



jess brown

Multidisciplinary Multimedia Spectacle Generator, Afrofuturist Mermaid Cosmonaut Explorer, Community Builder and Creative Connector, creating disruptive & discursive work centered social justice, diversity and equity

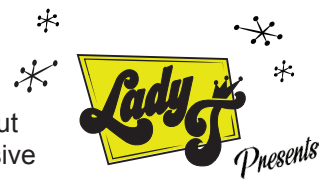


Photo by: Stephanie Alvarez Ewans

Jessica Brown is a Multidisciplinary Multimedia Spectacle Generator, Afrofuturist Mermaid Cosmonaut Explorer, Community Builder and Creative Connector creating disruptive & discursive work centered social justice, diversity and equity. Known around town as Lady J, she's a visual and performance artist, activist, designer, entertainer, musician, producer, party thrower and world builder — curated and unscripted. She operates through a lens of joy and justice in order to empower, uplift and encourage discourse across audiences. She is fierce and unapologetically Black.

In her work, she uses multiple mediums, mixes music, light, sound, props, and pop culture images from her childhood— offering a heavy dose of nostalgia in order to connect with her audience. Her work “amuses all of the senses” and as a means to educate and inform, she offers “layers of engagement” in order to engage on your own terms in ways that feel comfortable to the viewer.

An Associate Professor of Industrial Design at Rhode Island of Design, she uses a liberatory design framework, creating flexible environments that facilitate safe and inclusive space for all people to explore, investigate, reflect, & discuss intersectional topics of race, class, gender, environment, politics and human rights through the lens of her own lived experience as a Black Woman of African American Heritage living and thriving in the US.

She is stationed in the Industrial Design Department and also teaching in Graphic Design, offering courses in Toy Design, Activism and Social engagement. She serves on the University's Board of Social Equity & Inclusion (SEI) and Community Engagement Steering Committee to name a few. In her classes, she has a high level of expectation from her students. Mainly to be good community members and supportive of one another, to be critical thinkers and keenly observe/examine/question everything around them, to be risk takers and fail repeatedly, and be empathic and contribute greatly to the world.

Within the Providence community she is very active, currently serving in the *African American Ambassadors Group (AAAG)* under Mayor Elorza to advance the progress of her people on the path to Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations, board member of the Providence Municipal Reparations Commission advocating to close the racial wealth gap, founding board member of the Nicholson File Art Studio Collective, founding member of *Studio50(sims) Artist and Culture Lab*, longtime board member of *PRONK! (Providence Honk Festival of bands and community activists)*, member of the *Haus of Glitter Performance Lab*, founder of *OPP! (Optimistic People Project!)* and *FLOAT!* Providing safe and social healing spaces for Black women to safely return to the water to Reclaim, Release, Resist, Recover & Rejoice.

Long story short, she likes to talk about serious things in an unserious way. And if you can't get a hold of her, she's probably at the ocean, restoring her soul.



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Education

Rhode Island School of Design, RISD

2007-09; Graduated Magna Cum Laude
Masters of Industrial Design

Murray State University, MSU

2001-06; Graduated Summa Cum Laude
BFA in Furniture Design

Yestermorrow Design/Build School

2008
Certificate in sustainable building and design

Memberships

Alpha Kappa Alpha Sorority Inc, NAACP, For Freedoms, Haus of Glitter. Multicultural Queer Collective + Performance Lab, Honk! community of activist brass

Work Experience

RISD | Industrial Design faculty

Associate Professor of Industrial Design, 2018-Present

Classes taught: Undergrad: ID Design Principles 1 & 2, Wood II, Adv. Design Studio: ArtTwerking-Popping Pop Culture, Decolonizing design & appropriated art forms; Adv'd Studios: Toy Design with a Purpose: Social Justice & Mental Health through Designed Forms, Special Topics: Toy Design, Graduate: Grad seminar: Design & Activism: Building Social Justice & Community Building into Design Practice, Thesis Making.

Hasbro | Consumer Products

Project Manager, Licensed Toy & Game, 2013- 2018

- Managed product development for 50+ licensees representing a \$130m annual wholesale business.
- Work cross-functionally with internal and external stakeholders to create best in class product that integrates seamlessly with Hasbro offerings at retail.
- Revived Vault toy brands successfully relaunching Tonka, Spirograph & Weebles.
- Responsible for developing #2 selling affinity Monopoly Game- Golden Girls.

