AFRO AMELIORATION INTROSPECTION

Khamar Hopkins

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Introduction

Afro Amelioration Introspection is a projected video artwork, abstract sound piece, and solo art exhibition with a digitally interactive component focused on the topic of Black mental health. Using ethnographic methods, I conducted a series of six interviews where I questioned participants on their personal feelings and narratives covering but not limited to the issues of COVID, family, police brutality, racism, intergenerational trauma, and the stigma on the subject of mental health in the Black community. I video documented the conversations and transmogrified them into nonrepresentational art using the programming language, Processing. Next, I produced a conceptual soundtrack using the audio from the interviews. Finally, I organized a synergistic art show in Baltimore to showcase the project and create a safe space for conversation on the topic. The purpose of *Afro Amelioration Introspection* is to reflect the type of work I want to do in the future, let the African American community know they're not alone even if they're struggling with addressing the concept of mental health, sustaining culture by approaching an issue that harms a community, and make the topic less taboo so people can have a better quality of life. This reflection paper follows a chronological timeline and is taken from the journal I kept throughout the process.

Project Progress

Preparation Stage

I've made a lot of progress these past few weeks and it's amazing I completed my Capstone after overcoming so many obstacles since I started. My official Capstone Proposal course didn't begin until the summer session of 2021, but my journey started sooner in the beginning of the year. I knew that 2021 was going to be the year I would do my Capstone so in January I prepared a notebook that was specifically dedicated to my final project and wrote down plans for every potential idea I had. Some ideas were simple with just a title or a description, while others were more fleshed out with notes, sketches, and timelines. After jotting down all my ideas I then began to evaluate each one. Since I'm in the Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability and Master of Fine Arts in Digital Arts programs at Goucher College I wanted to do something that was both ethnographic and artistic. To have a deeper connection to the work I made it a requisite that the subject be something personal. After reviewing pages of content, I finally decided on the untitled "projection mapped interviews" concept on mental health. Mental health was personal to me because I was depressed for a while after taking in a lot of media in 2020. I had a lot of interesting notes on this idea. Two questions that stood out to me in the notes for this thought were, What are the circumstances that prevent Africans Americans from engaging with the topic of Black mental health? and What is an accessible way for community members to address the topic? From research I concluded that cultural and systematic factors were the main reasons why Black people don't entertain discussion on mental health. My answer to how to address the subject for the community is through art, my

Capstone. After I decided on what I wanted to do, I set up a meeting with my program directors Amy, and Andrew, to discuss it with them. During our meeting Amy reminded me of how when I started graduate school, I brought up doing a type of police brutality awareness website for my Capstone. I didn't forget but upon doing research I discovered that there are scores of websites out there like that and most of them have been running for a long time and are better than anything I could produce by myself in a few short months. I had a few other ideas but none of them highlighted what I learned from both programs like *Afro Amelioration Introspection.*

In the spring for my second studio course, I developed the Processing code that I was going to use for my Capstone project (Appendix A). I chose to use Processing because Andrew, my professor for the studio course, was most familiar with it, I already knew the basics, and because Processing was designed to provide instant visual feedback which is a great convenience when it comes to production in the context of the digital arts. The way the code works is, first a video file is imported, then the frame rate, size, pixel density, etc. are set, then a filter is added to saturate and limit the colors in the video, then a "float" (A float is a floating-point number, which means it is a number that has a decimal place. Floats are used over Integers when more precision is needed.) value is declared to identify the brightness of the pixels, and finally the pixels of different values of light are replaced with specific colors and shapes of your choosing. I chose to use the code to abstract the human form to protect the identity of my interviewees. Originally, I was using brain shapes but adopted to using circles because they looked better aesthetically and were easier for the code to draw. Different colors were picked so that viewers would notice there were different people responding to each

question. I selected red, blue, yellow, orange, purple and green as the colors with the mindset of making my project more accessible for a color-blind audience who can easily tell the difference in the colors in greyscale value, and it makes who's responding easier to remember. If all my participants were different shades of the same color, the project would get tiring to look at and hard to follow. By using different colors, it makes the visuals more stimulating and helps bring attention to when a different question or response is being addressed. I learned a lot more about creative coding that semester through my trials and errors.

In the summer I started the Capstone Proposal course which really helped me finalize my thought process behind my project. It was challenging but necessary. I created a title and abstract for my artwork. In the beginning the working title for the exhibition was "Black Credence Amelioration" and the working name for the artwork was, "Assorted Afro Introspection." Credence is the belief in or acceptance of something as true. Amelioration is the act of making something better; improvement. My thought process behind this working name was that it means the exhibition itself reflects the belief that it can improve Black mental health. Introspection is defined as the examination or observation of one's own mental and emotional processes. I was thinking "Assorted Afro Introspection" would read like the examination of various Black people's thoughts. In the end I decided that the exhibition was a part of the project as a whole and that it should have one name for everything. I choose *Afro Amelioration Introspection* because the title can be interpreted as the advancement of one's own perceptions. "Afro" was added to identify that this advanced perception would be about African Americans. I put "Afro" at the front of the title and not the middle because it sounds

better and if it was added to the back to read "Amelioration Introspection Afro" then it would make the project seem like it's about Black hair.

Statement of Rationale

This Capstone serves my professional and personal goals by being a project that represents the kind of work I wish to do in the future. Any artwork made using, edited with, or aided by technology can be considered digital art. By that standard the realm of digital art is vast and can take many multimedia forms. This also means the production of commodities is extensive. The difference between artwork and commodity is that art is made to represent a thought, idea, or feeling while commodities don't embody anything, are mass produced, and their primary purpose is to make a profit. My Capstone is contributing to the field of Digital Arts because I'm making art using multiple software and technologies that have the purpose of presenting a taboo topic to a struggling community. From my motion text poem on Black identity, to my projection mapped dancers, to my rotoscoped short story animation about quarantine, my Capstone speaks for my mastery of the Digital Arts program because it is the corollary of all the projects and skills I've developed up to this point of time.

Culture is the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religions, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, symbols, communication, and material objects acquired by a group of people from generation to generations through individual and group striving and transmitted through social learning. Sustainability refers to a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not depleted or permanently damaged. Cultural sustainability is an endeavor of fostering support for communities through organizing, fundraising, legislation, or written, audio, and/or

visual means to prevent cultures from being harmed, misunderstood, or disappearing. The Capstone will contribute to the field of cultural sustainability by bringing awareness to a taboo topic that is harming the African American community through a visual medium and gathering, using art to engage a community in meaningful conversations, spreading local knowledge through story sharing, and building a deeper connection in a community by creating a memorable experience. Bad mental health can have a negative effect on your body, emotions, and relationships. *Afro Amelioration Introspection* is important because it will show viewers how members of the Black community have dealt with the stress of current events as well as their thoughts and feelings about how to heal from it. This will hopefully encourage observers to try some of their methods and could potentially improve their quality of life.

Educational Objectives & Methodology

My educational objectives were how to build rapport with a gallery space, plan and organize an exhibition, edit video using Processing, become proficient with projection mapping, improve my interview skills, learn more about Black mental health, learn more about myself, and how to approach a sensitive topic with art. While my primary content is focused on the subject of Black mental health, I wanted to have questions that covered important secondary topics that affect the primary one such as: police brutality, racism, social movements, COVID-19, shadeism (discrimination based on skin tone), Blackfishing (when a nonBlack person makes themselves appear as Black or mixed race), stigma, religion, family, generational trauma, and institutional support. It was difficult to get my question set down to just 10 questions.

The methods in which I used to gather data for my project involved research in written and digital scholarly sources, video documentation, and qualitive interviews. I plan on sharing

my findings using audio and visual artwork, and exhibition. I abstracted the interviewee form

using Processing so that my participants remain anonymous, and viewers of the artwork can

self-insert. I edited the final artwork using Adobe Premiere and Adobe Audition so that I could

become more efficient with both. The final projections will have no audio but will have subtitles

so it's more accessible for a non-hearing audience. Not having audio from the interviews will

contribute to interviewees remaining anonymous and help when it comes to organizing the

exhibition since I won't have to worry about headphones. To make up for the lack of sound I

will be producing a conceptual sound piece that will be made from the audio of the interviews

and will be played simultaneously with the video. As a visual ethnographer and artist, I want to

use this art as a vehicle to present my Capstone research. The primary goal of my Capstone is to

sustain culture by bringing attention to issues that can influence the mental health in the

African American community. Secondary to that I believe the artwork and exhibition will be the

best way to create a space for open discussion and shared reflection on the topic.

Literature Review

I examined many written and digital academic materials on: Black health, Black mental

health, police brutality, racism in America, social movements, spatial justice, social change,

methodologies in art, tutorials for digital art processes, cultural communication, COVID-19,

shadeism, strategies for art exhibition, African American art, art education, systemic racism,

health equity, oppression, religion, Black identity, cultural community, critical ethnography,

cultural anthropology, creative inspiration, cultural hegemony, and emotional wellness. All

these issues are different pieces that influence Black mental health. When reviewing materials,

I found myself going down a rabbit hole and with so many different sources. I was happy

though that there's already so much literature on these subjects. I organized my review into

five main sections, Black mental health and wellness, art methodologies, community change,

racism, and cultural studies. Here are my thoughts on the literature I analyzed.

Black mental health and wellness

Content on Black mental health and wellness is relevant to my Capstone because it's the

main subject of the project and analyzing them will help guide my approach to it. Alang,

McAlpine, McCreedy, and Hardeman's, *Police Brutality and Black Health: Setting the Agenda for*

Public Health Scholars, is about the five ways in which police brutality affects Black health.

Those five products are: 1.) an increase in mortality rates, 2.) physiological distress, 3.) public

racists reactions and responses, 4.) financial strain, and 5.) systematic oppression. Police

brutality and it's five biproducts are all major factors that have an effect on one's mental

health. This article made me organize my thoughts and the responses I got to find out what five

major factors negatively affect present Black mental health.

Barlow's, *Restoring Optimal Black Mental Health and Reversing Intergenerational*

Trauma in an Era of Black Lives Matter, covers the intergenerational trauma on both a

biological and psychological level for Black people. He examines how colonialism, slavery, Jim

Crow laws, segregation, the prison-industrial complex, and over-policing result in health

inequities such as hypertension, obesity, depression, and heart disease in Black communities.

This source is important because it provides an explanation as to why some intergenerational

traumas and health problems exist in the Black community. In Cannon and Locke's *Being Black*

Is Detrimental to One's Mental Health: Myth or Reality?, they try to answer the question "Is

being Black detrimental to one's mental health?" During their exploration of this extreme

question, they encounter problems like data not organized by race, and of the data they did find, it didn't specify Black people only "nonwhites." This article opened my eyes to how race is a major factor in the quality of one's mental health depending on where someone lives or who they're surrounded by.

In Snyder's *Black Mental Health Matters: The Ultimate Guide for Mental Health Awareness in the Black Community* he discusses how we're living in a new era where dialogue on the topic of mental health is now mainstream but Black people's connection with their own mental health is struggling because of their unique relationship with trauma, oppression, depression, anxiety, and other issues. This book is a prime example as to why I should be doing my Capstone; to make the topic of mental health less taboo for a group of people who are dealing with many issues at once but don't seek out the proper aid or even know what that help looks like.

In *The Unapologetic Guide to Black Mental Health: Navigate an Unequal System, Learn Tools for Emotional Wellness, and Get the Help You Deserve* Walker explores Black mental health in the present world by breaking down the mental health crisis in the Black community, and offering salient information on how to combat stigma, spot potential mental illness, how to get the proper care in a racially biased system, and how to practice emotional wellness. This self-help book has similar hopes that I have for my project and those are to help Black people recognize mental and emotional health problems, and understand how mental health affects physical health, quality of life, and relationships. I learned more about the subject matter from these sources, but my art methodologies studies will help me display my findings in the most successful ways.

Art Methodologies

There are a lot of different ways to approach my topic from a visual standpoint and the following resources helped me narrow down my approach from an art point of view. Adams' *The Methodologies of Art: An Introduction* considers how the different approaches of formal analysis, iconology, Marxism, feminism, psychoanalysis, structuralism, etc. can reflect the multiplicity of different ways an artistic form can be interpreted. This book reminded me that even if something is intended to be looked at one way it can still be perceived in a different direction. Buskirk's *MadMapper Tutorial - Part 8: Exporting* is an art process tutorial of how to export a project out of the digital projection mapping program Mad Mapper. This video taught me how to put the finishing touches on my video piece.

