



# Abolitionists Jumpsuits New Jersey Youth 4 Justice

Taking back a garment used for oppression and  
transforming it into a tool for delivering youth  
visions of leadership and liberation



## NJ Youth 4 Justice Goals:

- Create something that we can wear that carries our demands and messaging.
- At a time when the NJ Governor is recommending building 3 youth prisons, we want to be able to take up public space with counter narrative against the construction of the new prisons, emphasizing that young people have not been included in conversations about what youth need to thrive.
- Create art that shows youth power, modeling young people as leaders

### MESSAGING:

**Put Youth In Power Not Prison**  
**the Future**  
**Future**  
**Harm**  
**Detainment**

**Uncuff**  
**Fund the**  
**Healing Not**  
**Destroy**

## “Costume” inspiration to begin imagining how to create a message



Gan Golan, Tax Dodgers



Brick x Brick is a public design project that builds human “walls” against misogyny.

Is the energy of a team or feeling of “we are stronger together” how you want the garment to feel? Are we creating youth super heroes?





Floating Lab Collective experiments with the aesthetics of direct action in crafting responses to specific places, communities, issues and circumstances. Imagine inventing a utility worker who designs the world where all youth are free.



When Performing Statistics did a show and we wanted people to feel like they were incarcerated. We had youth play the role of prison guards who were in charge of the adults in the room. Look closely at the patch on her arm...it says **Prisons Don't work! Free the Youth!**





## NJ 4 Youth Justice Agree:

- Jumpsuits portray they are here to get things done
- “Custodians” wear jumpsuits but we don't want it to feel like janitors cleaning up things, more futuristic.
- Jumpsuits are used in prisons, what if it's a take back? A mix between suits from another galaxy and futuristic utility worker?

### Opportunities for adornment:

- Patches
- Text / screen printing
- Fabric with Patterns
- Vinyl transfer
- Pins
- Logos that represent freedom

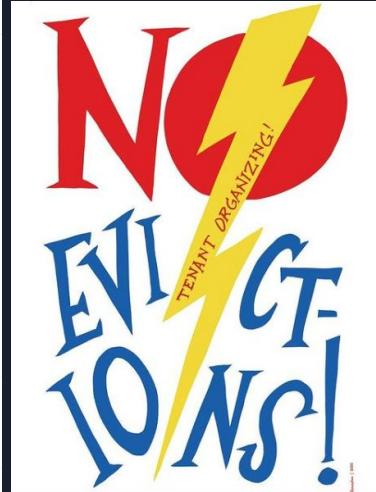


**Inspiration:** for imagining an aesthetic of the world where these Abolitionist Jumpsuits belong:

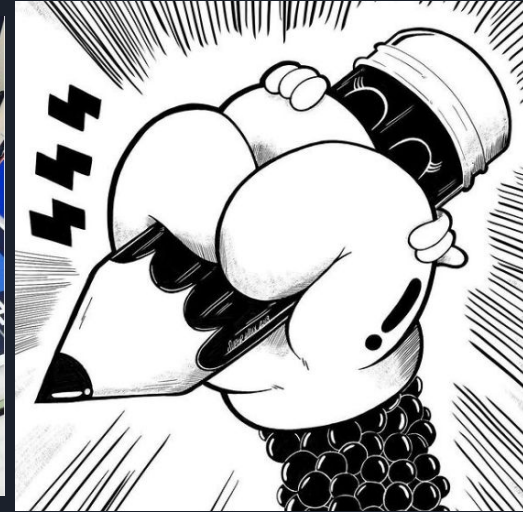
Should the world feel like a cartoon?



