Who Gets to Future? Race, Representation, and Design Methods in Africatown

Jasper Tran O'Leary[1], Sara Zewde[2], Jennifer Mankoff[1], Daniela K. Rosner[1]
[1]University of Washington, [2]Studio Zewde
Seattle, Washington, United States
jaspero@uw.edu,info@studio-zewde.com,jmankoff@uw.edu,dkrosner@uw.edu

ABSTRACT

This paper draws on a collaborative project called the Africatown Activation to examine the role design practices play in contributing to (or conspiring against) the flourishing of the Black community in Seattle, Washington. Specifically, we describe the efforts of a community group called Africatown to design and build an installation that counters decades of disinvestment and ongoing displacement in the historically Black Central Area neighborhood. Our analysis suggests that despite efforts to include community, conventional design practices may perpetuate forms of institutional racism: enabling activities of community engagement that may further legitimate racialized forms of displacement. We discuss how focusing on amplifying the legacies of imagination already at work may help us move beyond a simple reading of design as the solution to systemic forms of oppression.

CCS CONCEPTS

•**Human-centered computing** →**HCI theory, concepts and models; Empirical studies in HCI;**

KEYWORDS

Race; design methods; gentrification; public art

1 THE CENTRAL AREA

Seattle, WA, United States: In August 2018, Black artist Jasmine Brown posted several life-sized portraits of her teen son reading the foundational book *Pedagogy of the Oppressed* onto exterior walls around the city. The portraits made up an art piece titled "Black Teen Wearing a Hoodie," referring to the 2012 murder of Black teenager Trayvon Martin. Several weeks later, Brown discovered the portraits had been vandalized—heads ripped off, arms missing, faces and bodies covered in graffiti. Brown commented on the incident in a local newspaper:

> *I've discovered through this project that just a young, Black, male body or image in a public space is to some people offensive, or at least invites violence or slander or whatever you want to call defacing it. That's a shame, because all he's doing is reading a book* [31].

The vast majority of remarks on the newspaper's online comments section took issue with the idea that racial motivation could have caused this. For example, the most-liked comment read:

> *Why would the automatic conclusion be racism? Scary to think young people are taught that every obstacle they encounter is rooted in racism. They'll never know the real world carrying that dead weight.*

Such an event captures the plight of Black designers and artists seeking to enact change in their environment. Although we know

Figure 1: The Africatown Activation

little about the intention of the defacer, the act of destruction reflected the conditions of possibility for a system of power. It revealed the racialized opposition that follows design and the subsequent tendency to deny racism or claim colorblindness[1], particularly under the anonymity that digital forums provide.

These struggles are of increasing concern to us in HCI. Racial categories have become a harmful tool of facial recognition systems and chatbots reproduce racist language [72]. More broadly, racialization continues within the very fabric of our field. As a discipline, HCI has taken steps to intro-duce policies and practices that remediate the effects of discrimination [44]. Yet, rarely grappling with racism directly, this work raises questions of complicity within the field. To what extent do we, as designers, hide the workings of racism? To what degree do we learn to treat design techniques as portable without accounting for the legacies of racial struggle that surround them?

Our goal in this paper is to examine these questions through the work of Africatown, a community group seeking to use design to reclaim Black representation in Seattle's Central Area (also known as the Central District[2]). The group designed and built an installation known as the Activation that celebrates one of the last public spaces in this historically Black neighborhood. They aimed use the language and practice of design to activate not only the spaces they live in, but also the community itself. The design process became less of a problem-solving activity than a means of mobilizing and legitimating the concerns of the neighborhood's Black residents in the aftermath of state-run segregation policies and ongoing displacement [1, 38]. Africatown's efforts thus expose how a design process can be both unconventional (in line with existing critical approaches e.g. [17, 35, 53]) and inherently racialized.

To make this argument, we contrast Africatown's activities with those of *conventional design practice*, which we define as city-regulated, waged, and professionalized activities of contextual inquiry, sketching and brainstorming, and iterative prototyping and feedback. In examining this approach alongside Africatown's work, we explore where the conventional design process fails to account for under-recognized racialized narratives and experiences.

Our analysis draws from a wider literature within critical race studies that traces the legacies of production that position race and class as, in Lisa Nakamura's words, "commodities" in the design process [61]. This work troubles conventional design terms—terms that obfuscate exclusions and normalize whiteness—by examining the conditions under which racism plays out in the design process [18, 23, 59, 78]. We also build on a body of design and HCI scholarship that examines design with excluded communities e.g. [34, 37]. Taken together, this literature helps us explore how those who struggle for visibility and voice become recipients of what Sarah Ahmed calls a "liberal promise" of inclusion [9], a phrase she uses to acknowledge the procedures of liberalism that obscure structural racism.

---

[1]Colorblindness refers to a practice of ignoring racial differences which in turn ignores inequalities perpetuated by race [12, 30, 33]

[2]We use the phrase Central Area rather than Central District or CD to highlight the term preferred by community members as they establish new agencies like the "Central Area Design Review Board" [48?]—(see also the note on CD's roots in the phrase "Colored District")

Unpacking this theoretical context, we share a rich case study of design in a racialized setting and reflect on how design and race intersect. From this reflection, we make three central contributions to the HCI literature. First, we bring new attention to how design can be used to counter racism and disinvestment. In particular, we trace how community members convene and take design into their own hands in order to counteract projects that does not represent them. With this process in mind, we call for HCI scholars to further recognize and legitimate design practices that make processes of racialization explicit, revealing and addressing their effects. Second, we use a case study of landscape architecture to identify how HCI scholars can decenter the authority of a design elite. For example, we show how incomplete infrastructures work as a means of animating participation. We show how designers can intervene in power hierarchies by localizing design techniques. Lastly, we discuss how HCI's promise of inclusion may need revision in order to contend with the realities of racial discrimination, past and present. As a partial response, we highlight the contingency of design practices that work within and against the effects of structural racism.

2 RELATED WORK

Theoretical Foundations

The range of literature typically brought into HCI has been largely insufficient for grappling with the dynamics of our case study. Across our collective theorizing, we have found an invaluable lens for analysis in the writings of anti-Blackness scholars [23, 58, 60, 74, 78], particularly Saidiya Hartman [47] (see [73] on anti-Blackness). In *Lose Your Mother*, Hartman traces her own ancestry through slave routes in Ghana to ask: how can we understand slavery and its consequences beyond its popular understanding? Her journey involved traveling the routes while reckoning with the complex conceptions of the slave trade that people along the routes hold. Her work problematizes the idea of a sanctuary away from racism. Indeed, her account shows that the search for this sanctuary glosses over political and class divides that negatively impact the Ghanaians whom she visits. Hartman makes clear that Africa, while geographically distant from slavery's descendent structures in the United States, is no utopia. Yet, she still validates the need to imagine a sanctuary, writing:

> [F]or those bound to a hostile land by shackles, owners, and the threat of death, an imagined place might be better than no home at all, an imagined place might afford you a vision of freedom, an imagined place might provide an alternative to your defeat, an imagined place might save your life [47].

In complicating the idea of Africa as a sanctuary to return to, Hartman illuminates how the imaginary troubles the reinscription of racial narratives. By examining the Activation, we investigage an attempt at creating the imagined place—not away from racism, but within it. It is by putting the process of imagination in conversation with legacies of racialization that we find useful work on Blackness, feminism and design.

