ACKNOWLEDING PEOPLE AS
CO-DESIGNERS

PEOPLE PARTICIPATE IN TI
LONG TERM

KNOWLEDGE FROM THE
PROCESS RETAINED IN
COMMUNITY

SEED GRANT

INTER
STEE

HUMILITY &

PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGN JUSTICE

# GENERATING SHARED PRINCIPLES FOR DESIGN JUSTICE

Using a venn diagram (see page 4), we plotted out the characters in these stories — who was involved in the design process? Who was harmed by the product or in the process? And who benefited? We found that some people who benefited and were also harmed; in the case of the EMPWR coat, homeless Detroiters received a warm garment in the short term, but the coat perpetuates poverty by posing as a solution, when it is really a distraction. And we found that those who were rarely involved in design processes.

How could we redesign design so that those who are normally marginalized by it, those who are characterized as passive beneficiaries of design thinking, become co-creators of solutions, of futures?

On June 21, 2015, 30 people gathered in a session called "Generating Shared Principles for Design Justice" at the Allied Media Conference in Detroit. The participants identified as designers, artists, technologists, all of the above, and none of the above.

The hope was to start shaping a shared definition of "design justice" — as distinguished from design with good intentions, which can be harmful, exclusionary, and can perpetuate the systems and structures that give rise to the need for design interventions in the first place.

We began by examining three design and social impact stories that had recently come out of Detroit: the EMPWR Coat, a winter coat that converts into a sleeping bag for the city's homeless; Shinola, a luxury watch company that proudly employs Detroiters, and Detroit Future City, a nonprofit economic development organization.

WHAT IS DESIGN JUSTICE?
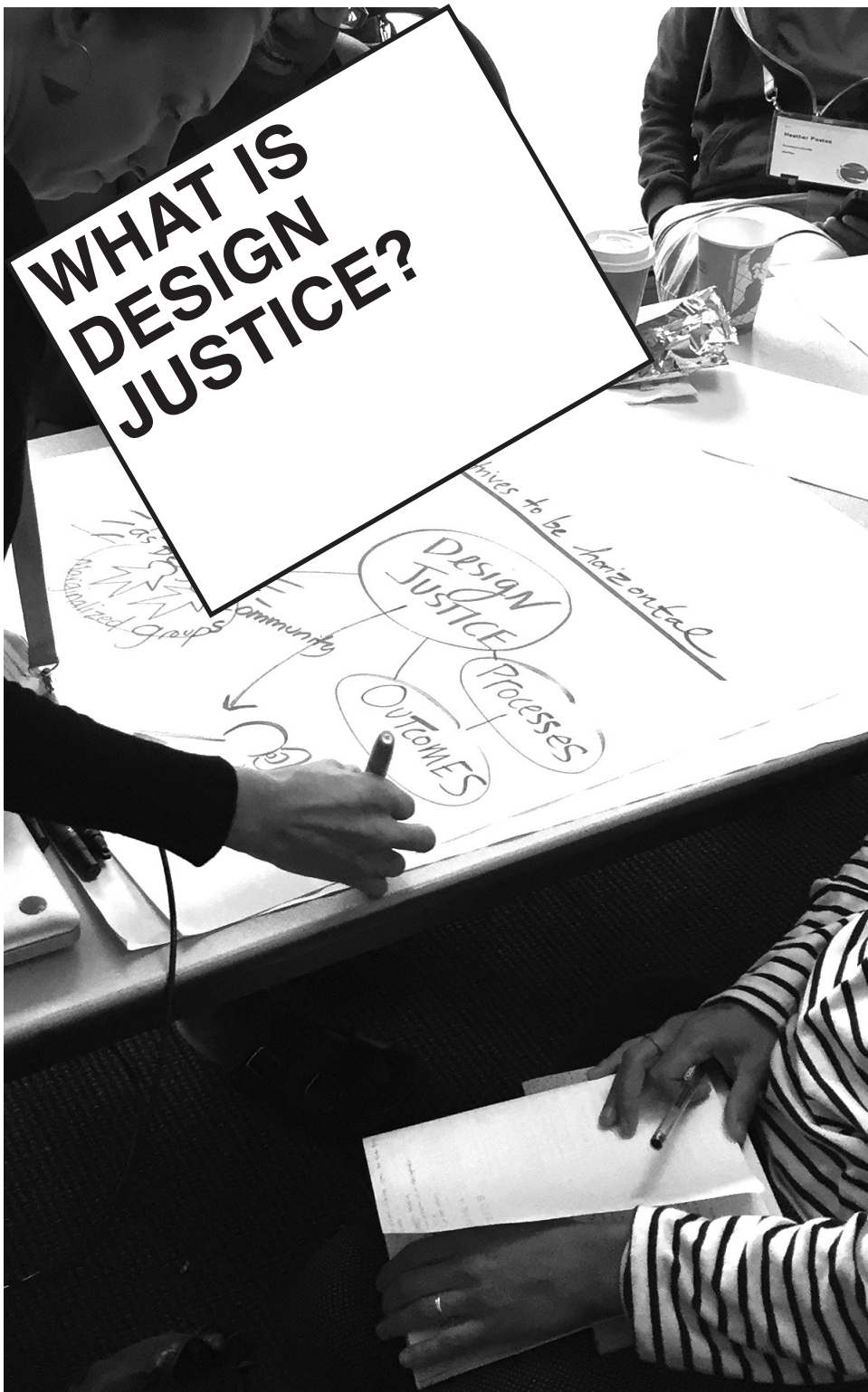
Design mediates so much of our realities and has tremendous impact on our lives, yet very few of us participate in design processes. In particular, the people who are most adversely affected by design decisions — whether they relate to visual culture, the planning of our communities, or the structure of political and economic systems — tend to have the least influence on those decisions and how they are made.

