



# DISCO SUMMIT 2024

June 14 – 15, 2024

Weiser Hall, University of Michigan

AN INTERDISCIPLINARY SYMPOSIUM ABOUT THE PAST, PRESENT, AND  
FUTURE OF THE INTERSECTION BETWEEN DIGITAL TECHNOLOGY,  
CULTURE, RACE, DISABILITY, GENDER, SEXUALITY, AND LIBERATION



**M** | DIGITAL STUDIES INSTITUTE  
UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN

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- Office of Diversity, Inclusion, Justice, and Equity, Marsal Family School of Education
- Office of Multi-Ethnic Student Affairs
- University of Michigan Initiative on Disability Studies



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

This event would not have been possible without the work of our incredible DISCO Network and Digital Studies Institute (DSI) staff and our partners. We are grateful to the Mellon Foundation for supporting this event.

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Angel Food Catering

El Harissa Market Cafe

Cappuccino Man

# THE DISCO NETWORK

The Digital Inquiry Speculation Collaboration Optimism (DISCO) Network explores the current post-pandemic digital landscape by both analyzing the ways that the digital state has perpetuated existing social and racial inequalities and envisioning a new anti-racist, anti-ableist digital future. The DISCO Network creates a collective by (1) building an academic pipeline for students and junior scholars interested in pursuing training in critical digital methodologies, (2) creating a mutual support and mentorship network for marginalized scholars, (3) offering lectures, roundtables, and programming about cutting edge digital topics, (4) writing rapid response articles and books on current events in digital racial politics, and (5) bringing a humanistic perspective about race, gender, disability, and technological exclusion to undergraduate students outside of the humanities.

The DISCO Network is comprised of a hub at the University of Michigan (PI: Lisa Nakamura) and five labs across five universities: Northwestern University (Co-I: Rayvon Fouché), Stony Brook University (Co-I: Stephanie Dinkins), Georgia Institute of Technology (Co-I: André Brock), University of Michigan (Co-I: Remi Yergeau), and University of Maryland (Co-I: Catherine Knight Steele). Each lab brings together an interdisciplinary group of faculty, postdoctoral fellows, graduate students, artists, and activists who have collectively broken new ground in digital studies, ethnic studies, gender and sexuality studies, technology studies, disability studies, and media studies.

The DISCO Network is funded by the Mellon Foundation.



## LAND ACKNOWLEDGMENT

This event is taking place on the ancestral, traditional, and contemporary lands of the Anishinaabeg (the Council of the Three Fires: the Odawa, Ojibwa, and Potawatomi) as well as the Wyandot. And as we live here and learn here, we honor the Indigenous people who continue to steward this land and those who were forcibly removed from it.



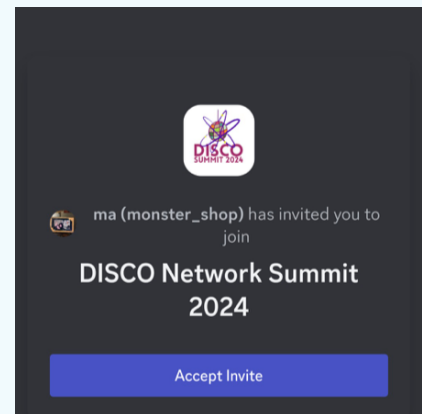
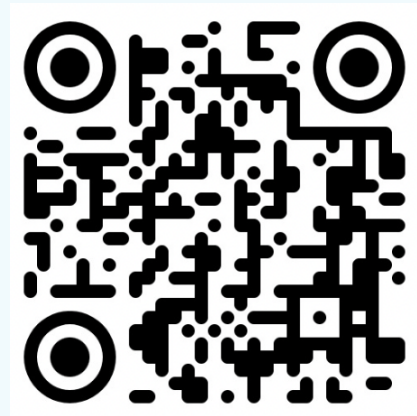


## JOIN THE DISCO SUMMIT DISCORD

You're invited to join the DISCO Network Summit 2024 "DISCOrd" Server!

Discord is an invite-only messaging app where you can discuss our events in live-time with DISCO Summit online attendees.

**Step 1:** Scan the QR code with your camera or Discord mobile app. A screen with an invitation to join the DISCO Network Summit 2024 DISCOrd Server will appear. Please press 'Accept Invite'.



**Step 2:** Download the Discord mobile app via Google Play or the App Store

**Step 3:** 'Register' to create an account with your phone number or email address OR log in with an existing account

**Step 4:** Create a display name\*

**Step 5:** Create a Discord account and unique username

**Step 6:** Enter your date of birth, prove that you're not a robot (hopefully), and select a Discord avatar. You are now free to join the DISCO Network Summit 2024 DISCOrd Server. Welcome!

\* Remember that both your display name and username are visible. Please keep them respectful and appropriate.

# EVENT ACCESSIBILITY



Communication Access Real-time Translation (CART) services will be provided.



All attendees are requested to wear well-fitting masks. Masks will be provided at the event.



The event space is ADA-compliant.



Gender-neutral and accessible restrooms are available in the event space.



The event planning team has worked to mitigate potential sensory triggers, such as loud buzzing sounds or flickering lights, in the event space. Attendees with sensory sensitivities should be aware that there is a possibility of unpredictable sound or lighting changes during the event.



A quiet space is available nearby the event space.



All attendees are asked to refrain from using scented products, such as perfume or cologne. Unscented products (e.g., soap, hand sanitizer) will be provided at the event.



Take-out containers and picnic blankets will be provided for attendees who prefer to eat outdoors.



All food provided will be labeled with common food allergens and dietary restrictions.




A digital copy of the event program is available on our website.



For those who are unable to attend the event in-person, a Zoom livestream viewing option is available.



# GETTING TO WEISER HALL 10TH FLOOR

 500 Church St, Ann Arbor, MI 48109

## Recommended Parking:

Forest Avenue Parking Garage  
650 S Forest Ave



Weiser Hall is located in the heart of central campus at the University of Michigan. This picture shows you what Weiser Hall looks like when entering from central campus. Ramps are on both sides of the staircase in front of the building.



Entering from the West entrance (coming from central campus):

- Enter the building, take a right.
- Walk towards the end of the hallway.
- Make a left once you pass the staircase.
- Walk down the hall and elevators will be on both sides.



Entering from the East entrance (coming from Church St):

- Enter the building, walk straight ahead.
- Go to the left of the exit stairwell door.
- Elevators will be on both sides.

## THE 10TH FLOOR



This picture shows you what the 10th Floor event space looks like. Attendees will be able to sit in either lecture-style seats or rounds to view the stage. Seating is first come, first serve.

