

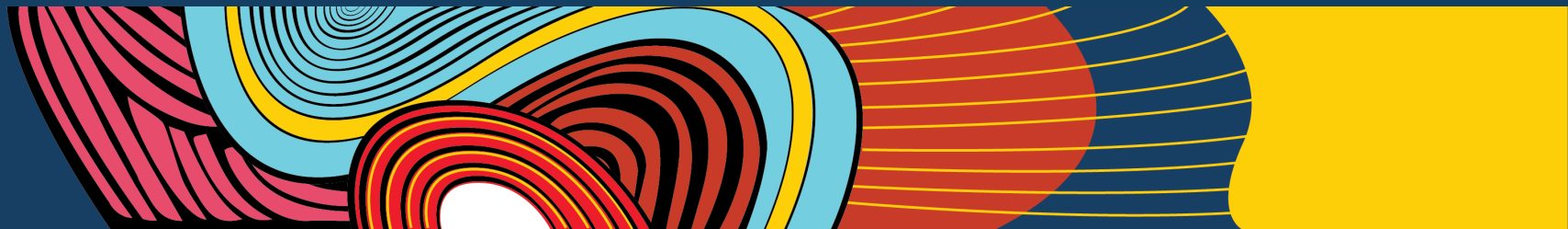


THE TIME IS OURS

A public art proposal by Jenie Gao Studio



jenie.org

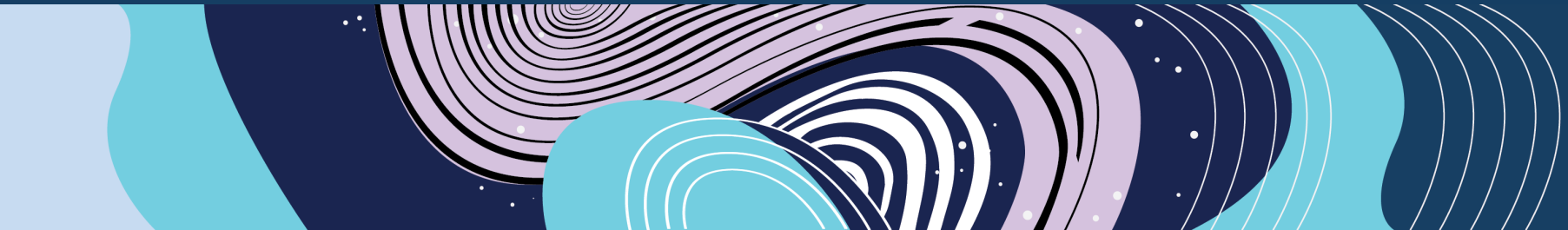




PUBLIC ART FOR PUBLIC GOOD

Public Art + Public Good: *Centering the bus riders*

Community interviews are integral to my process. I focused on interviews with bus riders, because this public infrastructure exists to connect people with their communities.



Community Interviews

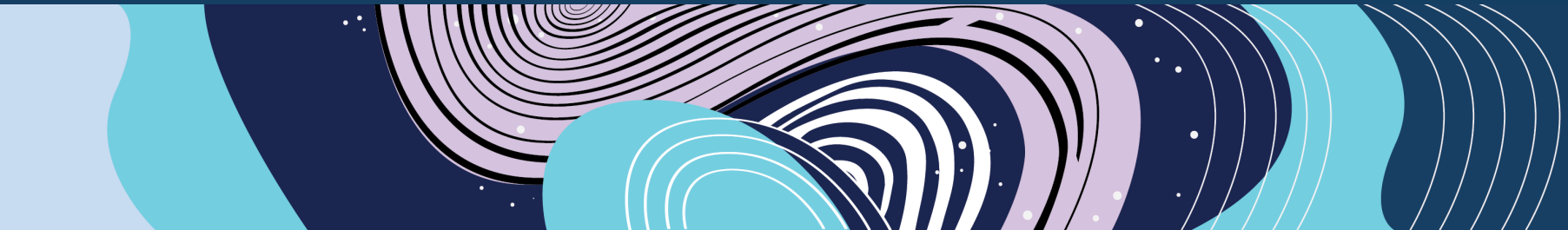
- Interviewed 27 people who rely on the buses, 70% BIPOC, average interview 45 min

