

## APPROVAL SHEET

Title of Thesis: Hue, Intensity, Value

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## Abstract

My thesis exhibition, *Sibling Portraits* and this text, *Hue, Intensity, Value*, are the result of nine months of writing and three years of making art. I identify my three areas of focus: elements of design, face perception, and psychological essentialism. I examine how my practice of capturing and manipulating photographic portraits relates to photography's historic relationship with xenophobia and practices such as physiognomy and criminal atavism. I also contextualize the images I produced within contemporary discourses about intersectionality and the social construction of race.

I produce images for three main reasons:

1. To study my and other's biological and sociological responses to the way people look including facial expressions, facial metrics and skin tone.
2. As an excuse to look at faces and enjoy their aesthetics.
3. To manipulate reality in order to disorient and entice my audience and myself.

*Sibling Portraits* is a series of animations and still images that incorporate these three interests using my seven biological siblings. The body of work addresses aesthetic design, face perception and psychological essentialism by presenting the bodies, hands, voices and faces of my siblings for viewers to observe.

Hue, Intensity, Value

By Jaclin Paul

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## Preface

Every day I use phenotypes (the way genes interact with the environment to form the way organisms look) such as skin color and facial metrics to categorize humans. The portraits I make are about the semiotics of physical markers and the exchange of looking. I am interested in appearances and appearance-based perception between individuals and groups. I study how face recognition and psychological essentialism prompt culturally significant behavioral responses to the way people look. These responses are evident when corporations, individuals, cultures and governments assign value, meanings and names to physical markers.

My thesis project, *Sibling Portraits* began as an attempt to make work about whiteness in order to promote what Rachel E. Luft calls “an antiracist white collective racial identity,”<sup>1</sup> and advance anti-racist behavior. I did this because a sincere investment in anti-racist art practice requires work that is didactic and directed toward teaching white culture about itself. However, through the process of excavating my motivations, I discovered two new things. First, that making art about race is not a catalyst but a byproduct of the resentment I have toward my and others’ essentialist tendencies and second, that my interest in physical difference is rooted in compositional aesthetics. *Sibling Portraits*, rather than explicitly displaying white privilege and the power of being white, more broadly addresses racial markers, gender presentation, body types and facial metrics when related to genetic presentation.

All representation traffics in power. I am the beneficiary of multiple dominant statuses. The privileges provided by various aspects of my identity, including whiteness, education, non-disabled etc. give me agency to produce images that classify humans based on my non-objective perspective. For example, I have the benefit of funding to attend a higher-education institution that gives me access to the technology to produce photographs. Also, in the US, I appear “white,” arguably the most privileged, socially mobile master status. Some of my work uses photographs of models who do not look or identify as “white.” I represent the models based on my subjective interpretation even though they and I are phenotypically dissimilar with divergent life experiences rooted in individual and group responses to our phenotypic variation. As Linda Martin Alcoff writes, my depictions construct the model’s “subject-positions” instead of illustrating their deeper humanity or authentic self.<sup>2</sup> When I represent anyone who is not myself I create and reproduce them as a “public discursive self.”<sup>3</sup> I inaccurately simplify them by removing them from the complexity of subjective experience. As the artist, I have power over the models because I represent and define them based on subjective categories.

In contemporary Western contexts, photographic classification of humans risks affirming the validity of historical social hierarchies because both image production and classification are historically biased practices used to create social hierarchies that result in physical and psychological harm to groups and

individuals. Phenotypic observation, aided by portrait photography, was a convenient method to scientifically and genetically confirm race in a way that does not exist, resulting in destructive fictions used to promote false, racist axioms and impose subjective observations and definitions onto humans. Some of my work emphasizes phenotypic difference and some of it homogenizes groups based on a physical marker or genetic inheritance. Some viewers who are sensitized to photography's history and practices using phenotypes are alarmed or disturbed that my work also categorizes based on phenotypes. My use of categorization is to examine, illustrate or highlight what Kimberlé Crenshaw describes as the specific values that accompany some phenotypes and the social hierarchies produced and nurtured by those values.<sup>4</sup> My objective is to consider and challenge how visible difference translates into embodied cultural capital and individual identity.<sup>5</sup> Some of my projects, such as *Sansus*, emphasize visible difference. Other projects, such as *Blushing*, and *Sibling Portraits* homogenize groups based on a single physical marker or genetic lineage. Since many of my works classify groups based their phenotypes, I acknowledge the relation of my work to the historical and contemporary misuse of phenotypes.

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## 1. Neural mechanisms and social context

### a. Elements of Design, Face Perception and Psychological Essentialism

#### Elements of Design

Skin colors have hue, value and intensity. Each human head varies in form, lines, shapes and textures arranged to make a singular composition. Scale, proportion, balance and hierarchy, when read as elements of design instead of sociological or anthropological terms, are categories that can classify and define the dispersal of shapes and forms on the surface, protruding from within and sprouting out of heads.



*Fig 1. Jaclin Paul, Kali #1-#4, 2015, Digital image.*

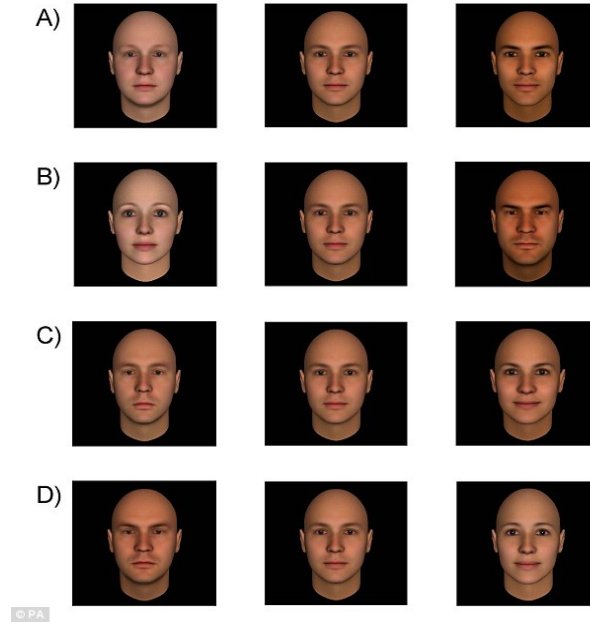
Aesthetically, I am interested in the way people look – in the elements that construct the appearance of human faces such as the angles of a forehead compared to the geometry of a nose combined with the tilt of eyebrows and the texture of a chin.<sup>6</sup>



My work indulges this visual interest. Because I take photographs of people, I have images that I can arrange, adorn and manipulate, using my power as a photographer to create reality. In all of my projects my aesthetic attraction to the human face is the foundation and without it I would not make portraits.

### **Face Perception**

Secondary to this fundamental aesthetic attraction is my affinity for the gaze, meaning I like to look at people looking. The gaze,<sup>7</sup> is one of six aspects of human face perception.<sup>8</sup> When I choose a single final portrait of an individual to edit from a large number of portraits of the same individual, my selection is always based on my perception of the individual's gaze and by extension, their emotional expression - two aspects of facial perception.<sup>9</sup>



*Fig 2. Trends in Cognitive Sciences, Olivola et al.*

*This chart shows computer generated models of faces considered less competent (a), dominant (b), extrovert (c) and trustworthy (d) in the left-hand column. The middle column represents an average face in the statistical model, and the right column shows the most competent, dominant, extrovert and trustworthy facial features.*

Although scientific knowledge is culturally and politically positioned, current neurobiological research asserts that across cultures and geographic locations there is a high level of collective individual agreement and differentiation between specific human facial characteristics. These facial characteristics include competence, dominance, trustworthiness, neuroticism, open-mindedness, conscientiousness, agreeableness, extraversion, fertility, perceived likability and perceived threat.<sup>10 11</sup> Individual face perception has social implication when collective face perception, regardless of its accuracy, molds socially shared

subjective reality. Yet, studies show that some forms of biological face-recognition successfully function for both socialization and survival.<sup>1213</sup> When I look at the models in my images I realize their facial metrics have affected their life experiences since what we project influences how we are received. I also consider how their life experiences have affected their facial structure and expression. I am interested in the difficulty of discerning accurate perceptions about facial characteristics from those that are faulty.