Design justice rethinks design processes, centralizing people who are normally marginalized by design and using collaborative creative practices to address the deepest challenges our communities face.

We prioritize a design's impact on a community over the intentions of the designer. The strongest solutions happen through the process, not in a moment at the end of the process. Thus it is important to us to open up the design process to those who will be most impacted by its outcomes.*

We use design to dismantle structures that marginalize, dehumanize, subjugate, and oppress others while centralizing voices that are most marginalized by institutional racism, patriarchy, and colonization.
**We are reimagining the role of a designer as that of a creative facilitator rather than a creative expert.**

We believe in innate human bril liance. Everyone has the capacity to contribute in unique ways to design processes, and all people are experts in their own experiences.

We undertake in processes that are transparent and accessible, that are led by the needs of the community, and that result in community ownership of the outcomes.

We are not just creating new solutions — we are looking for ways to adapt what is already working in other contexts as well as reviving ancient approaches that have been erased by colonialism and capitalism.

ANALYZING DESIGN NARRATIVES

Who participated in the design process?

Who benefited from the design?

Who was harmed by the design?
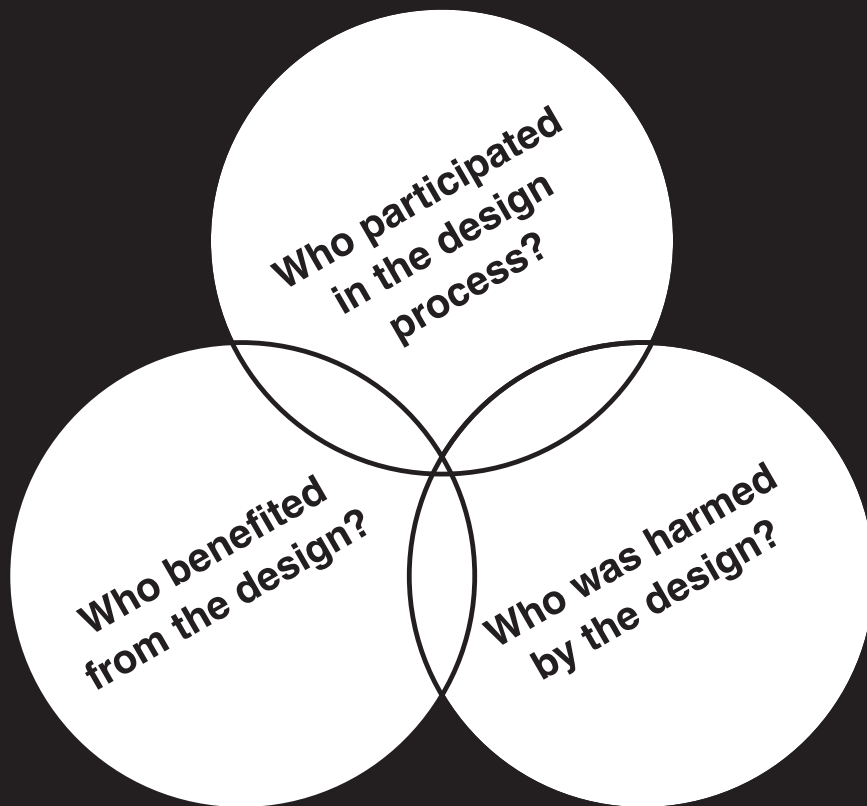
DESIGN JUSTICE WORKSHOP ACTIVITIES

1. In groups, look at three Detroit "design for change" stories:
a) DETROIT FUTURE CITY
https//vimeo.com/96930973
b) SHINOLA
http//www.bloomberg.com/news/
videos/b/05125438-2cf9-4784-a515-
30549ee39d97
c) EMPWR coat
http://www.empowermentplan.org

2. Recorded the "characters" in the story
in a Venn diagram to understand
a) Who is involved in the design
process?
b) Who is harmed?
c) Who benefits?

3. Look at the design process:
Define the problem
a) Research
b) Creative
c) Develop & produce
d) Deliver & distribute
e) Evaluate

4. Each group redesigned one part of the
process by responding to these prompts:
a) Who should participate?
b) What are they motivated by?
c) What do they have to offer?
d) What methods could be used?

5. Individually or collaboratively,
responded to these prompts:
a) Design justice is…
b) We do this by...

DEFINING TOGETHER

These principles were collaboratively written in the session "Generating Shared Principles for Design Justice" in the Future Design Lab, a practice space at the Allied Media Conference, Detroit, June 2015. The hope was to approach a shared definition of "design justice" and some methods of creating a just design practice as distinguished from design with good intentions, which can be harmful, exclusionary, and can perpetuate the systems and structures that give rise to the need for design interventions in the first place.