# FRIDAY, JUNE 14

## CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

8:15 - 9:00 am

*Catering provided by Angel Food Catering*

## OPENING REMARKS BY ELLIE ABRONS

9:00 - 9:05 am



Ellie Abrons, Director of the Digital Studies Institute, is a licensed architect, principal of T+E+A+M, and Associate Professor of Architecture at the University of Michigan Taubman College of Architecture and Urban Planning, where she was the A. Alfred Taubman Fellow in 2009–2010. Ellie’s research and creative practice is focused on the intersections of materiality, technology, design, and construction—with an emphasis on material reuse, the culture of images, and the effect of ubiquitous digitality on architectural culture and production.

## DIGITAL OPTIMISM

9:05 - 10:15 am

*Lisa Nakamura, Ray Fouché, Stephanie Dinkins, Remi Yergeau, and Catherine Knight Steele*

## DIGITAL FRICTIONS

10:30 - 11:45 am

*Remi Yergeau, David Adelman, Jeff Nagy, Aimi Hamraie, Jaipreet Virdi, and Mara Mills*

## LUNCH

12:00 - 1:00 pm

*Catering provided by El Harissa Market Cafe*

## DIGITAL BLACK FEMINIST PLEASURE AND PAIN ONLINE

1:00 - 2:15 pm

*Catherine Knight Steele, Rianna Walcott, Brandi Pettijohn, Francesca Sobande, Kishonna Gray, and Apryl Williams*

## LITTLE MEMES: STORYING RACE, GENDER, AND DISABILITY IN THE DIGITAL STUDIES CLASSROOM

2:30 - 3:45 pm

*Remi Yergeau, Huan He, Toni Bushner, and Lida Zeitlin-Wu*

## DIGITAL INTERVENTIONS: RECALIBRATING OPTIMISM [IN-PERSON ONLY WORKSHOP]

4:00 - 5:15 pm

*Catherine Knight Steele, Rayvon Fouché, Stephanie Dinkins, and Kevin Winstead*

## RECEPTION

5:30 - 7:00 pm

*Catering provided by Angel Food Catering*



# SATURDAY, JUNE 15

## CONTINENTAL BREAKFAST

8:15 - 9:00 am

*Catering provided by Angel Food Catering*

## BLACK INNOVATION

9:00 - 10:15 am

*Rayvon Fouché, Aaron Dial, Ron Eglash, Tonia Sutherland, Michael Bennett, Aria Halliday, and Ngozi Harrison*

## DIGITAL POSSIBILITIES

10:30 - 11:45 am

*Stephanie Dinkins, Hagar Masoud, Ria Rajan, Cezanne Charles, and Audrey Bennett*

## LUNCH

12:00 - 1:00 pm

*Catering provided by El Harissa Market Cafe*

## MAJORITY WORLD DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURES

1:00 - 2:15 pm

*Lisa Nakamura, Huan He, Jasmine Banks, Marisa Duarte, Ivan Chaar Lopez, and Meryem Kamil*

## LEGIBILITY AND COMMUNITY IN DIGITAL STUDIES

2:30 - 3:45 pm

*Huan He, Kevin Winstead, David Adelman, Aaron Dial, Jeff Nagy, Brandi Pettijohn, Rianna Walcott, and Lida Zeitlin-Wu*

# VIEW ZOOM LIVESTREAM



## HOST: RIANNA WALCOTT



Rianna Walcott is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Black Communication and Technology Lab at the University of Maryland, and part of the DISCO Network. Walcott will be joining the Department of Communication at the University of Maryland in Fall 2024 as an incoming Assistant Professor. Her research takes a mixed-methods approach to investigating Black British social media usage, incorporating interviews and discourse analysis across various sites in order to examine digital communities, the circumstances under which they are created, and the constraints they face.

# DIGITAL OPTIMISM

**Optimism is the belief that the interval between the now and liberation is where we can act. Digital optimism is the recognition that there are elements of life that vivify and energize in the here and the now, despite and amidst the digital purgatories that we endure. Sometimes that energy is found in stillness; sometimes in refusal; and sometimes in moments of catharsis or joy. This panel will explore the concept of digital optimism as it appears in DISCO's collaborative writing and work together.**



## LISA NAKAMURA

Lisa Nakamura is the Gwendolyn Calvert Baker Collegiate Professor in the Department of American Culture, and the founding Director of the Digital Studies Institute, at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor. She has written on race, gender, and digital culture and recently completed a manuscript on women of color labor and the Internet. She is currently working on Zoom embodiment, Buddhist practice, and woman of color epistemologies.



## RAYVON FOUCHÉ

Rayvon Fouché holds a joint appointment as Professor of Communication Studies and Professor in the Medill School of Journalism, Media, and Integrative Marketing Communications. He authored or edited *Black Inventors in the Age of Segregation* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2003), *Appropriating Technology: Vernacular Science and Social Power* (University of Minnesota Press, 2004), *Technology Studies* (Sage Publications, 2008), the 4th Edition of the *Handbook of Science & Technology Studies* (MIT Press, 2016), and *Game Changer: The Technoscientific Revolution in Sports* (Johns Hopkins University Press, 2017).



## STEPHANIE DINKINS

Stephanie Dinkins is a transdisciplinary artist and educator whose work intersects emerging technologies, and our future histories. Her art practice is deeply committed to creating platforms for dialogue about AI as it intersects with these critical societal issues. As an LG-Guggenheim Awardee and one of Time Magazine's 100 Most Influential People in AI, Dinkins leverages technology and storytelling to challenge and reimagine the narratives surrounding marginalized communities, particularly those of Black and brown individuals. Through her installations, digital platforms, and community-based projects, Dinkins seeks not only to question the current paradigms of AI development but also to forge paths toward more equitable and inclusive technological futures. Her work emphasizes the importance of incorporating diverse voices and perspectives into the design and application of AI, advocating for a future where technology uplifts and amplifies underrepresented histories and experiences, fostering a tech ecosystem that is truly beneficial for all. She exhibits internationally and publicly advocates for inclusive AI internationally at a broad spectrum of community, private, and institutional venues.



## REMI YERGEAU

M. Remi Yergeau (they/them/theirs) is an Arthur F. Thurnau associate professor of Digital Studies and English at the University of Michigan. At U-M, Yergeau currently serves as the associate director of the Digital Studies Institute and director of the Digital Accessible Futures Lab, the latter of which receives funding support from the Mellon Foundation and is part of the DISCO Network. Along with David Adelman, Yergeau is also the co-PI of “Crip Computing,” which receives support from the Mozilla Foundation’s Responsible Computing Challenge.