Eric Garcia



Superwaxx

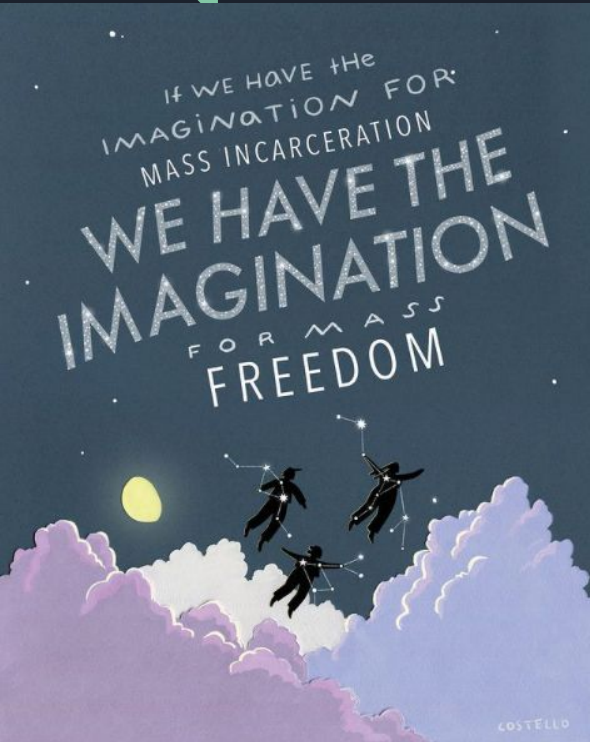




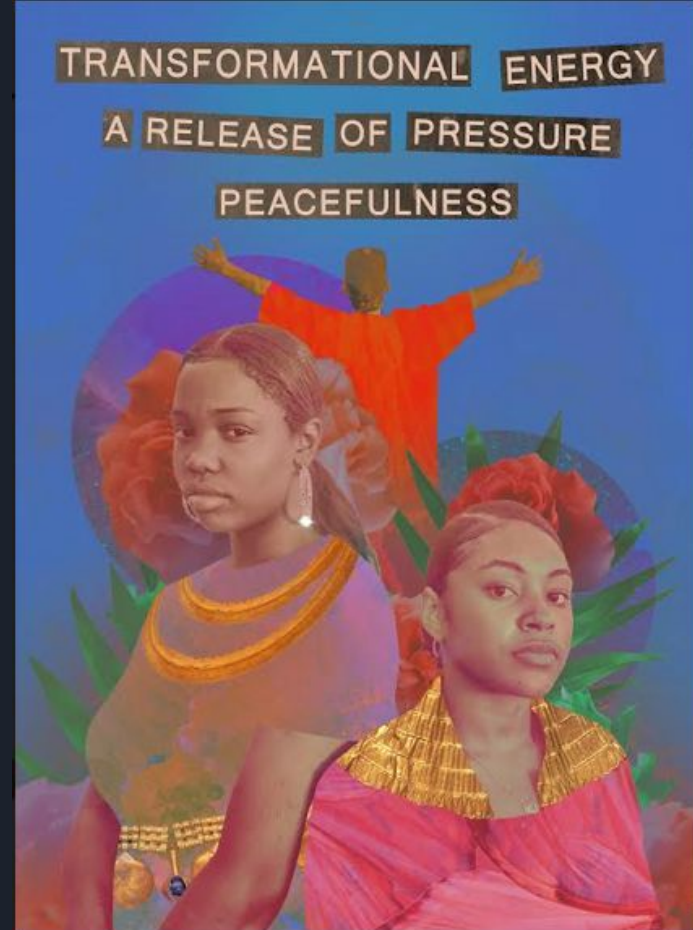




**Afro-Futurism & Collage:** Are we looking to the power of Black imagination and dream aesthetics where we collage youth into leadership in a world inspired by the past, present and future rooted in African Diaspora?



Olly Costello



Amir Khadar



## NJ 4 Youth Justice Agree:

- AfroFuturist / Collage aesthetic is aligned with our vision of youth leadership
- We want to include nods to youth movements of the past and integrate futurist imagery and textures to show imagery of young people looking POWERFUL

