

[FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE]

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Beyond Earth Day:

EJ Disrupt Design Fellows Work Every Day to Redefine Our Earth’s Future

NEW YORK, April 22, 2024 - Today marks a pivotal moment in the journey towards Environmental Justice (EJ) as the [Tishman Environment and Design Center](#) at The New School proudly announces the new 2024-2026 cohort of the [EJ Disrupt Design Fellowship](#).

Selected from a pool of 230+ leaders, the cohort includes 18 EJ Fellows divided into five groups from 16 community organizations spanning seven U.S. states and three territories, including Indigenous territories, Hawai’i, and Puerto Rico.

Fellows will be building upon the groundbreaking achievements of the [inaugural ‘21-’23 cohort](#), which mobilized \$4 million in philanthropic support for grassroots initiatives and empowered

350 organizations in the practice of EJ Design. Following the fruitful outcome of the very first [Centering Justice Symposium](#) in January 2024, birthing the Centering Justice Manifesto, these dedicated leaders will help create practical and effective solutions as part of a network that will serve as a valuable resource for the EJ Movement.

“These EJ Fellows work every day beyond their organizations. The urgency of the climate crisis has made Earth Day insufficient, we need Earth Futures across the World. Today, we stand at the precipice of transformation. These leaders are not merely envisioning the world they desire to see but are actively designing it in action and in community,” said **Angela Mahecha, Director of the EJ Disrupt Design Fellowship.**

Kaniela Ing, National Director of the [Green New Deal Network](#), brings his expertise in climate policy to the forefront of the Movement. Kaniela’s group is ready to converge [Justice 40](#) and the [IRA](#) for a more practical Just Recovery approach in Hawai’i. The EJ Fellowship will provide the group with tools, resources, and a network of technical coaches necessary to scale that vision. *“The fires on Maui were an unnatural disaster caused by colonial greed and decades of environmental mismanagement. This EJ fellowship enables us to reimagine the blank slate of Lahaina, emerge from our grief with optimism, and design a more clean and just Maui from the ground up.”*

Dana Johnson, Senior Director of Strategy and Federal Policy at [WE ACT for Environmental Justice](#), brings a vision of rest, reflection, and collaboration to the fellowship. Dana’s group will be focusing on environment and climate policy, and movement assessment moving into an election year. They have one of the most diverse mixes of EJ Fellows in a group representing community organizations with frontline leaders, a research center, trusted philanthropy, and an energy group. *“I can’t contain the excitement that I have about dreaming, collaborating, planning, and testing assumptions and ideas with brilliant leaders in service to creating a new paradigm of balance, awareness, expansion, creativity, and harmony in our work.”*

The EJ Disrupt Design Fellowship benefits from the guidance and support of its esteemed Advisory Committee for the years 2024-2026. Influential leaders and experts in the Environmental Justice Movement, including 2021-2023 EJ Fellows; Jade Begay, Diné and Tesuque Pueblo; Cami D. Egurrola, Communications Director of [Micronesia Climate Change Alliance](#); and Rahwa Ghirmatzion, Senior Policy Fellow of [Just Solutions Collective](#), will be joining this cohort’s Advisory Committee. Former 2021-2023 EJ Advisory Committee Veronica Coptis, Senior Advisor of [Taproot Earth](#), will also be a part of the Committee. Last but not least, joining this well-respected list of EJ Legacies is a [2024 TIME Women of the Year](#) and former 2021-2023 EJ Advisory Committee, Jacqui Patterson, Founder of [The Chisholm Legacy Project](#).

As we reflect on the accomplishments of the last cohort, the impact of collective action becomes evident. Moving forward, the EJ Disrupt Design Fellowship stands firm in its dedication to fostering collaboration, cultivating power, and amplifying scale. With unwavering resolve, these visionary leaders are positioned to forge a future characterized by resilience and equity, ensuring a legacy of progress for generations to come.

