

New World Summit—Rojava, by the Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava and Studio Jonas Staal, is a new public parliament for the stateless government of Rojava in northern Syria used for international forums on sharing power and resources.

DESIGNING PEACE

MUSEUM EXHIBITION

June 10, 2022 – September 4, 2023

COOPER
HEWITT



Smithsonian Design Museum

INTRODUCTION

Around the world, people are facing vast social, environmental, and economic inequities, and dozens of conflicts continue, from the U.S.–Mexico border to the China Seas. Even as the global community aims to meet the United Nations 2030 Sustainable Development Goals—Goal 16 calls for the promotion of peace—these conflicts impact all our lives.

Peace building and design are dynamic processes which involve engagement, understanding context, trust-building, communication, and iteration. Cooper Hewitt’s exhibition *Designing Peace* will explore the role of design in building peace and resilience—and will propose that peace is not abstract and remote, but can be local, tangible, and even possible.

Organized by Cynthia E. Smith, Curator of Socially Responsible Design, with Caroline O’Connell, Curatorial Assistant, *Designing Peace* will examine the numerous ways designers are collaborating with individuals, communities, and organizations to create a more sustainable peace.

Through the exhibition and supporting programs, the museum seeks to create a conversation about how we might collectively design for peace, and to inspire action in our own lives and communities.



HUMANITARIAN DESIGN AT COOPER HEWITT

As the design museum of the Smithsonian Institution—the world’s largest museum, education, and research complex—Cooper Hewitt’s mission is to educate, inspire, and empower people through design.

Our expertise in historical and contemporary design informs a wide range of exhibitions, education and public programs, publications, and interactive resources that advance public understanding of design as a life skill and a force for good.

Designing Peace continues Cooper Hewitt's humanitarian design exhibition series—which has included *Design for the Other 90%* and *By The People: Designing a Better America*—exploring how design can address social and economic inequities. This exhibition will highlight innovative approaches that aim to build and sustain peace around the world.

ABOUT THE EXHIBITION

Occupying Cooper Hewitt's largest gallery, the entirety of the mansion's third floor, *Designing Peace* will feature 40 design proposals, initiatives, and interventions from 30 countries, represented by objects, architectural models, full-size installations, images, film, and video games.

Visitors will encounter a wide range of design responses to the underlying reasons for conflict and division, such as socio-economic inequality, resource competition, and environmental degradation—and will be encouraged to consider their own agency in designing peace through interactive installations, quiet moments of reflection, and opportunities for practical action.

The exhibition will be organized into five sections, each asking a fundamental question about what it means to design for peace.

Maps (bullet rug) series, by DETEXT, uses discarded bullet shells collected in different locations to hand-weave rugs—exposing stories of international arms trafficking and military interventions.



EXHIBITION SECTION 1

HOW MIGHT DESIGN SUPPORT SAFE, HEALTHY, RESPECTFUL ENVIRONMENTS?



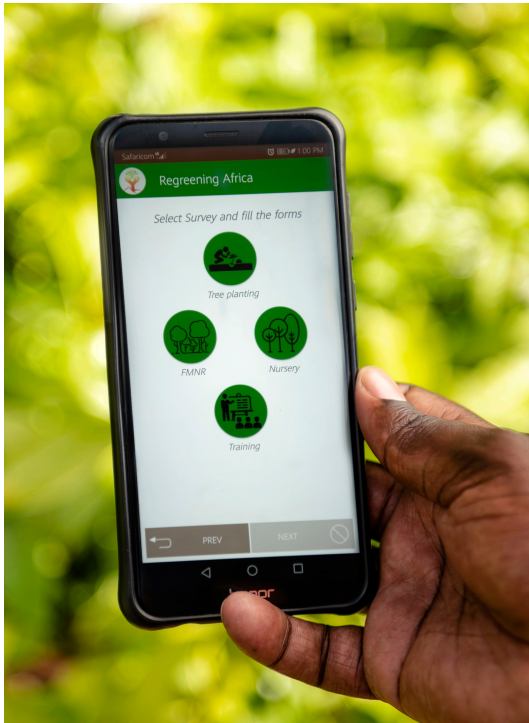
Teeter-Totter Wall, by Studio Rael San Fratello with Colectivo Chopeke, is a set of see saws installed through the slats of the U.S.-Mexico border wall, which encouraged meaningful interaction and dialogue across both sides.



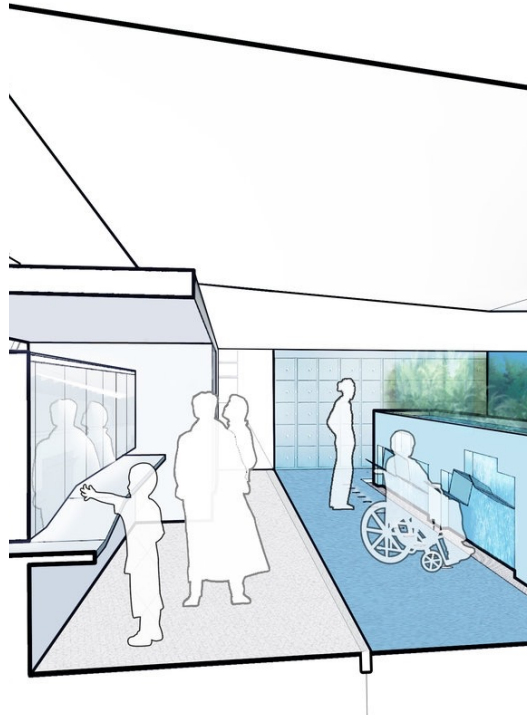
The Adventures of Daly graphic novels, by Lab 619, were designed collaboratively with vulnerable Tunisian youth helping them develop the skills necessary to understand and create alternative narratives to violent extremism.