In Cooks *Exhibiting Blackness: African Americans and the American Art Museum* he inspects the curatorial challenges, strategies, and reception of some of the bigger museum's exhibitions of African American art. From this reading I learned about the two most common approaches to how African American art is exhibited; the ethnographic approach which focuses more on the artist than the art, and recovery narrative approach which focuses on correcting or addressing past injustices. Analyzing these approaches aided me in choosing how I want to design my own exhibition and that is ethnographic but in way that focuses on my participants responses more than the art itself. Housen and Yenawine's *Visual Thinking Strategies Starter Lessons: An Art Program for Museums and Schools* is a collection of lessons for how to appreciate art along with sample questions for instructors and students. This book serves as a guide to what types of questions I should be asking about my art and exhibition. With my

project I'm going to ask questions that will get visitors to connect with my participants answers as well as get them to think critically on the topic. Lavigne's *Tutorial: How to Render Processing Sketch as a Movie* shows viewers how to export an mp4 video file out of Processing. This tutorial is important to my project because it taught me how to share my project outside of my code. While showcasing my art in the proper way is one of my goals, another big one for me is to bring about some community changes.

Community Changes

Community changes are very hard to do and sometimes even require years before any development is achieved. With my project I want to get the ball rolling and make the topic of Black mental health less taboo for my community. *Culture Counts: Strategies for a More Vibrant Cultural Life for New York City* is Atlas's report for the New York Foundations for the Arts special initiative to enhance the cultural life of New York City residents. This report has unique strategies that made me think out of the box for approaching my own topic. Some of those strategies are using art as an economic engine, polling a community on an issue, and making a detailed map of cultural activity for an area. Bedoya's *Spatial Justice: Rasquachification, Race and the City* focuses on the topics of gentrification, "placekeeping," and creative resilience, defines rasquachification, and addresses and challenges the "white special imaginary." Rasquachification is the preservation of a culture through creative conservation in a community. Rasquachification is the opposite of gentrification and challenges the white spatial imaginary. From this reading I learned more about preserving culture through creative conservation and how I'm trying to do the same with my project. Another way to protect a

community is to make sure they're healthy, not just in a physical sense but a mental and emotional one as well.

Bojer's *Mapping Dialogue: Essential Tools for Social Change* supplies transformative dialogue tools and processes which decide how successful sustainable social change is. This book covers over 20 different dialogue methods and example case studies. This book made me really think about what questions I want to ask my interviewees as well as what I want to say to the world with my Capstone project. *When They Blew the Levee: Politics, Race, and Community in Pinhook* by ethnographers Lawrence and Lawless follows the tragic story of how the small Black town of Pinhook, Missouri got destroyed by a flood. The authors investigate the two narratives, one being the US Army Corp of Engineers bragging about the success of the levee breach, and the other following the displaced former residents of Pinhook. This reading was a reminder that there's two sides to every story and made me want to seek out diversity amongst the people I plan on interviewing.

The Beast Side: Living and Dying While Black in America studies the harsh economic, political, and social realities that Blacks must face in America. Watkins goes deeper into how most cities are like "urban war zones" with all the violence, drugs, and corrupt politicians. This text is relevant to my capstone topic because it shows how people express pain and deal with mental anguish. At the same time this text influenced my thoughts about the human capacity for mental affliction and ways to help someone you know is struggling through a difficult moment in their life. Out of all the things Black people deal with that can influence their mental health I believe racism is one of the most prominent factors.

Racism

From individual interactions, to media, to entertainment, even to systems, racism can be found in almost every facet of our lives and can have a strong negative effect on one's health. Armour's *Negrophobia and Reasonable Racism: The Hidden Costs of Being Black in America* tackles the tough topic of how common unconscious racism is in American society towards Black people. The degree varies from the small things like the inability to get a taxi to the extreme of excessive force by police. This reading was a reminder of how we must support our own communities because you never know the true intentions of an outsider. In *Systemic Racism and U.S. health care* Feagin and Bennefield cover the dangers of systematic racism in the health care industry on people of color. In a racist health care system people of color don't get proper treatment, health care data gets tampered with, white patients get priority, physicians and patients of color don't get listened to, public policies don't respect cultural practices, and many other injustices. This article showed how inadequate the care is for people of color in the system and made me want to direct visitors to my exhibition to Black and POC friendly sources if they are interested in care.

In Hoberman's *Black and Blue: The Origins and Consequences of Medical Racism* he dives into the racially motivated thinking and behaviors American doctors have practiced that have affected the treatment and abuse of Black patients. In the medical world racist folklore has infiltrated every discipline to impose the thought that Black bodies are somehow different than white bodies. This reading taught me that experience and education mean absolutely nothing when coming from racist physicians. They don't view Black bodies the same way as white bodies, which results in distorted diagnosis, mistreatment, and possibly even death. *Invisible Woman: Growing Up Black in Germany* is a recount of Ika Hügel-Marshall's experiences

growing up in Germany after WWII as a Black child. She underwent an incalculable amount of institutionalized racism and cruelty in her upbringing. Kids also deal with mental health problems because of racism. The sooner they're taught about things like mental health and racism the sooner they can seek support and hopefully grow up happier. That can also start with getting their parents more comfortable around the topic which is one thing I want to achieve with my project.

In Lipscomb and Ashley's *Surviving Being Black and a Clinician During a Dual Pandemic: Personal and Professional Challenges in a Disease and Racial Crisis* the authors use an autoethnographic methodology to narrate their experiences being Black healthcare providers dealing with systematic racism, white supremacy, white fragility, anti-racism, oppression, racial identity, professional expectations and many more issues. From this article I learned that systematic racism not only effects Black patients but Black doctors as well. The authors use of autoethnography influenced my methodology because I put myself in my participants shoes and answered the questions I prepared before asking them. All these sources have shown me that racism in health care has always been so common that it's a part of medical cultural hegemony. Examining cultural studies should reveal some principal insights as to how groups like the medical field function and change.

<center>*Cultural Studies*</center>

Cultural studies are very important to my Capstone because I'm making art out of ethnographic work. Carbaugh's *Cultural Discourse Analysis: Communication Practices and Intercultural Encounters* is a cultural analysis of intercultural social interactions. The authors develop a framework for their discourse that responds to specific research questions, addresses

appropriate intellectual problems, introduces a special set of concepts, and investigates the five basic modes of inquiry. The modes of inquiry are theoretical, descriptive, interpretive, comparative, and critical. This article is important because it made me think about how I wanted other cultures to see my project. Hyde's *The Gift: Creativity and the Artist in the Modern World* highlights the value of cultural gifts/gift giving over commodities. There are a lot of different ways and things to give but you can't give until you receive first and you must always keep a gift in motion. The reader learns about this through the fairy tale *The Girl and the Dead Man.* In the tale there are three sisters, before any of the girls leave the house their mom bakes a loath of bread, the older and middle sisters take their portion of bread and don't share it which results in their deaths, the youngest sister shares her bread which results in her receiving many gifts from other characters as a result of giving her gift away. This reading made me question what I'm really giving with my project, if I'm giving the right stuff, am I giving enough, and what I'm receiving in return, besides a grade.

Madison's book *Critical Ethnography: Method, Ethics, and Performance* answers the questions: What is critical ethnography? How do we use theory to interpret research data? What is performance ethnography? and many other fundamental multidisciplinary ethnographic questions. This book also covers theoretical concepts in critical race theory, queer theory, and feminist theory and the methodological techniques in asking in-depth interview questions and developing rapport. This book made me wonder if I'm being critical enough in my work and ponder how different the responses of my interviewees will be based on their gender, orientation, and age.

Social and Cultural Anthropology: A Very Short Introduction is Monaghan and Just's review of ethnographic methodology and guiding principles with an exploration of culture as a distinctively human trait. From their fieldwork experience the authors highlight the ways cultural anthropology has advanced our understanding of human society and culture. This book made me imagine how my work will be viewed years from now or even from different countries. I'm asking myself: Am I being clear enough on what I want to do? Would this have made sense to someone who isn't Black? And am I using terminology that's simple enough that anyone can digest it? Toelken's *Cultural Worldview* is a report defining the primal context of culture and folklore at individual and global levels. The way a culture sees and expresses its relation to the world is its worldview. This reading not only made me think about my project from a global scale as well as from my community perspective. I wonder how Black people in other countries are doing and if anyone is pursuing work like mine.

From the sources I have reviewed I have a better sense of what I want to give and receive from doing my project for myself and my community. I learned that there are a lot of different things to consider when specifically talking about Black mental health and some of those components are the history of intergenerational trauma, police brutality, discrimination, and systemic racism. These written and digital publications improve my Capstone work by helping me craft a good question set, develop my artistic and ethnographic skills, and think about my work on a bigger scale. Black mental health is important to me because I know how taboo the topic is for Black people and how limited proper resources are. If nothing is done for an unhealthy mind then it can affect your body, emotions, and relationships which can

ultimately harm a person's quality of life. I want to do this work to improve the quality of someone's life.

IRB Statement

After my review of literature, I began thinking about whether my capstone should make its way to the Institutional Review Board. Even though my project involves human subjects and a sensitive topic, I'm not proposing general knowledge on the subject, not telling subjects to seek out mental health care, none of the subjects involved in the project will be identifiable, I will be asking for consent to participate, I have no knowledge on my interviewees mental health problems nor will I be asking anything too personal, and audio/visual documentation will be destroyed after making the final artwork..

Capstone Committee

I still had one major challenge to conquer in the summer and that was finding my Capstone committee. I didn't have a full committee until August, the same month I was to start my Capstone project. Originally Andrew was going to be my advisor, but he relocated to Germany with his family and was too busy to be able to give me the proper attention needed from an advisor. I reached out to Amy, and she was willing to be a part of my committee. I had two more spots left for my committee and didn't know who they should go to. At first Rita, my Capstone Proposal course instructor, and I reached out to a Goucher faulty member who was a professional in the Black mental health studies and had shown interest in being a part of past student committees. Sadly, she loss interest because the pay was too low. Next, I messaged a former coworker who just so happened to be an artist in the city. He felt like being a committee member was too big of a commitment and turned down the offer. I google searched a bunch of

local therapists and emailed them explaining what my project was and how I wanted them to be a part of my committee. I only got 1 response out of the 20+ people I contacted, and their response was no. Finally, I decided I should just stick to professors I had before in the past. I contacted Damain and he was available and willing to help as my advisor. I took Amy's reference and emailed Robert, and he was also interested in my project. Somehow, I got lucky and formed a committee at the last second. I think it would have been a major help for me, and future students if the first thing you do for the proposal course is to find your committee members.

Pre-Production Stage

Now that I had my committee and some free time, I filled out my portfolium for the MACS and DA programs (Appendix B). I figured it would be better to get it done sooner so I wouldn't have to worry about it later in the semester when I'm busy. I also organized my plan of work into 4 different stages (pre-production, production, reflection, and exhibition), constructed a strong bibliography with 50 sources, and outlined what I was going to deposit into the Goucher Library as evidence of mastery in the field. I'm planning on giving everything I have as it relates to this project to the Goucher Library.

The first thing I did once the semester began was finish the first draft of my interview protocol (Appendix C) and release form (Appendix D) then sent both to my committee for critique. I picked my questions from a list I prepared on paper in a notebook. What was most important to me with picking questions was to cover a large range of subject matter and ask open-ended, opinionated questions that would make participants think and give unique responses that would differ from each other's based off of their distinct life experiences. For

the release form I repurposed a template I had from my documentation course. The next big challenge I had to prepare for was finding an exhibition space. Considering the small window of time I had to find one, the global pandemic causing most public spaces and gatherings to be cancelled, knowing most exhibition spaces have their schedules planned out months in advance, and having no personal relationships/rapport with local galleries, things were looking very grim. I was very worried but that didn't stop me. I was motivated because I considered the exhibition a key part of my project. The projections are the main part, but I also want my exhibition goers to have conversation, learn, and grow.

I decided that if I couldn't find a space then I would create a virtual exhibition. I would make a 3D environment of an art gallery and set it up how I would ideally want my exhibition to be. The virtual exhibition wasn't ideal because I wanted viewer interactions and conversations to occur.

On Wednesday, August 25, I had my first meeting with my Capstone committee. It was a great meeting that lasted about 90 minutes and I got good feedback. My biggest take away from the meeting was to start keeping an online journal so that I could follow my progress. Little did I know that it would also become a useful tool when I started writing my reflection paper. I remember the night of the meeting I had a hard time sleeping because I had so many ideas in my head. I had to take the next day off just so I can relax and think before I take on such a big project. By the end of that week, I made a google drive folder containing my journal, plan of work, interview protocol and other documents as they relate to the project (Appendix E).

That weekend I started contacting my future potential interviewees. No one picked up my phone call, so I sent them all a brief text explaining a little bit about the project, and to reach back out if they were interested in knowing more. I felt good about the people I chose to interview because I had already built rapport with them, and I've had conversations with each of them in the past on this subject matter. To get a diverse range of responses I decided I would interview two people in their 20's, two people in their 30's, and two people age 40 and above. Also, I wanted to get perspectives from different genders. I was open to interviewing anyone no matter how they identified. It just so happened that the people I listed to interview identified as men and women. I chose six people to interview because of the age, and gender identity perimeters but also because that seemed like a good number of interviews that I could schedule and complete in the window of time I was working in. Josiah was the first person to call me back and agree to participate in my project. After him Alaysia, Nnamdi, and Dani all agreed to be a part of my Capstone. Tina was on leave for a week and Tony was preaching so I would have to contact them at a different time.

