A MEMORIAL IN NEW HAVEN FOR THOSE AFFECTED BY COVID-19 THROUGH THE LENS OF SOCIAL JUSTICE

ON MEMORY: A DESIGN BRIGADE PROJECT

We would like to dedicate this guidebook to the lives of those lost to COVID-19.
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COVID-19 continues to bring great loss to the City of New Haven. The pandemic has taken away traditional ways of remembering those who have passed: funerals and memorials have been limited due to social distancing, and safety precautions have removed spaces to commemorate those who have valiantly fought the virus on the frontlines. Many people have not even been able to say goodbye to their isolated loved ones, and the ensuing financial crisis has wrought socio-economic devastation to whole neighborhoods. There is a need for a way to process and heal from the collective traumas of this moment.

As the pandemic began to hit New Haven, Adriane Jefferson, the Director of Cultural Affairs, began thinking about a COVID-19 Memorial for the city after some discussions with members of the Community Wellbeing Committee. Simultaneously, one member of the Committee, Ming Thompson, the co-founder of a New Haven architecture firm called Atelier Cho Thompson, was formulating the idea for a program called Design Brigade. In collaboration with Dana Karwas at the Yale Center for Collaborative Arts and Media (CCAM), Ming started this program to bring together design students to work on the new spatial problems of the pandemic era. The idea for a COVID-19 memorial became one of the three Design Brigade projects in the summer of 2020, and was taken on by our team, a group of undergraduate and graduate students pursuing art and architecture.

We began working on this memorial project at the beginning of June. Our initial conversations were held in the week after George Floyd’s murder. Around the same time statistics nationwide were making clear the disproportionate impacts of this virus on Black and brown communities. There was no question that this project could not address the pandemic without keeping in mind the already existing inequalities that plague our city and our nation.

We have created this guidebook to pass onto the next group of people working on this project. The aim of this document is to compile the information, ideas, and wisdom that we have gathered from working on this project over the last couple of months. We hope that this can be a helpful resource for continuing engagement and planning for this project going forward. Neither of these processes are complete, but hopefully the work that we have done can serve as the foundation for a memorial that truly serves the New Haven community and honors the struggles it has endured during this pandemic.
This project aligns with a moment of national political reckoning of what monuments and memorials mean, what they represent, and what their roles are in our communities. As such, we acknowledge that "memorial" may not be the right word for what this project aims to accomplish. We hope the resulting space will serve as a catalyst for healing and gathering, as well as a place that celebrates the togetherness, resilience and compassion expressed by New Haven in this time. The work we have done is very much foundational, but we have defined our process and approach as inclusive, respectful, and sensitive to the many experiences of COVID. We hope it continues to be this way.

A question that has guided our design and research is: How do we define a memorial for New Haven at this moment? One of our mentors told us to embrace the approach of “curating, not designing”. And so, instead of designing exactly what this memorial will be, we have created a framework for engagement that can morph as the situation unfolds, and the needs and experiences of New Haven change.
We are a team of Yale University undergraduate and graduate students working in partnership with the City of New Haven. Our project began as a digital and physical memorial for the city’s experience with coronavirus and transformed—along with the changing political climate of the nation—into something that directly addresses the disproportionate impact the pandemic had on the elderly, Black, and Brown communities in New Haven.

MISSION
Design a memorial for those affected by COVID-19 through the lens of social justice.

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We cannot emphasize enough the importance of engaging the people of New Haven from the fundamental stages onward. For the duration of the Design Brigade internship, we have been pondering the difference between designing “for” and designing “with” the city, and a key part of this aspiration involves the establishment of an Advisory Committee.

The Advisory Committee for the Covid-19 Memorial will be composed of community leaders of New Haven residents, representatives from the Department of Cultural Affairs, and representatives from the Design Brigade. This action is essential to the development of the COVID-19 Memorial Art Park, as the committee ensures that representatives of the three stakeholder branches all have decision-making power over this park. The Committee is tasked with coordinating the creation of the Covid-19 Memorial and upholding the values of accountability, transparency, and equanimity.