### **Psychological Essentialism**

The inconsistently reliable pattern of facial recognition overlaps my third area of interest: psychological essentialism. Psychological essentialism is the implicit belief that groups of humans and animals have inside of them an “essence” that shapes what and who they are.<sup>14</sup> These “essences” ground and stabilize the enduring properties of different groups or “kinds” of humans and animals resulting in the belief that groups of humans and animals have shared central characteristics that justify their similar phenotypes and behaviors.

While both affirming and refuting various aspects of psychological essentialism, current scientific research has yet to parse how social contexts influence and change neural mechanisms<sup>15</sup>. In “Face Perception in its Neurobiological and Social Context,” W. C. De Souza, et al. conclude that we still don’t fully comprehend how the fusiform facial area of our brains interacts with the social signals human faces provide.<sup>16</sup> This gray area is what frustrates and motivates me

to make work about facial metrics. I want to know if I can unlearn my automatic perceptions or reveal which are biological and which are sociological.

## **b. Essentializing Race, Skin Color, and the Social Construction of Race**

### **Essentializing Race**

When applied to racial categorization,<sup>17</sup> psychological essentialism insists that race is more than simply variation in skin color and facial metrics and that the visible facial differences reveal “essences.” Currently, psychological essentialism results in the widespread idea that two people of the same race are consistently more genetically similar than two people of different races when in fact 85% of genetic variation is within racial groups. While not useful scientifically, the biological markers that determine one’s “race” are loaded with sociological value.<sup>18</sup>

Although they lack scientific biological underpinning, current and historic social implications nevertheless dictate racial categorization. This creates social hierarchies, leading to advantaged and disadvantaged groups. The belief persists that disadvantaged groups underperform because of inherent inferiority, rather than external impediments. The consideration of this kind of psychological essentialism helps discern the contours and dimensions of essentialist tendencies. Without concerted self-examination of the subconscious reliance on the convenience of racial markers, gender presentation, body types and facial metrics,

patterns of racist and other biased judgment perpetuate despite efforts toward acting without prejudice. My effort is to uncover deeply lodged psychological essentialism that is nefarious and persists in spite of theoretical understanding of its indefensibility. I recognize this in myself in a variety of ways when I encounter it. My research is sometimes an attempt to liberate myself of habits of thought assumption that impair the potential to achieve a more ecumenical way of operating and constrain my understanding of humanity.

### **Skin Color**

Skin color is at once the most immediate and the most superficial physical marker. Through cultural conditioning skin color is used to ascribe meanings related to racial formations. These culturally invented meanings have widespread repercussions. For example, as Irene V. Blair, et al. explain in *The Influence of Afrocentric Facial Features in Criminal Sentencing*, regardless of race, the individual who is considered to look more “black” will garner more stereotyped trait impressions, less positive associations, and worse sentences when found guilty in a court of law.<sup>19</sup>



*Fig. 3. Still from video recording of the Clark Doll Test, 2012, Video still.*

More broadly, people of varying racial categories, including people who identify as Black, correlate lighter-skinned Black people with positive traits and darker-skinned Black people with negative traits.<sup>20</sup> Racial bias is ubiquitous in studies such as the Clark Doll Test.<sup>21</sup> More recently the Implicit Association Test<sup>22</sup> quantified unconscious bias, revealing that 70% of white people and 50% of Black people exhibit an anti-black bias.<sup>23</sup> These biases result from essentializing skin color and overemphasizing the homogeneity of racial categories.<sup>24</sup>

### **The Social Construction of Race**

From a sociological perspective, psychological essentialism engenders the prejudiced creation of racial formations.<sup>25</sup> According to sociologists Michael Omi and Howard Winant, a racial formation is “the sociohistorical process by which racial categories are created, inhabited, transformed, and destroyed,”<sup>26</sup> specifically the way social, political, and economic contributors define the substance and

relevance of the racial categories and the racial meanings that designate those categories.<sup>27</sup>

As a consequence of the US's racial formations,<sup>28</sup> Kwame Anthony Appiah says, "People thought race was important not just because it allowed one to define human groups scientifically, but also because they believed that racial groups shared inherited moral and psychological tendencies that helped explain their different histories and cultures."<sup>29</sup> In spite of the revelations of biology, current psychological research suggests that stereotyping and prejudice are linked to these essentialist beliefs.<sup>30</sup>

Patricia Hill Collins argues that, "The question is less whether race is real or whether racial projects exist, but rather what kinds of racial projects appear and disappear across specific racial formations and why."<sup>31</sup> A more complex understanding of popular beliefs about racial differences is integral to understanding the trajectory of contemporary culture. My fascination with racial formations, beauty privilege and other sociological constructs based on the way someone looks is compounded by an aesthetic interest in how people appear, perceive and non-verbally communicate based on face recognition.

## **2. Photography and Subjectivity**

Historically, photography's presumed objectivity was used to confirm cultural bias, including the social construct of race and the pseudosciences phrenology<sup>32</sup>

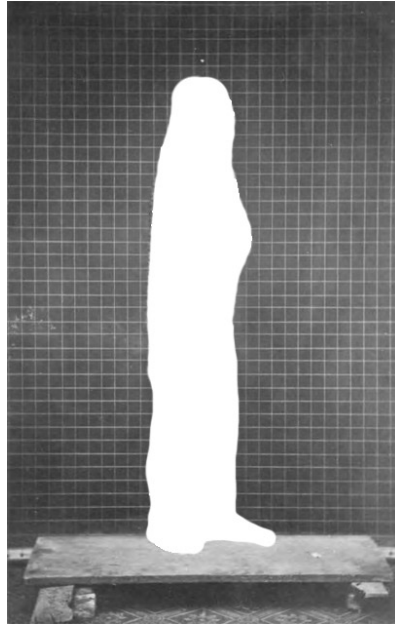
and physiognomy.<sup>33</sup> Photography has, been used by the state to identify and document its citizenry and by others to categorize, scrutinize and marginalize non-“white” bodies, reinforcing the superiority of “white” bodies. In the 1800s Thomas Huxley, John Lamprey, and Cesare Lombroso used photography to document and classify criminals based on skin color and facial metrics. Huxley and Lamprey focused on systematizing anthropological photography to document the widest range of human subjects.<sup>34</sup>

As Mary Marien describes in *Photography: A Cultural History*, they believed that the biological study of race required observing the nude body in order to record variations in hair texture, physique and skin complexion. This practice reinforced both the power relationship that divides the observer from the subject, and psychological essentialism: the belief in fundamental differences between races made evident in physical variation.<sup>35</sup>

Calibrating human character using facial metrics and head shape insinuated itself into contemporary thought. Cesare Lombroso, an Italian criminal anthropologist, invented criminal atavism, stating that physiognomy and phrenology identify subjects as inherently deviant rather than the manifestation of environmental factors.<sup>36</sup> Criminal atavism used physical characteristics – such as asymmetrical faces, large ears and under bites – to differentiate persons accused and convicted of crimes. In the 1870s Lombroso employed photography to extricate and consolidate these types.<sup>37</sup> He described some subjects as having Mongolian



physiognomy, drawing parallels between “less evolved non-European races,” and the criminal types he had identified. Examples include his description of a French female criminal’s “Mongolian” wide jaw, a direct reference to the belief in the evolutionary model of racial development where “Mongolian” indicated a holdover from a previous stage of human evolution.<sup>38</sup>



*Fig. 4. Jaclin Paul, John Lamprey and Thomas Huxley’s grid, absent the human photographed, 2017, Digital image.*

When I take portraits of non-“white” subjects, because of the “white” subjectivity through which my photographs are viewed and because of my cultural position of power, I acknowledge this history by writing about it in this text and using this paper to investigate my motives in an attempt to ask myself how I might be perpetuating these destructive practices.<sup>39</sup> But using my images to simply challenge history overlooks eugenic-like practices that are used today in science and surveillance (i.e. racial profiling, facial recognition systems). Instead of

challenging or displaying a litany of historic abuse, my works intend to show the commonness of face recognition and psychological essentialism. If I can produce images that start to identify and differentiate the biological and sociological impulses to categorize humans then I might make a more specific critique of the categorization. My photographs are not saying, “It’s bad that phenotypes matter.” Instead, I assert that phenotypes matter. My photographs do not claim that racism is bad; they say that racism *is*. I am not interested in repeating ethical imperatives because I don’t think that is an effective way to expose and prevent explicit or implicit bias. Instead, if I can insist and reveal that people reason phenotypically and if I can develop a visual language to describe the assigned meaning of phenotypes, I can interrogate their power and how they intersect with racial formations and identity construction.

