

GET – Get Together, Get Along

by

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The student author, whose presentation of the scholarship herein was approved by the program of study committee, is solely responsible for the content of this thesis. The Graduate College will ensure this thesis is globally accessible and will not permit alterations after a degree is conferred.

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ABSTRACT

This qualitative study is based on a project which is designed on the framework of social design. The aim of this project is to counter the racist and stereotypical narratives about minoritized and marginalized communities that often find themselves at the receiving ends of negative propaganda, hateful rhetoric and discrimination.

The goal of the research is to determine if social design can play a part in making communities more inclusive, if design can facilitate in starting a conversation towards social issues revolving racism, stereotypes and discrimination

Graphic design and visual imagery are a form of persuasion; the aim is to use visual imagery to counter the negative rhetoric about the marginalized communities. Alongside photography, sound is added hence making the project more impactful and versatile. Ames, Iowa is used as the place for representation of individuals hailing from different communities as it hosts more than 36,000 students (Iowa State University Registrar's Office, 2017) from various countries and communities. By using design with photography, audio stories and technology, the investigator explores various aspects of interdisciplinary art that would appeal to the audiences and facilitate in starting a conversation between marginalized and non-marginalized groups.

The study examined the possible outcomes of the project and tests one outcome to see if design can help facilitate towards making an impact in making society more inclusive. The study outcome through the prototype exhibition gave voice to individuals with stories that will educate as well as inspire and influence people.

Keywords: Exhibition, Installation, Media, People, USA, Discrimination, Communities, Social design, Graphic design, Photography

CHAPTER 1. INTRODUCTION

Research Questions and Goals

Resistance to Immigration

Global patterns of migration have been significantly higher than they have ever been in the recent past due to political instability and search for better economic opportunities. (Glaser, 2016). “Migration is one of the major forces shaping the world today, with more than 60 million displaced people” (Glaser,2016). The influx of immigrants in western countries have brought economic contribution, talent and culture but like everything else it comes with its own limitations. Consequently, discrimination and intolerance have increased due to diversification of a global world.

In USA, hate crimes are on the rise, since 2014 they have increased for second consecutive year. According to the statistic released by the Federal Bureau of Investigation (FBI), the number of hate crimes in the year 2016 was recorded at 6,121, which is 5% more than 2015. Hate speech against minorities is being normalized which in turn has given rise to incidents of violence against minorities. Research shows that “hate speakers rely on dehumanizing images to justify exclusion and it can be both an attack on the target's dignity and a justification for harmful actions” (Roginsky and Tsesis, 2016).

Hateful rhetoric and speech desensitize and normalize crimes done under the name of prejudice, bias and hate. Rhetoric plays a very important part in breaking down everyday actions of individuals into tolerable and acceptable acts, or as necessary consequences by many people. “The basic function of rhetoric is described as ‘a mode of altering reality, not by the direct application of energy to objects, but by the creation of discourse which changes reality through the mediation of thought and action” (Bitzer, 1968). Hate speech and hateful rhetoric need to be

discouraged and counteracted. To reduce its effects, it is important to counteract it. Hateful rhetoric has been persuasive to change opinions and spread misinformation, and since graphic design is used as a form of persuasion, can it be used to change opinions or start a conversation?

Purpose

The purpose of this study is to investigate how design, along with other disciplines, can create an engaging experience for audiences to view and interact in a capacity of an exhibition. Also, the purpose is to help start a dialogue and work towards making communities overall more inclusive and accepting of each other. This study therefore spans the interdisciplinary fields of design, photography, audio stories and technology together to make an impact and contribute towards social good.

The goal of the project is to showcase individuals from marginalized groups in their own narratives. The project emphasizes on the need to be aware and make sure that diversity is represented on all forums. This is so that people who are often on the receiving end of the negative propaganda because of their communities being discriminated against can share their stories.

This project consists of stories of individuals who hail from different minoritized groups specifically American Muslims, African Americans, LGBTQ community, International Students and other minoritized and marginalized communities.

The study is based in Ames, Iowa. Its main reason of inclusion is because it is a college town with an average attendance of 36,000 students a year along with 11 percent of them being international students, (ISU Website 2017). Since Iowa State University caters to students from all walks of life, all religions, gender, sexual orientation and geography, it serves as the ideal

ground to be the scale of the prototype. Ames hosts different ethnicities religions, races and communities; hence it was a good launching pad to test it on a local scale and then take it to a national level.

As mentioned earlier, there has been a rise in hate crimes against minoritized groups in USA, Ames experienced the effects of that too. There were race related incidents of anti-minority sentiment in the city and on Iowa State University campus. At least 20 anti-immigrant posters were found pasted in various buildings of Iowa State University campus on October 27, 2016 (Jeff Charis-Carlson, Des Moines Registrar, 2016). The messages in those posters included historical stats and comments that evoked feelings of fear, bias and anxiety amongst students. The text of some of the posters read:

"In 1950, America was 90 percent white. It is now only 60 percent white. Will you become a minority in your own country?"

"Our heritage, our people."

"White students you are not alone. Be proud of your heritage."



Figure 1.1 *Posters found on Iowa State Campus*

These posters created an unrest and evoked sentiments of frustration and fear in the student population of Ames, especially in the students from minoritized groups. To counter this emotionally charged, negative rhetoric which was present all over the country as well close to home, it was important to have a forum that provides a point of view which answers the hateful rhetoric.

Seven participants belonging to minoritized groups were selected through a public call for participation. After the entries, participants were short-listed using a series of questions (See methodology). These participants narrated their stories, struggles, personal and professional triumphs in order to equip this project. Through the mixed media installations and these participant's narratives, the project's aim is to engage and encourage people to discard their preconceived notions. The study demonstrates how a simple personification has the power to change attitudes towards what is wrongfully labelled.

Project aims to educate and change perceptions by making sure an intergroup contact happens under the design umbrella. Although, this intergroup contact is very prevalent in Ames because of Iowa State University and its diverse and international population. Still, there is a certain percentage of population which does not integrate well with International community and hence posters with racial messages and anti-minority sentiments surfaced on Iowa State Campus.

This study aims to create a virtual contact amongst marginalized and non-marginalized communities as even a contact of that nature is supposed to alter behaviors and attitudes. Empirical research has since demonstrated that "intergroup contact reduces prejudice among the majority group towards many other-groups including; black neighbors, gay men, disabled people, and has been shown to reduce prejudice in conflict situations." (Allport, G.W., 1954).

The project encourages people to know or befriend people from different communities and not believe in the negative propaganda circulating, free floating on mainstream and digital media.

“Graphic design firmly rooted in the arena of design and communication has long been associated with social and political discourse and propaganda.” (Fuad–Luke and Alastair, 2009). Social design for social good have a credible history and it is very important and needful for this qualitative project to shape up in this time and age. Need of the hour was to incorporate art towards something much more macro and politically correct. “The voices of graphic designers regularly bubble up during times of social and political change, both in the service of clients’ needs and with concerns raised by the designers themselves, the latter being good examples of design-led activism.” (Fuad–Luke and Alastair, 2009).

The prototype of this project was executed and tested on a local scale how graphic design can help make an impact within a community. Keeping in mind the recent events of posters being plastered on ISU campus, an exhibition was conducted with an opening symposium, speakers and participants. The event was held in a campus building which was open to public. Participants and audience members came together to have a look at the exhibition. The exhibition encouraged a conversation between the people of the Ames community and helped people get informed about different communities.

The Get together project fits the idea of a circular logo, which signifies a full circle. It refers to the circle of life and it is designed to be incomplete as a metaphor of how life is incomplete without indulging in the issues that surround us such as race, hate, bigotry and stereotypes.

Graphic Design for Social Change

Graphic design is known to have provided solutions and be the catalyst for change and innovation. According to Burkett, “graphic design has been known as medium to finding solutions, practical innovations, and making improvements that enhance people’s lives, address problems or open up possibilities for a better life and social design has been known to address social issues (such as poverty or social isolation), and ultimately creating a more just and sustainable society.” (Burkett, 2016).

Design in itself is a powerful tool but when in today’s digital age it is combined with the power of social media, it has much more wide impact. To counter the hateful rhetoric, the best way is to facilitate and encourage a conversation that starts from the grassroots level and then goes internationally through social media.

Given the above information, following question shall be investigated:

Can social design, be used to encourage and facilitate a conversation between marginalized and non-marginalized communities?

Definitions of Concepts

The following definitions explain how key words were used throughout this document.

Discrimination:

“The unjust or prejudicial treatment of different categories of people, especially on the grounds of race, age, or sex.”

Stereotype:

“A widely held but fixed and oversimplified image or idea of a particular type of person or thing.”

Propaganda:

“Information, especially of a biased or misleading nature, used to promote a political cause or point of view”

Social media:

“Websites and applications that enable users to create and share content or to participate in social networking.”

Rhetoric:

“The art of effective or persuasive speaking or writing, especially the exploitation of figures of speech and other compositional techniques.”

Discourse:

“Written or spoken communication or debate.”

Community:

A group of people living in the same place or having a particular characteristic in common.

QR code:

“A machine-readable code consisting of an array of black and white squares, typically used for storing URLs or other information for reading by the camera on a smartphone.”

All the definitions are taken from Oxford Dictionary.

CHAPTER 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Information and research cited below is necessary to understand the focus of the study. Literature review mainly includes peer-reviewed articles and journals. Review is broken down further in four main parts to make it easier to understand the project.

- Social design
- Discrimination and prejudice
- Propaganda
- Photography and Social media

Social Design

“Social design’ is about applying general design principles to address social issues (such as poverty or social isolation) and ultimately creating a more just and sustainable society.” (Burkett, 2016).

Social design provides a forum to explore about how design can be used to make a just society by making it more inclusive and accepting. “The aim of visual communication is to change attitude and thus behavior in its audience” (Jorge, 2006). Visual communication flows easily while delivering a message for a change in people because of its ease and general acceptability.

Social design has greatly evolved as a field. Specifically, nowadays given the power of social media and digitally fluent millennial generation, powerful visual imagery tends to make more waves than ever before. Social design as a form of visual communication when combined with the medium of Photography, sound, technology along with engagement of rhetoric can

become a more powerful and persuasive tool. Social design also possesses the power to alter discourse and engage masses in a conversation about a more inclusive society. “By adopting interdisciplinary research approaches, graphic designers can both question and form their intuitive inclinations and place this process in conversation with peers and even the lay public.” (Bennett, A. 2006). In a fast-paced volatile society, social design as visual communication when combined with other disciplines has a power to catch the attention amongst the clutter and influence masses with powerful design and narratives. “In a broader design context, there is a strong emergent interest in how design is engaging with issues both locally and globally.” (Fuad–Luke and Alastair, 2009).

Design becomes a creative and visual tool for activism for the individuals who choose to pursue this path. “However, there is a paucity of literature addressing the notion of activism in many of the design disciplines, with the exception of architecture and graphic design” (Fuad–Luke and Alastair, 2009). Activism has always been part of graphic design hence with the passage of time it keeps reappearing. Design activism has so much potential because of its swift nature. Visual imagery messages get to spread quick, far and wide and has more impact on people as people tend to remember it more.

A fusion of interdisciplinary fields and social design can be a persuasive tool to help impact people and discourage prejudice and discrimination. It can help encourage people to hold and steer conversations on a larger scale towards our communities being more inclusive of minorities and being a more diverse and an accepting society. When people receive a message and get reinforced in various ways specifically using visual imagery, messages about differences not being equivalent to or asking for discrimination, change in behavior and attitudes can occur.