### Next Step: Iconography of Power

#### What is iconography?

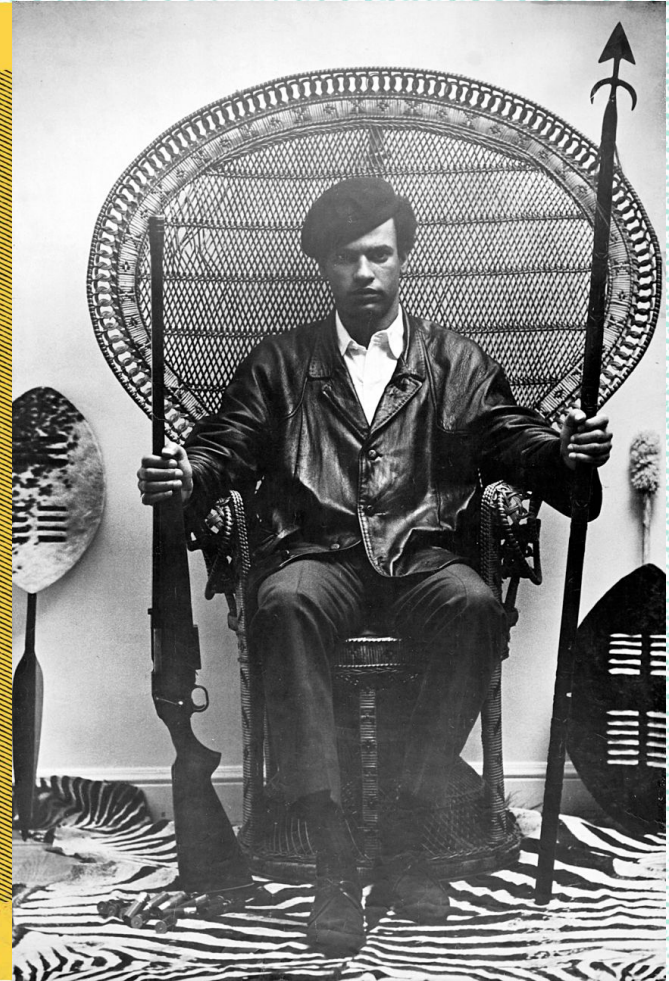
The visual images and symbols used in a work of art.

**Time to look at how visual images can be used to show  
POWER!**



# The Black Panther Party:

Uniformity & Cultural Reference to show a sense of collective power



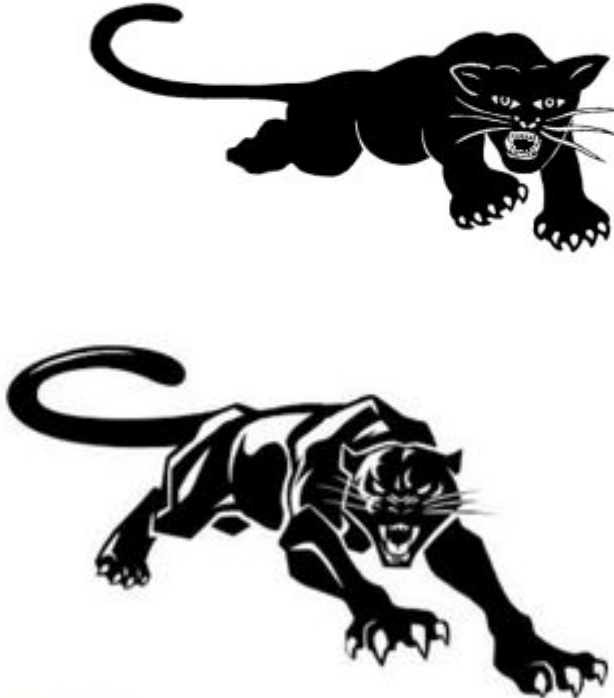


**Black Panther Symbolism:** is linked to grace, protection, beauty, night, magic, inner power, and even the secrets of life and death

The Lowndes County Freedom Organization (LCFO, Alabama) was formed in 1965 to utilize political means to empower black sharecroppers with the right to vote in one of the most racist counties. With the black panther as its symbol, it was the first independent political party in the County since Reconstruction. The Black Panther stood in direct opposition to the white rooster of the racist Alabama Democratic Party.



A year after the LCFO was founded, The Black Panther Party for Self Defense was formed in Oakland, CA. This new radical, justice seeking group chose the Black Panther Party as their name and symbol, playing off the notoriety and philosophy of Lowndes County.