Yergeau’s scholarship examines digital activism as a kind of disability theory-building, centering accessible design and its rhetorical intersections with gender, sexuality, and race. Their book, *Authoring Autism: On Rhetoric and Neurological Queerness* (Duke UP), is a winner of the 2017 Modern Language Association First Book Prize, the 2019 CCCC Lavender Rhetorics Book Award for Excellence in Queer Scholarship, and the 2019 Rhetoric Society of America Book Award.

Yergeau is currently at work on two book projects: one on disability, technorhetorics, and sociality, tentatively titled *Crip Data*; and the other on social media diagnosis, mobile mental health platforms, and trans-mad storying, tentatively titled *Intrusive Trans Thoughts*.



## CATHERINE KNIGHT STEELE

Catherine Knight Steele is an Associate Professor of Communication at the University of Maryland - College Park, where she directs the Black Communication and Technology Lab (BCaT) and the Digital Studies in Art & Humanities graduate certificate program at the University of Maryland. Dr. Steele was also the inaugural director of the African American Digital Humanities Initiative. Her research focuses on race, gender, and media, specifically emphasizing Black culture, digital communication, and technology. She moves beyond examinations of representation in the media to consider the relationship between resistance and joy as technologies of liberation online.

Catherine’s research on the Black blogosphere, histories of digital discourse, and digital Black feminism has been published in such journals as *Social Media + Society*, *Information, Communication and Society*, *Feminist Media Studies*, and *Rhetoric Society Quarterly*. Her award-winning book, *Digital Black Feminism* (NYU Press 2021) examines the relationship between Black women and technology as a centuries-long gendered and racial project in the U.S. Her latest book (co-authored with J.H. Lu and K. Winstead), *Doing Black Digital Humanities with Radical Intentionality* was published in 2023 with Routledge.



# DIGITAL FRICTIONS

In their manifesto on crip technoscience, Kelly Fritsch and Aimi Hamraie (2019) impress upon us that access production is a “frictional process,” one that requires “acknowledging that science and technology can be used to both produce and dismantle injustice.” This roundtable explores the frictional intimacies, practices, and material conditions of what it means to do the digital. In particular, panelists will consider myriad ways in which accessibility holds the potential to burn, grate, spark, and tug at new imaginings of crip futures.



**REMI YERGEAU**



**DAVID ADELMAN**

David Adelman (he/him/his) holds a PhD in Arts, Technology, and Emerging Communication from The University of Texas at Dallas, and is a postdoctoral research fellow in the Digital Accessible Futures lab at the University of Michigan. His research interests center disability and crip studies, with a particular emphasis on disability media studies, digital disability cultures, disability film studies, and critical sexuality studies. Through an interdisciplinary crip studies/feminist lens, he pursues questions which emerge at the intersection of power, culture, technology, identity, and desire. His recent work includes examining disability technology, infrastructure, and care for Just Tech, a project of the Social Science Research Council, situating Interabled Vlogging on YouTube as a site of compulsory ablebodiness and heterosexuality for RACAR, and various other projects at the intersection of crip technoculture and desire. He also maintains an artistic practice which centers experimental video and remix as a means to explore disability culture, aesthetics, and politics.



**JEFF NAGY**

Jeff Nagy is a DISCO Network Postdoctoral Fellow at the University of Michigan, and, beginning in July 2024, an Assistant Professor of AI and Critical Data Studies at York University. At the University of Michigan, he also directs Search Engines, a programming series at the intersection of the arts, technology, and justice. He is a historian of computing and AI focused on the intersections of that history with disability and the psy-sciences. His work has appeared in *New Media & Society*, *Technology & Culture*, and elsewhere.



## **AIMI HAMRAIE**

Aimi Hamraie (they/them) is Associate Professor of Medicine, Health, & Society, and American Studies at Vanderbilt University, and director of the Critical Design Lab.



## **JAIPREET VIRIDI**

Jaipreet Viridi is an Associate Professor in the Department of History at the University of Delaware whose research focuses on the ways medicine and technology impact the lived experiences of disabled people. She is author of *Hearing Happiness: Deafness Cures in History* (University of Chicago Press, 2020) and has published articles on diagnostic technologies, audiometry, hearing aids and deaf culture, and on disability accessibility.



## **MARA MILLS**

Mara Mills is Associate Professor of Media, Culture, and Communication at New York University and founding co-director of the NYU Center for Disability Studies. She is also a founding editorial board member of *Catalyst: Feminism, Theory, Technoscience*. She is recently co-editor of *Testing Hearing: The Making of Modern Aurality* (Oxford 2020), *Crip Authorship: Disability as Method* (NYU 2023), and a forthcoming special issue of *Osiris* on "Disability and the History of Science" (July 2024). Other upcoming publications include the NSF-funded edited collection *How to be Disabled in a Pandemic* (NYU 2025), a coauthored book with Jonathan Sterne on time stretching, and an NEH-funded collaborative research project with Michele Friedner on "The Global Cochlear Implant."

# DIGITAL BLACK FEMINIST PLEASURE AND PAIN ONLINE

The experiences of Black women online serve as a harbinger of what digital culture affords and what is to come. This panel thinks through the relationship between pleasure and pain in the online lives of Black women and how Black feminist methods, epistemologies, and strategies may point us toward a better digital future for us all.



## CATHERINE KNIGHT STEELE



## RIANNA WALCOTT

Rianna Walcott is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Black Communication and Technology Lab at the University of Maryland, and part of the DISCO Network. Walcott will be joining the Department of Communication at the University of Maryland in Fall 2024 as an incoming Assistant Professor. Her research takes a mixed-methods approach to investigating Black British social media usage, incorporating interviews and discourse analysis across various sites in order to examine digital communities, the circumstances under which they are created, and the constraints they face. This research investigates if and how discourse varies in different contexts with different demographics, and how social network services—and their attendant harms—impact how Black users express themselves.

Walcott cofounded [projectmyopia.com](http://projectmyopia.com), a website that promotes inclusivity in academia and a decolonised curriculum, and she was the UCL Writing Lab's Scholar-in-Residence for 2021–2022. She frequently writes about race, feminism, mental health, and arts and culture for publications including the Wellcome Collection, the Metro, the Guardian, BBC, Vice, and Dazed. Walcott is coeditor (with Dr Samara Linton) of an anthology about BAME mental health in the UK, *The Colour of Madness* (Pan Macmillan, 2022), and she moonlights as a professional jazz singer.



## FRANCESCA SOBANDE

Dr. Francesca Sobande is a writer and senior lecturer in digital media studies (Cardiff University). She is the author of *The Digital Lives of Black Women in Britain* (Palgrave Macmillan, 2020), *Consuming Crisis: Commodifying Care and COVID-19* (SAGE, 2022), and *Big Brands Are Watching You: Marketing Social Justice and Digital Culture* (University of California Press, 2024). Francesca is also co-author/co-dreamer of *Black Oot Here: Black Lives in Scotland* (Bloomsbury, 2022) and the freely available graphic novel and animation, *Black Oot Here: Dreams O Us* (2023). Her more recent research and writing particularly focuses on internet imaginaries, "alternative" music subcultures, and cultural memory.