Starting members of the project’s Advisory Committee are:
Devin Avshalom-Smith (New Haven resident community)
Adrianne Jefferson (Department of Cultural Affairs)
Ming Thompson (Design Brigade)

The starting members are responsible for adding new members to their own branch. The branches are expected to be in constant dialogue when allocating tasks and pushing the project forward. While each of the branches has its own areas of expertise and unique ways to contribute to this memorial project, all members of the advisory committee should be informed of what is happening among each branch. For example, community leaders should be involved in design reviews, and design consultants should be able to engage the city government through the Department of Cultural Affairs.
Through research, community outreach, and interviews, our team has sought to learn more about the impact of the coronavirus on New Haven and what characteristics New Haveners would like to see in a new space or memorial. This research was the basis upon which we built our memorial proposals, informing the goals and structure of our design ideas.
The City of New Haven has 2,639 confirmed and possible cases of COVID-19, 29% of the impacted individuals are African American.

100 of the total cases for the City resulted in death, 45% of those who died of COVID-19 are African American.

Fair Haven and The Hill are neighborhoods who have felt the brunt of the virus.
AFFECTED NEIGHBORHOODS

Dixwell
The Hill
Fair Haven
Quinnipac Meadows

AFFECTED AREAS

New Hallville
Dwight
Edgewood
**May 16-24, 2020**

New Haven’s coronavirus death toll surpasses 100. 25 of the lives lost are residents of the Mary Wade nursing home. The virus continues to hit the elderly in a particularly lethal manner.

**May 25, 2020**

George Floyd, a 46-year-old Black American man, is killed in Minneapolis. His death triggers Black Lives Matter protests against police brutality and systemic racism that quickly engulf the nation.

**May 31, 2020**

An estimated 1000 peaceful protesters march from Broadway to the New Haven City Hall, chanting “No Justice, No Peace.” After a sit-in on the I-95, protesters occupy the steps of the police headquarters.

**June 1, 2020**

The start of our memorial project coincides with the escalation of this international justice movement.

**Takeaway from our first client meeting**

COVID-19 cannot be addressed in a vacuum. The memorial must confront the disproportionate impact the virus continues to have on elderly, Black and Brown communities.

**June 24, 2020**

The City of New Haven takes down the Christopher Columbus statue in Wooster Square Park, amid a sweeping movement to remove monuments and memorials symbolic of white supremacy.

**July 15, 2020**

Review with City, CMT Leaders, and Community Organizers

We the Design Brigade should take a step back to give community artists, activists, and leaders a seat at the table. The people of New Haven must have design and decision making power from here on out.
OUR TIMELINE

1. Start of internship
   - First meeting with Adriane Jefferson and the Department of Cultural Affairs

2. Initial meetings
   - Kyle Pederson (CT Department of Mental Health)
   - Brian Weeks (CT Department of Public Health)
   - Jeff Mansfield (MASS Design Group)

3. Research
   - Addys Castillo (Citywide Youth Coalition)
   - Daniel Fitzmaurice (Arts Council of Greater New Haven)
   - Steve Drifflin (ConniCAT)
   - Jonathan Brand (Founder of Northyn)
   - Sarah Fritchey (Artispace)
   - Colleen Murphy: Dunning and Chris Orzyk (Urban Resources Initiative)
   - Devin Ashalom-Smith (Newhallville Community Action Network)

4. Cultural projects
   - Hope Chávez and Jacob Padro (Long Wharf Theatre)
   - Meeting #2 with Adriane Jefferson and Cultural Affairs
   - Clarissa Diaz (WNYC)
   - Survey: Tower One Assisted Living

5. Design and planning
   - Gage Frank (Out of Communications, City of NH)
   - Rob Goldman (Educator/Artist)
   - Hanifa Washington (One Village Healing
   - Elihu Rubin (Yale Architecture)
   - Leslie Radcliffe (Hill North CMT)

6. Leadership involvement
   - Paul Bryant Hudson (Musician, Artist)
   - Meeting #2 with Devin (NCAN)
   - Presentation to Cultural Affairs Commission
   - Turner Brooks and Adam Hopfner (Yale Architecture)
   - Eliehu Rubin

7. Cultural initiatives
   - Design presentation to Dept. of Cultural Affairs and community leaders
   - Eliehu Rubin

8. Recap
   - Future steps meeting with Adriane Jefferson

9. Leadership engagements
   - Presentation to Mayor Justin Elicker
   - Marissa Mead (Swigals + Partners)
   - Karen Dalbois-Walton (Storytellers of New Haven)
   - Katherine Jacobs (Chief Landscape Architect, City of NH)

