"DESIGNING PEACE" TO OPEN IN JUNE AT COOPER HEWITT
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This June, Cooper Hewitt, Smithsonian Design Museum will present "Designing Peace," an exhibition exploring the unique role design can play in pursuing peace. On view from June 10 through Sept. 4, 2023, the exhibition features design projects from around the world that look at ways to create and sustain more durable peaceful interactions—from creative confrontations that challenge existing structures to designs that demand embracing justice and truth in a search for reconciliation.

Organized by Cynthia E. Smith, curator of socially responsible design, with Caroline O'Connell, curatorial assistant, "Designing Peace" continues Cooper Hewitt's humanitarian design exhibition series exploring how design can address some of the world's most critical issues.

The exhibition opens at a critical juncture of current global dynamics, with people facing vast social, environmental and economic inequities, and dozens of continuing conflicts, from internal insurgencies, long-standing armed standoffs, territorial disputes and, most recently, the Russia-Ukraine war. This exhibition considers what might be possible if society were to design for peace and takes into account goal 16 of the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals, which calls directly for peace, justice and strong institutions through the elimination of hunger and poverty, improvements in health and education, the building of more resilient cities and infrastructure, the fostering of innovation, action on climate change and more.

"As America's design museum, Cooper Hewitt advances public understanding that design can be a force for good," Smith said. "Peace building and design are dynamic processes which involve engagement, understanding context, trust-building, communication and iteration. This exhibition will explore the role of design in building peace and resilience—and proposes that peace is not abstract and remote, but can be local, tangible and even possible."

"Designing Peace" will feature 40 design proposals, initiatives and interventions from 25 countries, represented by objects, models, full-size installations, maps, images and film. Visitors will encounter a wide range of design responses to the underlying reasons for conflict and division, such as socioeconomic 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.

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The exhibition is organized in five sections, each asking a fundamental question about what it means to design for peace:

How can design support safe, healthy, respectful environments?
A life-affirming, long-term approach to peace and security is one less concerned with militarization and more with safety, well-being and dignity for all. Design can support a culture that values and protects people, provides for fundamental needs, promotes healthy environments and respects diverse identities.

Among the projects on view in this section are Rael San Fratello's **Teeter-Totter Wall**, which featured three pink seesaws installed through the slats of the towering steel US-Mexico border wall to echo how movements and actions taken on one side of the border directly impacted the other; Colombia's **Christmas Operations** demobilization campaign, which brought floating orbs filled with messages from friends and family to the jungle's rivers, in an effort to persuade rebels to leave behind their weapons and come home; and the Design Studio for Social Intervention's co-created pop-up **Social Emergency Response Centers**, which bring communities together for mutual aid during social rather than natural emergencies. An interactive installation in the exhibition will invite visitors to consider when they experienced a social emergency in their own lives, how they were affected and what they did to respond.

How can design address the root causes of conflict?
Causes for armed conflict are complex, driven by social divisions, economic disparities and environmental and political factors. All are made more acute by a warming planet and a global pandemic. Design can play a significant role in building resilience, expanding access and challenging repressive systems to protect and improve lives globally.

Projects on view include the **Regreening Africa** mobile phone app, which enables local farmers to easily record and share their land restoration efforts in sub-Saharan Africa; Collaborative Architecture's **Peace Pavilion**, which flipped a national war museum competition brief to alter the discourse on war and nationalism; PeaceTech Lab's **Hate Speech Lexicons**, a series of handbooks that identify and explain conflict-provoking language, while offering alternative words and phrases that can be used to stop the spread of stop the spread of inflammatory language in media; and **New World Summit-Rojava**, designed by the Democratic Self-Administration of Rojava Studio and Studio Jonas Staal, featuring a circular, open public forum to embody the new democracy's foundational value of collective self-representation. Also on view will be the Institute for Economics and Peace's **Positive Peace Index**, which identifies the socioeconomic factors essential for durable peace. Visitors will encounter a series of actions (from planting a community garden to designing a better ballot) to design and build a more peaceful, just and inclusive world and are invited to take a postcard to share with friends and family.

How can design engage creative confrontation?
Not all conflict is damaging. Conflict can generate necessary change and improvements, especially when confronting unfair structures and systems. Creative confrontation can be transformative, making room for debate that allows for different voices and viewpoints. Provocative collaboration by designers, artists and activists has brought new attention to longstanding injustices.

This section features projects that acknowledge, address and challenge the status quo and existing structures, including **Maps (Bullet Rug Series)**, by DETEXT, which uses discarded bullet casings collected in different locations to weave shimmering rugs that tell hidden stories of international arms trafficking and military interventions; the **Black Lives Matter Harlem Street Mural**, one of eight painted in New York City, which provided a platform to reframe the conversation about public space, identifying the need for safe spaces for people of color to gather, create and heal; and the new **World Peace Symbol**, created by a Uruguayan graphic designer, devoid of the problematic meanings associated with previous peace signs.

How can design embrace truth and dignity in a search for peace and justice?
Realizing justice can mean engaging all of society in a dialogue about the past and raising voices historically excluded. Design can play a vital function in elevating universal human values by creating spaces for sharing hidden histories and innovative ways to disseminate new knowledge.

This section features projects that embrace justice and truth in the search for reconciliation, including Hood Design Studio's **My Ancestors' Garden**, a landscape design for the International African American Museum in Charleston, South Carolina, that memorializes the port of entry for nearly half of all enslaved Africans brought to North America; Colloqate Design's **Paper Monuments** project to elevate untold stories of New Orleans and its inhabitants, which began with an open call to residents to write and sketch monuments they wanted to see in their city; and **Conflict Kitchen**, a temporary takeout restaurant in Pittsburgh, which served cuisine and information from nations the United States was in conflict with to create understanding beyond the narrow lens of headlines and political rhetoric.

