

TRICKY STUFF AND HELPFUL HINTS

CHECK FOR THESE HANG-UPS

- **Capitalization:** *Make file and directory names lowercase. Use hyphens, not underscores, to separate words—for example, query-data.html . Use only standard ASCII alphanumeric characters in file and directory names.*
- *Look out for missing </> end brackets for elements!*
 - *Images don't appear at the size you intend - or don't size with columns and create horizontal scroll. Step 1, crop and resize using photoshop and make sure the image is not more than 2x's bigger than the standard resolution. Step 2, add this to your style section or css:*
 - ```
img {
 max-width: 100%;
}
```
- *Use <div class> rather than in-line css when possible - this allows you to define the class separately from the html and will help keep the style decisions localized with each other (and thereby easier to change and check than when buried amongst html.)*
- *When in doubt, use a code validator! <https://validator.w3.org>*

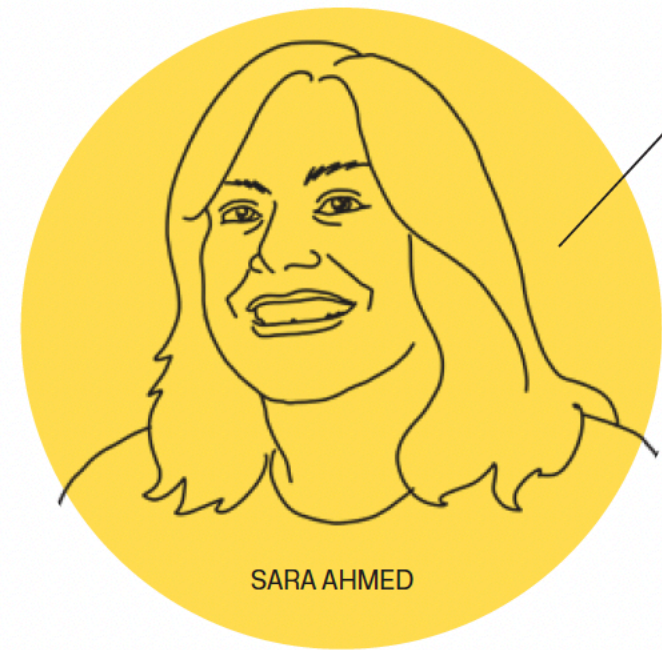
# CONSIDER THESE RECOMMENDATIONS

- Use relative measurements such as [\*em\*](#), % (percent), *rem* (root-Em), and others whenever possible. This will adjust the type to the browser zoom level and resolution. *1rem equals the font size of the html element, which for most browsers has a default value of 16px*
- This link has a good explainer on maintaining the width of objects as a way of controlling box sizes for resizing: <https://www.toptal.com/front-end/eight-expert-css-tips>
- Use percentages as a way of making sure things resize for different devices. This link explains how to work with flex-box and different inline versus block display properties: [https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Learn/CSS/Building\\_blocks/The\\_box\\_model](https://developer.mozilla.org/en-US/docs/Learn/CSS/Building_blocks/The_box_model)

**extra  
bold**  
a feminist  
inclusive  
anti-racist  
nonbinary  
field guide  
for graphic designers

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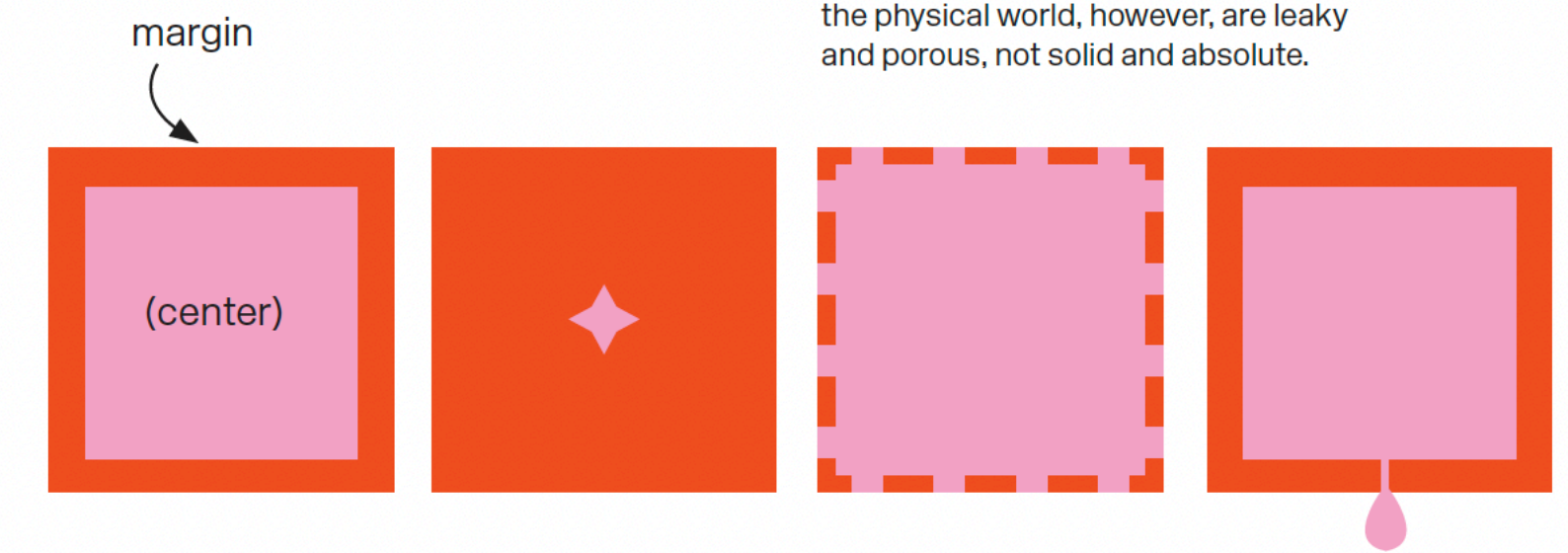


Space itself is sensational:  
it is a matter of how things  
make their impression as  
being here or there, on  
this side or that side of a  
dividing line, or as being left  
or right, near or far.

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**margins and centers**

DIAGRAMS BY ELLEN LUPTON



Margins and centers are part of the  
fundamental language of graphic design.  
Cropping, framing, padding, and gutters  
are tools for focusing attention and  
creating relationships such as inside/  
outside and figure/ground. Borders in  
the physical world, however, are leaky  
and porous, not solid and absolute.



THINKING ABOUT ACCESSIBILITY AS A  
QUESTION OF SPECIFIC BODIES IN  
SPECIFIC SOCIAL CONTEXTS  
CREATED THROUGH/BY DESIGN



# HOW TO USE THIS THEME

## meet mythical norm

TEXT BY ELLEN LUPTON AND LESLIE XIA

NORMS ARE INVISIBLE

What does it mean to design "normal" things for "normal" people? Western society defines certain individuals and communities as average and ordinary, while everyone else is something other. People living inside the norm bubble often don't recognize their own special status, because norms aren't supposed to be special. Synonyms for the word *normal* include *standard*, *average*, *typical*, and *ordinary*. Norms are invisible, becoming present only when they rub up against difference.

