

RON MORRISON

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BIO

Ron Morrison is a designer, artist, and urbanist. His practice works to create strategies using art and design that help people understand how urban systems work and how to act within their fissures and inconsistencies. From these dissonant spaces we learn to rework and retune systems towards an increased potential for collaboration and action. With a strong background in community development and social advocacy, he believes that people should have full access to shaping their cities and communities and sees design as a medium for creating knowledge and moving beyond paralysis in the face of complexity. From building open source platforms to upend the continued practice of solitary confinement to crafting community based archives to combat gentrification, his work investigates cartographies of slow violence, dispossession, embodied data, and blackness. He has been a collaborator with design teams that implemented projects in New Orleans, Ghana, Colombia, Ethiopia, New York, and Venice and has had work featured in AIA New York, the UN World Urban Forum, and the Tribeca Film Festival. Based in New York, he has worked in a wide range of roles within strategic design, collaborating with such organizations as The Center for Urban Pedagogy, Transportation Alternatives, and the Association of Neighbors and Housing Development. Ron holds degrees in Psychology and Gender Studies, as well as a graduate degree in Design and Urban Ecologies from Parsons School of Design. He currently teaches in the School of Design Strategies at Parsons School of Design.

EXPERIENCE

- Adjunct Professor**, Parsons School of Design 8/16-present
Engage students in reading and discussion to exercise focus on analyzing how design shapes - and is shaped by - everyday experience. Primary emphasis is placed on introducing skills in strategic or motivated observation. Encourage students to develop strength in close reading and analysis, critical thinking and academic writing.
- Founding Partner: Design Lead**, Thread Count Creative 4/15-present
Thread Count is a creative studio aimed at using design and systems thinking to retune social and ecological infrastructures. At the intersection of systemic change, sustainability and design, our work creates innovative approaches to service design. We believe design offers new potential to encourage behavioral change and shape societal values.
- Steward + Artist Fleet Member**, People's Collective (Formerly Climate) Arts 8/15- present
Collaborate with artists, social justice organizations, and cultural workers to show intersectional connections between movements for justice and liberation through arts engagement.
- Independent Design Strategist + Media Artist** 3/13- present
Collaborate with diverse teams of researchers, educators, artists, and non-profits to craft conceptual and design based approaches towards developing interactive multimedia art projects. Such projects include Solitary Gardens, The Argus Project, and Hidden Treasures of Orange to address larger issues of solitary confinement, police brutality, and community archiving against gentrification.
- Founding Partner: Design + Tech Lead**, SMS Care 9/15- 1/17
SMS Care works to transform access to health within developing countries. We combine strategies from design, ethnographic research and data science to identify and support parents of children with preventable disability.
- Creative Collaborator**, Design Culture Lab 6/14-8/16
Developed the initial concept, design strategy, and field research for the POC Survival Guide to Public Space project. The project is a collaborative platform sharing the stories, experiences, and knowledge of people of color as they navigate public space. Stories and interviews were used to produce a digital archive and interactive map.
- Public Space Project Coordinator**, Transportation Alternatives 4/14-9/15
Managed collaborative projects aimed at gathering various stakeholders to optimize the availability and quality of public space in New York City. Led the design and research strategies needed to actualize projects from ideation to implementation working with the Project for Public Spaces and the NYC Department of Transportation.
- Graduate Teaching Assistant**, Parsons School of Design: DESIS LAB 8/14-12/14
Assisted in a joint studio class uniting Parsons School of Design with local community partners in Harlem's Sugar Hill area. The studio collaboratively designed shared initiatives that examined issues of urban spatial justice; the accessibility of public services; and alternate urban economies.

Design Intern, Center for Urban Pedagogy (CUP) 9/13- 8/14
Assisted in the research, production, and design of collaborative arts based projects that demystify urban processes and engage historically marginalized communities.