## BRANDI PETTIJOHN

Dr. Brandi Pettijohn's scholarship created a framework called Black feminist technopractice that focuses on visual culture, Black aesthetics, and ethical digital storytelling. Black feminist technopractice is an interdisciplinary digital humanities framework for digital storytelling and interactive narratives that deploys what we know as participatory design and speculative design that asks that we make with marginalized users in mind while being expansive in the imagination of what we believe design can do. This is combined with art and archival practices that expand the archive beyond traditional institution spaces and leans on the visual art practices to tell more complete stories; while leveraging technoculture, examining and understanding how people make meaning in digital spaces. She currently works in the Department of Literature, Media, and Communications as a postdoctoral fellow where she teaches Race and Gender in Digital Media and is working on a book about Digital Visual Culture.



## KISHONNA GRAY

Dr. Kishonna Gray is a Professor of Writing, Rhetoric, & Digital Studies and Africana Studies at the University of Kentucky. She is also a faculty associate at the Berkman-Klein Center at Harvard University.

Dr. Gray is the author or co-editor of numerous books and articles including her foundational 2014 work *Race, Gender, & Deviance in Xbox Live: Theoretical Perspectives from the Virtual Margins*, 2018's edited collections *Woke Gaming and Feminism in Play* (University of Washington press) and most recently *Intersectional Tech: Black Users in Digital Gaming*. She also has a book currently under contract with NYU Press entitled *Black Game Studies*. She's a highly sought after speaker and regularly addresses both academic and industry audiences such as at the Game Developers Conference. She is the winner of a number awards over the years including The Evelyn Gilbert Unsung Hero Award and the Blacks in Gaming Educator Award.



## APRYL WILLIAMS

Apryl Williams is a jointly appointed Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication & Media and the Digital Studies Institute at the University of Michigan. She is also a Faculty Associate at the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, a Senior Fellow in Trustworthy AI at Mozilla, as well as an affiliated researcher at NYU's Center for Critical Race & Digital Studies. As a multidisciplinary scholar, Williams studies experiences of gender and race at the intersection of digital spaces and algorithmic technocultures. Williams' previous work has been published in leading interdisciplinary journals including *Social Media + Society*, *Information, Communication & Society*, the *International Journal of Communication*, and the *Sociology of Race and Ethnicity*. She also serves as Series Associate Editor of *Emerald Studies in Media and Communications* where she has co-edited five books on aspects of digital culture such as international media flows, digital inequalities, and digital publics. Her research has also been covered in popular press outlets including *Time Magazine*, *Mic.com*, *Newsweek*, *Slate*, *BuzzfeedNews*, *NPR's On the Media*, and *The Guardian*.



# LITTLE MEMES: STORYING RACE, GENDER, AND DISABILITY IN THE DIGITAL STUDIES CLASSROOM

How do students' stories about themselves or others—their anecdotal relations—inform their burgeoning understandings of digital inequality and related concepts? In this session, we reflect on student interviews and instructor experiences drawn from a study of five U-M Digital Studies classes focused on race and disability.



**REMI YERGEAU**



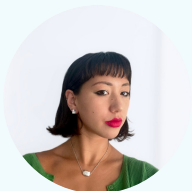
**HUAN HE**

Huan He is an Assistant Professor of English at Vanderbilt University and previously a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Digital Studies Institute at the University of Michigan. His research engages Asian/American literature and culture, digital studies, and critical game studies. His book project, titled *The Racial Interface*, examines digital capitalism through Asian American literature, art, and media. His research appears in *Configurations*, *College Literature: A Journal of Critical Literary Studies*, *Media-N*, *Just Tech*, and a new anthology on Asian American game studies. He is also a co-author on a collaboratively written monograph titled "Technoskepticism: Between Possibility and Refusal," forthcoming in February 2025 with Stanford University Press. Additionally, he writes poetry, which can be found in *Poetry*, *Sewanee Review*, *A Public Space*, *Beloit Poetry Journal*, and elsewhere.



**TONI BUSHNER**

Toni teaches a wide range of courses revolving around digital rhetorics, game studies, and technical writing with an emphasis on social justice and gamified learning experiences. Her pedagogical approach blends accessibility, game design fundamentals, and a structure that encourages and rewards curiosity.



**LIDA ZEITLIN-WU**

Lida Zeitlin-Wu is a Postdoctoral Fellow in the Digital Studies Institute at the University of Michigan. Her interdisciplinary research explores the commodification and rationalization of sensory experience—particularly color—under technocapitalism. Her writing appears or is forthcoming in *Visual Studies*, *Camera Obscura*, *Just Tech*, *Frames*, and other venues. She is also finishing up two collaborative projects: *Color Protocols: Technologies of Racial Encoding in Chromatic Media*, a volume co-edited with Carolyn L. Kane (The MIT Press, 2025), and *Technoskepticism: Between Possibility and Refusal*, a multi-voiced monograph by the DISCO Network (Stanford University Press, 2025). Starting in the fall, she will be an Assistant Professor in the Department of Communication & Theatre Arts and the Institute for the Humanities at Old Dominion University.

# DIGITAL INTERVENTIONS: RECALIBRATING OPTIMISM - A WORKSHOP

Is optimism an antidote or salve for turmoil? Please join us in a collaborative discussion charting pathways for digital scholarship to build optimistic societal interventions that traverse the potentialities of joy, sadness, refusal, skepticism, and trust.



**CATHERINE KNIGHT STEELE**



**RAYVON FOUCHÉ**



**STEPHANIE DINKINS**



**KEVIN WINSTEAD**

Dr. Kevin C. Winstead is an Assistant Professor of Critical Media and AI Studies within African American Studies and Sociology at the University of Florida. His research focuses on critical information studies, social movements, and digital media, specifically on transglobal disinformation. His work can be found in *Ethnic and Racial Studies*, *Sociology Compass*, and *Critical Intersections in Contemporary Curriculum & Pedagogy*, *Information Age Publishing*. Kevin is formerly with the Project on Rhetorics, Equity, Access, and Computational Humanities at Georgia Institute of Technology.

Dr. Winstead's in-progress book-length manuscript, *Sankofa Cyberculture: Black Digital Activism and Disinformation*, builds on his decade-long research into the Movement for Black Lives and foreign attempts to influence the American political process. *Sankofa Cyberculture* considers 1) the role of culture in a movement's political process and 2) digital misinformation's impact on the Movement for Black Lives agenda.

