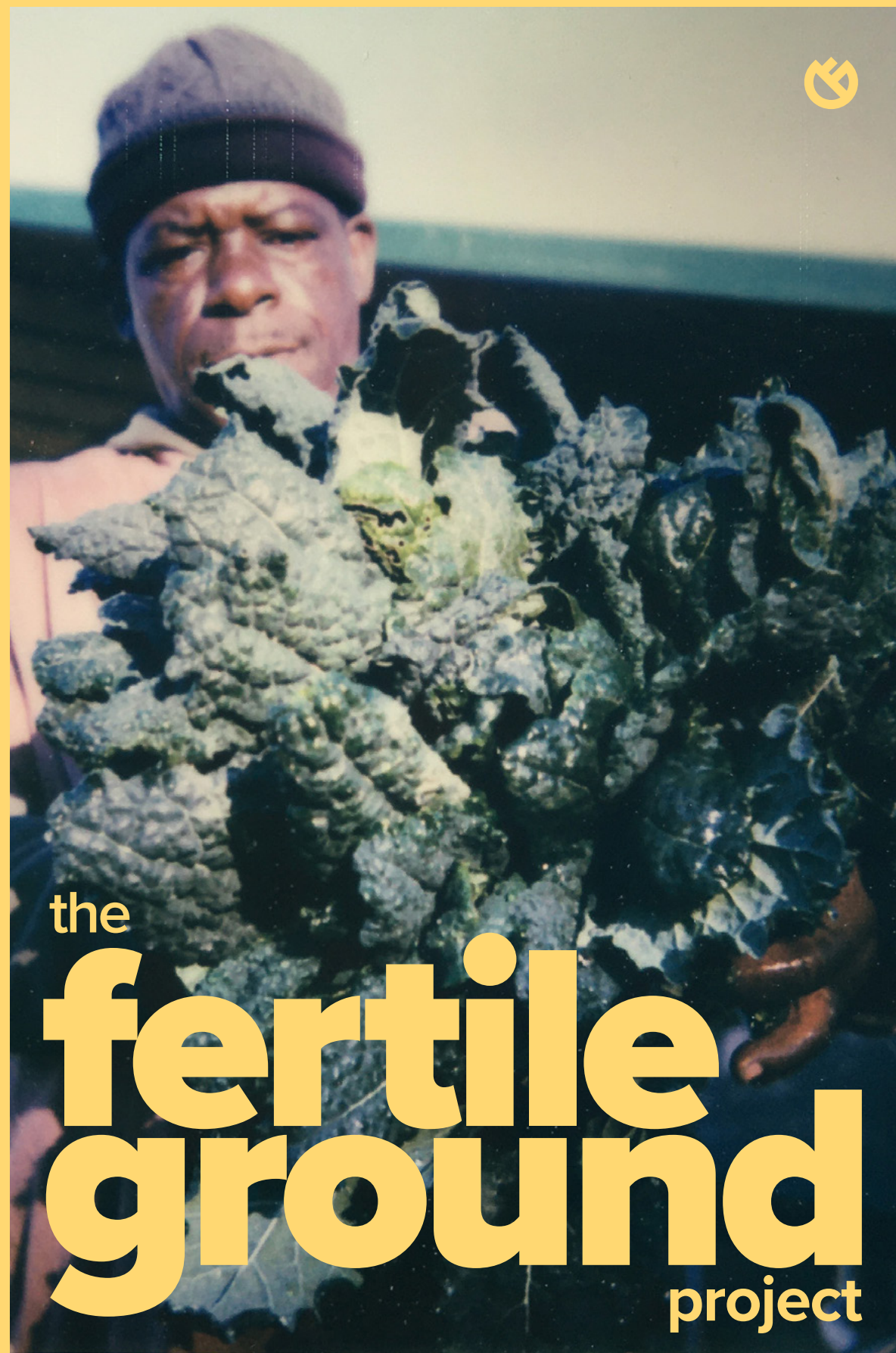


inspiring dialogue
about food
access



the
**fertile
ground**
project



THE CITY OF
JACKSON
MISSISSIPPI

Bloomberg
Philanthropies | PUBLIC ART
CHALLENGE



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Anchorage, AK – Addressing Energy Policy and Economic Development: “SEED Community”



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Coral Springs, FL – Inspiring Community Healing After Gun Violence: “The Power of Art”



Jackson, MS – Inspiring Dialogue about Food Access: “Fertile Ground”



Tulsa, OK – Reclaiming History through Public Art: “Greenwood Art Project”

“The Public Art Challenge brings people together to look at issues from new perspectives and **uncover new solutions**. The winning projects from the first competition all made a real and lasting impact in their cities.”

-Michael R. Bloomberg, founder of Bloomberg Philanthropies and three-term mayor of New York City

About the Public Art Challenge

Bloomberg Philanthropies’ Public Art Challenge encourages mayors to partner with artists, elevating the value of including the creative sector when developing solutions to significant urban issues. The program supports temporary public art projects that celebrate creativity, enhance urban identity, encourage public-private collaborations, and strengthen local economies.

After receiving over 200 applications and selecting 14 finalists, Bloomberg Philanthropies named five winners in the 2018 Public Art Challenge. Jackson was selected as one of the five winning cities for the project proposal Fertile Ground: Inspiring Dialogue About Food Access. The City of Jackson Long Range Planning Team created the proposal to host a city-wide exhibition with art installations and performances that promote dialogue about issues related to food access. The artwork explores topics of food policy, food sovereignty, nutrition, domestic hunger, and the agrarian landscape.

The Fertile Ground Project uses public art as a medium to inspire dialogue about food access in Jackson, Mississippi. The project is made up of physical installations deployed within food deserts across the city, a documentary about food access, community engagement sessions, a podcast series, performance art, a food policy roadmap, and a project expo in the spring of 2020. The project brings together an interdisciplinary network of people such as artists, designers, architects, farmers, chefs, nutritionists, policymakers, and community members to discuss the complexities of the city's food system.



“This is fertile ground.”

Mayor Chokwe Antar Lumumba



**Agriculture is
Mississippi's
largest
industry.**

**Yet, we are
the most food
insecure state
in the country.**

Mississippi has a complex relationship with food. During slavery and sharecropping periods food was used as a tool of control. Today urban food swamps and food deserts are another form of control. “Big Food” controls most of the Mississippi food system, showcasing itself through convenient store fast food urbanism and monocultural landscapes.

In 2017, Jackson was named the fattest city in America, unpacking what that means is critical to the project. That means Jackson is ranked in the top percentile for lacking access to healthy food, low fruit and vegetable consumption, diabetes, high blood pressure, and physically inactive adults.

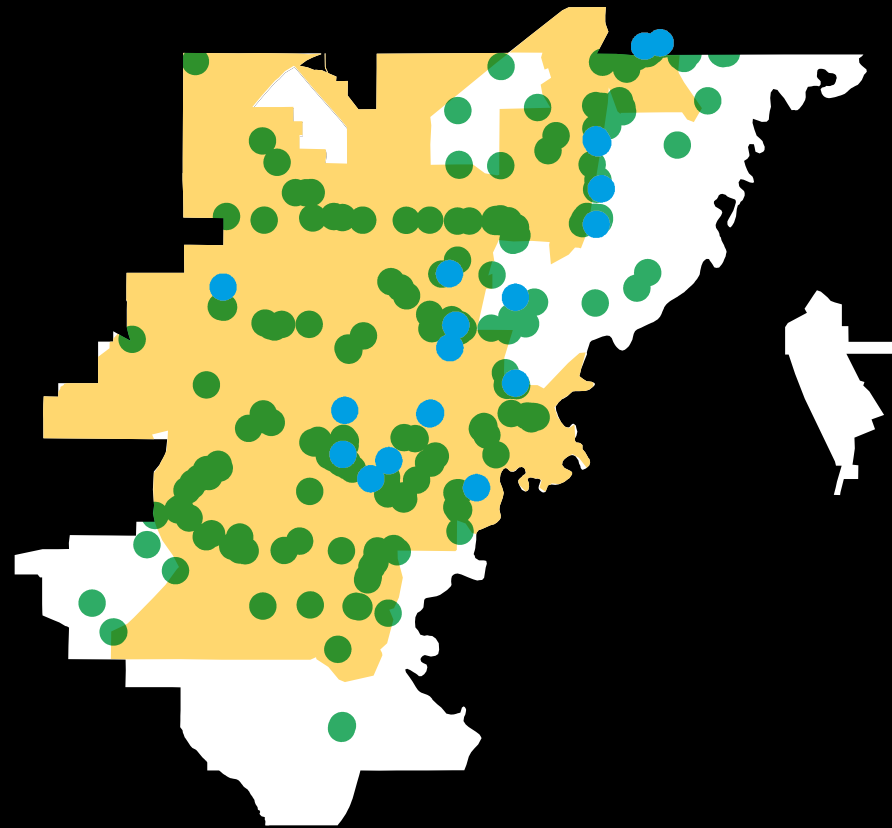
The Department of Planning and Development is using the Fertile Ground Project as a research tool to better inform policy decisions, community engagement, and future development for delivering better urban food access.

FOOD DESERT

an area that has limited access to affordable and nutritious food.

65% of Jackson is a Food Desert. (73 sq. miles of 113 sq. miles). This map illustration represents the geographical coverage that is considered a USDA food desert in Jackson. This map shows where residents are low income and are more than half a mile away from a grocery store and where there are extremely low car ownership levels.

The census tract layers are based off of 2015 USDA census data.



Jackson

FOOD SWAMP

an area where an abundance of fast food, junk food, convenience stores, and liquor stores outnumber healthy food options.

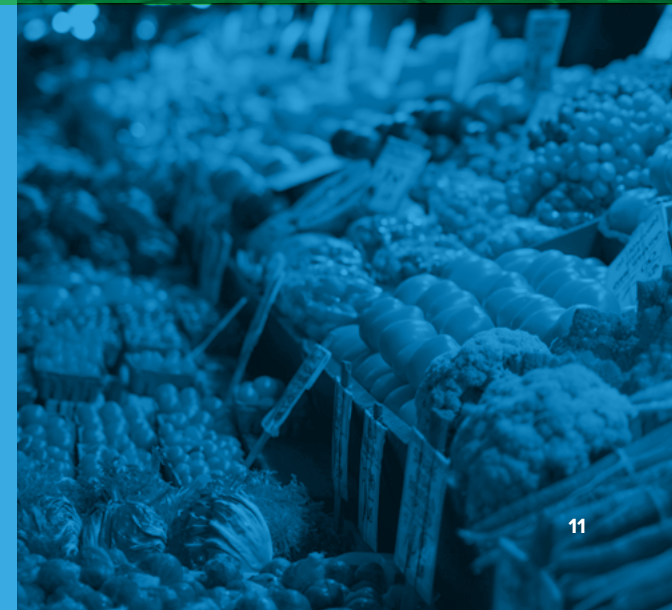
Jackson has over 70 fast food restaurants, 60 convenience stores, and 150 gas stations. This map illustration represents the geographical coverage of all of those locations with a quarter mile buffer around them. We use a quarter mile because that is a 5 minute walk to get to a destination from where people are living, making it extremely convenient.