Discrimination and Prejudice

“Prejudice is an unjustified or incorrect attitude towards an individual based solely on the individual’s membership of a social group and discrimination is the behavior or actions, usually negative, towards an individual or group of people, especially on the basis of sex/race/social class, etc.” (Saul Mcleod, 2008).

People are treated with prejudice and discrimination everyday all around us because of their race, religion, color of their skin, sexual orientation and social standing. “People who get discriminated against usually have a very negative, long-lasting impact on their personalities” (Huynh et al, 2012). “Past studies have demonstrated that African-Americans report varying levels of stress relative to the context of the discrimination they perceive” (Huynh et al, 2012). Discrimination is not only hurtful for the individual but for others around them and society in general.

Information is education, when individuals are informed about others and their perspective, it helps to make change in one’s opinions and attitudes. Information is truly power as the famous saying goes. Prejudice and discrimination stem from ignorance and misinformation, which becomes a common occurrence and with the passage of time it gets normalized and people eventually get conditioned with time to be desensitized. “Social norms define what is appropriate and inappropriate, and we can effectively change stereotypes and prejudice by changing the relevant norms about them” (Jetten et al ,1997).

“Beliefs which are hurtful to communities are ‘epistemically disabling’, leading one to discount or be insensitive to counter evidence, and are democratically problematic when they undermine sensitivity to political injustices.” (Jason ,2015). Stereotypes generally tend to be less in a society which has different cultures present and portrays more diversification, where every

individual have the freedom to express themselves in regards to their culture yet feel connected on a humanitarian ground. “A culturally pluralistic and multicultural society would be one in which all of us strived for unity within the framework of cultural diversity” (Berry, G. L. 2003).

In USA, hate speech against minorities is being normalized which in turn has given rise to incidents of violence against minorities. “False beliefs are problematic flawed ideologies, since they appear to justify counting the complaints of the oppressed as unreasonable and lead agents to dismiss testimony about the injustice of the distributions from those who are not well-off.” (Jason, 2015). The intolerance and discrimination in this politically charged and xenophobic world needs solutions and remedy in all fields and walks of life. The society and communities need holistic solutions to discourage prejudice and discrimination. Diversity and portrayal in all medium are a need of the hour to give just and equal representation to communities that often find themselves at the receiving ends of negative propaganda.

Propaganda

The official definition of propaganda, “information, ideas, or rumors deliberately spread widely to help or harm a person, group, movement, institution, nation, etc.’’. Although propaganda is known to be a persuasive tool for or against a campaign, institution, people or nation, it is generally considered to be negative information which is incorrect, hateful and constitutes of negative information, used to promote negative thoughts and views about an ideology or community.

Television, film, radio, the Internet and print communications (which include brochures, posters and newspapers) are the main medium of propaganda. According to Professor M. Lane

Bruner, the propaganda which is carried out with the help of television, radio and film is the one that does the most damage. “These messages are developed and broadcast by producers, directors, writers and news anchors or disc jockeys whose personal beliefs creep into ideas that are viewed and heard by a massive audience, since the audience has little or no opportunity to respond or provide feedback to these messages, they become fact in the minds of many.” (Lane, 2008).

Propaganda thrives on lack of information and education. “Education aims at independence of judgment whereas, propaganda offers readymade opinions for the unthinking herd.” (Martin, 1929). “Graphic design, firmly rooted in the arena of design communication, has long been associated with social and political discourse and propaganda.” (Fuad–Luke and Alastair, 2009). Propaganda is an organized and systematic infiltration of rhetoric. Propaganda infiltrates and influences rhetoric through public discourse and mainstream media so much so that it eventually becomes a tool for mass communication.

“Following World War II, propaganda was often defined in accordance with constantly shifting perspectives on political theory and the processes” (Doob, 1935). History is very clear about the systematic hate and negativity fueled towards Jews by an organized propaganda and the price whole world paid for it. “Malignant and distorted images of the others made it easy to bring the hated groups into disrepute with the population and cleared the way to their mass killing and divestment of property” (Roginsky and Tsesis, 2016).

“Images created in times of war reveal the tensions and fears ignited by the conflicts between nations” (Miles, 2012). “By dehumanizing the Japanese and instilling fear in the minds of Americans, WWII propaganda posters prompted cultural and racial hatred that led to massive historical consequences for the Japanese” (Miles, 2012).



Figure 2.1 (Left): Anti-hispanic poster, USA (Year unknown)

Figure 2.2 (Right) Anti-Muslim poster, USA (2018)

A study (Kuhn, 1991) talks about , “how reluctant people are to engage intellectually with any alternative or oppositional views and therefore how vulnerable they might be to propaganda; they merely seek to have their prejudices confirmed by pseudo-evidence” (O’Shaughnessy, 1996). The propaganda against Japanese during the World War II can be observed in the posters seen below.



Figure 2.3 (left) and 2.4 (right) WWII Propaganda Posters

What this visual imagery managed to do was dehumanize Japanese people in the eyes of American community which in turn convinced the public at large to treat Japanese in inhumane way. It played with post war emotions of the public and channelized their anger, hate and frustration towards all Japanese people. In order to not repeat the same mistakes as we did in history it is very important for us to keep negating hateful rhetoric and propaganda in the instigating stage. When a constant barrage of negativity and hate speech happen, the effects of it can be contained and minimized when it is counteracted by the positive messages and conversation.

Communities which are minorities such as African Americans, Muslims, Hispanics and others belonging to different race and religion who often find themselves at the receiving end of negative propaganda by large suffer economically, socially and mentally. These communities need to be included and portrayed through all forums for the good of the entire society and its

people. Interdisciplinary design specially with the help of photography and social media tool can be an excellent source for altering certain long-standing propaganda and actively voice reason against it by informing public.

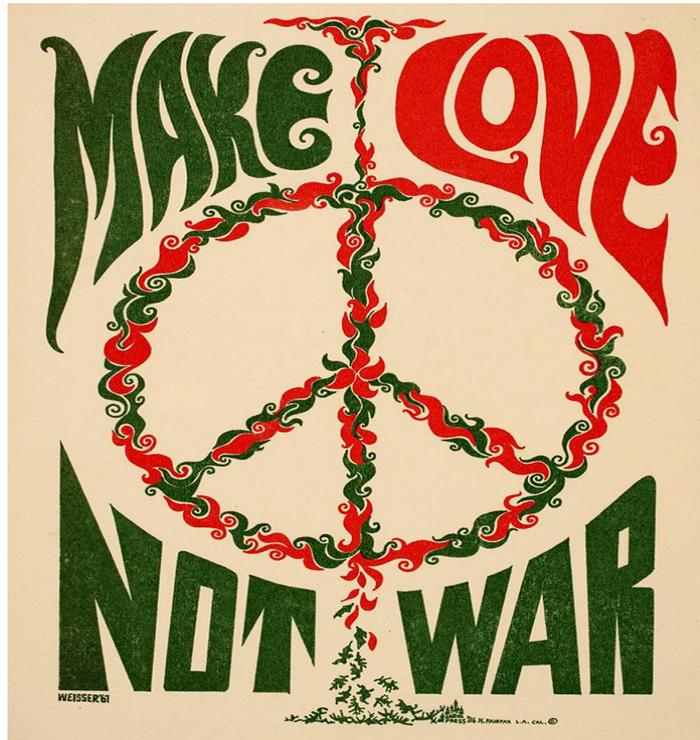


Figure 2.5 Decade of Protest (Political Posters from the UNITED STATES, VIET NAM, CUBA 1965-1975)

Propaganda when used as a tool to help a movement or a cause is also very impressionable and aids in creating a difference. In 1965, because of America's ever-increasing involvement with the war in South east Asia posters like figure 2.5 started appearing as a form of student unrest to show anti-war sentiment. The poster signifies the prominent hippie movement by artfully combining the weed imagery with the peace to capture the essence of the message.



Figure 2.6 Angry Graphics (protest posters of the Reagan/Bush Era)

This is a poster by American political artist, Barbara Kruger, advocating legal abortion, birth control and rights for women. The poster reads 'your body is a battleground' by showing a women's face divided in half lengthwise in two different lights. This poster is meant to influence and direct attention at the fact that women are in charge of their own bodies and it should be their choice what they chose to do. The haunting image is very attention grabbing and forces by standers to take a minute and absorb the information, as this poster was first displayed in Washington on billboards and bus shelters.

Photography & Social media

Photography is a great medium to play a part in reaching wider audience and educating the masses about everyday issues from mundane to the profound. Nowadays, camera plays a major part in capturing people's interests and fascination. This not helps in redirecting them to the issue at hand and starting a conversation but makes it more widely available for the public's attention because of the presence of social media and digital images.

Social media is the best source for accessing information for all entities. It is becoming more and more common for every organization and cause to have active social media presence. "People are using social media to connect with one another, sometimes standing up to others and other times perpetuating negative stereotypes and prejudicial attitudes" (Schumann et al, 2011). "Many individuals and groups use social media as a mechanism for social activism, for example: 93% of the most successful charities in the United States have a Facebook page, 87% have a Twitter profile, and 65% have a blog" (Barry, 2010).

Many projects exist like the famous series of Humans of New York by Brandon Stanton, which mainly focuses on photographing everyday people in streets along with their stories as stated by them. Started in November 2010 by photographer Brandon Stanton, *Humans of New York* has developed a large following through social media (Ivy Estenson, 2014). The blog had over 18 million followers on Facebook and around 7.5 million followers on Instagram as of December 2017. "As of March 2015, the book had spent 31 weeks on The New York Times Best Seller list." (Ivy Estenson, 2014).

Stated below are some empirical research and studies which discuss how medium of photography and social media, specifically the likes of HONY (Humans of New York) project

can be used to counteract the social problems and encourage cultural inclusivity. Furthermore, there is not an excess of research available on the similar interdisciplinary study and HONY becomes a very viable project to explain the concept of reducing prejudice and discrimination through photography and simply relaying everyday stories of individuals to the masses. “HONY provides a platform for virtual intergroup contact and is therefore a valuable study mechanism for expressions of virtual empathy, especially given its immense global reach.” (Wheeler and Quinn, 2017).



Figure 2.7 Humans of New York Facebook post.

Portraits of individuals with the narrative about the individuals in their own words creates a much stronger allure and demands more attention, hence influencing the masses. “Social media offers a new pathway for virtual intergroup contact, providing

opportunities to increase conversation about disadvantaged others and empathy.”
 (Wheeler and Quinn,2017).



Figure 2.8 Humans of New York Facebook post.

Because of transformative power of strong photography and carefully weaved words the audience does imagine the contact although it is only of virtual nature. This virtual contact between people of all communities benefits the conversation about the minorities and helps make societies more inclusive and accepting. “Virtual contact via social media provides a potential for new online intergroup contact strategies that may be key to developing empathy in today’s highly connected globalized world.” (Wheeler and Quinn,2017). Research about intergroup interactions between native and international students reveal that participants who merely just imagined contact reported reduced intergroup anxiety (Crisp & Turner, 2009).

Several studies about various different groups within society showed positive results after having just visualizing contact with the members of other groups such as; the elderly, gay men, Muslims, illegal immigrants and people with schizophrenia (Turner et al., 2007). “As internet

becomes more ubiquitous to our everyday lives, it becomes increasingly important to investigate whether and how social media can provide opportunities to increase (or at least provide an outlet for) empathy and reduce prejudice” (Wheeler and Quinn, 2017). Schwab and Greitemeyer proposed that even being passively exposed to other cultures on Facebook could improve general attitudes towards diverse cultural groups (Wheeler and Quinn, 2017).

