



Mark Bradford envisions a kind of map referencing the urban sprawl of Los Angeles.

JUSTICEscape

Fall 2020

LA 4990 – 01

Class Number: 72026

3 units; Fully Synchronous

Mondays 6:00 PM – 8:45 PM (Lecture)

Instructor:

Nina Briggs / nmbriggs@cpp.edu

Office Hours: W/F 9 AM – 11 AM by appt

As we educate ourselves, hold each other accountable, and build solidarity in the pursuit of embrace public space design, equitable representation and consideration of all peoples in landscape architecture, we center our attention on social justice, examining and dismantling systemic canons founded on Eurocentric, white supremacy, and work to create a genuinely accessible public realm.

Although BIPOC is the current, ubiquitous acronym for ‘Black, Indigenous and People of Color’ (PoC, the acronym meant to combine all non-whites into a convenient monolith - including the truncated terms Latinx and Asians), we question these designated, flattened labels bypassing identity recognition, intersectionality and multiplicity. The nomenclature and discourse of JUSTICEscape rebuffs euphemisms while stipulating that Black Lives Matter and advocating for the place-keeping of cultural spaces. In building community and shifting language and framings from ‘diversity’ to ‘equitable representation’ – from ‘race’ to ‘humankind’ and/or ‘global citizens’ – from ‘inclusion’ to ‘belonging’ – from ‘minority’ to ‘majority’ (according to a census section of White people - Wikipedia, there are 850 million whites in the world which is about 11.5% of the world population), we challenge the existing, insidious social contract in order to lay new groundwork for an ‘EVERY’-body politic.

We trace the historical trajectory from socioeconomic access and mobility to the privatization and consumerization of public space and institutional goods as hoarding vehicles to maintain privilege, using race as the camouflaged driver of capitalism. We confront the hypocrisies of these processes to reveal denied facts and reclaim our value as tellers, keepers and preservers of our own histories and stories. We disassemble the illusions of the empire and decolonize inequitable structures, unmasking the intrinsic racial hierarchies that persist in the making of the built environment.

Through the power of discourse, narrative and ‘making’ assignments – research papers, debates, systems mapping, experiential prose, and graphically collaged stories – students will speak truth to power, ask difficult questions, and assert their inherent worth as global citizens and designers. Students will also craft a digital children’s book derived from the intersecting, social and urban systems researched to contextualize and illustrate landscapes devoid of erasure, marginalization, assimilation, homogenization, colonization, and dehumanization. We maintain that these obstacles are surmountable as we acknowledge the full humanity and rich contributions of all global citizens, while simultaneously recognizing that colonial history shapes the current inequalities that structure society. We need to be able to hold these multiple realities at once, as they are the keys to unlocking and supporting our future visions for a just landscape and a healthy environment. As we challenge disfunction, engage in uncomfortable, and nuanced conversation, and find comfort in truth, we shall build communities of well-being and resilience in coexistence with the natural world, exercising our pleasure and responsibility as designers to ethically reshape the landscape.

All CPPLA Faculty are welcome to audit any of the LA 4990 Zoom class sessions. Contact Nina Briggs at nmbriggs@cpp.edu for details. All attendees should read and consent to the JUSTICEscape Manifesto below prior to attending. In the interest of privacy and providing a ‘safe space’ for students to freely express themselves, Zoom sessions will be recorded, but not publicly posted, unless authorized by the students.

JUSTICEscape FAQs & FSSs

WHAT DOES JUSTICE AND ANTI-RACISM HAVE TO DO WITH LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE?

Cities and landscapes are outcomes of the social and political priorities of their time; historically, these have leaned toward enforcing control and separation, and toward maximizing profit and production over community and wellbeing. While planners, urbanists, landscape architects and designers have made significant progress in humanizing our cities, racial inequity persists - even in progressive, liberal “livable” cities - it is historically and literally baked into the country’s landscape. The built environment manifests our cultural identity and power structure. Our nation was constructed through a Eurocentric lens, built on racial hierarchy. A misleading historical image of the US was crafted, as the conquest of Indigenous people and use of enslaved labor is disregarded. Acknowledging past injustice is a crucial step in reframing and restoring justice. From land grabs to legal loopholes, a complex and deliberate system of policy and planning has increased inequity among BIPOC. The results today are disproportionate burdens related to mobility, access, poverty, unemployment, homelessness, public safety, public health, food insecurity, environmental injustice, and the pursuit of happiness. Spatial inequalities remain obvious, intricately knitted into our systems, and untangling these complexities – reckoning with the true American story and history is fraught, but also necessary. Design professionals alone, of course, are not to blame. But as a community of talented, resourceful people who generally see themselves as open-minded problem solvers, designers can wield their limited power, influence, and responsibility to help deconstruct inequity. Now is the time to engage in difficult conversations and to reframe how we build and unbuild communities and spaces. We must move toward design justice, end the systemic power structures that enable oppressive spaces, and rethink how we build neighborhoods that liberate and celebrate disenfranchised communities - protect and strengthen their culture, stories, and sacred places.