Blackness, Feminism, and Design

Design researchers have published numerous works exploring the impact that conventional design has on cultures and communities

that fall outside our defaults [58, 60]. These works argue that conventional design practice has not adequately accounted for race or for the effects of racism. Much of it shows how treating race as a discrete variable in the design process often overlooks the structural effects that race (among other factors) has on design impacts and outcomes [22, 41]. Scholars have focused on how design and maker methods abstract away local and cultural accounts of cultural production [14, 27, 63, 64, 66, 69]. In particular, Sareeta Amrute examines the lives of Indian IT workers in Berlin as a means of examining race and class boundaries that bound IT work in a neoliberal economy [11]. Exploring racialization globally, others look to traditions like Afrofuturism and Afro-Centric HCI for inspiration [82, 83]—examining racial identity and its implications explicitly [7, 71]. Schlesinger and colleagues explicitly foreground the intersection of race and artificial intelligence to show that racist assumptions get built into algorithm designs [72]. Fox, et al. examine the implications of Internet of Things technology applied to public vending machines for menstrual products, showing how potential technology solutions are tied to the politics of who will maintain technology [43]. Bringing this notion of "design at the margins" into view, Dombrowski et al. advocate for *social justice-oriented interaction design* [35]. We particularly note their call not to exclude actors who might be perceived as "political."

Responding to these concerns, several scholars and practitioners have developed tactics for recognizing racialization in design [76]. Architecture scholar Darrell calls for "emancipating blackness" in architectural development [40] while Ayodamola Okunseinde and Salome Asega use afrofuturism as a frame for reimagining the built environment [5]. Developers of Anti-Oppressive Design tools argue for inverting the power structures built into digital media [62, 75, 84]. Taking inspiration from this body of work, Hankerson et al. offer concrete examples of how the technology design process frequently erases people of color [45], actively excluding along racial lines. Bringing these concerns together, Sengers calls attention to the disproportionate influence a narrow demographic (white and Asian, white-collar, educated, urban) have on the work of designing and imagining new technologies [45]. As a consequence of this overrepresentation, she argues, the space of designs reflects only a small subset of views and values. This racial inequality pertains especially to our analysis, as the community group we focus on—Africatown—falls outside of this narrow demographic.

Publics, Community Participation, and Space

Participatory design (PD) is an approach to design that aims to actively include stakeholders in the design process. HCI practitioners and researchers frequently employ PD methods as tools to address the concerns of people under-served in conventional, professional design processes. However, few accounts of PD have looked specifically at how to include stakeholders who are disenfranchised from legacies of racial oppression. One line of theorizing casts PD as less about a fixed design process, and more about a productive entangling with community. For example, Ehn theorizes PD methods as forms of "design-games" entwined within infrastructure, communities, language, and artifacts (but not legacies of oppression) [36]. He contributes this lens for designing artefacts or systems that exceed the familar or "safe" conventions of established design

practice. Building on the concept of infrastructure, Björgvinsson et al. note that infrastructuring through community design is an ongoing process that often entangles familiar "a-priori infrastructure activities," like design and development, with "design in use," namely adaptation, re-design, and maintenance [19]. Le Dantec contributes the concept of *publics* as a collection of competing interests in a localized community setting [51]. Lindström and Ståhl put forth the idea of *publics-in-the-making* as a lens to navigate how communities approach building infrastructure [54]. Balestrini et al. presented a framework for communities to orchestrate community design around urban issues [16]. These approaches collectively shift focus from design as a monocultural process towards design that takes place across heterogenous communities.

Other HCI scholars explore the limits of PD as a means of instigating change in the face of divisions like systemic racism. Taylor et al. investigated challenges around community members designing devices in a neighborhood setting [80]. They found it critical for community members to have control over the process through which they designed the devices, namely, the workshop sessions. Further, Rosner et al. argue that design workshops as a research method overshadow local understandings of design in favor of meeting facilitators' expectations [70]. Light and Akama highlight this tension between the drive for community participation in PD and local understandings of design, writing that "when ethical and political concern is narrowly focused on how people directly participate in designing products and systems, it can miss a significant dimension [53]." Bødker and Kyng further acknowledge these challenges, calling for a re-realization of PD as a tool for facing "big issues," possibly through recasting the role of design researchers as that of activists [21]. They call attention to how, in the current state of PD, "we sincerely lack a notion of partnership in conflict or a concern for how researchers team up with partners to fight for shared political goals in the interest of the partners. They argue that PD can carry a sense "do-gooding" which can insulate designers from negative consequences of their design work [20, 50].

This shift of focus in PD is timely, as racist practices in urban policy and planning shape the character of communities [13, 15, 29] and these effects are largely unaccounted for in theorizing of PD. Without a handle on race, PD risks compounding racist legacies under the title of design. For example, Erete and Burrell studied technology use as a means of mobilization over a three-year period in a low-income Chicago neighborhood and found that technology on its own could not increase neighborhood members' political voice in local governance [37]. Crooks drew similar conclusions after working with a low-income neighborhood in South Los Angeles [32]. Yet, PD approaches typically focus on creating a fixed design solution along finite timeframes, leading to language like "before the solution," "designing the solution," and "after the solution" [52]. This solutionist perspective cannot reckon with problems than cannot be solved right away—for example, in our case, shifting and oppressive racial politics. Our goal is not to discount the usefulness of PD methods, but rather to point out that PD should acknowledge race explicitly to realize its ideals of co-creation.

Focusing on Black communities, scholars of architecture and landscape architecture have sought to make real a vision of what public life could look like outside of racist development practice

[49, 55]. Landscape designer Walter Hood proposes the concept of the *everyday and mundane* within a landscape, such as light posts, curbs and public seating. He writes that "a cultural practice alive to the everyday and mundane recognizes these objects and spaces as opportunities and transforms them into public sculptures that embrace and validate the everyday patterns and rituals of neighborhoods" [81]. In this light, a public installation built by community members is not just a solution, a product with a seemingly fixed and stable resolution. It is an ongoing response to the explicit and less explicit forms of racism that haunt the present and continue to shape policy and development.

3 BACKGROUND: RACISM IN SEATTLE'S CENTRAL AREA

In 1975, Black residents assembled a booklet subtitled "how the banks are destroying our neighborhoods" that detailed the policies of redlining [3] and disinvestment that deprived the majority Black Central Area of financial resources. Banks refused to give home loans and required higher interest rates and down payments [1]. Throughout the 1970s, they took money from residents, only to reinvest it in the growth of majority white suburbs. Well into 1960s, the state further enacted Racial Restrictive Covenants sanctioning policies that forbade Black people from using, occupying, selling, renting or leasing land in the neighborhoods surrounding the Central Area [2, 6], confining them within its borders.

Across the last decade, this pattern of racial segregation has repeated, but this time in reverse. As urban land becomes more valuable, displacement now pervades the urban Central Area. Hoping to turn a profit and house new middle- and upper-class white residents, institutions partner with developers to buy up land in the neighborhood and turn it into luxury homes and condominiums. Black residents who once could only live in the Central Area now ironically need to move to suburbs outside Seattle.

During this period, white residents have repeatedly pointed out that incorporating Black Central Area residents' feedback would slow down the development process during a period of rapid growth. Consider, for example, this typical response to a recent article about the work of Black residents:

> *We are in the middle of a housing crisis, why is incorporating brickwork and gaining comments about that worth not having this building completed sooner and actually housing people?* [48]

This sentiment highlights how the interests of Black residents of the Central Area now appear to stand in the way of professional-seeming development from powerful design and architecture firms. Although Seattle's "housing crisis" often refers to homelessness, in this context it also denotes those who can afford luxury housing (the majority white Seattle transplants, many of whom arrive to work in the technology industry).

---

[3]The Oxford English Dictionary defines "redline" as "[to] refuse (a loan or insurance) to someone because they live in an area deemed to be a poor financial risk." Seattle banks and landlords could legally discriminate based on race until 1968 [2] and a community group in the Central Area argues that banks still effectively disinvested in loaning to the then majority-Black neighborhood well into the 1970s [1].