Graphic designers are in the norm business. We employ legible fonts and familiar interface conventions in order to churn out seemingly neutral, user-friendly messages. We use grids, hierarchies, and tasteful type pairings to unify publications and websites. We produce brand standards and corporate identity manuals to regulate the public image of companies and institutions. Each year, we harvest a fresh crop of sans serif typefaces claiming to deliver content in anonymous, trouble-free text blocks. It's Helvetica's world. We just live in it.

HISTORY OF HELVETICA

Norms appear throughout design culture. Uniforms and road signs are norms. Icons and emoji are norms. Style sheets, templates, and content management systems are norms. Social media interfaces are norms. At its core, typography is a norm, invented to reproduce text in a consistent, error-free manner. The rules of writing and typography encompass grammar, spelling, punctuation, capitalization, and the correct use of spaces and dashes.

People use graphic design to study and transform social relationships as well as visual ones. The words and concepts we use to talk about design—in both normative and disruptive terms—also ripple through the critical writing about race and feminism. Design is a tool for diagramming and exposing structures of power.

In the 1920s, designers in Europe argued that cubic buildings, sans serif typefaces, photographic images, and functional products could be useful and relevant to people across nationalities and income groups.

Such seemingly neutral forms resisted the nationalist and fascist ideologies that pitted groups against each other. Despite modernism's egalitarian ideals, however, the concept of universal or transnational design solutions presumed a male, Western European subject.

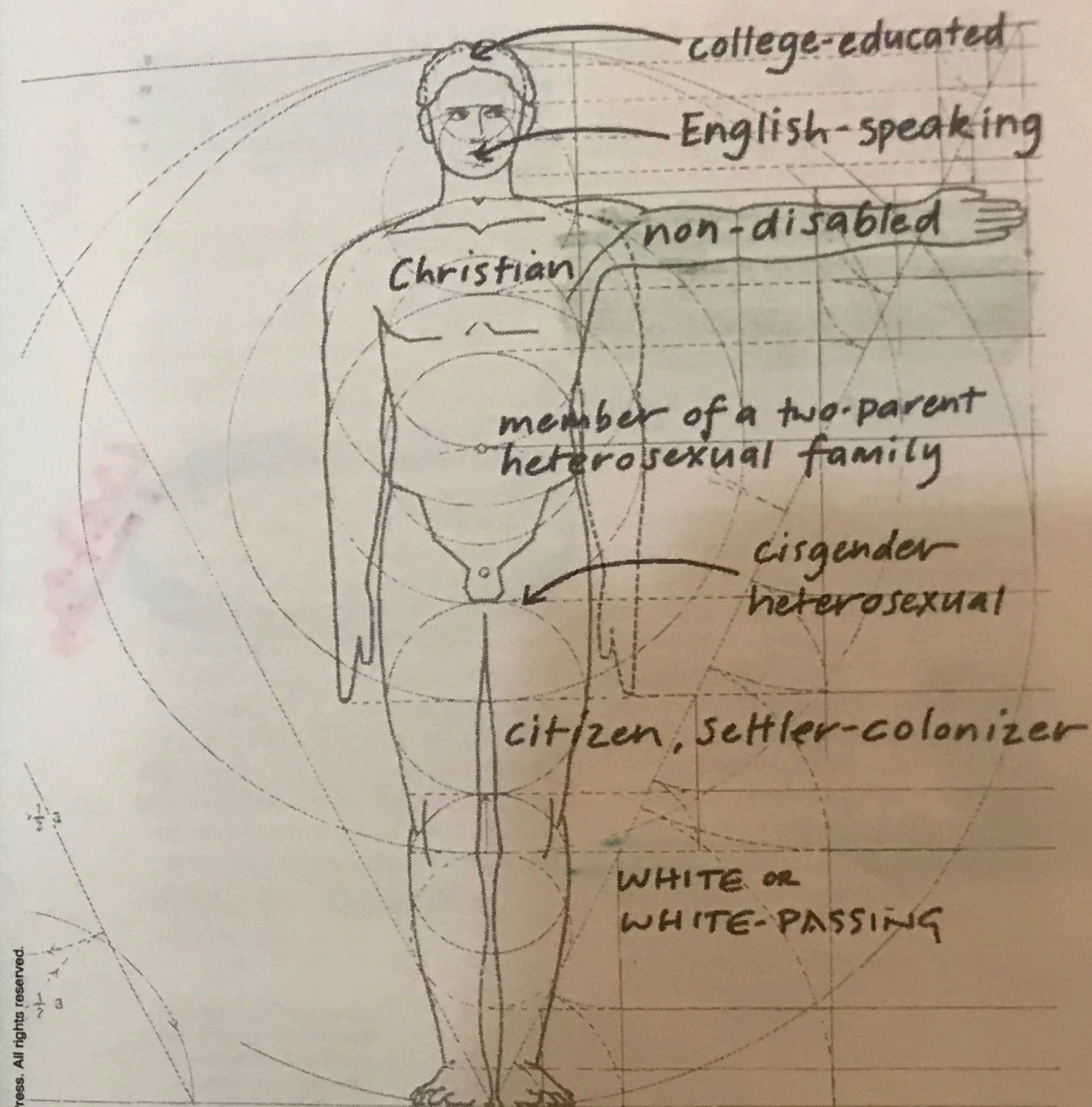
According to poet and activist Audre Lorde, the "mythical norm" is what a given society understands to be generically human. Writing from the perspective of a Black queer woman, Lorde noted that the norm in the US is typically "white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian, and financially secure." The mythical norm is an artifact of white supremacy, upheld by racism and oppression. Lorde writes, "As white women ignore their built-in privilege of whiteness and define woman in terms of their own experience alone, then women of color become 'other,' the outsider whose experience and tradition is too 'alien' to comprehend." White women are complicit in preserving the normative system.

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HOW CAN WE

EXTRA BOLD

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### modern man in his modern bubbles

DIAGRAM BY ERNST NEUFERT  
ANNOTATED BY JENNIFER TOBIAS

In 1938, Bauhaus-trained architect Ernst Neufert published a system of standard sizes for products and architecture based on a perfect male body. Harkening back to Leonardo da Vinci's famous Vitruvian man, Neufert's masculine measuring stick sealed the notion that universality stems from the White, male, Western classical tradition. Neufert's book of architectural standards—embraced by Hitler for its "Aryan" normativity—remains widely used today, circulated around the world in multiple languages.

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which inflicts ongoing violence—physical, psychological, and economic—on Black people and people of color.

