

# HOW DESIGN ONLINE

# PROJECT INKBLOT

# Q&A



We teamed up with Project Inkblot's Co-Founders Boyuan Gao and Jahan Mantin in June for a digital session that introduced attendees to one of the key tenets of Project Inkblot's Design for Diversity™ framework - how to disentangle intent from impact. At the end of the session the questions just kept coming so we asked Boyuan and Jahan to answer 5 more for us. You can check them out below. If you missed the original session or want to watch it again, you can view it on-demand at [howdesignlive.com/digital-sessions](https://howdesignlive.com/digital-sessions).

Q **Do you have any tips/ suggestions for incorporating the D4D framework as students?**

A Sure, students are often working on a variety of projects where equity can and should be centered. You can bring these high-level critical questions into your practice especially around group projects, when you're working with a team.

"It's through other people you can start to see what you can't see"  
-Jahan Mantin

**Do you think there are certain companies, such as Facebook, where your framework wouldn't work because systemically, the company's principles don't align with your Design for Everyone framework?**

Great question! Yes - this framework is not for people who are not interested in centering equity, particularly racial equity. If your core principles are anti-equity, it's hard to normalize these practices and rituals. Even if one department or team is excited about it, leadership will often be a barrier to doing the work. What we look for with partners is a willingness and readiness to take on this work because they are present to the benefit it provides. **No one has to "know" everything, but they have to recognize there is a problem** and be open to exploring new ways of addressing these challenges.



The other angle is that Facebook claims to be for ALL. Using the D4D framework can also be used as an accountability tool to show how they haven't been true to those vision/mission or values, both for internal departments or outside advocacy and tech accountability groups.

## **How can we help future black designers get opportunities to education and jobs, when we know they have systemic hurdles?**

I hear leaders say "I hire for talent, not color"... but inherently black designers don't make it to the team to get considered.

Yes, this is a real challenge. Mainly, that the thinking behind a statement like "I hire for talent, not color" is that it presupposes that there is a level-playing field even though countless data demonstrates that the percentage of black designers working at many companies are absolutely dismal. We highly recommend supporting companies like SOW, which is committed to creating an equitable creative ecosystem for young POC creatives through skill building, a fellowship program and career opportunities. **Investing in young people now, invests in a more equitable future for design.**

To create equity in the design landscape now, requires other strategies, such as identifying BIPOC design communities, and stepping outside of your own comfort zones and beginning to build authentic relationships and equitable partnerships with these communities. There are steps now that will ladder up to the outcome of a normalized diverse ecosystem.

## **How do you "go to the source" while not being exploitative?**

This is a multilayered process. First, it's worthwhile to ask yourself: "what might they gain from us partnering together?" doing some thinking around this means that you're starting to wonder what might be in for them? As opposed to, what can I gain?

You can also start by asking: "what would make this a win for you?" – **this is not THE answer, but a place to start. Then listen.**

## **I am committed to changing our recruiting process to broaden the applicant pool of graphic designers and as I look to do that, what advice do you have?**

You can start to identify your own cultural defaults within the existing recruitment process. What are the defaults? What has always existed? What specifically must be redesigned? Where can you begin to investigate partnerships with orgs that are committed to POC designers? And, see above – how might these orgs benefit from a partnership with your org?

Also: [peopleofcraft.com](http://peopleofcraft.com).