EXHIBITION SECTION 2

HOW CAN DESIGN ADDRESS THE ROOT CAUSES OF CONFLICT?



Regreening Africa, by World Agroforestry, aims to improve livelihoods, food security, and climate resilience for millions of small farmers by restoring the ecosystem through sharing of local knowledge.



Stalled!, by JSA/MIXdesign addresses inequities around access to public restrooms and uses restroom redesign to generate broader conversations about the built environment, design, and social equity.



Lexicons of Hate Speech, by PeaceTech Lab, identifies and offers alternative words for regionally specific inflammatory language used to provoke strong and even violent reactions.

HOW CAN CREATIVE CONFRONTATION CHALLENGE EXISTING STRUCTURES AND THE STATUS QUO?



The extinction symbol, designed by an anonymous East London artist ESP, calls attention to the vast and growing problem of species decline. Its simple design, which can be easily replicated by anybody, is seen on flags, walls, and social media across the globe.



The Art the Arms Fair collective enlists artists and designers in creating work to expose the role of international arms trade in modern society.



One of the multitude of Black Lives Matter street murals created across the U.S., this double mural in Harlem was painted by eight artists and hundreds of local community members.

EXHIBITION SECTION 4

HOW MIGHT DESIGN EMBRACE TRUTH AND DIGNITY IN A SEARCH FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE?



Conflict Kitchen, by Jon Rubin, Dawn Weleski, and Brett Yasko, served cuisine from countries with which the United States was in conflict (Cuba, Afghanistan, Iran, etc.) and offered events, performances, and discussions to expand public engagement with the culture, politics, and issues at stake for each country.

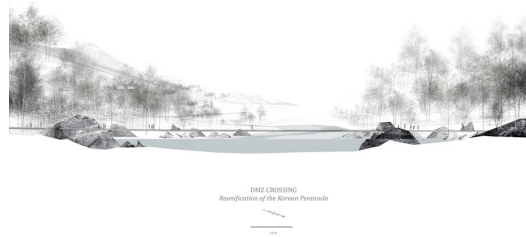


My Ancestors' Garden by Hood Design Studio memorializes the port of entry for nearly half of all enslaved Africans brought to North America. Its landscape design exposes what had been erased, revealing truths that have been long obscured.

HOW CAN DESIGN SUPPORT TRANSITIONS FROM INSTABILITY TO PEACE?



Stone Garden, by Lina Ghotmeh, is designed based on the architect's experience of living in a city in the aftermath of war, providing a constant reminder of what Beirut lived and an invitation to cherish life and cohesion.



Korea Remade, by a Harvard Graduate School of Design studio, explores alternative futures for a reunified Korea through landscape design, turning vestiges of war into social, economic, and cultural opportunities.



BLUE, a multi-year project by the Foundation for Achieving Seamless Territory, re-envisioned UN peacekeeping bases as catalysts for local development, providing communities with long-term solutions after the UN mission leaves.



EDUCATION AND PUBLIC PROGRAMS

Designing Peace will be accompanied by tours, conversations, hands-on workshops, online content, activities for students and educators, and more. These programs will extend the conversation beyond the museum galleries, offering learners of all ages opportunities to explore the themes in their own lives and bringing stakeholders together to expand the discourse on the possibilities of designing for peace.

Programs currently in development include panel discussions convening artists, activists, and designers whose work seeks to challenge the status quo and creatively inspire change. Cooper Hewitt's 2022 National High School Design Competition will ask students to develop and share their ideas for designing a more peaceful world.



PUBLICATION

A companion to the exhibition, *Designing Peace: Building a Better Future Now* is an intersectional snapshot of peace-seeking actions—culturally diverse and wide-ranging in scale—currently in play around the world.

This publication will offer perspectives on peace from activists, scholars, architects, policymakers, and graphic, game, and landscape designers. Through essays, interviews, critical maps, project profiles, data visualizations, and art, this publication conveys the momentum that design can generate in effecting a peace-filled future.

Designing Peace: Building a Better Future Now is the fourth in Cooper Hewitt's publications on socially responsible design which have accompanied our exhibition series—*Design for the Other 90%* (2007), *Design with the 90%: Cities* (2011), and *By the People: Designing a Better America* (2016).



REACH AND IMPACT

As part of the Smithsonian, Cooper Hewitt's impact extends across the country and the globe. Our collaborations with Smithsonian colleagues—at peer museums and centrally at the Office of International Relations, the *Learning Lab* portal, and others—leverage the Institution's reach and expertise.

Partnerships with community-based and design organizations nationwide amplify our core programs and help make design learning resources accessible to all. This year, we worked with The Point CDC in the Bronx, the Colorado Library Association, and the Boys & Girls Club of McAllen, TX, among others, to distribute more than 40,000 copies of our *Design At Home Activity Book*; while our partnerships with the Fashion Institute of Technology and SITE Architecture helped bring to life our acclaimed exhibition *Willi Smith: Street Couture*.

Extensive press coverage of our exhibitions and programs in national and international media outlets points to the impact of our work in elevating the power of design.

THANK YOU

To discuss partnership opportunities, please contact:

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