Kevin was part of the founding team of many of the country's earliest Black Digital Studies centers, including the African American History, Culture, and Digital Humanities (AADHum) Initiative at the University of Maryland and the Council for Library and Information Science (CLIR) Postdoctoral Fellow of African American Data Curation with the Center for Black Digital Research at Penn State University.

# BLACK INNOVATION

**Black folks have a tradition of being innovative in ways not understood and expected by traditional markets, dominant cultural formations, or information platforms. As the world is enamored, fascinated, enraptured, troubled, or simply confused by the potentiality of generative AI, is there a place and a role for Blackness to participate, contribute, or intervene in this next technoscientific atmospheric river? What will Black innovation and creativity look like in a world propelled by a network of AI trained on past utterances that did not see Blackness as meaningful? How can Blackness and Black innovation and creativity disrupt expected technoscientific futures?**



**RAYVON FOUCHÉ**



**AARON DIAL**

Aaron Dial earned his PhD from North Carolina State University in the Communication, Rhetoric, and Digital Media (CRDM) program where his expertise is in materialist and digital media studies, digital humanities, Black studies, and cultural studies of technology and race. These areas of expertise inform his research and teaching interests, which, broadly sketched, are affective labor, popular culture, urban spaces and temporal flows, and the nexus between sports and science and technology.



**RON EGLASH**

Dr. Ron Eglash is a Professor in the School of Information at the University of Michigan, with a secondary appointment in the School of Art and Design. He received his B.S. in Cybernetics, his M.S. in Systems Engineering, and his PhD in History of Consciousness, all from the University of California. He is best known as the author of *African Fractals*. With funding from the NSF and others, his work includes Culturally Situated Design Tools ([csdt.org](http://csdt.org)), which offers decolonial computing for K-12 STEM education, and the generative justice framework ([generativejustice.org](http://generativejustice.org)) which develops AI, digital fabrication and other emerging technologies for empowering low-income communities.



**TONIA SUTHERLAND**

Tonia Sutherland is Assistant Professor of Information Studies at UCLA. Global in scope, Sutherland's research focuses on the critical and liberatory in archival studies, digital studies, and science and technology studies, emphasizing the often-messy entanglements of memory, community, and technology. Sutherland, an internationally recognized expert in the study of Black archival practices, is the author of *Resurrecting the Black Body: Race and the Digital Afterlife* (University of California Press, 2023) as well as over two dozen articles and book chapters. In addition to her research and teaching, Sutherland is the Co-Director of the Community Archives Lab at UCLA, Co-Founder and Co-Director of AfterLab at the University of Washington's iSchool, and a member of the Advisory Board for the Center for Critical Race and Digital Studies at NYU.



## **MICHAEL BENNETT**

Dr. Michael Bennett is a philosopher of technology, legal scholar, and practicing attorney. He has held several leadership roles in higher education, most recently as the Director of Education Programs, AI Law and Policy at the Institute for Experiential AI. He has also served as the Director of Immersive Education at Discovery Partners (University of Illinois-Chicago); faculty member at Northeastern University School of Law; Assistant Director for Innovation Policy in the School for the Future of Innovation In Society, Research Professor in the Center for Science and Imagination at Arizona State University; and Research Professor in the Risk Innovation Lab at the University of Michigan. Bennett served as Commissioner of Arts and Culture for the City of Tempe, Arizona and is currently an executive board member of Leonardo, the International Society for the Arts, Sciences and Technology. His research focuses on pedagogy, learning engineering, STEM workforce development, innovation in the arts and technoscientific fields, Afrofuturism, and applied imagination. He is a keynote speaker, and consults with governments, creatives, limited-resource academic and artist-operated institutions, and politically active celebrities. Bennett holds a BS in physics from Florida A&M, a JD from Harvard, and a PhD in science and technology studies from Rensselaer.



## **ARIA HALLIDAY**

Aria S. Halliday, Ph.D. is Associate Professor in the Department of Gender and Women's Studies and program in African American and Africana Studies at the University of Kentucky. Dr. Halliday specializes in cultural constructions of black girlhood and womanhood in material, visual, and digital culture in the 20th and 21st centuries. Her articles and chapters have been published in *Cultural Studies*, *Departures in Critical Qualitative Research*, *Girlhood Studies*, *Palimpsest*, and *SOULS*, as well as in edited volumes such as *Against A Sharp White Background: Infrastructures of African American Print*, *Bloomsbury Handbook of Theories in Childhood Studies*, and *The Routledge Companion to Girls' Studies*. Her most recent book, *Buy Black: How Black Women Transformed US Pop Culture* was published in 2022 (University of Illinois Press).



## **NGOZI HARRISON**

Ngozi Harrison is an interdisciplinary researcher focused on the intersection of black study, critique of algorithmic reason, and algorithmic justice. After studying Management Information Systems at Menlo College, He went on to work at Google/YouTube for four years in various capacities as a data analyst, strategic partner manager, creator researcher, and creative effectiveness lead. Ngozi is currently a PhD student in Information Studies at UCLA advised by Dr. Safiya Noble. He is also a Cota-Robles Fellow and Center for Race and Digital Justice fellow. Ngozi's research interests include critical algorithm studies, philosophy of technology, and political economy. Specifically, he seeks to investigate how our understanding of mathematics, logic, and algorithms sustain the ontologies and epistemologies that structure our modern technoculture.



# DIGITAL POSSIBILITIES

**"Digital Possibilities" presents an intergenerational panel of arts practitioners who explore the critical role deliberate exploration and practical research play in understanding and shaping digital technologies and culture. The panel showcases the transformative power deeply engaging digital technologies can have on molding practical, aspirational, and equitable understandings of self and society. Panelists discuss how practice can leverage discovery, curiosity, out-of-the-box thinking, and leadership to mine and challenge opportunities, or the lack thereof, for beauty, potentiality, subjugation, and liberation that digital technologies often carry. The panel also engages thought about how future, present, and past technologies combined with narratives centering on underutilized, underrecognized communities can be coaxed or developed to produce technological ecosystems that produce nuanced, open, and equitably informed digital tools, platforms, and collaborators.**



**STEPHANIE DINKINS**



**HAGAR MASOUD**

Hagar Masoud is a New York | Cairo-based interdisciplinary artist and educator, and photographer who draws from her Cairo, Egyptian roots to inform her work. Through her research-based art practice, Masoud investigates gentrification, childhood trauma, and collective memory, in forms of Gender-based violence, and perceptions of socially constructed roles. Masoud's works attempt to transform the Occident narration of the Orient Culture and Women of Color, emphasizing the embedded violence and hate speech in the Occident. Masoud re-contextualizes socio-political commentary practice by adopting new media and oral history methodologies. Her practice incorporates sound art, sculpture, installation, video, technology such as Artificial intelligence (AI), and extended reality.