FOOD OASIS

an area with higher access to farmers markets, supermarkets or vegetable shops with fresh foods.

Jackson lacks access to fresh food sources. This map illustration represents a quarter mile buffer around all of the farmers markets, grocery stores, and fresh food sources in the city. We use a quarter mile because that is a 5 minute walk to get to that destination from where people are living, making it extremely convenient. The city only has around 20 grocery stores and many of them lack fresh produce. Less than 5% of them contain locally grown fresh produce.

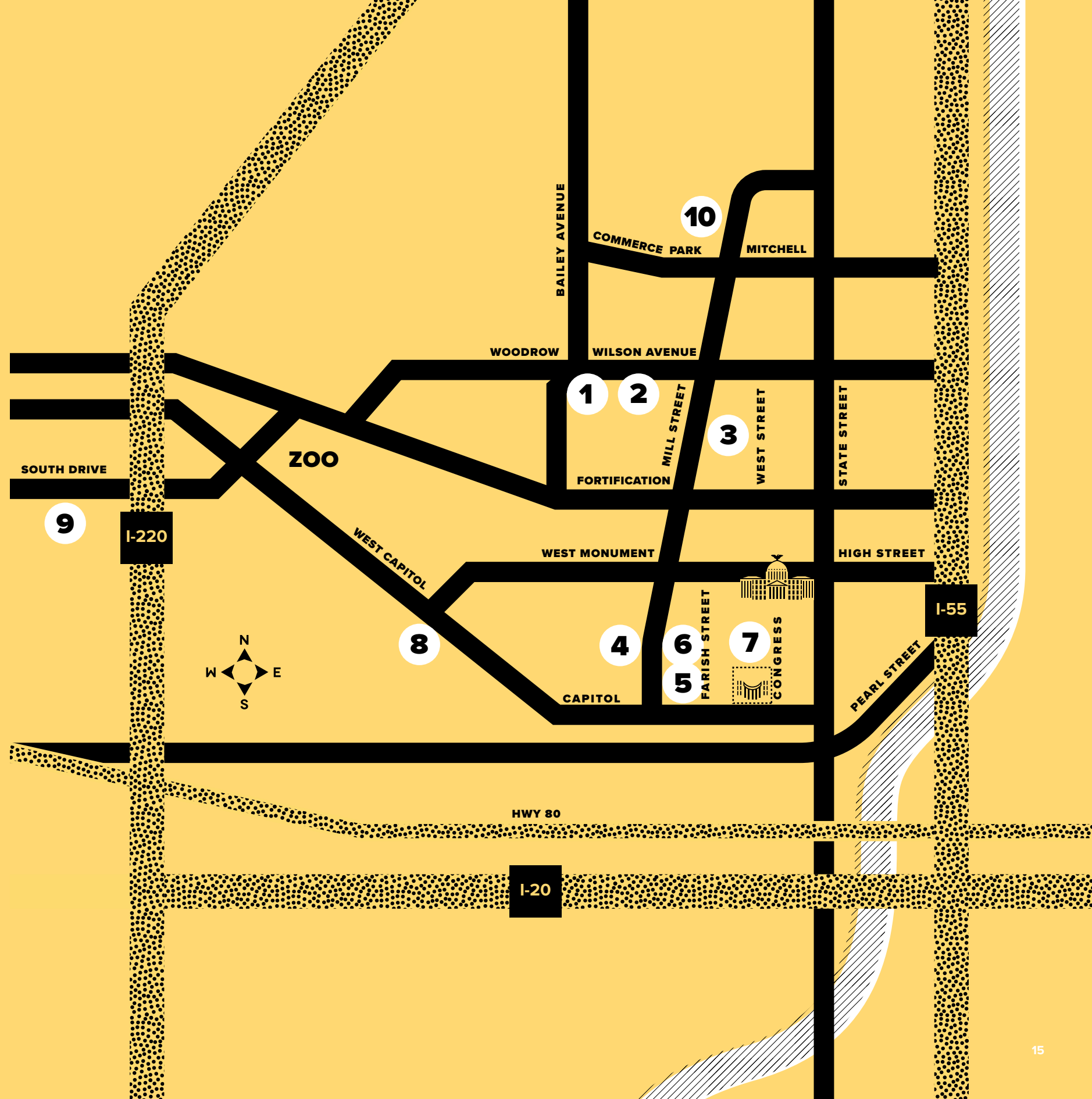




catalyst for food opportunities

Each project installation is located within a food desert. The sites are positioned along the linear path of the railroad in the center of the city that has historically been the segregation “redline” between West and East Jackson. The installations alternate from the east to the west side of the track aiming to bring the segregated communities together within public space to talk about food. The project grant proposal originally concentrated the artwork and activities at three sites but quickly expanded into ten sites after project team discussions. Installations are situated in a variety of urban typologies ranging from government spaces, elementary schools, industrial parks, neighborhoods, and the countryside.

1. **THIS IS FERTILE GROUND**
Galloway Elementary School
2. **GALLOWAY GARDEN**
Galloway Elementary School
3. **FIGA**
AND Gallery
4. **INFERTILE**
The Slab Mill Street
5. **FARISH STREET LANDING**
Farish Street
6. **MAMA ROSE KITCHEN**
Farish Street
7. **GROUND NOTATIONS**
Smith Park
8. **CO-OP STOP**
West Capitol Street
9. **THE COMMON TABLE**
Foot Print Farms
10. **PRODUCTION SITE**
Ecoshed



the work

THIS IS FERTILE GROUND

ARTIST

Tyler Tadlock

INSTALL

A+ Signs and Creative

LOCATION

Galloway Elementary School

MATERIALS

Paint

STATUS

Permanent



Change takes place from the ground up. If we want to see change, we have to plant seeds. When we plant seeds we are in charge of our future. When we are in charge of our future we are truly free. This mural illustrates the process of a food system where we are in control. From the fertile soil to the freshness of summer vegetables, this work is meant to remind us that when we take control over our own food, we take control over our own future.

The mural at Galloway, the largest of its kind in Jackson, was inspired by the students' favorite fruits and veggies from an engagement exercise held during the Back to School night hosted by the PTA. The mural is titled "This is Fertile Ground" and outlines the opportunity that JPS schools have to incorporate farm to school practices into the school system. The mural demonstrates the process of food from the ground to the harvest to the plate.

TOP: installation view of mural

BOTTOM LEFT: students drawing

BOTTOM RIGHT: detail of mural



GALLOWAY GARDEN

ARTIST

MSU School of Landscape Architecture
Design/Build Studio

INSTALL

MSU School of Landscape Architecture
Design/Build Studio

LOCATION

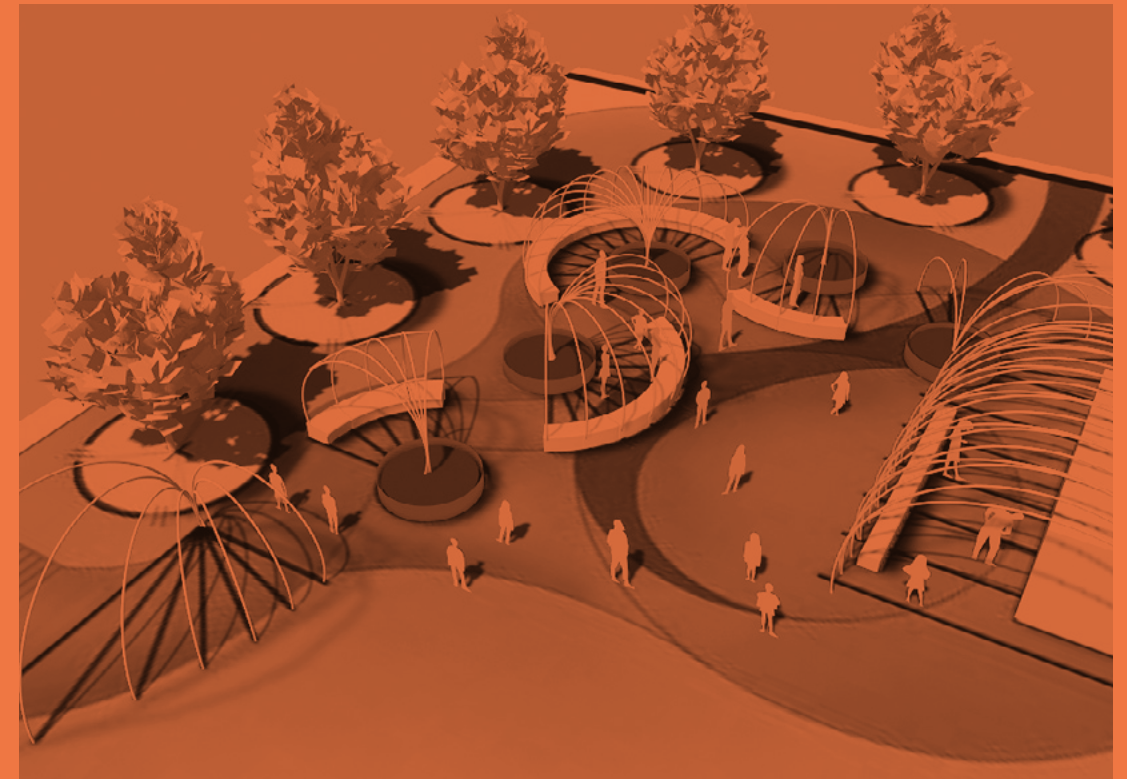
Galloway Elementary School

MATERIALS

3D Printed Concrete, Paint, Woodchips

STATUS

Permanent



TOP LEFT: cafeteria lunch

TOP RIGHT: learning garden rendering

BOTTOM LEFT: learning garden rendering

BOTTOM RIGHT: building orchard: photo credit

Drew Dempsey

Learning gardens in Jackson are often unsuccessful due to lack of resources, technical support, and community ownership. The Galloway Garden aims to alter that paradigm through offering technical assistance, continuous community engagement, and management by Fertile Ground Farms for a two year period. During the two year period teachers will be trained on how to teach students to use a learning garden. Significant Developments is the lead organizer for the project that has assembled surrounding institutions Galloway Elementary School, Wells Church, Operation Shoestring, Jackson Medical Mall, JSU School of Public Health, The Lighthouse Black Girl Projects, UMMC, Mississippi Center for Justice, MSU School of Landscape Architecture Design/Build Studio, Fertile Ground Farms, and Wurmworks into a site council for the installation.

