

(ON)



ARCHITECTURE
FRINGE

.Learn
—ing

Whiteness
& Race



Provocation: (Un)Learning

The majority of systems and structures that we have built to bring order to our lives are destroying us and life on Earth.

Architecture is uncritically complicit in its reliance on these systems and structures for its very creation, with little resistance or defiance in its making or deployment. We have arrived at the intersection of a climate emergency, global pandemic and racialised capitalist economy and the ground on which we stand is shifting at speed. We are in transition, from one world to another. Things are changing, and in order to make that change positive and transformative we need to engage in a process of unlearning and learning anew. To (un)learn. There is hope.

‘Another world is not only possible, she is on her way. On a quiet day, I can hear her breathing.’ **Arundhati Roy**

In a complex and interconnected world, with systems large and small, fast and slow, how can architecture as a process, as a way of thinking, help us (un)learn in order to firstly navigate this complexity to then reimagine a much better way of doing things? How can we radically rethink architecture's environmental impact on the Earth? How can we refocus architectural education away from a whitewashed Western lens? How can we redefine our relationship to the land, from ownership to stewardship? How can our neighbourhoods and cities achieve greater equality for those who live there, realigning architecture as a progressive force for a wider common good? The Architecture Fringe 2021 invites you to (un)learn with us, to interrogate your own behaviours, beliefs and biases in order to acknowledge how the world really is, to reimagine how it could be.

The Architecture Fringe is a non-profit, volunteer-led organisation based in Scotland which explores architecture and its impact within our social, political, cultural, and environmental contexts.

We seek to critically pluralise and expand architectural culture. It is a platform that encourages and supports both ideas and agency. We believe in thinking, testing, prototyping and taking risks. We believe that is our actions in response to our discourse that ultimately sets the tone for the culture that we create.

Since the inaugural Architecture Fringe Festival in 2016 we have inspired, commissioned or platformed over 300 projects, exhibitions, events and happenings across Scotland and further afield.

Our aims are:

- to support emerging practice in architecture by commissioning new voices, new ideas, and new work
- to offer platforms and opportunities which encourage a wider conversation about architecture and design in our contemporary social, political, cultural, and environmental contexts
- to develop a friendly but critical community of voices to connect, support, and challenge each other
- to engage internationally with other people and organisations for the wider common good

Join others in helping us reach our ongoing aims by supporting us on Patreon; patreon.com/ArchitectureFringe – Thank you!

Contents

8	Introduction: Whiteness & Race	
	Fictive Kinships & Counter Narratives	
12	Fictive Kinships & Counter Narratives: Summary	
15	Do We Care ENOUGH by Liane Bauer	
16	Where Is The Representation? by Raina Armstrong	
17	Architecture Is More Than Pretty Pictures by Andy Summers	
19	Black Geographies: Natasha Themviso Ruwona / summary by Alex Collins	
20	Whose Streets: Chris Daemmrich / summary by Alex Collins	
26	Beyond Whiteness: Amahra Spance / summary by Alex Collins	
	Essays	
34	Scottish Black History as Hauntology, Hauntologies as Ecologies by Natasha Themviso Ruwona	
48	Reconstructing the Syllabus: A Speculation from New Orleans by Chris Daemmrich	
64	I can't find the words by /other	
70	Pride and Prejudice by Lisa Williams	
78	Outro by Liane Bauer and Andy Summers	
82	Contributors, Biographies, Credits, and Acknowledgements	

Whiteness & Race

Introduction: Whiteness & Race

As part of the Architecture Fringe 2021 core programme, Fictive Kinships and Counter Narratives: Whiteness, race, and the space beyond - is work to understand the origins of whiteness but to also move towards a space outwith and beyond one defined by race logic - to a place where alternative ways of dreaming, living, and being can be explored with a focus on shared, intersectional goals.

Whiteness, and white racialised identity refer to the way that white people, their customs, culture, and beliefs operate as the standard by which all other groups of people are compared. Whiteness is subsequently deployed as the 'normal', where nonwhite people are seen as inferior, as other. Whiteness is therefore a primary source of systemic racism.

In context to whiteness and race, fictive kinships are perceived social ties that are based solely on the colour of someone's skin and are therefore considered to be fictional or unreal. An example of this may be where, in relation to class, a fictive kinship is created between a capitalist elite and a working class group of people. In reality, this 'kinship' continues to afford all advantage to the capitalist elite with little to no benefit to the working class group of people in terms of solidarity, rights, economic advancement, or wellbeing. Any 'kinship' is based on skin colour alone and is therefore fictive.

With counter narratives we seek to move towards more liberated spaces which are not defined or set by predetermined structures or practices. Spaces which enable ideas, dreams and imaginations and are shaped by new stories, social settings, systems of value, and structures of organising.



Fictive Kinships & Counter Narratives

Image: Artwork by Dhamintha Wickremasinghe
for the Architecture Fringe



Image: US Capitol Insurrection, January 6th 2021
(From Chris Daemrich presentation)

Fictive Kinship & Counter Narratives: event summary

On 17th June 2021 as part of the 2021 Architecture Fringe core programme we hosted an international online event called Fictive Kinships & Counter Narratives: Whiteness, race, and the space beyond.

The event invited activists, scholars, and artists from the UK and US to talk about whiteness and spaces of liberation beyond it. With keynotes from **Amahra Spence**, **Natasha Thembiso Ruwona**, and **Chris Daemrich**, the event sought to highlight how whiteness can directly influence the planning, formation, occupation, and perception of space, architecture, and land. The event was introduced and hosted by **Raina Armstrong**, **Liane Bauer**, and **Andy Summers** of the Architecture Fringe, with personal opening statements provided from the team to help give context to the discussions.

The following pages present those opening statements and offer summaries of the provocations given by Amahra, Natasha, and Chris. The full event can be watched on our YouTube channel via the QR code below.



Watch the
event here

Do we care...

ENOUGH?

WHERE IS THE REPRESENTATION?

WHERE IS THE REPRESENTATION?

WHERE IS THE REPRESENTATION?

WHERE IS THE REPRESENTATION?

ARCHITECTURE
IS MORE THAN
PRETTY
PICTURES

Do we care ENOUGH?

Liane Bauer

This is my provocation to my team and the Architecture Fringe audience, who I know DO care and who see themselves as liberal, educated, engaged and who reflect on questions of Whiteness and Race.

But - do we care ENOUGH? Enough to not just be an ally, which is a broad term in itself, but to help bring down the goddamn ship?

I'm going to quote a short extract from Emma Dabiri's What White People Can Do Next: From Allyship to Coalition (pp 72-73). Dabiri, in turn, draws upon psychologist, poet, teacher and speaker Bayo Akomolafe:

'Our articulations of dissent too often mirror the parameters of our oppression, reproducing oppressive systems, unwittingly reinforcing them, or attempting to reverse them, or indeed 'diverse' them, to make them more 'inclusive' when in truth they need to dissolve. Bayo Akomolafe describes our current system as a replication of the slave ship, complete with the various levels that existed on board. In actual slave ships, the captured Africans were chained in the bottom, in the dark, dank hold, with the European slavers of the top deck, livin' it up in the fresh air. Yet although they were on different levels, and as such had radically different experiences of the ship, they were all still aboard a vessel of destruction. Akomolafe says that inclusion today can be understood as access to the top deck of the slave ship. Inclusion is access to power in a system that is ultimately a tool of destruction.

It's not enough to make exploitive systems more 'inclusive'. Do we want to get on the top deck or do we want to sink the goddamn ship?"

Where Is The Representation?

Raina Armstrong

Where is the representation...

... in the university application process? If University applications cannot rely on objective testing alone, the interview panels or processes should reflect the background of the applicant. (Timothy Onyenobi)

... on the curriculum? How many books by black or ethnic authors were on your university reading list? Where are the counter narratives, where's the non-white architectural discourse? How many of us were taught about the Black history that underpins Scotland's built environment? Does architecture school emphasize the need for accountability to the communities that we as designers seek to engage with? (Open letter on anti-racism to the Princeton School of Architecture)

... to support the diverse student body? Students from black and ethnic backgrounds must work harder to prove themselves or be seen (respondent to AJ race & diversity survey.)

... within the studio? During my post-graduate year in Scotland, there were only two non-white tutors in the entire architecture department. Where is the critical examination of the overall pedagogy? How do we still believe that a short visit provides enough insight into a community's needs and desires from their built environment?

In architecture, where is the representation?

Architecture Is More Than Pretty Pictures

Andy Summers

When first developing the work here we wanted to ground this by talking about whiteness, rather than race. In talking about race, this often gives white people the opportunity to step away from the conversation, believing that they themselves are not racist so the conversation cannot have anything to do with them. In initially grounding the work in whiteness, we seek to remove this excuse.

Architecture is a visually-led discipline, and this is no different in Scotland than elsewhere. In citing Architecture Is More Than Pretty Pictures, we recall the sometimes instantaneous fervour which occurs when a high-profile lecture is announced featuring a well-known architect which we, and our colleagues, instantly book into, paying for, and often travelling 45 miles to sit and look at pretty, seductive pictures of buildings and landscapes. In the main this well-known architect is usually white, more often than not a man, and rarely if ever acknowledges the structural system that has been built to privilege them based on the colour of their skin. Sometimes climate change is mentioned. Sometimes gender. But rarely an intersectional perspective, which acknowledges the true context of how the work in that pretty picture has often come into existence.

The national narrative in Scotland is that the country is welcoming, open, and tolerant. Whilst the Scottish Social Attitudes Survey indicates progress on attitudes to race, conclusive research by the Coalition for Racial Equality & Rights confirms that there is still much work to do across society.

The recent award of the RIBA Gold Medal to Sir David Adjaye is a case in point, where the comments section on Urban Realm was populated by people suggesting that the award was not given on merit, but due to woke identity politics. But identity politics are not new, and they are the bedrock of a system constructed around whiteness and white supremacy. Everyone who isn't a white cis straight man knows this from experience. And all white people, too, know the power and exceptionalism that the current system has not only designed but specifically bestowed upon us due to the colour of our skin. If we (un)learn one thing through this year's Architecture Fringe, I hope it is an acknowledgement and understanding of whiteness by white people. To really look in the mirror. It takes guts to see your skin for what it has become - as an excuse for violence. But guts we need, and bravery, too. The liberation of everyone depends on it, and that includes people who are white.

Black Geographies

Natasha Thembiso Ruwona

Summary by Alex Collins

Natasha Thembiso Ruwona's provocation focuses on her work with black geographies and ecologies, and how space is never neutral, but is always politicised.

Embedding her work in readings of Katherine McKittrick, Dionne Brand, Christina Sharp and Octavia Butler, Natasha emphasises that we continue to walk in and exist in the spaces of those who came before us. Although only a small percentage of people in Scotland are black, the landscape and architecture around us is steeped in the legacy of black history. Natasha mentions Scotland's willing participation in the transatlantic slave trade and colonialism, with the money earned from the labour of enslaved people visible in the civic buildings, houses, monuments, transport systems and statues throughout the country, and the street names celebrating connection with the Caribbean, and the trade that occurred through Scotland's ports and docks.

The narratives and maps of this space continues to be produced from a white colonial perspective, skewing who is connected to a given place, and creates of ideas of the "unlocal", "false impressions" and "originating from other places and times". Yet under their surfaces, and in the landscape and architecture around us, are hidden human histories. This awareness of the invisibly inscribed landscape informs her film "in dreams I" which draws on the story of escaped slave Frederick Douglas, who carved "send back the money" on Arthur's Seat in Edinburgh. Natasha's film reimagines Arthur's Seat is a site of black resistance and activity while showing the relationship between Scottish land and black lands as being not too dissimilar as they seem.

