



LIZ OGBU

Designer + Spatial Justice Activist
Global Speaker

 www.lizogbu.com

  @lizogbu

↳ *Building healing futures at the intersection of racial + spatial justice*

LIZ OGBU BIOGRAPHY

A designer, urbanist, and spatial justice activist, Liz is a global expert on engaging and transforming unjust urban environments.

From designing shelters for immigrant day laborers in the U.S. to a water and health social enterprise for low-income Kenyans, Liz has a long track record of working with historically marginalized communities to leverage the power of design to catalyze community healing and foster environments that support people's capacity to thrive. Her work blends a combination of community-centered research; dynamic forms of engagement and prototyping; equitable architecture and planning strategies; place-based grieving and repair frameworks; and tools to build participatory power and community-centered systems.. She is founder and principal of Studio O, a multidisciplinary design practice working at the intersection of racial and spatial justice.

Liz has been actively involved in shaping two of the world's pioneering social impact design nonprofits. In 2011, she was part of the inaugural class of Innovators-in-Residence at IDEO.org, IDEO's sister nonprofit dedicated to fostering global poverty reduction through design and innovation. Prior to that, she was Design Director at Public Architecture, a national nonprofit mobilizing designers to create social change. Whether interviewing day laborers on street corners in the US, analyzing health clinics in Bolivia, or developing innovative strategies for cookstove adoption in Tanzania, she has worked to advance the ability of design to meaningfully support those most in need to access better opportunities and outcomes.

In addition to her practice, Liz has had a long commitment to bringing social impact work into the classroom where her courses and research explore opportunities at intersection of design, justice, and engagement. She currently is on the faculty and advisory board of the Design Futures Student Leadership Forum, a national university consortium that brings together student leaders, faculty, and practitioners to learn and discuss best practices in social equity and community impact. She has also been on faculty at UC Berkeley, Stanford's d.school, California College of the Arts, and the University of Virginia. Liz has also been a scholar-in-residence at multiple institutions including the Maryland Institute College of Art, the Taylor Center for Design Thinking and Social Design at Tulane University, and the Australian Institute of Architects. Currently, she is an inaugural University Fellow at the University of Virginia.



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Liz frequently lectures on the intersection of racial and spatial justice and place-based grief and repair. Previous appearances include the Aspen Ideas Festival, Congress of the International Union of Architects, the Clinton Global Initiative Annual Meeting, and TEDWomen. Her TED and TEDx Talks have been viewed over a million times.

Liz has written for and been profiled in publications such as The New York Times, National Public Radio's TED Radio Hour, The Atlantic's City Lab, and the Journal of Urban Design. Her work has also been widely exhibited globally, including at the Cooper-Hewitt National Design Museum, Benaki Museum (Athens), and the Venice Biennale. Among her many honors include the Holcim Foundation Global Innovation Prize, Aspen Ideas Festival Scholar, Public Interest Design's Top 100, and the International Interior Design Association's Titan Award.

Liz earned her Bachelor of Arts in architecture from Wellesley College and Master of Architecture from the Graduate School of Design at Harvard University. She currently lives in Oakland, Ca on the traditional unceded lands of the Chechenyo speaking Ohlone.