### **3. Work**

#### **a. Introduction**

In 2014 I returned to the US after living in Ghana for two years. Extended exposure to some Ghanaian’s sociological approaches to phenotypic variation engendered a more complex comparative perspective about the socially shared subjective realities of the US’s racial formations. My perception was that in the US whiteness was the default, lacking the same visibility as, for example, Black or Asian. I also observed that where I was in the US, verbal acknowledgement of race in social interactions was suppressed and difference appeared to be amalgamated through the use of language. For example someone might describe a

Black person as “the person with dark curly hair” instead of identifying them as “Black.” In order to express the cognitive dissonance I experienced upon reentering US culture, I made photographic portraits, painted portraits and photo composites that showed the race or ethnicity of each person,<sup>40</sup> antagonizing the hegemonic approach to acknowledgement of some phenotypic differences, specifically those related to the social construction of race. Rather than mitigating difference, I wanted my work to highlight it and serve as evidence of “the fact of the active racialization of every aspect of daily life.”<sup>41</sup> My resistance to “colorblindness” or a de-emphasis of race in social interactions was also to decipher the politics of representation in my native culture. I tried to make work that would not tolerate prefabricated responses to race and representation in order to prove or disprove their logic. Broadly, my projects helped me gain a deeper understanding of racial formation in the United States because of the conversations I had and observations I made from interactions with the models and viewers.

When I started making work in 2014, it was before more mainstream cultural awareness of the Black Lives Matter movement and before the rise of contemporary white consciousness<sup>42</sup> in the US.<sup>43</sup> The progression of my work from 2014-2016 coincided with the increased mainstream visibility of entrenched and systemic police brutality toward Black people and the racialization of white people. Among many social media phenomena, The Black Lives Matter and Say Her Name movements made the visibility of white privilege more apparent to

white people and radically shifted popular discourse about race and representation. The shift is evident in pop culture via memes and films like Justin Simien's *Dear White People*, and Jordan Peele's *Get Out*. My own racialization was evident as I observed my tendency to essentialize non-white people, specifically unfamiliar non-white people, in spite of my theoretical understanding that this is not accurate or useful. Further consciousness resulted from the perspectives of friends, colleagues, professors. Personal narratives about racialized experiences and the legacy of colonialism expanded my previously narrow understanding of individual and institutional racism.



Fig. 5. Daniel Kaluuya in "Get Out," Directed by Jordan Peele, Video still, 2017.

The process of producing and showing my projects made evident how pointing out or discussing physical difference is often considered prejudiced and affirming of racial hierarchy because of the hierarchical values socially ascribed to phenotypes in the US.

Initially I thought that my projects could exaggerate sameness and difference, re-centering race in order to denaturalize it. While I learned that the exaggeration of difference could question the meaning of phenotype representation I found that the meaning is constantly in flux and inextricably bound up with eugenics, colonialism and patriarchy. I made work about sensitive subject matter that was not rigorously researched before execution and without acknowledging or examining my position as a “white” image producer operating in US culture.<sup>44</sup>

### **b. Emphasizing Race**

I made *Sunscreen Binary* (see Appendix 1), *First Contact* (see Appendix 2) and *Blushing* (see Appendix 3) before beginning an academic study of racial formations in the US. Bell hooks writes that as a student of racism, I should study the source of power, not it’s victims. Although it is sometimes coincidental, many of my initial projects consistently focus on the victims of the system of racial categorization rather than the white group that dominates the system. Instead of examining and critiquing whiteness as the source of power I made work that examined superficial aspects of both white and non-white subjectivities. Many of my projects engage with the hierarchy of racial and ethnic categories but fail to highlight the role of whiteness, and my complicity, in generating and maintaining the hierarchy.

In 2015 I began to study the history and repercussions of colonialism and the social construction of race. Even though I was reading texts from bell hooks and

James Baldwin that were decades old, their social imperatives were still relevant. These and other theoretical writings, when paired with sociological studies of responses to racialized culture including white fatigue and co-cultural communication, made me better understand the pervasive power of “whiteness.” I realized that *Sunscreen Binary*, *First Contact*, and *Blushing* were reactionary, inadequately theorized responses to essentialist aspects of US culture.



*Fig. 6. White Trayvon and Black Zimmerman, May 2012*

Carrie Mae Weems says, “for the most part blackness can only stand for itself, in the same way that often only women can stand for themselves. So if the experience is a ‘female’ experience or if it’s a ‘black’ experience it can’t stand in for a broader human experience.”<sup>45</sup> Many of my projects perpetuated this cultural

problem instead of working against it. Weems argues for a more nuanced understanding of intersectionality and individual identity.

### **c. Politics of Naming & Power of Categorization**

The process of naming has impact on populations and the act of providing an individual a limited number of choices with which to represent their identity is meaningful. Furthermore, the use of language to describe physical markers and groups of people reveals the psychology of the individuals who mandate the words. In *Sansus* (see Appendix 4) and *Multicultural Self Portraits* (see Appendix 5) I used existing language systems to classify images in order to investigate the validity of the systems. These language systems are a set of structures to which I apply my own logic and then take to its conclusion. In 2016 I continued making work about naming and categories while exploring cultural assimilation and appropriation. One example of this is *Penobscot Siblings* (see Appendix 6), where I tried to examine the meaning of passing as white.

### **d. Sibling Portraits**

After *Penobscot Siblings*, I continued my attempt at making work about whiteness in 2016 by conducting a drawing survey that asked the anonymous US public to illustrate what they think a white person looks like. A research trip to the Penobscot Nation in Maine complicated my understanding of whiteness in relationship to colonialism and racism to the point where I believed my focus was too broad to encompass in my thesis show. The final thesis work uses genetically

related subjects who usually pass as white. *Sibling Portraits*, rather than explicitly displaying the social power of whiteness<sup>46</sup> the work more broadly addresses racial markers, gender presentation, body types and facial metrics related to genetics.

*Sibling Portraits* features my seven biological siblings through photographs, animation and audio. Making *Sibling Portraits* was an aesthetic exercise where I considered elements of design, facial metrics, emotional expression and the exchange of looking. *Sibling Portraits* consists of 26 black and white portraits, three color portraits, 250 square feet of wallpaper made out of blue hands, a stop-motion animation of 1,000 black and white portraits, a sound recording lasting 28 minutes, and an 18-minute animation using four color portraits and a variety of feather images (see Appendix 7).

The three color images, *Siblings 2 & 6*, *Sibling 5*, and *Sibling 3* and the *180 degree Sibling Animation* do not alter the facial structure of the siblings. These images and animation are for the viewer to compare and contrast the facial metrics of the siblings.

The color animation, *Screensaver* and sound recording, *Assassin* are presented simultaneously in a theater. Together they exemplify a scenario in which exchanging a look has the potential to be deadly. *Assassin* features the voices of the seven siblings and others playing a game called Assassin. While they play this game, which requires an anonymous assassin to wink at people in order to



“kill” them, we also hear side conversations, discussions of the rules and other verbal exchanges. *Screensaver* is an animated composite featuring many feathers and four siblings with closed, blinking, or downward cast eyes. Once every four minutes, the torso of one of the four siblings rotates up from the bottom of the long green background and then experiences a series of events enacted by a cast of feathers of various bird species. Two of the feathers have eyes that open, blink and disappear.<sup>47</sup> The downcast eyes and blinking feathers in the animation reference *Assassin* where participants kill by winking and preserve their lives by avoiding eye contact.

All of the black and white portraits consist of a composite of two siblings, obscuring the singular identity of each sibling and inventing a new fictive human subject.<sup>48</sup> While the portraits look like the 26 people are genetically related, none are identical. In the majority of the portraits, figures gaze back at the viewer and are cropped at the waist or shoulders. Sometimes eyes that belong to a female sibling are composited with the bearded mouth of a male sibling. Similarly, some apparently female sibling faces are composited with male sibling chests. The result is that some of the images look both female and male, referencing complex gender presentation; the gender identity of these “individuals” is not clear. Other symbols are also ambiguous in meaning such as the positioning of hands, arrangement of clothing or the presence of jewelry such as a Star of David necklace.