Whose Streets?

Chris Daemmrich

Summary by Alex Collins

Chris Daemmrich is an architect of white Jewish descent from Austin, Texas (formally Tonkawa land) and is based in New Orleans, Louisiana (formerly Bulbancha, unceded land of the Chitimacha). In his provocation he explored how architecture in both cities helped construct and administer apartheid systems of oppression. He asks us - if architecture is used to help uphold white supremacy, how could it be deployed to deconstruct it?

Chris began his provocation by challenging the acceptance of naturalised white space, where black contribution and authorship is actively obscured or hidden. He cited the integrated multi-racial society of the Reconstruction period of 1865-1877 which, following the 1863 Emancipation Proclamation of the American Civil War, free black people helped build. Whiteness, however, has worked to systematically dismantled or erase many of the institutions and buildings which this society constructed. The Mechanics Institute in New Orleans, for example, which was the site of the integrated legislature which sought to enact legislation enabling black people to vote, was attacked by white rioters on 27th July 1866. No trace of the building now exists.

Architecture as practised in the South in the late 19th and early 20th Centuries was constructed as a profession open only to people who were white. The problems and crises of representation that we see today are not by accident or omission, with the intentional exclusion directly linked to the professional discrimination of over one hundred years ago.

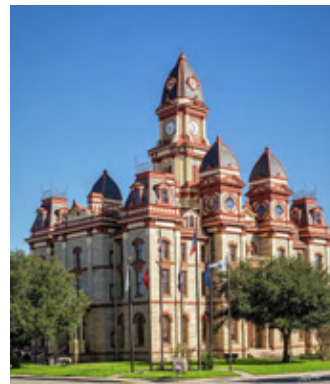


Images top clockwise:
These Strange Fruits with
Maddison Wells / Sociologist
W.E.B. Du Bois / Scottsboro
Boys, 1931 / The House on
Claiborne / Caldwell County
Courthouse, Lockhart TX



In the post-Reconstruction era of Jim Crow, Chris discussed the lens in which judicial architecture in Texas was viewed by architects such as Colin Rowe and John Hejduk. In the typical courthouse found across the state Rowe and Hejduk saw only an exemplary urban success of law and justice. Journalist Ida B. Wells however exposed these sites as places of illegitimacy, injustice, and lynching.

Chris again highlighted the selective curation of narratives and histories by comparing the renown of the Texas Rangers, a group of white architects, artists, and art historians who taught at the University of Texas School of Architecture in Austin between 1951 and 1958, and the contemporary battles of black students to access the same institution, one of whom was John S. Chase, a prominent architect in Austin who was the first black graduate of any school at the University of Texas.



BLACKSPACE MANIFESTO

We are Black urban planners, architects, artists, activists, designers, and leaders working to protect and create Black spaces. Our work includes a range of activities from engagement and planning in historically Black neighborhoods to hosting cross-disciplinary convenings and events.

While what we do is very important, the way we do it is also critical. Acknowledging our triumphs, oppressions, aspirations, and challenges, we've

created the manifesto to guide our growth as a group and our interactions with one another, partners, and communities.

We push ourselves, our partners, our fields, and our work closer to these ideas so we may realize a present and future where Black people, Black spaces, and Black culture matter and thrive.

CREATE CIRCLES, NOT LINES

Create less hierarchy and more dialogue, inclusion, and empowerment.



CHOOSE CRITICAL CONNECTIONS OVER CRITICAL MASS

Quality over quantity. Focus on creating critical and authentic relationships to support mutual adaptation and evolution over time.*



MOVE AT THE SPEED OF TRUST

Grow trust and move together with fluidity at whatever speed is necessary.*

BE HUMBLE LEARNERS WHO PRACTICE DEEP LISTENING

Listen deeply and approach the work with an attitude towards learning, without assumptions and predetermined solutions. Take criticism without dispute.



CELEBRATE, CATALYZE, & AMPLIFY BLACK JOY

Black joy is a radical act. Give due space to joy, laughter, humor, and gratitude.



PLAN WITH, DESIGN WITH

Walk with people as they imagine and realize their own futures. Be connectors, converters, and collaborators—not representatives.



CENTER LIVED EXPERIENCE

Lived experience is an important expertise; center it so it can be a guide and touchstone of all work.



SEEK PEOPLE AT THE MARGINS

Acknowledge the structures that create, maintain and uphold inequity. Learn and practice new ways of intentionally making space for marginalized voices, stories, and bodies.

RECKON WITH THE PAST TO BUILD THE FUTURE

Meaningfully acknowledge the histories, injustices, innovations, and victories of spaces and places before new work begins. Reckon with the past as a means of healing, building trust, and deepening understanding of self and others.



PROTECT & STRENGTHEN CULTURE

Make visible and strengthen Black cultures and spaces to honor their sacredness and prevent their erasure. Amplify and support Black assets of all forms—from leaders, institutions, and businesses to arts, culture, and histories.



CULTIVATE WEALTH

Cultivate a wealth of time, talent, and treasure that provides the freedom to risk, fail, learn, and grow.



FOSTER PERSONAL & COMMUNAL EVOLUTION

Make opportunities to expand leadership and capacity.

PROMOTE EXCELLENCE

Amplify, elevate, and love Black vanguards and the variety of their challenging, creative, exceptional, and innovative work and spaces. Allow excellence to build influence that creates opportunities for present and future generations.



MANIFEST THE FUTURE

Black people, Black culture, and Black spaces exist in the future! Imagine and design the future into existence now, working inside and outside of social and political systems.



*This principle is derived from Adrienne Marie Brown's Emergent Strategy: Shaping Change, Changing Worlds.

We are grateful to the many individuals and organizations that inspired these principles.

Image: Blackspace Manifesto
Whose Streets? Slides by Chris Daemrich

Later in his provocation, Chris approaches the question of how designers can unbuild white supremacy and what do we do next. As a model, he identifies the work of the Black Space Manifesto. This group of architects and urbanists draw on Adinkra symbols, brought by slaves from present-day Ghana and written into the architecture and iron work of New Orleans. The Black Space Manifesto group have created their own Adinkra, drawing on the past to facilitate the future. Another source is Dr Andrea Roberts, who teaches at Texas A&M University in Urban Planning. Her work on the freedom colonies created by emancipated slaves involves not only historical research, but also listening to and talking with present-day communities, creating a personal practice.

Chris utilises these ideas in his own work, such a House on Claiborne, in which the first black-owned house in a formerly all-white suburb undergoes flood prevention works. His practice here uses listening and observation as primary tools – while there is research on land history, much of his work involves meetings and interactions with the new owner and tenants of house, working with students organising public engagement events and especially being present during construction works and attentive to the people doing the labour. By being present during the process, Chris models the past-present-future continuity of the Adinkra symbols used by the Black Space Manifesto and the work of Dr Roberts. Similarly, in another project Chris refers to, the Project Pipeline Summer Camp, he focuses on learning. In this he works with black, Latinx and Vietnamese ethnic high school students who are given space to articulate their own visions for what urbanism, design and planning can be. By giving the students capacity and agency, the project learns from how they approach design and what they do.

ADINKRA SYMBOLS

Adinkra are visual symbols, originally created by the Ashanti. Adinkra are used in fabrics, pottery, logos and advertising. They are engraved into walls and other architectural features. Fabric adinkra are often made by woodcut printing or screen printing.



Reconstruction, 1866-1877
Texas Capitol, Austin, 1882-1888
Black Codes criminalize 'vagrancy', 'loitering'
Enslavement becomes convict labor



Jim Crow design education

"Between 1951 and 1956, the program of the Austin School of Architecture changed drastically. The "Texas Rangers," as they were widely called later, were a group of architects, artists, and art historians who, within a few years, created a new curriculum...

Bernhard Hoesli, Colin Rowe, John Hejduk, Robert Slutzky, Lee Hodgden, John Shaw, and Werner Seligmann... created a unique bond in which their different backgrounds and their forthcoming careers were tied indissolubly to the future of architectural education."

Federica Soletta



Jim Crow screen,
New Orleans,
1951

Tulane students,
1909



"Jim Crow was the name of the **racial caste system** which operated primarily, but not exclusively in southern and border states, between 1877 and the mid-1960s.

Jim Crow was **more than a series of rigid anti-black laws**. It was a way of life. Under Jim Crow, African Americans were relegated to the status of second class citizens. **Jim Crow represented the legitimization of anti-black racism.**"

Jim Crow Museum, Ferris State University, Michigan

Beyond Whiteness

Amahra Spence

Summary by Alex Collins



Beginning by quoting Malcolm X – “Revolution is based on land” - Amahra Spence uses her provocation to argue for a liberating, radical re-envisioning of property and land rights. Citing the development of property rights in works such as Locke’s Treatise of Government, she examines how property evolved alongside systems of enslavement and anti-blackness. Occurring within the Enlightenment was the dehumanisation of African people as property.

Even in post-colonial environments, Amahra argues we see the adoption of the same patterns of whiteness focused on ownership and exclusion, with the white property system present even in black majority countries. We see also in the built environment, with reference to architect activist Deanna Van Buren, our architectural aspirations and policies have also been conceived and implemented have been conceived from anti-black positions, including how black people are policed in public and who accesses architectural education and holds agency in the workforce.

In response to this, Amahra contends that even anti-racist, anti-whiteness or anti-oppression practice is not enough - how can we commit to pro-blackness and what does that look like? We cannot just imagine ourselves as liberal and thus that everything is ok.

Instead, Amahra seeks alternatives, using in her work ideas drawn her own Maroon heritage as well as practices of communities in the UK and America. Among the historical examples Spence cites in her provocation are the community trusts Windrush-generation communities formed in the UK and, following Leah Penneman, the community land trusts formed by escaped slaves in Virginia. In contemporary practice and culture, Spence emphasises structures of resource redistribution – forms of mutual aid and sharing knowledge that create de-colonial frameworks which do not recreate the existing patterns of harm. By envisioning this together, actively, we can redefine and reimagine our relationship to space in a way which is truly revolutionary and truly anti-racist.

Practice



INFRASTRUCTURE

RADICAL IMAGINATION X SYSTEMS TRANSFORMATION



Images: Beyond Whiteness slides
by Amahra Spence

MALCOLM X

"Revolution is based on land. Land is the basis of all independence. Land is the basis of freedom, justice and equality."

We build what we believe

ARCHITECTURE AND THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT IS COMPLICIT AND ACTIVE IN
ANTI-BLACK VIOLENCE AND OPPRESSION

What we make monuments of / what our architectural aspirations are / how our policies are
conceived and implemented / how Black people are policed in public / who accesses architectural
education / who accesses and holds agency in the workforce / which public spaces are sacred and
which are disinvested in/

WHAT WILL WE BUILD

Central to the Black Land + Spatial Justice Project

- Recognise Black people have found a number of ways of organising to collectively create, preserve, protect, amplify and celebrate their spaces.
- Invest in bold infrastructure and radical reclamations of our environment.
- Redistribute resources, including finance and knowledge, engaging in decolonial frameworks and collective organising to redefine our relationships to land and space.

CO-OP ECONOMICS

WINDRUSH COMMUNITIES
UNABLE TO ACCESS
MAINSTREAM BANKING AND
RESOURCES CREATING
ECONOMIC MODELS ROOTED IN
SHARED RESOURCING, TRUST
AND COMMUNAL ORGANISING -
SHARED HOUSING, CHILDCARE,
RESPONSIBILITIES, COOKING,
ETC.