10. Continued collaboration
    - Bill Ferrahnik (Radiant Features)
    - Meeting #3 with Devin (NCAN)
With each conversation, we expanded our contact network. However, we do not claim this outreach process to be complete. The chart here gives you an overview of who we have met with, and who we believe could be important partners and should be included as the project progresses (denoted by the asterisks). Continuing to build on relationships with arts groups, Community Management Teams, and other community organizations will be essential moving forward.
outreach should be at uncomfortable depths
what does sensitive and respectful outreach look like remotely?
architecture is never neutral
reflect
align intentions
advisory committee of community members
healing
this virus is felt differently along lines of race, class, and age
this pandemic doesn’t exist in a vacuum
clear, open, honest communication with clients and partners
people are mourning alone
how do we reimagine ‘memorial’?
how can we serve the neighborhoods hardest hit by the virus?
gardens are spaces of revitalization, regrowth, and calm
bring in the community at every level
art builds community
New Haven has so much creative talent
symbolism is not enough
space is a service
space to grieve
be transparent about intention and timeline
involve local artists and creators
We have been working within the capacities of this project and the pandemic to represent the diversity of those impacted by COVID-19. Our outreach is grounded in the aim of listening, learning, and really emphasizing the idea of designing with and not for the community.

Because of the pandemic, most of our conversations were held over Zoom video calls, but we did bring a series of boards and post-its to survey attendees of the Juneteenth March and Teach In. The formatting of these boards corresponds to our immediate response idea. Hopes for greenspace and art were reflected again and again in our ensuing conversations, and directly informed our final propositions.
The intentions of our proposals are a combination of the ideas that emerged from our many conversations:

▷ Most importantly, this memorial must be, not only a symbolic monument, but a service for the communities most deeply affected by this crisis. For this reason, we are pushing for the creation of a permanent space.

▷ We aim to provide a non-prescriptive space — one that doesn’t tell people how they need to feel or process this moment, but invites people to come together and heal.

▷ We must honour the struggle of this time. Yes, it is a time of great fear and heartache, but it is also one of community compassion, bravery and resilience.
PHASE 1 OF OUR DESIGN WORK

In our meetings with city leaders, the discussion was primarily framed around two pairs of contrasts: the first is whether the memorial is an immediate or a long-term design solution, and the second is whether the memorial should be sited at a single location or multiple locations—the former would attract people from various neighborhoods, while the latter may acknowledge the loss of those neighborhoods hit hardest by the pandemic.

In a greater picture, we see these qualifiers pointing to several directions for the memorial design in the course of time. Formulating possible narratives while avoiding any specific prototypes, we hope to envision scenarios that can bolster the long-term goal of a memorial aligned with the quest of New Haven’s resident community.

The four categories and designs are not mutually exclusive. These dichotomies are presented as conversation starters. Elements from multiple categories may be crossed over as needed.
The purpose for creating this site was to make sure everything we do is publicly accessible. The website allows us to present everything as transparently as possible and be accountable to the organizations and people we work with.

Given the short time frame of our internship, we hope this serves as an archive of what we’ve done, and will aid those picking up the work after our part is complete. It is something that our clients at the City and our community partners can continually refer to. Because the cargo site is easy to update, edit, and configure, we imagine this site to change overtime and adapt to the needs and changes of this project. Currently, there is little interest in the Virtual Healing space we proposed, but perhaps the website we have now can evolve to accommodate a virtual healing space and much more.
MULTI-PLATFORM & DIGITAL

VIRTUAL HEALING SPACE
The virtual memorial will honor, acknowledge, and provide a healing space for those who have been affected by Covid-19. Our proposal will have three main pages: Breath, Reflect, and Heal.

▷ **BREATHE:** There will be guided meditations and breathing exercises, as well as interactive breathing visualizers that guide you through your breath. Breath is vital to life and an awareness of breath is heightened in this time of pandemic and protest. To gather one’s breath is foundational to the healing process.

▷ **REFLECT:** This page will have archives, interviews, and testimonials from families and community members who have been affected by Covid-19. Visitors of the site will be able to tell their own stories and share with others.

▷ **HEAL:** Activity, community, and gathering is important to collective and individual healing. In this page, there will be a directory of healing spaces in New Haven. This includes Green spaces, breathing spaces, yoga studios, community events, and other resources.