Although at the time of making this project I was unaware of his work, comparisons have been made between images in *Sibling Portraits* and the facial composites of Sir Frances Galton (1822-1911). His photos differ from mine in that he overlaid several transparent portraits creating layers that mesh into a single image. *Sibling Portraits* does not use transparencies but rather seamlessly stitches together discrete facial features from two siblings in order to form a new individual. Galton, a multi-facted English Victorian statistician, sociologist, psychologist, eugenicist, proto-geneticist, anthropologist and psychometrician,<sup>49</sup> was interested in using statistic averages and correlation in conjunction with his portraits to generalize about groups of people such as criminals and Jews. *Sibling Portraits* might allow for the audience to generalize or make visual averages out of the models as well, since they are biologically related.

When I made 26 the composites of siblings, I was illuminating and documenting artifice in order to make it appear real. In addition to documenting the artifice, I also created it. During this process I found visual similarities in Hiroshi Sugimoto's photo series, *Portraits*. These photographs show realistic wax figures from Madame Tussaud's wax museum in London, staged against a black background. In *Portraits*, Sugimoto mimics Renaissance lighting used by the Flemish painter Hans Holbein the Younger during the sixteenth century in an attempt to recreate royal portraits but with a mix of contemporary and historic figures and by using photography instead of painting. The composited portraits invented a fictional object or "other" for the subject, my audience, to view from

their unique position. By inventing the model, rather than using a real human, I can represent the model without having to contend with the ethical implications of my creation of them as a public discursive self.

Making *Sibling Portraits* made me realize that I'm not exclusively interested in the construct of race. My work is about the way people look, the exchange of looking and the meanings we give to both of those things. From the discussions I had around writing this paper I learned that my work doesn't exist in a vacuum and that it is best to make projects about something explicit by first rigorously researching my subject matter and cross-examining power dynamics between myself and the models and my motivations for producing the work. This allows me to take responsibility for the way the work is received by my audience and how it operates in my culture. Since this lesson coincided with the production of *Sibling Portraits*, and my realizing how complex the subject of "whiteness" is, I found myself moving away from explicit visual statements in order to intellectualize, research and justify past projects. This shift of mental energy resulted in *Sibling Portraits* where I do not consciously interrogate or hypothesize identity politics in the US. Although the images have intersectional interpretations because they include symbols of gender, ethnicity, class, race, ability, and other statuses, I can also frame the series as a display of bodies, hands, voices and faces for the viewer to observe, compare, judge, categorize or not.



*Fig. 7. Jaclin Paul, Sibling Portraits, 2017, Digital images.*

## Appendices

### 1. Sunscreen Binary (page 15)



*Fig. 8. Jaclin Paul, Sunscreen Binary Series A, 2014, photograph.*

In *Sunscreen Binary*, my first project as an MFA student, I used ultraviolet light to make a series about how photography and light waves reveal and obscure skin complexion. I shot with a lens filter that blocks all light waves except ultraviolet. As a result, any surface that repels ultraviolet wavelengths appears opaque black in the final image. I took photographs of two models who identify as Black. The images show the models from the shoulders to the top of their heads sitting in front of a brick wall while they use their hands to apply sunscreen to their faces. Since only ultraviolet light passed through the filter the white sunscreen appears

opaque so it looks like the subjects are using the sunscreen to make their skin black.

As a comparison, I also shot a group of portraits without the UV filter, using visible light. The compositional elements are identical and the models apply the same sunscreen but it appears white because it is captured in the visible light spectrum. In the images, as the models apply the sunscreen to their faces, their expressions are varied. Sometimes the model stares directly into the camera, squints into the sun, closes their eyes, or looks down with a relaxed expression.



*Fig. 9. Jaclin Paul, Sunscreen Binary Series B, 2014, photograph.*

The images reference the history of minstrelsy in early to mid 19<sup>th</sup> century in the US where white entertainers used burnt cork and cocoa butter to make their faces black. The white entertainers performed as freed slaves in attempt to make black people appear subhuman. *Sunscreen Binary* also references contemporary uses of blackface in racist contexts by people who identify as white such as some members Caucasian fraternities at US universities such as the Tau Kappa Epsilon fraternity at Arizona State University or for more visually accurate biographical depiction in acted movies or TV roles by people who identify as Black such as

Zoe Saldana portraying Nina Simone in “Nina.” The work departs from these historic and contemporary uses of skin darkening material because it illustrates an invisible incidental occurrence that takes place whenever someone puts on sunscreen. When I created *Sunscreen Binary* I wanted to see what the images would look like and find out if they had symbolic meaning. I also wanted to observe viewer response based on their understanding of blackface and their perceptions about the phenotypes of the models. However, this deciphering of symbolic meaning hinges on the historicized racial and visual semiotics of blackface, a history I failed to research. Therefore I could not interpret the meaning of the images or the significance of viewer response or even identify what was at stake in the project because I did not ground the project in historic and contemporary discourses on blackface. From my audience there was an obvious avoidance of discussion around race and representation. The project would have benefitted from a clearer objective in order to be more effective in creating discussions about the meaning of skin darkening and skin lightening in the US.

## **2. First Contact (page 15)**

In my work I subvert dominant paradigms and turn things inside out. *First Contact* illustrates an alternative to colonialism in America by creating scenes where non-Native Americans assimilate to Native American culture and lifestyle.

*First Contact* also incorporates cultural appropriation; another topic that interests me because it is about the meaning of dress, hairstyles and accessories. The meaning is mutable without fixed lines of delineation and is susceptible to the influence of psychological essentialism.



*Fig. 10. Jaclin Paul, Addy, Josefina, and Caroline in Spring, 2014, Digital image.*

The doll company, American Girl, manufactures a line of historic character dolls. Each of these fictional personalities inhabits a pivotal time and location in the US's history. Four of the dolls, Kaya, Addy, Josefina and Caroline are relative contemporaries, all alive during the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Addy is an escaped slave, Josefina lives in New Mexico under Mexican rule in the 1820s, Caroline represents the War of 1812, and Kaya is a member of the Nimiipuu tribe right after Lewis and Clark infiltrate them.

Based on the dual interest of cultural assimilation and cultural appropriation I created a narrative of historical fiction where the character dolls of the American

Girl company who were alive at the time of Kaya (see Appendix 9), visibly assimilate to her culture by inhabiting her geographic location, wearing her clothes, maintaining her animals, preparing and eating her food and utilizing her dwellings. *First Contact* is a group of four triptychs, one for each of the four seasons in the Pacific Northwest, where the Nimiipuu tribe originate. The compositions are vertical, and mostly occupied by botanic and topographic features found in Oregon, Idaho and Washington. Within each composition is one of three American Girl dolls: Addy, Caroline and Josefina, inhabiting Kaya's native environment, wearing her clothing and posed with the accessories of her Nimiipuu culture.

In *First Contact* I sought reactions from different people in order to see how they felt about phenotypes. I wanted to see how my audience would react to a blond, blue-eyed girl, or Black girl, wearing the traditional cultural clothing of the Nimiipuu tribe. Most of my audience did not engage with the work on this conceptual level. Maybe that is because the project was conceptually muddled.

### **3. Blushing (page 15)**

*Blushing* is a series of 24"x36" color portraits of models who have skin dark enough to camouflage their blush. All of the models are in front of a black backdrop and look directly at the viewer. Their expressions are varied but without extreme emotion. *Blushing* was created to make the viewer think about the power dynamic between a person who is blushing and the person who witnesses the



blush and to provoke consideration of the positionality of blushing invisibly or almost invisibly.



*Fig. 11. Jaclin Paul, Ardy, Nzinga and Breana Blushing, 2015, photograph.*

*Blushing* was inspired by Jane Blocker’s “The Shame of Biological Being,” about how a blush is a response to recognizing that one is both seeing and being seen. The person who blushes is made into both the “subject and object of the gaze.” If reddened cheeks signal emotional transparency and vulnerability, I wanted to know if an invisible blush could obstruct possession and objectification. I selected the models based on the complexion of their skin rather than other aspects of their personhood. The titles of *Blushing* act as a stark rebuttal of other meanings the viewer might get from the image. It stops the viewer’s train of thought and refocuses it to note that this is what this person looks like when they blush. The viewer might wonder why they are blushing, consider the models’ relationship to me or what I did or said to make them blush. The mystery of what the person is feeling is dissolved since the title implies it is an emotion that resulted in a blush.