CAPTURE LAND

STEWARDSHIP AS A RESULT OF
NO PAPERWORK/DEEDS IN THE
AFTERMATH OF WHITE FLIGHT
FROM THE CARIBBEAN
FOLLOWING ABOLITION.

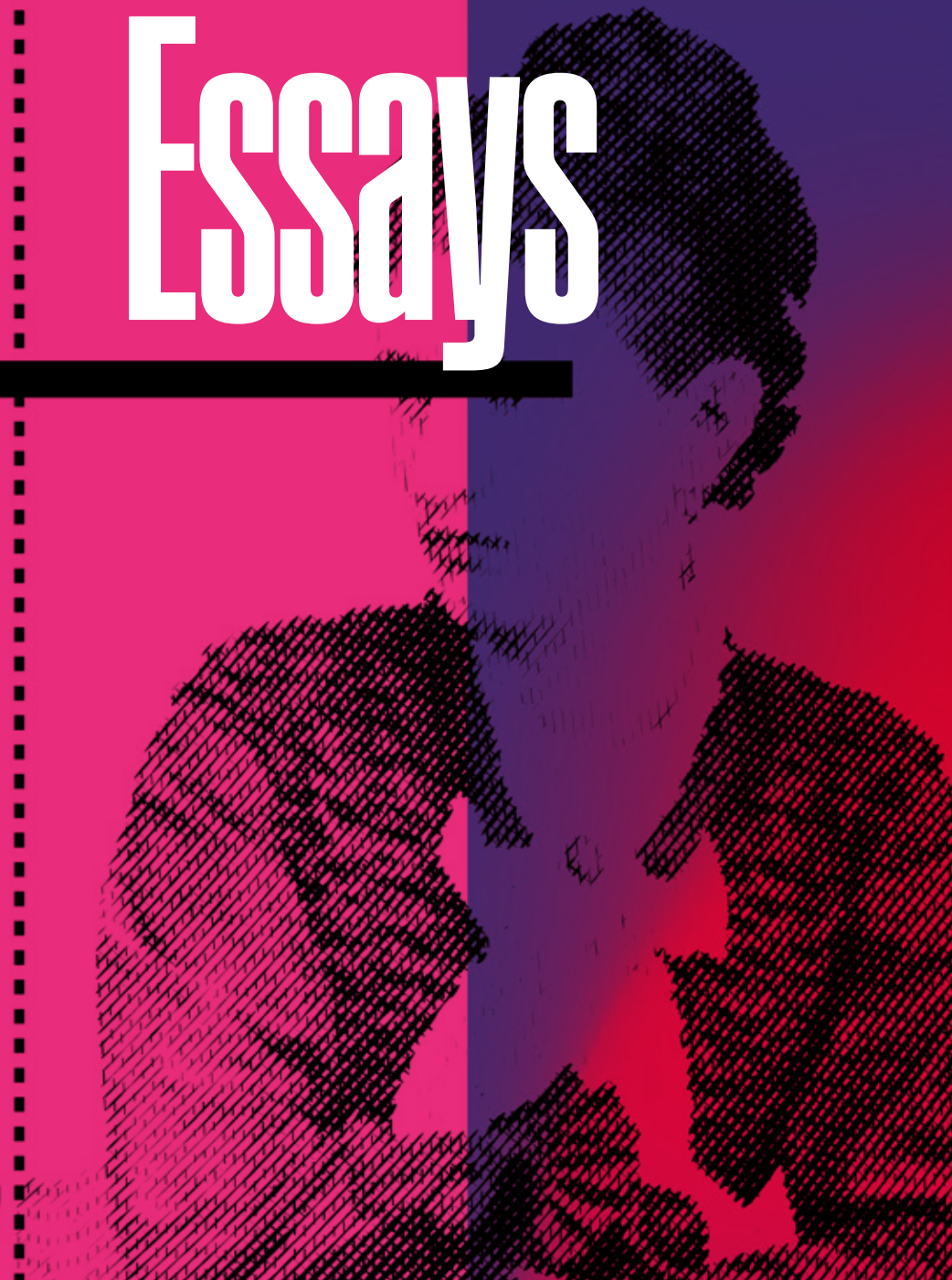
MAROON ARCHITECTS

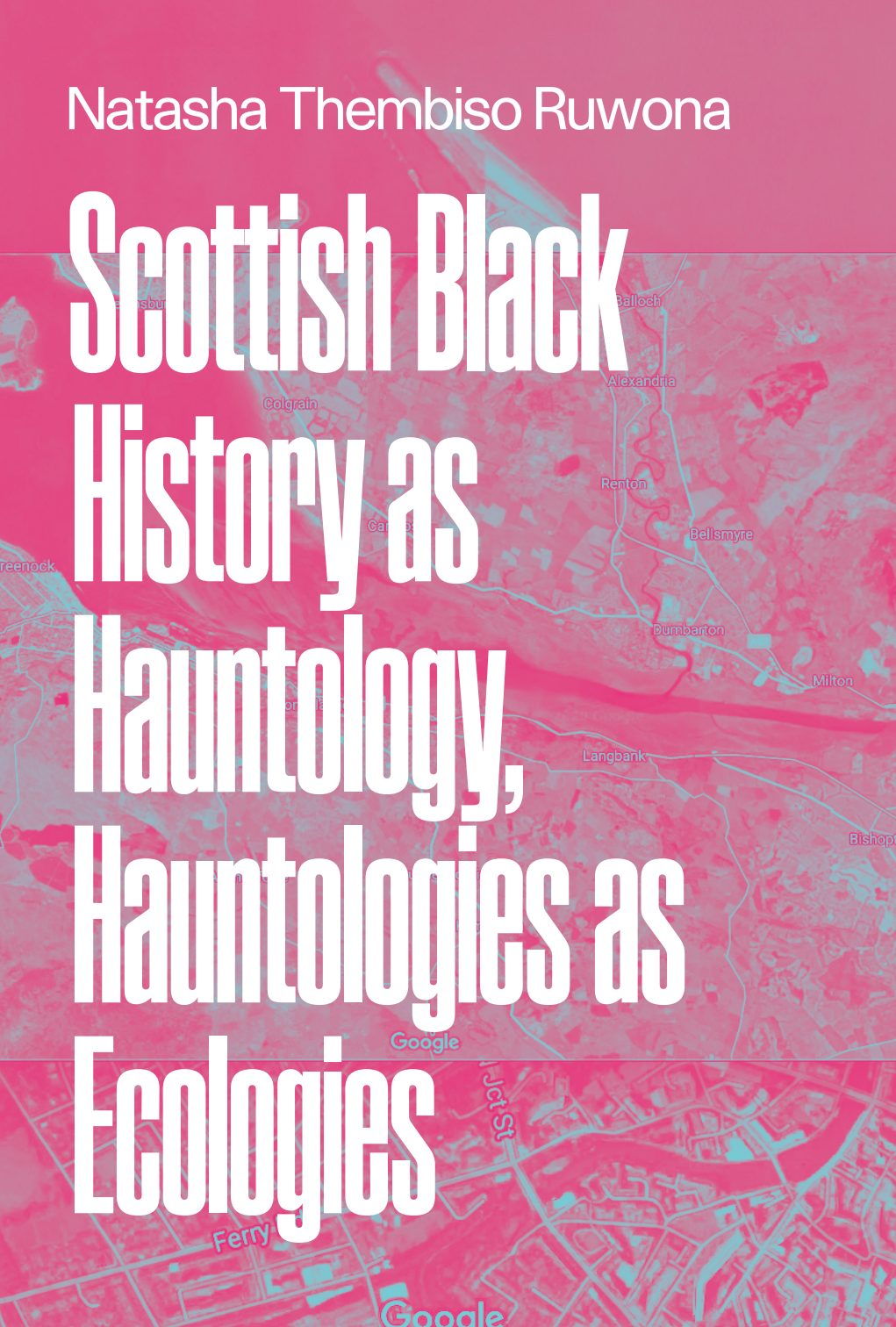
RADICAL ENGINEERING IN
VIRGINIA SWAMPLAND,
REMOVING TOXINS FROM SOIL
WITH INDIGENOUS PRACTICES
TO GROW CROPS, CLAIMING
SANCTUARY, LAID THE
FOUNDATION FOR COMMUNITY
LAND TRUSTS

SHAPE-SHIFTING

INFRASTRUCTURE THAT HAS
TO BE A MILLION THINGS -
GRANDDAD'S HOUSE AS THE
COMMUNITY CENTRE, THE
CARIBBEAN GROCERY STORE
AS THE SOCIAL SURGERY,
KITCHEN TABLE AS A
SUPPLEMENTARY SCHOOL,
CHURCH AS RESOURCE HUB

Essays





Natasha Thembiso Ruwona

Scottish Black History as Hauntology, Hauntologies as Ecologies

Scotland's Black population is 1% according to the last census back in 2011, and yet our presences can be felt through the landscape, as (in)visible through the histories of Scotland's natural and built environments.

The legacies of the Transatlantic slave trade and the colonialism which we gained access to through the Acts of Union in 1707, mean that the Scottish landscape has largely been shaped by Black lives over time. These unseen racial infrastructures include; the money earned from the labour of the enslaved used to pay for buildings, houses, monuments, and transport systems; the trade across Scotland's main ports and docks; and the more visible signs such as the stolen objects currently housed within museums, the celebratory statues all over the country that monumentalise slave traders and apologists, and the repetition of street and place names across Scotland and the Caribbean. The indicators mentioned, and many more, are all a part of the racial geography and ecology of Scotland.

I define Black Ecologies through the relationship between Black existence and the earth, water, weather, living and dead organisms, and our manifold relationships to the environment around us. The physical environment that holds this ecology is its geography. When we are locating these Black ecologies and geographies - our perceptions and relationships to space, place and time, are all marked by money, power and their synonym - whiteness.

Thinking along the lines of Psychogeography, I am often mediating on the visceral experiences of being a Black person in Scotland. We are in the minority, but moving around the

land, the many presences of the Black people who have also inhabited this place in the past can be felt...those who have been in Scotland physically, but also through the ghostly dust of its ecologies that speak to us and how this is related to the experiences of living in contemporary Scotland now as a Black person.

Through undertaking this work I am reminded that there is no neutrality within geography - the landscape is also a container for oppression. I am interested in how this landscape speaks to us and how we speak back - considering psychogeographical understandings of how we think and feel in spaces and how this is impacted by the history of a place. In her Black History walking tours, Lisa Williams of the Edinburgh Caribbean Association unearths secrets hidden beneath the streets of the capital city. Lisa reminds us that we are never alone in our (re)tracings of history as Black people living in Scotland.

*Black Ecologies, or a relationship to the skin, soil and mind;
We dig and dig
Eventually asking,
How could we ever have thought that we were the first
and only one?*

Katherine McKittrick describes Black Geography in *Demonic Grounds: Black Women And the Cartographies of Struggle* as being 'subaltern or alternative geographic patterns that work alongside and beyond traditional geographies and a site of terrain of struggle.' This tension is useful in highlighting spatial hierarchies, why they exist, and the effects that they have.

We are seemingly ungeographic. The Black non space is both habited and uninhabited. McKittrick's conversations about Black Canada within *Demonic Grounds* can often be

mirrored within the attitudes and understandings of Black Scotland, 'To belong as black in Canada is to belong elsewhere' - 'always other, always recent.'

"To belong as black in _____ is to belong elsewhere"- how easily geographies can be misplaced, displaced and erased.

