

# GREAT PLACES AWARDS

**2022 WINNER**  
Place Art

**Black Bottom Street View**  
Emily Kutil\*

## Black Bottom Street View Project Team:

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Black Bottom Archives

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We the People of Detroit

## Pedal to Porch Project Team:

Pedal to Porch  
Mogo Detroit  
Black Bottom Archives  
Black Bottom Street View  
Marsha Music / Salon De'troit  
Bert's Warehouse Theater  
Pirahnahead

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# G R E A T P L A C E S A W A R D S

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Black Bottom Street View is a commendable and timely experiment that discovers innovative means of eliciting community voice and makes the systemic forces operating behind seemingly void and evidently neglected sites in Detroit more tangible to diverse publics. The project also aptly demonstrates the potential of place-based interventions that are temporal, iterative and flexible.

The Black Bottom Street View team has conceived of a means for place sensitive redeployment and reconfiguration of its design elements across disparate sites, thus expanding its potential to connect to distinct publics and diverse communities.

The project conceptually manifests as a design intervention which at once responds to discrete site situations while also revealing the physical evidence of systems operating across space and time. The project also grapples with the absences that haunt places in ways that galvanize memories and otherwise amplifies community perspectives. Taken together Black Bottom Street View unpacks histories and legacies of urban renewal and eminent domain, exposing racism and discriminatory practices intertwined across discourses of design, urbanism and public policy.

Black Bottom Street View begins with an all-too-common project - that of reconstructing a part of Black history erased through anti-Black spatial and archival violence. Former residents and descendants of a Black neighborhood in Detroit razed by white planners in the 1950s are reconstructing the place using photographic, spatial, and oral information. The project's innovation, however, is in how it makes this project itself a portable spatial one, creating opportunities for gathering at multiple scales. Walkable maps and reconstructed stoops spur memory and catalyze social interactions. An effort to remember the past becomes a platform for making a new present.

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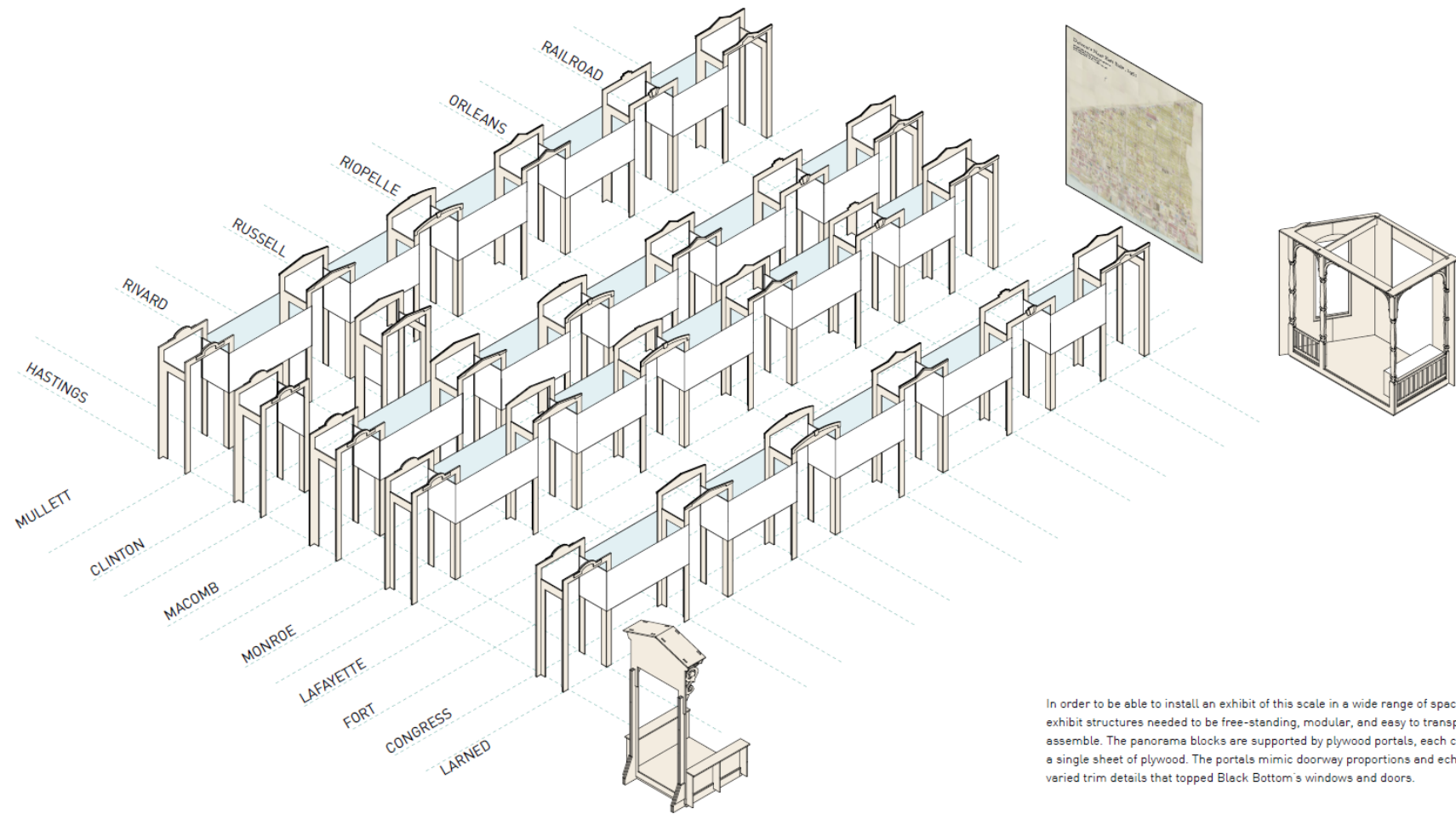
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In order to be able to install an exhibit of this scale in a wide range of spaces, the exhibit structures needed to be free-standing, modular, and easy to transport and assemble. The panorama blocks are supported by plywood portals, each cut from a single sheet of plywood. The portals mimic doorway proportions and echo the varied trim details that topped Black Bottom's windows and doors.