In contrast to Madison's 2019 survey of bus riders, where 84% of those surveyed were white despite Madison's highly diverse bus ridership

- Also interviewed city employees, not all of whom can rely on the buses, despite all city employees having access to a free bus pass

Public Art + Public Good: *Centering the bus riders*

By interviewing primarily BIPOC bus riders, I can use this project to elevate the perspectives of commuters who rely on the bus for a wide range of needs.



Why People Take the Bus

“I bus to run errands for my family. I’m a big help to them.”

– Katherine

“I bus to visit my parents who live outside the city.” – Carlos

“As a growing adult without a car, public transit means that I can be independent. I can take the bus to school and work without having to rely on someone else.” – Daphne

More quotes from interviews in the Appendix



The Time is Ours, mockup of final artwork by Jenie Gao Studio

Materials: exterior mural paint, matte brushed silver aluminum panels floated on wall surface

Dimensions: 16' tall x 500' long. 8,000 sq. ft.

View heading westward on East Washington Ave



THE EXPERIENCE OF TRANSIT, ACCORDING TO MADISON RIDERS



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Experiences of Riding

*“You know when you ride the bus and you hear this humming, especially in the winter when you're leaning your head on the glass, **this is soothing**, and this is what public transit means for me. I don't have to worry about traffic. I get to see people chatting and in transit. I really like this experience.” - Eyad*

Looking Out the Window



- Each section starts with a person looking out the window

Note: these portraits are stand-ins for the finals, which will be based on real bus riders to accurately portray their commutes

Sharing Space with Fellow Commuters



Stand-in portraits representing bus commuters

Materials: exterior mural paint painted on top of brushed silver aluminum panels floated on wall surface

Dimensions: 16' tall, varying widths

Still(ness) in Transit



One issue that Madisonians repeatedly bring up is how long commuting by bus can take: infrequency of buses, inconvenient stops, and transfer points all add to people's transit.

Yet even bus riders with long commutes (1 hour+) describe the experience *as time that belongs to them.*

Still(ness) in Transit



Each section delineates the passage of time, distilled to motifs that are often subtle but distinct time markers in Madison.

Wave patterns allude to Madison's native plant "prairie" lawns and surrounding lakes.



Section 1: Melting Ice and First Spring Crocuses



Section 2: Sunflowers and Cicadas



Section 3: Fluffy Milkweed Pods and Migrating Geese



Section 4: Snow and Empty Space

*I planned the artwork so that Section 4 would start where tree cover increases, to be most covered in summer and most visible in winter.



Section 4: Snow and Empty Space

*In winter, when the leaves are gone.

Experiences of Waiting

“It’s really important to have a shelter. One time while waiting, I was crying because the wind was so cold and there was no shelter at that stop...also, one of my closest friends I met at a bus shelter...We’re really close now and all because of the time we spent waiting and in transit at the shelter.” - Eyad

Bus Shelters as Connection Points



- Each section is bookended by people waiting in a bus shelter
- The silhouettes are cut out of aluminum composite panels with a matte finish, which are floated for depth



CONNECTING THE COMMUNITY



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Investing in Community



Operation Fresh Start student crew installing a mural
with City of Madison

- Hiring locally, demonstrated history of hiring and mentoring 25 paid interns and apprentices at Jenie Gao Studio
- Plan to partner with Operation Fresh Start (OFS) to hire students for art production and installation
- Many OFS students rely on the buses, so this is also a chance to model how job creators can create opportunities for people whose main mode of transportation is public transit



Operation Fresh Start Student Crew Installing Public Artworks with City of Madison