Through McKittrick's discussion on Black Canada, we have been led to believe that Black Canada, and mirroring this, Black Scotland, presences are new. Through this misinformed temporality, "diasporic spacializations" make it seem that our contributions to Black Scotland are through an 'unlocal' narrative of history, originating from other(ed) places in other(ed) times.

The geography of a space and place, inside and outside. The body as a placemaker - a map, to and from, a journey and home. The space between is here.

This writing is a reflection and mediation on the conversations that I have had with myself and others - physically, on Zoom, between pages, on word documents, real and imagined. A collage of ideas spanning a year and a half, ideas that hint at and look to the future, or suggest a future. An acclamation to the work of Katherine McKittrick.

Situating the City

*the city is always an institution
and we are losing,
are lost in its landscape*

Within *In The Wake: On Blackness and Being*, Christina Sharpe discusses architectural repetition, which she describes as the structures and systems that show up in different spaces i.e. the prison and institution, contribute to the ideas of mirrored environments that exist across space and time, creating and containing oppression. My considerations on Sharpe's architectural repetition are reflected in relation to the buildings in Scotland built using the money made from the labour of the enslaved, where those buildings themselves continue to repeat colonial systems through their more transparent everyday infrastructures (hierarchies, racism, capitalism, etc).

Knowing the histories of buildings creates a shift in how the building is felt and accessed - buildings house their own memories as archives of the past, present and future. The duality of oppression of both the past and present meets within a space, or between multiple spaces - and history becomes a present presence.

Cities of citations

Described by Hettie Judah in *The Guardian* as a 'shrine to the Enlightenment', Calton Hill sits atop the City of Edinburgh and is the home to various monuments of the Enlightenment and nationalist figures, and where lies its original City Observatory. The Observatory was instrumental as a colonial tool, used to view the tide and incoming ships at Leith Port, as well as being integral for timekeeping. ~Hydrocolonialism

haunts Leith Port~ The Observatory played a huge role in contributing to the mass growth of trade, and thus the expansion of the British Empire¹ and the Transatlantic slave trade as described by Lisa Williams within 'Sugar, ships, and science: the City Observatory and Caribbean commerce'.

Edinburgh had a significant role in the scientific and knowledge production of the Enlightenment period, and prides itself on this history. Many of the prominent thinkers attended or taught at The University of Edinburgh where they began producing ideas about race, often split between believing that the races were monogenism - originated from the same place, or polygenism - that they originated from different places. This included ideas of there being multiple species of humans, which favoured white/Europeans as the more dominant race. Many of these Enlightenment figures contributed to capitalism and eugenics, thus creating white supremacist analogies as a product of their study and time at the University. The monuments of Calton Hill symbolise a moment in time for solidifying Scotland's national identity within the British Empire. One of the memorials is of Horatio Nelson, an officer who served in the Royal Navy. Contested views of Nelson describe him as a slavery apologist due to his direct links to plantations and colonialism.²

*who does the city (dis)serve/deserve?
in this city, alone
in this city, what and where can i call home?
what and who does this city own and condone?*

...Oh, this afterlife...

The Hold (of the ship) is the prison, the institution, monumentalisation. Architectural repetition shows up as the reminders of those who have and continue to contribute to the harmful practices of white supremacy.

*...That feels oh so difficult
At times.*

Memories and memorials Memorials as memories

Water

In *Black Geographies & The Politics of Space*, Katherine McKittrick and Clyde Woods describe the ocean as something that “prompts a geographic narrative that may not be readily visible on maps. This tension between mapped and the unknown reconfigures knowledge, suggesting that places, experiences, histories, and people that no one knows do exist.” McKittrick goes on to revisit this idea of the unknown ocean on page 130 of *Demonic Grounds*. She writes “while encounters with the unknown made the uninhabitable a newly available geography for exploration and economic gain, it also translated places that were previously deemed nonexistent (underwater, unlivable) into conquerable and profitable spatial categories.”

I look at her observations in two-fold. The first mention of water feels like a provocation towards speculative worldmaking and thinking, and situated in the context of Drexian mythology³ - water is a place for us, we, the other(ed) to exist in, a space far from here - the unknown as escapism. The second seems to hint towards colonisation of the unknown - perhaps alluding to human exploration into outer space and vast oceans, as unused space is available and waiting for unethical consumption. I’m thinking about the River Clyde, which runs through Glasgow and was a vital component for trading and shipbuilding during the British Empire, which eventually became known as the Second City of the empire due to its industrial and engineering advances.



*AN ACROPOLIS OF SORTS
NATIONALIST MYTHICAL DREAMS
APOCALYPTIC INFRASTRUCTURES OF RACE*

Image: Acropolis collage
by Natasha Thembiiso Ruwona

Part of this effort was due to the expansion of the River Clyde, which was originally too shallow for larger ships to pass through. The Clyde's mouth faced the Americas, making it a prime location for the trade of tobacco and cotton present at the time, but the shallowness meant that cargo had to be transferred to nearby ports, slowing down the processes of the trading of goods. The river's flow was controlled by jetties, creating some level of deepening, but not the required amount. After failed attempts to get the desired depth, the river was dredged in the mid 19th century, and the River Clyde quickly became the prime location for shipbuilding during the British Empire⁴.

National identity bound up in a body of water. Glasgow made the Clyde and the Clyde made Glasgow, as the saying goes.

McKittrick's musings on water communicate a duality - water as a weapon, water as a sanctuary. We can easily locate the many harmful stories of water and its contributions to painful histories and presences, but Drexciya offers us a place of solace, a meeting point under the water instructed by the past, a new world that is an offering of a possible future.

Water is speaking, each wave a whisper, each droplet a glimmer, a glimpse into what once was or is, a wetted rememory, a liquid memorial. What is carried through must also continue to haunt.

Creating Cartographies

Placing and placemaking become issues of Black Scotland. There have been many offerings given by those interested in Scottish Black history, as many of us work as time travellers excavating the landscape. McKittrick writes "it is not simply a matter of placing blackness within Canada, or the world; nor is it a matter of superimposing black maps atop the nation-space. Rather, black diaspora theories hold place and placelessness in tension, through imagination and

Liquid
memory

materiality, and therefore re-spatialize Canada on what might be considered unfamiliar terms"⁵. How do we retell history without erasing erasure? "...nor is it a matter of superimposing black maps atop the nation-space." Like the conversations surrounding the toppling of statues, or the changing of place names, does it become more valuable to confront these histories as opposed to replacing and erasing them, without the proper correction of their legacies? As mentioned in my introduction, these visible indicators of white supremacy create a difficult relationship to the landscape, but perhaps this can be useful. Seeing these visible indicators of history reminds us of what once was, but also what is. This idea that McKittrick talks about of holding tension feels important - we want uncomfot and accountability, thus action. But by holding this tension, we are also held in tension, and who's tension is this to hold?

There are various projects and people who are working to edit, or remix⁶ Scotland's history by creating alternative mapping practices that document Black history. These include Lisa Williams, mentioned above, whose group walking tours create a new reading of Edinburgh city centre outside of its tourist attractions and commonly known history. I remember going on her walk at the beginning of my own excavation journey and being struck by how little I knew of the Black history in the city, and how all of this information has bubbled under the surfaces that I had walked over so

many times. It re-spatialised, to use McKittrick's words, my understanding of my place in the city - my home, and more widely, Scotland. We have always been here. Through the act of group walking and oral histories, Lisa invites us to do a joint remapping and retracing of Black history as we walk together to remember and placemake.

Other forms of maps have been appearing as mapping practices move towards malleability. These include the tracing of the relationship between Black Abolitionists in Edinburgh with the map produced by the National Library of Scotland charting Frederick Douglass' time in the city, and the Legacies of British Slavery slave-owner beneficiary maps produced by University College London. Here, the map is no longer a static object fixed in time or space, new cartographies are being made to tell other hi(stories). Another project that offers a remapping is UncoverED, a project led by current and past students at The University of Edinburgh. The project focuses on the figures and experiences of students of colour in the history of the university, while discussing the university's role as a colonial and imperial institution. UncoverED places students of colour back in the rightful landscape of the university's history, highlighting their contributions and life stories. The project reminds us that the university is always an institution - another form of architectural repetition. There is also an UncoverED tour created for the Curious Edinburgh app which remaps the city as we have come to know it.

My attempt here is to collate some, not all, of these histories while also offering a response and framework to create a discussion within a Scottish Black ecology. I am interested in Scotland as a subject - a nation of pride and forgetfulness. With Scottish history so grounded in Black history, the unbelongingness that is felt feels almost contradictory as a place that holds "...locations that situate black diaspora populations both materially and imaginatively." (McKittrick).