Notice how the image has changed Over time to look more modern but Still carry the strength of the original symbol





## Notice **Symbols of Power, Cultural Pride & Organized Strength**

**Arrows and shield that reference Maasai warrior.**

The Panthers sought to counter racist imagery of Blackness in the US by elevating their African lineage showing the Maasai as symbolism of power, grace, beauty and strength affirming pride for Black cultural identity.

**Maasai warriors, often hold an arrow in both hands.** The arrow has been replaced with a **rifle** boldly claiming the right to bear arms. Many Americans hold the 2nd amendment as an integral part of American identity but we know that Black people have been criminalized for arming themselves....This imagery intentionally affirms the 2nd amendment right.

**The Zebra rug**, another visual reference that grounds the portrait with a bold pattern contextualizing African culture.

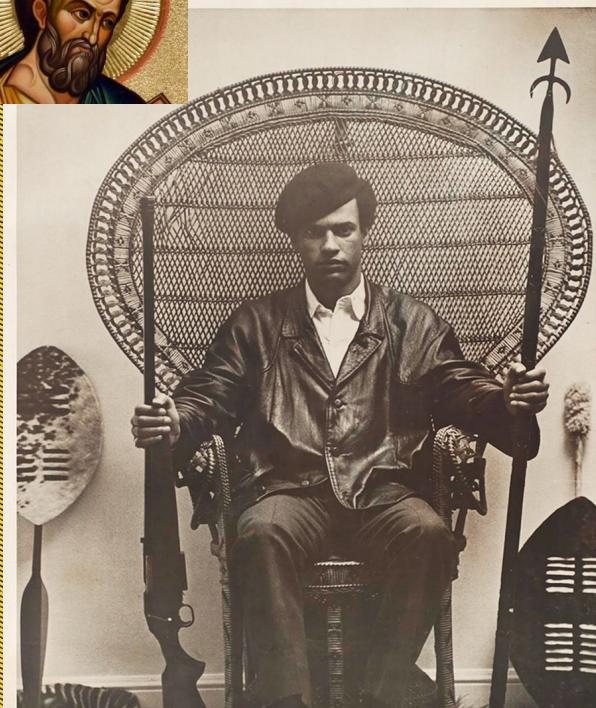
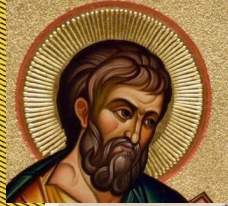




**The Peacock Chair:** This photo of Huey P Newton created a 'throne' out of a wicker chair called a peacock chair. This natural fiber chair creates a circle behind Newton like an icon



This image is a proposal to create this chair HUGE in brass as a statue to be created for Oakland, home of the Black Panthers. The artist is imagining how people today could recreate portraits of power today inspired by this famous photo by sitting in the chair.



Notice the shapes and pose of Black Panther referencing Huey P Newton's portrait.  
Notice the texture of Black Panther's skin and the leather jacket.



## The Beret:

By the 1970s, this symbol of the revolutionary that was adopted by Che Guevara was worn by many young activists.

**Black Panther Party** was one of many groups wearing the beret.



**Young Lords:** fighting for liberation, self determination & justice of Puerto Rican, Latinx & Third World People



## Brown Berets w/ Cesar Chavez:

Organizing for labor rights of farm workers



## Guardian Angels:

Organizing for community-based security as alternative to policing





# Black Panther Iconography in Pop Culture Today!

FREE ANGELA DAVIS



## Beyonce Superbowl

**2016:** At a peak moment for BLM, Beyonce as an artist decides to make the Superbowl (the MOST watched event on TV) a platform for lifting Black lives. Notice the many symbols she uses to reference history and also make the look totally her own.