The product could be in the form of a web app or phone app. It will be a constantly changing site that addresses the situations of this ongoing pandemic. While a digital memorial may be ideal for its immediacy and mutability, its audience and outreach will be determined by those who have access and desire to use this platform.
The Remediation & Art Park project would take a contaminated abandoned site, remediate the land, and create a park filled with pieces by local New Haven artists. Local artists would be commissioned to create pieces that speak to the experience of the pandemic for the community, and together these would form the art park. The commissioning of artworks will be ongoing for years to come. This project would provide dual healing—it would heal a piece of land while also allowing people to heal and reflect in this new green space.
MULTI-SITED & PHYSICAL

MOBILE HEALING SPACES
In the context of covid, the idea of a memorial is multi-sited since the pandemic has touched upon all neighborhoods in New Haven. As an intermediate memorial, we propose pop-up meditation, healing, and spaces of remembrance that are durable yet flexible. This recognizes the profound need for healing infrastructure in multiple neighborhoods. A recent precedent for this is the Juneteenth Altar to honor Black New Haven Women at the Goffe St. Armory. These mobile structures aim to accommodate varying weather conditions and encompass elements of shade/covering, seating/physical organization, and potentially elements of sound.

COMMUNITY GREEN HOUSES
The importance of gardens and greenspaces continues to come up a lot in our outreach. In an effort to have a system of localised memorial interventions into New Haven’s various neighborhoods, the City could potentially work with some of New Haven’s many community gardens in developing this memorial project. Our hope here is to present a ‘kit of parts’ for a structural additions that will be both beautiful and functional, such as shaded rest area, lamp posts, benches. The structure would then be assembled and decorated by the neighborhood as a group activity.

Gathering/Breathing Spaces  Building gardens together  Year-round community space
PHASE 2 OF OUR DESIGN WORK

Based on our outreach and research process, we narrowed our focus to two proposals that community partners and our clients at the City expressed interest in during our internship. However, we would like to invite future stakeholders to revisit the four directions posited during phase 1 if needed.

We see these not as two completely separate options, but two processes that could feed into one another. The first is an immediate, low-budget installation that garners participation and reflection from New Haveners. This could provide material and insight to inform and lead into the second proposal: a long-term art park project which would memorialize COVID-19 by creating memorial art gardens with customizable components as funding demands.
The immediate response is a collection of easy-to-assemble memorials as platforms for people to voice their thoughts and feelings, in order to address the ongoing pandemic situation and the lack of public, physical spaces to reflect and grieve.

Considering the nationwide impact of Covid-19, the general sentiment seems to be a push for reopening and normalcy. New Haven’s residents are hurting, and certain communities and individuals are more affected than others and are grieving from loss and struggle. The temporary memorials will shed light on our neighbor’s experiences. A defining aspect of these memorials is to provide spaces for anyone who feels inclined to write and leave memorabilia. We hope these interventions, in even the slightest ways, may hold space for the grieving and healing process. These quick to assemble memorials can spring up within days and will serve as platforms for people to voice themselves, communicate, and feel a sense of connection with the city. We also hope that by asking the right questions (as writing prompts), we may get an understanding of what people in New Haven want for a permanent memorial. The temporary memorials will be in multiple sites throughout New Haven and will bring the city together through a common platform and design.
The Immediate memorials can be simple interventions like transforming city walls into murals. These interventions will invite residents to memorialize how they want to memorialize.

Immediate Memorials can also be freestanding, made out of standard-size plywood, and easily assembled by local makers. Designs and content can be specific to each neighborhood and can be configured in different ways to encourage different forms of engagement.

These designs are very customizable, and materially, they are cost effective. The exterior plywood, lumber, and paints for the design on the right for example, costs roughly $500.

We anticipate that by asking the right questions (as writing prompts), we may get an understanding of how people in New Haven are feeling. Immediate memorials can also serve as moodboards. Moodboards are collections of visual and written materials collaged together to get a sense of how an individual or community is feeling at this moment.

From these responses, we may also gather enough voices to have a clearer picture of what people want for a more permanent memorial. We can also use this platform to share resources for healing. Such as, where to go for breathing and meditation spaces or where to apply for Covid relief funds. We can speak directly to the community about what the city is doing for a memorial, ask for people’s feedback, and inform residents of how they can be involved in the process of creating a more permanent memorial.
Using construction materials from the Home Depot, these immediate memorials can be assembled in a variety of ways and painted. Materials cost will be under $500 for each structure and the only tool that is needed is a drill gun. If saws are available, lengths for the shelves can be cut.