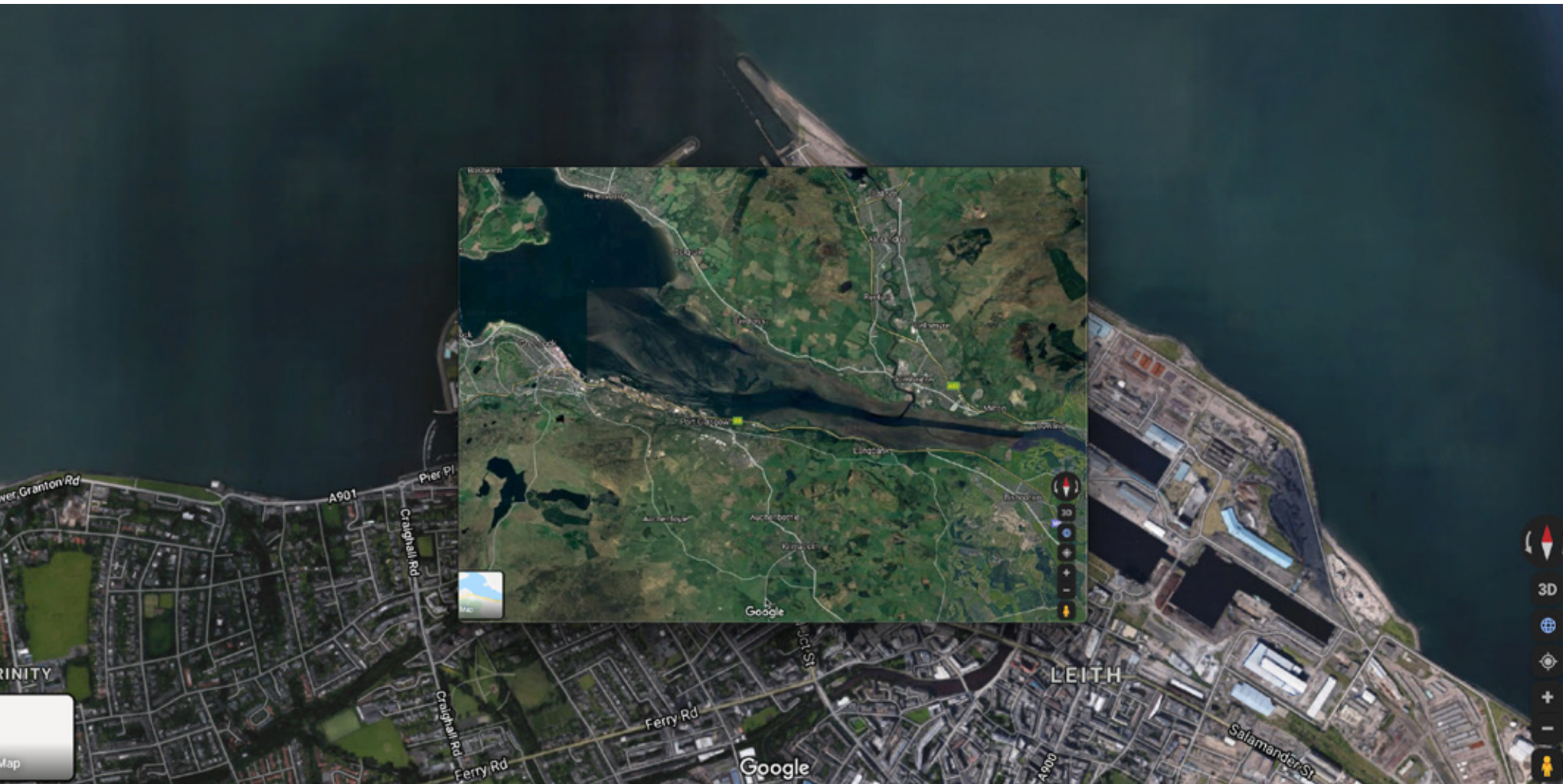


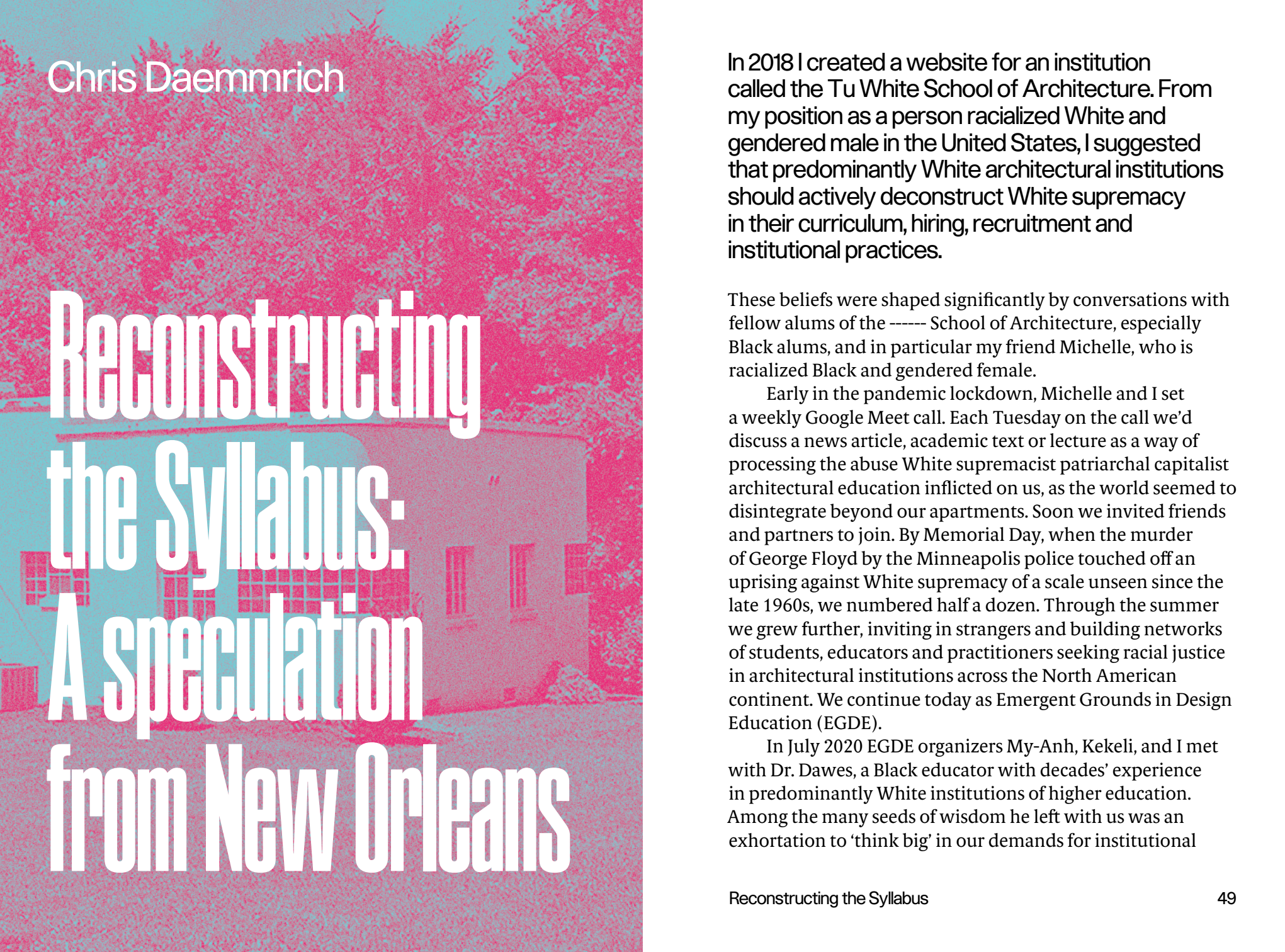
Image: 'Shipping on the Clyde' postcard c/o wikimedia commons

The visibility of invisibility, the feeling that comes with feeling a history. We are remembered as easily as they forget and are forgotten after momentary regret.

A lament for bitten tongues and aching lungs.

Image: Forth & Clyde collage
by Natasha Thembiso Ruwona



The background of the entire page is a photograph of a two-story building with a light-colored facade and several windows. The building is partially obscured by large, vibrant red trees in the foreground. The sky is a deep, solid red. The overall color palette is dominated by reds and oranges, creating a dramatic and somewhat somber atmosphere.

Chris Daemmrich

Reconstructing the Syllabus: A speculation from New Orleans

In 2018 I created a website for an institution called the Tu White School of Architecture. From my position as a person racialized White and gendered male in the United States, I suggested that predominantly White architectural institutions should actively deconstruct White supremacy in their curriculum, hiring, recruitment and institutional practices.

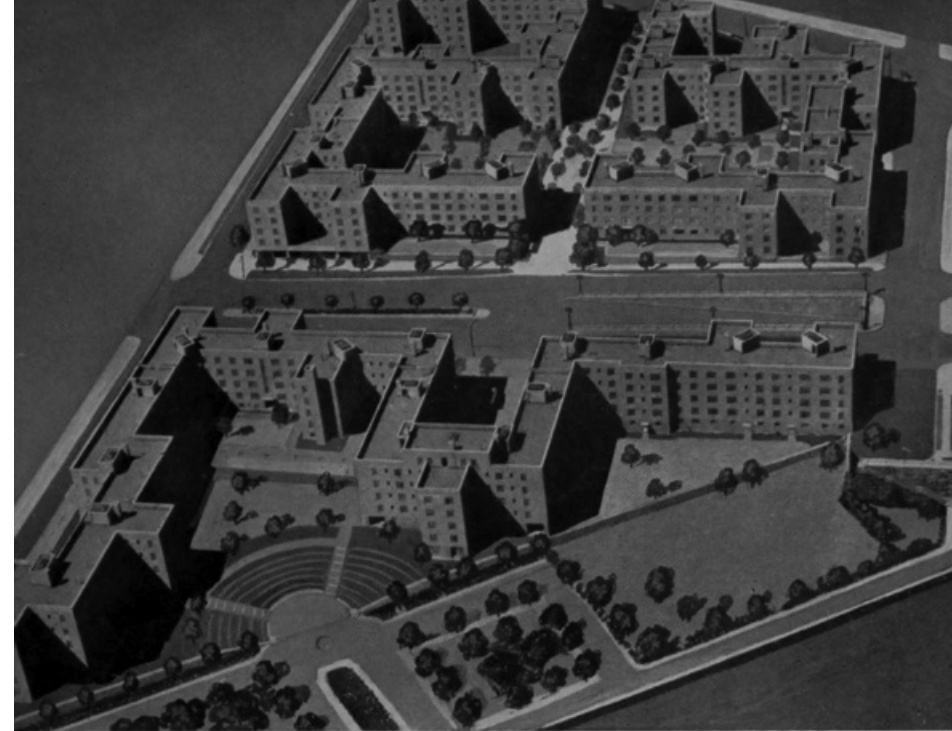
These beliefs were shaped significantly by conversations with fellow alums of the ----- School of Architecture, especially Black alums, and in particular my friend Michelle, who is racialized Black and gendered female.

Early in the pandemic lockdown, Michelle and I set a weekly Google Meet call. Each Tuesday on the call we'd discuss a news article, academic text or lecture as a way of processing the abuse White supremacist patriarchal capitalist architectural education inflicted on us, as the world seemed to disintegrate beyond our apartments. Soon we invited friends and partners to join. By Memorial Day, when the murder of George Floyd by the Minneapolis police touched off an uprising against White supremacy of a scale unseen since the late 1960s, we numbered half a dozen. Through the summer we grew further, inviting in strangers and building networks of students, educators and practitioners seeking racial justice in architectural institutions across the North American continent. We continue today as Emergent Grounds in Design Education (EGDE).

In July 2020 EGDE organizers My-Anh, Kekeli, and I met with Dr. Dawes, a Black educator with decades' experience in predominantly White institutions of higher education. Among the many seeds of wisdom he left with us was an exhortation to 'think big' in our demands for institutional

transformation. This syllabus, for a class to be taught 100 years from now, represents an attempt on my part to do so, inspired by Black futurist speculative practice and the Akan metaphor of sankofa. Symbolized by a bird flying forward while reaching backward to pick up an egg, sankofa expresses the importance of reaching back to knowledge gained in the past and bringing it into the present in order to make positive progress.

architecturetuwhite.org
eg-de.org



HARLEM RIVER HOUSES

FEDERAL EMERGENCY ADMINISTRATION OF PUBLIC WORKS



FIRST YEAR DESIGN STUDIO ----- SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

JPMORGAN CHASE PROGRAM IN AFRICAN DIASPORIC ARCHITECTURAL STUDIES

ARCH 1010/3010 3 cr.
Spring 2121
MWF 12-3 PM

Faculty:

Prof. Alice Thornton Morse, coordinator*
Prof. Amaza Lee Meredith*
Prof. John Louis Wilson, Jr.*
Prof. Holbrook Chamberlain*

Partners:

----- Public Schools

Course Description

This course serves as an introduction and foundation to principles of architectural design rooted in collaboration and co-creation with communities shaped by the global African diaspora, European settler colonialism, and Indigenous histories. We are training architects for the reality that our built environment is largely structured to serve domination, or the needs of the White supremacist capitalist imperialist patriarchy. To perpetuate practices which for centuries were considered the 'status quo' of architectural instruction and practice would cause harm not only to the people beyond the institution's walls with whom you will be trained to co-design, but to you. We practice architecture not to perpetuate harms, but to repair them.

This studio, and the practices of this School, confront the reality that, though 78% of the City's population is descended from African, Indigenous, Latin@, East and South Asian Americans, the architectural profession in this country remains stubbornly 45% White, 10% Black, 22% Latin@, 3% Indigenous, 12% East Asian, and 13% South Asian. More than 50 years after the passage of the first Reparations Acts, these inequitable levels of representation reflect the continuing effects of systemic racism within our city and our country.

Our built environment was designed for an outdated capitalist economic system, a cooler climate, and lower sea levels. The architectural profession that produced it was wildly unrepresentative of the people and philosophies of this City, a legacy of the Jim Crow apartheid system which disproportionately harmed Black people, Indigenous people and other people of color, and largely prohibited them from participating in the architectural profession, into the first decades of the 21st century. In contrast with today's practices of collaboration and co-design with people deeply rooted in the communities where we work, this architectural profession was highly patriarchal and undemocratic, particularly with regard to the exclusion of children and young people's perspectives on the design of the built environment.