The aspects like being able to relate, perspective taking and realizing the differences in people’s lives and the difficulties they face on everyday basis was one of the few measured responses related to these studies with the HONY context. For instance, people commented “So glad to see HONY in my hometown,” and “I came from a neighborhood just like these kids.” HONY. This exhibits how a simple project by one photographer through social media has the power to alter people’s opinions and make them relate to each other, in turn reduce prejudice and bias towards different communities.

CHAPTER 3. METHODOLOGY AND PROCEDURES

The methodology and procedure of the research initiate the topic by explaining the concept of the project in order to help better understand the study and its workings.

Concept Development

A good project needs to have a great concept to start the process. The focus of the study is social design and to determine how design can be a catalyst of change. Racial and political tensions in USA affected almost the entire country and Ames, IA was no exception.

The main question arises as, how can the power of design, visual imagery and sound be used to encourage a change and be a form of information and inspiration for people?

Before beginning the project, it was determined that design needs to have two main components.

Verbal: The verbal part of the concept focused on the auditory form of data that not only supports the visual information but also makes it engaging and enhances the effects of the prototype exhibition.

Visual: Visual part of the concept focused on the imagery, design and color scheme. It explored ways to express information and imagery to create the final material of the project.

The visual elements of the project focused on photography as the main imagery material. Typography was not included in the visual pieces because the mode of information was sound and subject's face, any text details would take away the attention grabbing element of the photo or trying to listen to the story of the person. The face had to be the only form of information as it mimics the idea of absorbing information based on the appearances of a person. Listening to the story then provides further information that might negate certain ideas that one might have gotten

by merely looking at the face of the person. Since photography had to be done from scratch, therefore various moods and lights were chosen to shoot. Photography was tried in a natural setting, studio setting and outdoor setting.

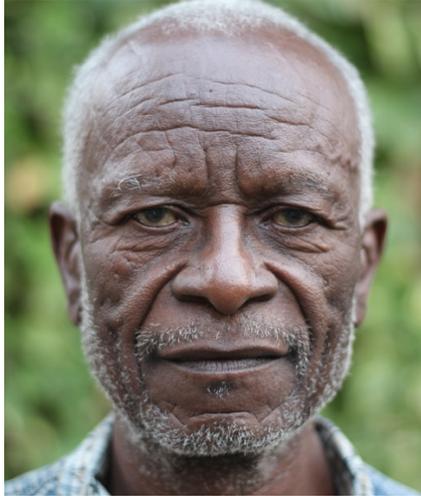


Figure 3.1 Bright outdoor theme with serious mood.



Figure 3.2 Bright indoor studio theme



Figure 3.3 Bright studio theme with happy mood.



Figure 3.4 Dark studio theme with serious mood.

The examples shown above were the potential investigations done for the photography style. The mood and feel was chosen to be studio and serious photography style as shown in figure 3.4. Example was later investigated further to become the final form.

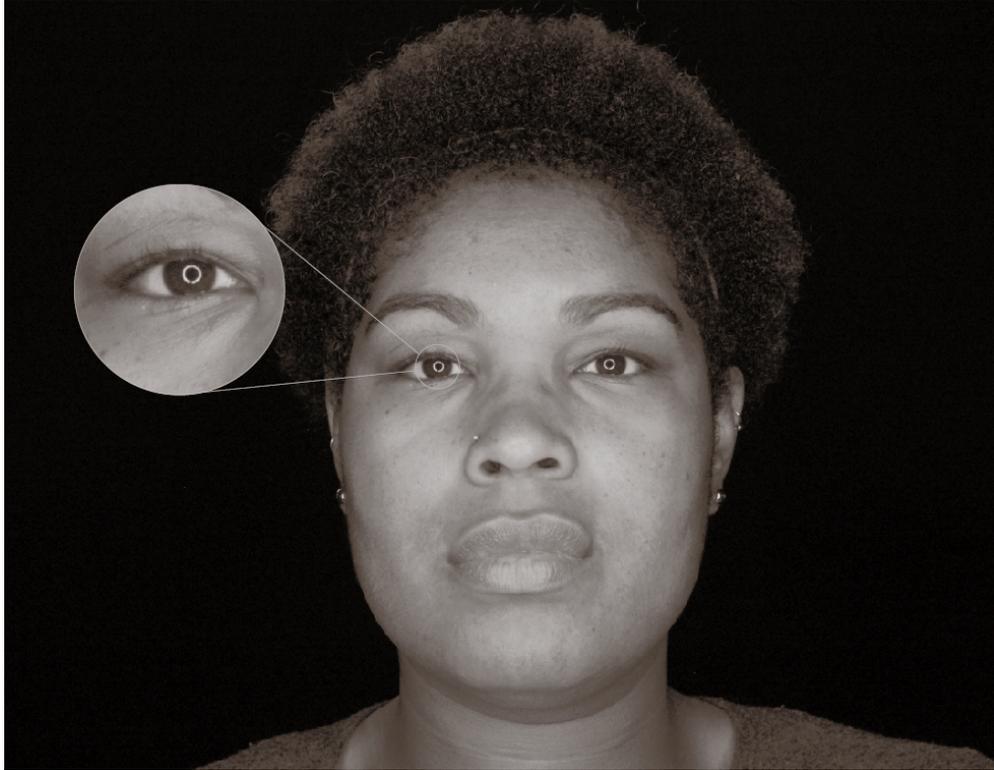


Figure 3.5 Sample photo with Ring-light seen in the eye.

The light used for photography is called a Ring-light. It provides light on the subject's face and a reflection of the light can be seen in the subject's eyes. The inspiration for the logo came from the light and also the fact that circle represents the circle of life.

The design had to complement the theme of the project, therefore a dark yet powerful design had to be put in place to make the project effective. Figure 3.6 was designed to be the logo.

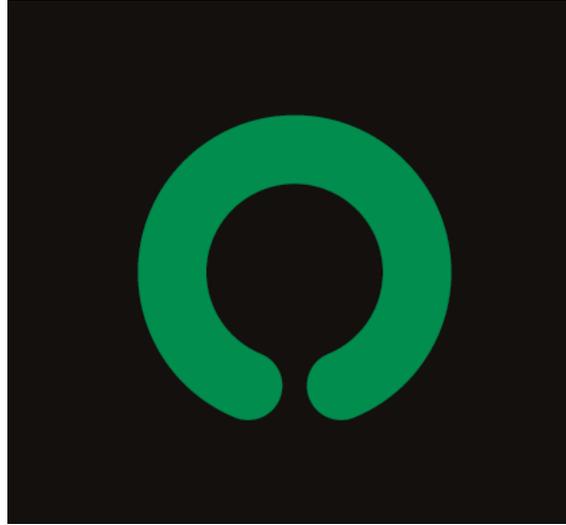


Figure 3.6 Get Logo

The logo (negative space) also resembles the silhouette of a human head and also a silhouette of a tree. The head relates because we are all humans and we all have a part to play, and the tree reinforces the idea of growth and life.

Methodology

The methodology of the research utilized these data collection instrument: An Initial Survey, Meeting, interviews and an Exhibition.

Initial Survey

An initial survey was the starting point for this qualitative research. It was conducted to acquire participants for the study. Main aim of the survey was to reach the target audience. As opposed to a questionnaire, a flyer was designed as it was more attention grabbing and had the ability to reach masses.

The design was clean, simple and minimalistic and had two main questions at the bottom with a bold statement on the top, '*Do you feel misrepresented?*'. Contact information was provided also provided at the bottom right of the page.

Following are the screening questions:

- Do you feel misrepresented? (Answer Yes or No)
- Do you consider yourself a minority? (Answer Yes or No)
- Have you experienced discrimination based on Color? (Answer Yes or No)
- Have you experienced discrimination based on Religion? (Answer Yes or No)
- Have you experienced discrimination based on Sexual Orientation? (Answer Yes or No)

Location

The study of the project is based in Ames, Iowa. Its main reason of inclusion is because it is a university town with an average attendance of 36,000 students a year along with 11 percent of them being international students, (ISU Website, 2017). Since Iowa State University caters to students from all walks of life, all religions, gender, sexual orientation and geography, it served as the ideal ground for the study. Also, it was a great launching pad to test on a local scale and then take it to a national level.

The main platform for survey to select participants were through the Committee for Diversity and Inclusion at the College of Design and other student clubs. Also, friends and acquaintances turned out to be the main resource to help connect with individuals that would like to participate in this study.

Furthermore, other student organizations like The Office of Veterans at Iowa State, Pakistan Students Association, African Students Association, Native American Students Association, Chinese Students Association, Mexican-American Young Achievers Society and South Sudan Students Association.

Flyers (*Figure 3.7*) was distributed amongst peers and colleagues and also posted on various buildings on campus and throughout Ames to recruit participants for the interviews. As this project involved human subjects, IRB Form (Institutional Review Form), was obtained and filled as the initial step for going ahead with the project research. The person who conducts the research is the primary investigator (PI) as per the form. This project was exempted from IRB form. (*Appendix*)

Upon meeting they were verbally asked about their consent as according to the IRB, a signed form was not required in this case as there was no human testing involved.



Figure 3.7 Participation Flyer

Criteria for Participation

Inclusion Criteria

Individuals who hail from different cultures and walks of life. People who face prejudice, biasness, discrimination because of their race, color, religion, gender or sexual orientation and still managed to stay positive. Participants were asked to answer 5 questions related to their experiences of discrimination. If they score 3 out of 5, they were included in the research.

Exclusion Criteria

It was also very important to keep number of participants few. Also, filtering out from the list of participants that reached out for the study was also imperative to keep the focus of the project towards a singular issue at hand. Individuals who fail to score minimum of 3 out of 5 in the screening question were not included in the survey.

Selection

After initial screening, respondents were contacted directly and via organizations to be part of the project. Through the survey, a total number of 18 people reached out as willing participants for the study. After applying the inclusion criteria, small-scale meeting amongst 10 of those participants was organized to explain the procedure about how study will be conducted and their valuable input in it. The meeting was held at Design on Main (207 Main St, Ames, IA 50010). Participants were asked if they would like to be part of the symposium to share their experiences with live audience. Participation in the symposium was optional. Consequently, by the time actual procedure and interview started, final participants were reduced to 8 due to their

availability and willingness to share. One female participant however after selection backed out because of the photography requirement as she did not wish to be photographed so over all, final study was conducted with 7 participants.

Meetings

A separate meeting before the interview with every single participant was scheduled. The aim of the meeting was to break the ice with the participant on a one on one basis and to make sure that the participants were comfortable with the Primary Investigator. Also, they were briefed in detail about the project and what their story as a data will mean for its outcome. In the meeting, any possible questions or concerns were cleared with the participants and a date and time was set for the interview and photo-shoot.

Interviews

Main data collection instrument for the study was the interview and it consisted of two main parts, interview and photo-shoot.

The interview recordings took place at Design on Main (207 Main St, Ames, IA 50010) with the consent of the participants. However, the participants were also given the option of choosing the place of their convenience where they would feel the most comfortable.

Format

The format of the interview was set to be semi-structured. A semi-structured interviews allow informants to answer the questions in their own terms. It develops a scenario where the

interviewer covers the list of topics or questions and leaves them open ended for the participants to elaborate.

The set of questions to guide the interview are mentioned below:

How was it like growing up as a minority?

What were the challenges and how did you overcome them?