In response, residents have taken to community organizing once more: this time to involve themselves in the development process. Next, we describe the Activation installation, which members of the grassroots community group Africatown built. We show that while conventional design methods such as participatory design workshops grant Black residents a voice in the development of the Central Area, these same methods often do not address the reality of decades-long racist housing policies and disinvestment.

4 SITE DESCRIPTION: THE AFRICATOWN ACTIVATION

Africatown is an organization within the Central Area primarily focused on securing space for Black-owned businesses, majority-Black and/or low-income housing, and Black-centered public spaces. The idea for the Activation arose out of several rounds of community meetings, which Zewde facilitated, to prototype the future of the site. The site of the Activation is a block at a prominent street intersection in the Central Area, which has served as a social space for the community. In Fall 2017, a development firm bought the northern 80% of the property on the block and began planning for its redevelopment, a project we refer to as "the long-term redevelopment." The firm sought to demolish the existing building, which houses three Black-owned businesses, as well as a few vacant storefronts and a post office. In its place, they hoped to construct large mixed-use buildings which include market rate housing and ground floor retail spaces. Residents of the Central Area, particularly those involved with Africatown, see the new building—through its removal of the site's potential as a Black business hub and gathering space—as the erasure of a Black cultural center in the neighborhood. With the percentage of Black residents having fallen from 75.0% in 1990 to 32.5% in 2010 [25] members of the Central Area worry about the effects of gentrification in the neighborhood and view development that does not make room for Black business, living, and gathering space as the effective end for Black community in the Central Area.

Design and Research Team

As authors, the four of us collaborated on analysis but have different relationships to the scenes described in the sections that follow. While Tran O'Leary primarily served as an ethnographer on the project, Zewde spearheaded the design and development of the installation and served as a board member on Africatown from 2017-18. Zewde's work preceded the formation of our ethnography, a collaboration that ultimately led to her being second author of this paper. Mankoff primarily contributed to data analysis. Rosner contributed to data analysis and writing, and collaborated with members of Africatown on a separate public design project alongside the Activation installation.

In the following sections, the term "Africatown" refers to the community group which includes its leadership as well as design interns working to plan and publicize the design events such as the Imagine Africatown Design Cipher and the Community Paint Day. Further, "Africatown" comprises Zewde, who served as the project manager and designer for the Activation, Tran O'Leary, who worked as Zewde's assistant, and the community members who took part in the design events, community meetings that Zewde

facilitated, and/or public design review meetings that the site's developers facilitated.

The Activation Design Process

The Activation involved four phases: (1) design ciphers (a series of workshops in which community members reimagined the Central Area), (2) the urban living room (a concrete bench and table structure built at the site), (3) the community paint day (community-based mural painting day at the site), and (4) the design weekend (a weekend of discussions and design events in the Central Area). The idea for the Activation came out of the design ciphers, described below.

Phase 1: The Design Ciphers were collective charrettes that brought together community members within the Central Area with members of design and development firms around issues of displacement. Inspired by the forms of gathering and improvisation around freestyle rap, the term cipher references lineages of ideation and debate that differ from professional design. At each cipher, facilitators introduced a design problem that demanded reimagining or speculation and asked participants to reimagine the site slated for redevelopment. Members then brainstormed values, sketched out concepts, and built physical models that showed a material instantiation of speculative ideas. During the last cipher, for example, two facilitators split participants into several teams, with each team assigned to a site in the Central Area to be re-imagined. Facilitators tasked one group with redesigning the Seattle Vocational Institute building, an organization founded to teach trade skills to primarily Black residents. The cipher ended with all groups convening to present and discuss the physical models they created of their re-imagined sites.

Phase 2: The Urban Living Room entailed constructing concrete benches resembling sofas and a coffee table, as well as devising a paint pattern that covered a large portion of the block—including a central parking lot—and murals on the building close to the street intersection (see Figure 1). Zewde and Tran O'Leary worked through several iterations of the design on paper and in 3D modeling software, weighing several options and considering cost and feedback from business owners. They then sketched out the design in chalk on site and contracted with an installation artist and four workers to construct the concrete benches on site.

Phase 3: The Community Paint Day gathered around 300 community members to paint the Activation site with pan-African, Kente cloth, and Afro-diasporic flags and patterns. The organizers intended community members to participate in the construction of a space built for them. Before the Community Paint Day, contractors and volunteers helped outline and prime the site for paint. Afterwards, volunteers and paid workers made many touch-ups and detail additions to the paint scheme.

Phase 4: The Design Weekend included a panel featuring renowned Black architects, another design cipher to generate ideas for the futures of additional neighborhood sites, and an inaugural community dinner at the Activation site.

In parallel to Africatown's design process through the Activation, the architecture and developer firms were developing a proposal for the long-term redevelopment. In contrast to Africatown, the firms operated within the framework of a professional design process, which included mandatory public design hearings for community members to give input on the developing proposal. Unlike Africatown, whose designs focused on the lived experiences of community members, the firm's proposals conformed to issues of real estate and economic viability. Throughout their design process, employees at the firm felt under pressure to be sensitive to the issue of race, as members of the community both inside and outside of the neighborhood recognized that the development's design could displace Black residents.

Finally, the Activation was fundamentally ephemeral. As agreed between Africatown and the developer firm, once the city approved the long-term redevelopment plans, it would demolish the entire site, including the Activation and the businesses, to begin construction on the new building.

5 METHODS

Our data collection and analysis followed feminist approaches to situated inquiry [85] and strands of interventionist inquiry within traditions of critical and speculative design [79]. While feminist traditions emphasize the contingent and embodied nature of knowledge productions, traditions of interventionist inquiry materialize ideas or arguments to examine what they curtail or make possible in the world around them. Within both data collection and analysis, the authors sought to highlight their own place as participants in, rather than observers of, the politics of the Activation, following notions of reflexivity and participant ethnographies [24, 68].

Data collection: Activation planning began in the summer of 2017 and continued until July 2018. Zewde participated in the development of the project from start to finish (producing planning documents, slide decks, meeting notes, and digital renderings) and Tran O'Leary collected ethnographic fieldnotes during regular visits to the Central Area over an eight-week period in 2018. Drawing from this mix of planning documentation, fieldnotes, photographs, and archival material, we sought to create descriptive documentation that we could iteratively cluster and refine to describe the design space (borrowing from prior work [26]).

Analysis: Drawing on inductive techniques [28], we analyzed our data thematically based on how they shed light on the role of design methods and histories of racialization. Three questions organized our analysis: (1) What is Africatown's approach to design? (2) What relationship does conventional design have with Africatown's approach? And (3) How do both accounts of design handle economic struggle? To develop to these questions, we created reflective memos derived from our jottings, field notes, and other empirical materials and iteratively refined our interpretations.

6 AFRICATOWN'S APPROACH TO DESIGN

Our first set of episodes considers the often invisible but seemingly pervasive way organizers adapted techniques of sketching and prototyping to the Activation site and Africatown organization. These adaptations often centered around community building, rather than adhering to a formal design process. As a result, a professional design paradigm might not recognize these adaptations as "true" design, which compounds the historical silencing of Black residents' ability to shape the design of their neighborhood.

Figure 2: Snapshots from the Activation design process. 1) initial design ciphers to generate concepts and prototypes for the Activation's physical form, 2) constructing concrete benches for the urban living room, 3) volunteers painting the site during Community Paint Day, 4) the final cipher from the Design Weekend.

Situated Sketching as Opposed to Idealized Modeling

Bringing design practices to the Activation site involved members of the Africatown design team (including Tran O'Leary and Zewde) sketching a variety of design options for the Activation. Through sketching first on paper and software, and then on the physical Activation site itself, we learned of the contingent nature of our tools. Questions of where to sketch became as important as questions of how to sketch, and we adapted our process accordingly.

