

COMPLEX MOVEMENTS *BEWARE OF THE DANDELIONS*



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Complex Movements



Complex Movements is a Detroit-based artist collective developing interactive performance work that juxtaposes complex science and social justice movements to support the transformation of communities.

Complex Movements is composed of graphic designer/fine artist Wesley Taylor, music producer/filmmaker Waajeed, hip-hop lyricist/organizer Invincible/ill Weaver, artist/designer/engineer L05 (Carlos Garcia), and producer/cultural strategist Sage Crump. Their work is created in partnership with architect Aaron Jones.

The collective's work is inspired by the writings, philosophy and experience of Detroit based activist Grace Lee Boggs (1915-2015), as well as grassroots networks in Detroit.



Beware of the Dandelions

Complex Movements' project Beware of the Dandelions (BotD) is a mobile art installation that functions as a performance, workshop space, and visual arts exhibition.

Through science-fiction narrative, music, interactive performance, video projection, and technology, BotD invites communities to explore the relationship between art, science, and social justice movements and develop new strategies to create change.

BotD takes place inside a 400 square foot dome-like structure called the pod. Once inside the pod, attendees participate in an immersive audio visual experience. The experience in the pod begins to help communities understand how the ideas of complex sciences are applicable to local social justice issues, and connects participants across communities and sectors to one another to cross pollinate the way they work for change.

Beware of the Dandelions has been presented in Dallas, Seattle, and Detroit.



[Click here to watch a short film about the project's Detroit engagement.](#)

Press

[ArtNews](#)

[The Creator's Project](#)

[Fader Magazine](#)

[Art in America](#)

[Howlround](#)

[Complex Magazine](#)

Three Modes

Beware of the Dandelions functions in three modes:

Performance Mode

Performances feature a science fiction parable told through live music and projections. The form alters the traditional audience/performer paradigm by physically separating the performers from the audience while animated and generative designs are projected onto the surface of the pod to create an immersive audiovisual and interactive experience. Performance experiences run approximately 75 minutes for 35 participants at a time.



Installation Mode

Movement Memory Maps is the stand alone installation mode of the project which features an archive of social justice stories told in the first person. These dialectic narratives are collected through a Story Seed Saving process in which cohort members invite community members to a gathering to have rarely shared stories of community led change archived. The stories are embedded into Beware of the Dandelions as a way to combat one dimensional narratives of social change. These are shared in every city in which Beware of the Dandelions tours to nurture translocal cross pollination, learning, and collaboration.



Community/Workshop Mode

Beware of the Dandelions (BotD) is designed to support local social justice work happening in cities. Complex Movements recognizes the importance of ongoing consistent interaction with community members to achieve substantive impact. The depth of community involvement and collaboration in each city is made possible through a local cohort of artists, organizers, and community members who partner with Complex Movements to co-design the engagement for their community needs. The cohort of six to eight organizations and individuals shapes the experience of Beware of the Dandelions by curating a series of activities to benefit local communities and social justice movements. BotD engagements are designed above all to foster and deepen authentic relationships, exchange skills, and build community capacity for visioning.

Cohort members take on several roles including:

- Organize and co-collect Movement Memory Maps (unpreserved and rarely told stories of social justice movements) through video recordings that are integrated into the visual arts installation component of BotD. This preserves and highlights actions for reflection which can inform the next set of strategies for these communities.
- Co-curate the community workshop calendar, co-facilitate discussions, and co-design workshops. This includes identifying community venues and businesses to partner with.
- Attend select performances, workshops, and installation presentations. At the epilogue of each performance, a cohort member invites attendees to join and support local social justice work.
- Develop an invite list of local organizations and community members to ensure local goals are kept as a priority and to optimize the strategic use of BotD to reimagine their organizing. Through this process they help catalyze and deepen relationships, and support attendance by those most impacted by systemic injustices, who are least likely to access cultural and art spaces.

To view examples of past month long engagements curated with local cohorts view the links to our [Dallas](#), [Seattle](#), and [Detroit](#) public schedules.



Complex Movements is informed by Detroit photographer and community organizer Erik Howard's definition of community impact success for his Southwest Detroit based organization Young Nation:

“We measure success by the frequency and depth of unlikely relationships formed through our projects and process.”