Writing prompts on display boards can come in the form of questions. These prompts invite residents to share their thoughts. These prompts can be generated through group discussions and feedback from the community so that the most relevant questions can be asked in the most sensitive ways. Waxed pencils and oil pastels can be left out or strung to the structure as writing utensils.

Information about how to get involved in the creation of the COVID-19 memorial and resources for those affected by the pandemic should be on the walls of these structures.
Participatory Public Platforms are ways to get the community engaged, informed, and allows people to voice themselves to their communities. These Platforms can range from one-time interventions to more durable installations.

The Feedback Boards we used for the Juneteenth March and Teach-In is a type of Participatory Public Platform. Some of the responses we got from people were not so much about the questions we asked, but about the boards themselves. They thought the boards were a great way to ask for feedback and create communal conversations in the time of social distancing.

Another example of a Participatory Public Platform was the Juneteenth Altar at Goffe Street Armory. This event was organized by CT-CORE and One Village Healing. Attendants were invited to leave memorabilia in honor and remembrance of those lost to Covid-19 and to the victims of social injustices.

The last example, Candy Chang’s Participatory Art Practice shows how eliciting public response can be a ritualistic and empathetic event. In her project “Before I Die,” she elicits people’s written desires by asking them to fill in the blank. There are over 5,000 of these “Before I Die” walls created by communities in 75 countries.
LONG-TERM RESPONSE

BROWNFIELD TO MEMORIAL ART GARDEN

In our outreach, we heard again and again that people wanted to see more art and more parks in their neighborhoods and communities. Both can be effective tools for processing trauma, reflecting, and healing. Putting these two components together for a suggested long-term response, we formulated the idea of a memorial art garden that showcases the work of local artists on remediated land.

New Haven has a wealth of creative and artistic talent. By creating a park and then sending out a call for artists to create works speaking to the experience of COVID-19, the City could utilize this talent to create a memorial that is tailored to a New Haven-specific experience of the current era.

We proposed that this park be sited on a remediated brownfield site, providing a public health service in response to a public health crisis. According to the EPA, “a brownfield is a property, the expansion, redevelopment, or reuse of which may be complicated by the presence or potential presence of a hazardous substance, pollutant, or contaminant.” Brownfields are a health threat to the neighborhoods they are sited within. They are an environmental justice issue, affecting low-income and communities of color disproportionately, similar to COVID-19. This pandemic has started a conversation around health equity and health justice, and cleaning up brownfields can be another piece of this conversation.

Imagine how powerful a message it could be to transform an unusable, diseased space into a space for remembrance, art, and green space. We could turn a toxic space, polluting the neighborhood, into a space of healing and restoration.
LONG-TERM RESPONSE

FIND AND ACQUIRE A SITE

The first step is to find a brownfield site in New Haven in need of remediation. Aicha Woods at City Plan and Helen Rosenberg of the City’s Economic Development Office are wonderful resources to gather information and insight into possible brownfield sites. Sites must be chosen and acquired through a process that includes the surrounding neighborhood. Their input and buy-in are vital for the success of this project.

APPLY FOR REMEDIATION FUNDING

The state and the federal government have grant programs for brownfield remediation. Federal funding sources include Brownfield Cleanup Grants, Multipurpose Grants, and EWDJT Grants through the EPA. There are also state grants and programs available. Binu Chandy is the Deputy Director of the Office of Brownfield Remediation and Development at the Connecticut Department of Economic and Community Development (DECD) and could be a good contact to reach out to to strategize funding for this project. Her email is binu.chandy@ct.gov and her phone number is (860) 500-2454. Through the Connecticut DECD and Department of Energy and Environmental Protection (DEEP), New Haven could apply to the Abandoned Brownfield Cleanup (ABC) Program, Brownfield Remediation and Revitalization Program (BRRP), Brownfield Municipal Grant Program, and Urban Sites Remedial Action Program. The DECD website also has a number of resources related to funding, regulations, and advice regarding liability related to brownfield sites.

LANDSCAPING

Create a low-maintenance landscaping strategy. Urban Resources Initiative (URI) could be a potential partner for this effort. According to the URI website, their Community Greenspace program “provides material supplies, technical advice, and classroom-based and hands-on training to support resident-driven community greening projects.”