Introduction

This studio continues the Program in African Diaspora Architectural Studies' Association of Collegiate Architecture Schools-award-winning partnership with ----- Public Schools.

Instruction in this studio begins with active engagement in the histories and present conditions of the City's built environment through field trips, conducted in partnership with ----- Public Schools co-learners and educators.



Images top clockwise:
 Azurest South by Amaza Lee Meredith, credit Calder Loth
 University Hall, Leland University with Holbrook Chamberlain
 Harlem River Houses by John Louis Wilson, Jr.



Studio projects will be co-generated by collegiate and public school students in partnership with faculty and staff facilitators. Projects will focus on the following subject areas:

- Waterborne design and transportation systems
- Adaptation and reuse of historic structures
- Ecologically and economically reparative design

Students do not have to be architecture majors to take this course; it fulfills the design requirements for undergraduate and graduate students. It is cross-listed with the School of African and Diaspora Studies and the School of Decolonial Studies.

Classes will meet on the west porch of the Architecture Building and will travel together by public WaterBus from that location for community-based work and collaborative off-campus work sessions with ----- Public Schools co-learners. All students are required to obtain a SplashPass from the Office of Transportation Services.

Acknowledgement and Reparation

----- University is built on land stolen from the Choctaw and Natchez people, whose Tribal Councils steward its management under the Agreement with the City of ----- published March 21, 2079.

As detailed in the Report of the Commission on the University in the Era of Enslavement, published April 12, 2034, the labor whose profits built this University and its School of Architecture was stolen from enslaved people racialized as Black, most directly:

- those enslaved on the plantation formerly located on the property where the University now stands, from 1791-1862, by Samuel Ricker and his descendants
- those enslaved on the St. James Plantation in Gramercy, Louisiana from 1812-1863 by Paul Richardson and his

descendants, who donated the funds to construct the Architecture Building

As detailed in the Report of the Commission on the University in the Era of Jim Crow and Incarceration, published October 24, 2037, the labor of Black workers paid artificially reduced wages further sustained the University into the mid-21st century.

If you are entitled to reparative payment, enrollment or other forms of reparation under the Reparations in Higher Education Act of 2055, please contact the University's Office of the Provost for Reparation.

The Program in African Diasporic Architectural Studies is made possible with the support of JPMorgan Chase under Title XII of the Reparations in Investment Banking Act of 2058. If you are entitled to further reparative payment or other forms of reparation from this institution, please contact the Regional Reparation Office, 1555 Peachtree, Ste. 2700, Atlanta, GA.

Transformation Policy

The ----- School of Architecture, through its Leadership Council of faculty, alumni and students, seeks to draw guidance from our nation's National Development Plan published on 19 June 2065, and address the elimination of racialized inequity and maldistribution of resources under capitalism, through the establishment of its own Transformation Policy.

Architects, through their education, experience and their critical role in the ongoing creation of the built environment, are strategically placed to lead this drive through a series of development strategies, to assist in achieving these goals.

The ----- School of Architecture's approach to creating conditions of justice in our society is guided by a single important philosophy:

That our efforts toward transforming the architectural profession should be employed in such a way that the skill and experience be retained and enhanced towards building a transformed profession which will meet the needs of our society in the creation of a just built environment.

Studio Culture

Students will be expected to prioritize their needs and responsibilities ahead of, or at most equal to, their role as a design student. Designers who neglect responsibilities of self-care and their roles as friends, family and members of other communities outside the studio will be less effective as designers and as people.

Selected Readings

Bell, Carla Jackson, editor of compilation and Carla Jackson Bell author. 2014. *Space Unveiled: Invisible Cultures in the Design Studio*, London; New York: Routledge.

Davis Williams, Ujijji. *The Black Landscape*, Boston: Harvard Press, 2029

Du Bois, W.E.B. *Black Reconstruction in America*, 1860-1880. 1935.

Elloie, Mariana. 'Native in Architecture: A New Generation.' Tulsa: Red Nation Press, 2056

Ellis, Clifton and Rebecca Ginsburg, eds. *Slavery in the City: Architecture and Landscapes of Urban Slavery in North America*. Charlottesville: UVA Press, 2017

Goldstein, Brian D. "The Search for New Forms: Black Power and the Making of the Postmodern City." *The Journal of American History*, 2016.

Gonzales, J. and Wang, Y. *Space Between: Immigration and the Reshaping of American Space*. New York: Princeton Architectural Press, 2035.

Mitchell, Melvin L., III *The Crisis of the African-American Architect: Conflicting Cultures of Architecture and Black Power*. Rev. 5th ed. Writers Advantage, 2093.

Moore, DeMarcus and Jackson, Sha'Nell, eds. 'Green Reconstruction: The Architecture of Climate Justice.' Detroit: Black Architectural Press, 2089

Nicholson, Kendall. *Where Are My People? Racialized Exclusion and Architecture*, New Haven: Yale Press, 2025

Pierre, Jeanette. *Black Feminist Architectural Practice*, Detroit: Black Architectural Press, 2068.

Weisman, Leslie. *Discrimination by Design : A Feminist Critique of the Man-made Environment*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1992

Washington, Collette. *Abolition and Architecture: The Task Ahead*, Architectural Record, March 2075

Faculty

Prof. Alice Thornton Morse (1844-1936) was born in Mississippi. Her status as enslaved or free at birth is not known, but she was free prior to the Civil War, and married Amos Morse, a literate, free Black man who worked as a steamboat porter. She bore 8 children over the 25 years of their marriage, and not long after the birth of the last child in 1880, she took a teaching position at Leland University in Uptown New Orleans, founded in 1870 to educate freedpeople. She was the first Black woman faculty at Leland, most of whose initial teachers were White women from the North. For 35 years, Morse taught sewing and served as house mother for hundreds of children, many of whom came from rural farming areas of Louisiana. Her mentorship to these students, especially young Black women, “cannot be overstated”. Morse acted in productions at the Lyceum theater along with many of the city’s Black socialites. Several of her daughters, Odalie, Desiree, and Ethelene, followed her into teaching at Leland. Her grandchildren included many more teachers, including longtime Xavier basketball coach Alfred Priestley, Jr., and her great-grandson Maynard Jackson, Jr. was elected the first Black mayor of Atlanta in 1973.

Amaza Lee Meredith (1895-1984) was born to a Black mother and a White father during the rise of Jim Crow, the social, political and economic system of subjugation set up by White Americans to disenfranchise Black Americans after the violent overthrow of Reconstruction in the 1870s. Jim Crow laws prevented her parents’ marriage in Virginia. Her father, a carpenter, lost much of his business due to his controversial marriage and died by suicide in 1915. The same year, Amaza graduated at the top of her high school class and attended Virginia Normal Institute, now Virginia State University,



Images top to bottom:
Amaza Lee Meredith, Prof. Alice
Thornton Morse, John Louis Wilson Jr.



where she met Edna Meade Colson, who would become her partner. Meredith taught for several years, and joined the Great Migration north to Brooklyn in 1926. At Teachers' College at Columbia she studied fine arts, receiving a BA in 1930 and an MA in 1934 before returning to her alma mater in Virginia. There she taught art and established the Fine Arts Department, which she chaired until her retirement in 1958. She worked with her partner Colson, a VSU administrator, advocate for Black education and voting rights, to design their home Azurest South in Ettrick, VA, and enjoyed a career designing homes primarily for friends and family, operating outside traditional architectural licensure.

John Louis Wilson, Jr. (1899-1989) was born in Meridian, Mississippi during the rise of Jim Crow, the social, political and economic system of subjugation set up by White Americans to disenfranchise Black Americans after the violent overthrow of Reconstruction in the 1870s. Wilson moved to New Orleans to attend high school at Gilbert Academy and college at New Orleans University, both located in Uptown, graduating with his degree in 1920. (NOU merged with Straight University, located on Canal Street, in 1930 to become present-day Dillard University in Gentilly.) Wilson worked for prominent New Orleans architect Moise Goldstein, a faculty member at Tulane, then Louisiana's only architecture school. As Tulane's Jim Crow policies restricted admission to White students only, Wilson joined the Great Migration north to New York City, where he became the first Black graduate of Columbia's architecture school in 1928. He was a lead architect on the design team for the Harlem River Houses, considered one of the US' best examples of social or public housing, in 1934, and worked as an architect for New York City's Parks Department while maintaining a private practice, designing mostly affordable housing and civic buildings, into

the 1980s. Wilson was a mentor to dozens, if not hundreds, of aspiring Black architects over his long career.

Holbrook Chamberlain (1805-1883) was a shoe merchant from Brooklyn, New York. A White Baptist missionary, an advocate for the abolition of slavery and for the education of freedpeople during the American Civil War (1861-1865) and the Reconstruction era that followed (1865-1877), he used his family's wealth, the resources of the American Baptist Home Mission Society and the US federal government's Freedmen's Bureau to found Leland University in Uptown New Orleans. Chamberlain represents the presence throughout history of people racialized as White who have recognized and sought to live up to our collective obligation to deconstruct systems of White supremacy through education, and contribute to the construction of systems for Black liberation.



/other

I can't find the words

/other presented a physical installation at the 2021 edition of the Architecture Fringe. Against a cultural backdrop of screen fatigue and image overload, the images created for the exhibition in turn become the backdrop in these pages. They exist as reflections on the fragile yet fluid nature of language.

From a ceiling hangs a series of light and wispy cloths, draped into strange and irregular forms, suspended before a projector. As people move between them, they gently follow, pulled with the disrupted air. Onto the translucent cloths, projections of words and shapes combine to create larger patterns whilst frantic marimbas and drum-beats soundtrack the animations.

Since our first contribution to the Architecture Fringe in 2019, we've given space to the many varied perspectives of people of colour within architectural practice and education. Last summer, after the prolonged pandemic caused a 'racial reckoning' to peter out into superficial debates regarding cancel culture, our conviction to never have to explain or validate our lived experiences, only grew. The statement "I can't find the words to tell people how I feel because the people who made the language are the oppressors" was spoken by Ayesha Hussain, a member of our community, in a previous interview series and it became the provocation for our Architecture Fringe 2021 installation. Ironically, while putting into words the limits of the English language, or any hegemonic language, it also hints at deeper, ineffable truths.

सजावेटा

ख

जंवा

वे

टा

area's vibrant ethnic community...

everybody

Deconstructions of select words and statements chosen by our community were projected as moving animations. By capturing the aspects of our lives deemed 'untranslatable' when viewed through a Eurocentric lens, we marked out a space that taps into our personal and (a)political lived experiences, normally reserved for the white establishment within architecture and design. We found joy in how these resulting symbols and images, moving in and out of the limitations of the English language, could be compared in coincidental ways: how a term of endearment in Turkish was auditorily similar to words in Bangla and Hindi, the meanings all rooted in concepts of birth and life. That the images would appear and then disappear, overlap and slowly crowd the layers of fabric, only reinforced these connections.