To understand this adaptation, we turn to the process of sketching that took place the month before the Activation's construction. Across two weeks, Zewde and Tran O'Leary drew out alternative configurations of the concrete benches and the paint patterns. They then translated the hand-drawn imagery into 3D renderings and shared the digital files with both the development firm and with the businesses on the site. In this process, they found that designing on paper and in a 3D model failed to capture the full social life of the site.

This observation came into view as Zewde and Tran O'Leary spent more time at the site. Once a loud but brief physical altercation broke out between a worker and a business owner. Patrons from businesses ran out to watch, and those same patrons often sat on an abandoned stone wall and chatted while waiting for an appointment—a small space which is already "activated," according to community members. Zewde and Tran O'Leary observed how people stood and chatted in front of businesses, often honked at and greeted by friends waiting in their cars at the intersection's traffic light. The Activation's designs would need to acknowledge these existing forms of social interaction.

To adapt our sketching strategies, Zewde proposed sketching on the actual site. She came prepared with chalk and masking tape, noting the importance of tracing the dimension lines on the site. This physical intervention would enable the designers to get a sense of how the benches' size would feel on the actual site, in person, not just in the model. The following day, upon visiting the site again, she wanted to change some the lines around, after having precisely measured them. Tran O'Leary, with less installation experience, felt reluctant to pivot the benches away from the clean construction lines in the software model. What "worked" on site was not the same configuration that snapped cleanly to the grid lines in software.

> Tran O'Leary: "Is it okay to be making so many modifications that are different from what we have in the model?"
> Zewde: "It's always gonna be different. Whatever you figure out in a drawing or model is always gonna be different in real

life, where there's all the moving pieces."
> Tran O'Leary: "I don't think I have a sense for what works."
> Zewde: "You do have that sense! It's design. It's design! I like it because when you move back it's good to see a row of people sitting, so when you walk in, you have a bunch of people greeting you.

Upon later reflection, Tran O'Leary learned that while he had been thinking in terms of lines of "perfect" alignment for the concrete forms, Zewde was always thinking in terms of the lines drawn between two or more people lost in conversation, or the invisible regions that would be ideal for families to gather and feel safe amidst the automobile traffic of the intersection. This distinction reveals how Zewde, who had previously designed spaces for celebrating Black history, had prioritized specific people's engagements over an idealized design process. Sketching had been a critical part of the design process, but where she sketched—the safe blankness of paper versus the complex, bustling surface of the site—became just as important. Previous participatory design work has advocated for "staying through the trouble with design [46, 77]." To stay with the trouble of a representing the lives of people in the community, we had to forgo the rigidity of a more conventional design practice and sketch on the site, in the open, where she was accountable to the community in person.

Scales of Community Building

In addition to adapting ideation, the construction of the concrete benches also adapted to the context of Africatown. Although professional design firms often contract to large construction firms that take matters into their own hands, construction of that scale was not possible. Instead, the Activation design team used the construction process as a means of participation.

This process began when Zewde hired workers from the community to learn construction skills in the process. She contracted an artist who led the workers in building molds for the concrete. After the molds were built, a concrete truck arrived on site and began to pour concrete into wheelbarrows which workers would then take to pour into the mold. Unlike professional construction sites, the concrete bench construction became a sight for the community. As the concrete flowed, community members approached and crossed the flimsy line of caution tape cordoning off the site and volunteered a hand. Cars stopped at the traffic light to glimpse the unfamiliar endeavor. At one point, as one wheelbarrow lay empty, Tran O'Leary stopped taking field notes and began helping shuttle

concrete from the truck to the molds. "*People are really coming out of the woodwork*," Zewde said as concrete splattered onto Tran O'Leary's shoes.

One business owner who had voiced skepticism about the installation in front of his shop changed his mind once he saw the work that people put into the site. As workers began pouring the concrete, the business owner walked up to Zewde and Tran O'Leary and said "*Come tell me when you need me. … This is a really nice way to go out.*" After the concrete had been poured, troweled, and screeded, one taciturn worker walked up to Tran O'Leary and said, "*thank you.*" Zewde told Tran O'Leary: "*I saw you getting up there with your Sunday shoes on. I think you got their respect. …It's funny, just like everyone else on site, you also sort of fell victim to the concrete. Once the concrete was out, you just had to participate!*"

With Africatown, the construction of the benches became an effective means of publicity and engagement, just as much as the design events proper. In this sense, the shifting scale of the intervention—building a temporary installation versus building a public place meant to last for decades—allowed for processes more open to community participation.

7   THE ELITE STATUS OF CONVENTIONAL DESIGN

Having examined local adaptations to the design process, we now turn to the ways those contingencies hit up against the elite status of conventional design. To understand this dynamic, we examine the process by which Africatown organizers brought community members and invested designers into the fold. Our focus is not on the ways Africatown's recruitment methods sometimes failed so much as how the failures to capture and engage Black Central Area residents shed light on wider racialized developments built into professional design vocabulary. We find that the tight coupling between a design elite made up of mostly white middle and upper-class Seattle residents and racialized histories of segregation within the city foreshadows deep elisions in the practice and even language of design in ways that curtail who gets to influence development.

Demystifying the Language of Design

In the days before finalizing and constructing the concrete benches, Zewde held a community meeting to update attendees on the results of the previous design ciphers—including those that generated alternative designs for the developers—as well as plans for the soon-to-be-built Activation. About twenty-five people from the community gathered in the main room of a Black co-working space.

Zewde had gathered slides describing the results of the previous three ciphers. Before starting, a member of Africatown's leadership jumped in with an introduction: "*The main goal of this meeting is to break down the foreign language of design, get it so it can be broken down for our community, because we as a community do design every day.*"

In this statement, the leader made explicit something that the developers had left unsaid: the concept of design itself represented people and institutions located outside the community. When the developer and architecture firms first proposed drawings of the long-term redevelopment, the drawings featured very little community gathering space. While this lack of public space would be detrimental to the community, members of Africatown felt that

saying "no" to development based on the lack of public space would not be compelling to the professional firms, nor to the public at large. They wanted to go one step further and present an alternative design of their own. In this sense, the taking up the language of design was a strategic move to force the design firms to take the community's suggestions seriously.

As the meeting continued, one of the community members at the meeting pointed to a Black architect in the audience who's firm was partnering with the development firm. Suddenly, the architect became the target of many frustrated questions from the audience. A questioner pointed accusingly at the developer's rendering on one of the presentation slides. The architect responded defensively, "*No, no, don't say 'you guys,' that's not my work.*" Another dissenting member chided: "*this architect has an opportunity to break out [of what the firm wants], but he needs to be held accountable to that option.*" Ultimately, the architect could not reconcile his own status as part of the conventional design process, while also being a member of the community.

Eventually, members of the audience began to disengage from the formal language of design and a process they saw as beyond their control. Instead, they focused on another kind of design: one that involved small, achievable changes that community members could make to the Activation in order to reflect their needs and lived experiences. Several members contributed achievable suggestions: create a place for people to leave their thoughts, ensure the benches face away from a controversial business across the street, build a mobile app that shows users the history of the Activation site. With this relaxing of what could be considered "design," the atmosphere of the meeting room became jocund and improvisational. For example, in response to a business owner who did not want any part of the Activation, Zewde told the audience: "*we tried to blend in the gap to the paint scheme, not just make it look like a box.*" A community member chimed in, jokingly: "*add a big old red-line border around it!*" And another: "*Ooh, more redlining!*" provoking laughter from the audience. Once the community separated from the rigid structure of the formal design process, only then could they propose design changes that reflected their lived experiences.