Product Designer for Embedded Innovation (Futuring) Team, Summer 2017

- Selected for a rogue team that focuses on disruptive ideation to breathe new life into established brands.
- Developed brand concept that can be translated into entertainment content, lifestyle, and product strategies.
- Create a new preschool product line based on whitespace retail opportunities.

Professional Practice

LadyJ Presents: Owner, Artist, Host, Performer, Designer, 2009-Present

- Using social practice to engage and educate through art and design. Instigating audience participation moments through multiple mediums & platforms to facilitate raucous moments of spontaneity & life changing experiences. Pop culture-infused art & product designs that blur the lines of 2,3, and 4D.
- Design clients include: *Google, Hasbro, Fred Worldwide, City of Providence, Providence Downtown Parks Conservancy, Flipp Salon, Olive Tap, Planned Parenthood, Bintimani & more.*

bands, Pronk!, GirlTrek, Mastermind Failure Club

Committees/ Boards

- 2018- Present RISD: SEI Steering committee, Community Engagement, 18th Presidential Hiring Committee
- 2022- 2023 Providence Reparations Board Commissioner
- 2020- 2023 AAAG African American Ambassadors Group for the City of Providence
- 2016-2018 Arts + Culture/Tourism Providence Board Commissioner
- 2016-2017 PASA: Providence After School Alliance Board member
- 2011- Present *Pronk!* Providence Honk Committee, Board Member
- 2018-2021 *Brick x Brick*, Music Director
- 2021- Present *Nicholson File Arts Studios, Studio50 (Sims)*
- 2017-2018 *Langston Hughes Community Poetry Reading*

Professional Practice (Cont.)

- 2022 Pronk! Music + Community Festival, Dexter Park 2022
- 2022 Planned Parenthood +Advocates for Youth Campus Abortion Access Redesign Project. Created new graphics and visual language. Art Director
- 2022 Planned Parenthood Abortion Providers Appreciation Public Engagement Project. Art Direction, Graphic Design
- 2022 Bintimani Family Restaurant, Under Construction Window Treatment, Art Direction
- 2021 *Chief Massosoit* Mural, Electrical Box, Warren RI. The Warren Arts & Culture Commission+The Avenue Concept
- 2021 The Ladies Banner, 15' x 30' 19 Snow Street, Providence RI. In collaboration with Mary Beth Meehan, photo source with permission of the black Heritage society
- 2020 VOTE Mural, sponsored by The Avenue Concept in collaboration with 4 BIPOC artists , Dyer Street, Providence, RI
- 2021 RIXQ Rhode Island Delegate for community outreach

Performance /Television

- 2021 *Inauguration Celebration* w/ Brick By Brick (BxB) + Pronk! Music + Community Festival + Fine Acts, Video Project for Biden/Harris Inauguration Ceremony in Collaboration with The Womxn's Project, The Haus of Glitter, & Hurricane Farms Cranston, RI
- 2021 *This is my House*. Cedarhurst Center for the Fine Arts, and Mitchell House Museum, solo art exhibit, full sensory performance, neighborhood parade, Soul! Bingo, Mt. Vernon TN
- 2021 Dyke March, Clam Jam Brass Band, Pride Week. Providence, RI
- 2020 Television pilot for *Minor Designer*, 44 Blue Productions, Gettin Rad Productions, on Air Carpenter
- 2020 *Climate Justice Celebration*, "I want a Future that is..." Pronk! Music + Community Festival . Workshop + Parade + Demonstration
- 2021 *This is my House*. Pronk! Performance of the Story of the Slave Ship Sally, Esek Hopkins House, Providence, RI
- 2019 Clam Jam Brass Band, Founder, Creative Director, Trumpeter, Whistle Blower, Providence, RI
- 2019 *This is my House*. RISD museum, Grand Gallery, Providence, RI
- 2019 *Clam Jam Brass Band* Debut
- 2019 Pronk! 20' Geodesic Dome Build. Engagement Wall. Parade, Grand Marshall, Providence, RI
- 2015 *Framework* Design Build Reality Television Show Contestant. Host, Common. Los Angeles CA.