**RIA RAJAN**

Ria Rajan is an Intermedia artist working across analog and digital mediums, focussing on the intimate relationships between people, places, and the technosphere. Her work deals with ideas related to movement, space and time, through intangible, ephemeral and transient experiences – IRL and online – through performance, audio visual explorations, imagemaking, locative + lens based media, and video art. At present, her practice is centered around ideas of embodiment, personhood, inner mappings, and ontological modes of artistic production.

Ria has been a fellow and artist-in residence at the International Residency Exchange Program - Bamboo Curtain Studio, (Taipei), TIFA Working Studios

(IN), Walkin Studios (IN), Jaaga, Figment (NY), Art-A-HACK (NY) and has been supported by cultural institutions such as the Goethe Institute and Alliance Francaise. She is also a part of the core creative team that organises Cyberia - a new media festival in Poona (IN), since it's inception in 2019. Currently, she is pursuing an MFA in Studio Art at Stony Brook University, NY and is a Research Assistant at the Future Histories Studios. **Website:** rrad.studio **Instagram:** @\_rrad.studio\_



## CEZANNE CHARLES

Cézanne Charles is a creative practitioner, curator, and researcher with 20 years of experience working at the executive and senior management level within the creative industries (USA/UK). Her work focuses on the intersection of art, design, technology, culture, economy, social justice, and public policy. Cézanne co-directs with John Marshall, rootoftwo - a research- and practice-driven art, design and technology studio that explores the consequences of under-imagined futures through tangible objects, environments, and participatory methods.

Charles is an active presenter at forums on creative industries research, place-based creative work, design, and new technology. She serves on the boards of Allied Media Projects' and the Museum of Contemporary Art Detroit's; is a council member and Vice-Chair of the Michigan Arts and Culture Council, and a member of Design Core Detroit's Design Economy Council. Cezanne is also a member of the technical working group (TWG) for the National Arts Statistics and Evidence-based Reporting Center (NASERC) which is operated by the American Institutes for Research (AIR). The project is funded by the National Endowment for the Arts. She has an MPA from the Gerald R. Ford School of Public Policy at the University of Michigan.



## AUDREY BENNETT

Professor Bennett's research concerns race and aesthetics, technology and inequality, the design of health campaigns, the analysis of images and graphics, interactivity, and the decolonization of graphic design history. Her research interests are in the design of persuasive campaigns, particularly in health and poverty reduction, race and aesthetics (specifically black aesthetics), and design generally, including her work on web design and interactivity on the web. A major strand of her work is the investigation of inequality and the experience of technology. She uses primarily qualitative research methods to investigate how interactive aesthetics can engage stakeholders with transformative images that aim to yield cognitive and behavioral changes toward equity and justice for historically disadvantaged and marginalized populations. Her recent co-authored book *Critical Mapping for Sustainable Food Design* was published by Taylor & Francis/Routledge, and her first book, *Engendering Interaction with Images*, was published by Intellect, an imprint of the University of Chicago Press (2012). Professor Bennett edited *Design Studies: Theory and Research in Graphic Design* from Princeton Architectural Press (2006) and co-edited the *Design Education Manifesto*, published by an Italian press & Icoграда, in 2011.

# MAJORITY WORLD DIGITAL INFRASTRUCTURES

Digital infrastructure shapes access, representation, and cultural politics. Indigenous, Asian, Palestinian, U.S. Mexico borders', and women of color's uses of digital networks are often represented as niche or marginal, sequestered in area studies, ethnic studies, and women's studies, despite people of color making up the global majority.



**LISA NAKAMURA**



**HUAN HE**



**JASMINE BANKS**

Jasmine Banks is a Ph.D. candidate in the Department of Psychology and Digital Studies, a Center of Racial Justice Graduate Fellow, and a DISCO Graduate Fellow at the University of Michigan. Jasmine examines the intricacies of Black digital culture at the intersection of race, identity, and culture, focusing on the digital manifestations of African-American traditions, meaning-making processes, and individual and collective identity development. In addition, she explores the experiences of Black women in online dating.



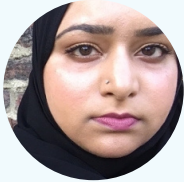
**MARISA DUARTE**

I am a professor in the program of Justice and Social Inquiry through the School of Social Transformation at Arizona State University. I am also a member of the Pascua Yaqui Tribe. I research Indigenous peoples approaches to knowledge, information interfaces, and technology. My 2017 book *Network Sovereignty* is about how tribes build out Internet infrastructures on sovereign lands. I have also researched Indigenous political engagement in online environments. I teach courses in Justice Theory; Critical Indigenous Methods; Digital Methods; Surveillance and Society; Women, Gender and Technology; and Learning Technologies in Native American Education. I am currently writing a book on Indigenous experiences of information, from family history work to cybersecurity.



## **IVAN CHAAR LOPEZ**

Iván Chaar López is an Assistant Professor of Digital Studies in the Department of American Studies and the Principal Investigator of the Border Tech Lab at the University of Texas at Austin. He is the author of *The Cybernetic Border: Drones, Technology, and Intrusion* (Duke Univ. Press, 2024). His work appears in *American Quarterly*, *Social Studies of Science*, *Critical Ethnic Studies*, *The Guardian*, and *Interactions (ACM)*. As a member of Precarity Lab, he co-wrote *Technoprecarious* (Goldsmiths, 2020) and the “Digital Precarity Manifesto” published by Social Text.



## **MERYEM KAMIL**

Meryem Kamil is an assistant professor of Film & Media Studies at the University of California, Irvine. Her research is concerned with how technology reinforces and undermines settler-colonialism in Palestine, engaging in fields including postcolonial studies, ethnic studies, cultural studies, and new media studies. She received her PhD in American Culture at the University of Michigan. Kamil is co-author of *Technoprecarious* (Goldsmiths Press, 2020) as part of the working collaborative Precarity Lab.



# LEGIBILITY AND COMMUNITY IN DIGITAL STUDIES

As junior scholars, the Digital Inquiry Speculation Collaboration Optimism (DISCO) Network postdoctoral fellows faced unique challenges negotiating the tensions of being legible for academic employment and serving digital studies projects that foster collaboration and community. This panel discusses best practices for being young career scholars in critical identity and digital studies.