This ideation and engagement revealed an important tension: while the audience felt empowered to shape the ephemeral Activation, the community members felt removed from the language of design and the use of the long-term, permanent development. Several weeks later, the leader who spoke at the beginning of the community meeting reflected this tension by revisiting his initial concern for the language of design. "*I might have thought about taking the word 'design' out of 'Design Town Hall,' 'Design Weekend,' and other things because it made people feel alienated,*" he explained when co-organizers (Tran O'Leary, Zewde) asked him what he might have planned differently for the Activation. He elaborated that the framing of events as design events, rather than events for community action, may have alienated community members who felt like they could not participate in a conventional design process. The leader's response alludes to Ahmed's *non-performatives*, the way institutions can tout diversity without taking steps to address problems of systemic racism. By including Black residents through the language of design, but without affording them a meaningful

say over the economic logistics of the site, the developer and architecture firms could pass off their responsibility of avoiding the displacement of Black businesses.

Contending with Classed Expertise

Over the course of the activation, another tension emerged around the unevenly valued expertise involved in the Africatown Activation. Some of the people organizing the installation trained in elite design schools at Harvard and Berkeley and thus carried a mantle of formal design expertise into the Activation's process. Yet, this elite background often overlooked classed expertise within the neighborhood. An unexpected run-in with a professional painter offers a useful of lens on this situation. While Tran O'Leary was painting touch-ups on the sidewalk next to the face of a building, a non-Black resident suddenly walked up to him to ask what the paint was for. When Tran O'Leary told him it was part of the Activation and intended to create a Black gathering space, he became dismissive of the concept. He then mentioned he was a professional painter, and, despite his disagreement with the project, took the paint brush from Tran O'Leary's hand and began giving him a lesson on how to paint details:

> *Just like I showed you: push, pull, pull. That's just one simple trick they show you as an apprentice, that's what I tell you. It doesn't even matter I guess if they're tearing everything down—unless you take pride in your work.*

As the conversation continued, a Black resident who also identified himself as a professional painter walked up to the site and told Tran O'Leary that the paint tape pasted down on the sidewalk should be removed while the paint was still wet. Although he pointed to issues with craft, he acknowledged that, as a whole, it had turned out appropriately, saying "*we ain't trying to put a masterpiece out here.*"

In this engagement, the very presence of the paint, while not perfectly planned or executed, surfaced issues of craft and classed expertise that were missing during community design meetings. The act of painting attracted input from working-class professionals who did not have the time or means to attend the more formal design ciphers and community meetings. These instances of needing to fix crooked paint lines also reflected a deeper tension between the highly visible call for community participation and the less visible labor needed to sustain the participation. Unlike the elite status of design, the painting process called on the expertise of working-class professionals within the community. It highlighted the craft of professional painters—which the idea of community-sourced paint labor overshadowed—as the invisible labor that supported the visible labor. The Africatown Activation design team worked with and through this classed expertise: painting represented a crucial but less-visible side of the project that Zewde and Tran O'Leary did not initially account for.

Participatory design depends on participation to give people a voice. This anecdote illustrates the uneven nature of participation, particularly when it comes to the entangled racial and classed identity of those participating. Busy working-class professionals in the neighborhood often reported needing to work and were not able to attend the design events. Considering this alongside

how the leader mentioned that the mention of "design" could feel alienating, working-class voices only came out when organizers directly engaged their expertise outside of formal design events. While this instance of design overshadowing classed expertise is not unique to racialized contexts, the Central Area is a neighborhood historically comprised of working-class residents, many of whom are also Black. As others have pointed out around design workshops and hackathons [42, 70] this episode suggests that design efforts, even when including based on race, can unintentionally exclude around class.

8   HOW DESIGN HANDLES ECONOMIC STRUGGLE

Building on this attention to socioeconomic status, we now consider how the design process allowed participants to reveal and temporarily suspend—for better or for worse—the historical, racial, and class constraints that have discouraged Black community members from shaping economic activity in the built environment.

Our examination begins with the final design cipher workshop that took place as part of the Design Weekend and with which organizers sought to engage a wide range of community members in the redevelopment process. Nearing the end of the day, team members scurried about constructing their own part of physical models, the low-fidelity physical representations of the reimagined sites. Rather than propose concrete actions, the nature of the cipher encouraged participants to think speculatively and playfully about what the Central Area could look like. For example, when one group presented a redesign that included a stage at a local park, an audience member asked, "*we're in Seattle, is this stage gonna have a cover?*" alluding to the rainy climate of the city. The presenter took her phone and placed it on the physical model as a makeshift roof, accompanied by laughter form the audience. Nearing the end of the presentations, an older woman rose from her seat and spoke in the face of all the rosy futuring:

> *I've lived in the community for over fifty years and didn't hear anything about African American businesses. African Americans, they have businesses and churches. Our churches are leaving. I had a business for thirty years and I couldn't afford the rent. African Americans need money. The young lady [another participant] talking about space for artists on the first floor [in her model] gave me hope. All this other stuff with parks is okay, but African Americans need businesses.*

With this comment, the space quieted. The photographer in the room snapped a photo. After a brief silence, one man in the audience grappled with the incommensurate views of a future Central Area, announcing "*I think this is all a larger issue of putting people at the center of design.*" Another attendee added on "*it's about political power as well.*" In the midst of the participatory design cipher bringing community members together, members also had to grapple with the reality that economic and political struggle within the Central Area constrained the space of possible futures. While everyone in attendance worked all day to create proofs of concept on behalf of the Central Area, the woman made evident that not all voices—business owners, in this example—were represented in the process. Just as in the community meeting,

this commentary revealed multiple motives and factions under the umbrella of "community."

This concern for economic struggle remerged during the community update meeting, discussed previously. As the meeting's facilitator, Zewde had hoped to center the meeting on designs for the Activation, but the discussion quickly developed into a reckoning with the limited amount of sway that Africatown members had concerning the economic logistics of the redevelopment. "*Is the program for the retail floor still the same?*" one community member asked. "*There was a brewery?*" another questioned, referring to how breweries in gentrifying US neighborhoods often signify further displacement of people of color. "*Bartell's!? Are y'all serious?*" a third member chided, referring to a local pharmacy chain. "*You're gonna put a Bartell's in a Black spot? What did they ever do for us? I'll open up my own pharmacy there before I see Bartell's move in. Sir, is there really gonna be a Bartell's?*"

In response, a member of the leadership channeled the grievances into a call to action, saying: "*Speak actively about what you want to see. Don't say, 'Is there gonna be art?' Say: 'We need art here!'*" One member added: "*If you're feeling mad about the economic reality, show up to community meetings where your comments are recorded, because that will hold the developers to it.*" Another pointed out an upcoming public design hearing where people who felt frustrated could share their views. While community members had been involved with design through the ciphers, their design efforts held little sway over the economic direction of the redevelopment. For the community members, as for several others in the room, the promise of the Activation and the long-term redevelopment consisted of its economic opportunity, or what several community members called a Black Wall Street[4]. This faction of the audience accepted the value of designing a community gathering space, but their primary concern lay with attracting Black businesses back to the Area. Rather than just a space for gathering and celebrating alone, the Activation represented a chance for intervening in histories of economic oppression.

These episodes reveal that even as the design processes gave community members hope for the neighborhood, it sidestepped the challenge of Black businesses affording to operate in the Central Area. Although public space design and economic vitality often intertwine, business owners may have viewed the Activation design process as a distraction from the more pertinent task of increasing the number of Black businesses in the Central Area.

9   CAN DESIGN OVERCOME ITS ELITE STATUS?

We live in a historical moment in which a growing number of designers are recognizing and responding to the lack of racial diversity in their profession. With renewed attention to the radical Black tradition [57, 67], with a rising Black feminist political resistance within the arts e.g. [39, 65, 74] and with annual events aimed at supporting and celebrating Black design achievements (e.g. "Black in design [4]," "Afrotech [3]"), change is on the march. But these changes are slow and often incremental when they exist

within design institutions that serve as authoritative keepers of knowledge.