I started brainstorming to design a concept for my exhibition marketing collateral and drafted a cool graphic I loved (Appendix F). It was so good I didn't even want to make a second option. That was the easiest struggle I conquered on my Capstone quest. I wanted something abstract but also with slight detail and color. I didn't want to use an exact frame or illustration of the project I was making because at the time I didn't have those resources and a single frame wouldn't reflect the project as a whole. I knew I was going to be projecting in a circle, so I wanted to incorporate that into the art. Along with all six colors. I arranged a group of circles into the shape of a larger circle. After that I drew a bunch of wavy lines over the cluster of

circles to divide them. Finally, I went through the entire artboard and filled in each unique

shape with a different color. I decided on placing the graphic on a black background because of

how well it made the colors pop. I loved my art so much that I even brought it into Adobe

Photoshop to make it into a gif. I used Photoshop to animate since that is a program a have

years of experience in and know how to make quick simple animations with.

Over the next few days, I scheduled official interviews with Josiah, Alaysia, Nnamdi and

Dani, and tried getting in contact with Tony. I had called him a few times, left voicemails, and

texted him, but still didn't get a response from him. I was getting worried and started

pondering moving onto a new participant. Now that I had interviews planned, I had another

challenge of purchasing equipment such as a quality tripod, backdrop, and ring light. I had just

moved so I didn't have the extra money to spend since it went to buying new furniture, décor,

and other things I needed for my apartment. Two pieces of equipment I didn't have to worry

about were a microphone and transcription software. I already owned a quality mic from a

previous class and knew that Microsoft Word online was a good tool for automatic

transcriptions. I learned the hard way that manual-transcribing from an audio file takes forever

from my fieldwork course.

I started reaching out to local galleries. I was honestly intimidated because I had never

done that before and didn't know if I was explaining myself or my project clearly enough. Amy

had a contact at a Baltimore gallery who I reached out to first. I emailed Camille from Motor

House about using a space in November. That message would be reformatted and used as a

template email that I'd be sending to all the other galleries and places I reached out to. My

gallery hunt was getting intense. I researched over 40 different galleries in Baltimore, D.C., and

Prince George's County. I had a Microsoft Word document with a table that had all the data I collected (Appendix G). The information I gathered and examined were the galleries names, locations, distances from me, contact information, square footage, covid precautions, social media, websites, and other unique notes as they relate to each space. Ideally, I wanted a space that was close to me so it would be more convenient to travel to. I will be commuting to my gallery multiple times during the show preparation stage, so I wanted a short easy drive. I thought Goucher's Silber Gallery would be a space that I would be able to easily access since I had a show there in 2019, I knew Alex, the gallery director and curator, and know she would love to showcase a graduate students work. I had been trying to reach out to Alex for months. I first emailed Alex back in April once I was finishing my Processing code. I had then emailed her again in the summer just in case my first email got overlooked. I tried emailing her again in the beginning of the semester and once that didn't work, I tried calling the gallery. The gallery voicemail inbox was full so I couldn't even leave a message. As a last resort I even messaged the gallery on Instagram, and like all other contact options I got no response. I even thought about visiting the gallery to see if Alex was there. It was like she disappeared. The Goucher website still listed her as a staff member and a show just ended so I doubted that she got fired. I just assumed maybe she got sick, or she was just too busy.

I had trouble with a lot of galleries I was looking at. The smaller ones closed, some until the end of the pandemic, others for good. Medium sized galleries were only doing virtual exhibitions, had high space rental fees, or they were already booked. Large galleries didn't want to exhibit the work of a student and they needed to see the completed work even before considering. I was starting to get exhausted from my search.

Tony didn't respond to any of my messages, so I decided to move onto my backup

contact for him. I had backups for everyone just in case they couldn't participate. I was a little

nervous about my first interview because it was so important. The first interview would give me

an idea of how the flow of the conversation would go, some good follow up questions and

threads, and how long the interviews would last. Dani was going to be my first interview, but

she had to cancel at the last moment because she was stuck at the hairdresser. We rescheduled

for the next day after Alaysia's interview. That day was very physically and mentally draining. I

worked 9 a.m.–5 p.m., then interviewed Alaysia from 5:30–7 p.m., and then interviewed Dani

from 7:30–9:30 p.m. I swore I would never do two interviews in one day ever again. After I

finished with Dani I went straight to bed. Alaysia's interview turned out to be my shortest one

at just 36 minutes. I didn't really need to ask any of my follow up questions since her responses

covered both the main question, the follow up, and then some. Before we started, I was a little

nervous because I have a little experience when it comes to interviewing and because I was

asking such intense questions. I logged onto the Zoom 5 minutes early and so did she. I thanked

her again for participating, asked her how she was doing, and then gave her a rundown of how

the interview was going to go. I also let her know that she can talk as long as she wants to or go

as deep as she feels comfortable with for any of the questions. I printed a copy of my question

set so I wouldn't have to switch between Zoom and Microsoft Word. I used the live

transcription function on Microsoft Word online, but it logged me out since I didn't interact

with the screen for 30 minutes. Thank goodness I recorded the interview because Microsoft

Word online transcribes from audio files.

Alaysia did the interview on her phone instead of a laptop. She was successful in changing her background to solid black to make it easier for me when it came time for editing. I did make one small mistake of leaving the meeting on Gallery view instead of Speaker view, but I fixed it halfway through the first question. Overall Alaysia was a great interviewee. She wasn't intimidated by any of the questions, she gave well thought out responses, she told stories of her experiences, and I can tell she really enjoyed the interaction. At first the interview was more formal but as we got halfway done, we both became more relaxed, and it became a conversation. After we finished the interview, we stayed on Zoom and talked for another 45 minutes about the questions and the experience. I got some fine feedback on my question set. Alaysia said she wished I had a question about how Black people are portrayed in the media and she thought I should restructure my question of "What was 2020 like for you regarding your mental health?" to something like "What Pros and Cons did quarantine have on your mental health?" She was also curious as to what my responses to the questions would be and if her answers were good enough. I answered all her questions and reassured her that her responses were up to the mark.

Dani, unlike Alaysia, was nervous. Dani is Afro Latina, but she mostly passes as Latina, so she had a little identity crisis. Dani couldn't change her Zoom background, so she just sat in front of an empty wall. Despite telling me she was nervous before we began, Dani gave me very in depth, well thought out, long responses. Our interview lasted a whole hour and we even talked for an additional hour afterwards. It was a magnificent interview. Every response from her was gold. Even though I was physically tired by the end of it I felt very fulfilled because we had such rich conversation. I really enjoyed those interviews. From the two interviews I did so

far, I was surprised with how well some responses lead into each other. I learned so much about Alaysia and Dani and now I feel a lot closer to them.

Next, I had my interview with Josiah, and it was incredible. His interview was my longest at a whopping 90 minutes! Josiah did end up rambling a lot for a few of his responses, but all his points were valid and important data. When it came time to edit, I thought about cutting some of his responses short. One unfortunate thing that happened was Josiah had bad internet connection so at some parts during the interview his audio cut out and his image froze. The freezes weren't long, they would be about a second or two, but they happened frequently. After each of the interviews I always found myself mentally tired and my eyes couldn't take the strain of looking at my computer screen anymore. Other than that, I've felt very grateful with all the dialogue up to that point. With each interview I adapted to use new follow up questions and rephrase old ones. One thing that surprised me about Josiah's interview was before we started, he told me he didn't have any time to look over the questions until right before we began. Somehow, he still ended up giving me longer responses than anybody. Tina finally responded back to me, and we set up a time to have our discussion. I still hadn't heard back from Tony's replacement Khori yet.

I narrowed down my gallery search to the Waller Gallery and Motor House. Just in case neither of those options worked out I started thinking outside the box for spaces such as venues, libraries, churches, parks, and community centers. On Labor Day I got lucky and got an email from the director of the Waller Gallery, Joy, saying that they were interested in my project. I sent her a screenshot of how the art would look (Appendix H), a link to the exhibition I did last year (Appendix I), as well as my project abstract (Appendix J). The only unfavorable part

about this situation was that I had to wait a couple weeks to get officially approved. Also, I didn't know how much square space I'd be working with. I still followed up with Motor House the next day just to be safe. Either way I was exhilarated and felt like a huge burden had been lifted off my shoulders. I remember I sat in my chair in disbelief because I had been told no or ignored by so many other galleries up to that point. I looked at myself in the mirror and said, "This is really going to happen." I was halfway done with my interviews and now I potentially had a gallery. I was completely delighted with how things were going. Joy liked my content, so we scheduled a Zoom meeting for the end of the week.

After over 2 weeks of no response, Motor House finally replied to my many emails. They wanted me to come in one day next week to discuss how my project could best be exhibited. I decided I'd wait until after my talk with the Joy before I make a choice on what I was going to do. It finally came the day for me to have my meeting with Joy and it went marvelous. We talked about my vision for the exhibition as well as logistics. At the end of our conversation, she said she would love to work with me. She told me that they're supposed to do some renovations in November so my exhibition may have to be pushed back. I originally wanted to have my exhibition in November to give my committee enough time to evaluate my project and leave the rest of my semester to write my reflection. Joy said she would also let me exhibit for a few weeks. I introduced Joy to my Capstone committee through email and sent her a "needs list" of equipment I'll have to acquire for the exhibition (Appendix K). I decided on using three projectors. Joy also wanted me to come in to see the space which filled me with zeal. Since Motor House was so bad with communication, I told them I was going with another gallery.

Amy informed me about The Harold Anderson Jr. Fund for documentation work in cultural sustainability, and I submitted a proposal (Appendix L). The Harold Atwood Anderson Jr. Fund is designed to recognize researchers who specialize in cultural documentation, particularly those engaged with endangered folkways, and to support MACS students who are focusing on cultural documentation in their MACS capstones by providing funding for software and/or equipment. I didn't hear back from Khori, so I was ready to move onto Everett. I messaged Everett and got a response back immediately. We had a quick phone call and Everette decided he wanted to participate. Before I knew it, it was the day for my interview with Nnamdi. Nnamdi's interview lasted a little over an hour. He gave me some deep, personal responses. I honestly wish I could have asked him more questions. His interview was remarkable, but Nnamdi kept on leaning to his side to rest on his arm and got uncentered. It's not hard to fix in post-production but it's still something to note. The only persons documentation I worried about was Dani's since she was the only one who couldn't change her background.

Now that I only had two interviews left, I started thinking more about the art show. In anticipation for my exhibition, I updated my artist statement and exhibition resume. Since I was going to have 3 projections going on, they all couldn't have their audio playing at the same time. I decided to take the interview audio and make an abstract sound piece. I also needed a way to play it which I didn't think about until that moment. Damian suggested that I get an MP3 player and I did. Music players are super cheap now. I got one for $20. The Waller Gallery will provide with me a Bluetooth speaker to use for my MP3 player as well as extension cords. Joy

said the gallery would even purchase 2 projector mounts for me. That made me happy that I choose them over Motor House.

Tina cancelled our appointment last minute because her son got sick. She told me she'd let me know when the next time she would be free later in the week. Everett still hadn't responded to any of my emails or messages even though he said he was interested a few days ago. I decided that if I didn't hear from him by the end of the week I would move on again to another participant. I was annoyed by Everett because he told me he was excited about my work, and he really wanted to help. He left my messages on read. His text messages and Facebook Messenger let me know he read them right after I sent them, and he chose not to respond. He was ignoring me for some reason. I just assumed it was because maybe he changed his mind. I was confused because if he wasn't interested, he could have told me sooner that he no longer wanted to participate. I learned some of the harder lessons of field work which are, no one is ever on your schedule, and sometimes people change their minds even if they say they'll commit.

I gave up hope on ever hearing back from Everett and messaged Jeremiah and Delante. I figured it would be smarter to contact 2 people instead of 1 just in case someone says no, or they don't communicate well. Jeremiah said he was too busy and Delante said he was interested but he wouldn't be available until next month because he was about to go on a trip. I reached out to my final option for men, Fiyin, and he said he would love to be interviewed. I finally had my last two interviews set up for the end of September. I was still on track on my Plan of Work since I was getting the interviews done before the end of the month. Finding my last participant was such a hassle, I felt so appreciative to have a friend like Fiyin. Out of all my

previous obstacles finding one final person to interview was the most annoying. It would be a dream to do a project like this where people reach out to me if they want to participate and work with my schedule. Just when my luck was going well, my area got hit with a severe thunderstorm and my car got totaled from a falling branch. The back windows were shattered, trunk door was bent in and couldn't open, there was damage to the roof, and the axle was broken. This happened a few days before I was supposed to go in and see the Waller Gallery. I emailed Joy and told her I would have to reschedule because of car problems. I spent the next 72 hours looking for a new car like a mad man. I took the bus, got rides from friends, and caught Uber's to different dealerships and by the end of the next week I had a new car.