**Angela Davis Style Afros**  
**Berets**  
**Leather**  
**Military Boots**  
**The Bullet X across her chest**

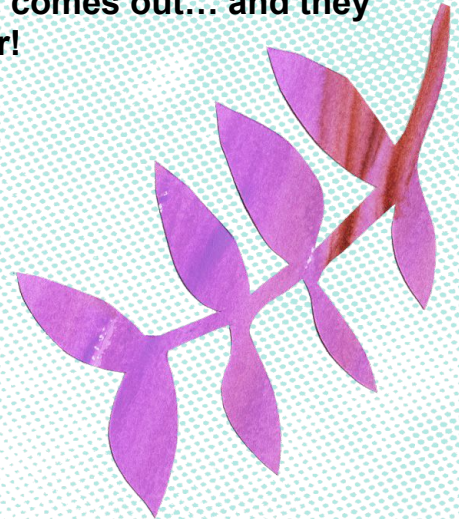




**Military style Jacket** that feels like she is the general of a world where all things Black Power are arriving together. Remember she performed Formation. They're all in combat boots...this was a year when marches & protests were exploding in ways we hadn't seen since the 60's.

Plus! It's Beyoncé so of course it's going to all be a jumpsuit/leotard...which makes her feel like a superhero. Just notice how these details together work to make Beyoncé look powerful before she even says a word.

**2 years later Wakanda comes out... and they push it all even further!**





# What is Afrofuturism?



“Afrofuturism is a total re-envisioning of the past using combinations of elements of magic realism, Afrocentricity, fantasy, science fiction, and non-Western beliefs to imagine and create the future. It is more than just conceptualizing the world using the power of fiction and fantasy but about challenging the existence of our present world.”

**“Afrofuturism gives us a chance to be in charge of our story.”**

“Afrofuturism is all about empowering us enough to see the future and realize a sea of possibilities. A world in which **we can use our creativity and ideas to create a more balanced and equitable future** with the ability to think and innovate more freely.

**Afrofuturism is a way of telling stories that creates a greater and better world than the one that exists.** The high-tech, utopian world in Black Panther shows us the possibilities that exist in a society of Black men and women that protect their history and embrace their advancement.”





## Visual Expression of AfroFuturist Power is expressing in Wakanda:

**Formation:** heads & chests held high, organized like an army

**Materials:** Metallic & natural textures (shells, claws, leather) show mix of history/nature & modern technology influences