Exclusion from the protective bubble of normativity leads to varying degrees of oppression or inequality. People who embody some or all aspects of the norm tend to treat their ostensibly typical attributes as neutral, invisible, or nonexistent. Being normal seems natural—not a special privilege. It's easy to say "I don't see race" when you live inside the bubble of Whiteness.

Indeed, any norm tends to disguise itself and disappear. Thus, a White, heterosexual, cisgender man may ignore the superpowers bestowed on him by the mythical norm—believing instead that his achievements are wholly earned through hard work, talent, and merit. A White woman may feel the forces of sexism while denying her race-based privilege. Although the norms of Whiteness or maleness may appear invisible to people who are White and/or male, they are oppressively visible to those excluded by their bubbles.

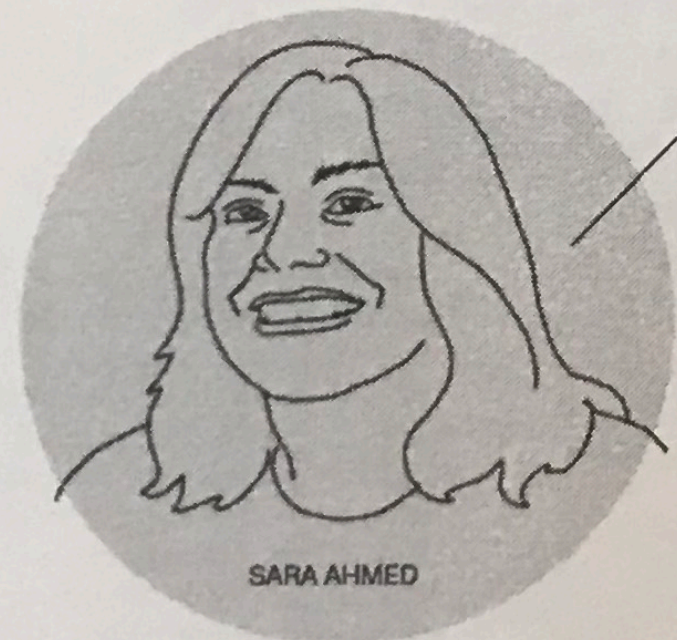
Although norms are deeply embedded in design's professional ethos and official history, protest and resistance are

crucial parts of this history, too. Dada and Constructivist artists used diagonal lines, mismatched fonts, and montaged photos to challenge thousands of years of static symmetry. In the mid-twentieth century, industrial designers rejected the Renaissance ideal of the perfect young man and began creating "ergonomic" products, designed to fit more bodies. Disability historian Aimi Hamraie calls this area of inquiry "epistemic activism." New guidelines for human measurements encompassed a wider range of people.

Not all products are ergonomic. The COVID-19 crisis revealed that the gowns and masks used in hospitals and care facilities are designed to fit a so-called average male body, making them dangerous for caregivers of smaller stature, including many women.

Writers and thinkers can use the tools of graphic design to study and change social relationships. The words and concepts we use to talk about design ripple through the critical writing about race and feminism. Terms like axis, intersection, and orientation are familiar to graphic designers. Writers and philosophers use these

Spatial



SARA AHMED

Space itself is sensational: it is a matter of how things make their impression as being here or there, on this side or that side of a dividing line, or as being left or right, near or far.

How can we design to center something we expect?

terms too, creating spatial metaphors for concepts like racism, sexuality, and gender. Spatial ideas such as "margin/center" help people create vivid mental pictures of dominance. These concepts prompt readers and listeners to construct diagrams in the gray matter of the mind. White savior narratives are told from the perspective of White people who become enlightened and help improve the lives of people in marginal groups. Such narratives are said to "center Whiteness," a process of erasing the margins and focusing on the emotional needs and seemingly heroic actions of the dominant group.

Sara Ahmed's book *Queer Phenomenology* unpacks the spatial language of queerness. The phrase "sexual orientation," commonly used to label a person's attraction to people based on their gender identity, suggests how bodies gravitate toward other bodies, as if drawn by a magnetic force. Ahmed wants to rethink how a body's turn "toward" objects shapes the surfaces of bodily and social space." She states that

queer comes from the Indo-European word meaning "twist." Historically, to be queer meant to deviate from the straight line of social norms. Today, people use the word queer to express pride and solidarity.

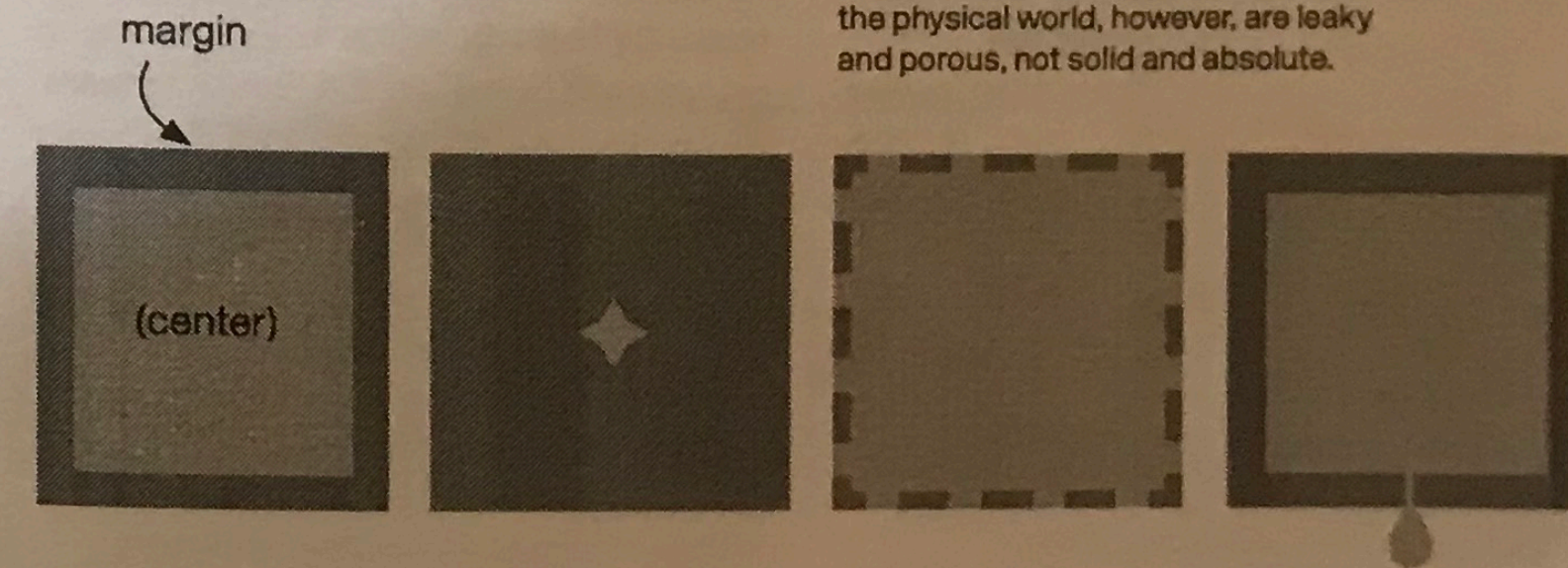
Design is normative, but it can also be transformative. Binary oppositions lure the mind with their shiny, neatly defined polarities. Just one of many alternative models is the spectrum, which contains endless shades of difference between opposing endpoints. Intersections, twisting paths, and mixed ecologies push beyond the either/or structure of binary categories.