How does the stereotype about your community effect you as a person?

What do you think is important to make the community diverse and inclusive?

How do you think we get there?

Recording

After meetings the participants, an interview recording day and time was set up. The recording took place in an informal setting where the participants were given the chance to take a break, ask questions, repeat the answers or listen to their answers after they had recorded them. The average time for the interview was one hour. Their experiences were recorded using audio recording device, which were later edited to make sure that they were of the best quality and suitable for an exhibition.



Figure 3.8 Glimpse of the Interview being recorded.

Editing

After the initial interview was recorded, it was edited to make sure that it does not include any sensitive information, controversial statements or mistakes that might have taken place during the interview. Apart from editing out the unwanted parts of the interview, slow flute music was added to the interviews as the background music to give the interview whole experience and to make it more appealing. There were moments where the speaker would pause after completing the sentence and the flute in the background will continue playing. This detail helped to create a storytelling format involving the listener more into the story. The aim of this audio experience is when audience listen, their perception about the person in the picture

changes, develops and they are informed about a narrative of a community from its own member.

Photo-shoot

After the interview, photography of the participants was conducted so that they can be printed and combined with the audio to create a mixed media experience. Since photography is a narrative which is closer to reality and is understood universally, it is also relatable as the image you see in a photo is closer to reality. Photography contains visual information and it is the closest discipline to design.

Photography of the participants was the essential component as it would add ‘a face to the story’. The idea of the image was to capture the very essence of the participant which would humanize their story for the audience, the image was supposed to add the human touch to the narrative. The next part was to investigate if the photographs as pieces of visual information can inform communities about the marginalized groups within them.

There were various ways to photograph the participants but what truly served the purpose of the study was one which did justice to the idea of putting up a life size exhibition. Tight headshot portraits gave a very impactful and powerful feel to the images. There were no visual cues present in the photo about the participant apart from their face. One could not tell anything about their occupation, situation, financial status or social status as the surrounding, clothes or any factor was completely missing from the photos making it almost as abstract as a painting. It was open for interpretation as the only form of information was the facial cues. Putting up large-scale portraits exaggerated the facial features of the person creating an effect which is intriguing and is abnormally big. Hence creating interest and curiosity to know more about them.

Portraits were taken with great attention to details with professional lighting and camera. At least 30 pictures of each participant were taken in order to make sure that the photos are of high quality and portray facial features with raw details. The photography also took place at Design on Main (207 Main St, Ames, IA 50010).



Figure 3.9 Glimpse of the photo-shoot

Graphic Design

Graphic design element in the project is at the crux of the study as it brings photography, sound and technology comprehensively under one roof. The logo represents what this project stands for. GET is abbreviation for Gather, Engage and Talk. It shows consistency, focus and it is aesthetically pleasing as well. The logo is seen throughout the whole project and it helps connect all the aspects of the project and shows unification and finesse.

The design is simple, bold and impactful. The ring represents the ring light used to take pictures. The emphasis is on ring because it is one element which is prominent throughout the project, from the equipment to photographs and the logo. It is designed to convey the ideology behind the project and yet kept minimalistic enough for it to stand out. Ring in the logo is a

metaphor of life. The circle is not complete because it represents the incomplete life of the minorities, regardless of social status or education, there are challenges that most of them always face in their lives. Challenges of being misunderstood and misrepresented and their life without their struggles being addressed is incomplete.

Green is the main color of project. The reason behind this color is because the project it represents stands for harmony, safety and environment. In most cultures, green represents purity and life. Green has healing power and is understood to be the most restful and relaxing color for the human eye to view and is often a natural choice in interior design as humans are so used to seeing it everywhere. (Bourn, 2011)



Figure 3.10 Get logo and tagline.

Photography

Photography of the project is meant to endorse the message and the narrative behind it.

Photographs are kept black and white, to have majority of the emphasis on the details of the image and not on the color of one's skin. Taking the emphasis away from the skin color underlines the topic of the study and highlights the theme of looking at an individual regardless of their race. Secondly, keeping it in grayscale looks more exhibition worthy because it adds a certain timeless quality to the images. Viewing it in life size portraits looks more aesthetically pleasing to the eye as compared to the colored photographs. Furthermore, the tonal contrast of the grayscale photographs draws more attention to the expressions of the person and makes the portraits raw and intense. It also draws the focus on the eyes, where logo can be seen.

The logo is the metaphor of the circle of life, and the raw unedited portraits were used to give the audience a chance to absorb as much detail as they can and perhaps form an opinion based on the visual cues they get from the images. The portraits are taken in such a way that no other information about the photographed individual can be deduced by the audience, for instance clothes, accessories, tattoos or even the mood as all photographs are captured in same restrained, impassive expressions. So, the visual cues are totally limited to the face and what audience takes away from looking at the image has more to do with the audience's own preconceived notion about that individual and the community that they believe they belong to.

The ideal experience of the exhibition revolves around the concept that the initial opinion of the audience will be different from after they hear the participant's story in their own voice. Given the location of the exhibition in Ames, most members of the audience were generally very accepting of the minorities but still some of the comments did show that not all members had a positive effect after the exhibition.

Since measuring the effects is one of the limitations of the study, the direct effect on all members of the audience is questionable which however will be further investigated as one of

the future implications of the study. The combination of images and sound aim to destroy any potential preconceptions formed by their initial opinion when one listens to the stories of these individuals.

The participants photographed and interviewed for the project are:

- Dilok Phanchantraurai
- Mohamed Abufalgha
- Manatsa Mazimbe
- Faisal Hafeez
- Graciela Orantes
- Natasha Greene
- Tia Carter.

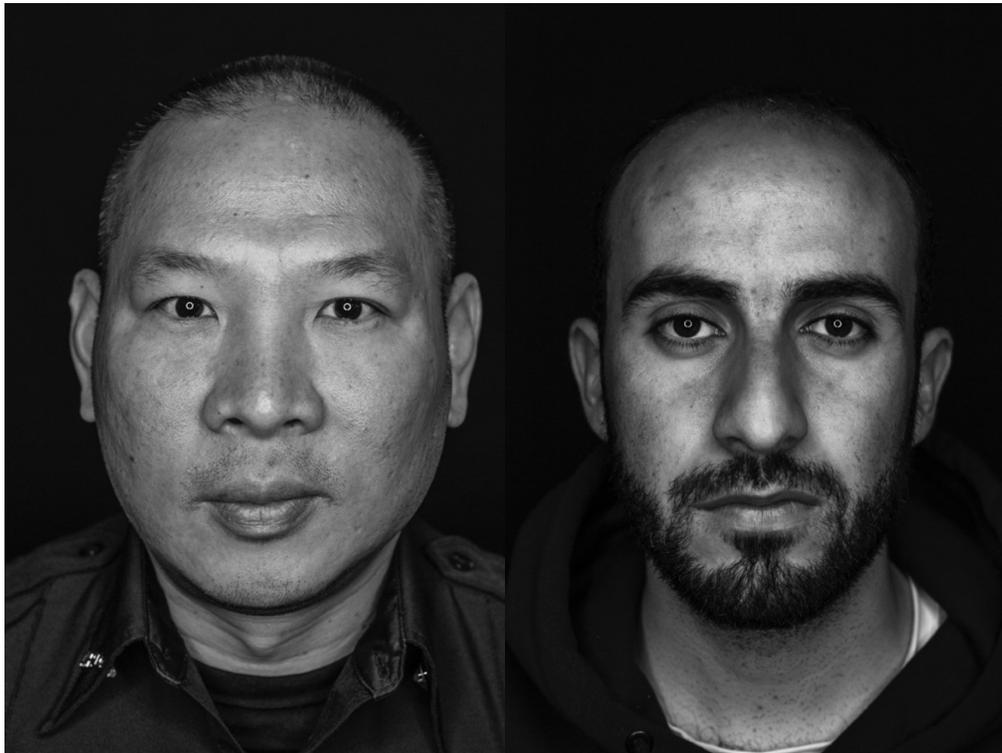


Figure 3.11 Dilok Phanchantraurai

Figure 3.12 Mohammed Abufalgha

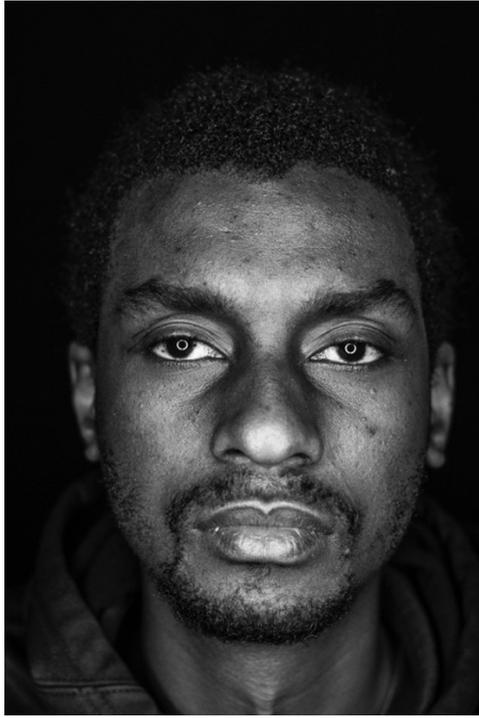


Figure 3.13 Manatsa Mazimbe



Figure 3.14 Faisal Hafeez



Figure 3.15 Graciela Orantes



Figure 3.16 Natasha Greene

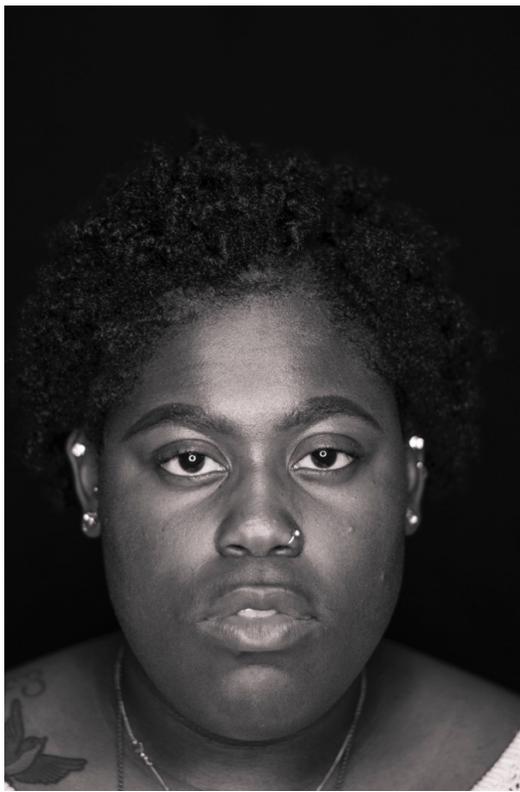


Figure 3.17 Tia Carter

Sound – Interview

To create a mixed media installation, audio interviews were linked with a QR code. Upon scanning the code, the phone automatically takes the viewer to the audio player. Each interview was linked with the person in the photo and story narrated by the participants themselves. For viewer not present in the exhibition, the interviews are available on the website (www.projectget.net).

The sound feature plays a vital part in the execution of the project, it renders the important aspect for the audience experience in the exhibition or when simply heard on social media platforms. The interviews are the participant's own narratives and offer a unique perspective to the audience. The interviews also have a background score to add a soothing touch

for the raw human stories and provide a complete listening experience to the listeners. The music helps in listening to the stories which as described by the audience, were emotionally charged and at times tragic. The background score also makes sure that all stories offer a unifying theme of belonging to the same project.