**HUAN HE**



**KEVIN WINSTEAD**



**DAVID ADELMAN**



**AARON DIAL**



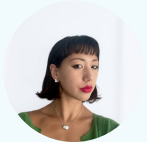
**JEFF NAGY**



**BRANDI PETTIJOHN**



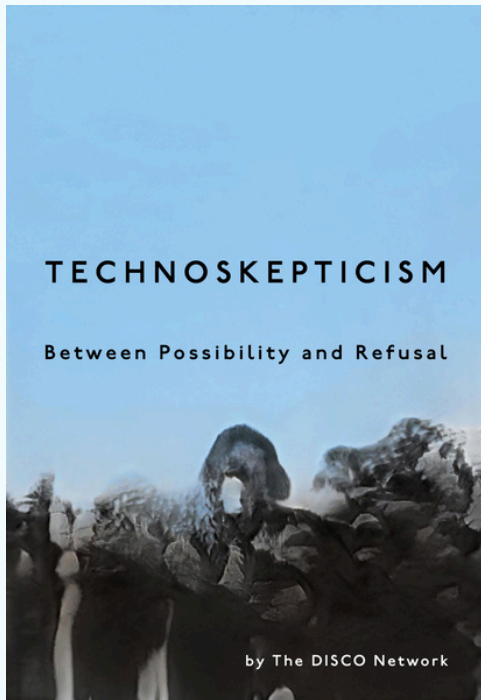
**RIANNA WALCOTT**



**LIDA ZEITLIN-WU**

# DISCO NETWORK PUBLICATIONS

## TECHNOSKEPTICISM



From Munchausen by Tiktok to wellness apps to online communities to AI, the DISCO Network explores the possibilities that technoskepticism can create.

This is a book about possibility and refusal in relation to new technologies. Though refusal is an especially powerful mode—particularly for those who have historically not been given the option to say no—people of color and disabled people have long navigated the space between saying yes and saying no to the newest technologies. Technoskepticism relates some of these stories to reveal the possibilities skepticism can create.

The case for technoskepticism unfolds across three sections: the first focused on disability, the creative use of wellness apps, and the desire for diagnosis; the second on digital nostalgia and home for Black and Asian users who produced communities online before home pages gave way to profiles; and the third focused on the violence inherent in A.I.-generated Black bodies and the possibilities for Black style in the age of A.I. Acknowledging how the urge to refuse new technologies emerges from specific racialized histories, the authors also emphasize how care can look like an exuberant embrace of the new.

*Technoskepticism: Between Possibility and Refusal* will be published by Stanford University Press in February 2025.

**LEARN MORE**



# FIELD REVIEWS

The Just Tech Platform is a dynamic digital resource that aggregates, curates, and distills research-based insight about the relationship between technological development, inequity, and social justice. The Platform is a free resource developed by the Just Tech program of the Social Science Research Council.

In this series of DISCO Field Reviews, developed in collaboration with Just Tech, members of the DISCO Network unpack emerging configurations of technology, difference, and power.



## **Meditation Apps and the Unbearable Whiteness of Wellness**

Lida Zeitlin-Wu analyzes the visual, haptic, and auditory features of popular meditation apps such as Headspace and Calm. She reveals how these apps look, sound and move in a way that claims to be deracinated and apolitical, but are in fact designed for an assumed white and able-bodied user while capitalizing on a sanitized version of "Eastern philosophies" (particularly Zen Buddhism).

## **#RIP Twitter- The Conditions of Black Social Media Platform Migration**

Rianna Walcott examines how migration and making a way out of no way is a historical condition of transatlantic Blackness that has mapped onto the digital. Here she posits that Black migration – both voluntary and involuntary, physical and digital – converts unfamiliar and hostile terrain into home via transformations that adapt spaces to Black community needs.

## **Un/Just Care: Imagining the History (and Future) of Disability, Technology, and Care**

David Adelman explores the current state of technobureaucracies of care in the United States in the wake of Covid-19; Technobureaucracies of care manage, triage, ignore, and erase the most vulnerable amongst us—including and especially disabled people. Thus, weaving together a constellation of disability, care, and technology, and moving across the supposedly ahistorical minutia of care technologies—wheelchairs, electronic surveillance, and healthcare legislation, Adelman invites the reader to (re)imagine their relationship to care, as well as more just futures.

## **Gaming Blockchain and the Asiatic Forms of Web3**

Huan He examines the Asiatic forms of blockchain as it manifests in digital gaming. What's "Asian" about blockchain encompasses both its user-facing aesthetics as well as its demographic concentration. He situates the social life of blockchain within new forms of racialized labor, refashioned as play.

## **Big Bad Feelings: AI Depression Diagnosis and the Technopolitics of Disability**

Jeff Nagy analyzes recent efforts to use big data to diagnose depression, showing how these systems represent a dramatic break in the practice of psychiatry and shift the politics of disability.

## **Notes from the Blackest Sea**

Aaron Dial writes about Bethesda Softworks releasing their much anticipated space RPG Starfield on 9/6/23. Since then, after hundreds of hours played, this game has left me delighted and frustrated - often simultaneously. Though, what's more is how it has forced intense consideration on my place (a technically mediated selfhood fusing my character's created fiction and my own [novel] position as a Black game player) amid the Blackest Sea's penetrating depths. During my playthrough, as I navigate in, through, and betwixt, the game's expansive narrative structures, many systems and mechanics, glitches...and yes, (too many) load screens, these - what I am calling - field notes stitch together in ways that are inevitably frayed, incomplete, but hopefully provocative a thesis on the possibility of Blackness after Earth, Black play as a necessarily imposing and intervening animative force, and the undertheorized Black-scopical tradition of gazing at and to the heavens.