SOURCES Audre Lorde, "Age, Race, Class and Sex: Women Redefining Difference," 1980, in *Words of Fire: An Anthology of African American Feminist Thought*, ed. Beverly Guy-Sheftall (New York: New Press, 1995), 284–91. Ernst Neufert, *Bauentwurfslehre* (Berlin: Bauwelt-Verlag, 1938); Nader Vossoughian, "Standardization Reconsidered: Normierung in and after Ernst Neufert's *Bauentwurfslehre* (1936)," *Grey Room* 54 (Winter 2014): 34–55; Aimi Hamraie, *Building Access: Universal Design and the Politics of Disability* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017); Sara Hendren, *What Can a Body Do? How We Meet the Built World* (New York: Riverhead, 2020); Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2006).

### margins and centers

DIAGRAMS BY ELLEN LUPTON

Margins and centers are part of the fundamental language of graphic design. Cropping, framing, padding, and gutters are tools for focusing attention and creating relationships such as inside/outside and figure/ground. Borders in the physical world, however, are leaky and porous, not solid and absolute.





TEXT BY JOSHUA HALSTEAD

I was at a stoplight, and you know that feeling you get when someone's looking at you? The hair on your arms starts to bristle, neck gets clammy, chest slightly caves in. Well, I got this feeling when I was at the stoplight. So I looked up. Across the street, there was a man—blue overcoat, red plaid shirt, chocolate shoes, dusty jeans... looking at me. The light turned green. I walked towards him. He walked towards me. As I turned to offer a smile, he cut me off and said, "How about you and your disabled friends find a car and drive out of San Francisco?"

I was born disabled, so atypical interactions in the world are rather typical, but this transaction threw me off. Emotions surged: anger, confusion, a little surprise, but it was relief that soon exceeded the rest. I had been thinking through a presentation scheduled in London the next day. The topic? Critical design and disability. And I'd finished everything but an opener.

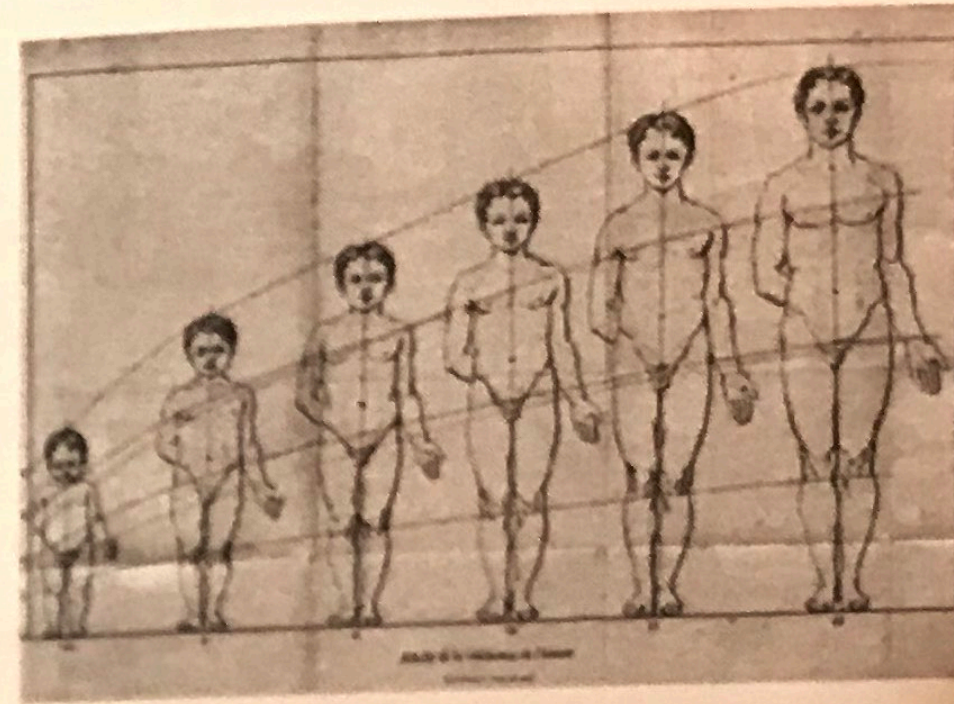
Identifying as a graphic designer and disabled has made me an unrepentant questioner of symbols and society throughout my life. This man saw my body as a problem because it's not normal. This surfaces two questions: When did challenging the norm become a problem? And what does it mean to be normal to begin with? After committing myself to these questions, I found out that *normal* is a construct manufactured and fed to society hundreds of years ago. This essay looks at three theories or paradigms for disability: medical, social, and identity-based.

**The medical paradigm** The origins of the medical (or deficit) model go back to the life of Belgian scientist Adolphe Quetelet (1796–1874). By the age of nineteen, he was a blooming scientific prodigy. He studied statistics, mathematics, movement, and terrestrial magnetism, and he had an intense interest in populations. In 1823, he traveled to Paris to study astronomy.

In his magnum opus, *A Treatise on Man and the Development of His Faculties*, Quetelet introduced the concept of the *homme moyen*—average man—by applying the Law of Error to bodies.

Astronomers were using the Law of Error to plot stars. How? Essentially, find a star in the night sky, take a few guesses about its mathematical location, and average your guesses. The mean (i.e., average) was the most likely location of that star. Quetelet created the *homme moyen* by applying this method to human features such as height and weight, giving us a statistically defined "normal" body. This set the groundwork for concepts like the BMI (body mass index) and the IQ (intelligence quotient) test, both processes of marking deviant bodies against accepted norms.

As the medical model developed, based on statistics, Sir Francis Galton (1882–1911) came on the scene. Galton was a British eugenicist. The pseudoscience of eugenics is associated with the Holocaust. Galton believed that everyone below average should be rooted out of society. In Quetelet's equation, the outliers were neutral. But Galton swapped out the mean, exchanging it for the median, and produced another model of normal. Instead of average and outlier, Galton split populations into quartiles that rank human beings first, second, third, and fourth. The ideal body—



ADOLPHE QUETELET  
"Anthropométrie, ou  
mesure des différentes  
facultés de l'homme  
[Anthropometry, or  
measurement of the  
different faculties of  
man]," 1870. British  
Library.

that is, a body existing above the median—replaced Quetelet's *homme moyen*.

When it's okay to erase human diversity, you don't plan on diverse bodies being around, and so you don't design for them. Galton created a corporeal split between deficient and desirable, design-worthy and a design afterthought.