Below are a few examples from past engagements of how this has emerged through Beware of the Dandelions:

- In Dallas, Black and Indigenous organizers from the groups Mothers Against Police Brutality and American Indian Heritage Day in Texas Committee met through our cohort, and are now working in consistent collaboration with each other. Along with other Dallas cohort members they most recently co-facilitated a series of community organizing trainings since the election.
- In Seattle, organizers from Ending The Prison Industrial Complex, and Got Green! A people of color led environmental and economic justice organization were part of our cohort and deepened the partnership between their groups. They are both integral contributors of a powerful campaign to prevent the building of a new youth jail in Seattle, that is being planned to be developed on a superfund toxic site.
- And at home in Detroit, our cohort members convened Detroit artists to sign on to a statement supporting a citywide community benefits ordinance on the November ballot to resist inequitable development and build community accountability mechanisms. Although this important ordinance was defeated by a hair in the election, we are now growing a network of Detroit artists who are invested in resisting displacement and supporting community led development.

Complex Movements is invested in working with local cohort members to identify community benefits that can be provided through the process of presenting Beware of the Dandelions. The outcomes will vary greatly in each city, but the process is rooted in years of community organizing experience.





Beware of the Dandelions has a community engagement and presentation development process that occurs over course of three residencies, 3-6 months apart:

3 Day Visit

- Initial community conversations
- Identifying cohort members and local priorities

7 - 10 Day Pre-Residency

- Workshops and events co-curated with cohort
- Collecting Movement Memory Maps
- Begin planning for full engagement community event series

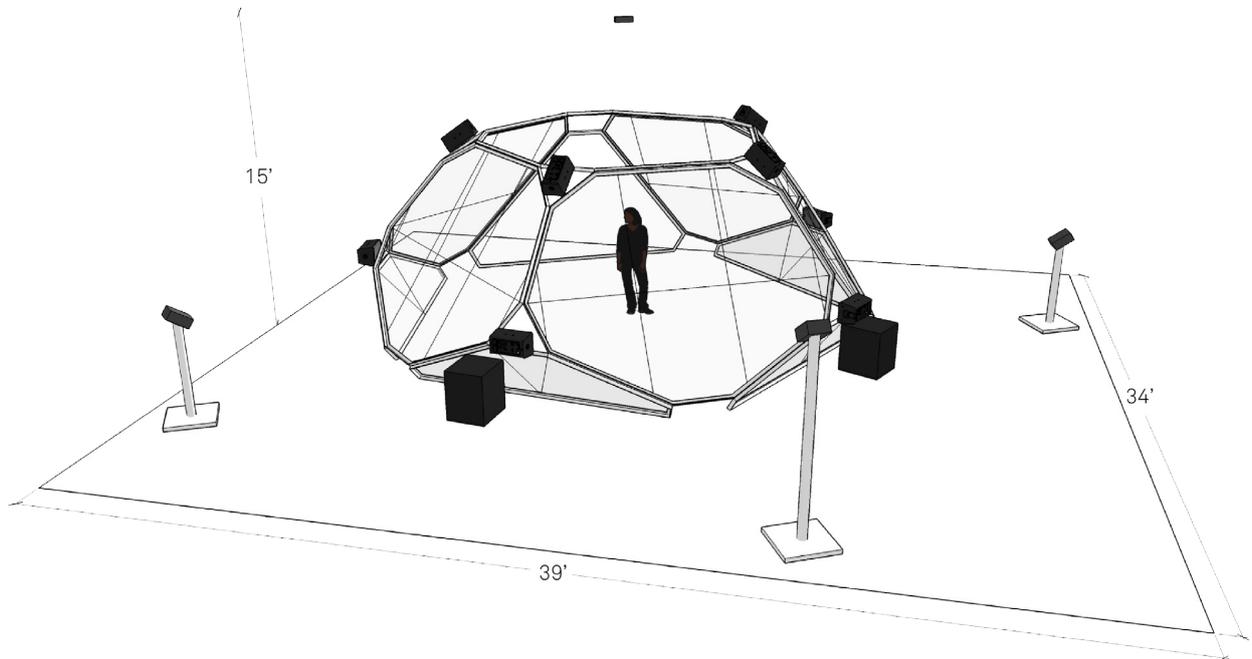
5 Week Full Engagement

- 1 week of install and rehearsal
- Opening week of performances
- 2 weeks of installation viewings
- Closing week of performances
- Workshops/community events throughout the entire engagement

Technical Needs

Beware of the Dandelions (BotD) has three spatial components:

The Pod



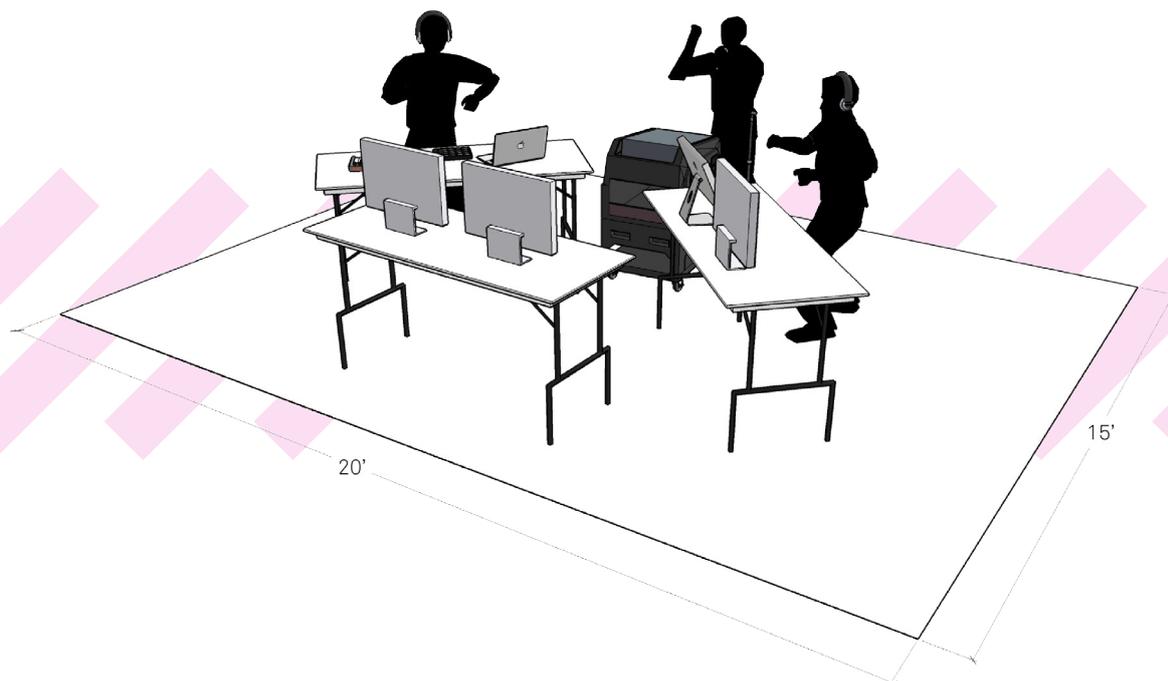
The Pod is a temporary structure in which participants experience the performance and installation.

It requires an unencumbered space of approximately 34 x 39 feet with a 15 foot ceiling or overhead lighting grid with similar clearance. This footprint allows for the placement of three projectors around the outside of the Pod, as well as a ceiling mounted depth sensor overhead.

Given the projected nature of BotD's visuals, full control over this space's ambient lighting is necessary and any windows need to be entirely blacked out. Foot traffic through should be restricted so as not to interfere with any performances, installation showings, or sensitive equipment.

The electronic equipment in the Pod requires at least two 20A circuits and four 15A circuits.

The Control Room



The Control Room is where Complex Movements performs the music and visuals for *Beware of the Dandelions*. It also houses the audiovisual workstations that feed the Pod's systems with content for both Performance and Installation Mode.

The Control Room requires a minimum of 15 x 20 feet of space. It should be adjacent to the Pod with clear pathways for cables to run between the Control Room and Pod equipment. In past iterations of BotD, the Control Room and the Pod have been part of the same contiguous space and were separated by pipe and drape.

Similarly to the Pod, full control over the Control Room's ambient lighting is also necessary, with any windows needing to be entirely blacked out. Foot traffic through this space should be kept to a minimum so as not to interfere with any performances, installation showings, or sensitive equipment.

The electronic equipment in the Control Room requires at least two 15A circuits.



The Pre/Post-Experience Room



The Pre/Post-Experience Room is where participants (audience members) are first introduced to the story world before the performances and where they are invited for dialogue afterwards.

This room has typically been around 20 x 26 feet in area, but there is some flexibility to this depending on the venue. It should be in close proximity to the Pod so that participants can quickly and easily transfer between the spaces.

The electronic equipment in the Pre/Post-Experience Room equipment requires two 15A circuits.

Personnel

During performances, we employ ushers to guide audience members to and from the Pod, and whenever the Pod is open for installation mode, we ask that the presenter help provide docents. At times when Complex Movements team members are not present in the space, we ask that the presenter provides a security detail to ensure the safety of all equipment and artwork.

We have typically coordinated with presenters the use of pipe and drape to help moderate ambient light and foot traffic around the spaces.

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#BewareOfTheDandelions