I was debating if I should start my content evaluations before I finish my last two interviews. Since there are 10 questions and I want to include 3 responses from all the interviews that means each person should be featured 5 times. (10 questions x 3 responses = 30 total answers. 6 interviewees / 30 answers = 5 each). Since I had some extra time before the next interviews, I choose one response for each question to get started. In that time, I also created my MD Soar account. It finally came time for my meeting with Tina and it was outstanding. It lasted about an hour and went smoothly. Tina had some unique perspectives as someone who grew up with an east African family, being married, and a mother. Anyone would be lucky to have her as a participant in their research.

Now that I had my car, I got a chance to go to the Waller Gallery in person. The gallery is surprisingly close. It took me less than 20 minutes to get there. I arrived 10 minutes early and texted Joy that I had parked. I didn't get a text back, so I just figured she was driving. I waited until it was another 10 minutes after the time we were supposed to meet then called her. She

didn't pick up, so I decided to get out of my car and go knock on the door. The gallery itself is a row home turned into an art space. After waiting on the stoop for five minutes I decided to go back to my car. I was going to try to call Joy again and if she didn't pick up, I would wait another 5 minutes and then head home. Just as I was about to leave Joy opened the door and waved at me to get my attention. I came back across the street and introduced myself. She welcomed me into the space and gave me a tour of the first floor. The space was bigger than I thought it would be which is astounding. It was apparent that the space was being prepped for renovation. The whole time I was there, someone was upstairs hammering and sawing. They wanted the space to be finished before the next exhibition, which would be mine. We talked for about 45 minutes before I left. We went over potential places to set the projectors, the timing of when the exhibition would occur (normal gallery hours), updates from the contractor (none), other spaces I could exhibit in for a worst-case scenario, covid safety precautions, social media promotion, and local spots to pin flyers and posters for marketing. From our conversation I believed my exhibit would most likely be happening in December. It's not what I planned for but as long as it opens before the semester ends, I should be fine. Plus, it gives me more time to work on the art. If we didn't set an official opening date by November 1st then I would hold off on marketing the exhibition.

In the meantime, Joy asked me to write a bio along with sending her a headshot for a profile. My bio read, "Khamar Hopkins is an interdisciplinary digital artist based in the Baltimore area, who creates art that celebrates black culture and explores social dilemmas in the African American community. Working primarily with motion graphics, code, and design, Hopkins' colorful, modern style draws inspiration from the paintings and illustrations of Aaron Douglas

and the subject matter of Kara Walker's installations. By focusing on African American history and narratives, Hopkins aims to inspire cultural understanding, topical conversation, and tackle the divisive rhetoric of racism and oppression."

It came time for my last interview. Fiyin's interview continued for roughly an hour and 20 minutes. Like all the others it was enjoyable and illustrious. For my project I'm going to cut one of the questions from the projections. I want each projector to cover an equal 3 questions total. I decided not to include the 9th question about religion since it spawned the shortest replies and was more outlandish from the other questions. I started my response evaluations and wanted to get them done as soon as possible so I could work on the art. I relistened to each interview and noted which responses would be best for each question. I wish I would have done this during my interviews but then again, it was going to be difficult because everyone gave such impressive retorts. I finished everyone's transcripts and assigned them colors randomly. Alaysia is blue, Dani is yellow, Fiyin is green, Josiah is red, Nnamdi is orange, and Tina is purple. While I was in the process of content evaluation, I won the Harold Atwood Anderson Jr. Award. I was thrilled because that meant I could afford to get 3 high quality projectors like I wanted along with anything else I needed. Everything was on track for my project, and I was kind of astonished by that fact.

I finished my evaluations (Appendix M) and I wanted to include just one more response for each question because I didn't want such great dialogue to go to waste. Once I started the editing process I would see if I could include just one more piece to each compilation. By being distracted with everything involving my car, the gallery, and the Harold Atwood Anderson Jr. Prize, I was close to falling a little behind schedule. I noticed this and went the extra mile to

make sure I stayed on task. Since I won the Harold Atwood Anderson Jr. prize, I didn't want to wait for the money to come in because I wasn't sure how long it would take. So, I selected to use my own money and would pay myself back once it finally arrived. With my interviews and evaluations finished, winning funds for my project, and having an exhibition space set, I was ready for the production stage.

Production Stage

After I finished the interviews, time felt like it was moving a lot faster. I ran into this one problem where the videos weren't uploading with the right dimensions, but I quickly solved it since I could export them to be the size, I wanted them to be. I tested a few clips in Processing and had to tweak the code a little bit but it looked amazing. I tested Alaysia's documentation, but something happened when I exported her clips and they all exported with grey boxes on the sides. Instead of going through and starting the whole process over again, I just re-exported the clips in Premiere and covered the grey boxes with black rectangles to save me a bunch of time and effort. Since Dani couldn't change her background, I had to add a manual mask to her video files, and it didn't look as clean as everyone else's. When I started editing videos with Processing, I noticed that they weren't exporting right. The clips are 25 frames per second, but I didn't see that in the shots that were exported. For example, a clip that's 2 minutes and 6 seconds should have 3,150 frames but instead I had 517, which is roughly 4.1 frames per second. It exports the full edited video but just not at the right frame rate. I later found out I could change frame rates in Premiere. I ran into a few other smaller problems, but they weren't anything that I couldn't handle. After editing all the clips into image sequences, I backed up my work after weeks of not doing so.

After doing some research I settled on which projectors I was going to get. I purchased a Yaber and TopTro projector. When they came in, I compared the quality to see which one I was going to return. They were both spectacular projectors. The Yaber projector had super high-quality image, didn't have a loud fan, didn't get hot after running for a while, surprisingly great sound, and it came with every type of wire, and a remote control. It was easy and simple to set up. I could even connect my phone to it with a special cable that didn't come included in the box. The TopTro projector was also nice. The UI wasn't the best, but the projection seems a tad bit brighter. It didn't come with all the wires like the other projector, but it did have Bluetooth capabilities and came with its own carrying case. I'm kept both projectors. I got another Yaber projector because it was cheaper but still great quality. Since none of the projectors were going to playing any sound, I concluded that it would be smart to include what question was being answered in the video file. This meant that I would no longer have to run the videos through Mad Mapper to constrain them in a circular shape. Which would also save me extra time. I learned a lot about how to use Adobe Premiere because of this project. I learned the basics of editing video and adding closed captions. After reviewing all my content, I felt that when people tell stories their responses are more interesting than their opinions on specific questions.

I had a short meeting with Joy where I basically just updated her on the progress of my project, and she went over the gallery schedule with me. She said she'd be able to host the exhibition from December 10th through the end of the year. The only problem with that is December 10th is the absolute last day of the semester. Now that I had an exhibition schedule, I updated my marketing material with the right dates and times. I'm going to have to create a virtual exhibition for my committee to give them something to review before my defense. Also,

now that I have more time to work on the project, I can add the additional clips I wanted to include. We're going to be setting up the exhibition space in November after the renovations. I made a few small adjustments to my plan of work. I was ready to begin marketing in the beginning of November. I started an online word doc of social media pages and places where I can share my exhibition graphics.

I was finally entering the final stages of editing. I focused on getting the visuals done first then worry about the sound piece last. I communicated with all my interviewees and let them know the date of the opening of the exhibition before I publicly announced it. The most time-consuming aspect of this project was editing the closed captions on the videos. With Premiere you can either upload or auto generate transcripts. I chose to auto generate since I cut and edited so many clips and I would double check them with the transcripts I already drafted. The system didn't include any of the "umms" or other noises the participants made that weren't words. The punctuation was off because of certain pauses or how people said things. I decided to keep so it would match better with their mouth movement. The first projector would be showing the responses for questions 1, 2, and 3, the second projector would be showing the responses for questions 4, 5, and 6, and the third projector would be showing the responses for questions 7, 8, and 10. The video file for the first projector was 40 minutes long, the second was 1 hour and 3 minutes long, and the third was 1 hour and 14 minutes long. The second and third projector video files are longer than the first because they had more follow-up questions.

I met with my committee and planned some work to do after I finish editing my videos and before the exhibition. I forgot to do it right after their interviews, but I sent my participants

their video documentation in case they wanted to revisit our conversation. After I finished

editing all the videos, I set up another google drive folder for the interactive aspect of my

project and then made a postcard with a QR code. I had a brilliant idea. I combined my regular

postcard and "interactive" card. The front has name and information relating to the exhibition

and the back has the QR code and questions. This saved me money, so I didn't have to order

two different sets of cards and will help me reach a wider audience online in terms of the

interactive element. I ran into a problem though. I couldn't fit all my questions on the back of

the card, so I had to choose which ones I wanted to incorporate. The questions I decided to

include on the card are:

- What are some of the biggest threats to Black mental health? How do we conquer
  them?

- What was 2020 like for you regarding your mental health?

- Did you notice any changes in incidents of police brutality during the pandemic and how
  did they make you feel?

- Does participating in or seeing marches and protest effect your emotional state?

- Do you believe racism is still prevalent in America today? If so, why?

- Can you give an example of a racist interaction you've dealt with?

- Do you think there is a negative stigma on talking about mental health in the Black
  community? If so, why?

- In what ways do you think Black people are affected by intergenerational trauma?

  I chose these questions because I felt like they were the most engaging. Anyone who

scans the QR code can add, edit, or comment on anything else in the google drive folder I made.

I doubt anyone will post anything inappropriate or hateful, but I'll still check on it every evening once I start marketing. I was a little behind on ordering my posters, flyers, and postcards but I wanted to prioritize getting the video files finished, plus I had to make another postcard. I ordered 125 postcards, 60 flyers, and 5 posters. Everything was surprisingly well priced since I used Fireball Printing. After I ordered everything, I began working on the sound piece. I was planning on being done at the end of the month so all of November I can just focus on the exhibition and my reflection.

I had a lot of fun experimenting in Adobe Audition when creating my audio art (Appendix N). As I was nearing the end of my project, I started pondering other creative projects I could make if I had the extra time. Some of those ideas included: making a word cloud out of the most common words, filling a blank wall with the text of a transcript, and pulling quotes and making giant stickers of them. I uploaded my final video, audio, and print files to my drive and was officially done with the production part of my Capstone. I purchased a mount and tested it with my projectors. Once November came around, I posted on all my personal social media pages (Facebook, Twitter, Instagram, and Snapchat) about the exhibition. I waited a week to post on specific Facebook pages so that I didn't annoy anyone who just so happened to be my friend and in the same page. Plus, this would increase the chances of them seeing the ad if they didn't check their social platforms the day I posted. I approved my proofs, and my printed materials were on their way to me. I wanted them to be here on the first of the month but there was nothing I could do. I prepared a gallery guide for my visitors (Appendix O). I made it with a white background so it's cheaper and quicker to print. Plus, it'll be easier to read and stick out more on a table. I also had a brilliant idea of turning the back room of the gallery into a

conversation space for visitors. There would be light refreshments, a few chairs, the room would be lit, and there might be a surprise projector in there.

I emailed Joy to update her on the status of my project and she said she would send my bio, headshot, and flyer out to her media contact to start promoting it. I was introduced to Chino, the Waller Gallery's social media intern. I sent him a vector file of the art and he's going to make a marketing plan for how they're going to post and promote the exhibition on their end. I wanted him to start soon because we were less than a month away from the show opening. I haven't heard anything from Joy about how the renovation is going but I'll check in with her halfway through the month. I need to know so I can document the space. If I can't come document the space before my defense, I'll ask Joy if she can send me some pictures so I can mock them up how my exhibition is going to look. I shared my flyer with my participants and some of them, along with a few peers and close friends, shared the ad on their social media pages.

The Waller Gallery started their promotion as well. They made an Instagram post, Instagram story, added me to their bio, Facebook post, and even made a Facebook event page (Appendix P). Around the same time, I went to Graffiti Alley and taped up flyers and tried to get some up in local businesses, but they wouldn't allow me (Appendix Q). Chino asked for 15 clips from my project to use for further promotion up until opening night of the show and I supplied them. In that email I also had to explain why I couldn't include the audio from the interviews.

One thing I must prepare for with the exhibition coming up is how I'm going to engage with my visitors. Do I introduce myself and describe the work at the door, or should I just stay silent? Joy and I haven't discussed how opening night will go yet but I think she might want to

introduce me or have me say something about the project. Besides the opening day, I'll leave all my interactions to being inside the conversation room. The first day of the show is a special occasion that will draw in a large audience, so I'll be fine with talking to visitors and letting them engage outside of the conversation room. I've been a part of and been to many art exhibitions over the past years and for bigger artist they usually have a talk before the opening and then they stand in one spot of the gallery to let people see the art then come and ask them questions. I want to do the same as well as give a public statement once there is a good number of visitors in the gallery. In the future if I have the opportunity to take *Afro Amelioration Introspection* further or do something inspired by it, I would like to organize a more formal community talk on the subject. I want to observe how people move about the space, view the art, talk to who they came with, and how long they stay. I believe that will all be valuable data to help make the show and future shows for this project and the Waller Gallery better. I have a guest book prepared to collect visitor names, emails, and comments on the exhibition.