I’M NOT A RACIST; I’M A NICE PERSON; RACISM HAS NOTHING TO DO WITH ME.

We’ve been socialized to regard a racist as someone who consciously and intentionally seeks to harm people based upon their race. This is of course offensive, and we become defensive when we are accused of being racist. However, the possible racism one has either unconsciously or unintentionally perpetrated, was harmful to other people, nonetheless. We all have been shaped by race and racism. When we change our understanding of what it means to be racist, we will no longer be defensive. Understanding what racism is, is actually liberating - it’s transformative. Defending, deflecting, denying, and explaining, gives way to acknowledging the impossibility of not being impacted by the society in which we live. Once acknowledged, one can begin working to identify the inevitability of being socialized in a hierarchical system. Then one can self-reflect on not if, but how one has been shaped by that system.

I’M NOT A BIPOC, SO RACISM DOESN’T HURT ME

Racism affects every member of a society, not only the victims. When racism corrupts public policy, it impedes economic growth and harms everyone, including those the policy is supposed to benefit. Only when all members of a society are treated equally and fairly will the country prosper culturally and economically. The position of supremacy is inherently dehumanizing to individuals in the dominant group, in addition to the terrible costs to the subordinated group. Our full humanity can only be realized in full community with other human beings - in situations of reciprocity, equity, fairness, and mutuality.

WHY DON’T WHITE LIVES MATTER?

"All lives matter" or "White lives matter" is a response to the phrase "Black lives matter", sometimes an effort to negate #BlackLivesMatter. There has never been a dispute about whether white lives mattered. History shows that. Statistics show that. Saying “All Lives Matter” allows a nostalgic feeling of comfort. “Black Lives Matter” makes some *uncomfortable*. Why? Because it reminds us that a race problem exists. It reminds us that the experience of non-BIPOC is beneficially different from the experience of BIPOC in America.

HOW CAN NON-BIPOC BE COMPLICIT IN RACIST SYSTEMS WITHOUT RECOGNIZING THEIR OWN RACISM?

Racism is what happens when you back one group's racial bias with legal authority and institutional control. When you back one group's collective bias with that kind of power, it is transformed into a comprehensive system. It becomes the default. It's automatic. It's not dependent on your agreement or belief or approval. It's circulating 24/7, 365. Racism is the foundation of the society we are in. And to simply carry on with no active interruption of that system is to be complicit with it. There is no neutral place.

HOW CAN I BECOME A BETTER NON-BIPOC ALLY?

Do not ask a BIPOC to educate you. This work is on you. Questions about systemic racism are not bad or forbidden, and honest, open-minded dialogues about the current movements are encouraged, but only *after* you've done the work mentioned above, and the research to learn about both. There are plenty of resources available to non-BIPOC allies to educate themselves. Please understand that the BIPOC you're asking for help have had to answer the same questions throughout their entire life. It's also important to realize that people of color suffer from prejudice and microaggressions that white people do not face, and recent events have only triggered existing traumas and opened new wounds. So, white allies’ responsibility is to be as informed and educated as possible. Before you ask or act, first investigate, making sure your work has commenced *before* approaching BIPOC with comments about race. Ask if the person you’re asking has the mental and emotional bandwidth to discuss and share – and compassionately accept a ‘no’ answer if given. True allyship is not just talk. It is about the work. It is an active process. And that process belongs to everyone, regardless of whether we want to engage or not.

JUSTICEscape MANIFESTO

As we educate ourselves, hold each other accountable, and build solidarity in the pursuit of embrace public space design, equitable representation and consideration of all peoples in landscape architecture, we center our attention on social justice, examining and dismantling systemic canons founded on Eurocentric, white supremacy, and work to create a genuinely accessible public realm. We trace the historical trajectory from socioeconomic access and mobility to the privatization and consumerization of public space and institutional goods as hoarding vehicles to maintain privilege, using race as the camouflaged driver of capitalism. We confront the hypocrisies of these processes to reveal denied facts and reclaim our value as tellers, keepers and preservers of our own histories and stories. We disassemble the illusions of the empire and decolonize inequitable structures, unmasking the intrinsic racial hierarchies that persist in the making of the built environment.

Through the power of discourse, narrative and 'making' assignments – research papers, debates, systems mapping, experiential prose, and graphically collaged stories – students will speak truth to power, ask difficult questions, and assert their inherent worth as global citizens and designers. Students will also craft a digital children's book derived from the intersecting, social and urban systems researched to contextualize and illustrate landscapes devoid of erasure, marginalization, assimilation, homogenization, colonization, and dehumanization. We maintain that these obstacles are surmountable as we acknowledge the full humanity and rich contributions of all global citizens, while simultaneously recognizing that colonial history shapes the current inequalities that structure society. We need to be able to hold these multiple realities at once, as they are the keys to unlocking and supporting our future visions for a just landscape and a healthy environment. As we challenge disfunction, engage in uncomfortable, and nuanced conversation, and find comfort in truth, we shall build communities of well-being and resilience in coexistence with the natural world, exercising our pleasure and responsibility as designers to ethically reshape the landscape.