**The social paradigm** We didn't begin to unseat this profound erasure until the 1960s, when architectural guidelines began addressing disabled bodies, marking the beginning of a new paradigm.

Let's imagine that you and I decide to go grab some coffee at a fancy San Francisco coffee shop with a loft and a view of the city. You grab your coffee, you go up one, two, three stairs, and you turn around, noticing I didn't follow you. You look at me, and I look at you. Then, it gets a little awkward. Stairs aren't made for legs like mine. Normal gets concretized in the design of places today; thus, *eugenic logic*, a term coined by disability studies scholar Rosemarie Garland-Thomson, isn't something that simply disappeared after World War II.

These stairs, and countless other examples of eugenic logic applied to the design of spaces and technology, made me become a designer. If I wanted to draw, I

had to design ways to do that. If I fell in love with art so much that I wanted to go to art school, I had to design a way to do that. If I went to art school and had to trim a whole bunch of posters, I had to design a way to do that. If I graduated from art school and wanted to practice as a professional, I needed to design a way to answer e-mails. (They don't tell you that in design school.)

I wouldn't be a designer today if my mom, Mari Halstead, who happens to be my favorite designer of all time, didn't invent a way for me to draw. One night we were learning how to say colors for the first time—red, blue, green—and my mom had an idea: Wouldn't it be nice if I could color the colors as we were talking. On the corner of the table were a bunch of rubber bands. After looking at me, then looking at the rubber bands, my mom leapt across the table and wrapped one around my hand. Then she wedged a marker underneath and effectively started my art career. This early prototype worked all right, but it often snapped after long periods of time.

We made our second apparatus with duct tape. This solved the instability problem, but it was painful to remove, so we made a third prototype. My mom got a wetsuit at a garage sale. She cut out a strip, made a U-shape, and created a cuff.





TOM OLIN Photograph, Capitol Crawl, 1990.

This design provided stability and flexibility, and I used it for the next dozen or so years. It allowed me to draw and paint as well as helping with tasks like eating.

This story illustrates the shift to the social paradigm of disability, which separates a person's impairment from a disabling society. Before my mom and I designed the cuff, the pen was the artifact of a disabling society. I was disabled not because I couldn't grab a pen but because there wasn't a pen available that could be fastened to a hand that doesn't grab.

The social paradigm of disability took shape in the 1960s and '70s. The passage of the 1964 Civil Rights Act, led by African American activists, inspired the Disability Rights movement to fight for accessibility in buildings and schools as a civil right, not as a nice-to-have or an afterthought. In 1990, hundreds of protesters gathered in front of the Capitol building in Washington, DC to claim their civil rights. A group broke

off, setting aside wheelchairs and crutches, and crawled up the marble steps. This performative act exposed tangible, physical discrimination and helped instigate the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

Today, we think of accessibility as the law. What we call *inclusion*, with respect to people with disabilities, is what I'd just consider good QA (quality assurance). If we're going to make things accessible, the people who are using our products and environments should test them and be considered designers themselves.

Mainstream design culture is now taking the social model of disability seriously. Big players such as IKEA and Google are getting on board. The Creatability project, a collaboration between Google and NYU, is creating open-source and accessible tools using AI and machine learning so traditionally excluded bodies can contribute creatively. But we're not going far enough.

Scholar Tom Shakespeare identifies three weaknesses with the social model: it undermines the significance of impairment in shaping lived experience; it represents disabled people as always oppressed; and it promotes the concept of a barrier-free utopia (where everyone has access to everything, all of the time). The social model's strengths are its power and simplicity. For most, conceiving disability as social is paradigm-busting. It does not require new knowledge, just a new frame. But the disability experience is not monolithic: some of us are disabled by society and our bodies; some of us find meaning and identity in our bodies as sites for reexamining and reconfiguring selfhood and society; and universal design is, unfortunately, a myth. Although the access needs of individuals often overlap, they sometimes conflict.

Discuss Social Paradigm of disability  
How can we be attentive to all manners of accessibility  
memory, speed, language  
modes of access  
point of access

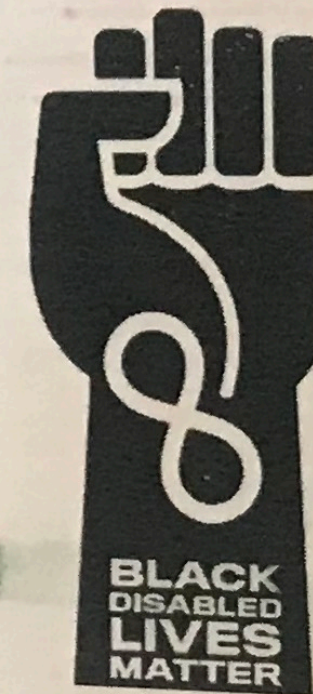
How can we design together with an awareness of our needs

If viewed uncritically, the social model has the insidious potential to reify existing power structures and discourage difference. Because the social model focuses rigidly on the environment, nondisabled designers often believe they can apply this model without the help or insight of disabled people. Thus, accessible design can be popularized without authentically engaging with disability communities. Shifting the focus from bodies to society excludes those bodies from the conversation. Designers end up creating objects and services through their own world-views, consulting a toolkit or checklist to make their solutions accessible to "others." From this angle, the social model doesn't move us far from the medical model. Although we aren't normalizing or rehabilitating bodies, we end up trying to normalize or rehabilitate the environment in lieu of exploring plurality and difference.

Let's return to the cuff example from my childhood. My mother and I designed

an apparatus that would allow me to draw. Our solution, however, left social structures untouched. We weren't only designing a useful prosthetic; we were designing a tool to support independent self-expression in a socially acceptable way. Materially, the cuff affirmed the use of an extant tool and hand for self-expression. Symbolically, it reified the colonial notion that photorealistic representation is superior to modes that are more abstruse. Politically, it prioritized independence over interdependence. We designed the cuff to help me fit into an ableist world, and it delivered on that promise.

I highlight this example not to critique assistive devices but to foreground the lost occasion to critically examine society. In a world designed for nondisabled people, we absolutely need products that fit disabled people into an unchanged, unquestioned world. I used such devices to get through grade school. But if our questioning stops here, so does our understanding of disability, design, and society.



"In solidarity with my 7-year-old Black Autistic son and in virtual protest with my Black disabled community, I felt compelled to use my art to bring visibility to the facts. More than half of Black/Brown bodies in the US with disabilities will be arrested by the time they reach their late 20s. We don't see many positive stories or acts of #AutisticJoy among Black/Brown bodies because they don't make headlines. 'To Be Pro-Neurodiversity is to be Anti-Racist': this statement carries a lot of truth, which directly influenced the need to create the graphic." —JENNIFER WHITE-JOHNSON

This symbol, created by disabled designer Jennifer White-Johnson in 2020, combines a black fist—representing protest and solidarity—with the infinity symbol, which Autistic communities use to depict the breadth of the autism spectrum as well as the larger neurodiversity movement.