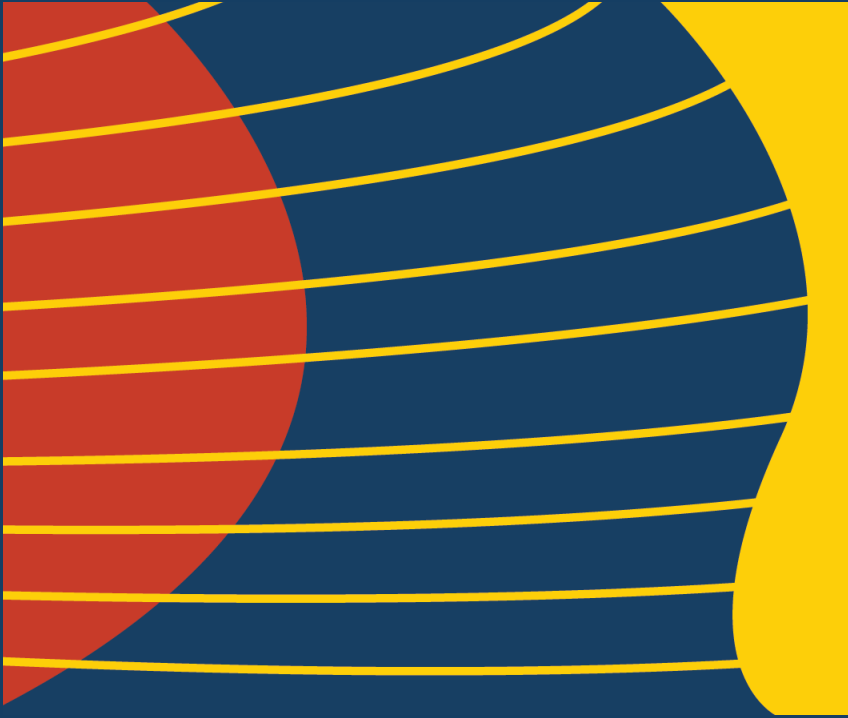
Investing in Local Economy



Former Jenie Gao Studio studio assistants Hannah Avner and Hedi Ma with the *Rest and Rejuvenation* mural

- Madison-based vendors for aluminum and other materials
- Local vendors and hires means money stays in the community
- Jenie Gao Studio has a breadth of experience incorporating mentorship into work opportunities

Community Paint Days



- Simple wave shapes make it easy to incorporate community paint days
- Neighbors can come help fill in colors and feel shared stewardship of this site

EMPHASIZING THE STRENGTHS OF THE SITE



Working with the Site's Strengths



- Madison Metro Transit System has one of the few stretches of East Washington Ave with full-grown trees, a set back lawn, and full shade
- North facing wall stays cool on hot summer days
- Significantly more pedestrian friendly than much of East Washington, a six-lane highway with little tree cover



The artwork ends before the western two sections of the wall that have the most tree cover, so removing mature trees is not needed for placement of this artwork.



The western two sections have the most tree cover. I focused my artwork on the eastern walls to avoid the removal of mature trees and necessary shade to keep the city cool.



Cap East Transportation Corridor: Pedestrian View from Across the Street

Easy Legibility that Won't Distract Drivers



- Large, silhouetted shapes are legible from multiple distances
- Brushed silver aluminum has a matte, non-reflective surface

Urban Design District No. 8



In accordance with Urban Design District No. 8's Core Development Principles:

- Wall-based work enhances the iconic view of the Capitol
- Community interviews strengthen neighborhood identity
- Art is legible for people using many means of transit
- Provides vibrant engagement for pedestrians to enjoy East Washington Avenue

Materials and Construction



- Brushed silver Dibond® aluminum composite panels (3/16") are lightweight, easy to maintain
- Aluminum panels installed slightly floated from wall will leave room for rain drains and be simple for City Engineering to remove and maneuver
- Budget breakdown available in the Appendix