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Additional Quotes Below

Dana Johnson (Joy)

“My vision for the environmental justice movement is that we have time and space to rest, reflect, and strategize on creating our desired futures. I can’t contain the excitement that I have about dreaming, collaborating, planning, and testing assumptions and ideas with brilliant leaders in service to creating a new paradigm of balance, awareness, expansion, creativity, and harmony in our work.” - **Dana Johnson, Senior Director of Strategy and Federal Policy at WE ACT for Environmental Justice**

Kaniela Ing (Design)

“The fires on Maui were an unnatural disaster caused by colonial greed and decades of environmental mismanagement. This fellowship enables us to reimagine the blank slate of Lahaina, emerge from our grief with optimism, and design a more clean and just Maui from the ground up.” - **Kaniela Ing, National Director, Green New Deal Network**

A.J. Hudson (Joy)

“It will be an absolute joy to be amongst other disruptors and build a space where we share the burdens of imagining a better movement, world, and future. Our collective resistance to the status quo gives me hope in this precarious moment, and the leaders I am surrounded by inspire me to smile even as we fight.” - **A.J. Hudson, Advisory Board, UPROSE**

Vivian Huang (Joy)

“Rooted in our shared values, trust, and decades of organizing relationships, we are excited for the fellowship space to laugh, cry, dream, and conspire as we fight for a world where our communities have full, joyful, dignified livelihoods.” - **Vivian Huang, Co-Director, Asian Pacific Environmental Network (APEN)**

Denise Abdul-Rahman (Design)

“As a community, we stand at a crucial juncture where we can either let the systems of racial inequality continue to plague us or take this opportunity to create a brighter future

for Black people. The impact of these systems is dire, which is why we must take the lead in ideating, building, and testing the solutions that will transform our lives and pave the way for a resilient and liberated Black future. Let us come together and seize this moment to bring about real change.” - Denise Abdul-Rahman, Executive Director and Founder, Black Sun Light Sustainability

Group 1

- Kaniela Ing, [Green New Deal Network](#), Hawai'i
- Khara Jabola-Carolus, [Roots Reborn](#), Hawai'i
- Pa'aele Kiakona, [Our Hawaii, Lahaina Strong](#), Hawai'i
- Nadezna Ortega, [Tagnawa](#), Hawai'i

Group 2

- Lynnette Grey Bull, [Not Our Native Daughters](#), Wind River Reservation
- Vivian Breckenridge, [Just Homes](#), California
- A. J. Hudson, [UPROSE](#), New York
- Alegna Malave Marrero, [Campamento Murcielago](#), Borikén

Group 3

- Melanie Allen, [The Hive Fund](#), North Carolina
- Dana Johnson, [WE ACT for Environmental Justice](#), New York
- Ajulo Othow, [Black Owners of Solar Services](#), North Carolina
- Ansha Zaman, [Center for Earth Energy and Democracy](#), Minnesota

Group 4

- Christine Cordero, [Asian Pacific Environmental Network \(APEN\)](#), California
- Vivian Huang, [Asian Pacific Environmental Network \(APEN\)](#), California
- Darryl Molina Sarmiento, [Communities for a Better Environment](#), California

Group 5

- Denise Abdul-Rahman, [Black Sun Light Sustainability](#), Indiana
- Bryan Bullock, [The Law Office of Bryan K. Bullock](#), Indiana
- Jordan Giger, [Black Lives Matter South Bend](#), Indiana

Press Kit

www.tishmancenter.org/ej-disrupt-design-press-kit-2024-26

Social Media Toolkit

www.tishmancenter.org/ej-disrupt-design-social-media-toolkit-2024-26

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***EJ Disrupt Design Fellowship** is a 2-year experience made up of progressive phases in Environmental Justice and Design for leaders of the Environmental Justice Movement. Fellows will participate in a combination of virtual and in-person retreats, group coaching sessions, and community ideation to scale project prototypes and build power. Learn more at www.tishmancenter.org/ejfellowship.*

***The Tishman Environment and Design Center at The New School** is a collaborative community of practice that leverages research, policy, and design in accordance with the Jemez Principles for Democratic Organizing. Our Center brings together research and action to tackle the root causes of climate and environmental injustice and commit to changing higher education practices within and beyond The New School. Learn more at www.tishmancenter.org.*

***Founded in 1919, The New School was established to advance academic freedom, tolerance, and experimentation.** A century later, The New School remains at the forefront of innovation in higher education, inspiring more than 10,000 undergraduate and graduate students to challenge the status quo in design and the social sciences, liberal arts, management, the arts, and media. The university welcomes thousands of adult learners annually for continuing education courses and public programs that encourage open discourse and social engagement. Through our online learning portals, research institutes, and international partnerships, The New School maintains a global presence.*