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Complicated and requires humility

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Planning done by the community, for the community

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Bringing together healing justice, transformative justice, and economic justice to frame design justice

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Complicated and requires humility. The possibility for all people to design their own solutions and lives

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
The effort to turn a practice that is traditionally tied up in power hierarchies into one that is inclusive, collaborative, and transformative

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Considering those directly and indirectly impacted

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Working with frontline communities intergenerationally to ensure we are the creators and implementors of our futures

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Complicated and requires humility. The possibility for all people to design their own solutions and lives

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Designing with instead of for

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Participatory, internally determined and acknowledges the full humanity of everyone involved

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Creating systems that build on the brilliance of those most affected

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Fluid understanding

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Becoming part of the community

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
The collapse of power relationships in conventional design processes

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Non-extractive

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Connecting with the earth

DESIGN JUSTICE IS:
Drawing on old wisdom while innovating new solutions that fit the needs of those most impacted

WE DO THIS BY AND THROUGH:
Intergenerational storytelling

WE DO THIS BY AND THROUGH:
Humility and personal transformation

WE DO THIS BY AND THROUGH:
Representing our own stories with dignity and power in our own voices

WE DO THIS BY AND THROUGH:
Seeking existing resources and strategies at the margins

WE DO THIS BY AND THROUGH:
Facilitating and enabling change rather than dictating or directing