Longevity and Protection

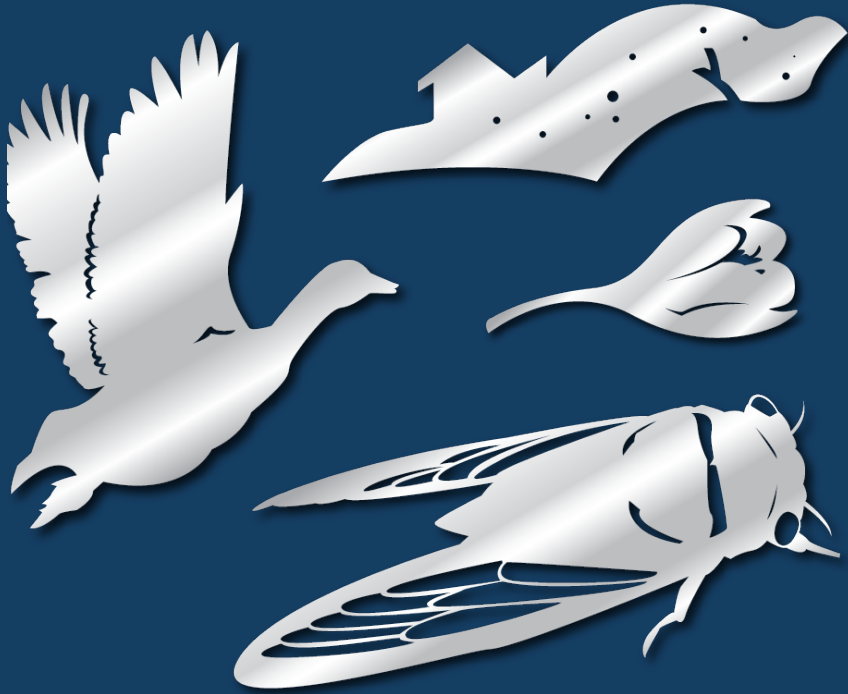


- Exterior grade mural paint durable in all weather conditions
- Anti-graffiti coating will protect the work from vandalism
- UV protective coating will prevent sun fading
- Easy maintenance, paint will need to be UV recoated every 4-5 years

ADDITIONAL OPPORTUNITIES



Accessibility



- It would be possible to make smaller, laser cut versions of the motifs
- These could be part of a tactile informational plaque for the blind and visually impaired

Community Stories



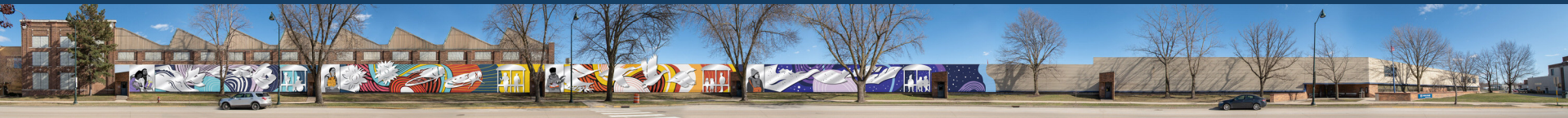
- Collected 27 interviews as a part of the design process that deserve attention
- Opportunity to print and release a zine in conjunction with the Metro project
- Madison is in the midst of a big conversation about the future of public transit as the city grows
- Now more than ever, we need community stories to inform perspectives of public transit



“A lifeline because I don’t drive.” – Angélica



“The buses feel like going home.” – Nada



“Because of their diversity, the buses going from a predominantly white university to my incredibly diverse west side community feels like the buses are taking me home.” – Nada