How can design help transitions from instability to peace?
Establishing a peace that is transformative, long-term and beneficial to all segments of society requires a comprehensive approach to sustainable development, peacebuilding and human rights. Collaborative design can play a key role by bringing together different disciplines, sectors and stakeholders, especially women, youth and those on the margins, to build durable peace.

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This section examines novel interventions that facilitate a transition from instability to peace, including **BLUE: The Architecture of UN Peace Missions**, which re-envisions UN camps not as temporary and closed forts, but catalysts for local development, providing services and remaining in use after the peacekeepers depart; **Stone Garden**, a 13-story mixed-use tower by architect Lina Ghotmeh in post-war Beirut that materializes what the city has endured in built form; and **HarassMap**, a crowd-mapped anonymous data reporting platform, designed by four women who were experiencing daily sexual harassment on Egypt's streets.

PUBLICATION
A companion to the exhibition, *Designing Peace: Building a Better Future Now* offers perspectives on peace from activists, scholars, architects and 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. Designed by Practise, the book is distributed in North America by Artbook | D.A.P. and worldwide by Thames & Hudson, UK.

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ABOUT COOPER HEWITT, SMITHSONIAN DESIGN MUSEUM

Cooper Hewitt is America's design museum. Inclusive, innovative and experimental, the museum's dynamic exhibitions, education programs, master's program, publications and online resources inspire, educate and empower people through design. An integral part of the Smithsonian Institution—the world's largest museum, education and research complex—Cooper Hewitt is located on New York City's Museum Mile in the historic, landmark Carnegie Mansion. Steward of one of the world's most diverse and comprehensive design collections—over 215,000 objects that range from an ancient Egyptian faience cup dating to about 1100 BC to contemporary 3D-printed objects and digital code—Cooper Hewitt welcomes everyone to discover the importance of design and its power to change the world.

For more information, visit www.cooperhewitt.org or follow @cooperhewitt on Instagram, Facebook, Twitter and YouTube.

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FACT SHEET: FEATURED PROJECTS

How Can Design Support Safe, Healthy, Respectful Environments?
- **Body Mapping**, Democratic Republic of the Congo
- **Christmas Operations**, Colombia
- **Island Tracker**, South China Sea
- **Papers, Please**, Global
- **Social Emergency Response Centers**, Canada, Serbia, United States (Arkansas, Connecticut, District of Columbia, Georgia, Illinois, Massachusetts, Mississippi, New Jersey, New Mexico, Oregon)
- **Startblok Elzenhagen**, Netherlands
- **Teeter-Totter Wall**, US-Mexico border
- **The Adventures of Daly Graphic Novels**, Tunisia

How Can Design Address the Root Causes of Conflict?
- **Astropolitics: Depletion of Terrestrial Resources and the Cosmic Future of Capitalism**, Moon and Earth
- **CONIFA**, more than 60 teams worldwide
- **Hate Speech Lexicons**, Cameroon, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, Iraq, Kenya, Libya, Mombasa, Nigeria, South Africa, South Sudan, Sudan, Yemen
- **New World Summit-Rojava**, Rojava (West Kurdistan)
- **Peace Pavilion**, India
- **Positive Peace Index**, 163 index countries
- **Rare Earthenware**, China (Inner Mongolia)
- **Regreening Africa**, Ethiopia, Ghana, Kenya, Mali, Niger, Rwanda, Senegal, Somalia
- **Stalled!,** United States
- **Universal Declaration of Human Rights Posters**, United States (California)

How Can Design Engage Creative Confrontation?
- **Art the Arms Fair**, United Kingdom
- **Black Lives Matter Street Mural Census**, United States
- **Black Lives Matter Harlem Street Mural**, United States (New York)
- **Extinction Symbol**, Global
- **Maps (Bullet Rug Series)**, Colombia, Guatemala, Lebanon, Mexico, Spain, United States (countries where bullet casings have been collected)
- **World Peace Symbol**, Uruguay

How Can Design Embrace Truth and Dignity in a Search for Peace and Justice?
- **Conflict Kitchen**, United States (Pennsylvania)
- **My Ancestors' Garden**, United States (South Carolina)
- **Paper Monuments**, United States (Louisiana)
- **The Chronic**, South Africa
- **The Murder of Halit Yozgat**, Germany

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How Can Design Help Transitions from Instability to Peace?

- **BLUE: The Architecture of UN Peace Missions**, Mali, Liberia (field research)
- **Casa Azul**, Venezuelan migration routes in South America, Central America, and the Caribbean
- **Designing for Dignity**, Norway
- **HarassMap**, Canada, Egypt, Mexico, South Africa, Switzerland, Turkey
- **Ideas Box**, Australia, Bangladesh, Burundi, Colombia, Democratic Republic of Congo, Ethiopia, France, Germany, Ghana, Greece, Iraq, Italy, Jordan, Lebanon, Malaysia, Rwanda, Senegal, Tanzania, Turkey, United States
- **Jordan River Peace Park**, Jordan, Israel
- **Korea Remade**, Korean Demilitarized Zone (DMZ)
- **Recoding Post-War Syria**, Syria
- **RefAid**, Albania, Austria, Belgium, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Bulgaria, Croatia, Czech Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Greece, Haiti, Hungary, Ireland, Luxembourg, Malta, Montenegro, Morocco, Netherlands, North Macedonia, Romania, Serbia, Slovakia, Slovenia, Spain, Sweden, Switzerland, Turkey, United Kingdom, United States
- **Safe Passage Bags Workshop**, Greece
- **Stone Garden**, Lebanon

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