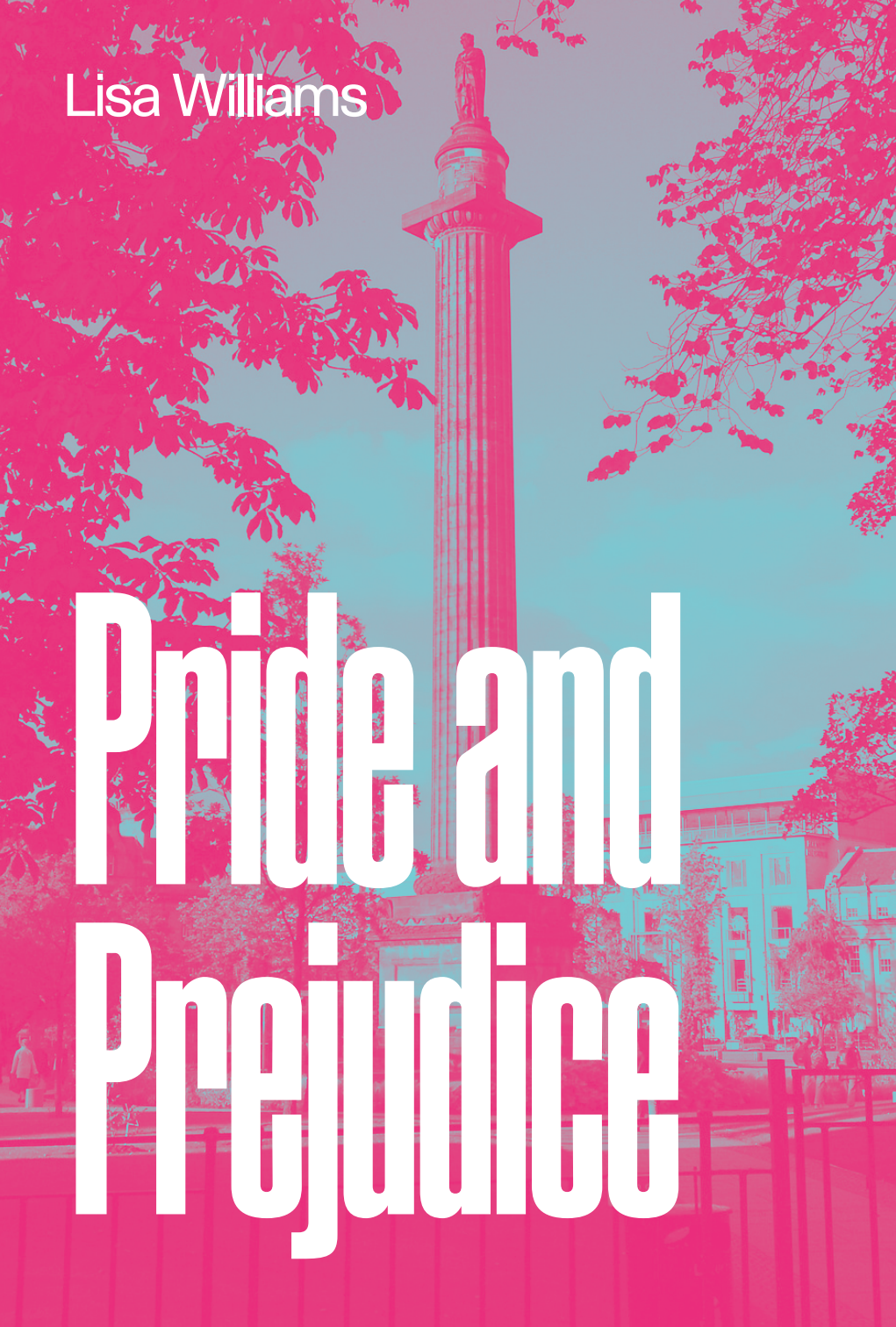
The gradual change in clarity, as the projection filtered through the fabrics, was to reflect that, through translation, the nuances and greater cultural contexts that languages exist within are erased. Globally dominant languages, especially those historically inflicted through violence, pick and choose aspects of 'the other' deemed appropriate and easy to (mis)interpret. Our conversations manifest in the intertwining shapes of the projection and explore the existence of language beyond the letters formed on a page, beyond what translation is incapable of conveying. The artwork created is not validated through its dissection, through the exposure of the words that formed it: our work exists to only be understood by some and, therefore, it can be understood by all.



Images: Portrait and 'I can't find the words'
exhibition by /other c/o Robb Mcrae



I can't find the words



Lisa Williams

Pride and Prejudice

The greatly admired Enlightenment architecture of Edinburgh's New Town is said by many to reflect rational, orderly planning, the celebration of the union with England, and the expansion of the British Empire.

Hints of the ideological links with Ancient Greece and Imperial Rome appear in many places within St Andrew Square, at the eastern end of James Craig's plan, such as the striking Palladian façade of Dundas House. The conviviality of the 'Peace and Plenty' tavern, originally occupying this spot, gave way to the palatial home of Lawrence Dundas in 1776, the very first residence to be built in the New Town. Dundas, who inherited Caribbean slave plantations, used the fortune he'd made from provisioning the military, including the British Army under the Duke of Cumberland during the Jacobite rising. Dundas was criticized at the time for his ostentation; the extravagant house that usurped the place of the intended St Andrew's church was seen as a symbol of new wealth and corruption infiltrating the aristocracy.

Edinburgh's pride in becoming a major centre of the Enlightenment was both reflected in and affected by its Neoclassical architecture. The New Town architecture reinscribed the societies of ancient Greece and Rome as the philosophical foundations of Europe. The intellectual lineage from Ancient Egypt, in itself influenced by civilizations further south, could not easily cohabit the same epistemological universe as the developing concepts of white supremacy that distinguished the system of chattel slavery in the Americas. Yet foundational Greek philosophers such as Pythagoras spent twenty-three years in the Kemetic mystery system, which had been established five thousand years previously, and Aristotle posited Egypt as the 'cradle of mathematics'

The codes of chattel slavery that formally legalized methods of torture, bodily mutilation and ultimately 'no right to life' for people of African descent coincided with the development of rights espoused for white men. The Barbados Slave Code of 1661, that was replicated across the region, ratified the rational, systematic dehumanisation of people of African descent enslaved in English colonies in the Americas. This simultaneously confirmed protection under English Common Law for white indentured labourers who were often of Irish and Scottish descent. Laws creating racial distinctions between workers served to divide and rule by offering an opportunity for social advancement under the new mantle of 'whiteness'. Despite the terrible conditions of indentureship, the fortunate were able to escape bonded labour after several years, on occasion during the boat crossing itself. Their status as 'white' gave them the opportunity to work for a wage or even invest in land and enslaved African workers.

Virginia was another such place where the possibility of a united workforce created a threat to the ruling classes. The Bacon's Rebellion of 1676, that saw the burning of Jamestown in Virginia by a multi-racial militia, created such fear in the colonists that laws were enacted to transform a relatively open society where Africans were able to buy land and labour to one of racialized chattel slavery. The Virginia Slave Codes of 1705, based on those in Barbados and Jamaica, further consolidated racial distinctions. David Hume, the celebrated Enlightenment philosopher, lived just off St Andrew Square. Hume's infamous footnote to his 1753 essay *On National Characters* denigrated 'Negroes' as 'naturally inferior to the Whites', a concept echoed by Founding Father Thomas Jefferson in 1780 in 'Notes on the State of Virginia', after the American Revolution had concurrently birthed twin ideas of freedom and white supremacy.

Yet at times the status of whiteness conveniently retained its internal hierarchies. Highlanders, along with Indigenous Americans, had been considered by some Enlightenment thinkers like William Robertson to be in the most primitive stage of social development, but retaining the potential for advancement. Even after the Jacobite threat had receded, Highlanders were still subject to abuse. Sir John Gordon of Cluny in Aberdeenshire who lived at no. 4. St Andrew Square, used the compensation he received in 1837 for the 1,400 people who had been enslaved on his uncle's cotton plantations in Tobago, to purchase several islands in the Hebrides. In 1851, after leaving his tenants to starve after the potato blight, he evicted 3,000 remaining people from the land, using dogs to hunt down anyone who resisted. Families were broken up as people were bound hands and feet, thrown on to ships bound for Canada where witnesses were shocked by their sick, emaciated, and ragged appearance.

The imposing statue of Henry Dundas, Lord Melville, in the centre of the square stands on a fluted column inspired by Emperor Trajan's own victory column in Rome. Deeply contested and unpopular in the run up to its completion in 1827, it celebrates a man with so much power at the end of the eighteenth century that he was nicknamed 'The Great Tyrant'. In his various roles in the British government, Melville repeatedly advocated gradual rather than immediate abolition of the Atlantic slave trade. Dundas appointed many of the governors across the West Indies, such as Lord Balcarres in Jamaica. In 1796, Balcarres overreacted to a minor incident due to a deep fear of enslaved people joining with free Maroons to achieve a liberated Jamaica. Pressure from the planters led him, at first reluctantly, to use vicious bloodhounds to 'reduce the enemy'. These were specially bred dogs that the governor sought, bought and shipped from Cuba, using them to rip African people limb from limb

in public spectacles designed to terrify people into eventual submission.

Against all the odds, enslaved African people had achieved full self-emancipation from the French during the Haitian Revolution. From 1793-1798, Dundas and Prime Minister Pitt sent between 30 and 40 thousand British men to their deaths in a mission to reinstate slavery in St Domingue and slaughter freedom fighters across the region, terrified by what they perceived as anti-white butchery by Black savages. However, the Haitian constitution of 1805 was one of the most advanced in the world, guaranteeing full and equal citizenship for all, including white French, and Polish and German mercenaries who had fought for liberty alongside African people. Regardless of previous racialization, all citizens were categorized as politically 'Black', once they lived by the principles of liberty and equality for all, explicitly rejecting the system of white supremacy.

The Enlightenment project carved a philosophical space that obscured and essentially invisibilised the foundations of the modern world; making the hidden realities of racial slavery, colonization, and genocide acceptable, or even desirable. Edinburgh's pride in the collective philosophical shift that challenged old power structures continues to function in part as a resistance to Scotland's own experience of subjugation by the English. More obvious to those excluded from a consistently racially particular Enlightenment, the contract between people racialized as white serves to uphold a system that extracts wealth and opportunities and metes out violence to those considered inferior or even 'subhuman'. As the consolidation of racial capital displays itself through the ownership of properties in the New Town today, many white people remain oblivious not just to the long history of 'colour bars' in establishments operating in the area, but the racist incidents that continue to happen today. Black

customers are regularly turned away from the nightclubs along George Street and white supremacist thugs violently assault unsuspecting teenagers and even young mothers pushing their baby prams along the quieter streets of the New Town.

In St Andrew Square, however, there are those who have forged the path of multi-racial solidarity over the centuries, and those who continue to do so. Abolitionist Henry Brougham, born at number 21 St Andrew Square, denounced the compulsory apprenticeship system brought in after legal slavery ended in 1834 in order to force several more years of unpaid labour from supposedly 'free' people. The Edinburgh Ladies' Emancipation Society also spent several decades championing the cause of enslaved people in America. They hosted journalist Ida B. Wells at number 5 in 1893, who shocked audiences with her reports of racial lynching in the American South. In 2020 the Black Lives Matter movement attracted huge support from young white people in Edinburgh, who came out to the protest that took place in St Andrew Square itself. People racialized as white have always found ways to break the racial contract, at the risk of being demonised as 'not of sound mind' like Brougham, or perhaps as a 'woke millennial snowflake' today. Yet, in order to dismantle the system of white supremacy that is ultimately detrimental to us all, we must learn from the past that the racial contract must continue to be denounced and subverted with commitment, dedication, and solidarity.