With our analysis of Africatown we illustrated a paradoxical relationship between the Activation project and the long-term redevelopment plan of an industrial firm. In one sense, the goals of the Activation contradicted the aims of the property developers. By drawing on an established organization dedicated to supporting the Central Area's Black community, the Activation design process presented a direct challenge to the disruptive aims of the property developers. In another sense, we found that the collaboration between Africatown and the property developers helped mobilize the community to attend public design hearings and to gain publicity within the city. In this wider engagement, the cooperation threatened to legitimate the long-term redevelopment—and its associated conditions for displacement—as "inclusive."

It is in this tension between activating the community and threatening the community's survival that we see the insidious hand of institutional racism. The fact that the threat of displacement could and would persist no matter the formulation of the Activation—no matter who participated, or what inclusivity it achieved—rests on decades of racially-motivated disinvestment and racist housing policies within the Central Area. It suggests that the structural effects of racism have long underpinned conventional design practice and its institutional arrangement, and that no design approach may in itself hold the answer.

During a recent public presentation by the development firm, we saw this tension play out once again. Design renderings for the Activation site fell short of addressing the concerns of Black community members. Public accounts cast the plans as ignoring the surrounding neighborhood: failing to support Black-owned business or recognize Black architecture from around the area [48]. "*How is the Central Area design team not looking at this?*" one speaker asked. Another attendee pointed out that each member of the design board was white. The development firm framed Africatown as doing design within the grander enterprise of (D)esign.

In closing, we draw from the Africatown Activation three lessons for HCI scholars to ponder their own work as producers of technology as well as for working within and against legacies of racism

Acknowledging Racism: When Not to Call it "Inclusion"

Our first lesson emerges from the power that the developer and architecture firms were able to wield over Africatown's design process. The firms allowed Africatown to build the Activation on land owned by the developers, with the understanding that the Activation would eventually be demolished for construction on the permanent redevelopment at the site. This setup created partnership between Africatown and the firms, but still required Africatown to handle diversity work on the ground. The burden to articulate the effects of racist city planning practices thus fell on Africatown and community members. In the words of Ahmed, the firms were *non-performative* [8]; they were able to appear as if they were committed to inclusion by allowing Africatown to do its design process, but the firms were accountable first to maximizing real estate for economic stakeholders.

By defining inclusion as a discrete variable in the design process, rather than something that permeates all parts of the design,

---

[4]According to the Tulsa Historical Society & Museum, the first Black Wall Street was a thriving Black business district in Tulsa, OK, USA, which a White mob destroyed in 1921 [56].

projects of inclusive design may pay lip service to inclusion efforts even as they limit designers ability to meaningfully respond to suggestions from people affected by design [8, 9]. Without acknowledging the legacies of racism through which difference unfolds, HCI designers may reify difference once again.

Confronting Racism: When Not to Call it "Design" and When Design Involves Activism

We have seen that calling something "design" can mean reproducing racialized exclusions by conjuring the elite cultural status of a conventional design practice. In the Africatown community meeting, for example, audience members had many ideas for how they wanted the installation to look, including the idea of making a place for public art or a companion mobile application. However, it was not until the meeting's facilitator dismissed the "foreign language of design" that community members felt comfortable voicing their ideas. Across the Activation, the conventional design process of the developer and architecture firms overshadowed how "we [Africatown] as a community [does] design every day," as the member of Africatown's leadership had said. Namely, Africatown's efforts to sketch in-situ, to celebrate labor and construction as vital to shaping the design process, and to gather the Black community for meeting and feasting, contrasted with a conventional design process. They exposed the exclusionary trappings of the language and practice of design.

But we also saw that Africatown used design (the "design ciphers," the "Design Weekend") productively—not just to activate the space, but also to activate the Black community in the Central Area. The ciphers, the Activation's pan-African paint, the concrete benches, and the community meetings also proved vital to confronting displacement by designing for the lived experiences of community members. They promoted people becoming more active in the community effort and having a stronger hand in the long-term redevelopment. A successful design process in the context of structural racism involved activism.

Working Within and Against: Finding an Imagined Place

Returning to the origins of our case study, arguably the main feature of the Activation was a mural that emblazoned the phrase "Imagine Africatown" (see Figure 1). This call for imagination sat at the heart of the organization's mission. Africatown is an organization, but its name refers to an imagined place that resists the historical forces that continue to disenfranchise Black Central Area residents.

In this sense, the design process offered not a means to a solution, but rather a way for community members to collectively imagine. Through design, residents could work within and against the property development firm's priorities: elevating their rich legacies of community-building and mobilizing around a different shared future. Saidiya Hartman describes this condition as a process of finding a suitable future by framing a suitable past: "The past depends less on 'what happened then' than on the desires and discontents of the present," she writes. "But when does one decide to stop looking to the past and instead conceive of a new order?" From Africatown, we learn that the time for conceiving of a new order is now.

10 CONCLUSION

Today the ghosts of disinvestment, displacement, and racism still haunt development in the Central Area. Although HCI scholars often write about the present moment as a time when researchers are including more people than ever before [9, 10], the Africatown Activation renders a more complicated story. The design proposed by the architects and developers did not reflect the needs of the community nor the community members convening to take design into their own hands. In parallel, the process of sponsoring and allowing the Activation to take place allowed the developer firm to position themselves as culturally sensitive. In light of HCI's values of inclusivity, diversity, and participation, we see the project of Africatown as one that raises the stake of intervention for HCI. It warns that inclusive design can serve as a token if we are not critical of its place among legacies of racism that intertwine with the present. This observation suggests we must take to heart Ahmed's claim that "to account for racism is to offer a different account of the world" [9]. In offering the Africatown Activation as a case study, we highlight how racial inclusion is not something that can be designed for. Rather, we call on the HCI community to critically engage with the complexities of race as they intertwine with the design process.

11 ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

REFERENCES

[1] 1975. *Redlining and Disinvestment in Central Seattle: How the Banks are Destroying our Neighborhoods.* Technical Report. Seattle: Central Seattle Community Council Federation, 1975.

[2] 2010.   The Seattle Open Housing Campaign, 1959-1968 - CityArchives | seattle.gov.   (2010).   http://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits-and-education/digital-document-libraries/the-seattle-open-housing-campaign

[3] 2018. AfroTech. (2018). https://afrotech.com

[4] 2018. Black in Design Conference. (2018). http://www.blackindesign.org/

[5] 2018. Iyapo Repository. (Sept. 2018). https://iyaporepository.tumblr.com/?og=1

[6] 2018.   Redlining in Seattle - CityArchives | seattle.gov.   (2018). https://www.seattle.gov/cityarchives/exhibits-and-education/online-exhibits/redlining-in-seattle

[7] Danah Abdulla. 2014. A Manifesto of Change or Design Imperialism? A Look at the Purpose of the Social Design Practice. *A Matter of Design: Making Society trough Science and Technology. Proceedings of the 5th STS Italia Conference.* (June 2014).   http://www.academia.edu/14145120/A_Manifesto_of_Change_or_Design_Imperialism_A_Look_at_the_Purpose_of_the_Social_Design_Practice

[8] Sara Ahmed. 2006. The Nonperformativity of Antiracism. *Meridians* 7, 1 (2006), 104–126. https://www.jstor.org/stable/40338719

[9] Sara Ahmed. 2012. *On being included: racism and diversity in institutional life.* Duke University Press, Durham; London. http://public.eblib.com/choice/publicfullrecord.aspx?p=1173269 OCLC:

782909885.

[10] Morgan G. Ames, Jeffrey Bardzell, Shaowen Bardzell, Silvia Lindtner, David A. Mellis, and Daniela K. Rosner. 2014. Making Cultures: Empowerment, Participation, and Democracy - or Not?. In *CHI '14 Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI EA '14)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 1087–1092. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2559206.2579405

[11] Sareeta Bipin Amrute. 2016. *Encoding race, encoding class: Indian IT workers in Berlin*. Duke University Press, Durham.