FIGA

ARTIST

Kara Walker

INSTALL

Tyler Tadlock / Adrienne Domnick

LOCATION

AND Gallery

MATERIALS

Sugar on polystyrene

STATUS

Temporary

New York-based artist Kara Walker is best known for her candid investigation of race, gender, sexuality, and violence through silhouetted figures that have appeared in numerous exhibitions worldwide.

RIGHT:

FIGA, 2014

Sugar on polystyrene

55 x 136 x 88 inches

139.7 x 345.4 x 223.5 cm

BELOW LEFT/RIGHT:

A Subtlety (installation view)

Photo credit: Scott Briscoe



FIGA, a room-sized fist made from polystyrene and covered in sugar is a segment from Kara Walker's larger piece, *A Subtlety*, which was built and displayed inside the Domino Sugar Factory in Brooklyn, the former site of a sugar refinery.



Courtesy of the Artist and Sikkema Jenkins & Co., New York.

INFERTILE

ARTIST

City of Jackson Department of Planning and Development

INSTALL

A+ Signs and Creative

LOCATION

The Slab Mill Street

MATERIALS

IBC Chemical Tanks, Steel

STATUS

Permanent

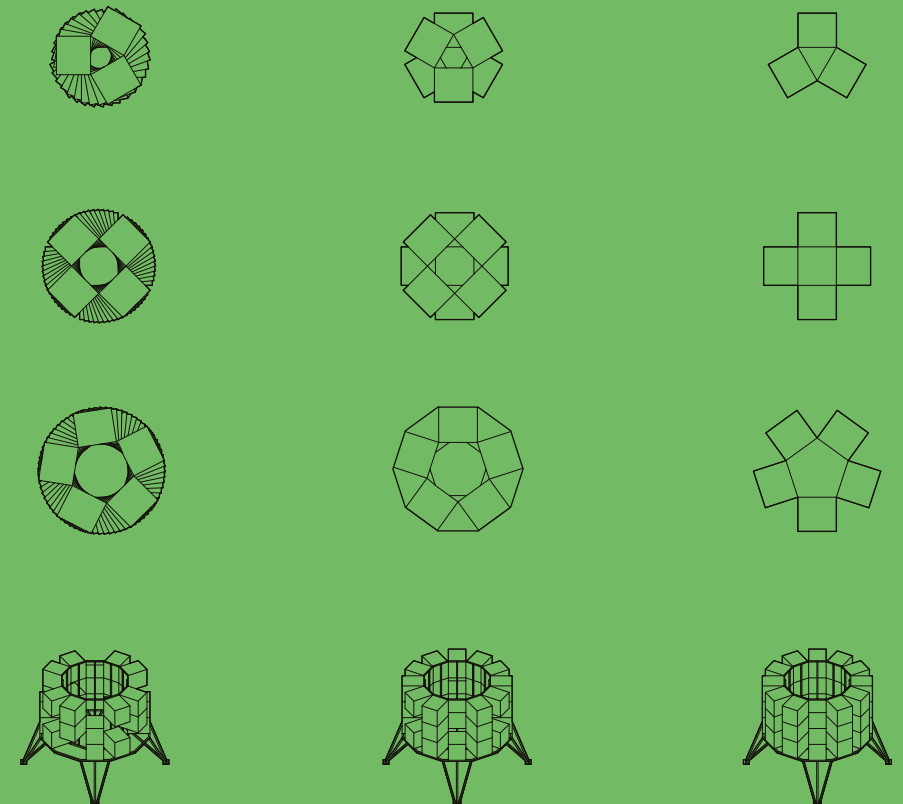
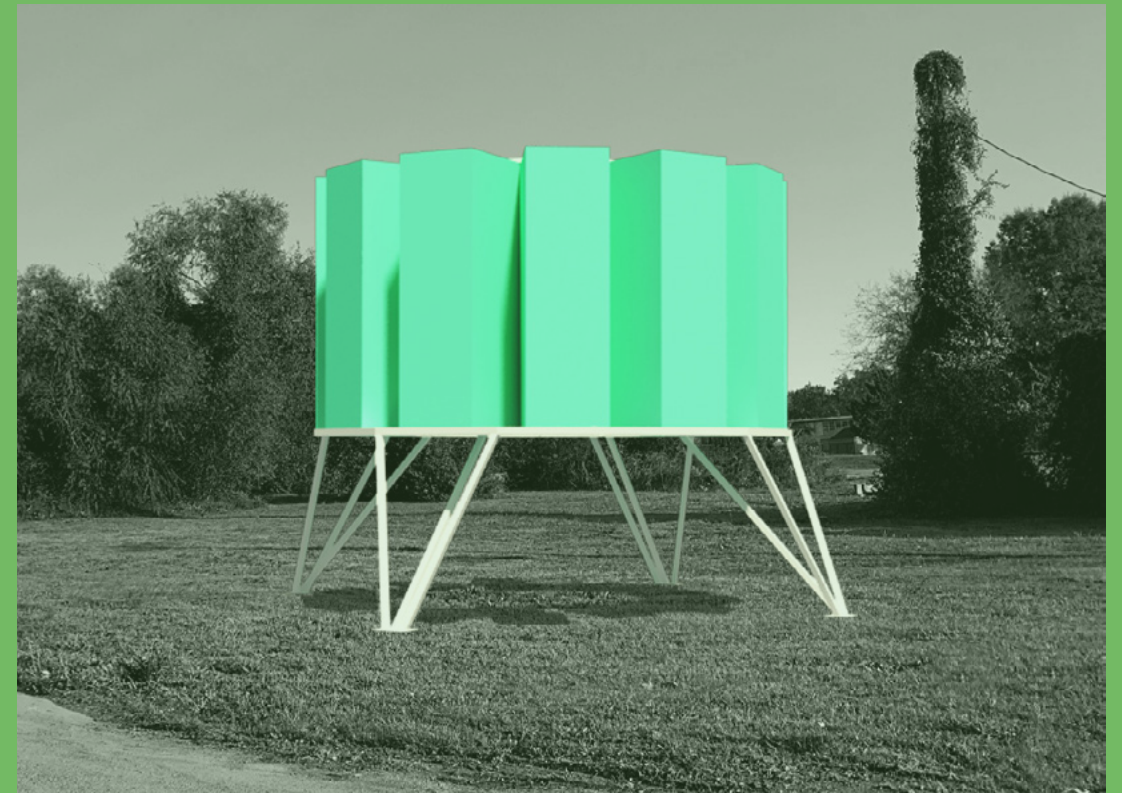
Our food is being sprayed by a toxic chemical cocktail. Today over 1 billion pounds of pesticides are used in the United States annually, amounting to spending around \$15 billion each year in chemical compounds. The increased usage of these synthetic sprays is disturbing biological systems in rivers, forests, and cities. Pesticides sterilize the environment. People most affected by these chemicals live in close proximity to the industrial agriculture system using them.

It is ironic that those places are often extremely food insecure. It isn't ironic that the communities most affected by agri-chemicals are high poverty black communities. The Mississippi Delta is a prime example of how food insecurity, race, agribusiness, and a poisoned environment intersect at the crossroads.

TOP RIGHT: sculpture rendering

BOTTOM LEFT: old Jitney Jungle distribution site
photo credit: Krishna Pandit

BOTTOM RIGHT: typology diagrams



FARISH STREET LANDING

ARTIST
Akoaki + RVTR

INSTALL
Akoaki + RVTR

LOCATION
Farish Street

MATERIALS
Robotic milled high density foam, steel

STATUS
Permanent

Farish Street Landing is an ephemeral intervention motivated by a simple inquiry: how can the cultural narratives of place contribute to activating an inclusive, vivacious and contextually-rooted collective environment? Sited in one of Mississippi's most legacied African American neighborhoods, the project turns to the local landscape and its vegetal histories for insight and inspiration.

The resulting spatial exploration, equal parts scenographic chronicle and urban prompt, deploys a series of props, symbols, and agricultural archipelagos as narrative mediums to instigate dialogue around the layered and ever-transforming relationships between the region's people and plants.



Cultivated staples, medicinal herbs, feral shrubs, and native grasses commingle in reference to Choctaw Nation, Republic of New Afrika, and European settler farming traditions and the ecosystems that sustain them. A provocation rather than a resolution, Farish Street Landing is an imaginary space of arrival and departure, of restoration and projection. Contingent on public appropriation, it invites local residents, artists, and activists to weigh in on the district's possible

- LEFT:** carnival squash rendering
- MIDDLE:** dumpling squash rendering
- TOP RIGHT:** eggplant rendering
- BOTTOM RIGHT:** Farish Street Landing (aerial view)



MAMA ROSE KITCHEN

ARTIST

Adrienne Domnick

INSTALL

Adrienne Domnick

LOCATION

Farish Street

MATERIALS

Painted Plywood Panels

STATUS

Permanent



Using depictions of family and loved ones placed against a vibrant monochrome background, she explores the role of food in tradition. In doing so, the artist hopes not only to archive memories of tradition, but also to ignite the conversation about food access and its impact on contemporary society.

TOP LEFT: Domnick holding family photo

TOP RIGHT: artist family photo

LEFT: Mama Rose Kitchen

GROUND NOTATIONS

ARTIST
Office of Jonathan Tate

INSTALL
J&B Construction

LOCATION
Smith Park

MATERIALS
Pine Lumber, Paint

STATUS
Permanent

Approximately 11 million acres of land in Mississippi are dedicated to Agriculture, the top industry in the state. Farming on a large industrial scale requires the manipulation of the ground for the highest yield of crops. The land is reorganized into a rigid application of a pattern across a natural landscape. The soil is moved, the ground is changed and restructured into grids, circles, and diagonals. Across this state, the natural landscape is replaced with the pattern of row crops. This has become Mississippi's new landscape.