**Pattern:** a mix of things that feel like a blend of ancient beadwork & new technology as if culture is armor.

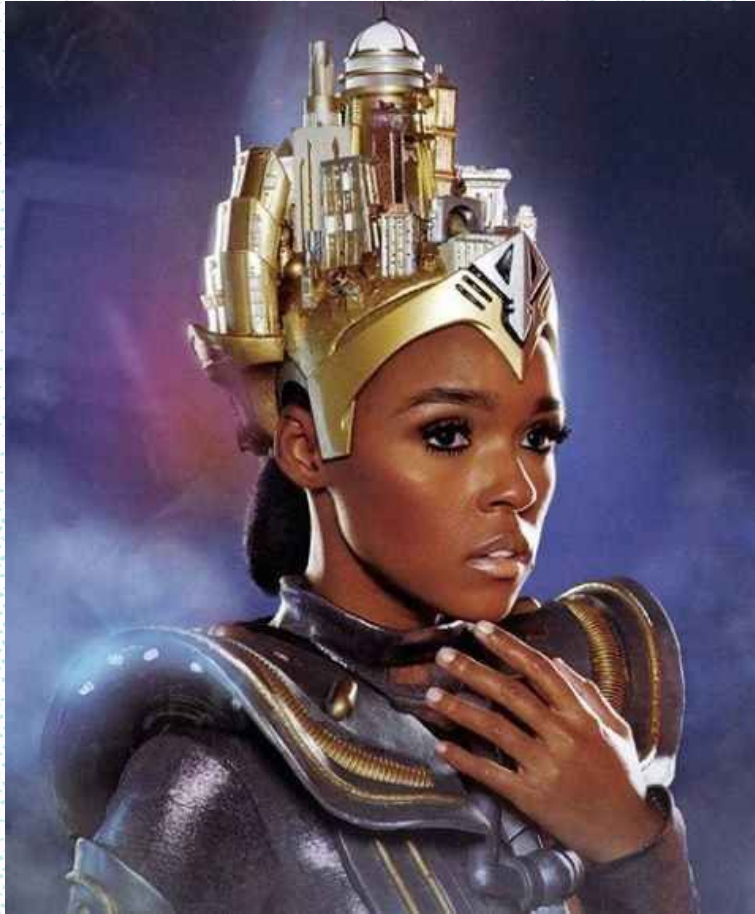




## Afro-Futurism & Janelle Monae:

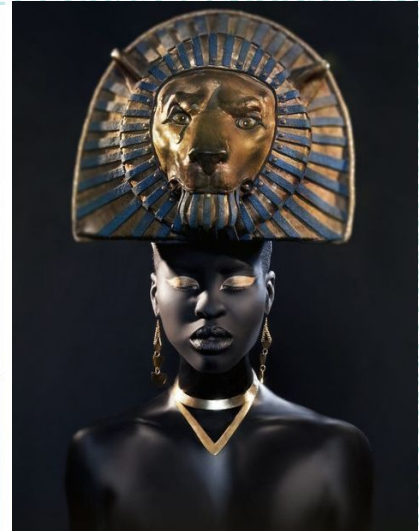
**The Crown:** Like a kingdom growing from her head, a modern city of gold/silver/diamonds.

**The Gold Throne:** Her arms rest on **lions**. Her outfit is **bold** with **pattern** and color showing us what kind of leader she is. Notice the patterns are magnified representations of **African textiles**, referencing cultural history & anchoring her power in culture





**Examples of Afrofuturist collage:** Notice how the artists have combined elements from nature, technology & culture to create a style that feels powerful, playful & from a time of past and future..





# More AfroFuturist Inspiration!

What do these images have in common?

What symbols are conveying power?







## Youth4Justice NJ Imagines the vision:

- **Nod to the Beret?**
  - Turn the beret into a graduation cap? So much freedom is tied to access to education.
  - This be a place for pins?
  - Maybe “Power not Prison” on the top of grad cap?
  - Maybe paint top like galaxy w/ stars & butterflies & put “Uncuff Our Dreams”
  - Do we put LED lights where the cap meets the flat part to show how your ideas “light the future”
  - Maybe we replace tassel w/ \$ and write “Fund Our Future” on top?
- **Props?**
  - We could make these props out of wood & simple stencil
  - Do we put Schools not Prisons on Pencil and swap out gun/arrow?
- **What pose shows power?**
  - Do we put you in front of a big gold circle?
  - Do we create a giant moon or a planet to stand in front of?
  - Sitting? Do we create some kind of throne /podium and do the shoot so it looks like you're the Mayor or Governor or President?





## How we to play with ✨ elements of revolutionary jacket?

**Create a pattern that goes down arms  
but isn't bullets?**

Is it broken chains?

Do the chains turn to butterflies as  
they move from wrist to shoulder?

**The gold X on the front? Create some  
kind of X sash that's metallic or  
reflective & has words?**

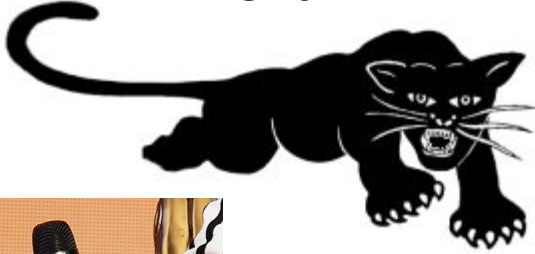
Restorative Justice or Healing?

**Leave the X off?**

Put gold dots down the front that look  
like brass buttons?

A reflective strip that says something  
like "NO KIDS IN PRISON" vertically?

**Include imagery from an animal that symbolizes a strength that represents youth power?**



**Stylize the animal so it feels like reference to the strength of culture / ancestors / abolitionists of the past/present/future?**

(Notice how the Black Panther's tail is similar to the Egyptian sphinx.)  
Egyptian imagery is often found in Afrofuturism showing incredible artistic and technological achievements of African people in history.



Egyptian art shows us examples of Black kings and queens who stood in power for many generations and created civilizations that valued imagination, connection to nature, art and critical thinking outside of Western Civilization.

### **Choosing an animal:**

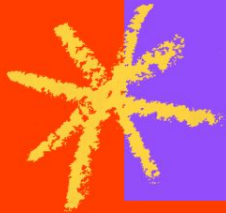
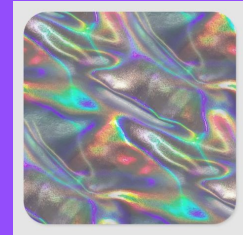
A zebra, cheetah, tiger w bold pattern and attitude?