Artist Kerry James Marshall thinks about the psychological visibility and invisibility of black people in relation to white culture. Some of his work explores the duality of being and not being as a black person.<sup>50</sup> Marshall sees the invisibility as both retinal and psychological “from a culture who doesn’t particularly care to see you or see you in the fullness of who you are.”<sup>51</sup> Marshall painted black figures against a black background where the only separation between the image and the ground is the color temperature of the black used.<sup>52</sup> He has also taken photographic portraits using black light, thereby obscuring the skin of his models. Literal and metaphoric seeing and not seeing is salient to the medium of photography, which makes visible some things that the naked eye would otherwise overlook due to either physical or psychological limitations. When I made the *Blushing* series I was interested in the process of obfuscation as the result of skin tone and perception. Unlike Marshall’s work this series includes anyone with skin dark enough to disguise a blush and is not limited to black subjects. Therefore, it addresses the more general visibility/invisibility of the subjectivity of having skin with a dark complexion.<sup>53</sup>

*Blushing* failed to address the disadvantages of an invisible blush when it prevents viewers from seeing the emotion of the blusher. An invisible blush can make the blusher seem like they don’t have emotion and are therefore outside of the need for empathy and compassion as compared to people with lighter complexions who blush visibly. Other viewers said the project segregated the models in a negative

way that made them think they were being singled out and classified for subjugation as non-“white” people were historically segregated by “white” people as a means of control. In listening to the variety of responses to this work, I witnessed both motivated cognition and biased perception.<sup>1</sup> The ambiguity of *Blushing* made it offensive because it didn’t take a position on the meaning of the blush or take responsibility for the historic meaning of categorizing people based on their skin opacity.

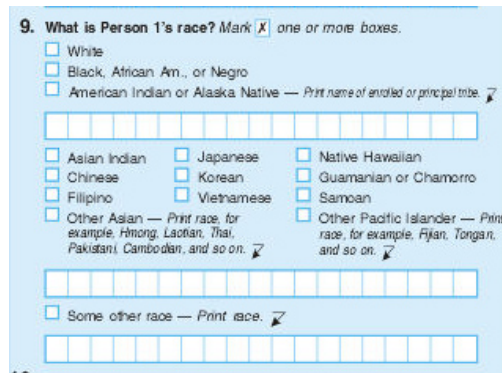
Unlike any other project I’ve created, some viewers insisted that I address the power dynamic at play in these portraits. In order to make this project I used my social power to solicit models willing to be presented as someone with skin dark enough to make a blush subtler than it would be if their skin were lighter. Because of my social status and other dominant statuses (non-disabled, white, college-educated, etc.) and the equipment and resources to which I had access, I was able to make this project. I had access to social media, a university, cameras and the will to use these things to make art. My models did not have those resources or the will to make this art project. It is possible, although not definitive, that they saw the portrait session as an exchange of goods for service because they got a free head shot as a result. Although they had the option of opting out of my project but still getting a free headshot, all models were interested in being featured in the project. Nevertheless, if I was unable to offer a free headshot as incentive to being photographed, it is possible, based on the photographic needs of volunteer models that I would have had far fewer volunteers as most people do

not want to do something like this with no benefit in return. Since I filtered the models based on amount of melanin, I am using my power to show people with dark skin blushing. They gave me permission to do this but my decision to show the project illustrates my power.

The responses to *Blushing* reminded me of S. Hall's observation that, "there is always a price of incorporation to be paid when the cutting edge of difference and transgression is blunted into spectacularization. I know that what replaces invisibility is a kind of carefully regulated, segregated visibility."<sup>54</sup> I wanted *Blushing* to be a meditation on the positionality of having a subtle blush. For many viewers, the elevation of dark complexions compartmentalized and separated humans, making them into a spectacle.

The process of shooting and showing *Blushing* was fundamental for my personal education because of what I learned about Black subjectivity in conversations with the models and when witnessing reactions to the images. Nevertheless, this project was an opportunity for me to realize the large gap between my intentions audience reception because the resulting work caused many viewers to read it as being about power dynamics and racist history rather than what it is like to have a nearly-invisible blush.

#### 4. Sansus (page 17)



9. What is Person 1's race? Mark ☒ one or more boxes.

☐ White  
☐ Black, African Am., or Negro  
☐ American Indian or Alaska Native — Print name of enrolled or principal tribe.

☐ Asian Indian ☐ Japanese ☐ Native Hawaiian  
☐ Chinese ☐ Korean ☐ Guamanian or Chamorro  
☐ Filipino ☐ Vietnamese ☐ Samoan  
☐ Other Asian — Print race, for example, Hmong, Laotian, Thai, Pakistani, Cambodian, and so on.   
☐ Other Pacific Islander — Print race, for example, Fijian, Tongan, and so on.

☐ Some other race — Print race.

*Fig. 12. Excerpt from the 2010 U.S. Census, 2010.*

The US government uses naming and categorization to designate racial/ethnic categories on the US census. *Sansus* is a visual thought experiment that applies the U.S. census racial/ethnic categories as a framework for the democratization of two icons that are usually depicted as white males: Jesus and Santa. The government categorizes citizens in these 14 categories so I visualized the categories using composites that provide a Jesus and Santa for each. I generated 18"x24" portraits, two for each of the census categories. Each pair depicts a model as Santa, and same model as Jesus using composited costumes and beards. The backgrounds are green for the Santa and violet for Jesus.



Fig. 13. Jaclin Paul, *Sansus: Korean*, 2015, Digital image.

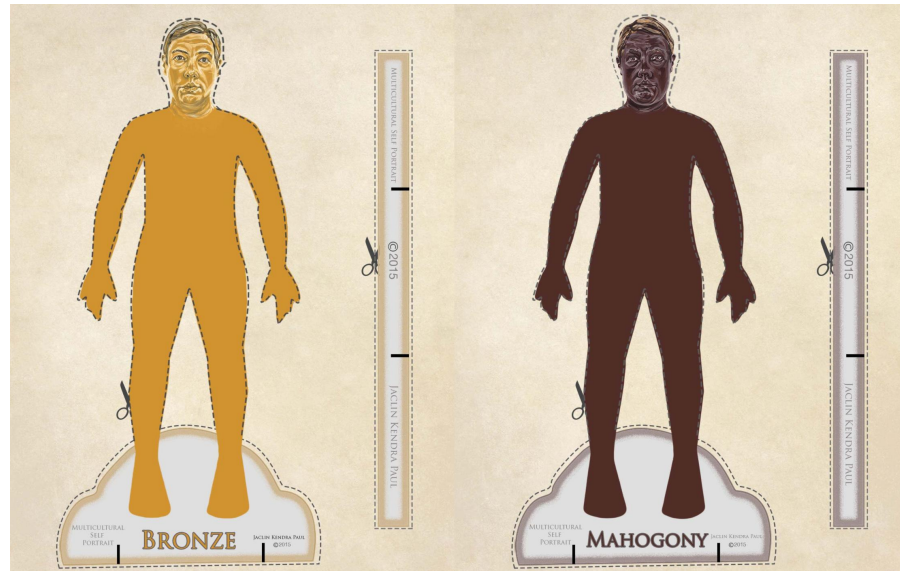
If the US government categorizes inhabitants based on 14 options, it is democratic to create a Santa and Jesus that feature some phenotypes of each race/ethnicity. *Sansus* uses humor to call attention to government classification.

Artist Carrie Mae Weems says that “Within seriousness there is little room for play but within play there is tremendous room for serious. I am trying to figure out these platforms in which to play with historical figures...that allow for me to engage with the world in an abstracted form in order to get at something that is more deeply realized.”<sup>55</sup> This sense of play is present in *Sansus* in order to get at the seriousness of putting humans into stringent categories, allowing the viewer to consider the significance and implications of a US census that categorizes based on race and ethnicity. Formally *Sansus* echoes some of Kerry James Marshall’s works by using hyperreal color as he does in paintings like *School of Beauty*, *School of Culture*, 2012 and *Untitled (Studio)*, 2014 and Nancy Burson’s *Guys Who Look Like Jesus* and *Women Who Look Like Mary*.

## **5. Multicultural Self-Portraits (page 17)**

*Multicultural Self-Portraits* archive the dominant culture's use of language and pigment to define differences in skin complexion. In this series, I painted myself ten times using pre-named, premixed colors available from manufacturers of “multicultural” tempera paint. Companies like Crayola manufacture paper, pencils, crayons and paint in different colors to embody variations in human skin color. These "multicultural" art supplies are marketed to primary and secondary schools. The names of the colors include “mahogany,” “terra cotta,” “bronze” and “skin pink.”