Image: Edinburgh from the Calton Hill (1858)
David Roberts c/o wikimedia commons



Outro

Andy Summers and Liane Bauer

As you read this we will assume that the order of the whatever day will be the continued marginalisation, oppression, and othering of people within your community who happen not to be white by people who almost certainly are, encouraged and sanctioned by systems of oppression that have been created often with this sole intent in mind. Central to our work here is helping white people to understand that unless you are a racist or white supremacist then this isn't personal. It's not about you, per se. If you are white, seeing that the colour of your skin (or, let's be honest, faintly blue skin if you're in Scotland) has been weaponised to elevate you above and beyond people who are not white with little justification beyond the rules and perceptions that white humans have fully fabricated to do it. Acknowledging that one's skin is being deployed to subjugate and limit billions of people's lives on a daily basis is a critical first step towards helping dismantle this wholly unnecessary way of being. To white people, whiteness presents itself as benign, as ubiquitous, to remain unseen in full view and relies on the ignorance or passivity of white people to remain unchallenged. This must change. Whiteness must be dismantled and overcome, and white people are needed to make this happen..

Our address to you here is written with another assumption; that you yourself are white. Black, brown, Asian, Indigenous, and people of mixed race already know all of this. They even feel it, such is the intergenerational heft of whiteness almost ever-present throughout the world. We also understand, and acknowledge, that our audience continues to

be majority white. The Architecture Fringe production team is majority white. The work here is for white people. Not on our own, of course, but definitively this is where the burden of labour rests. We have a lot of work to do.

In this space, our overlapping domains of care and responsibility are as individual people, collectively as a team, and organisationally as the Architecture Fringe. (Un)learning is required throughout, and this is live, active work. In all areas of society work is required to be undertaken. Our shared field of interest here is architecture and the built environment, and we are committed to dismantling whiteness and systemic racism throughout our own lives and our creative work as best we can. The (Un)Learning provocation for the Architecture Fringe 2021 invited you, our audience, to interrogate your own behaviours, beliefs, and biases in order to acknowledge how the world really is to then reimagine how it could be. That invitation will remain open, and we are grateful to those who provoke, challenge, inspire, and support us in this work at hand. We have made some progress, and we have made some mistakes. This oscillation is part of the learning. As time moves forward it is simply unacceptable that the pigmentation of someone's skin can engender fear, hate, and discrimination throughout most of our cities, towns, and landscapes. It's weird. And wrong. As we go forwards we hope you'll join us in this work as we journey unsteadily, bumpily, but ultimately with determination and steady propulsion towards a space of liberation and shared, intersectional goals; to a space beyond whiteness.





Contributors

The following people have contributed to the work at hand and to this publication. A big thank you to everyone for their energies, ideas and collaboration.

CORE PROJECT TEAM

Architecture Fringe

Raina Armstrong, Liane Bauer, Andy Summers, Alex Collins

Fictive Kinships & Counter Narratives

Amahra Spence, Natasha Thembiso Ruwona, Chris Daemrich, /other, Lisa Williams

Biographies

Amahra Spence

Amahra Spence is an artist, organiser, designer for social justice movements and spatial practitioner.

In 2013, Amahra co-founded MAIA, an arts and social justice organisation, invested in the radical imagination and systemic transformation through infrastructure building, space creation, resource redistribution and cultural programming.

In 2020, Amahra also founded the Black Land & Spatial Justice Project with a campaign to raise funds to invest in knowledge production, decolonial frameworks and the reparative means of

our built, natural and virtual environments. The project will launch in 2022.

twitter.com/amahra_
instagram.com/amahra_as/
blsjustice.com/

Natasha Thembiso Ruwona

Natasha Thembiso Ruwona is a Scottish-Zimbabwean artist, researcher and programmer. They are interested in Afrofuturist storytelling through the poetics of the landscape, working across various media including; digital performance, film, DJing and writing. Their current project - Black

Geographies, Ecologies and Spatial Practice - is an exploration of space, place and the climate as related to Black identities and histories.

Natasha completed a curatorship for Africa in Motion Film Festival 2019 and was selected as Film Hub Scotland's New Promoter for Glasgow Short Film Festival's 2020 edition. They are a Project Coordinator for UncoverED, Assistant Producer for Claricia Parinussa, a Committee Member for Rhubaba, Board Member of the CCA, and Assistant Curator for Fringe of Colour.

[instagram.com/badgalnt/](https://www.instagram.com/badgalnt/)
[natasharuwona.com/](https://www.natasharuwona.com/)

Chris Daemmrch

Chris Daemmrch is an architectural advocate, designer and educator based in New Orleans, Louisiana, USA, who facilitates Collab., a Collaborative Design Workshop focusing on racial, gender and economic justice.

Chris serves on the board of the National Organization of Minority Architects' Louisiana chapter, and is a co-facilitator of Emergent Grounds for Design Education, a member of the Tulane School of Architecture's Young Alumni Council, steward of the Architecture Lobby's Racial Justice Working Group, and a board member of the Association for Community Design.

twitter.com/SoDaemmGood
[instagram.com/sodaemmgood/](https://www.instagram.com/sodaemmgood/)
[rchrisdaemmrch.com/](https://www.rchrisdaemmrch.com/)
[collabdesignworkshop.com/](https://www.collabdesignworkshop.com/)

Lisa Williams

Lisa Williams grew up in Dorset in a British-Grenadian family and after a childhood travelling around the world, moved to the Caribbean to run wellness programmes and cultural/educational exchanges for twenty years. She is the founder of the Edinburgh Caribbean Association and curates education programmes, arts events and walking tours to promote the shared heritage between Scotland and the Caribbean, the possibilities of decolonising, and anti-racist practice. She is an Honorary Fellow in the School of History, Classics and Archaeology at the University of Edinburgh and works as a consultant to heritage organisations across Scotland.

twitter.com/edincarib
[instagram.com/caribscot](https://www.instagram.com/caribscot)
[caribscot.org](https://www.caribscot.org)

/other

/other is a collective of POC artists and designers, co founded by Alysha Choudhury, Carl Jonsson and Mia Pinder-Hussein in 2019. Placed in the intersection between architecture, critical theory & research, and the

contemporary culture of diverse creative expression, they work interdisciplinarily to shed light on the stories of black/yellow/brown/Oriental/Western/other.

twitter.com/slash_other
[instagram.com/slash_other](https://www.instagram.com/slash_other)
[slashother.com](https://www.slashother.com)

ARCHITECTURE FRINGE

Raina Armstrong

Raina Armstrong is a Part 2 equivalent Architectural Assistant specialising in algorithmic processes and automation of architectural production. She has been engaged in architectural culture in Scotland through volunteer positions at various organisations, including Architecture Fringe and SEDA. Her interest in Design Justice Principles embedded in sustainable and healthy buildings is a key driver of the work she does.

twitter.com/@rainarmstrong
[instagram.com/rainarmstrong_](https://www.instagram.com/rainarmstrong_)

Liane Bauer

Liane Bauer is an award-winning Landscape Architect and co-founder and director at UrbanPioneers Landscape Architects – a practice, which was founded in reaction to the lack of opportunities for young mothers in architecture. The practice focuses on socio-political

projects, meaningful stakeholder and user engagement and sustainable and highly contextual design. She is on the board of Play Scotland, an organisation promoting the right to play for children as recognised by UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and has been a co-producer of the Architecture since 2017.

twitter.com/upioneers
[instagram.com/upioneers](https://www.instagram.com/upioneers)
[urbanpioneers.co.uk](https://www.urbanpioneers.co.uk)

Alex Collins

Alex Collins is an art historian and aspiring town planner; he completed his doctorate in history of art at University of Edinburgh, where he also taught for a number of years medieval and renaissance art and culture. He likes to discuss space, ritual, the representation of architecture, heritage and education.

twitter.com/alexjarvisc
[instagram.com/alexanderjarvisc](https://www.instagram.com/alexanderjarvisc)

Andy Summers

Andy Summers is an architect, curator, and public programmer specialising in architecture and the built environment. He is interested in developing and contributing to a pluralised, progressive culture of architecture which seeks to support a just common good. His work questions and explores the conditions within which architectural cultures emerge, often challenging existing structures and cultural norms. He is a co-founder and co-director of the Architecture Fringe, and currently teaches architecture part-time at the Glasgow School of Art and the University of Edinburgh.

twitter.com/mrandysummers
[instagram.com/robb_mcrae](https://www.instagram.com/robb_mcrae)
andysummers.eu

Endnotes

- ¹ citymonitor.ai/environment/edinburghs-calton-hill-shows-not-even-buildings-are-safe-tide-populism-3127
- ² nmrn.org.uk/news-events/nelson-pedestal
- ³ Detroit duo Drexciya came up with the myth of an underwater world also called Drexciya. Pregnant slaves who were thrown overboard had their babies who adapted to breathing underwater, creating a Black underworld civilisation.
- ⁴ en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Clyde#Industrial_growth
- ⁵ McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds*, 106
- ⁶ Put forward by Kodwo Eshun in 'More Brilliant than the Sun', the mix, or remixology, mimics the DJ in bringing together different sounds and musicians, or styles of writing and authors, etc. Materials that are brought together to make something new.

Bibliography

(Scottish Black History as Hauntology, Hauntologies as Ecologies)

Books

Eshun, Kodwo. *More Brilliant than the Sun*, First Edition. Verso Books, 1998.
McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women And The Cartographies Of Struggle*, First Edition. University Of Minnesota Press, 2006.
Sharpe, Christina. *In the Wake: On Blackness And Being*, Illustrated edition. Duke University Press, 2016.

Links

Barrett, Gregory. "Edinburgh's Calton Hill shows that not even buildings are safe from the tide of populism". City Monitor. 29 June 2017, citymonitor.ai/environment/edinburghs-calton-hill-shows-not-even-buildings-are-safe-tide-populism-3127

Judah, Hettie. "We have liftoff: Edinburgh Observatory embarks on a new mission". The Guardian. November 21st 2018, theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/nov/21/edinburgh-collective-art-gallery-city-observatory-calton-hill

Sheldon, Matthew. "Nelson on a Pedestal". The National Museum Royal Navy, nmrn.org.uk/news-events/nelson-pedestal

Williams, Lisa. "*Sugar, ships and science: The City Observatory and Caribbean commerce*". Collective Edinburgh. 2020, collective-edinburgh.art/programme/collective-observations-lisa-williams

Various. "River Clyde Industrial Growth". Wikipedia. Last edited June 27th 2021, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/River_Clyde#Industrial_growth

geo.nls.uk/maps/douglass/index.html

ucl.ac.uk/lbs/maps/britain#zoom=9&lng=-3.437347&lat=55.845446&show=markers

uncover-ed.org/curiousedinburgh.org/uncovered/

Credits

Whiteness & Race

ASSEMBLED BY

Andy Summers and Liane Bauer

EDITED BY

Andy Summers and Liane Bauer

DESIGNED BY

Fiona Hunter, Neil McGuire and
Andy Summers

FRONT COVER ILLUSTRATION BY

Dhamintha Wickremasinghe

PUBLISHED BY

Architecture Fringe CIC

PRINTED BY

J.Thomson Colour Printers Ltd.

The Architecture Fringe 2021

Production Team:

*Raina Armstrong, Liane Bauer,
Louisa Butler, Shona Common,
Matthaios Lymperopoulos, Neil
McGuire, Scott McAulay, Andy
Summers and Rūta Turčinavičiūtė*

© ARCHITECTURE FRINGE CIC

architecturefringe.com

Acknowledgements

Our sincere thanks to our wonderful contributors for sharing their experiences, ideas and imaginations in joining us in this work.

Thank you, too, to our supportive and attentive audience.

We thank our funders and supporters for enabling this work.

Special thanks go to the Architecture Fringe volunteer production team for their imagination, commitment and resolve in continuing to explore and expand a critical culture of architecture.



Funded by:



Supported by:



moxon

COLLECTIVE
ARCHITECTURE

helen lucas
ARCHITECTS