Host/Emcee Events

- 2022 Moderator, Haus of Glitter, Esek Hopkins Talkback, RISD
- 2021 Host/emcee, FirstWorks Urban Carnivale, live streamed into homes over the pandemic
- 2019, 2020, 2021 Host/ Emcee, Funda Fest, Liar's Ball
- 2018- Present Host/Emcee, Randy Andy Productions Drag King Extravaganza Stranger Kings
- 2018- Present Randy Andy Productions VDay Spectacular
- 2018 Emcee and Keynote Speaker for the RI National Women's March, Statehouse Steps, Providence, RI
- 2016 Design Week RI: Panel moderator for Women in Design Conversation, Sponsored by Secretary of State, Nellie Gorbea, Statehouse Library, Providence, RI

Presentations

- 2019, 2022 Mass Art Massachusetts College of Art and Design, Boston, Center for Sustainability and the Environment Colleges of the Fenway, Boston
- 2022 Better World by Design, Re(Frame) How can Design and Social Practices challenge traditional boundaries
- 2021 Debunking Covid Vaccine Rumors With Dr. Katrina Byrd, Brown University
- 2021 Rhode Island Department of Health Covid Influencer, create video shorts for social media correctly information Black and Latino populations on the benefits of being vaccinated
- 2021 FF Billboard Design for XQ x FF Billboard Challenge XQ the organization dedicated to rethinking the high school experience. Performance Art displayed on a mobile LED billboard truck promoting the challenge during the festival, XQ Website landing page as an example of a successful billboard, for Social media promotion

Presentations (continued.)



2020 For Freedoms presents: Brooklyn Talks: Art & Democracy After the Election

Art Shows



2021 *This is my House*, Cedarhurst Center for the Fine Arts, and Mitchell House Museum, Mt. Vernon, TN, solo art exhibit, full sensory performance, neighborhood parade, Soul! Bingo
2016- Present Unkle Thirsty Holiday Sale invitee, Providence, RI

Commissions



2020- Present City of Providence, African American Ambassadors Group, to advance the progress of her people on the path to Truth, Reconciliation and Reparations. Created the Matter of Truth document, instrumental in Removing "Plantations" from the State Name
2022 Reparations: Closing the Racial Wealth Gap Commission selected by Mayor Jorge Elorza

Committees/ Boards



2010- Present Pronk! Providence Honk Committee, Board Member
2018 BxB, Music Director
2022 Nicholson File Arts Community
2017 Appointed Board Member for *PASA, Providence After School Alliance*
2016 Appointed Board member of *Providence Public Arts and City Life Council*

Fellowships



2021 Creative Reaction Lab CRXLAB Heartland Education Action Summit centering Anti-Bias/Anti-racist (ABAR) practices, Social & Emotional Learning (SEL), and Equity-Centered Community Design (ECCD)
2022 N-Squared Fellows Program, Altimeter Group, Cohort 6, Rockland Maine, Afrofuturist

Workshops



2022 *Emma Lake Artist Workshop* Resident. 100 artists are invited every two years to commune in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan
2022 *GirlTrek* Stress Protest, Estes Park, CO
2022 *Lady J Art Camp*, self imposed week long artist residency. Objective: to Play and to Discover
2019 *RISD Museum* teen workshop
2018 *Guerilla Girls* Workshop, Assistant, Brown University

Curatorial



2023 *Creative Survival, The Black Experience: A response to the Black Heritage Society archives by local Rhode Island Base Artists of Color*, Newport Museum, Newport RI

Conferences



2020 *For Freedoms Conference*, LA. Rhode Island. For Freedoms is an artist-led organization that models and increases creative civic engagement, discourse and direct action. We work with artists and organizations to center the voices of artists in public discourse, expand what participation in a democracy looks like, and reshape conversations about politics.