The study aimed to explore the concept of interdisciplinary art and put this idea to test, whether the experience of multimedia installations enhances the positive effect on audience. Utilizing visual and auditory senses at once is bound to make it more impactful on an individual as opposed to, if only one of them was used. However, this study did not come across any direct research done on this area and aims to fill the gap when in future the results of the exhibition can be quantified.

Exhibition

The Exhibition was the focal point for this qualitative study. Its was a total three-day event open to all people, communities and general public.

Testing

It was important to test the printing before the exhibition. Therefore, samples of the print were done on various papers to see the output. HP default paper was used initially figure 3.17(left) but it did not have the clarity required to print exhibition quality photos. Afterwards, HP Universal Heavyweight Coated Paper was used figure 3.18(on right) to print the same photo and the results were visibly different and better.



Figure 3.18 HP Default Printing Paper (left) and Figure 3.19 HP Universal Heavyweight Coated Paper (Right)

After the test printing was done, images were then printed on a scale that can be used for exhibition. One of the challenges for organizing exhibition was the fact that images had to be life size and printing them required an organized scaling. The portraits as per the available exhibition space needed to be of a scale of 72 inches wide and 90 inches tall. Since the scale of the print was large and the availability of the large printer was an obstacle because of limitations of funds, it was divided in two parts and printed separately as two 36 inches wide and 90 inches' tall posters. After printing it was later pasted together carefully to match the images even.

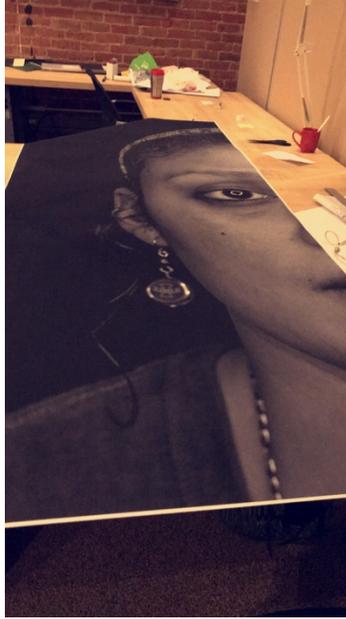


Figure 3.20 Picture of the 36x90 print

Event

Event was organized and put together at Gallery 181, College of Design Bissell Road, Ames, IA 50011. It was a three-day event. On the first day, a symposium was held as the opening ceremony. Symposium format was to help open the exhibition, with snacks and coffee to create an informal and comfortable setting for the audience. The idea of the symposium was to give the audience an overview of the project and also a chance to ask questions. Lights were kept dim during the symposium and spot lights were used to highlight the speakers only. The symposium prepared the audience for the exhibition and the things to expect from the exhibition. Afterwards participants were introduced to the audience who then spoke with the audience present and gave them an overview of their participation in the project and their feedback to make it a more interesting experience.

Later on exhibition was opened to the public and remained open for the next two days. The total foot traffic estimated for the exhibition was calculated to be 150 (this is based on the comments section available at the exhibition for the public).

Audience engaged with the participants and heard their stories. The reactions observed amongst the audiences involved some emotional moments where some members were seen crying while listening to the stories and others were very forthcoming and excited to share their experiences through the comment wall.

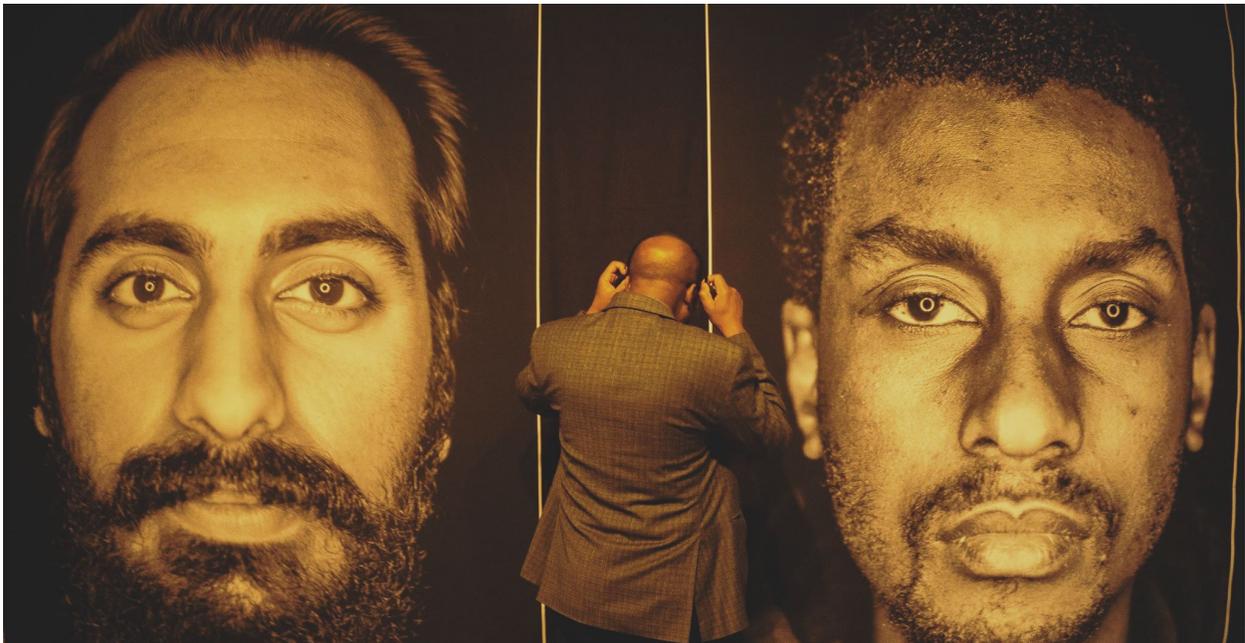


Figure 3.21 Audience listening to a participant's story



Figure 3.22 Participants interacting with the audience.



Figure 3.23. A member from the audience listening to the stories.



Figure 3.24 A member from the audience reading the description of the portraits.



Figure 3.25 Natasha Greene (participant) speaking with the audience about her experiences with racism

Comments

To make the event more inclusive and successful, it was important to involve the participants and give them platform in front of the attending audience. It provided a very personalized touch for the people who attended the symposium before the exhibition opened for the public viewing. Being introduced to the participants was appreciated as they shared their thoughts and feelings of excitement about the project as shown in the figure 3.24. Meeting the participants set the tone of the exhibition and made audience more interested and participants feel more inclusive about the project.

For a qualitative study with a prototype exhibition as an event, feedback and comments by the audience was the means of quantifying the impact of the study. A separate space in the exhibition was set up as the comment section to give a chance to the audience to provide their valuable feedback.

Some of the comments at the exhibition were as follows

“Thank you for bringing this insight to Iowa.” - Charlie

“Majority of Americans are not racist. In the 21st Century its petty feelings that are put in main stream media. It’s historically inaccurate to suggest that we as a society have not changed. Both, Indians and Asians are the highest income earners in the US. I urge you to reach Thomas Sowell views on why blacks are low income earner is because of the Liberal Welfare State.”

- Anonymous.

“Amazing experience! Truly respect all the participants sharing their story! Love!”

- Anonymous.

“Lets fight for a world without Borders!” - Paula Moller

“The hearts and souls of every American need to take time and listen and see into the world we offer and the hand we extend. This is such a powerful journey. Thank you for sharing it and making it happen.” - Merry

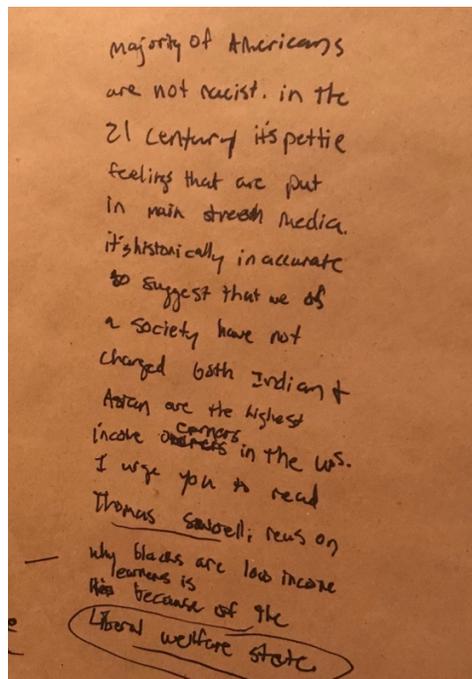
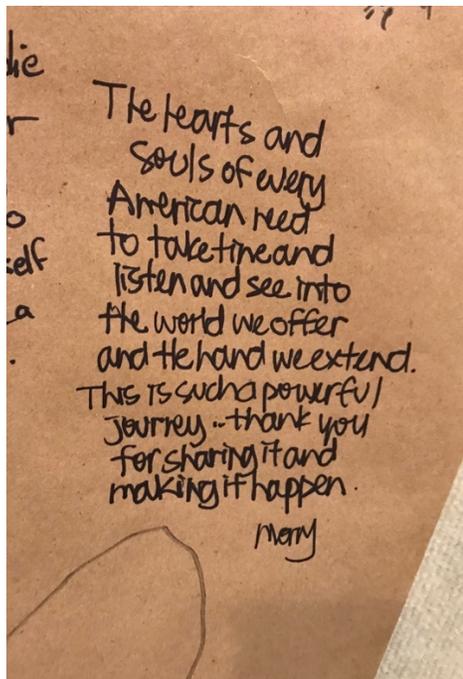


Figure 3.26 (Left) and 3.27 (Right) Comments from the exhibition

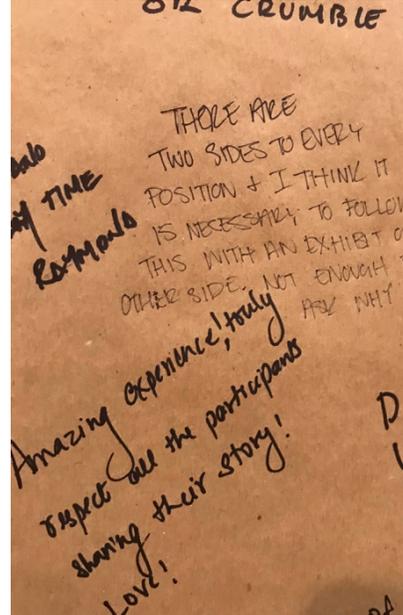
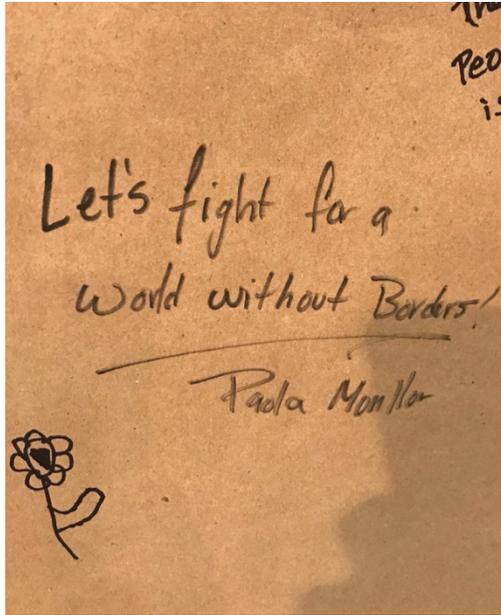