Despite the fact that about half of the land in this state is dedicated to industrial farming, Mississippi remains no. 1 in food insecurity. A space exists – between the prolific presence of the commercial farm all across the state and the Mississippi citizen who lacks access to fresh food

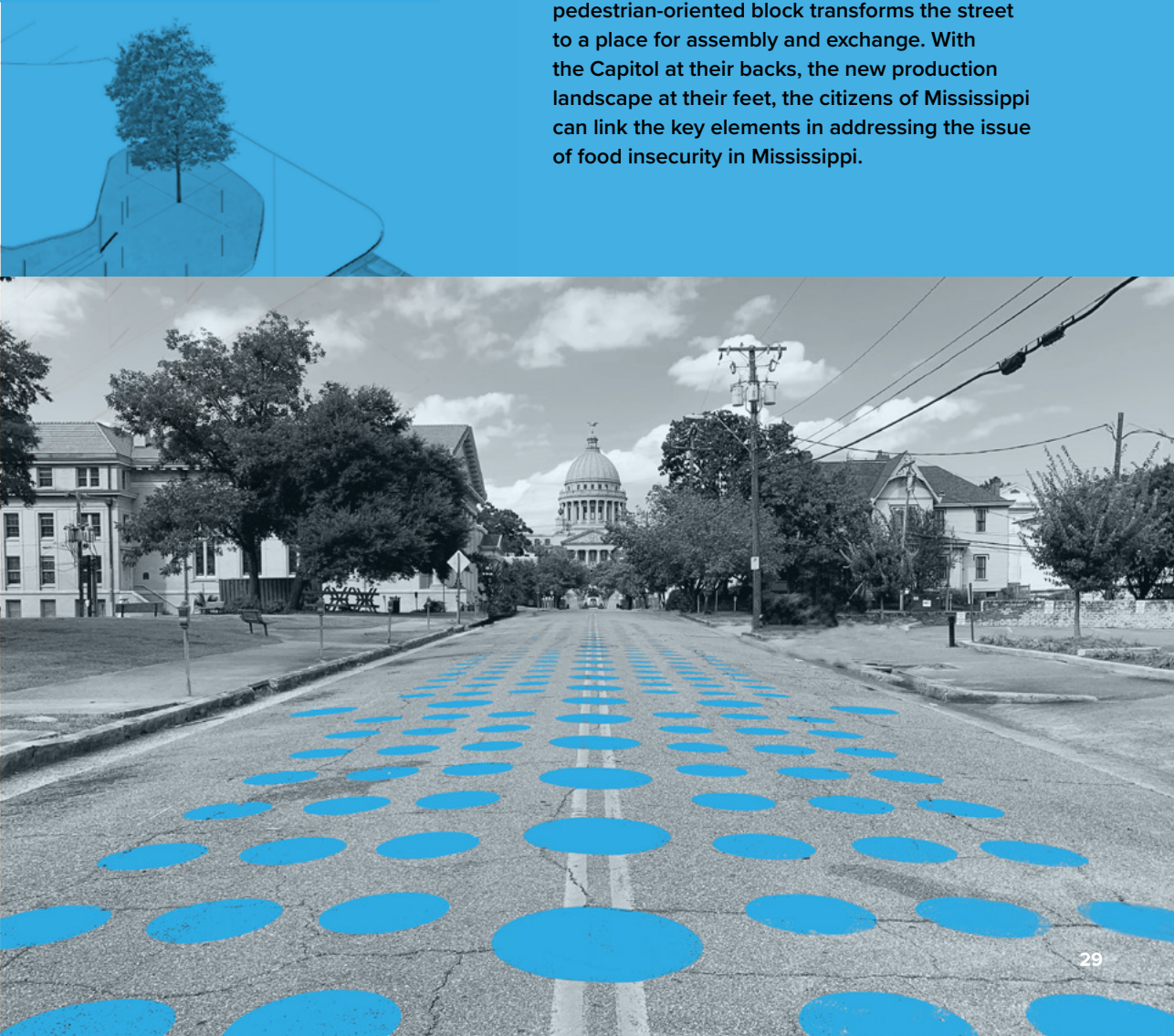
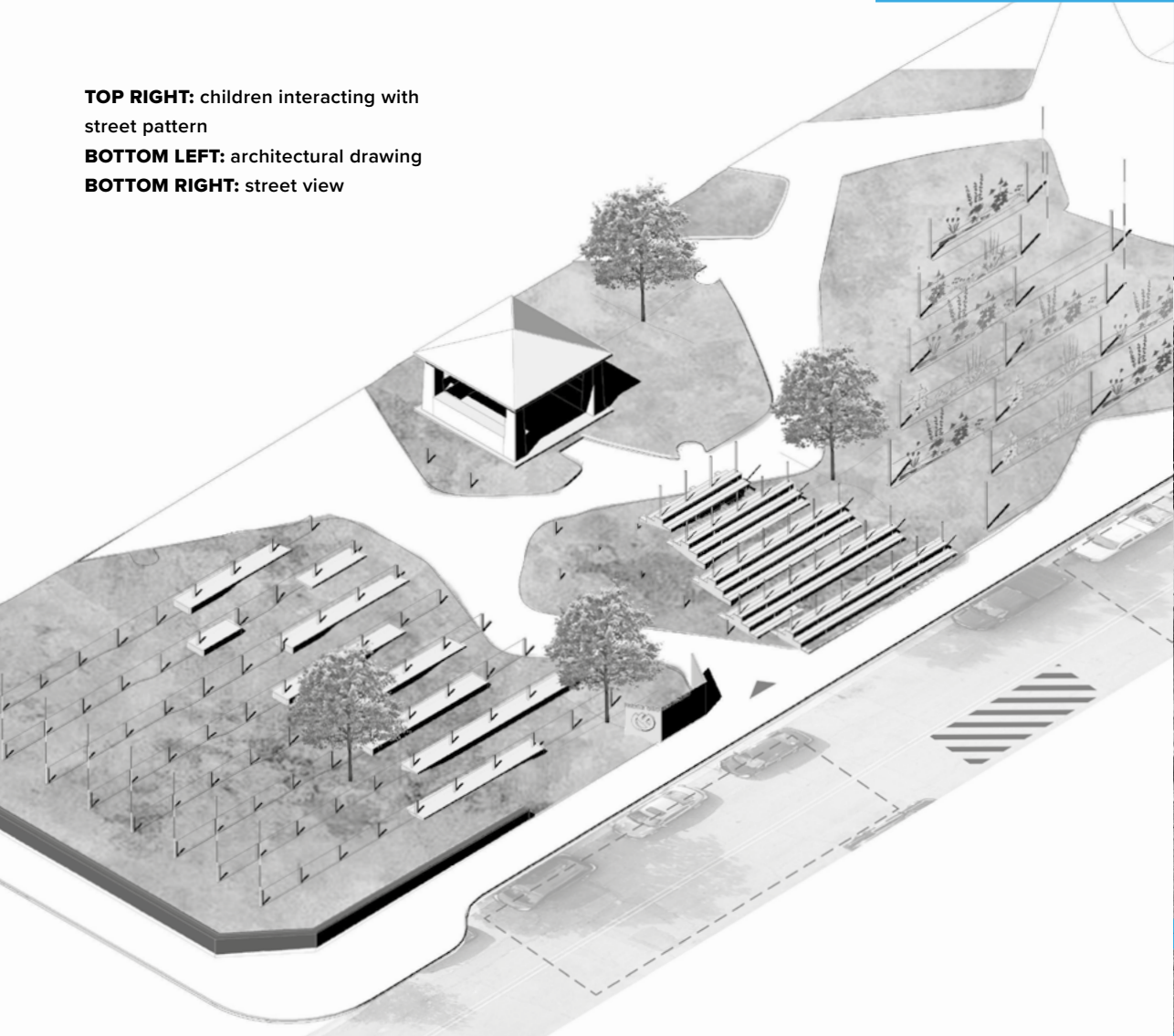
Here, we overlay the pattern of row crops over a city block. The ubiquitous industrial agrarian texture finally marries itself with the urban space it could serve. Situated at the doorstep of the Capitol, the policies that facilitate the spread of this pattern, the yield of crops, and the access to these crops, are finally adjacent to the landscape it has created. If policy can create the new Mississippi landscape, policy can bring the space between industrial farming, and Mississippi's own access to food one fraction closer.

No longer a road solely for vehicular traffic, this pedestrian-oriented block transforms the street to a place for assembly and exchange. With the Capitol at their backs, the new production landscape at their feet, the citizens of Mississippi can link the key elements in addressing the issue of food insecurity in Mississippi.

