

BLACKSPACE MANIFESTO

We are Black urban planners, architects, artists, activists, designers, and leaders working to protect and create Black spaces. Our work includes a range of activities from engagement and projects in historically Black neighborhoods to hosting cross-disciplinary convenings and events.

While what we do is very important, the way we do it is also critical. Acknowledging our triumphs, oppressions, aspirations, and challenges, we've

created this manifesto to guide our growth as a group and our interactions with one another, partners, and communities.

We push ourselves, our partners, our fields, and our work closer to these ideals so we may realize a present and future where Black people, Black spaces, and Black culture matter and thrive.

CREATE CIRCLES, NOT LINES

Create less hierarchy and more dialogue, inclusion, and empowerment.



CHOOSE CRITICAL CONNECTIONS OVER CRITICAL MASS

Quality over quantity. Focus on creating critical and authentic relationships to support mutual adaptation and evolution over time.*

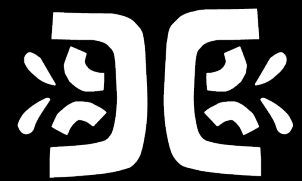


MOVE AT THE SPEED OF TRUST

Grow trust and move together with fluidity at whatever speed is necessary.*

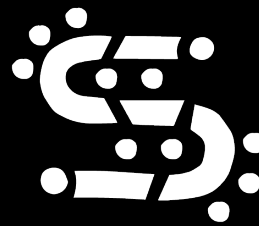
BE HUMBLE LEARNERS WHO PRACTICE DEEP LISTENING

Listen deeply and approach the work with an attitude towards learning, without assumptions and predetermined solutions. Take criticism without dispute.



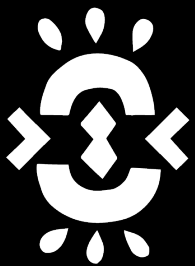
CELEBRATE, CATALYZE, & AMPLIFY BLACK JOY

Black joy is a radical act. Give due space to joy, laughter, humor, and gratitude.



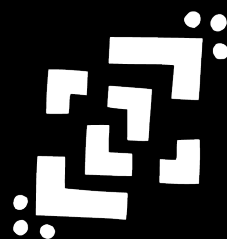
PLAN WITH, DESIGN WITH

Walk with people as they imagine and realize their own futures. Be connectors, conveners, and collaborators—not representatives.



CENTER LIVED EXPERIENCE

Lived experience is an important expertise; center it so it can be a guide and touchstone of all work.

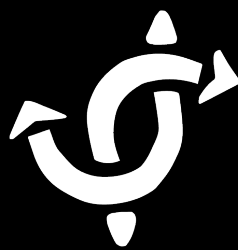


SEEK PEOPLE AT THE MARGINS

Acknowledge the structures that create, maintain and uphold inequity. Learn and practice new ways of intentionally making space for marginalized voices, stories, and bodies.

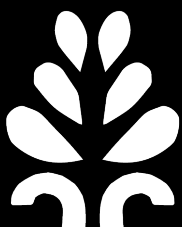
RECKON WITH THE PAST TO BUILD THE FUTURE

Meaningfully acknowledge the histories, injustice, innovations, and victories of spaces and places before new work begins. Reckon with the past as a means of healing, building trust, and deepening understanding of self and others.



PROTECT & STRENGTHEN CULTURE

Make visible and strengthen Black cultures and spaces to honor their sacredness and prevent their erasure. Amplify and support Black assets of all forms—from leaders, institutions, and businesses to arts, culture, and histories.



CULTIVATE WEALTH

Cultivate a wealth of time, talent, and treasure that provide the freedom to risk, fail, learn, and grow.

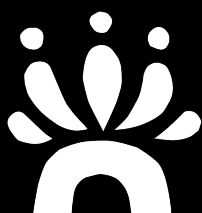


FOSTER PERSONAL & COMMUNAL EVOLUTION

Make opportunities to expand leadership and capacity.

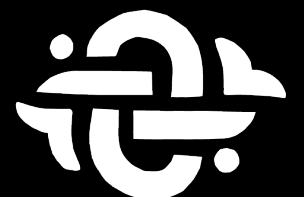
PROMOTE EXCELLENCE

Amplify, elevate, and love Black vanguards and the variety of their challenging, creative, exceptional, and innovative work and spaces. Allow excellence to build influence that creates opportunities for present and future generations.



MANIFEST THE FUTURE

Black people, Black culture, and Black spaces exist in the future! Imagine and design the future into existence now, working inside and outside of social and political systems.



*This principle is derived from Adrienne Maree Brown's Emergent Strategy: *Shaping Change, Changing Worlds*.

We are grateful to the many individuals and organizations that inspired these principles.