**The identity paradigm** Artist Neil Marcus writes, "Disability is not a brave struggle or courage in the face of adversity. Disability is an art. It's an ingenious way to live." For Marcus, disability is a generative identity, and this has radical implications for design. When we reorient beliefs about disability-loss toward disability-gain, designers can begin to realize that access issues transcend the environment. Becoming an "inclusive" designer requires transformative work from the inside out.

Alex Haagaard is an Autistic designer and disability activist-scholar. In 2019, they created thirty drawings representing aspects of Autistic experience. Haagaard also posted a list of artistic prompts for others in the #ActuallyAutistic community, ranging from "comfort" and "texture" to "uncertainty," "flap," and "movement." After Haagaard posted these prompts on Twitter, a respondent questioned number 15: "glitter." Haagaard explained that their experience is fluid. Although they appreciate low-sensory environments, sometimes glitter is a favorite visual stim.

The respondent said, "Got it!" and posted a link to a glitter-filled room in Tokyo designed by teamLab. You probably wouldn't think of glitter if I asked you to design something with autism in mind. Challenging the disability-as-problem paradigm centers difference. It took one prompt ("glitter") to shift attention from design platitudes to unexpected queer-crip aesthetics. Disability becomes an identity—a standpoint for resisting normalization and amplifying nonconformity.

Downstream access design, like my own cuff example, needs to continue. Not every project presents an opportunity to unseat hegemonic norms and ways of relating with each other and the world. But we need to make space for the identity para-

Often, when designers want to learn about disability, their instinct is to interview a doctor or peruse PubMed. Resources like this typically reflect the medical (or deficit) model of disability, which limits creativity. Some projects do require medical data, but it's important to learn from multiply marginalized disabled people, disability activists, and disability studies scholars.

In closing, here are two places to start: hire disabled people and work toward demedicalizing and decolonizing the disability-design nexus. Invite Black, Disabled, Indigenous, Latinx, Mad, Neuroqueer, Trans, Two-Spirit, and other historically marginalized people and communities to share their perspectives with your design program or company (and pay them, please). Not only are marginalized people experts on their own oppression, but they are also designers themselves. Don't assume that a community needs your students or company to organize a design charette—they have likely organized themselves for decades. Inclusive design must dismantle power structures within ourselves and the institutions we occupy as much as those in society. Make no mistake, this is subversive work.

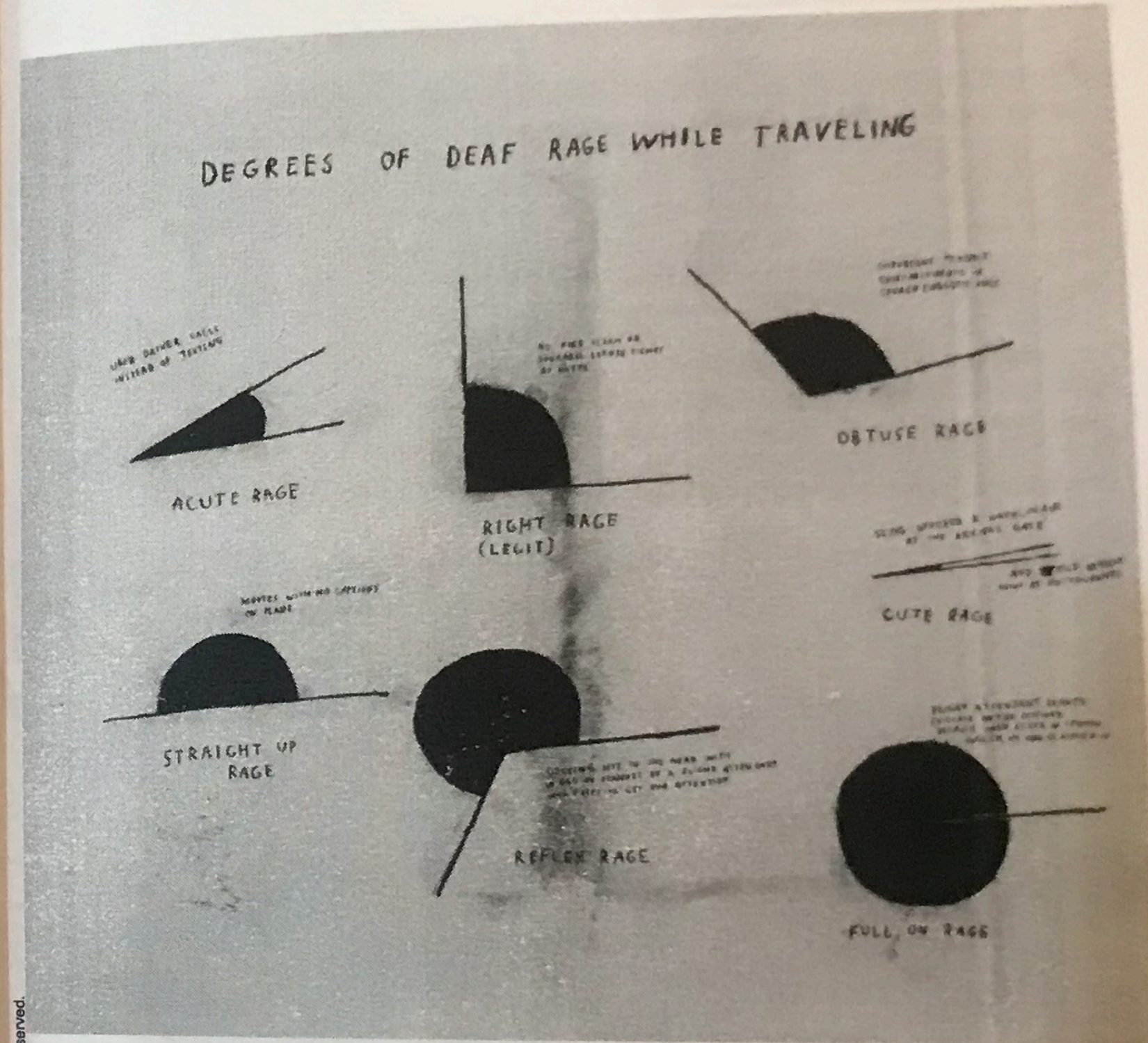
We've learned about the construct of normalcy—what it means to be normal and not normal. We've explored the medical, social, and identity paradigms of disability. After I learned about teamLab's glitter room, I couldn't resist taking a look at their logo. As it turns out, their logo is a star. Ironic. Quetelet, if you remember, manufactured the "average" human by recycling a methodology for plotting stars. So I'll leave you with this thought: the questions we ask become the stars we follow.

Thank you to Emeline Brulé, PhD, Rahul Guttal, Ellen Lupton, and Emily Nusbaum, PhD, for their helpful comments.