Figure 3.28 (Left) and 3.29 (Right) Comments from the exhibition

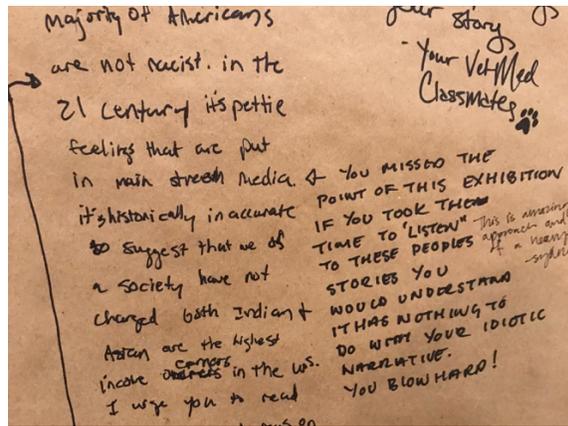
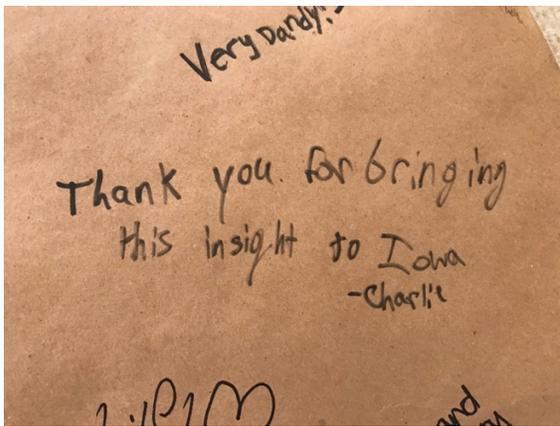


Figure 3.30 (Left) and 3.31 (Right) Comments from the exhibition

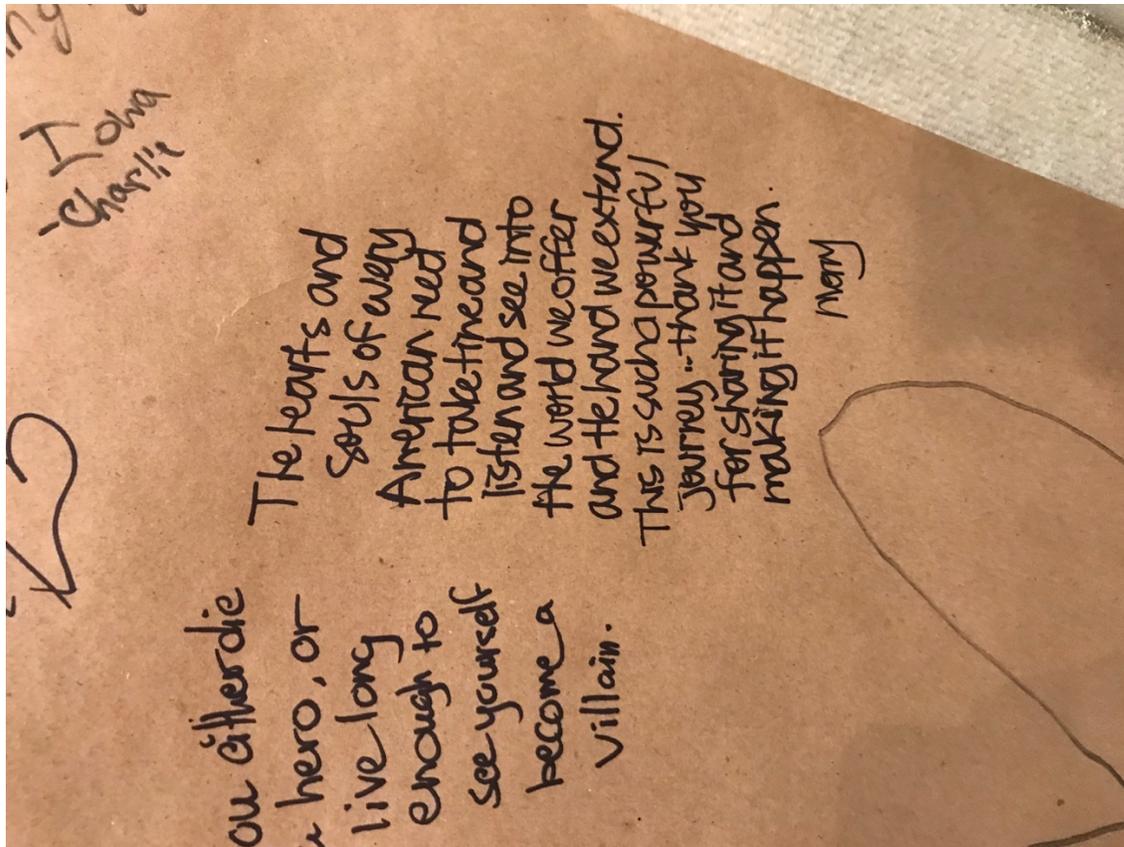


Figure 3.32 Comments from the exhibition

Website

Internet presence for the project is a needed tool for the study. Website and social media presence help make the exhibition reach more people despite the geographical limitations. Internet also provides a free and open space for the conversation between marginalized and non-marginalized communities that the project aims to facilitate. The website helped spread the word about the exhibition and more people participated in it as they were informed through it. Also, it helped and will continue to mobilize the exhibition by providing the entire experience online. Images and stories are shared and will continue to do so for a larger audience, just a click away at any time, anywhere. The exhibition was held in Ames, IA and

the participation was limited to the people who had access to the gallery, it was vital to provide if not same then similar virtual experience to the audiences online.

Website address: www.projectget.net

Home Page:

Contains a large image of the participant and gives a clean feel as the page does not have any clutter in it and the focus is on the participant.

About:

This page gives a brief introduction of the project and what to expect from the project in a very brief manner.

Portraits:

This page contains the portraits along with the interviews of the individuals. It is easy to navigate and does not require any additional installation or software to play the audio.

Artist:

This page gives a brief description about the artist and who is the artist. It also contains links that can be used to get in touch with the artist.

Contact:

Contains a form that can be filled in order to get in touch with any questions or feedback about the project.