WE DO THIS BY AND THROUGH:
Becoming/engaging ourselves as part of the community before problem solving
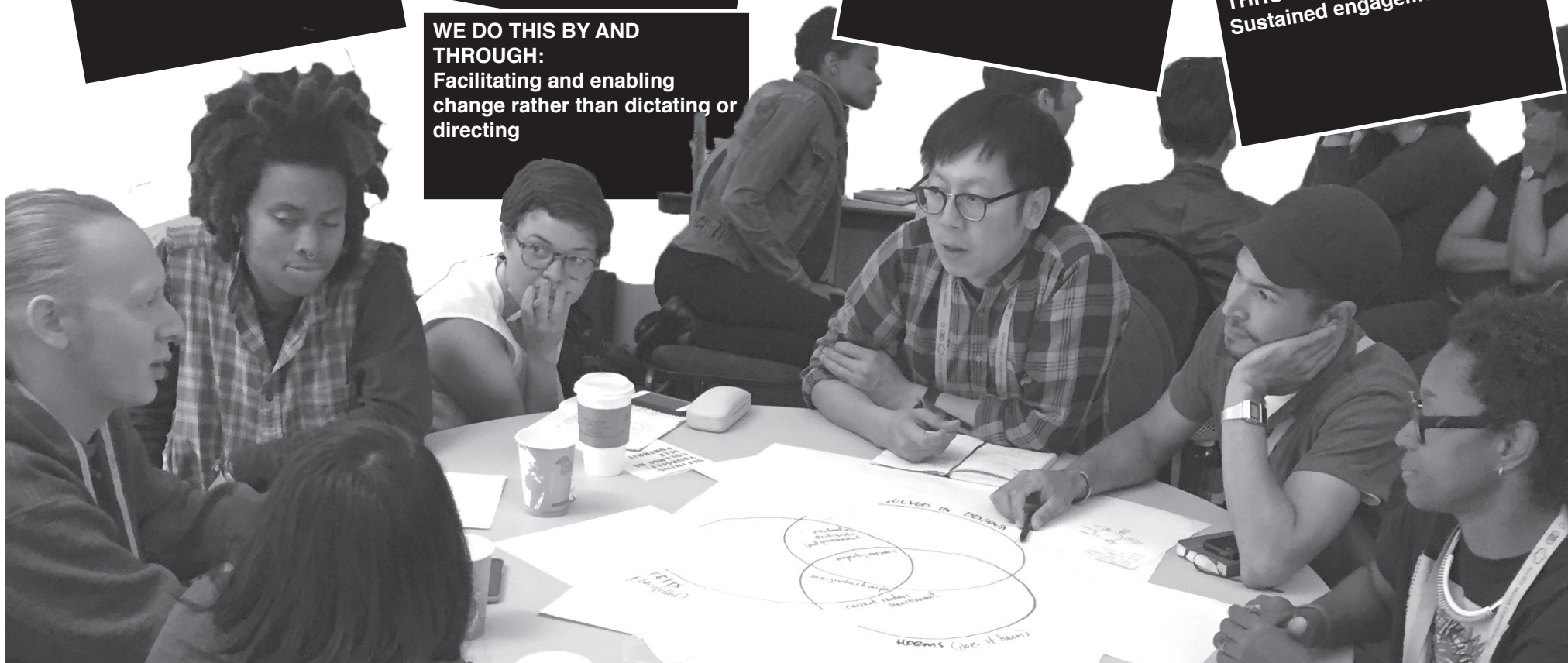
WE DO THIS BY AND THROUGH:
Learning/teaching studios

WE DO THIS BY AND THROUGH:
Participation

WE DO THIS BY AND THROUGH:
Creating community ownership of design products & processes