In addition to black and white to show shadows and highlights, each of the 24”x24” self-portraits use only one of the colors of multicultural paint. Each portrait is titled with the color name of the paint used. The painted portraits show the bust of the subject with a neutral expression returning the gaze of the viewer. The background of the subjects is very light blue. The portraits are mass-produced as interactive paper doll sets for you to cut out. These paper doll sets expand the bust into a entire body shape filled with the color of paint used in the portrait.



*Fig. 14. Jaclin Paul, Multicultural Self Portraits Bronze and Mahogany, 2016,  
Digital image.*

*Multicultural Self Portraits* are about producing and naming hues to represent the spectrum of skin complexion. They are about the psychology of representation when an individual chooses how to reproduce their skin complexion. The phenomenon of multicultural art supplies makes me question the power in naming and the significance of limiting options with which to represent an aspect of the self, in this case the color of one's skin. Whoever chose the colors and words to describe the colors is exerting power by limiting options and also defining the options through language and metaphor. The metaphors are names of wood like mahogany and names of metal like bronze and names of skin like "skin pink." The power dynamics are in play when someone is given a small set of colors from which to choose to represent their skin. The fixed number of paint colors results in the lack of visual representation of some users. The relationship between



manufactured, color and the user is complicated when the manufacturer names the colors. In a class setting the name of the user's skin color choice might have significance when compared to the skin color names of their peers.

From early childhood, we start assigning symbolic meanings to the elements of the human face. This continues into adulthood, as explained by Olivola, Funk, and Todorov in *Social Attributions from Faces Bias Human Choices*, where they describe how both societies and individuals sustain a belief that the face of a human has the potential to express a variety of facets of the individual's authentic self and intentions.<sup>56</sup> The lay belief that the face is the "window to the soul" is tenacious. Individuals and societies unrelentingly infer meaning about other's characters based on their facial features and expressions and these inferences have social consequences.<sup>57</sup>



*Fig. 15. Crayola Multicultural Crayons, 2015.*

Individual choice also reflects the cultural influence of the user's relationship with multicultural colors. I'm interested in the meaning of that choice and the impact

of naming and limiting choices. The project touches the surface of these questions by using myself as a test case to see what meaning is produced by painting my portrait with ten different colors of skin and naming each of my portraits one of the ten different words for those colors.

## **6. Penobscot Siblings (page 17)**

*Penobscot Siblings* a series about diluted ethnic heritages and the personal history and cultural knowledge that are lost when choosing to pass as white, or passing as white because of lost genealogy. The portraits show seven siblings wearing a felt peaked cap, traditional wear from the Native American Penobscot tribe. The images are altered to appear weathered and sepia-toned, similar to 19<sup>th</sup> century photographs of Native Americans. *Penobscot Siblings* indirectly addresses gender because the peaked cap is only worn by females in the Penobscot tribe. When I asked permission from a cultural representative of Penobscot Nation to use the cap in my images, he said it was not problematic because it is art. The time I spent with members of the Penobscot Tribe informed my understanding of the complexity of race and colonialism in America. It made me feel even more overwhelmed by the idea that I could grapple directly with whiteness in my art.



*Fig. 16. Jaclin Paul, Sibling Portraits, 2016, Digital image.*

### **7. Sibling Portraits Description (page 18)**

Fourteen of the portraits are printed on 30” long paper and hang in a horizontal row on a single wall. Twelve of the 26 portraits are smaller and framed, some with a white circular matte, and some with a square matte. The majority are cropped at the shoulders like a bust. The twelve framed portraits hang in a three-walled room with blue hand wallpaper covering the walls.

The hands are blue from an overlay applied in Photoshop. The hands are from the seven different siblings and they imitate the same four poses. The name of the wallpaper is *Rena Small* because the hand poses are copied from an artist named Rena Small who took photographs of famous artist’s hands. I consider the poses she captured to be compelling and asked my siblings to mimic them.

The three color portraits are printed the largest. *Sibling 3* is a heavily layered photo composite vignetted with a white “X” and partially covered with a black fur crest cutout. In the center of the image is the bust of a sibling looking at the viewer and surrounded by trees and smoke embellished with smaller items such as red heart balloons and tiny landscapes with amorphous borders. *Siblings 2 & 6* is an infrared photograph that was altered in Photoshop using glows and curve changes. In this image, the two siblings are cropped above the chest and stand next to each other. The sibling on the left closes thier eyes as and the sibling on the right looks camera left. *Sibling 5* is also an infrared image where the sibling is cropped at the chest and inside of the shoulders so their truncated bust is floating on a gradient that is a similar dusty pink as the infrared interpolation of their skin, hair and shirt. The sibling stares directly at the camera.

The black and white animation of 1,000 sibling portraits has a circular black mat that crops each portrait at the neck and the mat blends with the background which is also black. The animation begins with a portrait of one sibling who moves from profile right to face the viewer and continues to rotate so they are facing profile left. At this point the profile of the sibling changes to a different sibling and the 180-degree rotation begins again from the opposite direction. This continues until all seven siblings make a full 180-degree rotation. The animation loops seamlessly and is intended for playing on a continuous loop with no visible beginning or end.

## 8. Thesis Exhibit Documentation





<sup>1</sup> Luft, Rachel E. "The Risk of Flattening Difference: Gender and Race Logics and the Strategic Uses of Antiracist Singularity." In *The Intersectional Approach: Transforming the Academy Through Race, Class, & Gender*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

<sup>2</sup> Alcoff, Linda. "The Problem of Speaking for Others." *Cultural Critique*, no. 20 (1991): 5. doi:10.2307/1354221.

<sup>3</sup> Alcoff, Linda. "The Problem of Speaking for Others." *Cultural Critique*, no. 20 (1991): 5. doi:10.2307/1354221.

<sup>4</sup> Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241. doi:10.2307/1229039.

<sup>5</sup> Bourdieu, Pierre. "The Forms of Capital." *Readings in Economic Sociology*: 280-91. doi:10.1002/9780470755679.ch15.

<sup>6</sup> When observing the arrangement of elements in a human face, my aesthetic interpretation is related to my formal understanding of design. Although this visual system to define composition exists independently, my understanding of the elements of design that make a human face are culturally bound and not a neutral starting place. For example, my spatial relationship to design is influenced by my reading from left to right. My perception of design is culturally and geographically influenced, but that doesn't negate the existence of the physical reality of design elements such as texture, shape, line, form, scale, etc. Light and shadow have different culturally assigned meanings, but they also have dictionary definitions, to which I refer above. I read phenotypes and their designs and contextualize them from my sociological perspective. I give them significance based on my cultural influence but I also have an aesthetic attraction to human faces.

<sup>7</sup> The Gaze is also a term used in psychoanalysis and anti-colonialist, antiracist and feminist theory.

<sup>8</sup> As Doris Y. Tsao and Margaret S. Livingstone explain in "Mechanisms of Face Perception," human response to the gaze is neurobiological. Tsao, Doris Y., and Margaret S. Livingstone. "Mechanisms of Face Perception." *Annual review of neuroscience* 31 (2008): 411-437. *PMC*. Web. 22 Feb. 2017. When humans look at some one else's gaze their neural architecture responds in order to give them insight into the human's state of attentiveness including focus of interest, level of engagement, and intentions. Face perception is defined as the comprehension and interpretation of the geometry, proportion and expression of the human face. In the research presented in, "Face Perception in its Neurobiological and Social Context," W. C. De Souza, et al. report that the ability to understand this non-verbal language begins in infancy in many primates including humans, and is biological, rather than the result of social conditioning. Humans perceive faces because the fusiform facial area of our brain lets us distinguish and analyze the identity, attractiveness, emotional expression and gaze of an individual. de Souza, W. C., Feitosa, M. Â. G., Eifuku, S., Tamura, R., & Ono, T. (2008). Face perception in its neurobiological and social context. *Psychology & Neuroscience*, 1(1), 15-20. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3922/j.psns.2008.1.003>

<sup>9</sup> "Recognition of faces, facial expressions and gaze direction are important components of the non-verbal human social behavior (Argyle & Cook, 1976; Grusser, 1984). The face provides important social information related to sexual attraction, emotional state, and individual identity." de Souza, W. C., Feitosa, M. Â. G., Eifuku, S., Tamura, R., & Ono, T. (2008). Face perception in its neurobiological and social context. *Psychology & Neuroscience*, 1(1), 15-20. <http://dx.doi.org/10.3922/j.psns.2008.1.003>

<sup>10</sup> “General, spontaneous evaluations of strangers based on their faces have been shown to reflect judgments of these persons’ intention and ability to harm. These evaluations can be mapped onto a 2D space defined by the dimensions trustworthiness (intention) and dominance (ability). Here we go beyond general evaluations and focus on more specific personality judgments derived from the Big Two and Big Five personality concepts. Results indicate that judgments of the Big Two personality dimensions almost perfectly map onto the 2D space. In contrast, at least 3 of the Big Five dimensions (i.e., neuroticism, extraversion, and conscientiousness) go beyond the 2D space, indicating that additional dimensions are necessary to describe more specific face-based personality judgments accurately. Building on this evidence, we model the Big Two/Big Five personality dimensions in real facial photographs. Results from 2 validation studies show that the Big Two/Big Five are perceived reliably across different samples of faces and participants. Moreover, results reveal that participants differentiate reliably between the different Big Two/Big Five dimensions.” Walker, Mirella, and Thomas Vetter. "Changing the personality of a face: Perceived Big Two and Big Five personality factors modeled in real photographs." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 110.4 (2016): 609-24. Web.