Part of the animal, like a claw/paw, wing?

A **butterfly**, a symbol of metamorphosis & freedom? Draw them in a way that feels inspired by Egypt or a culture you're team's to? A future looking butterfly logo that looks more like the new Black Panther Symbol?



# What color combinations could successfully express youth power and your overall vision? ✨



## Text Styles:

What styles feel like they have the right look and feel to deliver bold messaging and demands for a world where youth are in Power Not Prison?

**FINELY  
TUNED**

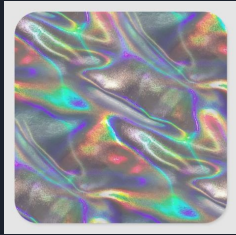


**GALAXY**



# Youth4Justice NJ Finalize Jumpsuit / Grad Cap Concept :

**Symbols:** Butterflies, Breaking Chains, Crowns  
**Colors:** Purple/Blue, Gold, holographic



**Inspiration:**  
BPP & Afrofuturism



## MESSAGING:

**Put Youth In Power Not Prison**  
**Uncuff the Future**  
**Fund the Future**  
**Healing Not Harm**  
**Destroy Detainment**



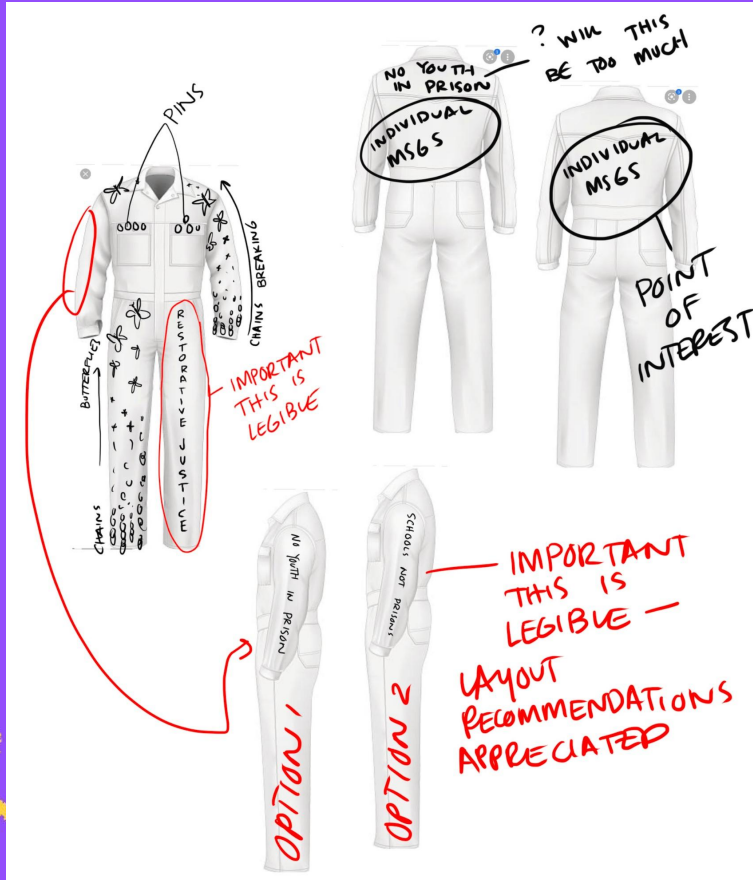
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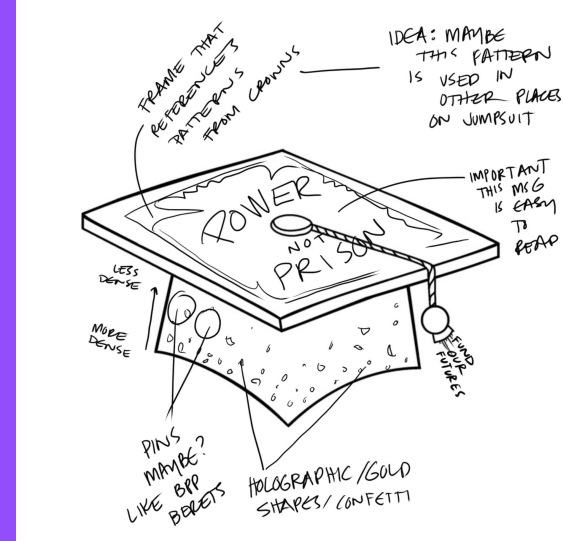
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***FINELY  
TUNED***