WE DO THIS BY AND THROUGH:
Transparency

WE DO THIS BY AND THROUGH:
Throwing giant dance parties

WE DO THIS BY AND THROUGH:
Sustained engagement

Design Justice

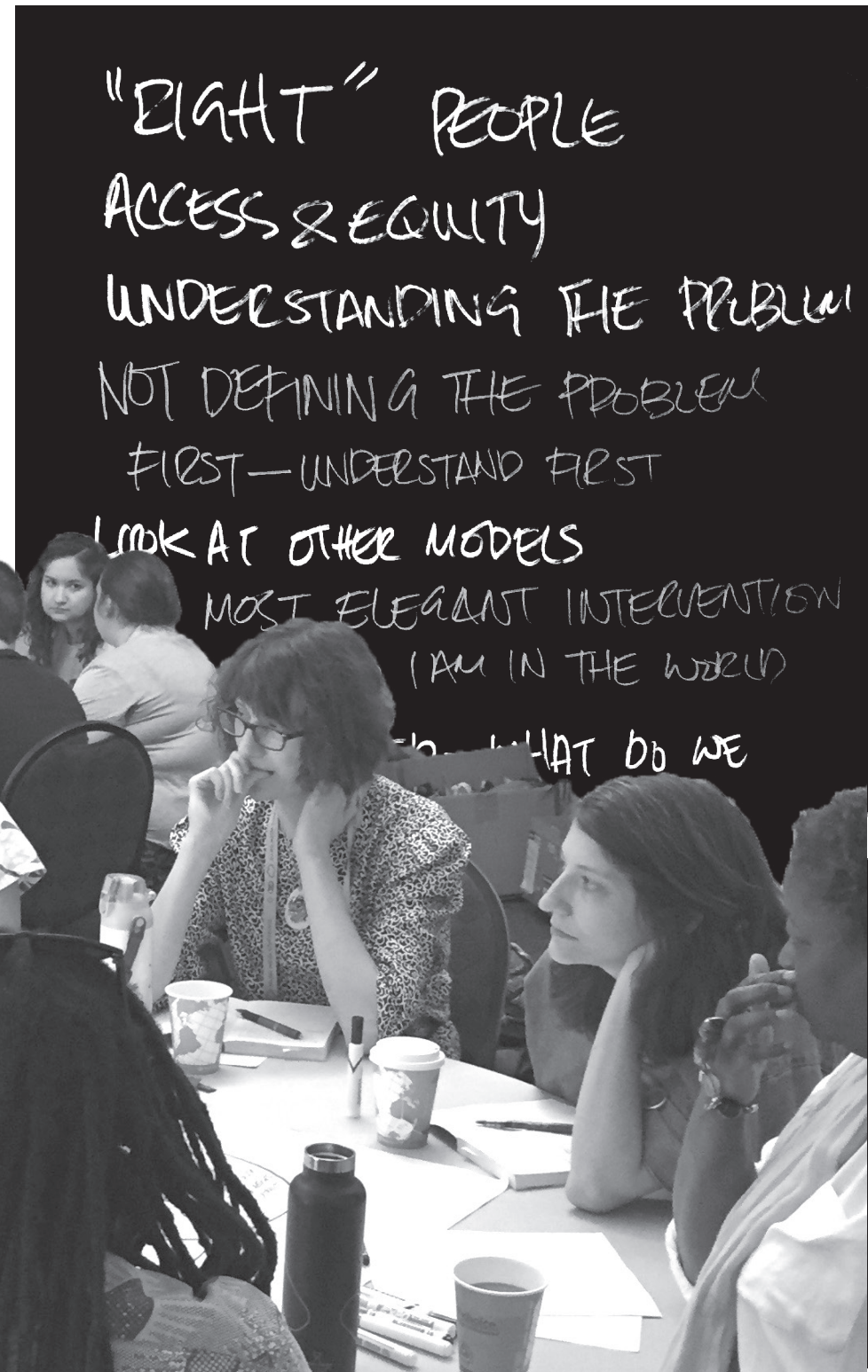Equitable Processes

Equitable Outcomes

Challenges Status Quo

ALL PEOPLE

designers

community

Listening instead of prescribing

"EIGHT" PEOPLE
ACCESS & EQUITY
UNDERSTANDING THE PROBLEM
NOT DEFINING THE PROBLEM
FIRST — UNDERSTAND FIRST
LOOK AT OTHER MODELS
MOST ELEGANT INTERVENTION
I AM IN THE WORLD
WHAT DO WE