<sup>11</sup> These facial characteristics are so unique from each other and recognizable that many of them can be mapped onto 2-D space (photographs of human faces) and still differentiated between by study participants. Walker, Mirella, and Thomas Vetter. "Changing the personality of a face: Perceived Big Two and Big Five personality factors modeled in real photographs." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 110.4 (2016): 609-24. Web.

<sup>12</sup> Broomberg, Chanarin, and Weizman. *Spirit Is a Bone*, 209

<sup>13</sup> As Walker and Vetter explain, the general consistency in individual characteristic judgments of a human face has serious consequences for the individuals being perceived. These consequences result when a society has a fixed and recurring interpretation of the individual’s face expression, creating a cohesive but potentially inaccurate communal reality. Walker, Mirella, and Thomas Vetter. "Changing the personality of a face: Perceived Big Two and Big Five personality factors modeled in real photographs." *Journal of Personality and Social Psychology* 110.4 (2016): 609-24. Web.

The following descriptions and research are susceptible to speculative projection influenced by the cultural location of the researchers. The studies I cite are by no means definitive. There is no ultimate refutation for them either, and so for the purpose of this paper, they will stand as viable sources. One study shows that round faces with wide chins and mouths, and bigger eyes suggest competence. Some features in women are considered more attractive from an evolutionary standpoint because they signal higher levels of estrogen that means more fertility. Humans find symmetrical faces more attractive than asymmetrical faces leading evolutionary psychologists to believe that the human affinity for symmetry has to do with signaling genetic quality and avoiding “developmental instability.” Other studies prove the ability of face perception to estimate genetic quality and health and gauge hormone levels and fertility in potential mates. Olivola, Funk, and Todorov. "Social Attributions from Faces Bias Human Choices." Perrett, David I., D. Michael Burt, Ian S. Penton-Voak, Kieran J. Lee, Duncan A. Rowland, and Rachel Edwards. "Symmetry and Human Facial Attractiveness." *Evolution and Human Behavior* 20, no. 5 (1999): 295-307.

doi:10.1016/s1090-5138(99)00014-8. L. W. Simmons "Are Human Preferences for Facial Symmetry Focused on Signals of Developmental Instability?" *Behavioral Ecology* 15, no. 5 (2004): 864-71.

doi:10.1093/beheco/arh099. Little, Anthony C., Benedict C. Jones, and Lisa M. DeBruine. "Facial Attractiveness: Evolutionary Based Research." *Philosophical Transactions of the Royal Society B: Biological Sciences* 366.1571 (2011): 1638–1659. PMC. Web. 23 Feb. 2017

<sup>14</sup> "Race and Psychological Essentialism." Interview by Sarah-Jane Leslie. Philosophical Conversations With Sarah\_Jane Leslie. December 25, 2013. Accessed February 21, 2017. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcU7U\\_NMv7s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcU7U_NMv7s).

<sup>15</sup> From early childhood, we start assigning symbolic meanings to the elements of the human face. This continues into adulthood, as explained by Olivola, Funk, and Todorov in *Social Attributions from Faces Bias Human Choices*, where they describe how both societies and individuals sustain a belief that the face of a human has the potential to express a variety of facets of the individual’s authentic self and intentions. The lay belief that the face is the “window to the soul” is tenacious. Individuals and societies unrelentingly infer meaning about other’s characters based on their facial features and expressions and these inferences have social consequences. Tsao, Doris Y., and Margaret S. Livingstone. “Mechanisms of Face Perception.” *Annual review of neuroscience* 31 (2008): 411–437. PMC. Web. 22 Feb. 2017. Olivola, Funk, and Todorov in *Social Attributions from Faces Bias Human Choices*

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<sup>16</sup> de Souza, W. C., Feitosa, M. Â. G., Eifuku, S., Tamura, R., & Ono, T. (2008). Face perception in its neurobiological and social context. *Psychology & Neuroscience*, 1(1), 15-20.

<http://dx.doi.org/10.3922/j.psns.2008.1.003>

<sup>17</sup> Varying cultures and groups of people have essentialized “other” races since ancient times. Isaac, Benjamin. "The Invention of Racism in Classical Antiquity." 2013. doi:10.1515/9781400849567. but European scientists formalized the practice in the late 19th century. Garrod, Joel Z. "A Brave Old World: An Analysis of Scientific Racism and BiDiL®." *McGill Journal of Medicine: MJM* 9.1 (2006): 54–60. Print. Scientific racism, also known as race science, started out as a project to define the “differential distribution of human variation.” "Race and Psychological Essentialism." Interview by Sarah-Jane Leslie. Philosophical Conversations With Sarah\_Jane Leslie. December 25, 2013. Accessed February 21, 2017. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcU7U\\_NMv7s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcU7U_NMv7s). While that may be a viable topic, much of the research was biased by psychological essentialism and not grounded in biology, as race scientists claimed it was. In the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, race scientists who endorsed Social Darwinism used scientific racism to justify social divisions, explaining them as a result of natural order rather than societal forces, in order to reinforce the fallacy of European superiority. Before the discovery of DNA, this essentialism resulted in both polygenism (a theory that states human races have different origins) and the practice of European scientists, explorers and philosophers comparing different races to different species.

<sup>18</sup> Leroi, Armand Marie, Troy Duster, Alan Goodman, Jr. Joseph L. Graves, Evelyn M. Hammonds, Ruth Hubbard, Jay Kaufman, Nancy Krieger, Roger N. Lancaster, R.C. Lewontin, Jonathan Marks, Ann Morning, Brady Dunklee; Jenny Reardon; Kara Wentworth, and Jacqueline Stevens. "Confusions About Human Races." Confusions About Human Races. Accessed February 21, 2017. <http://raceandgenomics.ssrc.org/Lewontin/>.

<sup>19</sup> Blair IV, Judd CM, Chapleau KM (2004) The influence of afrocentric facial features in criminal sentencing. *Psychological Science* 15: 674–679. Black children show that they are able to more accurately recall the actions of story characters when the narrative pairs the dark skinned black characters who have negative behaviors and worked in lower class jobs with light-skinned black characters who have positive behaviors and upper-class jobs. Averhart CJ, Bigler RS (1997) Shades of meaning: Skin tone, racial attitudes, and constructive memory in African American children. *Journal of Experimental Child Psychology* 67: 363–388.

<sup>20</sup> Maddox KB, Gray SA (2002) Cognitive representations of Black Americans: Re-exploring the role of skin tone. *Personality and Social Psychology Bulletin* 28: 250–259.

<sup>21</sup> "Stereotypes and the Clark Doll Test by Clark & Clark." By Clark & Clark. Accessed December 11, 2016. <https://explorable.com/stereotypes>.

<sup>22</sup> "ProjectImplicit." Implicit.harvard.edu. Accessed December 11, 2016. <https://implicit.harvard.edu/implicit/education.html>.

<sup>23</sup> Furthermore, skin tone determines the perception of racially prejudiced European Americans who are quicker to identify the beginning of an angry expression in a black face than they are in a white face, and they are slower to recognize the “offset of anger” in black faces than in white faces. Hugenberg K, Bodenhausen GV (2003) Facing prejudice: Implicit prejudice and the perception of facial threat. *Psychological Science* 14: 640–643.