Communication Designer, Greater New Orleans Fair Housing Action Center 2/13-7/13
Collaborated with staff attorneys, policy analysts, and community outreach specialists to design accessible learning tools that demystified the processes of avoiding foreclosure & foreclosure scams, reporting race based discrimination, and the importance of fair housing laws.

Curriculum Designer, St. Claude LAB 3/13-5/13
Created an interactive, year long curriculum aimed at engaging middle school students to investigate their neighborhoods and surrounding urban spaces to formulate interpersonal responses to gentrification and changing neighborhood dynamics.

Design Fellow, Civic Center 5/11-8/12
Worked with co-founding artists Candy Chang and James Reeves to initiate and produce print, digital, and physical media installations for the public realm. Managed and formatted data for the "Before I Die" project. Oversaw administrative functions for the studio shop, and produced commercial products. Our clients included the Harvard Media Lab, Urban Omnibus, and Story Corps.

Teaching Artist, Sankofa HEAL Project 6/12
Created an interactive and visual design curriculum for 12 high school students working to create a community garden to provide a source for nutritional food and healthy living information. Facilitated classes teaching the fundamentals of design as a vehicle for community outreach.

Social Justice Program Coordinator, Hagar's House 8/09-10/12
Designed and facilitated a political education program for staff, residents, and volunteers. Utilizing popular education models we collectively investigated the root causes of poverty and the lack of access to housing. Acted as a point person for connecting residents with New Orleans based organizers and campaigns. Contributed to the professional development of the housing program by introducing new trainings for shifts in social work theory, and practice. Acted as a restorative justice based mediator for conflict between residents.

EDUCATION

Parsons the New School for Design, Class of 2015
(MS) Design and Urban Ecologies
Dean Merit Scholar

Università IUAV di Venezia, Summer 2014
Urbanisms of Inclusion

University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, Class of 2009
(BS) Psychology, (BS) Gender Studies

University of Ghana-Legon, Fall 2008
Survey of Africana Feminism and International Development

AWARDS

The Laundromat Project Create Change Artist Fellow 2017
MECATE Social Entrepreneur Fellow 2016
D-Prize Winner 2016
Parsons E-Lab Winner 2016
Eyebeam Art + Tech Studio Artist in Residence 2015
Center for Social Innovation Incubation Fellow 2014
Atlantis: Urbanisms of Inclusion Fellow 2014
American Institute of Architects NY Design for Free Speech Winner 2014
Mario Savio Young Activist Nominee 2010

SKILLS

Programs: Mac OSX, Adobe Creative Suite (Illustrator, Photoshop, InDesign, Bridge, Dreamweaver, Premiere, Audition) QGIS, Carto DB, Carto CSS, SQL, HTML, CSS, Mapbox, Wordpress, Social Media Platforms (Twitter, Facebook, Flickr, Vertical Response), Microsoft Office Suite

Practice: strategic design, visual communication, systems thinking, stakeholder analysis, design research, digital cartography, data management, critical theory, civic technology, participatory action research

SELECT PRESENTATIONS + EXHIBITIONS

Refest 2.0, NYU (ITP) 2017, New York, NY
Tribeca Film Festival: Storyscapes 2016, New York, NY
Project Row Houses 2016, Houston, TX
To Scale, Eyebeam Studios 2016, New York, NY
Allied Media Conference 2015, Detroit, MI
Future of Food in Harlem 2015, New York, NY
Nordes: Design Ecologies 2015, Stockholm, Sweden
U.N. World Urban Forum 2014, Medellin, Colombia
Theories and Practices of Designing Urban Transformation 2014, New York, NY
Post No Bills, Southern Graphics Conference 2012, New Orleans, LA

SELECT PUBLICATIONS

Morrison, Ron, "Research Notes from a Black Urbanist" , pARTicipatory Urbanisms 2016. University of California, Berkeley Press

Morrison, Ron et.al. (2014), "Fixing NYCHA's Maintenance Program" , Inam, Aseem (ed.):Designing for an Equitable New York