Press/ Publications

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- Dec 2021 Newspaper Article, Brown Daily Herald, Jacob Smollen, Murals
- Jan/Feb 2021 Art New England magazine, 30 Arresting Art By Jennifer Mancuso. From the fire of disorder rises an assembly of creatives devoted to Black expression
- July/August 2021 Art New England magazine, "Summer of Joy," Feature Story, The Haus of Glitter Performance Lab Providence
- November 2020 Motif Magazine, Making music through hard times, Clam Jam Brass Band
- July 2020 Boston Globe, Providence Public Art, Vote Mural
- Jan 2018 Shonda Rhimes Instagram feed; "Dear Sister," #Times Up video on depicting the #Womens wave2018
- Oct 2018 Featured on MoveOn.org, MSNBC, and the Today Show for BrickxBrick
- Jan 2018 Providence Journal
- Jan 2017 CNN.online, The New Yorker, New York Post, Pitchfork
- March 2016 Austin American-Statesman
- August 2015 AWFS- Association of Woodworking & Furnishings Suppliers "New Faces" Poster Person
- August 2015 Paducah Life Magazine
- July 2015 Equestria Daily Blog
- Feb 2015 Providence Monthly Magazine
- Jan-April 2015 Framework on Spike.com
- April/May 2013 Artscope Magazine #43 Centerfold
- Sept 2021 Providence Monthly, *Inside Providence's Nicholson File Art Studios*. Artists, designers, makers, and small business owners find affordable spaces in a repurposed boilerroom in the Valley neighborhood
- 2018 Invitation to be featured in the 'Home Futures' exhibition for Google On Hub piece, Design Museum London

Interviews

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- 2019 Design For America, Career Conversion
- 2021 RiNPR the Public's Radi0, Mosaic Podcast, Fridge Fest, Ana Gonzalez Conversation between Ana and Lady J, *How has Covid affected your teaching?*

Panels

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- 2021 Panelist for Artist as Witness Webinar, FYA Community Studios, Boston, Mass
- 2020 November, For Freedoms presents: Brooklyn Talks: Art & Democracy After the Election, Topic: How can art and creativity be used to strengthen democracy?

Citations

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- 2021 Nellie Gorbea, Secretary of State for Civic Engagement, VOTE Mural, The Avenue Concept
- 2021 Mayor Jorge Elorza, for work on behalf of the African American Ambassadors Group, AAAG
- 2022 Mayor Jorge Elorza, for work on behalf of the AAAG, Reparations

Grants

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- 2012 Rhode Island Innovation Grant Finalist

Volunteer

- 2020 *City of Providence Black Ambassadors under the leader of Mayor Jorge Elorza, along with 85 BiPOC community members, activists, educators, entrepreneurs, clergy and city leaders, we are activity working on truth telling, reconciliation, and reparations for our city and state. I am leading initiatives between the collaboration of the Artist Group and history group of how to communicate our history visually for the citizens of Providence.*
- 2019 *Black Lives Matter Mural committee for Providence- working with this team, we are planning a city/school/ community wide effort to paint a BLM street mural on Francis Street in front of the Providence Place Mall Wide Awakes Providence, 2020. Art Director.*

Collaborative Partners

Collaborative partners- the Womxn's Project, the Haus of Glitter, For Freedoms, City of Providence, Public Displays of Affection, Love Lab, BrickxBrick

RISD Service

2022	Community Engagement Steering committee
2022	Presidential Inauguration committee
2022	Special Project to the President
2022	RISD Green Book Special Project
2021	18th Presidential search steering committee to elect Crystal Williams
2021	SEI Cluster Hire Search committee
2021- Present	Liaison for new SEI cluster Hirees
2021	Host, Welcome party for new SEI cluster Hire and BIPOC faculty
2019, 2020	Design Principles teaching coordinator
2019	ID Culture Club- Curating exhibits for the ID gallery, developing lecture series
2019- Present	SEI steering committee
2019, 2020	Design Principles teaching coordinator
2018	Project Thrive Mentor
2018	Building Improvement committee

Advising

2021	Black Biennial Faculty Advising Committee
2022	RISD Mascot Redesign Wintersession Course
2022	Toy Design Club
2021	Surf Club

Department Projects

2022	ID Town Hall + Sophomore Town Hall
2022	ID House Party
2021	Study Break Playlist/restaurant list

ISPs/CSPs

2022	Beyonce, Painting
2021	Nadia, Textiles
2019	Dorian and Beyonce, ID + Painting
2018	Jessica Snow, Illustration

Workshops

2021	Leading, SEI, <i>How to teach post Nov.3 Presidential Election: Care Centered Class Room Spaces</i>
2021	Attendee, SEI Leading meditation in the classroom, Dr. Liz Menard, HIPPS, RISD

Fellowships

2020	SEI teaching fellow cohort, Decolonizing the classroom
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