I hadn't heard back from Andrew in a while. I emailed him in the beginning of the semester to check my portfolium so I would have no last-minute problems when it came to graduate. I sent him a follow up and had Damian check it just to safe. After my email I got a response from Andrew. He said my portfolium is good and I have completed all requirements for graduation.

Joy asked for a project description, and I drafted:

"Afro Amelioration Introspection is a projected video artwork, abstract sound piece, and solo art exhibition with a digital interactive component focused on the topic of Black mental health. Using ethnographic methods, the artist conducted a series of six interviews where they questioned participants on their personal feelings and narratives covering and not limited to the issues of COVID, family, police brutality, racism, intergenerational trauma, and the stigma on the subject of mental health in the Black

community. This piece consists of video documentation of the conversations that have been transmogrified into nonrepresentational art using Processing. A conceptual soundtrack produced using the audio from the interviews. Lastly, a synergistic art show organized to showcase the project and create a safe space for conversation on the topic."

All that I have left to do now is write my reflection, prepare, and document the gallery space, have my defense, and start the exhibition. It's crazy how I'm almost done. A few months ago, this felt so far away.

Reflection Stage

Now that my project is finished, and marketing is underway I have some time for reflection on my whole Capstone process. If I had to do my Capstone all over again there's only two things I would do differently, and they are to form my Capstone committee and begin my gallery search a lot sooner. It would have been better if I started both in the spring semester. Even though finding participants was hard near the end, that's still something that is out of my control and there's nothing I can do personally to affect their willingness to be a part of a project. I don't feel like there were any gaps in my Capstone. I achieved enough for the type of project I did in the small amount of time I had. If I wanted to add anything to the project, I could continue to reach out to other bigger galleries to host the show and add more questions, projectors, and interview even more people. I could also pull notable quotes from the interviews and have them written largely on a blank wall in a nice handwritten font or make a fully accessible web 3D gallery for the exhibition.

This project will be a great asset for my future career. As an example, Johns Hopkins University recently did a survey in Baltimore to see what people thought about their brand. The survey only had a few questions with generic responses. There was an area that really

disfavored Johns Hopkins University and now the upper brass wants to know why. If they wanted someone who has experience with field work/interviews and who could also document people's responses while keeping them anonymous in a creative way, then I could show and tell them about *Afro Amelioration Introspection.* Which could hopefully let me take lead on the project, probably get promoted or even creating a new position at Johns Hopkins University.

My shortest video is 40 minutes long. Do I really think someone will stand in the same spot and watch a whole projection for that long? Especially when there are 2 other projections that are even longer. I don't expect someone to watch a projector in its entirety. I am hoping that visitors will at least watch all the responses to a single question then move onto a different projector. Is there a way to make the space more comfortable for those watching the work? The floor is going to be completely empty since we're mounting the projectors on the ceiling. Most galleries have one or two benches for video artwork. I don't want to add chairs to the main gallery because they would take up space and usually when the chairs in front of a video are taken it deters others from going to watch it with them. I think it's just human nature not to want to make others feel uncomfortable. I know I would worry about making someone feel weird if I was to silently stand behind them watching something. With no chairs more people can gather around and watch the art. It could also potentially lead to conversation circles amongst strangers. Also only having chairs in the conversation room will help drive people back there if they want to sit down. Snacks will help with that to. I'm deducing that no chairs in the main gallery space is a good thing.

I'm not too worried about people struggling to converse. Being at an art show is an ice breaker itself. No matter what, if you had to speak to a stranger, you could easily just ask them

what they think about the art. The gallery guide will also have all the questions I'm asking so they could use those as well. Also, since the Waller Gallery is in Baltimore that invites conversation on Baltimore culture such as sports teams or traffic troubles. With all the questions I'm presenting it should be unlikely that a visitor can walk away without saying anything to anyone or at least not talk about the show when they get home. If there's a show where there's no other visitors, then someone can take one of the cards and engage digitally. The day after the opening of the show should reveal more data on my hypothesis. Until then I'm going to remain positively optimistic. I can't wait to see all my work for the past year come into fruition with my exhibition.

Concluding Thoughts

Afro Amelioration Introspection is solo art exhibition showcasing 3 projected video artworks, and abstract sound piece, with a focus to primarily engage the African American community in conversation on the subject of Black mental health. In preparation for my Capstone, I drafted and evaluated different ideas for potential projects, developed code for my chosen project in the programming language Processing, and got a better understanding of what I wanted to do with my Capstone and what my Capstone could do for my future and the Black community by fabricating a statement of rationale, educational objectives list, methodology statement, Capstone committee, plan of work, IRB statement, bibliography, and literature review. In the "Pre-Production Stage" of my Capstone I utilized what I learned from the Master in Arts of Cultural Sustainability program to conduct a series of six interviews where I questioned participants on their personal feelings and narratives covering but not limited to the issues of COVID, family, police brutality, racism, intergenerational trauma, and the stigma

about mental health in the Black community. I also documented the interviews, made transcripts of the dialogue, evaluated participant responses, designed the art for the exhibition advertisements, started a marketing plan, and completed my search for a gallery space during the pre-production stage as well.

During the "Production Stage" of my project I applied the skills I developed from the Digitals Arts program to transform my documentation into art using the power of Processing and Adobe programs, purchased quality equipment for the art show, ordered my printed materials, collaborated with Waller Gallery staff for social media promotion, and finalized exhibition plans and details. Finally, during my "Reflection Stage" I thought over what I could have potentially done differently with my project, if I was missing anything, what I could do to take it further, how the project will be an asset to my future career, pondering how I would engage with visitors, analyzing how people could interact in the space and with the art, imagining if visitors would struggle conversing, wrote my reflection, and prepared the gallery for the exhibition.

I accomplished everything I planned for and a few things I didn't. The things I completed that I prepared for were to show my mastery of the Cultural Sustainability and Digital Arts programs with the project in its entirety, my educational objectives, my interviews, marketing materials, artwork, social media promotion, reflection, and exhibition. What I didn't expect was to build a closer bond with my participants, make new friends on social media, discuss Black mental health with strangers online, and build a relationship with a local gallery. *Afro Amelioration Introspection* contributes to the field of cultural sustainability by bringing awareness to a taboo topic that is harming the African American community through a visual

medium and gathering, using art to engage a community in meaningful conversations,

spreading local knowledge through story sharing, and building a deeper connection in

a community by creating a memorable experience. *Afro Amelioration Introspection* is

contributing to the field of digital arts by being crafting artwork using multiple

different software and technology and has a purpose of presenting a taboo topic to a

struggling community.

My educational objectives were to learn how to build rapport with a gallery space, how

to plan and organize an exhibition, how to edit video using Processing, to become proficient

with projection mapping, improving my interview skills, learning more about Black mental

health, learning more about myself, and how to approach a sensitive topic with art. I reached

my educational goals through different means, effort, and training depending on which was

necessary. I built rapport with the Waller Gallery with honest and open communication about

my project, schedule, and self along with visiting the gallery a few times, and keeping the

director up to date on my project biweekly. I learned how to plan and organize and exhibition

through my own research, established knowledge from past exhibitions, and by talking to the

Waller Gallery director multiple times. I learned how to edit video files with Processing from

what I learned from Andrew in the spring and by also referencing coding tutorials on YouTube. I

became proficient with projection mapping by reading the manuals that came with the

projectors, watching tutorial videos, and testing it out in my apartment. I improved my

interview skills by taking what I learned from each interview (how to phrase certain questions,

different follow ups, asking participants to elaborate, etc.) and applying it to the next one. I

learned more about Black mental health through my literature review, bibliography, research,

and interviews. I learned more about myself from doing this project. I gained deeper insights on my interests in art and ethnography, my physical limits regarding interviews, my subject position when leading a discussion for research, my drive to complete a project, expanding my social battery by constantly reaching out to different galleries and people, and never asking a question I, myself wouldn't feel comfortable with answering. Finally, to approach a sensitive topic with art or ethnography, you should let your participants know everything about the project before they partake, get their consent before you document or let them join your research, let them tell their own stories without leading them, and using the dialogue or data they provide with as little editing as possible.

After conducting the interviews, I now have a more general understanding of how quarantine affected people both in positive and negative ways. For the most part everyone can agree that it was bad but there were still some good things about it. Some of those bad experiences were, feeling isolated from friends, family, peers and coworkers, the loss of traditions, gatherings, social outings, celebrations, and holidays, increased media coverage of race fueled police brutality, relationship strains, childcare problems, the spread of false information regarding the virus, fear of getting laid off from work, depression, and being stressed about potentially getting sick. On the other hand, some of the positive circumstances were having more time to spend at home with loved ones and pets, the opportunity to work from home, having more free time to do hobbies, things being more sanitized than usual, saving money, and less traffic. I have felt both the good and bad parts of quarantine. I gained awareness to some of the major things Black people consider the biggest threats to our collective mental health. Some of those things are environment, stereotypes, media portrayal,

upbringing, police brutality, racism, how the previous generation perceives the current, religion, academia, "Black super woman syndrome," politics, body image, family, accessibility to care, and stigma on the subject. I think these are all important factors to consider when analyzing mental health. To conquer these things we need acceptance, access to care, practicing self-care, education, embracing hobbies, spreading joy, avoiding negative media, and removal of stigma. On top of this list, I think we need more positive media to break stereotypes, more justice for racist actions, and more free tools for positive mindset like the Calm app.

Family can also play a major role in one's mental health and sadly even your loved ones can affect you in a bad way. Your family makes you feel loved and not alone, but they can also tire you out if you have children, choose to ignore you if you're reaching out for help, make you think you're having mental health problems because you aren't praying enough, and pressuring you to gather even when you know you shouldn't. It was comforting to know a lot of our families do the same things and I found it intriguing to see how each participant handled things differently.

Everyone felt like there weren't more incidents of police brutality than before, but there were just more media coverage and people absorbing that coverage because they were at home bored, and it was the only other news we were getting besides anything new on the pandemic. Things weren't getting better or worse, they were only getting documented more. Marches and protests made my participants feel tired, sad, and angry. They were tired, angry, and annoyed because we still must constantly protest police brutality and injustice, and if they couldn't participate, they would feel sad or think not participating makes it seem like they don't

care about the issue. I also got a sense of hopelessness from everyone's responses and their thoughts and feelings were universal with mine.

Everyone easily agreed that racism is still prevalent in America because that's what our country was founded on, and our systems and laws let it continue. And they felt that, if anyone didn't agree then they were either "stupid," choosing to ignore the situation, or viewing the problem through the lens of white privilege, white supremacy, or anti-Blackness. I found my interviewee statements on racism to be in line with my experience. All my participants had strong stories of racist interactions they've dealt with. One dealt with being mistaken for a staff worker while on vacation, another had to deal with a toxic conversation on identity politics in film with their peers. Someone lost their housing because the leasing manager found out they were Black, and one participant even got profiled, their right of privacy abused, and had guns drawn on them. Besides the everyday macro and microaggressions, they all had many stories of race-influenced hate, which is in line with my own experience.

My participants concluded that shadeism exist because of its history and connotation with slaves, and Eurocentric beauty standards. By researching the last few decades of beauty standards based on magazines, advertisements, models, and actors/actresses, I can see how they came to those conclusions. None of my male participants have ever felt insecure about their skin tone but all my female participants say they all have at one point in time. They all were made to feel as if darker skin was undesired, one woman even said when she was a child, she told her mother she wanted to be white. I think this might have to do with the immense pressure woman feel from other women, family, and the world to fit in with societal beauty standards. Those who set those standards are usually the ones with power or majority in the

population, leaving minorities and people of mixed race with darker skin, different hair textures, features, or bodies to feel left out or unattractive. I have never felt insecure about my own skin tone, but I am aware of how anti-dark skin media is. Everyone agreed that Blackfishing exists because Black culture is cool. There was no doubt that even though nonBlack people find our culture fun that it's still disrespectful and wrong to "dress up" like a Black person.

The participants were aware of and agreed that there was a stigma surrounding talk about Black mental health. They were all also positively optimistic that the things will be better for the next generation because right now we're having the conversations on it and making it less taboo to seek help. Most of my interviewees acknowledged that they believe Black people suffer from increased rates of mental health concerns when compared to white people because of the environments they grow up in and racism in medical care. All the participants were familiar with the concept of intergenerational trauma, but more than half couldn't name any institutional support we have for it. I know of a small handful of nonprofits to help with certain specific problems, but I only learned about them a few years ago and not sure how well known they are. I learned more about or was enlightened on everything I questioned my participants about.

Going to the exhibition will impact visitor perspective by giving them a chance to talk about a topic that is considered taboo. If they choose not to engage in conversation, then they will at least see what other people think about the topic from the art or overhear exchanges from other guests. This will hopefully encourage them to think differently about certain topics or start dialogue on them. *Afro Amelioration Introspection* will impact the community by giving them a bonding experience and open space to talk about sensitive topics to help them build a

closer bond and possibly seek out help if they need it. I am evaluating the success of this project based off people communicating about the topic and learning because the goal of this Capstone is to not only reflect the type of art I want to make in the future, but let the African American community know they're not alone if they're struggling with addressing the concept of Black mental health, sustaining culture by approaching an issue that harms a community, and making the topic less taboo so people can have a better quality of life. I'm measuring the success of what I observe during the exhibition, in the google drive, and on social media. I would say I've been successful so far because people have been having discussions digitally on social media with me and friends who have shared the ad for the exhibition. I'm looking forward to seeing these interactions in person during my exhibition in December.