TOP RIGHT: children interacting with street pattern

BOTTOM LEFT: architectural drawing

BOTTOM RIGHT: street view



CO-OP STOP

ARTIST

Cooperative Community of New West Jackson

INSTALL

Cooperative Community of New West Jackson

LOCATION

West Capitol Street

MATERIALS

Reclaimed Lumber, Edible Plants

STATUS

Permanent

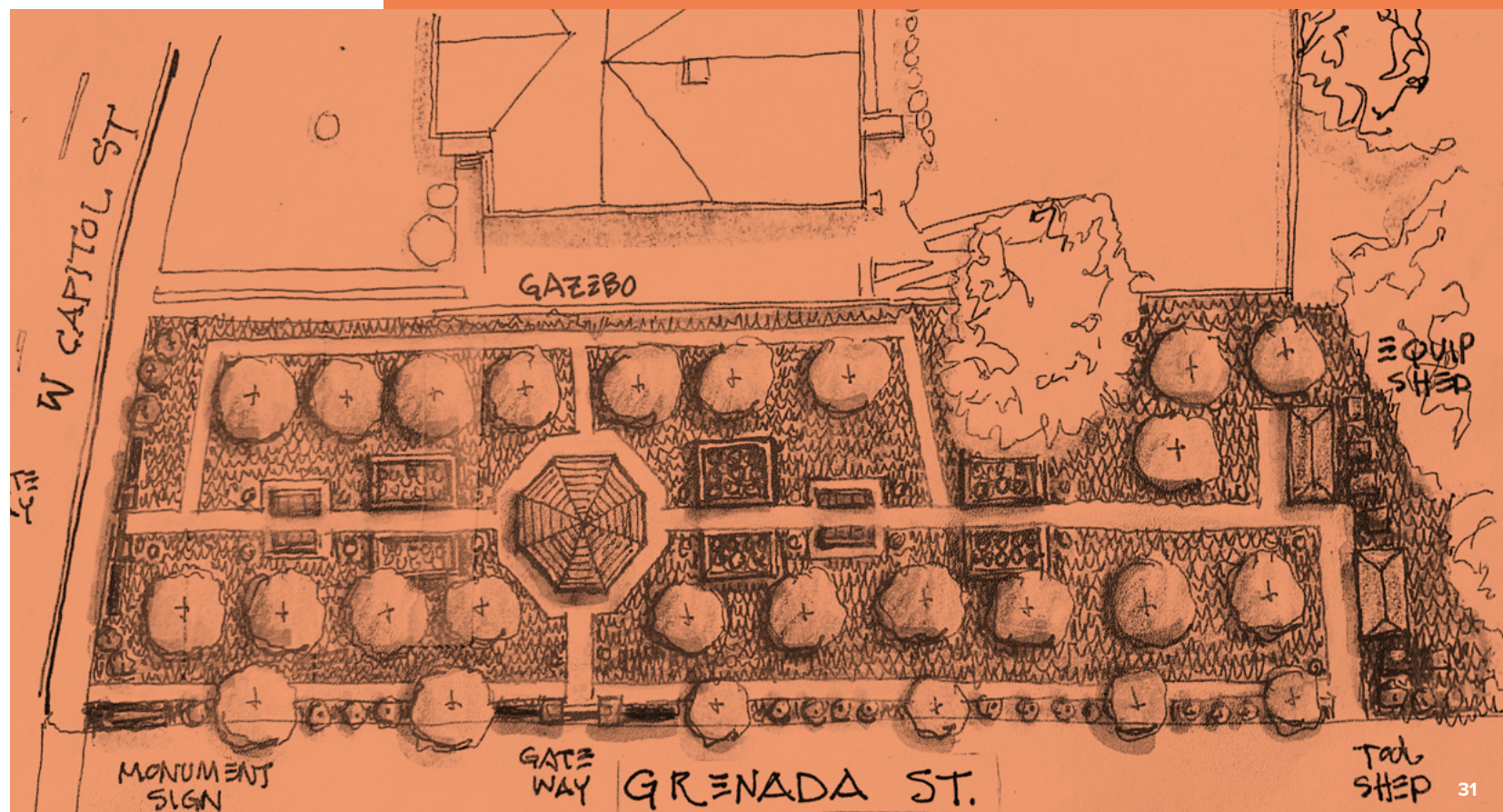


An intentionally designed hello spot that creates an entryway into the Cooperative Community of New West Jackson. This dynamic space will be home to a production orchard supplying CO-OP based cottage food businesses including Jus' Chillin' Gourmet Pops; the Roots & Fruits Farm Stand creating a marketplace for local farmers; and a space that recognizes and celebrates our agricultural roots and "fruiture" possibilities through an artistically curated, culturally relevant landscape.

TOP RIGHT: Cooperative Community of New West Jackson

TOP LEFT: planting starters

BELOW: sketch of food shelter garden



THE COMMON TABLE

ARTIST

Dr. Cindy Ayers-Elliott, Nick Wallace, Adrienne Domnick

INSTALL

Dr. Cindy Ayers-Elliott, Nick Wallace

LOCATION

Foot Print Farms

MATERIALS

Aluminum, Polycarbonate, Oak, Grass

STATUS

Permanent



Overlooking the common table is an art installation by Adrienne Domnick titled *Sunday at 6*. That installation focuses on the importance of the table and family gathering around food.

TOP: Domnick in studio working on *Sunday at 6*

BELOW RIGHT: Foot Print Farms hoop house

BELOW LEFT: Dr. Cindy Ayers-Elliott at Foot Print Farms

The installation retrofits a hoop house used for growing vegetables. The tables and seats are formed from an oak tree by a local carpenter. Grass lawn is the surface material and bistro lighting creates a pleasant ambient environment during the evenings.



URBAN FARMING PROGRAM

ARTIST

Sam Humphrey

INSTALL

Sam Humphrey

LOCATION

Multiple

MATERIALS

Multiple

STATUS

Permanent

Sam Humphrey is the farming contractor for multiple Fertile Ground Project installations. His role is to start plants from seed, install plants, manage the beds, and help train the students or community members at each site on how to grow food sustainably. Sam is providing technical assistance for farmers within Jackson to grow produce that uses sustainable agriculture practices.

Jackson has an abundance of vacant properties that have the ability to be transformed into productive agricultural landscapes. Each project installation showcases a different scale of food production on various types of land uses.

BOTTOM: Humphrey inspecting tomato
RIGHT: talking with students



TOP: diversity of life is crucial to regenerative agriculture
BELOW LEFT: ripe tomatoes off the vine
BELOW RIGHT: early starter plants



PRODUCTION SITE

ARTIST

N/A

INSTALL

Multiple

LOCATION

Ecoshed

MATERIALS

Recycling Materials

STATUS

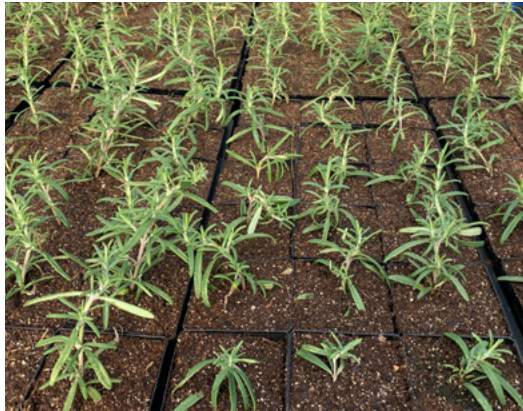
N/A



TOP: construction of picnic tables

BOTTOM LEFT: rosemary transplants for the installations

BOTTOM RIGHT: donated wood chips



The Ecoshed acted as a free making space for building, storing, growing, experimenting, and handling deliveries for the multiple project installations. The industrial logistics space was critical for saving costs, accelerating the project timeline, and reaching sustainability goals for the project. The teams were able to access the space for building installations along with using the tools and equipment. This included building project mock-ups, compost bins for Galloway,

building tables and seating for sites, growing plants for the sites, growing the food for the expo, receiving and storing FIGA sculpture, receiving and storing the chemical tanks for Infertile sculpture, receiving and storing the Farish Street Landing sculpture and more. The Ecoshed donated the materials and transport to multiple project installations. This included soil, reclaimed wood, and wood chips.

The total value of utilizing the space, tools, and materials provided over \$100,000 of in-kind support, which was a major part of the grant application. The Ecoshed did not receive any of the grant funds. Since the legal agreements to receive permission to work on the various landscapes like JRA, JPS, City of Jackson, and other sites took several months to be complete, Ecoshed allowed the teams to work there for free so that the teams could deploy the installations into the project sites and not be delayed. Building and deploying from the site significantly reduced the carbon footprint for each project since the Ecoshed is located within a two mile radius and using local recycled materials.

LEFT: dumping soil cut at Galloway

BELOW: building planters for Congress Street installation



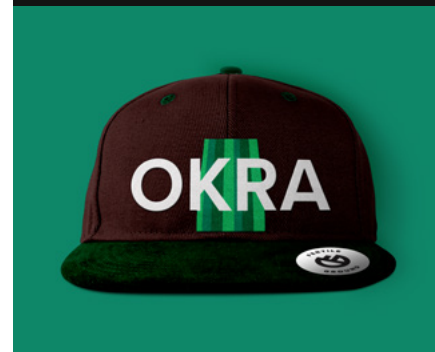
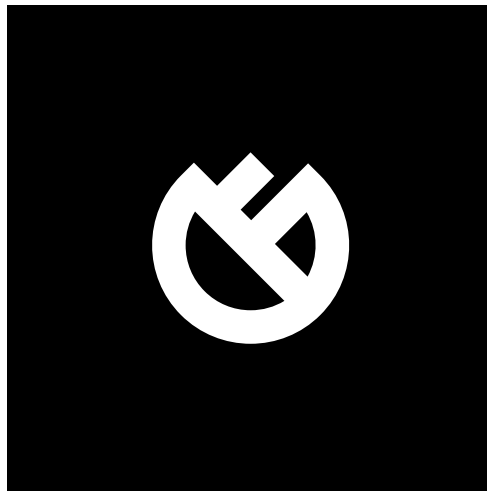
IDENTITY CAMPAIGN

ARTIST
Tyler Tadlock

MATERIALS
Logo design, collateral design,
ephemera design

“The Bud”

symbolism: fertility, spring, new beginnings, greens, hops, flowering



Through this identity campaign we highlight how environmental elements can be leveraged to inspire optimism of the future.

The Fertile Ground identity campaign is largely demonstrated through digital platforms but also exhibits itself through printed materials that are posters, stickers, hats, shirts, and bags to bring awareness across the city.

FERTILE GROUND DOCUMENTARY

ARTIST

General Usage / Southern Cult

CREW

Robby Piantanida - Executive Producer
Alex Warren - Director
Aaron Phillips - Director of Photography
Joecephus Martin - Producer
Taiwo Gaynor - Sound Mixer
Drew Dempsey - Set Photographer

The Fertile Ground Documentary examines the extensive impact the industrial food system has on Jackson. The film takes you through the life of local residents experiencing everyday food insecurity within under-served communities. The short film highlights several food advocates within Jackson that are challenging the industrial food system through localized efforts. The sequences demonstrate the battle Jackson is up against but demonstrates how fertile the future could be if we can collectively work together to transform our local food system.





New solutions to food access requires more cross sector collaboration. The interdisciplinary team is made up of a diverse array of artists, advocates, urban farmers, chefs, nutritionists, designers, architects, landscape architects, policymakers, filmmakers, and evaluators. Teammates have had the unique opportunity to work alongside one another and develop relationships that span beyond the project.

the artists

Mayor Lumumba



Project Role: Leader for the Fertile Ground Project, Visionary

The Honorable Chokwe Antar Lumumba, Esq. is the son of two life-long community activists—the late Mayor Chokwe Lumumba and Nubia Lumumba. Throughout his life and career he has maintained a consistent presence in community projects and displayed a genuine commitment to justice. Attorney Lumumba began his community work early on—serving as co-director of the Malcolm X Grassroots Day Camp and acting as an assistant coach for the Jackson Panthers Basketball Organization. He received his Bachelor of Arts degree in 2005 from Tuskegee University where he served as president of both the Pi Sigma Alpha Political Science Honor Society and the Tuskegee Political Science Association. As an undergraduate, Attorney Lumumba also represented the institution on a national level as a member of the Tuskegee Bio-Ethics Debate Team and was honored as the 2005 Gwendolyn M. Patton Student Scholar Activist.