<sup>24</sup> "Race and Psychological Essentialism." Interview by Sarah-Jane Leslie. Philosophical Conversations With Sarah\_Jane Leslie. December 25, 2013. Accessed February 21, 2017. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcU7U\\_NMv7s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcU7U_NMv7s).

<sup>25</sup> Leroi, Armand Marie, Troy Duster, Alan Goodman, Jr. Joseph L. Graves, Evelyn M. Hammonds, Ruth Hubbard, Jay Kaufman, Nancy Krieger, Roger N. Lancaster, R.C. Lewontin, Jonathan Marks, Ann Morning, Brady Dunklee; Jenny Reardon; Kara Wentworth, and Jacqueline Stevens. "Confusions About Human Races." Confusions About Human Races. Accessed February 21, 2017. <http://raceandgenomics.ssrc.org/Lewontin/>.

<sup>26</sup> Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. *Racial formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

<sup>27</sup> Omi, Michael, and Howard Winant. *Racial formation in the United States*. New York: Routledge, 2015.

<sup>28</sup> Although race science began as the result of European exploration and colonial expansion into the world, the United States invented its own specific racialized culture. Sparked by Bacon’s Rebellion of 1676 (An uprising of indentured servants against colonial leaders) the ruling class began to privilege “whiteness” to separate and divide the racially integrated lower class into more easily controlled groups. Smedley, Audrey.



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""Race" and the Construction of Human Identity." *American Anthropologist* 100, no. 3 (1998): 690-702. doi:10.1525/aa.1998.100.3.690. Race-based slavery soon followed and perpetuates as evidenced by institutional and individual prejudice, resulting in health disparities, wealth inequality, segregation in housing and the prison industrial complex.

<sup>29</sup> "Race and Psychological Essentialism." Interview by Sarah-Jane Leslie. Philosophical Conversations With Sarah\_Jane Leslie. December 25, 2013. Accessed February 21, 2017.

[https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcU7U\\_NMv7s](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gcU7U_NMv7s).

<sup>30</sup> "Gelman, Susan A. "Science Brief: Essentialism in Everyday Thought." *PsycEXTRA Dataset*. doi:10.1037/e407812005-005. Nonetheless, there are positive outcomes possible for forms of racial identity, which are important when considering the history of slavery and colonialism in the US. For example, the post-Civil Rights era creation of a positive Black identity was an antidote to racism. Furthermore, current research supports the necessity of pro-Black bias as a way to neutralize anti-Black bias. Black Enterprise. October 04, 2016. Accessed April 29, 2017.

<http://www.blackenterprise.com/news/black-children-need-positive-black-images/>.

<sup>31</sup> Collins, Patricia Hill. "Intersectionality's definitional dilemmas." *Annual Review of Sociology* 41 (2015): 1-20.

<sup>32</sup> Determining the character of a person based on their skull.

<sup>33</sup> Determining the character of a person based on their features.

<sup>34</sup> Marien, Mary Warner. *Photography: a cultural history*. Boston: Pearson, 2015.

<sup>35</sup> Marien, Mary Warner. *Photography: a cultural history*. Boston: Pearson, 2015.

<sup>36</sup> Maxwell, Anne. *Picture imperfect: photography and eugenics, 1870-1940*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010.

<sup>37</sup> In *The Female Offender*, which he co-authored with his son-in-law, William Ferrero, Lombroso identifies traits in women and girl criminals that give the overall appearance of being more masculine, including, "strong jaws and cheekbones," and "virility of expression." Describing one 11-year old accused thief he writes, "She looks like a grown woman--nay, a man."

<sup>38</sup> Maxwell, Anne. *Picture imperfect: photography and eugenics, 1870-1940*. Brighton: Sussex Academic Press, 2010.

<sup>39</sup> Broomberg, Adam, Oliver Chanarin, and Eyal Weizman. *Spirit Is a Bone*. (London: MACK, 2015), 214-215.

<sup>40</sup> The social structures created by essentialism include gender, ability, class, and other master statuses. While I recognize contemporary discourses surrounding intersectionality, I agree with Rachel E. Luft who writes that race needed particular attention:<sup>40</sup> "Intersectionality is not the most strategic methodological principle for the early stages of micro interventions when the objective includes antiracist consciousness change...I am not arguing here that race is a more fundamental form of oppression than gender but that its current logic of domination requires an exceptional logic of resistance at the level of individual consciousness. Intersectional work that employs gender, race and other terms simultaneously in these settings may serve to neutralize the significance of race because of its contemporary iteration, thereby reproducing its hegemony." Luft, Rachel E. "The Risk of Flattening Difference: Gender and Race Logics and the Strategic Uses of Antiracist Singularity." In *The Intersectional Approach: Transforming the Academy Through Race, Class, & Gender*. The University of North Carolina Press, 2009.

<sup>42</sup> The self-perceptions of white people of themselves in relation to groups of non-white individuals.

<sup>43</sup> Browder, Glen. "White Americans and 'White Consciousness'" The Huffington Post. April 07, 2014. Accessed April 29, 2017. [http://www.huffingtonpost.com/glen-browder/white-americans-and-white\\_b\\_5051542.html](http://www.huffingtonpost.com/glen-browder/white-americans-and-white_b_5051542.html).

<sup>44</sup> I've recently read interviews with Carrie Mae Weems and Kerry James Marshall who make work about Black subjectivity. Their research and interests further illuminate the variety of ways my work misses the point. Marshall's work elevates Black subjectivity and normalizes Blackness in art institutions. Weems' uses the African American subject to show "deeper humanity." Weems, Carrie Mae. "Photographer and Video Artist Carrie Mae Weems, 2013 MacArthur Fellow." Interview. September 24, 2013. Accessed December 16, 2016. [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLHzpH\\_\\_Rk](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oLHzpH__Rk). She says, "I'm always peeling back what I understand to be power. I'm really fascinated with the hand of power and gestures of power and how to penetrate it, understand it, rebuke it, challenge it, question it, but also understand it." Weems,

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Carrie Mae. "Using photography to peel back the image of power." Interview. May 9, 2014. Accessed December 13, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovW520P4a3A>.

<sup>45</sup> Weems, Carrie Mae. "Using photography to peel back the image of power." Interview. May 9, 2014. Accessed December 13, 2016. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ovW520P4a3A>.

<sup>46</sup> I use this to describe "white privilege" because I think "white privilege" is weak and inadequate.

<sup>47</sup> Through the four-minute duration of each portrait animation, the siblings' position varies slightly within the middle of the composition while feathers fly in and out of the frame interacting with the sibling. At the end of the animation segment, the sibling fades out and the feathers explode out of the frame.

<sup>48</sup> I made them by finding a portrait of two different siblings with a similar angle of capture and facial expression. Next, I placed one portrait on top of the other in Photoshop and erased part of the top portrait to reveal parts of the bottom portrait, resulting in an almost seamless composite.

<sup>49</sup> "Francis Galton." Wikipedia. April 26, 2017. Accessed April 30, 2017. [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis\\_Galton](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Francis_Galton).

<sup>50</sup> Related to Ralph Ellison's Invisible Man

<sup>51</sup> Marshall, Kerry James. "Paint It Black." Interview. Youtube. February 22, 2017. Accessed May 2, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVsYUX0v6VA>

<sup>52</sup> Marshall, Kerry James. "Paint It Black." Interview. Youtube. February 22, 2017. Accessed May 2, 2017. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UVsYUX0v6VA>.

<sup>54</sup> Hall, S. . "What is this "black" in black popular culture." In *Popular culture and cultural theory: A reader*. 4th ed. Storey, J. Essex: Pearson, 2009.

<sup>55</sup> "Corbis Interviews Carrie Mae Weems at 2013 LOOK3." Interview. <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AcuG00tf1fU>. October 30, 2013. Accessed November 21, 2016.

<sup>56</sup> Olivola, Funk, and Todorov. "Social Attributions from Faces Bias Human Choices." Perrett, David I., D.michael Burt, Ian S. Penton-Voak, Kieran J. Lee, Duncan A. Rowland, and Rachel Edwards. "Symmetry and Human Facial Attractiveness."

<sup>57</sup><sup>57</sup> Olivola, Funk, and Todorov. "Social Attributions from Faces Bias Human Choices." Perrett, David I., D.michael Burt, Ian S. Penton-Voak, Kieran J. Lee, Duncan A. Rowland, and Rachel Edwards. "Symmetry and Human Facial Attractiveness."

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