My plan for the future of *Afro Amelioration Introspection* after this exhibition is to hopefully continue exhibiting it at different galleries, thus helping my art and ethnography careers. I've already had a conversation with Joy about the worst-case scenario if I couldn't exhibit at the Waller Gallery and she said she would reach out to her contacts at other local galleries to see if I could exhibit there. I know Joy is also inviting these gallery directors to my show so I'll network with them to see if I can have a show at their space with *Afro Amelioration Introspection* or if not then have a future exhibition with them with a different project. I also invited my communications director from Johns Hopkins University and hopefully they'll find this project useful enough that they'll let me do some ethnographic work for the school. No matter what the future holds I know that this work is important and not a lot of people are doing it right now. There is a lot of mental and cultural turmoil for Black people in America and around the world, and I just want to help make their lives better.

Glossary:

Afro Amelioration Introspection: the advancement of a Black person's own perceptions. This is also the title of a Capstone project and solo art exhibition in Baltimore.

Amelioration: the act of making something better; improvement.

Art: a means of expression that involves creativity, planning, and/or skill. It can represent anything but doesn't have to.

Autoethnography: an approach to research that involves analysis of one's own personal experiences.

Black Super Woman Syndrome: the idea that Black women can handle more mental and physical burdens than other women.

Blackfishing: when a nonBlack person tries to appear Black on social media or the internet.

Capstone: a culminating educational project at the end of an academic program.

Commodity: an economic good or resource. They are produced with no artistic purpose.

Cultural Hegemony: dominant culture that is understood by most.

Cultural Sustainability: an endeavor of fostering support for communities through organizing, fundraising, legislation, or written, audio, and/or visual means to prevent cultures from being harmed, misunderstood, or disappearing.

Culture: the cumulative deposit of knowledge, experience, beliefs, values, attitudes, meanings, hierarchies, religions, notions of time, roles, spatial relations, concepts of the universe, symbols, communication, and material objects acquired by a group of people from generation to generations through individual and group striving and transmitted through social learning.

DA: the Master of Fine Arts in Digital Art program at Goucher College.

Digital Art: any artwork made using, edited with, or aided by technology.

Educational Objectives: what one plans to learn.

Ethnographic: relating to the study of cultures.

Eurocentric: a world view focused on European culture and history, and exclusion of everything else.

Exhibition: a public display of art.

Frame: a single image in a sequence.

Float Value: a floating-point number, which means it is a number that has a decimal place. Floats are used over Integers when more precision is needed.

Gentrification: the displacement of urban neighborhood residents for higher economic activity and development.

Intergenerational Trauma: the collective trauma experienced by a person or group of people that gets passed down directly to subsequent generations.

Interview Protocol: a guide for an interview containing interviewee name(s), plans, and questions.

Introspection: the examination or observation of one's own mental and emotional processes.

MACS: the Master of Arts in Cultural Sustainability program at Goucher College.

Marketing Collateral: the printed and/or digital advertisements used to promote something.

Methodology: a system of procedures used to study something.

Oppression: the unjust treatment of a group of people under the guise of governmental authority.

Police Brutality: the excessive and unwarranted use of force or misconduct that violates civil

rights by law enforcement.

Processing: a flexible software sketchbook and computer programming language for learning

how to code within the context of the visual arts.

Projection Mapping: a technique that involves video projecting onto objects or surfaces.

Qualitive Interview: a semi-structured interview based off a particular topic with open-ended

questions.

Rapport: a friendly relationship; a bond.

Rasquachification: the preservation of a culture through creative conservation in a community.

Rasquachification is the opposite of gentrification and challenges the white spatial

imaginary.

Release Form: a form giving consent to let go of legal liability for participation in something.

Shadeism: discrimination based on skin tone.

Social Battery: a person's capability to socialize with others.

Stigma: the social disapproval or disgrace of a particular topic, circumstance, or person.

Sustainability: refers to a method of harvesting or using a resource so that the resource is not

depleted or permanently damaged.

Taboo: the prohibition of discussion on a particular thing.

Transcript: a written record of a material documented from another medium.

Waller Gallery: a multidisciplinary art gallery focusing on art created by people of color.

Located at 2420 N Calvert St, Baltimore, MD 21218.

White Spatial Imaginary: is perceiving any cultural celebrations or identifiers besides white

    ones as threats.

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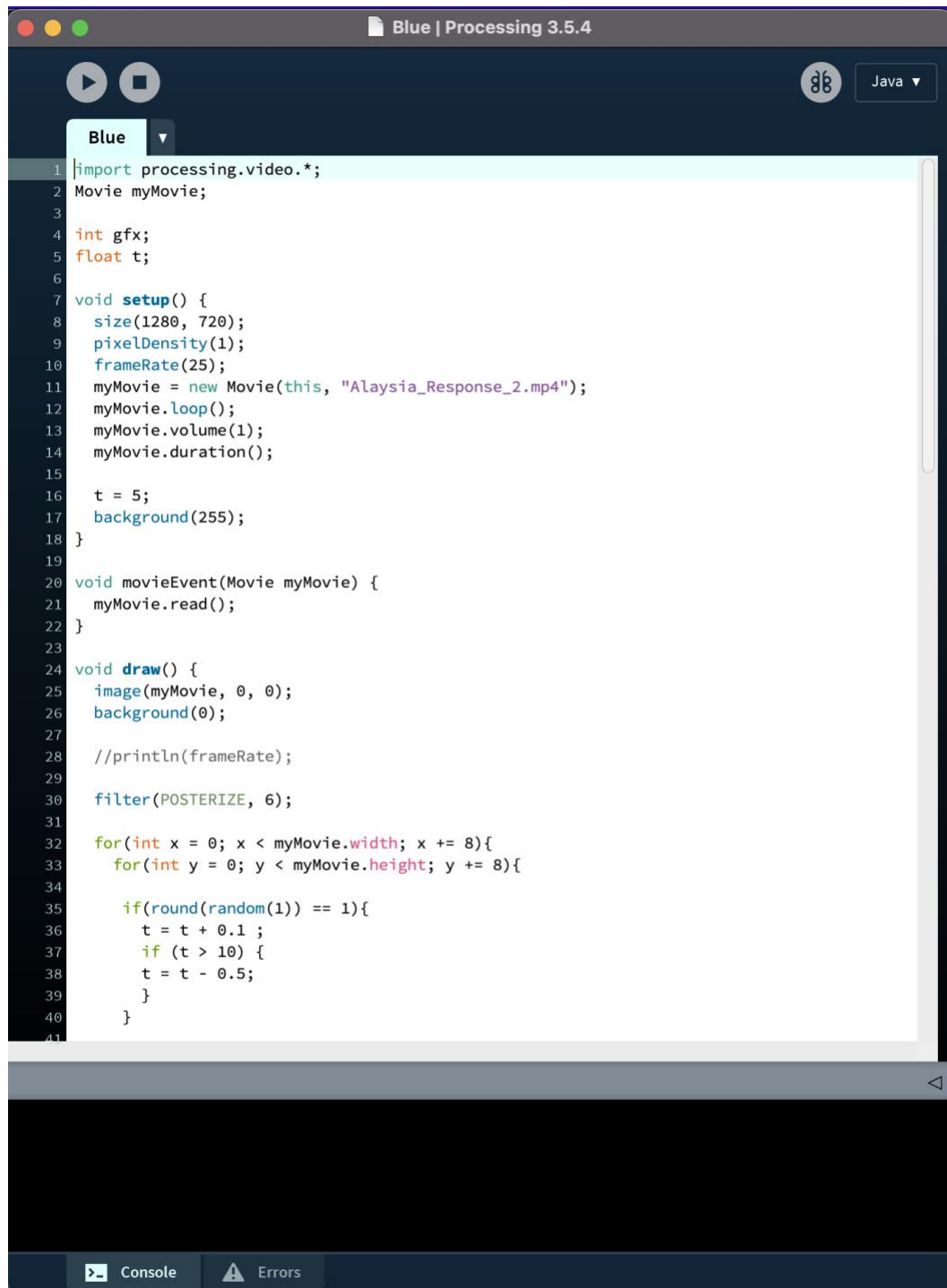
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Appendix:

Appendix A: Processing Code


```
1  import processing.video.*;
2  Movie myMovie;
3
4  int gfx;
5  float t;
6
7  void setup() {
8    size(1280, 720);
9    pixelDensity(1);
10   frameRate(25);
11   myMovie = new Movie(this, "Alaysia_Response_2.mp4");
12   myMovie.loop();
13   myMovie.volume(1);
14   myMovie.duration();
15
16   t = 5;
17   background(255);
18 }
19
20 void movieEvent(Movie myMovie) {
21   myMovie.read();
22 }
23
24 void draw() {
25   image(myMovie, 0, 0);
26   background(0);
27
28   //println(frameRate);
29
30   filter(POSTERIZE, 6);
31
32   for(int x = 0; x < myMovie.width; x += 8){
33     for(int y = 0; y < myMovie.height; y += 8){
34
35       if(round(random(1)) == 1){
36         t = t + 0.1 ;
37         if (t > 10) {
38         t = t - 0.5;
39         }
40       }
41
```

Appendix B: Portfolium

Appendix C: Interview Protocol First Draft

Interview Protocol

Interviewees	Back Ups
Josiah Bradley	Everett Hall-McNeill
Nnamdi Odoazu	Jeremiah Evens
Tony Miller	Khori Smith
Dani Velasco	Valarie Proctor
Tina Suliman	Kimberly Joseph
Alaysia Corley	April Amacker

After getting this question set approved, I will call my expected interviewees explaining what my Capstone project is, its purpose, and asking them if they'd be willing to be interviewed as a part of it. If any of my first choices aren't interested, then I will reach out to my backups. If a participant agrees to be interviewed, I'll get their email address and send them a copy of the question set and project abstract along setting up a time for us to meet individually. I am free every weekday after 5 p.m. and I can make time for an interview anytime on the weekend. Considering the Delta variant as a health risk I am willing and able to do interviews through Zoom with the set up. I'm vaccinated but I understand if people still aren't comfortable with face-to-face interactions. I tested it and if I'm going to have to do an interview through Zoom then my participant will need to either change their virtual background to a solid black color or have a black backdrop with themselves in good lighting.

Questions Set

- How has the pandemic affected your mental health?
  - Can you elaborate?
  - How do you deal with that?
  - Has this caused any disconnect between you and family, friends, or community?
    - If no, why do you think so?
    - If yes, how do you get that lost connection back?
- What is your family's effect on your well-being during quarantine?
  - Pros and Cons?
- Do you think police brutality got worst during the pandemic? Why/Why not?
  - What are your thoughts on George Floyd?
- Do you think marching and protesting has made a difference?
  - If yes, how?
  - If no, why and do you think protest can bring about change?
  - What are your thoughts on the Jan 6 attack on the capital?
- Why is racism still prevalent in America today?
  - How do you respond in racist interactions?
  - Can you give an example of one you've dealt with?
  - How should you respond as a Black person?
  - Where do people learn racism from, and can it be untaught? How?
- Do you know what shadism is and why do you think it exists?
  - Have you ever felt insecure about your skin tone?
  - Do you know what Black fishing is and why do you think it exists?
- Do you think there is a negative stigma on talking about mental health in the black community? Why?
  - Do you think Black people suffer from increased rates of mental health concerns including anxiety and depression when compared to white people?
- What is the relationship between your religion, if you have one, and your mental health?
  - Is religion vital for positive mental health?
- Are black people still affected by the intergenerational traumas from our ancestors? (i.e., colonialism, slavery, Jim Crow, segregation, the prison-industrial complex, red-lining, over-policing, etc.)
  - How long are we as a community going to have to deal with this?
  - Do feel like the government cares?
    - If yes, then why and how do they care?
    - If no, then why and what could they do to help?
- What's are some of the biggest threats to Black mental health?
  - How do we conquer those threats?

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Documentation Release Form

I,_____ , am a participant in *Afro Amelioration Introspection*. I understand that the purpose of this documentation project is to explore how the Covid-19, the pandemic/quarantine, police brutality, racism, and other current events have affected Black mental health. I further understand and grant permission to *Khamar Hopkins,* a student in the Masters of Cultural Sustainability and the Masters of Digital Art programs of Goucher College to photograph, videotape and otherwise document as a part of this research project.

I understand that *Khamar Hopkins* plans to retain the product of my participation in the research, including but not limited to my interview, presentation, video, photographs, statements, name, images or likeness, voice, and written materials ("My Collection") as part of his Capstone project and that it may be used for the research purposes described above.