Mark Bittman

Project Role: Leading Food Dialogues at Expo

Mark Bittman is the author of 20 acclaimed books, including the How to Cook Everything series, the award-winning Food Matters, and The New York Times number-one bestseller, VB6: Eat Vegan Before 6:00. For more than two decades his popular and compelling stories appeared in the Times, where he was ultimately the lead food writer for the Sunday Magazine and became the country's first food-focused Op-Ed columnist for a major news publication. Bittman has starred in four television series, including Showtime's Emmy-winning Years of Living Dangerously. He has written for nearly every major newspaper in the United States and many magazines, and has spoken at dozens of universities and conferences; his 2007 TED talk has more than a million views. He was a distinguished fellow at the University of California (Berkeley) and a fellow at the Union of Concerned Scientists; he is a member of the faculty of Columbia University's Mailman School of Public Health. Throughout his career Bittman has strived for the same goal: to make the food, in all its aspects, understandable.



Kara Walker

Project Role: Artist for FIGA Installation at AND Gallery

New York-based artist Kara Walker is best known for her candid investigation of race, gender, sexuality, and violence through silhouetted figures that have appeared in numerous exhibitions worldwide. Kara was born in Stockton, California in 1969, Walker was raised in Atlanta, Georgia from the age of 13. She studied at the Atlanta College of Art (BFA, 1991) and the Rhode Island School of Design (MFA, 1994). She is the recipient of many awards, notably the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation Achievement Award in 1997 and the United States Artists, Eileen Harris Norton Fellowship in 2008. In 2012, Walker became a member of the American Academy of Arts and Letters. In 2015, she was named the Tepper Chair in Visual Arts at the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University. Her work can be found in museums and public collections throughout the United States and Europe.



Ron Finley

Project Role: Farming Activist Leading Workshop at Galloway Elementary



Armed with a shovel, some soil and seeds, Ron Finley has come to be known as the “renegade gardener,” and his unexpected tactics have made him one of LA's most widely known activists. Frustrated by his community's lack of access to fresh, organic food, Finley inadvertently started a revolution when he turned the parkway in front of his South Central LA home into an edible garden in 2010. Ron's goal was simple; bring healthy food to an area where there was none, making him see first hand how gardens build community and change people's lives. This experience has blossomed into a quest to change how we eat and to teach youth that they have the capacity to design the life that they want to live rather than the one that has been designed for them.

University of Michigan: RVTR

Project Role: Designing and Building Installation on Farish Street

Geoffrey Thün and Kathy Velikov AIA, are founding partners of the research-based practice RVTR and Associate Professors at the University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning. Their work explores the agency of architecture and urban design within the context of dynamic ecological systems, infrastructures, materially and technologically mediated environments, and emerging social organizations. Projects range in scale from urban analysis and site design, to prototype buildings, to full-scale installations that mediate energy, atmosphere, and interaction. Their recent work focuses on questions of urban accessibility, across a spectrum of needs from food and mobility to health and learning. Current work aims to prototype solutions as forms of public space and socially engaged practice.



University of Michigan: Akoaki

Project Role: Designing and Building Installation on Farish Street

Akoaki is a Detroit-based architecture and design studio founded by Anya Sirota and Jean Louis Farges. Since 2008, Akoaki has established a reputation for innovative and resonant projects that critically engage the social, spatial, and material realities of place. Bridging the commonly perceived divide between social and aesthetic practice, the work explores urban interventions, perceptual scenographies, and pop actions as responses to complex and contested urban scenarios. Akoaki's design philosophy recognizes the pleasure and value of collective, aesthetic experience. The creative process, supported by intensive research and fieldwork, builds on existing dynamics and forges relationships between diverse networks of people. The resulting set of inter-related experimental works produces conceptually and materially surprising, unrestricted, and inclusive environments.



Nick Wallace

Project Role: Chef for Farm to Table Dinner at the Expo and Common Table Installation

Gifted, talented, and inspired by nature Chef Nick Wallace's mission is to remain focused on the beauty of food. Chef Nick was voted one of 2017's Best Chef America. He did not stop there as he was honored to be Mississippi's first Food Network's Chopped Champion, Alton's Challenge and featured on Food Network's Cut Throat Kitchen. He has also been blessed with the opportunity to present five James Beard Foundation "Mississippi Themed" Dinners in New York. Known for redefining the experience that Southern food has to offer, many would agree that it is rare to find a talent, even close to that of Chef Nick Wallace. Chef Nick combines his family farm origins with a sophisticated French technique to create his modern Mississippi cuisine that is exceptionally pleasing to the pallet.



Enrika Williams

Project Role: Chef for Farm to Table Lunch at the Expo

Enrika Williams is a Jackson chef that grew up in West Point, where she helped her grandmother cook for her family, flipped through cookbooks for fun and watched culinary television icons such as Julia Child. Williams graduated from the culinary program at the Art Institute of Atlanta in 2004. The world of culinary arts, outside of baking, is a largely male-dominated field, but Williams more than holds her own. She trained in the French kitchens of Au Pied du Cochon at the Intercontinental Buckhead Hotel in Atlanta and served as a sous chef at Parlor Market (115 W. Capitol St.) in downtown Jackson. Her current entrepreneurial venture, Fauna Foodworks presents an intimate dinner series that pays homage to southern black rural women for preserving the cultural food ways of the south, and its reach and cornerstone to the entire culinary world.



Dr. Cindy Ayers-Elliot

Project Role: Farmer for Farm to Table Dinner at Expo and Common Table Installation

Dr. Cindy Ayers-Elliot is CEO of Foot Print Farms, a 68 acre specialty crops vegetable and livestock farm, with a focus on agro-tourism for community development in the City of Jackson: growing an array of fruits and vegetables. She believes that planting seeds in the earth will grow fresh vegetables, however, planting a seed in the minds of young people will create a new universe of scholars. After working five years as CEO for Delta Foundation, Delta Enterprises in economic development in the Mississippi Delta, she also worked many years in New York as an investment banker. She participates with the United States Department of Agriculture, Natural Resources Conservation Service (NRCS) to ensure her farm is productive and environmentally friendly while she depends on her farms for sustenance, she also wants to use it as an educational tool for people not accustomed to new ways of farming.



Kathleen Finlay

Project Role: Leading Food Dialogues at Expo

Kathleen has been a leader in the regenerative agriculture movement for most of her career. She has also been instrumental in organizing women who work for environmental progress. Kathleen is the president of the Glynwood Center for Regional Food and Farming. Since 2012 she has refined the organization's mission and become a national figure in the world of progressive agricultural nonprofits. Previously, Kathleen was a Director of Harvard's Center for Health and the Global Environment, where she developed and shaped programs to educate communities about the correlation between human health and the global environment; created a farm-friendly food policy for dining services; and produced a comprehensive online guide to nutritional, seasonal eating and cooking in the Northeast. She also founded the Harvard Community Garden, the University's first garden dedicated solely to the production of food.



Adrienne Domnick

Project Role: Visual Artist / Painter

Adrienne Domnick is a local visual artist whose work is an exploration of sound, light, and bold colors through paint on a variety of surfaces. Her work rediscovers Afrocentric iconic pop culture through the lens of contemporary art. Over the last few years she's championed many of the creative initiatives in Jackson's Midtown community in her role as Former President of the Business Association of Midtown and Co-Founder of AND Gallery—an artist-run space for contemporary art.



MADDRAMA

Project Role: Performance Artists performing at the Expo

MADDRAMA was founded on the campus of Jackson State University in Jackson, Mississippi in 1998 by Mark G. Henderson. The Founding Student Members are Harold Barnwell, Treasure Shields-Redmond, Frank Terry, Jr., and Taranasha Wallace. The group's purpose, at that time, was to provide an outlet for students interested in drama activities on campus. Although there were other drama activities on campus, there were very few opportunities for students to develop and distribute their theatrical ideas beyond the campus environment. With the founding of MADDRAMA, the students began to travel extensively throughout the city, state, and country. MADDRAMA became a major recruitment vehicle for both the Department of Speech and Dramatic Art and the university. In 2004, MADDRAMA became an official campus organization and is now part of the Special Interest Council at Jackson State University.





MSU Design/Build Studio

Project Role: Designing and Building Learning Garden at Galloway

Mississippi State University's Interdisciplinary Design/Build Studio was started in 2010 to create a platform for design students to work with allied design professions, explore detailed design refinement, and implement their ideas on a real world installation. Each studio partners with a community group as the client to develop a thoughtful and lasting improvement to the community. The studio's work has been recognized by the American Society of Landscape Architects, American Institute of Architects, Environmental Protection Agency, and by the Cooper Hewitt Smithsonian. In its 10th year, the Design/Build Studio has helped to shape hundreds of young designers and their responsibility to the world around them.

Office of Jonathan Tate

Project Role: Designing Installation at Smith Park

Jonathan Tate is principal of OJT (Office of Jonathan Tate), an architecture and urban design practice in New Orleans. The office engages in numerous design-related activities, including applied research, opportunistic planning, strategic development and conventional architectural practice. Tate is a graduate of Auburn University, where he was a multi-year participant in the Rural Studio, and Harvard University Graduate School of Design. Tate, and the practice, have been recognized as part of the 2017 Emerging Voices by the Architectural League of New York. Notable recently completed projects include 3106 St. Thomas, the first unit under the Starter Home* development agenda, which was recently awarded a national AIA housing award, and Wetland Urbanism, a research and publication project that was exhibited at the 14th International Architecture Biennale in Venice.



Fertile Ground Farms

Project Role: Urban Farm Manager for Project Installation Sites

Sam Humphrey is founder and farmer for Fertile Ground Farms, a regenerative "chemical-free" urban agriculture business in the city of Jackson that aims to grow the urban farming movement in the city using sustainable social, economic, and environmental practices. Fertile Ground Farms is the farming contractor for all of the fertile ground sites growing food which include the edible landscape in Smith Park, the Galloway Elementary Learning Garden, Farish Street Landing, and on West Capitol Street. Sam aims to provide assistance to everyone growing food in the city at different scales through workshops, videos, community training events, and interdisciplinary projects. Before starting Fertile Ground Farms, Sam developed an organic demonstration farm at the Piney Woods School and provided technical assistance to African American farmers across the state while working for the non-profit National Center for Appropriate Technology (NCAT) Gulf States office. Sam is trained in environmental studies with a concentration in sustainable agriculture at Warren Wilson College and University of Colorado Boulder.