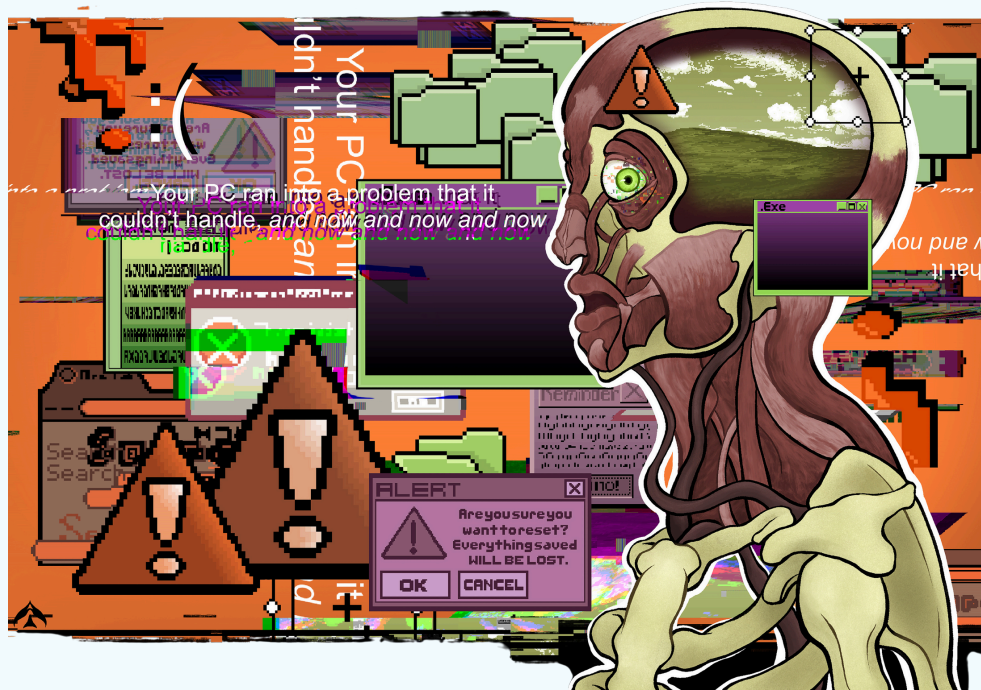
**LEARN MORE**





# ACCESSING DISABILITY CULTURE ANTHOLOGY

*Accessing Disability Culture* is a multi-institutional digital series that highlights disability culture, lived experience, and inaccessibility at the University of Michigan. *Accessing Disability Culture* joins DISCO in dreaming about radically just disability futures. Without a Disability Cultural Center, it can be hard for neurodivergent / chronically ill / disabled / Deaf / questioning students to find each other. However, we are here. We meet our community members here and there, at club meetings, classes, strikes, sports games, protests, parties – often in an accidental way. Through this digital series, we can meet intentionally. Here we can talk about our experiences freely, with and for each other. This anthology is not just for future students. It is for all of us who benefit from the sharing and celebration of disability culture and community.



Artwork by Abbie Stochmal

**LEARN MORE**



# SEARCH HISTORY ZINE

Coming Fall 2024, *Search History*, produced by the DISCO Network, is a publication motivating interdisciplinary conversation on art, tech, and justice. Why do we value what we value, and how does it inform what we make? How does art help us redefine what technology is and therefore expand our notions of what's possible? How do interdisciplinary practices in technology expand traditional knowledge production and storytelling? With these inquiries at heart, *Search History* is a communal exploration of the possibilities of creative technology. We're interested in where personal experiences with technology, artistic expression, and academia meet to envision a more just future.

The speed at which the tech industry moves often leaves the consumer unsure of where their agency lies in an increasingly digital world. This zine is an invitation for playful uncertainty—a space for a software engineer to write a poem, a painter to code, a sociologist to write fiction. We welcomed submissions from any University of Michigan student, not just artists or technologists, including undergraduates, graduate students, professional students, medical students, and those who have left or graduated in the last five years. We are all profoundly impacted by our socio-technological landscape, and we hope to show that we need diverse voices meditating on the implications of technology.

*Search History* compliments DISCO's programming initiative 'Search Engines,' which brings artists to Michigan's Ann Arbor campus who are deeply invested in leveraging new media to create work that critiques existing social and political inequalities. *Search History* deepens the impact of Search Engines programming by continuing these conversations with the U-M community.



# ANN ARBOR GUIDE

## THINGS TO EAT



vegetarian



vegan



gluten free



### **Aventura** | 216 E Washington St

Tapas, paella, wine & cocktails offered in a stylish, contemporary space with rustic touches.



### **TK Wu** | 510 E Liberty St

Chinese kitchen with take-out options serving classic dishes in modest, wood-lined space.



### **No Thai** | 1300 S. University Ave. Suite 3

Fast casual Thai-inspired restaurant.



### **Poke Poke** | 312 S State St

Marinated sushi grade fish tossed over rice with toppings.



### **Afternoon Delight** | 251 E Liberty St

Cozy, bustling eatery known for its eggs Benedict also boasts an extensive salad bar.



### **Shalimar** | 307 S Main St

Cozy storefront spot offering Northern Indian & Mughlai-style fare, plus beer & spirits.



### **Miss Kim** | 415 N 5th Ave

Trendy spot for traditional Korean fare with a modern, seasonal twist in contemporary surrounds.



### **Detroit Filling Station** | 300 Detroit St

Casual cafe with art-lined walls serving creative comfort fare, plenty of vegan dishes & cocktails.



### **Zingerman's** | 422 Detroit St

Deli sandwiches at funky, longtime market with specialty groceries.



### **Frita Batidos** | 117 W Washington St

Colorful Cuban street food & tropical cocktails in stark white space with picnic table seating.

## THINGS TO DO

### **U-M Computer and Video Game Archive | 919 S University Ave**

Located in the Shapiro Library on central campus, CVGA acquires, maintains, and makes available an extensive collection of video games, consoles, board games, and more, from the 1970s to today. Visit the archive and play games at one of the game stations. The DISCO Network has the space reserved for DISCO Summit guests from 3:00 - 5:30 PM on Thursday, June 13.

### **U-M Nichols Arboretum | 1610 Washington Heights**

It is free to enter Nichols Arboretum, locally known as the Arb. It's adjacent to the Huron River, and features over 400 species, including 110 species of trees, in a varied, hilly landscape.

### **U-M Museum of Art (UMMA) | 525 S State St**

The UMMA is one of the largest university art museums in the United States, with a collection of over 21,000 objects. Admission is free.

### **U-M Museum of Natural History | 1105 N University Ave**

The U-M Museum of Natural History inspires curiosity with exhibits that explore the natural world from molecules to dinosaurs, a planetarium to discover the Universe, science demonstrations, and U-M scientists discussing their research. Admission is free.

### **Top of the Park (June 14-15) | 915 E. Washington St**

Ann Arbor's annual summer festival with admission-free concerts, Movies by Moonlight, open-air street spectacles, culinary treats, and unique family attractions.

### **Ann Arbor Farmers Market | 315 Detroit St**

Proudly brings fresh produce, farm products, prepared food, beverages, and artisan items to the community on Wednesdays and Saturdays from 7 AM-3 PM.

### **Argo Park Canoe & Kayak | 1055 Longshore Dr**

Argo Canoe Livery is located at the Argo Cascades and features canoe, kayak, raft, tube and SUP boat rentals in a natural setting on the Huron River.

### **Bill's Beer Garden | 218 S Ashley St**

Seasonal beer courtyard features local craft brews & wine in the evenings with picnic table seating.

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# RESEARCH AFFILIATES

Anuli Akanegbu  
Oliver Banner  
Dev K. Bose  
Lydia X.Z. Brown  
Emily (Em) Doffing  
Jina DuVernay  
Yvonne M. Eadon  
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