 <p>WE REFUSE TO BE INDIRECTLY TAUGHT RACISM & WE LOVINGLY CULTIVATE THE VALUE OF BIPOC.</p>	<p>Sage <i>Salvia officinalis</i> health, purity, wisdom</p>	 <p>WE VOW TO KEEP THIS SPACE SAFE. WE CLAIM OUR RIGHTS TO SHOW UP AS OUR FULLY AUTHENTIC SELVES WITHOUT HAVING TO CODE SWITCH, SHRINK OR BE QUIET.</p>	<p>Mistletoe <i>Viscum album</i> a meeting space where no violence could take place</p>
 <p>SHAME IS NOT AN EFFECTIVE SOCIAL JUSTICE TOOL AND IS INHERENTLY DEHUMANIZING. Being held accountable for racism and experiencing shame around that is not the same as being shamed about racism. Shame is the intensely painful feeling or experience believing that we are flawed and therefore unworthy of love, belonging and connection.</p>	<p>Star of Bethlehem <i>Ornithogalum</i> atonement, reconciliation</p>	 <p>WHITE SUPREMACY LIVES IN A SCARCITY MINDSET – WE CHOOSE TO LIVE IN ABUNDANCE.</p>	<p>Blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>: fate, protection, hope against adversity, good fortune</p>
 <p>THERE IS NO (NEUTRALITY) IN-BETWEEN INEQUITY & EQUITY. A racist idea suggests that a racial group is inferior or superior to another racial group - connoting racial hierarchy. The opposite is an idea that connotes racial equality - that challenges racial hierarchy - all racial groups are equals & there's no in-between racial equality & racial hierarchy. There's only a racist idea & an anti-racist idea.</p>	<p>Gardenia <i>Gardenia jasminoides</i> trust, clarity, purity</p>	 <p>AS WE RESIST OPPRESSION & FIGHT FOR JUSTICE, WE REMEMBER THAT JOY IS THE TRUE RESISTENCE.</p>	<p>Yarrow <i>Achillea millefolium</i> healing, inspiration</p>
 <p>WE CHOOSE TO PROTECT OTHERS IN LIEU OF CHOOSING TO PROTECT OUR OWN EGOS.</p>	<p>Aloe vera <i>Aloe barbadensis</i> healing, protection</p>	 <p>WE EXERCISE SELF-CARE PERSONAL WELL-BEING, EMOTIONAL LITERACY AND EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE. We will not deny the personal fallout that takes a toll on BIPOC, and in fact, we will value these personalized stories – we cannot remove ourselves – it's all personal.</p>	<p>Lavender <i>Lavandula</i> relaxation, comfort</p>
 <p>WE'RE NOT HERE TO BE RIGHT, WE'RE HERE TO GET IT RIGHT.</p>	<p>Phlox <i>Phlox paniculata</i> harmony</p>	 <p>WE SERVE THE CAUSE OF JUSTICE, FREEDOM AND LIBERTY FOR ALL.</p>	<p>Black-eyed Susan <i>Rudbeckia hirta</i> justice</p>
 <p>OUR ANTI-RACISM WORK IS THE WORK OF BECOMING BETTER HUMANS TO OTHER HUMANS.</p>	<p>Elderberry <i>Sambucus</i> compassion</p>	 <p>NO DENIAL, NO COGNITIVE DISSONANCE. WE WILL HOLD TWO OR MORE COMPETING IDEAS SIMULTANEOUSLY. We vow to be willing, vulnerable and to acknowledge our privilege and admit racism – to be anti-racist is to admit when we're being racist.</p>	<p>Flaming Katy <i>Kalanchoe blossfeldiana</i> eternal love and persistence</p>
 <p>WE WILL SCRUTINIZE OURSELVES AND SOCIETY, AND WHILE DOING SO, CHANGE BOTH. Everyone has the capacity to be anti-racist – the capacity for self-awareness to learn and grow.</p>	<p>Common sword-lily <i>Gladiolus italicus</i> strength of character, honor, conviction</p>	 <p>DANGER IS REAL, BUT FEAR IS A CHOICE – WE CHOOSE COURAGE.</p>	<p>Starflower <i>Borago officinalis</i> courage</p>
 <p>WE WILL LEAN INTO DIFFICULT CONVERSATIONS.</p>	<p>Common sugarbush <i>Protea repens</i>: courage, transformation, daring, resourcefulness</p>	 <p>WE DIVEST OURSELVES OF PREDISPOSITIONS, STEREOTYPING AND GENERALIZATIONS. We will step into reality and recognize what's happen to ourselves and to other people. "<i>Racist ideas separate people from reality.</i>" Jonathan Metzle, Dying of Whiteness</p>	<p>Peony <i>Paeonia suffruticosa</i> compassion, good relationships</p>