferson, the author of the Declaration of Independence and third U.S. president, excelled and held in high regard. These medals are the highest external honors bestowed by the University of Virginia, which grants no honorary degrees.

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