I hereby grant to *Khamar Hopkins* ownership of the physical property comprising My Collection. Additionally, I hereby grant to *Khamar Hopkins*, at no cost, the perpetual, nonexclusive, transferable, worldwide right to use, reproduce, transmit, display, perform, prepare derivative works from, distribute, and authorize the redistribution of the materials in My Collection in any medium for educational, non-commercial purposes. By giving this permission, I understand that I retain any copyright and related rights that I may hold.

I hereby release Goucher College's Graduate Programs, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of My Collection, including but not limited to any claims for copyright infringement, defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity.

If I have any questions, I may reach *Khamar Hopkins* at *khhop001@goucher.edu* or *301-356-7184.*

ACCEPTED AND AGREED
Participant Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____
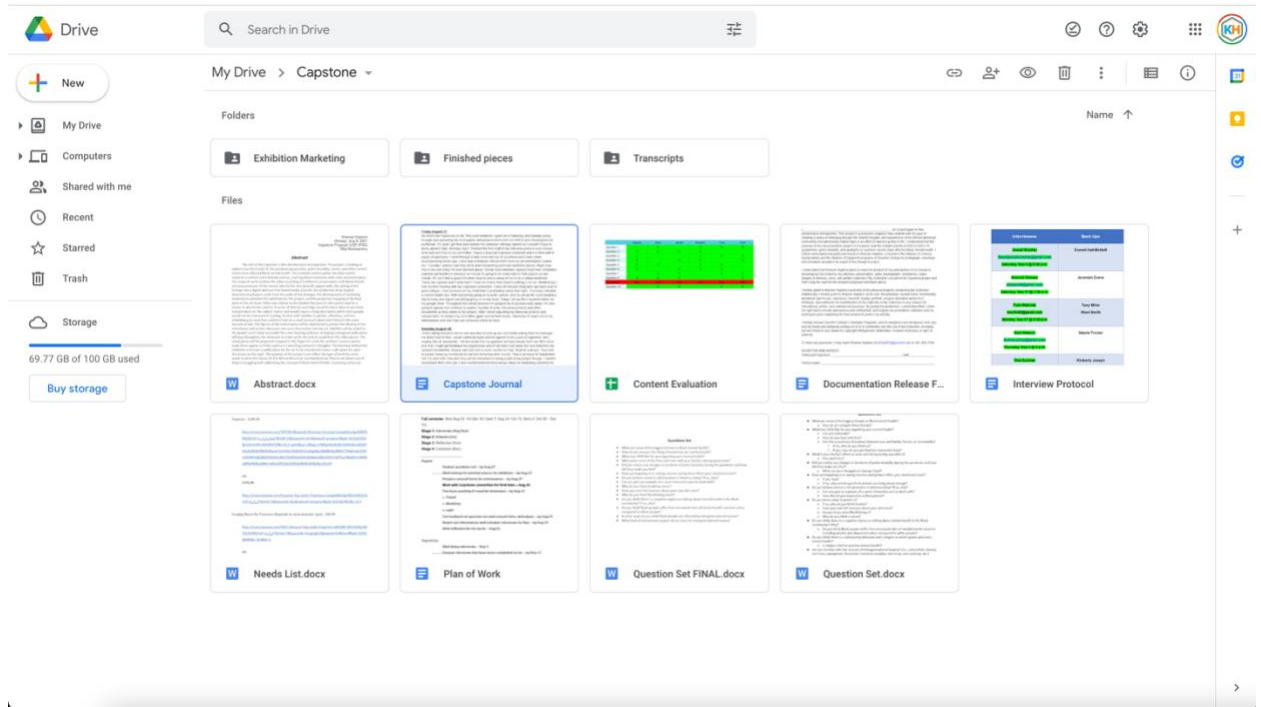
Address_____

Student Signature_____ Date_____

Printed Name_____
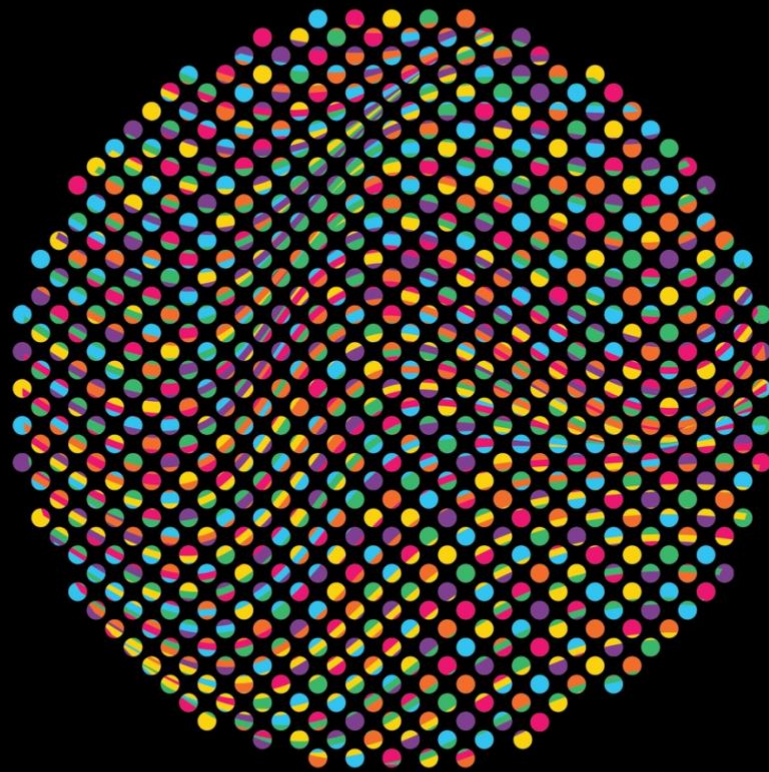
Goucher College, Welch Center for Graduate Studies, 1021 Dulaney Valley Road, Baltimore, MD 21204

Appendix E: Google Drive

Appendix F: Marketing Graphic

Appendix G: Exhibition Hunt

Exhibition Locations
Looking for November. No later than Nov 20th
3-4 hours long. Flexible on start/end times.

Place	Contact	Location	Web
Goucher College - Silber Art Gallery	Alex.Ebstein@goucher.edu (emailed)	1021 Dulaney Valley Rd, Towson, MD 21286	https://www.goucher.edu/art-galleries/silber-art-gallery/
Waller Gallery	(443) 879-9731 WALLERGALLERY@GMAIL.COM	2420 N Calvert St, Baltimore, MD 21218	https://www.wallergallery.com/
The Peale Center	(667) 222-1814 info@thepealecenter.org	225 Holliday St, Baltimore, MD 21202	https://www.thepealecenter.org/
C. Grimaldis Gallery	(410) 539-1080 info@cgrimaldisgallery.com	523 N Charles St, Baltimore, MD 21201	https://www.cgrimaldisgallery.com/
Full Circle Gallery	(410) 528-1868 gallery@fullcirclephoto.com	33 E 21st St, Baltimore, MD 21218	https://www.fullcirclephotogallery.com/
Galerie Myrtis	(410) 235-3711 info@galeriemyrtis.com	2224 N Charles St, Baltimore, MD 21218	http://galeriemyrtis.net/
Goya Contemporary	(410) 366-2001 gallery@goyacontemporary.com	3000 Chestnut Avenue, Mill Centre #214, Baltimore, MD 21211	http://goyacontemporary.com/index.php
Mono Practice	monopractice@gmail.com	212 McAllister St, Baltimore, MD 21202	https://www.monopractice.com/
Practice 1628	info@project1628.com https://www.project1628.com/contact-us	1628 Bolton Street Baltimore MD 21217	https://www.project1628.com/
Resort	443-415-2139 resortbaltimore@gmail.com	235 Park Ave. Baltimore, MD 21201	https://www.resortbaltimore.com/

|			
~~Prince George's African American Museum & Cultural Center~~	~~info@pgaamcc.org~~ ~~(301) 809-0440~~	~~4519 Rhode Island Ave, North Brentwood, MD 20722~~	~~https://pgaamcc.org/~~
school 33 art center	(443) 263-4350	1427 Light St, Baltimore, MD 21230	http://www.school33.org/index.cfm

Notes:

- https://art-collecting.com/galleries_md_baltimore.htm
- On **The Peale** contact page (https://www.thepealecenter.org/contact/) it says they're temporarily closed till 2022.
  - Despite it being closed there's still an exhibition going on in Nov (https://www.thepealecenter.org/events/the-guardians-reshaping-history-exhibition-opening/)
- **Art Gallery of Fells Point on the Avenue** website hasn't been updated since 2018
- **Baltimore Clayworks** wouldn't be the right venue for my medium
- It's too late to get gallery space at **Towson University** plus it's a very long and rigorous process.
- **Red Emma's** also doesn't feel like the right venue for the exhibition
- **Catalyst Contemporary** has an exhibition scheduled for my time (https://www.catalystcontemporary.com/upcoming)
- **CRYSTAL MOLL GALLERY (CMG)** is closed plus isn't a good fit
- I don't think the **Current** will be a good fit
- **Fleckenstein Gallery** prefers printed works
- **Full Circle Gallery** had a projection mapped exhibition earlier this year https://www.fullcirclephotogallery.com/orphanedlight
  - They also don't have any exhibitions planned for November (https://www.fullcirclephotogallery.com/copy-of-current)
  - They prefer the "stronger photographic community"
- **Galerie Myrtis** pro black art and no exhibitions for November (http://galeriemyrtis.net/exhibitions/)
  - Costs money. $185 an hour plus
- The **Winkel Gallery** isn't a right fit
- I don't like the rental space and all of the requirements for the **Hamilton Art Gallery** (http://hamiltonarts.org/?page_id=513)
- **Max Gallery** is a no
- **Metro Gallery** is a no
- **More Than Fine Framing** not a right fit for my medium

- **Y: Art Gallery** is permanently closed
- **Merritt Gallery** is a no
- **SkyLofts Studios and Galleries** is a no
- **Springsteen** is a no
- **ST. CHARLES PROJECT** is closed because Covid
- **Steven Scott Gallery** has an exhibition up for the rest of the year
- My piece wouldn't be a right fit for **Tradestone Gallery**
- **Bromo Seltzer Arts Tower** would be a bad location
- It's too late for the **Chesapeake Arts Center**
- Missed the exhibition proposal due date for **Creative Alliance**
- Too late for the **Institute of Contemporary Art**
- **Maryland Art Place** has an exhibition up till Nov 6 so it would be cutting it close plus I might be too late to even apply.
- **Potters Guild of Baltimore** is for clay work
- **Sowebo Arts** isn't a good fit for me

Appendix H: Art Visual

Appendix I: Previous Exhibition
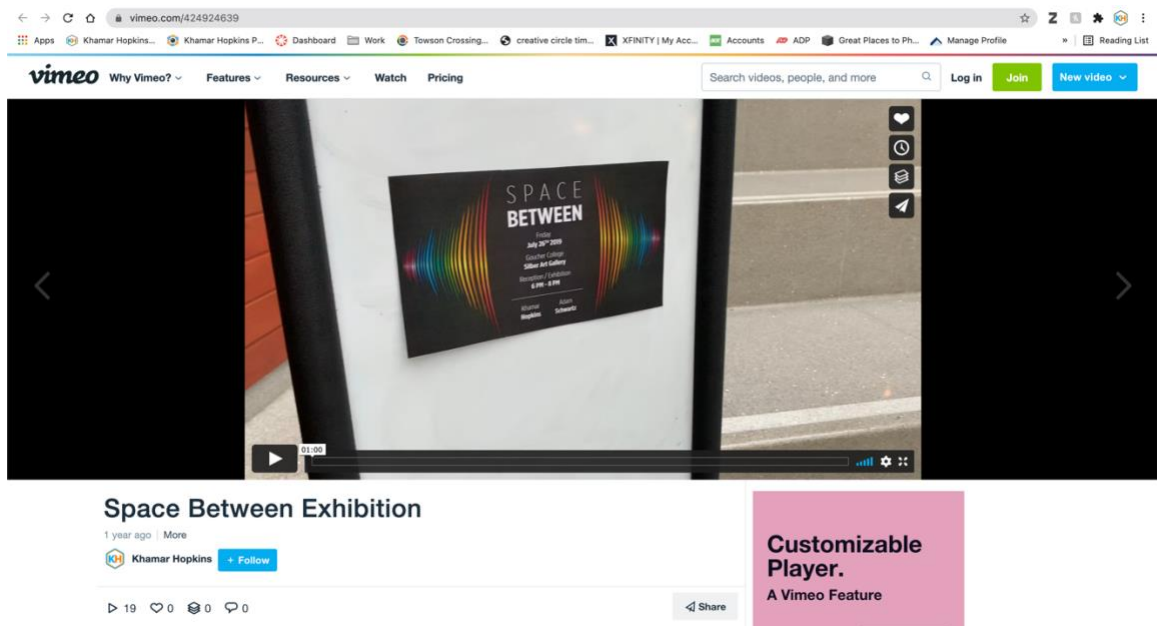
Appendix J: Project Abstract

Khamar Hopkins
Monday, Aug 9, 2021
Capstone Proposal (CSP 675A)
Rita Moonsammy

Abstract

The title of the Capstone is Afro Amelioration Introspection. This project is looking to explore how the Covid-19, the pandemic/quarantine, police brutality, racism, and other current events have affected Black mental health. The methods used to gather the data involve research in written and scholarly sources, and 6 qualitive interviews with video documentation. The scope of work involves the video recording of 6 different conversations with Black friends and acquaintances of the creator who he has already built rapport with, the editing of the footage into a digital abstract time-based media artwork, the production of an original distorted sound piece made from the audio of the dialogue, the development of marketing materials to advertise the exhibition for the project, and the projection mapping of the final piece in the art show. Video was chosen as the medium because it's the easiest way for a viewer to absorb the content. A series of abstract paintings would be more open to spectator interpretation on the subject matter and would require a long description which most people would not be interested in reading. A video with subtitles is quicker, effortless, and less intimidating to read than a block of text on a small museum label even if they're the same amount of text. The figures of the interviewees will be abstracted to protect the identity of the interviewee and so that observers can insert themselves into the art. Subtitles will be added to the project so it's more accessible for a non-hearing audience. A looping conceptual audio piece will play throughout the showcase to make up for the lack of sound from the video pieces. The visual pieces will be projection mapped in the shape of a circle for aesthetic reasons and to make them appear as if the audience is watching someone's thoughts. The intention behind the exhibition is to have a public place for the art to be shared and create a safe space for open discussion on the topic. The purpose of this project is to reflect the type of work the artist wants to do in the future, let the African American community know they're not alone even if they're struggling with addressing the concept of Black mental health, sustaining culture by approaching an issue that harms a community, and make the topic less taboo so people can have a better quality of life.