[12] Evan P. Apfelbaum, Michael I. Norton, and Samuel R. Sommers. 2012. Racial Color Blindness: Emergence, Practice, and Implications. *Current Directions in Psychological Science* 21, 3 (June 2012), 205–209. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0963721411434980

[13] Ian Appel and Jordan Nickerson. 2016. *Pockets of Poverty: The Long-Term Effects of Redlining*. SSRN Scholarly Paper ID 2852856. Social Science Research Network, Rochester, NY. https://papers.ssrn.com/abstract=2852856

[14] Seyram Avle, Silvia Lindtner, and Kaiton Williams. 2017. How Methods Make Designers. In *Proceedings of the 2017 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '17)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 472–483. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3025453.3025864

[15] Emily Badger. 2018. How Redlining's Racist Effects Lasted for Decades. *The New York Times* (Jan. 2018). https://www.nytimes.com/2017/08/24/upshot/how-redlinings-racist-effects-lasted-for-decades.html

[16] Mara Balestrini, Yvonne Rogers, Carolyn Hassan, Javi Creus, Martha King, and Paul Marshall. 2017. A City in Common: A Framework to Orchestrate Large-scale Citizen Engagement Around Urban Issues. In *Proceedings of the 2017 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '17)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 2282–2294. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3025453.3025915

[17] Shaowen Bardzell. 2010. Feminist HCI: Taking Stock and Outlining an Agenda for Design. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '10)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 1301–1310. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/1753326.1753521

[18] Shaowen Bardzell. 2018. Utopias of Participation: Feminism, Design, and the Futures. *ACM Trans. Comput.-Hum. Interact.* 25, 1 (Feb. 2018), 6:1–6:24. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3127359

[19] Erling Björgvinsson, Pelle Ehn, and Per-Anders Hillgren. 2012. Agonistic participatory design: working with marginalised social movements. *CoDesign* 8, 2-3 (June 2012), 127–144. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/15710882.2012.672577

[20] Susanne Bødker. 1993. The AT-project: practical research in cooperative design. *DAIMI Report Series* 454 (Sept. 1993). DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.7146/dpb.v22i454.6772

[21] Susanne Bødker and Morten Kyng. 2018. Participatory Design That Matters—Facing the Big Issues. *ACM Trans. Comput.-Hum. Interact.* 25, 1 (Feb. 2018), 4:1–4:31. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3152421

[22] André Brock. 2012. From the Blackhand Side: Twitter as a Cultural Conversation. *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* 56, 4 (Oct. 2012), 529–549. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/08838151.2012.732147

[23] Simone Browne. 2015. *Dark matters: on the surveillance of blackness*. Duke University Press, Durham.

[24] Michael Burawoy. 1998. The Extended Case Method. *Sociological Theory* 16, 1 (1998), 4–33. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1111/0735-2751.00040

[25] US Census Bureau. 2010. Census.gov. (2010). https://www.census.gov/en.html

[26] Kathy Charmaz and Linda Liska Belgrave. 2015. Grounded Theory. In *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*. American Cancer Society. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1002/9781405165518.wbeosg070.pub2

[27] Elizabeth Chin. 2016. *My life with things: the consumer diaries*. Duke University Press, Durham.

[28] Adele E. Clarke. 2003. Situational Analyses: Grounded Theory Mapping After the Postmodern Turn. *Symbolic Interaction* 26, 4 (Nov. 2003), 553–576. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1525/si.2003.26.4.553

[29] Rodney D. Coates (Ed.). 2011. *Covert racism: theories, institutions, and experiences*. Number v. 32 in Studies in critical social sciences. Brill, Leiden ; Boston. OCLC: ocn707887030.

[30] Marilyn Cochran-Smith. 1995. Color Blindness and Basket Making Are Not the Answers: Confronting the Dilemmas of Race, Culture, and Language Diversity in Teacher Education. *American Educational Research Journal* 32, 3 (Sept. 1995), 493–522. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.3102/00028312032003493

[31] Tyrone Beason Columnist. 2018. Damage to mother's 'black teen' artwork teaches hard lessons in progressive Seattle. (Aug. 2018).

[32] Roderic N. Crooks. 2019. Times Thirty: Access, Maintenance, and Justice. *Science, Technology, & Human Values* 44, 1 (Jan. 2019), 118–142. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0162243918783053

[33] Robin J. DiAngelo. 2018. *White fragility: why it's so hard for white people to talk about racism*. Beacon Press, Boston.

[34] Tawanna R. Dillahunt. 2014. Fostering Social Capital in Economically Distressed Communities. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '14)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 531–540. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2556288.2557123

[35] Lynn Dombrowski, Ellie Harmon, and Sarah Fox. 2016. Social Justice-Oriented Interaction Design: Outlining Key Design Strategies and Commitments. In *Proceedings of the 2016 ACM Conference on Designing Interactive Systems (DIS '16)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 656–671. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2901790.2901861

[36] Pelle Ehn. 2008. Participation in Design Things. In *Proceedings of the Tenth Anniversary Conference on Participatory Design 2008 (PDC '08)*. Indiana University, Indianapolis, IN, USA, 92–101. http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=1795234.1795248

[37] Sheena Erete and Jennifer O. Burrell. 2017. Empowered Participation: How Citizens Use Technology in Local Governance. In *Proceedings of the 2017 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '17)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 2307–2319. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3025453.3025996

[38] Olivia Littles Erickson. 2015. *Co-Constructing Racial Identities at Seattle's Northwest African American Museum*. Thesis. https://digital.lib.washington.edu:443/researchworks/handle/1773/33555

[39] Eve L. Ewing. 2017. Thursday Morning, Newbury Street. *Indiana Review* 39, 1 (2017).

[40] Darell Wayne Fields. 2015. *Architecture in black: theory, space and appearance* (2. ed ed.). Bloomsbury Academic, an imprint of Bloomsbury Publishing Plc, London. OCLC: 913814001.

[41] Sarah Fox, Jill Dimond, Lilly Irani, Tad Hirsch, Michael Muller, and Shaowen Bardzell. 2017. Social Justice and Design: Power and Oppression in Collaborative Systems. In *Companion of the 2017 ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work and Social Computing (CSCW '17 Companion)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 117–122. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3022198.3022201

[42] Sarah Fox, Rachel Rose Ulgado, and Daniela Rosner. 2015. Hacking Culture, Not Devices: Access and Recognition in Feminist Hackerspaces. In *Proceedings of the 18th ACM Conference on Computer Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing (CSCW '15)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 56–68. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2675133.2675223

[43] Sarah E. Fox, Rafael M.L. Silva, and Daniela K. Rosner. 2018. Beyond the Prototype: Maintenance, Collective Responsibility, and Public IoT. In *Proceedings of the 2018 Designing Interactive Systems Conference (DIS '18)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 21–32. DOI: http://dx.doi.org/10.

1145/3196709.3196710

[44] Christopher Frauenberger, Amy S. Bruckman, Cosmin Munteanu, Melissa Densmore, and Jenny Waycott. 2017. Research Ethics in HCI: A Town Hall Meeting. In *Proceedings of the 2017 CHI Conference Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI EA '17)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 1295–1299. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3027063.3051135

[45] David Hankerson, Andrea R. Marshall, Jennifer Booker, Houda El Mimouni, Imani Walker, and Jennifer A. Rode. 2016. Does Technology Have Race?. In *Proceedings of the 2016 CHI Conference Extended Abstracts on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI EA '16)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 473–486. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2851581.2892578

[46] Donna Jeanne Haraway. 2016. *Staying with the trouble: making kin in the Chthulucene.* Duke University Press, Durham.

[47] Saidiya V. Hartman. 2007. *Lose your mother: a journey along the Atlantic slave route* (1. ed ed.). Farrar, Straus and Giroux, New York. OCLC: 836422604.