CALL FOR ARTISTS

Send out a call for artists to create pieces that speak to the experience of the pandemic. This call should come from the Department of Cultural Affairs. Various national and local arts grants could be used to fund compensation for these artists. These artworks would then be sited in the newly remediated park to create the full memorial art garden.
LONG-TERM RESPONSE

OPTION 1: BASE PARK +
On the more budget conscious end of the spectrum we propose the creation of a small base park of 50,000. This seems to be the minimum for a modest park with few embellishments.

BUDGETARY ESTIMATES
Base park without arts funding $50,000
City Contractor + Project Manager + Interns $10,000 - $30,000
Engineering and additional costs $10,000+
ESTIMATED TOTAL $70,000 - $90,000

OPTION 2: ART GARDEN +
Parallel to the creation of the park, art is commissioned so once open to the public, it is a COVID-19 memorial art garden. This option is moderately priced and goes back to the idea of creating a base park for around 50,000 minimum.

BUDGETARY ESTIMATES
Base park without arts funding $50,000
City Contractor + Project Manager + Interns $10,000 - $30,000
Engineering and additional costs $10,000+
Artists $15,000 - $20,000/ea x 3
ESTIMATED TOTAL $115,000 - $135,000
OPTIONS:

**COMMUNITY MEMORIAL**

After the park and art are created, community organizations are funded to create workshops that feed into the mission of the COVID-19 memorial. This option, while the most expensive, is strongly recommended.

**MEMORIAL ART NETWORK**

Another budget conscious option is to use existing green space and commission 3 or more artists to create pieces that are dropped onto these existing sites.*

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**BUDGETARY ESTIMATES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Description</th>
<th>Cost</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Base park without arts funding</td>
<td>$50,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>City Contractor + Project Manager + Interns</td>
<td>$10,000 - $30,000</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering and additional costs</td>
<td>$10,000+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Artists</td>
<td>$15,000 - $20,000/ea x 3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community Organization Support for workshops and arts outreach</td>
<td>$5,000/ ea x 4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**ESTIMATED TOTAL**

$135,000 - $155,000

*As a reminder with this option, every community park and green space in New Haven has its own purpose and identity. Seeking these existing locations would require consent from the community around them.
FUNDING

PRELIMINARY LIST OF AVAILABLE GRANTS

- Mayor’s Neighborhood Cultural Vitality Grant Program: $2,500—$5,000
- Could Be Fund: $2,000-$25,000 and 1:1 matching
- Elm City Innovation Collaborative Grant: $10,000 and 1:1 matching
- Springboard for the Arts Placemaking Grant: Varied
- Community Foundation of New Haven: $7,500 micro grants and special grants up to $45,000. Can be paired with other 1:1 grants
- Our Town Grant: National Endowment of the Arts: 1:1 grants from $25,000 to $150,000, minimum cost share/match equal to the grant amount
- CT State and Bond Funding: $100,000 +/-

ANNUAL GRANT MODEL

The Architectural League: Folly/Function

A design-build competition organized with Socrates Sculpture Park

“The Folly/Function competition is jointly run with Socrates Sculpture Park. It challenges architects and designers to design and build a large-scale project for public exhibition at Socrates. Folly was launched to explore the intersections and divergences between architecture and sculpture. In 2016, the competition was renamed Folly/Function and shifted in emphasis to asking entrants to create lasting designs that improve the conditions in the park.” (https://archleague.org/folly-function/)

EXAMPLES OF PAST ENTRIES

They range from permanent to impermanent depending on the funding available and the evolving necessities or objectives of the park.
SPECIAL THANKS

We want to offer a special thanks to Ming Thompson and Dana Karwas for arranging the Design Brigade and for their unending support; as well as our mentors Celia, Keith, Justin and Aaron for their patience, attentiveness, and wisdom.

To Adriane Jefferson, the Department of Cultural Affairs, and Devin Avshalom-Smith, thank you for the encouragement, honesty, and trust you have given us since day one. We are incredibly grateful, and excited to see where this project goes under your guidance.

Lastly, we’d like to thank everyone who has taken the time to meet with us, whether as an external advisor, or as someone with a personal stake in this project. The stories we’ve heard, the conversations we’ve had on diversity, race and inclusivity, and the dedication each individual exhibits to this community has inspired us every step of the way.