Building up Black Women in Architecture & Design

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KEY PARTICIPANT THEMES

**THE INVISIBLE WOMAN**
- Marginalized
- Unrecognized as Individual
- Mammy/Jezbel/Welfare Queen
- Inequitable Wages
- Myth of Colorblindness
- Characterized as "a Diversity Hire"

**THE ANGRY BLACK WOMAN, SUPERWOMAN**
- Aggressive, Hot Tempered
- Illogical, Ruled by Emotions
- Sassy and Standoffish
- Expectation to work 2x as Hard
- Manifest Strength, Suppress Emotion
- Obligation to Help Others

**WORKING UNDER THE WHITE GAZE**
- Palatability
- Code Switching
- Discomfort in "White" Spaces
- Conforming to Eurocentric Beauty Ideals
- Minimizing Cultural Expression

**PROBLEM**
- US Black Female Population: 7%
- US Black Architects: 2%
- US Black Female Architects: 0.3%

**METHODS**
16 Black Women in A&D participated by interview or written personal narrative. The goal was to understand their lived experience in the field and generate recommendations for improving it.

Prompt themes included:
- Instances of "otherness"
- Experiences of marginalization
- Advice for leaders

**Recommendations for...**
- **EMPLOYERS AND ALLIES**
  - Celebrate Black people's contributions to the A&D field
  - Hire and nurture grow Black talent with intentionality
  - Pursue design equity

- **BLACK WOMEN IN A&D EARLY IN CAREER**
  - Network - expanding your creativity, and a fan base
  - Be yourself; this field is enriched by difference
  - Practice self-care whatever that means to you

- **BLACK WOMEN IN A&D WITH PRIVILEGE**
  - Bring junior talent under your wings; seek her out and pull her up!
  - Volunteer in your community to educate young people about A&D
  - Prioritize mentoring and serving others

**CONCLUSIONS**
- The multiplicative impact of intersectionality of race and gender combined with under-representation present unique challenges for Black Women in A&D.
- There is a relative permanency of space and place, therefore the consequences of under-representation impact communities of color for generations.
- It is critical to seize the energy generated by the dual pandemics of racism and Covid19 to escalate representation.

**LITERATURE CITED**

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