Wurmworks

Project Role: Urban Farm Manager for Project Installation Sites

Matt Casteel is the founder of Wurmworks, a vermicomposting business based in Jackson, Mississippi. Wurmworks' mission is to provide creative and affordable ways to reduce food waste, feed the soil, and work in collaboration to grow more high nutrient foods. Wurmworks currently collects food waste from small local businesses and transforms it into fresh fertilizer. The company actively participates in events that expose people to the incredible biological processes of vermicomposting. Before starting Wurmworks Matt worked as a program manager for Rise Against Hunger helping to package 3 million meals annually. Matt holds a Bachelor of Science in Anthropology and Sociology and is a graduate of the Business Advantage Program at Millsaps College. He also is currently a member of the Board of Trustees for Leadership Greater Jackson.

Tyler Tadlock

Project Role: Art Director for the Fertile Ground Project

Art director, graphic designer, and music creator Tyler Tadlock brings nearly two decades of graphic design experience to the Fertile Ground team. Tadlock is founder of Southern Cult, a freelance creative team with an emphasis in non-profit identity and brand design, co-founder of AND Gallery—an artist-run space for contemporary emerging artists, and artistic co-director of Articulated Works, a multimedia arts organization anchored in New Orleans. As a music creator he'll be contributing to the Fertile Ground Documentary soundtrack and has worked on projects for clients such as Red Bull Music Academy and Spotify. His music project Spirituals has been featured in Vice, Resident Advisor, XLR8R, Pitchfork, and has appeared on NTS Radio, Mary Ann Hobbs's BBC6 Four Tet guest mix, and Gilles Peterson's WorldwideFM with Thris Tian.



Cooperative Community of New West Jackson

Project Role: Leader for Cooperative Community of New West Jackson

Nia Umoja is a member of the Cooperative Community of New West Jackson (CCNWJ). CCNWJ is a grassroots, resident-led development model that seeks to revitalize West Jackson, MS through an inventive "inside out" strategy. Their mission is to find sustainable solutions to the chronic economic and social challenges we face by matching residents' underemployed skill sets and abandoned property resources with a creative placemaking effort that centers on local food production, folk art, and construction trades.

Significant Developments

Project Role: Community Engagement Facilitator and Artist at Galloway Elementary

daniel johnson [sic] is an independent artist, curator, and entrepreneur focused on agency, equity, and the emergence of consensus. Johnson roots the creative and curation process in deep listening and the articulation of the resonance present among the unfolding, intersecting stories of everyday life. Through reflection on the nature of belonging and facilitated community storytelling, Johnson works with groups of people to harness their unique cultural expressions in a co-design process to disrupt power dynamics and realize shared intentions. He has served as Director of Engagement and Learning at the Mississippi Museum of Art, as Assistant Director for the Paris, France production of Cocoon by Kae Browne, and as an Inter-cultural Leadership Fellow for Alternate ROOTS, the National Association of Latinx Arts & Culture, the First People's Fund, and the Pa'i Foundation. Currently, Johnson serves as CEO of Significant Developments, creating his Social Practice art through the establishment of contractor-client relationships which center communities impacted by the work.



DJ Baker

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Assistant

DJ. Baker has an energy that really comes across when he talks about good food. The former member of the FoodCorps moved to Mississippi in 2015 after growing up in a suburb of Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, and attending the University of Central Oklahoma. He worked first for FoodCorps in the Mississippi Delta in Shelby and Cleveland, Mississippi, mostly teaching school kids to garden and learn more about good food. He then moved in Jackson for his second year in FoodCorps, doing similar work in Jackson Public Schools. That experience led him to start his own business, Esculent, when his stint with FoodCorps was over.



Robby Piantanida

Project Role: Executive Producer on Fertile Ground Documentary

Robby Piantanida is a Texas native. Educated in fine art in Mississippi, he moved into film production running Borrowed Productions out of Jackson, MS for a decade before starting General Usage on the west coast. He works as an editor and DP/director for both film and television, sometimes scoring his own projects as a musician under the name Magnetic Dispatch. He is an avid aquarium keeper with 2 reef tanks and a freshwater tank, and believes there is too much about the world to learn to stop moving for even a night's rest.



Otis Wright

Project Role: Learning Garden Site Council Member

Otis Wright is farm manager at the Jackson Medical Mall. Otis is responsible for starting, managing, and maintaining garden plots across the street from the mall in the Virden Addition Neighborhood. The garden plots are "U-Pick" meaning anyone from the neighborhood can come grab produce when they are hungry. Before working at the Mall he worked with the Tougaloo Farm Aid program. Otis is a graduate from Alcorn State University's farming program.

Tyson Jackson

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Assistant

Tyson Jackson serves as the Program Coordinator for the City of Jackson's Jackson Meals Matter program, the College Hunger Coordinator for the Partnership for a Healthy Mississippi, as well as the Lead Organizer for The People's Advocacy Institute, where he works on criminal and electoral justice initiatives. As a child, Tyson grew up in adversity where his family relied on government subsidies and benefits. Coming from a lower-income family, he also had to access to those same benefits as a college student who faced many semesters with less than enough to sustain himself independently. This created a drive and a passion inside of him to be part of the solution to ensure other families, and students didn't experience the same. Since college, Tyson has gone on to work as a community organizer for non-profits focusing on social justice and labor issues.



Madeline Morcelle

Project Role: Project Food Policy Advisor

Madeline Morcelle, JD, MPH, is Director of Public Benefits Law at the Mississippi Center for Justice (MCJ). She is also a Fellow of the Mississippi Women's Policy Institute. Before joining MCJ, Madeline worked concurrently as a Staff Attorney at the Network for Public Health Law and Research Scholar at the Center for Public Health Law and Policy at Arizona State University's College of Law, and focused her research, teaching, and practice on addressing the root causes of health injustice. Previously, at the U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services, she worked on health care payment and delivery system reforms. She received her MPH in Health Policy from the Harvard School of Public Health, JD from Washington and Lee University School of Law, and BA in English from the State University of New York at Buffalo.





Melishia Brooks

Project Role: Learning Garden Site Council Advisor and Expo Facilitator

Melishia Denee' Brooks is an educator turned advocate. She grew up in the Midtown community in Jackson, MS and is a proud graduate of historic Lanier High School, where her love for advocacy and community started. She has an English degree from Jackson State University, and a Master's degree in Curriculum and Instruction from the University of Mississippi. As a classroom English teacher, Melishia's passion for radical change increased substantially. At The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects, Melishia serves as Vice President of Operations. In her spare time, she enjoys browsing Pinterest and attempting DIY projects, cooking for her family, and a nice glass of Sweet Red wine.



Candice Cole

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Communications

A native Washingtonian and former television news reporter, Candice Cole came to the City of Jackson eager to help move the city forward in her role as Communications Director by promoting the initiatives set forth to attract commercial and residential growth and investment in the City of Jackson. During her time as a reporter, Candice had the opportunity to live in Jackson for a year in 2014. While there, she fell in love with the people and recognized the great potential that Jackson has to be a major southern city with all of the amenities that new and existing residents want and need to have an excellent quality of life. Her belief in Mayor Lumumba's vision for Jackson is ultimately what propelled her to move back to the city where she is happy and excited to be of service.

Joecephus Martin aka "skipp coon"

Project Role: Fertile Ground Documentary Producer

Joecephus is a Jacksonian whose path to The Lighthouse | Black Girl Projects took interesting twists and turns. Having worked with every student population from 3-year-old to college students across the past 15 years, Joecephus has found similarities with most of them: many of the children and young people didn't know how powerful they were and how much they could do, if they wanted. In order to move communities forward, he determined, it was incumbent to find ways to support parents and caring adults in their efforts to advance their children's academic, psychological and spiritual lives. Through that work and growth of understanding of the issues in the black community, he realized much of his analysis ignored the challenges and structures placed on the women that had reared and protected him.



Bilal Qizilbash

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Participant

Bilal Qizilbash is a social entrepreneur; one of his passions is feeding the hungry, something he does weekly in his adopted home town of Jackson, Mississippi, through his non-profit organization, the Draw A Smile Foundation. The R U Hungry program feeds the hungry every Friday at 6 p.m. in downtown Jackson as well as in Brooklyn, New York on Sundays. Bilal pledges 2.5% of net profits from his company to the Draw A Smile Foundation.



Deep Seedz

Project Role: Performance Artists performing at the Expo

The mission of Deep Seedz is to enhance artistic skill through civic engagement, leadership development, and cultural enrichment for youth and young artist in Jackson, Mississippi. Their objectives seek to enhance members artistic development in graphic art, poetry & creative writing, dance, and all forms of creative arts.



Dominique Starling

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Participant

Dominique Starling is the culinary consultant and one of the chefs for the Jackson Medical Mall Foundation's culinary kitchen. She is the owner of Star La Vie, LLC which specializes in culinary consulting and catering for events in the Metro Jackson area. She is a Third generation farmer. Her family has been farming in the Mississippi Delta since 1948 and more recently, at Jubilee Ranch located in Jackson, Mississippi where they farm grass-fed cattle, soybeans and much more. She has a passion for organic farming, fighting food insecurity in Jackson, empowering the youth in the community, and fine culinary arts.

Mukesh Kumar, Ph. D.

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Manager and Advisor

Mukesh Kumar is the former Director of Planning and Development for the City of Jackson, Mississippi. Before joining Mayor Lumumba's team, he taught City Planning at Jackson State University for thirteen years. His work is focused on local processes that shape the future of urban areas. He is a planner and routinely consults with municipalities on issues related to development and revitalization. Committed to the values of equity and justice, he finds his inner quiet within webs of urban complexities. He is an avid runner, uses running as an excuse to experience the built environment, and enjoys being a perennial student of cities.



Jordan Hillman

Project Role: Project Manager for the Fertile Ground Project

Jordan Rae Hillman is the Director of Planning and Development for the City of Jackson, Mississippi. Previously, she served as the Community Development Director for the City of Brandon, Mississippi. Her work has focused on comprehensive planning, process improvement, and capacity building. She is a member of the American Institute of Certified Planners, American Planning Association, and Engaging Local Government Leaders. She is a regular contributor to the ELGL "Morning Buzz" blog. She received a Bachelor's degree in landscape architecture from Mississippi State University and a Master's degree in city and regional planning from the University of Memphis.



Sarah Mason, Ph. D.

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Evaluator

Sarah Mason is the Director at the Center for Research Evaluation at the University of Mississippi. Sarah's goal is to make evaluations as useful as possible, for as many people as possible. She combines her experience as an early childhood educator and an international development practitioner with extensive knowledge of evaluation theories, approaches, and methods.



Herbal Blessings

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Contributor

Eric T. Collins, Jr. is learning the ancestral medicinal herbal traditions as the CEO a natural health food and metaphysical store in the historic Farish Street district. His parents, Eric T. Sr. and Yasmin served as the Founder/COO and Attorney/CFO; together they are known as "The Plant-based Family". Herbal Blessings is supporting people's journey to better health and wellness.