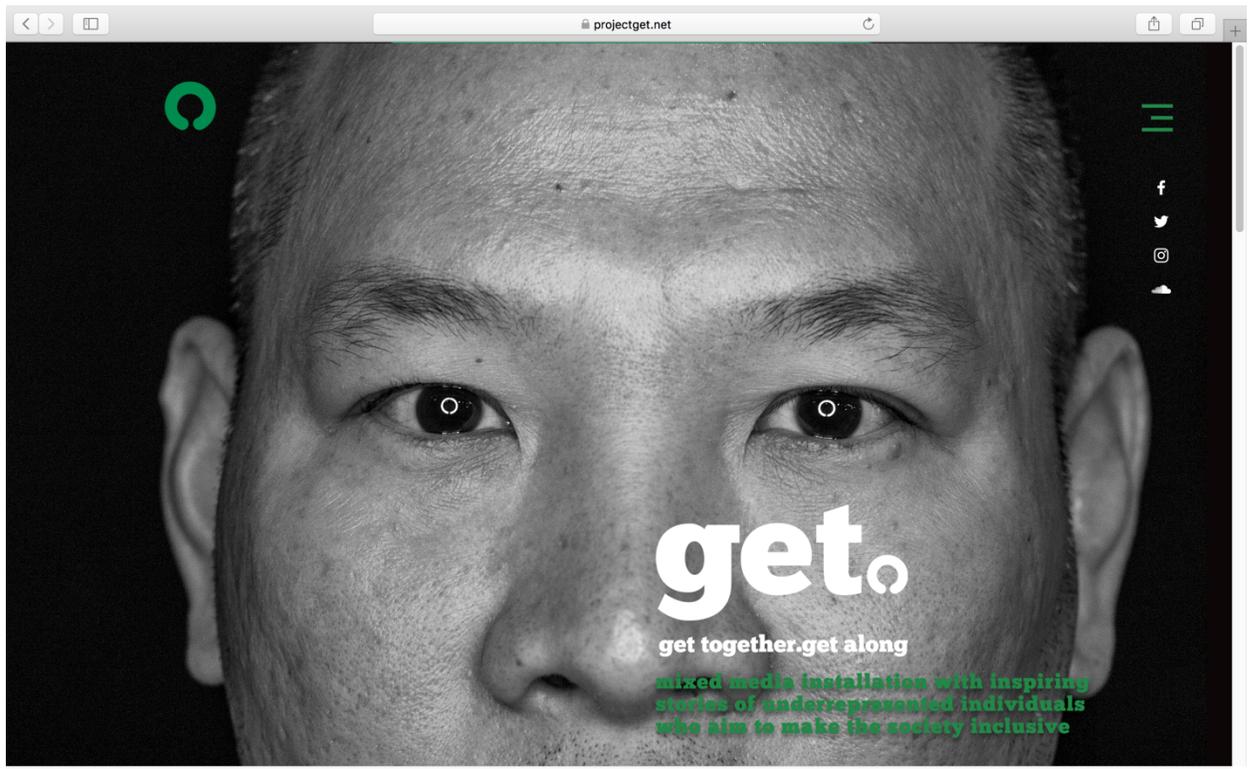


Figure 3.33 Home page

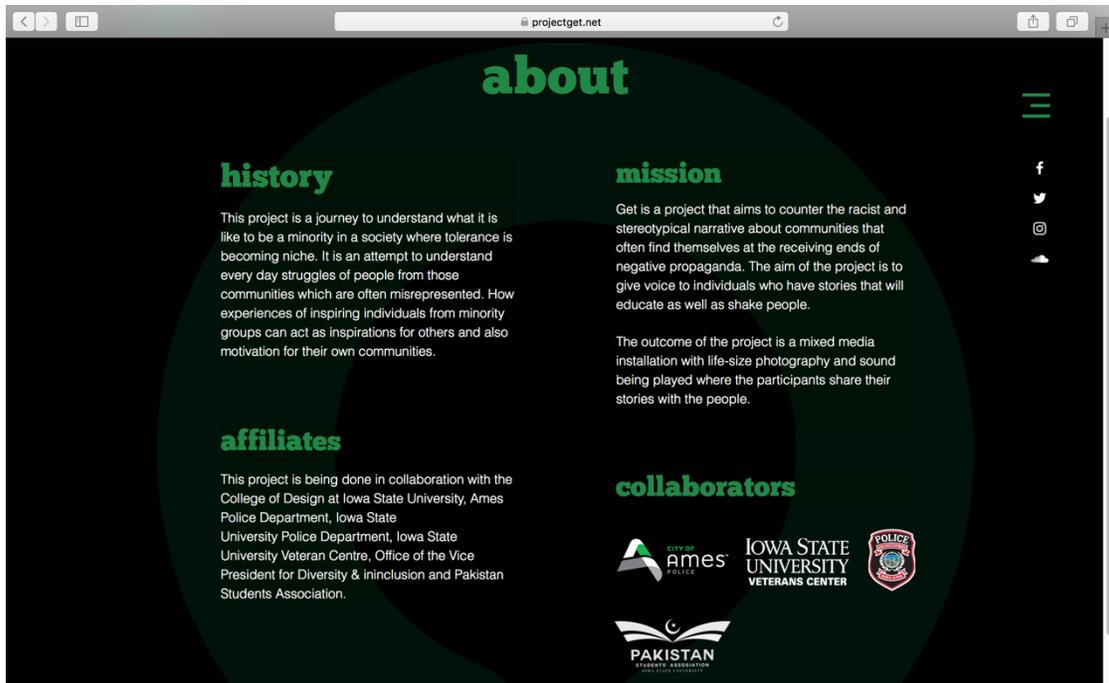


Figure 3.34 About Page

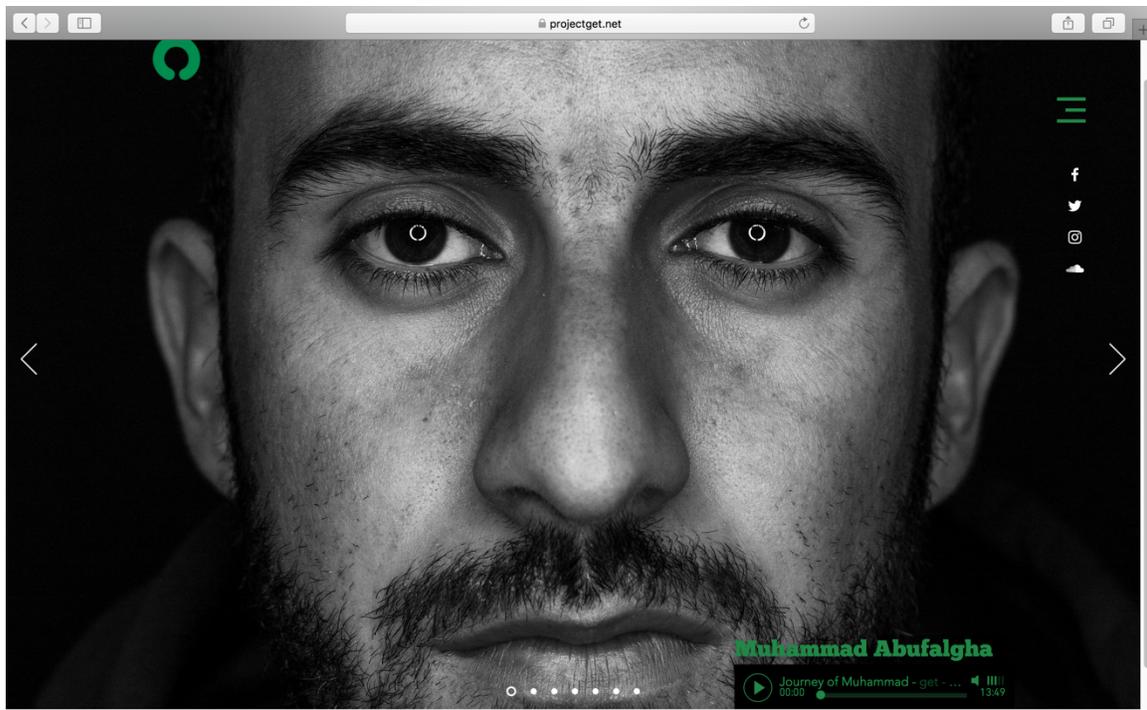


Figure 3.35 Portraits Page

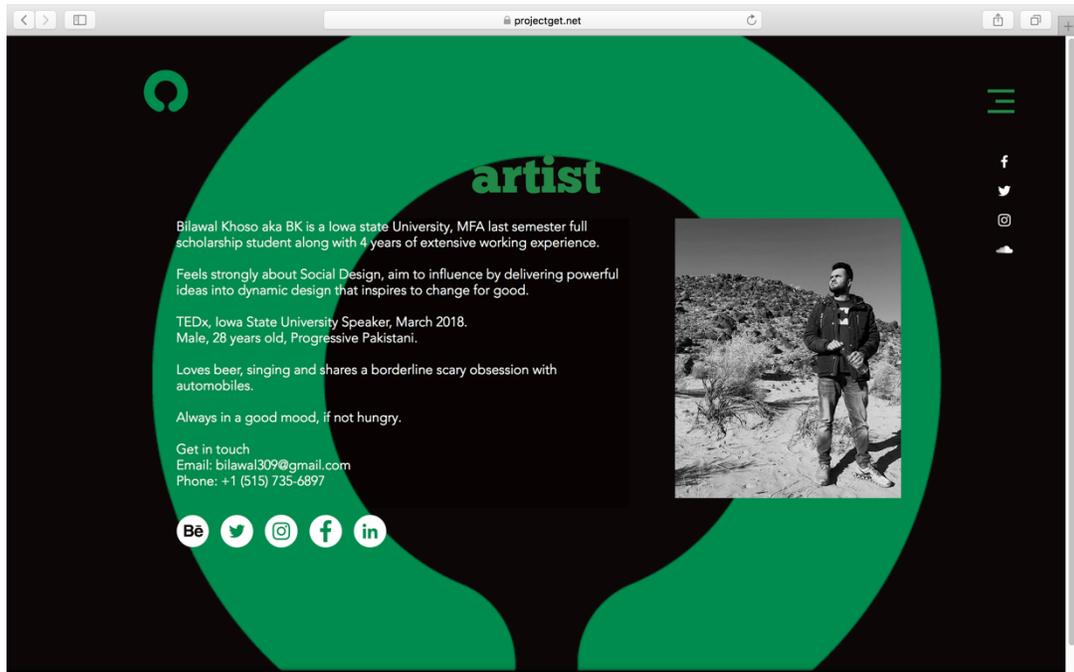


Figure 3.36 Artist Page

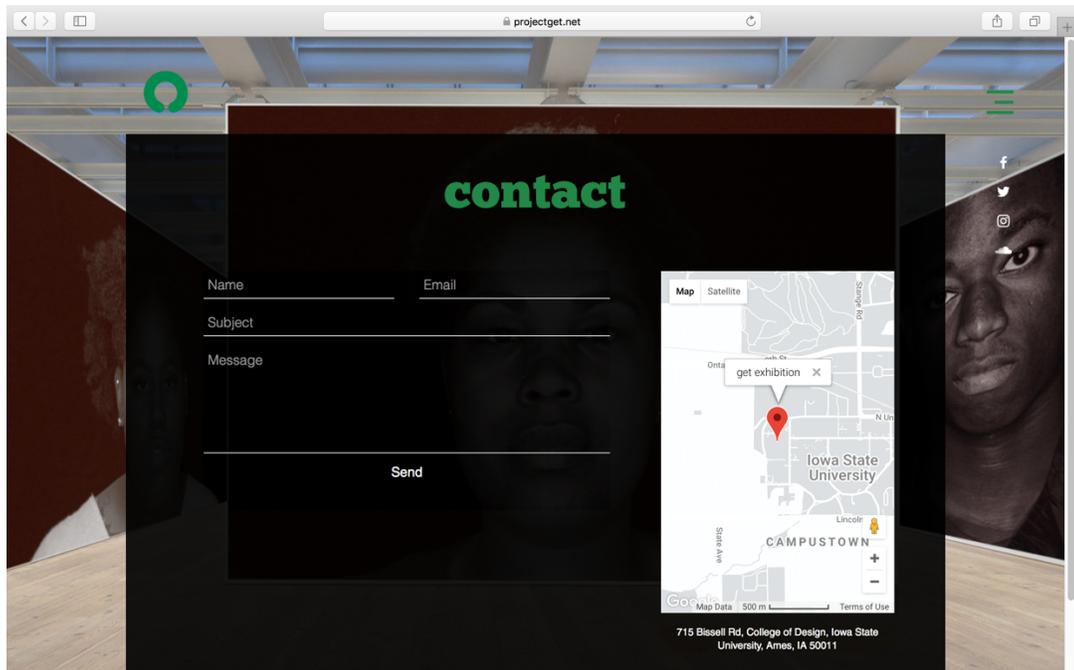


Figure 3.37 Contact Page

Social Media

To create a maximum reach through social media platform a Facebook page was set up to inform and provide the multimedia exhibition for those who wish to access it online. Social media helped in reaching the people who otherwise would not have heard about exhibition as it was a University event and mainly students, staff, faculty and related people are the audience members of such exhibitions. Through social media it targeted the entire Ames community and invited them to be part of the event. The Facebook page was liked by 70 people within the span of 3 days and visited by approximately 100. Also, it was shared from there onwards by many individuals and organizations and it will be a safe estimate to say 250 people were informed about the exhibition through social media presence alone.

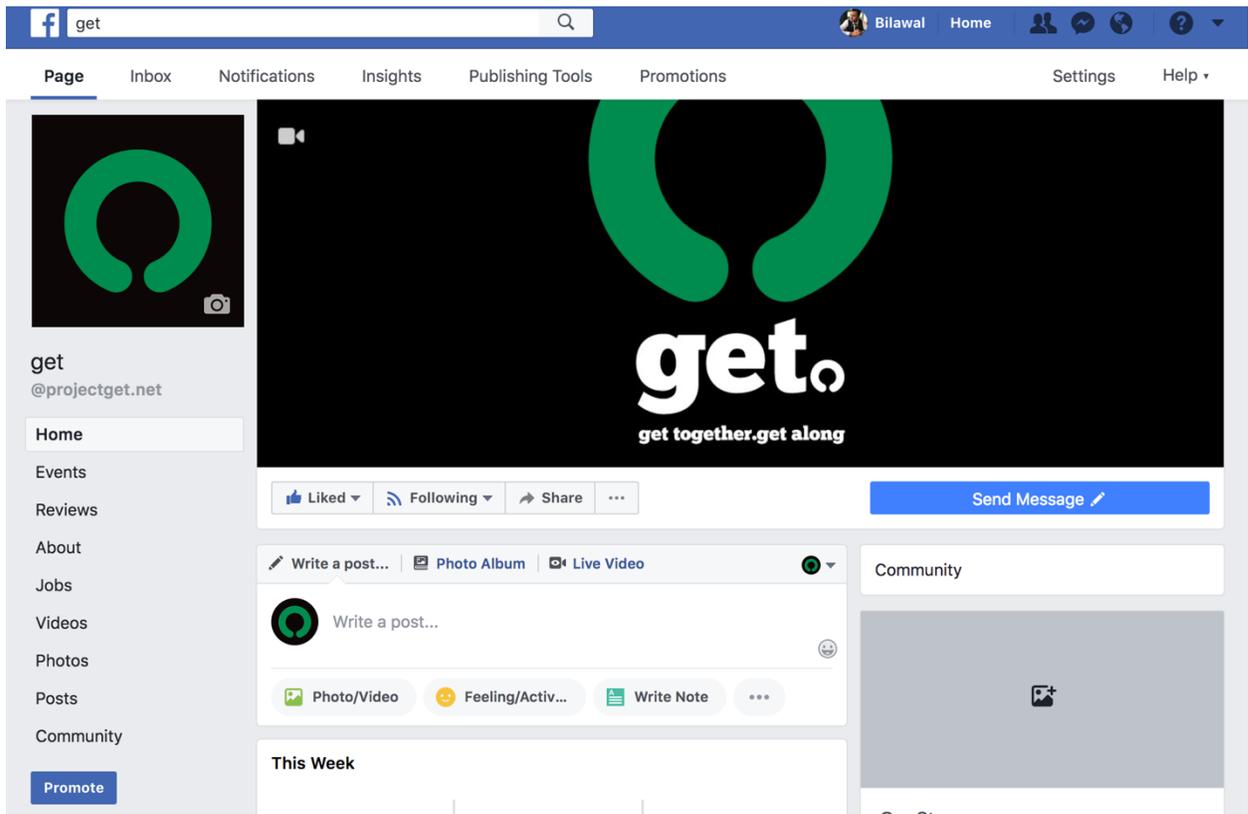


Figure 3.38 Screenshot of the Facebook page.