## 1st Sketches





# 1st Mock-ups from Project for Empty Space & Inter-Design Collective







## Refined Designs from PES & Inter-Design Collective



Graduation Cap



Tassel(Detail)







Pin Designs!





**Next Step:**

**Transforming Portraits in the  
Jumpsuits into Posters**





## Poster Creative Brief:

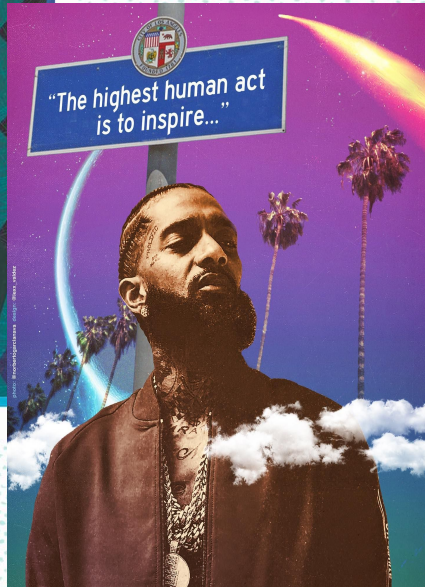
- Aligned with aesthetics of the jumpsuits.
- Gold, Blue, Purple, Blacks.
- Clean / simple, Afrofuturist background featuring gradients & natural elements that suggest outer space
- Portraits are the center of attention on the posters.
- Messaging is Bold and very Legible



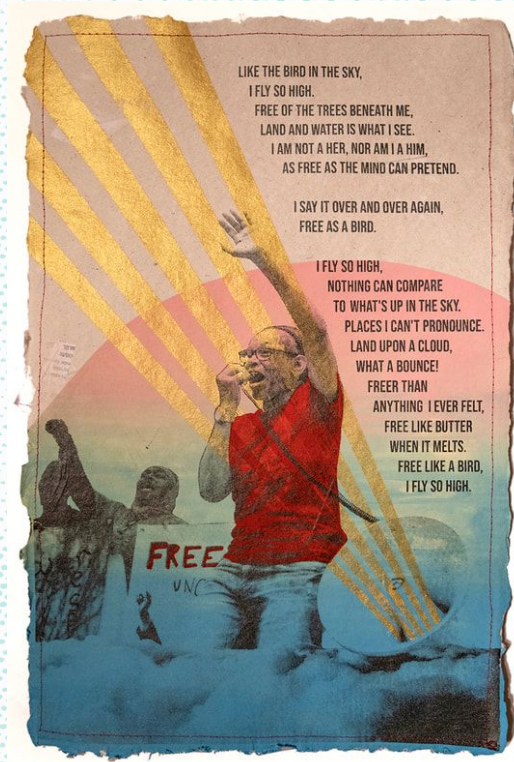
# Poster Inspiration:



Lexx Valdez



Mer Young



Sharita Towne





Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison

# FUND THE FUTURE

Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison



150 YEARS  
IS ENOUGH

Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison

# DESTROY DETAINMENT

Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison



150 YEARS  
IS ENOUGH

#CloseJamesburg #CloseHayes

Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison

# HEALING NOT HARM

Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison



150 YEARS  
IS ENOUGH

#CloseJamesburg #CloseHayes





Prison - Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison - Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison

Prison - Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison - Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison

# FUND THE FUTURE

Prison - Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison - Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison

Prison - Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison - Create the World with Youth in Power not Prison

**150 YEARS IS ENOUGH.**  
#CloseJamesburg #CloseHayes





Curriculum created by Kate DeCiccio