Salam Rida

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Curator

Salam Rida is an Urban Designer for the City of Jackson Department of Planning and Development. A Detroit native, Salam received her Master of Architecture degree from the University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning and received her Bachelor of Arts in Sociology and Urban Studies from the University of Michigan College of Literature, Science, and the Arts. She has assisted in the curation of several major art and architecture exhibitions including the 2017 St. Etienne Design Biennale in France, the 2016 Venice Biennale in Italy, and the 2015 Chicago Biennial. She is lead curator on the project and is simultaneously involved in other city planning projects that focus on food access. Salam's multidisciplinary approach to design intersects tactical urbanism, environmental sustainability, and economic development.



Travis Crabtree

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Coordinator

Travis Crabtree is the co-author of the Fertile Ground Project proposal and an Urban Designer working within Jackson. In 2017 Crabtree moved back to Mississippi to assist in building up creative sustainable food, water, energy, and waste systems within the city and state. Crabtree helped establish an experimental green incubator and makerspace called Ecoshed located within Industry Park between the Virden Addition and Midtown neighborhoods. Crabtree's green infrastructure research and design/build experience have been critical to the Fertile Ground Project's approach. Crabtree values interdisciplinary systems thinking that brings many professionals together to achieve new experimental environments and outcomes.





True Local Market

Project Role: Fertile Ground Expo Smith Park Bazaar Coordinator

Gabe Porter is the operator of True Local Market, a weekly farmer’s market with all local growers, makers, and artists. The desire for the market started as a need to find a place where people can gather and cultivate a space which advocates for ethical and sustainable growing practices. The market features homegrown veggies, hand-poured candles, handmade jewelry, baked goods, herbs, pottery, organic honey & eggs, fresh teas & coffee, and much more. Their vendors and participants are constantly growing and expanding into other programs on site such as growing demonstration workshops, family events, and craft seminars.



Scott Allen

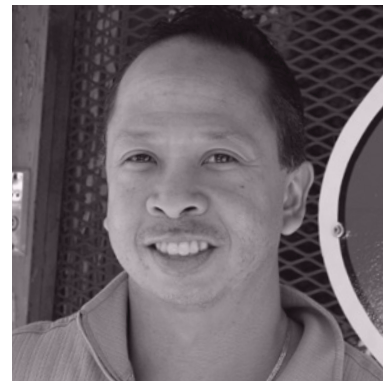
Project Role: Graphic Artist for Project Sites

Scott Allen is a local artist and owner of A+ Signs and Creative. Scott works to create art that enhances the community daily life. A+ Signs and Creative is a sign and creative company that specializes in large format printing, vehicle/wall graphics, vinyl, props, murals, banners and then some.

Geno Lee

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Contributor and Expo Facilitator

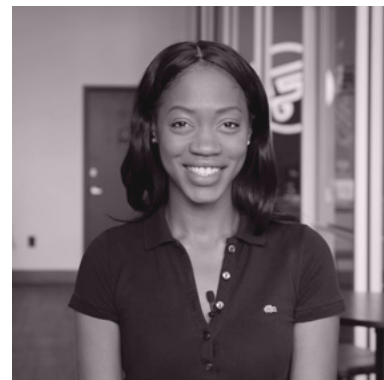
Geno Lee is the fourth-generation owner of the Big Apple Inn. His great-grandfather, Juan “Big John” Mora, who was born in Mexico City, arrived in Jackson in the 1930s, began peddling hot tamales on street corners and, by 1939, had earned enough money to buy a storefront on Farish Street in downtown Jackson, the center of African American culture in the first half of the 20th century. Juan took over a Sicilian-owned grocery store and called his new venture the Big Apple Inn, naming it after his favorite dance, the Big Apple. The rest of the story is a complicated one of interracial marriages, turbulent times, and a changing community.



Monique Davis

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Contributor and Expo Facilitator

Monique Davis joined Mississippi Museum of Art in 2016 to spearhead membership and community engagement efforts. Davis was part of the first cohort of the Liberation Leadership School, a program of the Highlander Institute. As part of her wider equity and service work, Davis holds positions as Board Chair of Alternate ROOTS and on the Board of the Jackson Convention and Visitors Bureau (Visit Jackson). Davis received her Bachelors of Business and Public Administration from Howard University.



Keyah Williams

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Contributor

Keyah Williams is on a mission to improve health and wellness in Jackson. Keyah and her partner Micheal McElroy started Mama Nature’s Juice Bar to provide healthy food options since many do not exist in the city or the state. Mississippi leads the nation in many preventable chronic conditions caused by obesity, such as hypertension, cardiovascular disease, type 2 diabetes, cancers, arthritis. The juice bar aims to challenge the Mississippi food system through creating delicious plant-based food options.



Betsy Bradley

Project Role: Fertile Ground Project Contributor

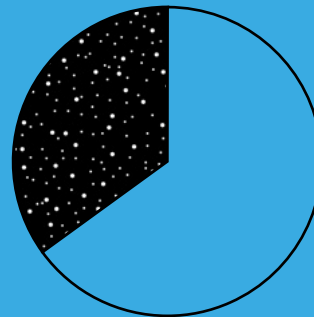
Betsy Bradley was appointed director of the Mississippi Museum of Art in December, 2001. At the Museum, she oversees the Museum in Jackson which has 31 affiliates statewide. Previously, she served as executive director of the Mississippi Arts Commission for six years after four years as its deputy director and community arts director. Since arriving at the Museum, Bradley has overseen significant growth of the institution, shepherding two capital campaigns, totaling \$20 million, that resulted in a move to a completely renovated facility, and the creation of The Art Garden, the first new public green space in downtown Jackson since the 1970s. Committed to making the Museum relevant to its community, Bradley works in partnership with many local cultural, social service, and history organizations to create opportunities for mutually beneficial collaborations.

The project was strategically written to maximize resources and impact as much as possible. The Bloomberg Philanthropies Public Art Challenge grant was approximately \$1,000,000 but required raising additional funds through partnering with organizations, institutions, and the private sector. The additional funds ultimately resulted in being “in-kind” contributions providing around \$639,690 in additional funding support. This gave the project more opportunity to equitably distribute the funding to the artists and collaborators.

Often emerging artists and food advocates aren't paid for their community work or underpaid in Jackson. We are proud to say that every artist and food advocate were paid for their work on this project. Around 100 people were employed through the grant from every ward in the city.

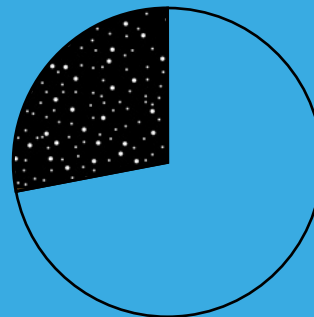
AMOUNT OF FUNDING THAT STAYED IN JACKSON

\$650,000
65%



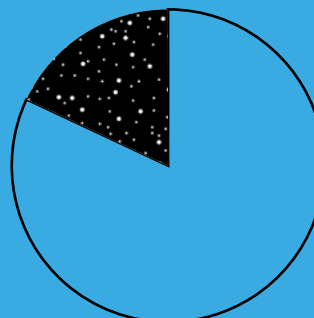
FOOD GROWN IN JACKSON FOR PROJECT EVENTS

over 200 lbs
72%



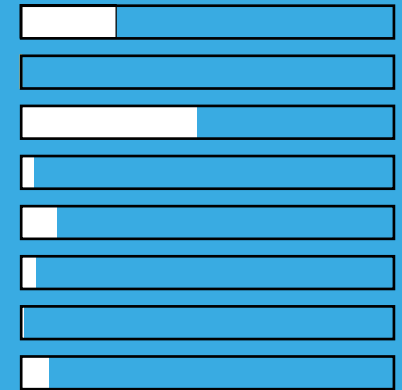
PLANTS GROWN IN JACKSON FOR PROJECT INSTALLATIONS

> 3,000 plants
82%



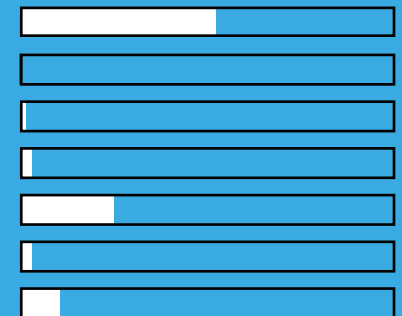
PROJECT COSTS

Personnel Salaries	\$352,000	26%
Fringe	\$4,900	0%
Contracting / Consulting	\$646,142	47%
Travel & Events	\$51,900	4%
Marketing	\$135,495	10%
Supplies	\$58,050	4%
Equipment	\$14,000	1%
Indirect	\$105,160	8%
TOTAL	\$1,367,647	



IN-KIND CONTRIBUTIONS

Personnel	\$352,000	55%
Fringe	\$4,900	0%
Travel & Events	\$10,000	2%
Marketing	\$21,000	3%
Supplies	\$167,190	26%
Equipment	\$19,500	3%
Indirect	\$70,000	11%
TOTAL	\$639,690	



the breakdown



PARTNERS

Bloomberg Philanthropies

City of Jackson

AARP Mississippi

Dole Packaged Foods

Community Foundation for Mississippi

Mississippi Museum of Art

Downtown Jackson Partners

Jackson Public Schools

Jackson Meals Matter

Jackson Redevelopment Authority

**Mississippi Department of Archives
and History**

Greater Jackson Arts Council

Visit Jackson

McLaughlin PC

Jackson Medical Mall Foundation

Jackson State University

University of Mississippi Medical Center

University of Michigan

Mississippi State University

**National Center for Appropriate
Technology**

Mississippi Farmers Market

Lighthouse Black Girl Project

Mississippi Center For Justice

Operation Shoestring

Wells Church

Refill Cafe

Social, economic, and environmental sustainability is a critical part of the Fertile Ground Project. The projects were designed and built to last, physically and emotionally. The project aims to catalyze more art and food based work across the city. We want to thank all of the artists, partners, and collaborators for the amazing work. We achieved the impossible by making all of this happen within a one year period. There are so many people doing incredible work in the food space within Jackson and we attempted to include everyone to the best of our ability. The Fertile Ground Project represents what is possible when we come together to build a new, equitable, and sustainable future for the City of Jackson.



**inspiring dialogue
about food
access**

**REAL B
FAMILY
\$15
DRIVE THRU**



**Bloomberg
Philanthropies**

**PUBLIC ART
CHALLENGE**