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Walter Hood to Design Solar-Panel Wonderland in Buffalo

By [Cliff Kuang](#)



Fields of solar panel arrays are now popping up all across the United States, but the State University of New York, Buffalo, hopes to create the country's most beautiful one yet--smack dab at the entrance to its North Campus.

The university just announced [1] that renowned landscape architect Walter Hood will design a combination solar-array-landscape installation, with construction to begin this summer.

Hood won out in a three-way competition with artist Vito Acconci and landscape architecture firm Balmori (whom we've covered here [2] and here [3]). He calls his design "The Solar Strand"--a double reference to landscape formations and DNA strands--and it'll be more than simply a solar

array. The panels themselves will be surrounded by grasses and trees that blend in with the surrounding campus. Nestled among them will be three "social rooms"--outdoor spaces defined by hillocks and ponds with added seating that blends into the land.



And when complete, the 5,000 solar panels will be among the largest arrays on any college campus, expected to produce enough energy for 735 student apartments while reducing carbon emissions by 500 metric tons per year. At a cost of \$7.5 million, it's the first stage in a green development plan that will cost \$21 million.

Hood's probably best known for his superb work [for the DeYoung Museum in San Francisco](#) [4], which earlier this year [helped him win](#) [5] the 2009 National Design Award.

Links:

- [1] <http://www.buffalo.edu/news/11249>
- [2] <http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/cliff-kuang/design-innovation/china-wants-its-own-version-high-line>
- [3] <http://www.fastcompany.com/pics/making-candyland-look-bland-eight-blinding-buildings#8>
- [4] <http://www.wjhooddesign.com/deyoung.html>
- [5] <http://www.fastcompany.com/blog/cliff-kuang/design-innovation/whirlwind-tour-years-2009-national-design-awards>