Be in conversation w/ the community - understand that there are no universals and difference is desirable, NOT A DESIGN IMPEDIMENT BUT POSSIBILITY

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The Questions We Ask Become The Stars We Follow



CHRISTINE SUN KIM The pie charts in this charcoal drawing by Korean American artist Christine Sun Kim express anger toward exclusionary design and behavior. Kim's distinctive use of text and materiality come into conflict with the dry, familiar idiom of infographics. *Degrees of Deaf Rage While Traveling*, 2018. Charcoal on paper, 49.2 x 29.2 in. (125 x 125 cm). Courtesy of White Space Beijing and Yang Hao 杨灏.

- TRANSCRIPT (from top left) DEGREES OF DEAF RAGE WHILE TRAVELING
- ACUTE RAGE Uber driver calls instead of texting
- RIGHT RAGE (legit) No fire alarm or doorbell strobe lights at hotel
- OBTUSE RAGE Important transit announcements in spoken English only
- CUTE RAGE Being offered a wheelchair at the arrival gate... and the Braille menu at restaurants
- STRAIGHT UP RAGE Movies with no captions on plane
- REFLEX RAGE Getting hit in the head with a bag of peanuts by a flight attendant who tries to get our attention
- FULL ON RAGE Flight attendant leaves suitcase on the runway because when asked in spoken English, no one claimed it

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### this body is worthy

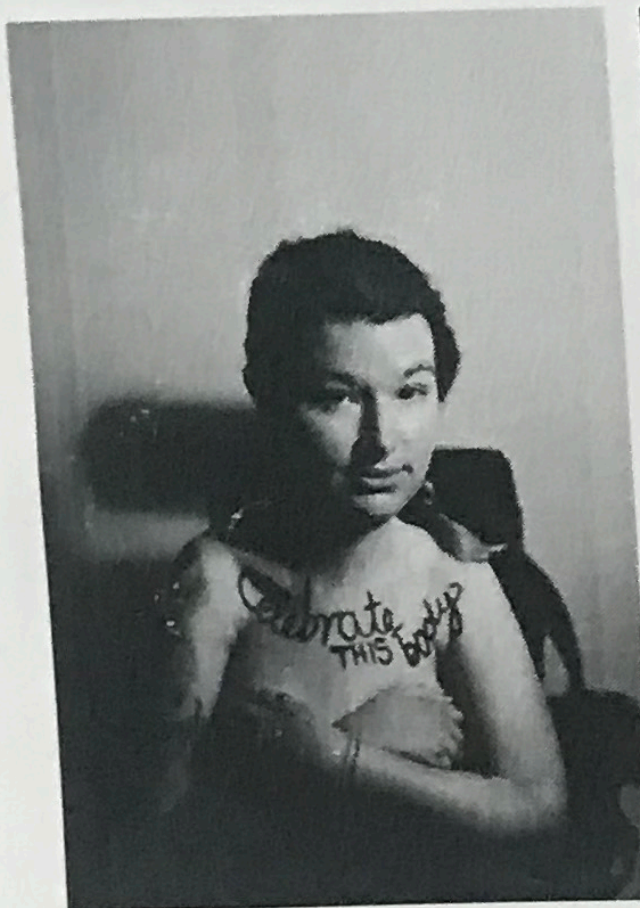
PROJECT BY HANNAH SOYER AND MARY MATHIS | TEXT BY JOSH A. HALSTEAD

"All bodies are worthy, regardless of what they look like and what narratives they have been forced to live inside of."—Hannah Soyer

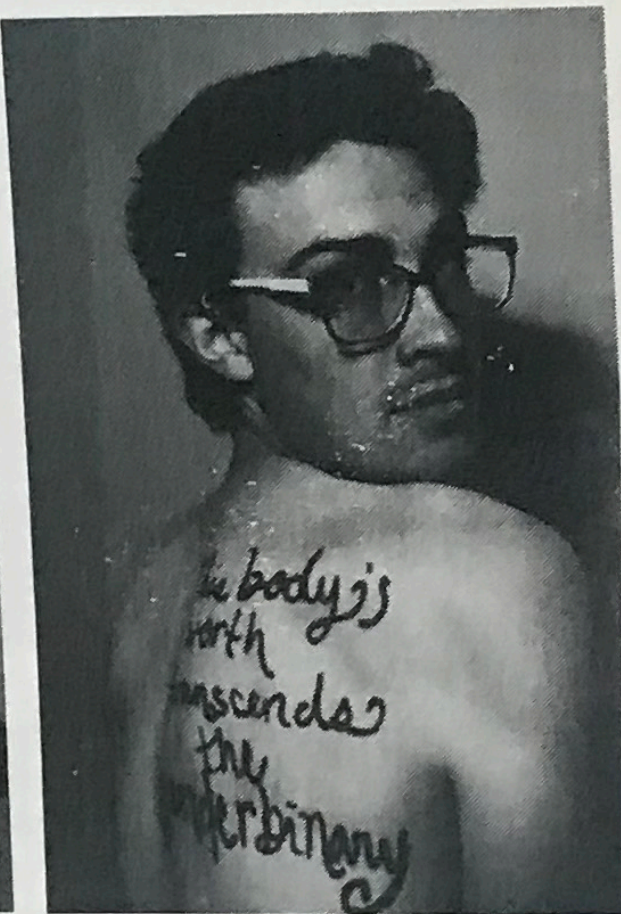
After finishing her undergraduate studies, Hannah Soyer started working with her friend Mary Mathis, a photographer, to capture various angles of her body that she felt self-conscious about.

Soon, the project started to expand. She and Mathis conducted workshops inviting anyone who felt that their bodies were outside of mainstream, normative ideals to write phrases on their bodies professing their worth. Participants received photo-

graphs of their bodies and wrote about the phrases they chose. *This Body is Worthy* extends past disability to a broader set of marginalized, gendered, and racialized bodies. The project has become a platform that features the work of disabled artists. Proceeds are split between the artists and disability justice organizations.