STAY IN TOUCH

Website: <https://jenie.org>

Facebook: Jenie Gao Studio

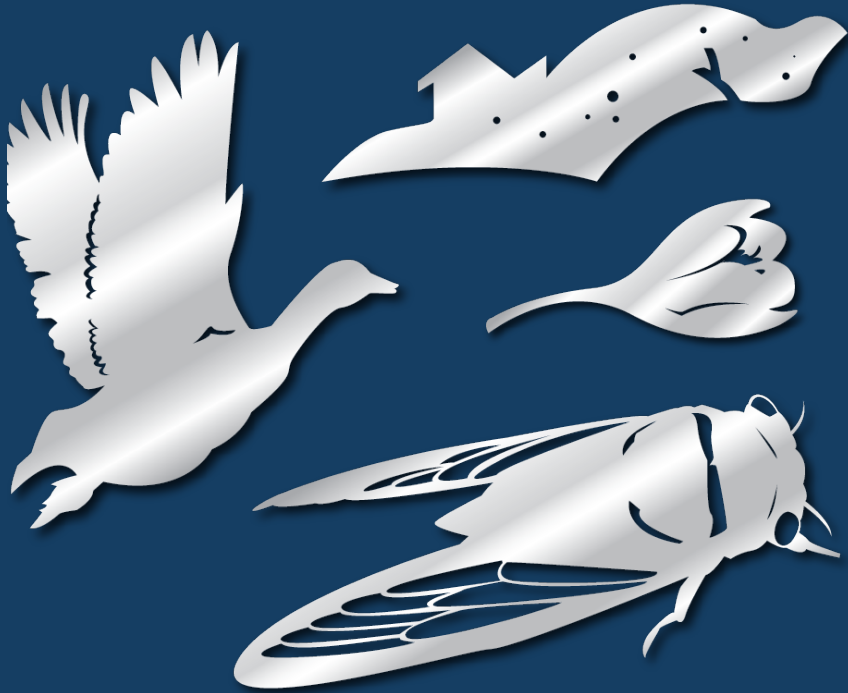
Instagram: @jeniegao

Appendix A: About Me



- Full-time artist and entrepreneur, started my business in Madison eight years ago
- Hyper Local: Madison resident in Tenney-Lapham neighborhood for nine years
- Community-focused practice, a long-term contributor to the Madison ecosystem
- Have hired and mentored 25 paid interns and apprentices
- Only person of color who is a finalist for this project

Appendix B: Budget



- Aluminum panels + CNC cutting: \$39,000
- Paint: \$4,200
- UV + Anti-Graffiti: \$5,000
- Other production supplies: \$1,600
- Travel: \$3,000
- Overhead: \$12,700
- Assistants (\$22/hr): \$15,000
- Artist's Labor (project management, production, installation, community engagement, etc.): \$29,500
- Total Budget: \$110,000

Appendix C: Operation Fresh Start

- Operation Fresh Start's mission is to empower emerging adults on a path to self-sufficiency through education, mentoring, and employment training
- Participants are assigned to either a construction crew (building affordable housing) or conservation crew (improving city and county parks) and receive paid training from their supervisor, who also acts as a mentor
- If awarded this project, Jenie Gao Studio will partner with Operation Fresh Start to hire young people for a hands-on project that improves the community



Appendix D: Quotes from Bus Riders - Frequency

- *“It would be nice if there were about 20% more frequency. Sometimes if I have to wait for the next bus it would take the same amount of time to walk. Some of the buses only come every 30 minutes so even them coming every 22 minutes would be amazing.” – Avenash*
- *“More frequent buses and buses that go to frequent destinations faster. Sometimes when you get out of the central core of Madison maybe the bus would take 40 minutes to get there whereas driving would take 15. Beyond that, shelters are important. There are shelters downtown but elsewhere it can get difficult if it's really hot or cold.” – Zia*
- *“My dream for public transportation is for it to be accessible to the widest amount of people possible. For that reason, I wish they were all free to ride. I also wish buses would run every 15 minutes rather than 30, to avoid wasted time for commuters.” - Nadja*
- “Frequency” came up 17 times in interviews

