(de)othering is a self-formulated empathic design thinking approach, integrating accurately researched historical narratives of the other in ideologically saturated cultural landscapes. Working against dominant spatial imaginaries, (de)othering provides a framework for reshaping architecture from the perspective of the other. (de)othering redefines civic, political, and social space by reframing existing site conditions, creating new spatial experiences that prompt emotional connections. The process develops from the author's scholarship, academic teaching pedagogy, international design expertise in empathic projects, and professional design practice. This paper details the foundational principles of the method and influences from a field-defining precedent, with guidelines on urban-scaled axial/spatial practices to produce, as noted by Mabel O. Wilson, "black scenography" in classical, colonial cultural landscapes. The author's design practice created siting designs utilizing the process in collaboration with the Albemarle County Office of Equity and Inclusion and the Equal Justice Initiative's (EJI) Community Remembrance Project to install the Charlottesville's Memorial for Peace and
Justice (CMPJ), officially dedicated on July 12, 2019. The Memorial consists of a historical marker and body-sized column designed by EJI’s Brian Stevenson and MASS Design Group of Montgomery, Alabama. The CMPJ marks the first planned installation of duplicate body columns in American cities where lynchings of African Americans occurred. This paper demonstrates the implementation of (de)othering in Charlottesville to memorialize the life and legacy of John Henry James, an African American man lynched just west of town on July 12, 1898. This paper outlines this socio-cultural process for experiential design – inserting an African American narrative within the contested territory of Court Square amongst several Confederate memorials. This paper presents details of the process in action, demonstrating a resultant case study for design activism for Southern cities grappling with non-inclusive cultural landscapes.

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Elgin Cleckley is a designer, educator, and principal of _mpathic design, a Design Thinking initiative, pedagogy, and professional practice focusing on socio-cultural design projects. A graduate of the University of Virginia’s School of Architecture and Princeton University, he has collaborated with DLR Group (Seattle), MRSA Architects (Chicago), and Baird Sampson Neuert Architects (Toronto) on award-winning civic projects. Elgin currently facilitates Design Thinking Workshops and project development with national clients through _mpathic design, utilizing its core methodology, the mosaic.

Before joining UVa’s new Design Thinking program in 2016, he was the 3D Group Leader and Design Coordinator at the Ontario Science Centre (Toronto), Visitor Experience / Science Content and Design, and Agents of Change Initiative, since 2001. This work produced award-winning exhibitions and public art with international artists David Rokeby, Michael Awad, Steve Mann, and Stacy Levy.

Professor Cleckley currently teaches University-wide Design Thinking courses and seminars, identifying intersections of race, culture, and design. The current work of the practice includes the installation of the Memorial for Peace and Justice in Charlottesville’s Court Square and design engagements with national clients.