HANNAH



RYAN

PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARY MATHIS

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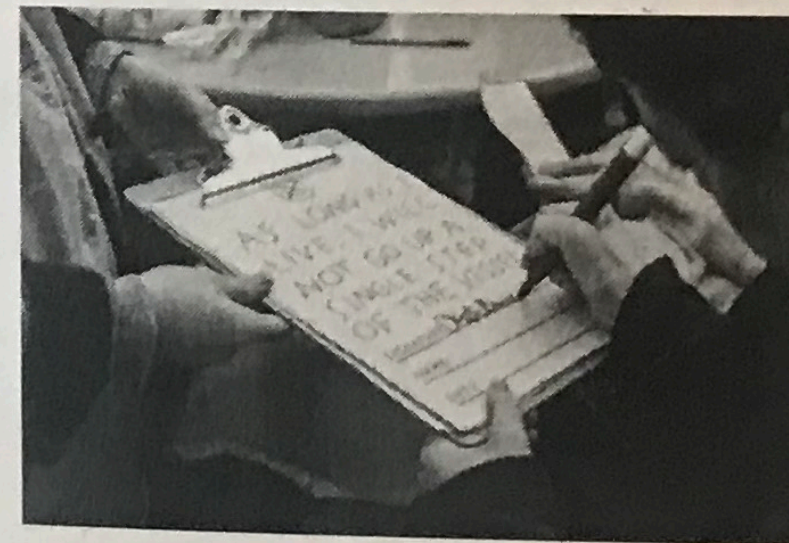
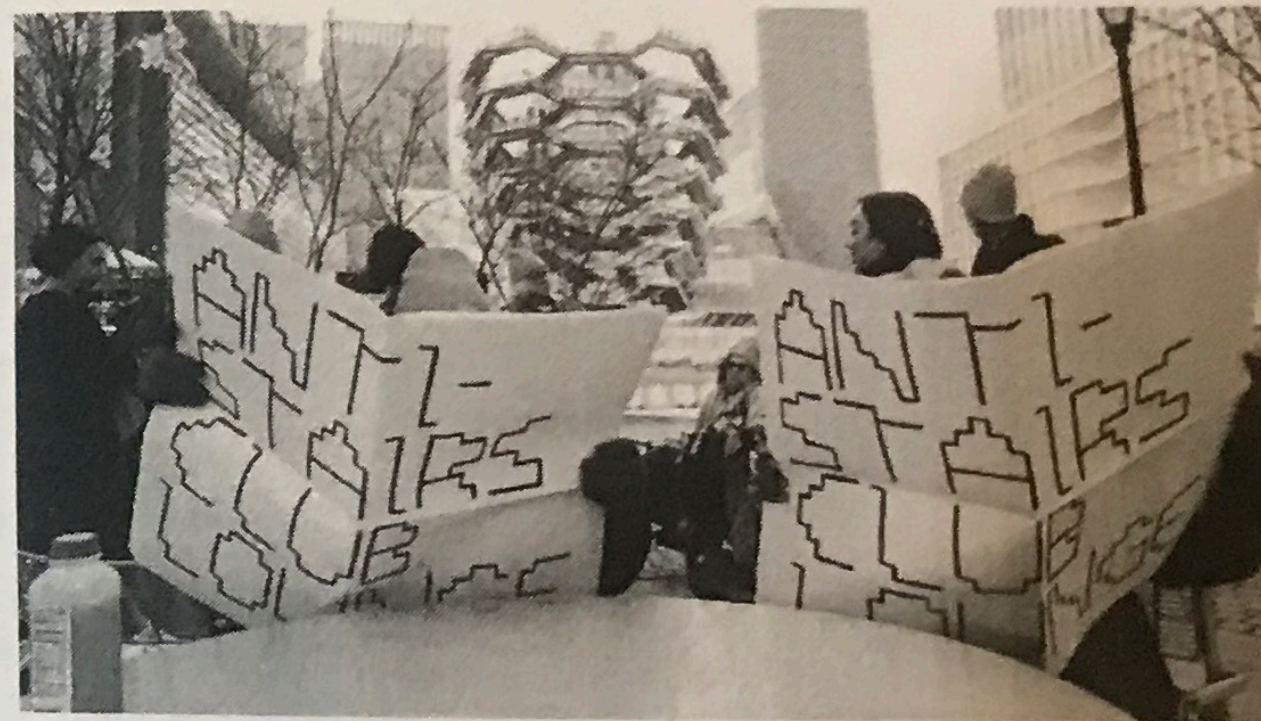
### anti-stairs club

PROJECT BY SHANNON FINNEGAN | TEXT BY ELLEN LUPTON

In 2019, artist and designer Shannon Finnegan organized the Anti-Stairs Club protest at the Vessel, a public sculpture conceived by Thomas Heatherwick in New York City. Consisting of 154 staircases, the Vessel resembles a giant vase or basket. Although the Vessel meets accessibility requirements by including an elevator, riding the elevator is not equivalent to traversing the sculpture's elaborate staircases.

Disability advocates argue that public amenities should holistically incorporate inclusive design principles. Designers often fulfill accessibility regulations in

a perfunctory way. Participants in the Anti-Stairs Club protest signed a statement vowing to never use the Vessel's stairs. Finnegan designed custom cushions adorned with a crossed-out staircase and a zine printed with letters shaped like stairs. According to Finnegan, "We need to focus on centering disability culture and acknowledging the complexity and nuance of disabled people. I know this will not happen without the presence of disabled people as designers, artists, thinkers, leaders, and creators." Inclusive design is a collaborative process.



PHOTOGRAPHS BY MARIA BARANOVA

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SOURCES Shannon Finnegan, "Disability Dreams," *Distributed Web of Care*, Jan 30, 2019 → [distributedweb.care/posts/accessibility-dreams/](https://distributedweb.care/posts/accessibility-dreams/); Emily Sara, "Fighting the Art World's Ableism," *Hyperallergic*, Aug 2, 2019 → [hyperallergic.com/510439/fighting-the-art-worlds-ableism/](https://hyperallergic.com/510439/fighting-the-art-worlds-ableism/).



Let's start by defining feminism as a practice. Sara Ahmed, in her book *Living a Feminist Life*, explains that becoming a feminist involves recognizing inequality, sharing power, acknowledging privilege, and exposing bias. She says, "Living a feminist life does not mean adopting a set of ideals or norms of conduct, although it might mean asking ethical questions about how to live better in an unjust and unequal world." Feminism is a practice—a way of thinking and acting. Design is a practice, too. Creating a feminist design practice involves examining one's own bias and privilege, seeking to represent varied ways of being, and making space for underrepresented voices.

### **international symbol of access**

The disability rights movement in the 1960s demanded barrier-free architecture. Organizations and designers created various wheelchair symbols, some including human figures. The icons signaled broader visibility for people with disabilities.



**1968** Designed by Susanne Koefoed, seminar organized by the Scandinavian Design Students (SDO).

**1969** The head was added by Karl Montan, Rehabilitation International, to humanize the symbol.



# ***DESIGNING CULTURES OF CARE, EDITED BY LAURENE VAUGHAN, BLOOMSBURY PUBLISHING USA, 2018.***

Hamington argues that there must be a leap of faith, a level of trust or belief in the value of the care that goes beyond the certainty of impact. ... It is in this way that the *role of imagination becomes pivotal*— not only to facilitate empathy to drive care, but also empathy with those we know little about so that we can enact care.

The greater our distance from the context of care, the greater the gap between imagination and impact. As I discuss further in the next section, Hamington (2017) poses that humility, ambiguity, imagination, and a disregard for the rules are fundamental for a practice of care, one that can be better served through a link to design.

*Establishing a practice of care requires that we work at and evolve the practice. At times the impact and value of the practice will be evident; at other times it will be less so. And like the development of any form of practice we must persist, be patient with ourselves as we evolve, and know that benefits (for ourselves and others) may take time and leaps of imagination in the process.*