[48] Justin Carder. 2018. Midtown design looks too much like SoLU, not enough like the CD—Can new Central Area Design Review Board help? (July 2018).

[49] Kofi Boone. 2017. Black Landscapes Matter. (2017). http://groundupjournal.org/blacklandscapesmatter/

[50] Morten Kyng. 2010. Bridging the Gap Between Politics and Techniques: On the next practices of participatory design. © *Scandinavian Journal of Information Systems* 22 (Jan. 2010), 49–68.

[51] Christopher A. Le Dantec. 2016. *Designing publics.* The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.

[52] Christopher A Le Dantec and Carl DiSalvo. 2013. Infrastructuring and the formation of publics in participatory design. *Social Studies of Science* 43, 2 (April 2013), 241–264. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/0306312712471581

[53] Ann Light and Yoko Akama. 2014. Structuring Future Social Relations: The Politics of Care in Participatory Practice. In *Proceedings of the 13th Participatory Design Conference: Research Papers - Volume 1 (PDC '14)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 151–160. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2661435.2661438

[54] Kristina Lindström and Åsa Ståhl. 2014. *Patchworking publics-in-the-making: design, media and public engagement.* Ph.D. Dissertation. Malmö University, Malmö. OCLC: 940844243.

[55] George Lipsitz. 2007. The Racialization of Space and the Spatialization of Race Theorizing the Hidden Architecture of Landscape. *Landscape Journal* 26, 1 (Jan. 2007), 10–23. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.3368/lj.26.1.10

[56] Victor Luckerson. 2018. Black Wall Street: The African American Haven That Burned and Then Rose From the Ashes. (June 2018). https://www.theringer.com/2018/6/28/17511818/black-wall-street-oklahoma-greenwood-destruction-tulsa

[57] Achille Mbembe and Laurent Dubois. 2017. *Critique of Black reason.* Duke University Press, Durham.

[58] Katherine McKittrick. 2006. *Demonic grounds: Black women and the cartographies of struggle.* University of Minnesota Press, Minneapolis. OCLC: ocm62533814.

[59] Katherine McKittrick (Ed.). 2015. *Sylvia Wynter: on being human as praxis.* Duke University Press, Durham.

[60] Fred Moten. 2017. *Black and Blur.* Number v. [1] in Consent not to be a single being. Duke University Press, Durham ; London.

[61] Lisa Nakamura. 2014. Indigenous Circuits: Navajo Women and the Racialization of Early Electronic Manufacture. *American Quarterly* 66, 4 (Dec. 2014), 919–941. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/aq.2014.0070

[62] Nathan Matias. 2015. Anti-Oppressive Design: From Theory to Praxis: Jill Dimond at CivicMIT – MIT Center for Civic Media. (March 2015). https://civic.mit.edu/2015/03/19/anti-oppressive-design-from-theory-to-praxis-jill-dimond-at-civicmit/

[63] Lilly U. Nguyen. 2017. Ethnic Platforms and the Failure of Techno-Futurity. *Journal of Asian American Studies* 20, 1 (Feb. 2017), 51–68. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1353/jaas.2017.0004

[64] Safiya Umoja Noble. 2018. *Algorithms of oppression: how search engines reinforce racism.* New York University Press, New York.

[65] Talíria Petrone, Sâmia Bomfim, Jô Cavalcanti, and Fernanda Melchionna. 2018. The Feminist Resistance to the Radical Right in Brazil: A Forum of Four Brazilian Feminist Political Leaders. (2018). https://www.crg.berkeley.edu/events/the-feminist-resistance-to-the-radical-right-in-brazil/

[66] Minh-Hà T. Phạm. 2015. *Asians wear clothes on the internet: race, gender, and the work of personal style blogging.* Duke University Press, Durham.

[67] Cedric J. Robinson. 2000. *Black marxism: the making of the Black radical tradition.* University of North Carolina Press, Chapel Hill, N.C.

[68] Jennifer A. Rode. 2011. Reflexivity in Digital Anthropology. In *Proceedings of the SIGCHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '11)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 123–132. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/1978942.1978961

[69] Daniela Rosner. 2018. *Critical fabulations: reworking the methods and margins of design.* The MIT Press, Cambridge, MA.

[70] Daniela K. Rosner, Saba Kawas, Wenqi Li, Nicole Tilly, and Yi-Chen Sung. 2016. Out of Time, Out of Place: Reflections on Design Workshops As a Research Method. In *Proceedings of the 19th ACM Conference on Computer-Supported Cooperative Work & Social Computing (CSCW '16)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 1131–1141. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2818048.2820021

[71] Ari Schlesinger, W. Keith Edwards, and Rebecca E. Grinter. 2017. Intersectional HCI: Engaging Identity Through Gender, Race, and Class. In *Proceedings of the 2017 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '17)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 5412–5427. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3025453.3025766

[72] Ari Schlesinger, Kenton P. O'Hara, and Alex S. Taylor. 2018. Let's Talk About Race: Identity, Chatbots, and AI. In *Proceedings of the 2018 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '18)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 315:1–315:14. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3173574.3173889

[73] Jared Sexton. 2012. Ante-Anti-Blackness: Afterthoughts. *Lateral* (2012).

[74] Christina Elizabeth Sharpe. 2016. *In the wake: on Blackness and being.* Duke University Press, Durham.

[75] Thomas Smyth and Jill Dimond. 2014. Anti-oppressive Design. *interactions* 21, 6 (Oct. 2014), 68–71. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/2668969

[76] Daniel G. Solórzano and Tara J. Yosso. 2002. Critical Race Methodology: Counter-Storytelling as an Analytical Framework for Education Research. *Qualitative Inquiry* 8, 1 (Feb. 2002), 23–44. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1177/107780040200800103

[77] Marie Louise Juul Søndergaard and Lone Koefoed Hansen. 2018. Intimate Futures: Staying with the Trouble of Digital Personal Assistants Through Design Fiction. In *Proceedings of the 2018 Designing Interactive Systems Conference (DIS '18)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 869–880. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3196709.3196766

[78] Hortense J. Spillers. 1987. Mama's Baby, Papa's Maybe: An American Grammar Book. *Diacritics* 17, 2 (1987), 65–81. DOI:http://dx.doi.org/10.2307/464747

[79] Lucy Suchman. 2007. *Agencies in technology design: feminist reconfigurations.*

[80] Nick Taylor, Loraine Clarke, Martin Skelly, and Sara Nevay. 2018. Strategies for Engaging Communities in Creating Physical Civic Technologies. In *Proceedings of the 2018 CHI Conference on Human Factors in Computing Systems (CHI '18)*. ACM, New York, NY, USA, 507:1–507:12. DOI : http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3173574.3174081

[81] Walter Hood. 2013. Developing a Cultural Practice. (Nov. 2013). https://frameworks.ced.berkeley.edu/2013/developing-a-cultural-practice/

[82] Woodrow W. Winchester, III. 2018. Afrofuturism, Inclusion, and the Design Imagination. *Interactions* 25, 2 (Feb. 2018), 41–45. DOI : http://dx.doi.org/10.1145/3182655

[83] Heike Winschiers-Theophilus and Nicola J. Bidwell. 2013. Toward an Afro-Centric Indigenous HCI Paradigm. *International Journal of Human–Computer Interaction* 29, 4 (March 2013), 243–255. DOI : http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/10447318.2013.765763

[84] Zach Mortice. 2017. Decoding Oppression in Architecture: Design as a Tool for Social Justice. (Oct. 2017). https://www.autodesk.com/redshift/design-for-social-justice/

[85] Teun Zuiderent-Jerak. 2015. *Situated intervention: sociological experiment in health care*. The MIT Press, Cambridge, Massachusetts.