DESIGN JUSTICE WORKSHOP PARTICIPANTS 2015

PARTICIPANT

PRESENTER

WORKSHOP CREATOR

Melissa Moore
Shauen Pearce
Ginger Brooks Takahashi
Ebony Dumas
Heather Posten
Kristyn Sonnenberg
Sam Holleran
Ryan Hayes
Dan Herrle
Dawn Walker
Tina Hanaé Miller
Nikki Roach
Aylwin Lo
Noelle Barber
Kiwi Illafonte
Devon De Lená
Ash Arder
Brooke Toczylowski
Kristina Miller
Nancy Meza
Becca Budde
Marina Csomor
Paige Reitz
Leslie Stem
Walter Wilson
Gina Reichert
Danny Spitzberg
Una Lee
Wes Taylor
Jenny Lee

DESIGN JUSTICE TEAM 2016

CARLOS GARCIA, L05 is an artist, performer, designer, and engineer based in Detroit, MI. As an artist and technical lead of Complex Movements, he brings an extensive range of experience in a number of skill areas, including computer programming, projection mapping, audio and video production, interactive performance technologies, improvisational and choreographic dance, and more. L05 is also a vocalist and producer having worked as part of hip hop/electronic duo Celsius Electronics and a co-founder of the Branch Out Collective, performing live throughout the U.S.

and contributing to a number of musical releases. In addition to his multimedia performance and design endeavors, L05 leads creative research and design as a member of the Emerging Technologies Group and manages the GroundWorks Media Lab at the University of Michigan, where he completed an undergraduate degree in Performing Arts Technology (Engineering Concentration).

UNA LEE is a graphic designer and collaborative design facilitator. Using participatory creative methods, she works with and within communities towards a more just and beautiful world. Una is a fellow with the Center for Society, Policy and Society at UC Berkeley and a member of the Allied Media Conference advisory board. You can find her at www.andalsotoo.net.

NONTSIKELELO MUTITI is a Zimbabwean-born artist and educator working across disciplines to produce work that occupies the forms of fine art, design, and social practice. Mutiti received a diploma in multimedia from the Zimbabwe Institute of Digital Arts an an MFA with a concentration in graphic design from the Yale School of Art. She is co-founder of the Zimbabwe Cultural Centre in Detroit Mutiti is currently Assistant Professor in the New Media Department at State University of New York, Purchase College.

WESLEY TAYLOR is a graphic designer, fine artist, musician, and curator. He started out as both an emcee and graphic designer in the hip-hop group, Athletic Mic League. He got into making music partly as an excuse to make album covers. He became a co-founding partner of Emergence as an excuse to make art and conceptualize creative projects.Wesley is also a co-founder and co-owner of Talking Dolls design studio. He is a professor at Lawrence Tech University in Detroit, and has taught at Eastern Michigan University, and Wayne State University.

THE ALLIED MEDIA CONFERENCE
is held every summer in Detroit, the Al-
lied Media Conference brings together a
vibrant and diverse community of people
using media to incite change: filmmak-
ers, radio producers, technologists,
youth organizers, writers, entrepreneurs,
musicians, dancers, and artists.

**DESIGN JUSTICE
NETWORK GATHERING
June 16, 2016, Detroit**

**How can design better support communities facing
injustice? How can we foster design processes, and
not just products, that reflect our movements' values?**

**The Design Justice Network Gathering will explore
these questions, build on a set of shared principles,
and foster a growing network of designers,
organizers, and advocates who are committed to
critical engagement with design for a social purpose.
Through storytelling, dialogue, and sketching,
we will uplift a variety of design and organizing
processes and identify strategies to facilitate
stronger integration between design and organizing.
Participants will leave with strategies and methods
they can incorporate into their design processes, and
a commitment to continue building together.**