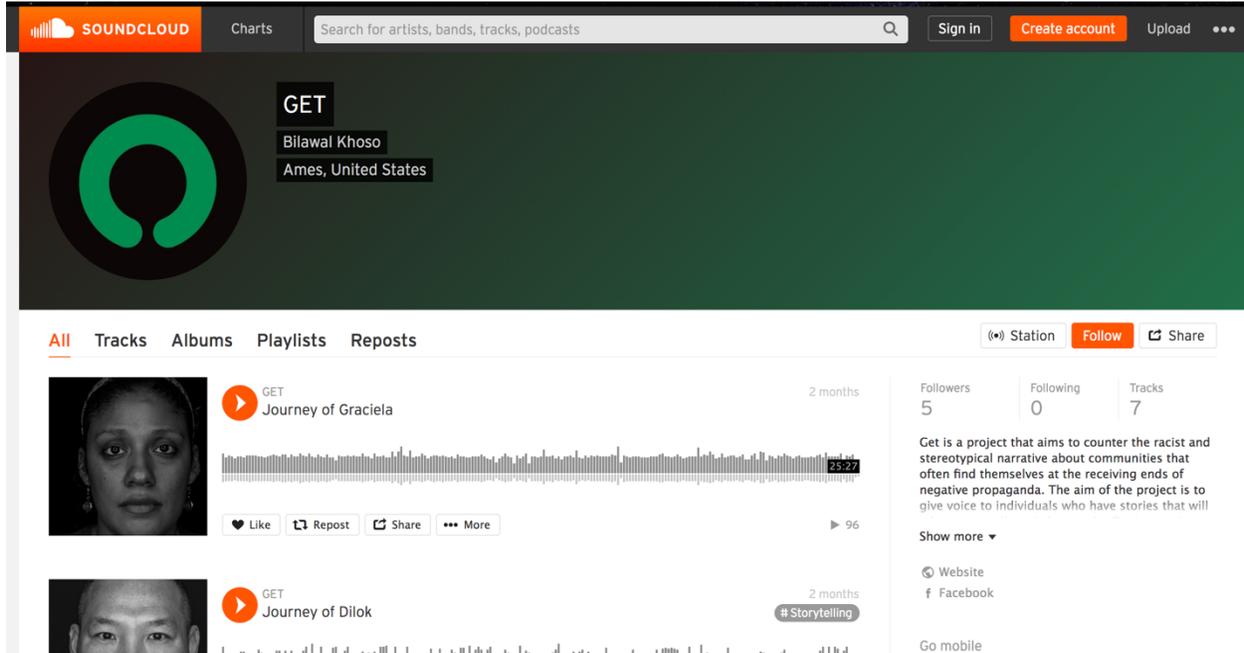


Figure 3.39 Screenshot of the Soundcloud account.

Audio interviews were also uploaded on Soundcloud. Soundcloud is a music streaming service that makes it easier for people to navigate and listen as it uses minimal internet data and it also plays sound in high quality.

CHAPTER 4. RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

The qualitative study helped answered the main question: Can social design, be used to encourage and facilitate a conversation between marginalized and non-marginalized communities? The following question is investigated below:

Results of the study reveal that under the umbrella of the design, a social issue had more viability, attention and audience interest. Exhibition, which was the testing element of the study revealed that when design and interdisciplinary fields are combined, it does become a powerful, attention grabbing platform.

Design worked as a persuasive instrument in bringing people together for the exhibition as well as its virtual presence on social media and internet. As a prototype and project, it sparked public curiosity and interest and helped gather them on a platform for them to think, reevaluate and get informed about marginalized people and their communities. Exhibition and social media presence of the project helped reveal that study did achieve to initiate a conversation between different communities which in turn can be used to make an impact in changing the rhetoric about negating the stereotypes about certain marginalized communities and contribute towards a more inclusive society.

Through this project the stories of individuals hailing from marginalized communities were heard from people belonging to non-marginalized communities which prompted a physical engagement of both communities (through exhibition) and virtual contact (through social media) The attendance of the exhibition which was roughly estimated to be above 150 as well as the online viewership and participation of 250 people for this project in just under a month's time period prove that it indeed help facilitate a conversation.

For this quantitative study with social good implications, results from prototype were not measurable. The prototype was executed on a small scale and since it engaged with human subjects it required a vast amount of time for its execution. Also, it required funds to facilitate the project and hold an exhibition of a grand scale which would have been used to attract more audience and ultimately start a conversation on a bigger scale.

CHAPTER 5. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE IMPLICATIONS

Limitations

The ideal way for this study would be a large-scale human subject participation and to test its effects on changed public opinion after viewing exhibition. However, because of the limitation of time, distance and funds this study used more small-scale methodology to answer the research questions.

Geography and Attendance

The exhibition was in Ames; therefore, the audience was limited to its community. Ames has a significantly larger international community because of the presence of Iowa State University, the community here is more aware and accepting of marginalized communities and by large the audience which attended the exhibition were mostly very well exposed to diversity and different communities. Due of which, it was unclear whether or no it changed or impacted any minds as there was no method of measure the before and after effect of the exhibition.

Therefore, geographically the challenge was to offer the same experience to larger segment of public. Apart from the geography, access to art gallery was also an issue since only the people with the privilege of knowledge about the location and the means to get there, had the access to the exhibition. Due to the nature of the exhibition being held in a non-confrontational space, no incidents of opposition were observed, however the exhibition was able to attract a good amount of people to the exhibition.

Resources and funds

Another limitation was the resources and funds available due to which the study was restricted to a small scale. Participants were few and exhibition was on a small scale. There were not enough funds to measure opinions of the audience before the exhibition and consequently whether audience had a changed opinion after viewing the exhibition to establish if a breakthrough impact did occur or not.

Future Implications

The future of the study is very promising. The execution of the project and exhibition need to be replicated on a bigger scale to make sure it reaches all people. To make the exhibition mobile to offer the same experience to the larger segment of public who are not necessarily non-confrontational. To make it reach communities which do not have access to art galleries and not be exclusive to the people with the privilege of knowledge about the location and the means to get there. A more public and open exhibition idea shall be explored in the future to make it into a public art and not be limited to gallery spaces.

After the exhibition Louisiana State University and ISU 4U have contacted to host an exhibition in their campuses. The ISU 4U Promise is a partnership between Iowa State University and Moulton and King elementary schools in Des Moines, IA that offers tuition awards to the youth from those elementary schools - schools in neighborhoods with populations that have historically been excluded from higher education due to systemic, institutional, and economic barriers, often from a root issue of racism.

Apart from the exhibitions, an effective way to measure the results of the study needs to be in place with a systematic and organized way to record the feedback and changed opinion of public before and after the exhibition. Exhibition also needs to be equipped to handle any

unfavorable situation in case of an opposition and confrontation by a member of the audience if the message is not received well.

A book is also a future possibility with participant's stories published. The book will also have a CD with it, that contains the audio stories of the participants. It will require funds to be printed, therefore a campaign will be set up to raise funds. The idea is to help raise funds through the book for further development and expansion of the project. A mock up of the book can be seen below.

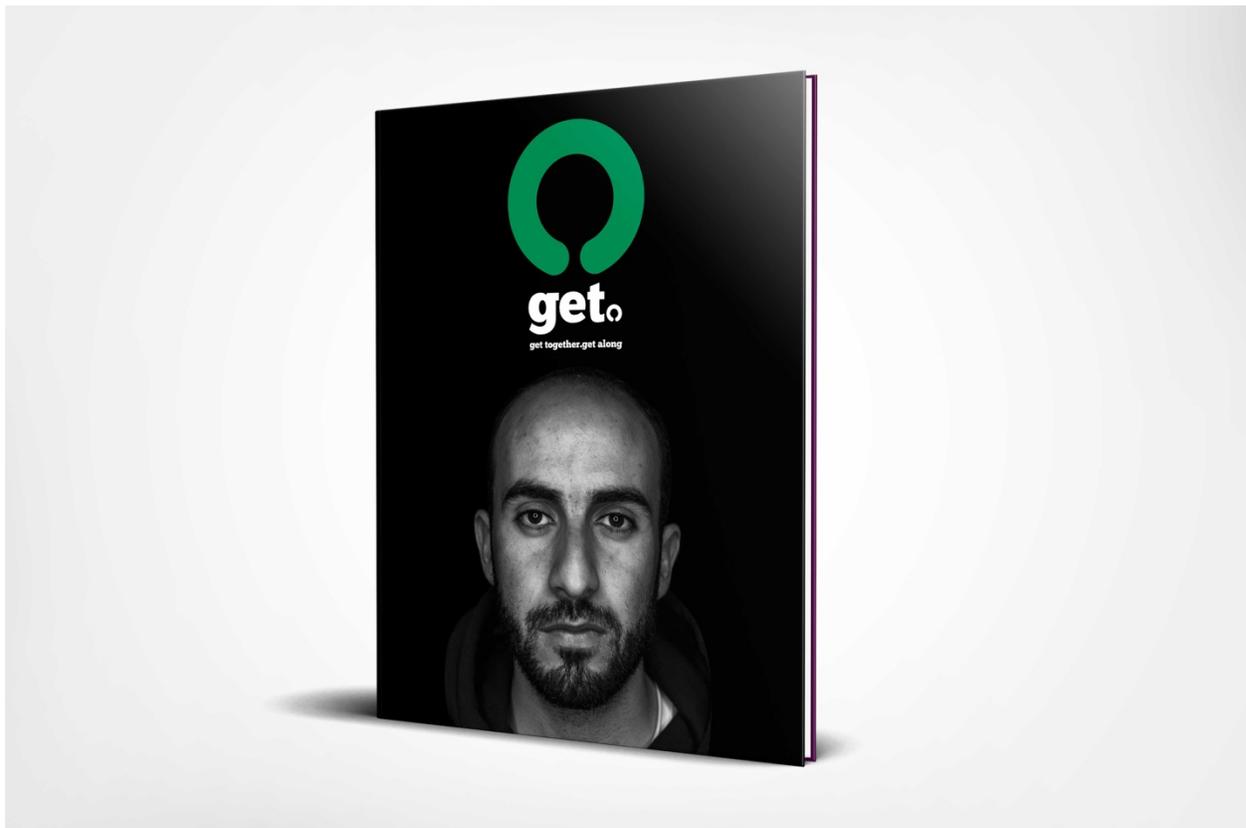


Figure 6.1 Mock up of GET book

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APPENDIX IRB EXEMPTION FORM

IOWA STATE UNIVERSITY
OF SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY

Institutional Review Board
Office for Responsible Research
Vice President for Research
2420 Lincoln Way, Suite 202
Ames, Iowa 50014
515 294-4566

Date: 12/21/2017

To: Muhammad Bilawal
2342 Edenburn Dr Apt 46-D
Ames, IA 50010

CC: Dr. Bernard Canniffe
146 Design
Dr. Lisa Fontaine
158 College of Design

From: Office for Responsible Research

Project Title: GET (Gather, Engage, Talk)

The Co-Chair of the ISU Institutional Review Board (IRB) has reviewed the project noted above and determined that the project:

Does not meet the definition of research according to federal regulations.

Is research that does not involve human subjects according to federal regulations.

Accordingly, this project does not need IRB approval and you may proceed at any time. We do, however, urge you to protect the rights of your participants in the same ways you would if IRB approval were required. For example, best practices include informing participants that involvement in the project is voluntary and maintaining confidentiality as appropriate.

If you modify the project, we recommend communicating with the IRB staff to ensure that the modifications do not change this determination such that IRB approval is required.