Appendix D: Quotes from Bus Riders - Groceries

- *“More public transportation to places closer. The grocery store I go to doesn't have a bus stop.” – Yuli*
- *“There are so many cultural centers in Madison when you get past downtown. Even in the commerce bit there's classism, too. The places that are most accessible to folks like Woodman's or Walmart have fewer bus routes compared to the Whole Foods and Hilledale Market which are more expensive.” – Nada*
- *“When I was in Eagle Heights, getting groceries and running errands was awful. I'd be taking two buses to the grocery store and then another bus to campus.” – Eyad*
- *“I live in a household with a car. If we were to not have that car, doing groceries would be very difficult with the way the bus system is set up. There aren't a lot of solid, walkable grocery stores with produce in Madison.” – Avenash*
- “Groceries” came up 18 times in interviews

Appendix D: Quotes from Bus Riders - Jobs

- *"I'm limited in my jobs because a lot of employers ask if I have a car and I say no, but I can use public transportation, and a lot of them say no. There have been different job opportunities downtown that I've applied for, but the bus schedule doesn't match with the hours." – Yuli*
- *"If it takes me this long to get to certain locations like the Allied Center, how long will it take once they change the bus stops to 'more popular' spots? Bus 20's route is changing so the bus stop would now be a 15-minute walk away from my work, which adds 15 minutes on top of an already long commute. If that happens, I may just need to find another job." – Katherine*
- On the topic of employment, city office employees have the easiest time using the bus for work. Public transit as a main means of transportation is a barrier to employment for hourly workers and many jobs outside of office work.

Appendix D: Quotes from Bus Riders – Community

“I love how commuting by public transportation is a form of active resistance to the isolation of individualism. A deliberate collective practice of sharing a ride to make the most effective use of resources like gas and space while keeping our neighborhoods and communities accessible and interconnected.” – Geraldine

Appendix D: Quotes from Bus Riders – Community

“It’s an important gathering space, even though people may be reading books or listening to music, it’s still a place where you’re sharing space with other people. Even if you’re not interacting I think it’s important to have that sort of public space.” – Jacob

Appendix D: Quotes from Bus Riders – Community

“It makes me connected to the community around me especially in winter when everyone is staying home. Having this experience that's pleasant with people. I like to say I met my friends through the bus. In the winter, people don't go out as much and just stay home. There are people I haven't seen for ages, but then I'll see them on the buses.” – Eyad

Appendix D: Quotes from Bus Riders – Community

“There's a lot of issues having to do with BIPOC and taking access away. If I were talking to someone from Metro, I'd tell them that BIPOC rely on Metro and if you cut certain routes you're affecting them and that's not right. You can find a way to fix this...I see people on the bus who do rely on it for everything. They're there with their baby stroller and two kids and groceries and they're exhausted. Or the old grandma who's carrying four bags of groceries. And you're going to tell them that you're going to take their route away?” - Carlos

Appendix D: Quotes from Bus Riders – Community

“The bus keeps me connected to my friends and community. There are places I can’t get easily get to so I’m not a part of that community because of transportation.”

- Yuli

Appendix D: Quotes from Bus Riders – Community

“Public transit means a lot to me because without a bus I would barely have any transportation. Public transit helps me stay connected to work, school, and get around to meet friends.”

- Mesha

Appendix D: Quotes from Bus Riders – Community

“I love seeing the trees and ripples in the lake when I'm near water. All the patterns of the buildings and streets, the color schemes. I enjoy seeing the seasonal changes throughout the city. Noticing where things are being left on the curb before trash day. Some sculpture artwork. I notice the intensity of the sunlight, especially if I forget my sunglasses. The wind in the trees and movement of the leaves. Even if you're not talking with anybody while you're riding the bus, you still feel like you're close to a community, and I like that closeness.” - Echnaton

Appendix D: Quotes from Bus Riders – Community

“What I would love to see captured is the diversity that the buses encourage. If you want to know the real Madison, it's in the buses.”

- Nada