

Shel Kimen, Founder, Board of Directors President, and Executive Director



For 18 years, Ms. Kimen has helped organizations find new ways to learn about and engage people and culture. She's worked across industries creating campaigns, products, and services for world-class brands like The New York Times and JC Penney. Most recently as Senior Vice President, Digital Strategy for Saatchi & Saatchi, a global advertising firm, she led award-winning client work and was also charged with capacity building around digital and social media. Her skills in collaboration led to *Together Counts*, facilitating CMOs from the world's largest food companies in a joint effort against childhood obesity.

Her current work, Collision Works, is a hybrid profit / non-profit social enterprise in Detroit, designed to connect people through storytelling. It's a mixed-use and sustainable community development project consisting of public event space, collaborative work areas, and a mentoring program. Phase two of the project adds in a mid-size creative extended stay hotel made from recycled shipping containers.

She has been featured in local, national, and international press for her work with Collision Works and her successful prototype "First Container," which spent its first seven months in a highly visible location in Detroit's Eastern Market. Between May and November of 2013, First Container attracted over 2000 visitors, hosted several public events, and partnered with the Detroit Public Library, Detroit Future City, and many local grass roots change-making organizations covering topics as diverse as women's health, experiential education, and life after prison all through the lens of personal stories. The community response has been overwhelmingly positive, attracting additional partners and sponsors for the project.

She speaks on topics such as urban resilience, community-first design, and entrepreneurialism, most recently at the Bruner Loeb Forum on Legacy Cities.

She will lead highly qualified professionals in finance, development, and community engagement and has over 15 years experience managing successful teams. Ms. Kimen will act as the Executive Director of the non-profit and Chief Creative Officer for the hotel.

It's not all business. Ms. Kimen has been involved in community art and music collectives since the mid 90's, has sailed 4,000 miles across the Arctic Circle, and is in constant awe of the amazing produce grown right here in Detroit. She believes more than anything that we **all** have something valuable to contribute and has made it her mission to cultivate that.