Needs List

Projector – $189.99

https://www.amazon.com/TOPTRO-Bluetooth-Projector-Carrying-Compatible/dp/B08JTLRWZ8/ref=sr_1_2_sspa?dchild=1&keywords=4k+bluetooth+projector&qid=1631467851&smid=A1PIL1NAUE6P39&sr=8-2-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEyNjZMSjhZNTZOSEpJJmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwNjg0Nzc0SERRVkk3R0VCTTNWJmVuY3J5cHRlZEFkSWQ9QTA5NDEwMjVFREJTSkhOSFAzRVMmd2lkZ2V0TmFtZT1zcF9hdGYmYWN0aW9uPWNsaWNrUmVkaXJlY3QmZG9Ob3RMb2dDbGljaz10cnVl

OR

$199.98

https://www.amazon.com/Projector-Top-vision-Projectors-Compatible/dp/B093GW561X/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=4k+bluetooth+projector&qid=1631467851&sr=8-3

Hanging Mount for Projectors (Depends on what projector I get) – $19.99

https://www.amazon.com/VIVO-Universal-Adjustable-Projection-MOUNT-VP01W/dp/B01014CD0O/ref=sr_1_4?dchild=1&keywords=hanging%2Bprojector%2Bstand&qid=1631468285&sr=8-4&th=1

OR

$21.99

https://www.amazon.com/Projector-Assome-Universal-Extendable-Adjustable/dp/B07B7M1K3V/ref=sr_1_3?dchild=1&keywords=hanging+projector+stand&qid=1631468285&sr=8-3

Bluetooth Speaker – $129

https://www.amazon.com/Bose-SoundLink-Color-Bluetooth-Speaker/dp/B01HETFQKS/ref=sr_1_5?crid=1LRBNKBBVOXYL&dchild=1&keywords=bluetooth%2Bspeakers&nav_sdd=aps&qid=1631467605&refinements=p_36%3A1253506011&rnid=386442011&s=electronics&sprefix=bluetooth%2Bspeaker&sr=1-5&th=1

Extension cords – 2 8ft cords for $19.99 with Prime

https://www.amazon.com/Maximm-Indoor-Outlet-Extension-Switch/dp/B077KGN86F/ref=sr_1_1_sspa?crid=1LGCYOANNLBME&dchild=1&keywords=extention.+cord+10+ft&qid=1631466828&sprefix=extentio%2Caps%2C172&sr=8-1-spons&psc=1&spLa=ZW5jcnlwdGVkUXVhbGlmaWVyPUEyNjZZU1oyOTlYQk04JmVuY3J5cHRlZElkPUEwMjc0MjQ2Sk9IV0FUR1gxUjI1JmVuY3J5cHRlZEFkSWQ9QTA5NTlxMjczQVRVUkVWNzBOMjhKJndpZGdldE5hbWU9c3BfYXRmJmFjdGlvbj1jbGlja1JlZGlyZWN0JmRvTm90TG9nQ2xpY2s9dHJ1ZQ==

Posters x 20 – $10.40 before tax

https://fireballprinting.com/

Flyers x 40 – $14.40 before tax

https://fireballprinting.com/

Harold Atwood Anderson Jr. Fund Prize

The title of my Capstone is Afro Amelioration Introspection. This project is looking to explore how the Covid-19, the pandemic/quarantine, police brutality, racism, and other current events have affected Black mental health. The scope of work involves the documentation of 6 different conversations with Black friends and acquaintances, the editing of the footage into a digital abstract time-based media artwork where subjects are anonymous, the production of an original distorted sound piece made from the audio of the dialogue, the development of marketing materials to advertise an exhibition for the project, and the projection mapping of the final piece in the art show. The intention behind the exhibition is to have a public place for the art to be shared and create a safe space for open discussion on the topic. The purpose of this project is to reflect the type of work the artist wants to do in the future, let the African American community know they're not alone even if they're struggling with addressing the concept of Black mental health, sustaining culture by approaching an issue that harms a community, and make the topic less taboo so people can have a better quality of life.

If I were selected for this award, I would use it to purchase the 3 projectors, 3 Bluetooth speakers, materials to build stands for the projectors, extension cords, and marketing materials for the exhibition. This equipment is vital to the final part of my project which is the solo exhibition. Without the equipment I won't be able to showcase my project. I will use this opportunity to promote the MACS program by putting a blurb like "In collaboration with Goucher College's MACS program" on the exhibitions marketing materials. I will promote the field of cultural sustainability more generally through my conversations with the exbibits visitors. My project is innovative because it is combining skills from two programs into one project to raise awareness on a taboo topic that a lot of people are affected by. After completing my MACS degree, I plan on making more creative projects like this one and this opportunity will strengthen my professional goals by giving me a strong portfolio piece to show to future galleries, events, or festivals that I want to be a part of. If I was awarded with $500 then I could get 3 $100 projectors with average display, 3 $30-$50 speakers, and use the rest of the money to get extension cords, material to build the stands, and get a few flyers and posters printed. If I were awarded up to $1000 then I could get 3 4K projectors for about $200 each, 3 high quality Bluetooth speakers for $100 each, and the rest of the money towards getting extension cords, materials for my stands, and flyers and posters.
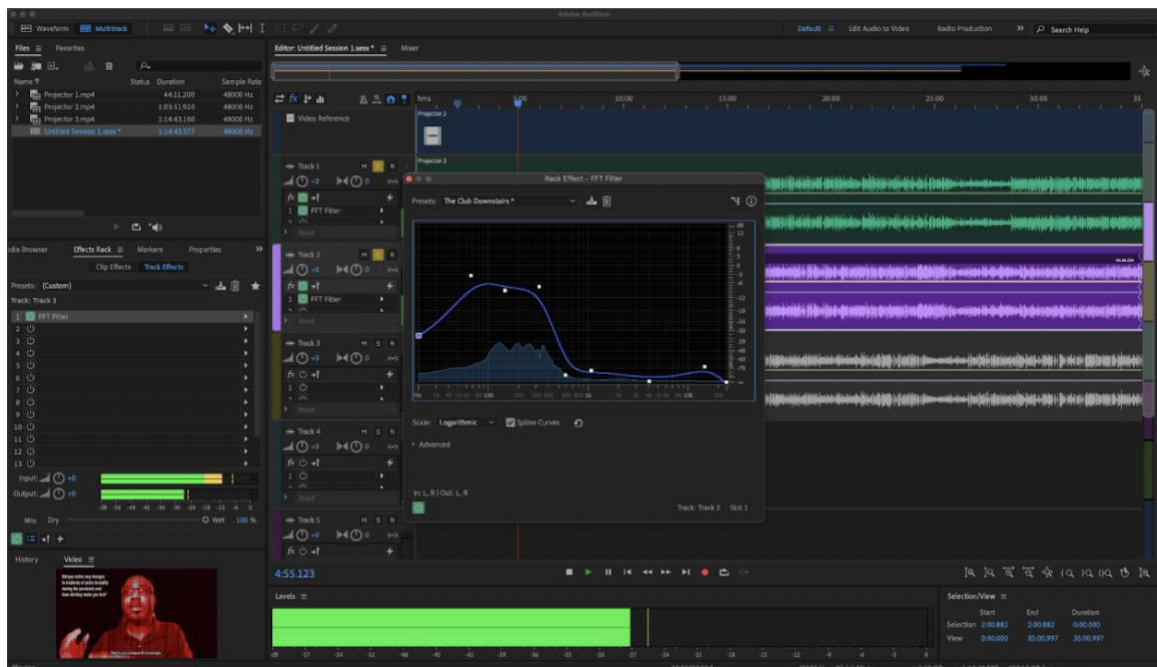
Appendix M: Content Evaluation

Appendix N: Adobe Audition Workspace

GALLERY GUIDE

BATHROOM

CONVERSATION ROOM

STAIRS

P2

P3

P1

⊡— GALLERY GUIDE
⊡— INTERACTIVE POSTCARD
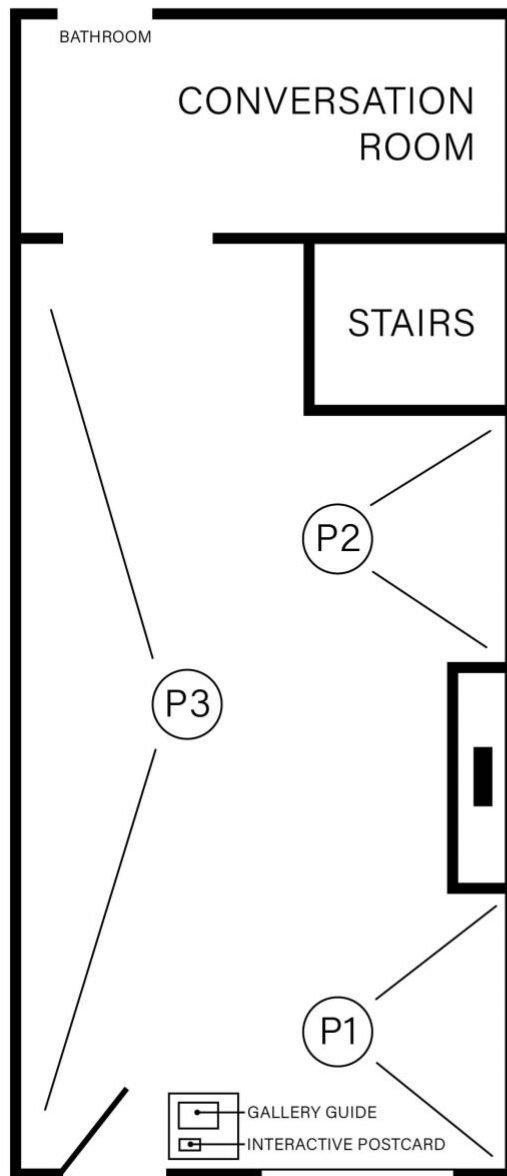
PROJECTOR 1

WHAT ARE SOME OF THE BIGGEST THREATS TO BLACK MENTAL HEALTH?

HOW DO WE CONQUER THE THINGS THREATENING OUR MENTAL HEALTH?

WHAT WAS 2020 LIKE FOR YOU REGARDING YOUR MENTAL HEALTH?

WHAT WERE SOME OF THE PROS AND CONS WITH YOUR FAMILY'S DURING QUARANTINE?

PROJECTOR 2

DID YOU NOTICE ANY CHANGES IN INCIDENTS OF POLICE BRUTALITY DURING THE PANDEMIC AND HOW DID THEY MAKE YOU FEEL?

DOES PARTICIPATING IN OR SEEING MARCHES AND PROTEST EFFECT YOUR EMOTIONAL STATE?

DO YOU BELIEVE RACISM IS STILL PREVALENT IN AMERICA TODAY? IF SO, WHY?

CAN YOU GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF A RACIST INTERACTION YOU'VE DEALT WITH?

PROJECTOR 3

WHY DO YOU THINK SHADEISM EXISTS?

HAVE YOU EVER FELT INSECURE ABOUT YOUR OWN SKIN TONE?

WHY DO YOU THINK BLACKFISHING EXISTS?

DO YOU THINK THERE IS A NEGATIVE STIGMA ON TALKING ABOUT MENTAL HEALTH IN THE BLACK COMMUNITY? IF SO, WHY?

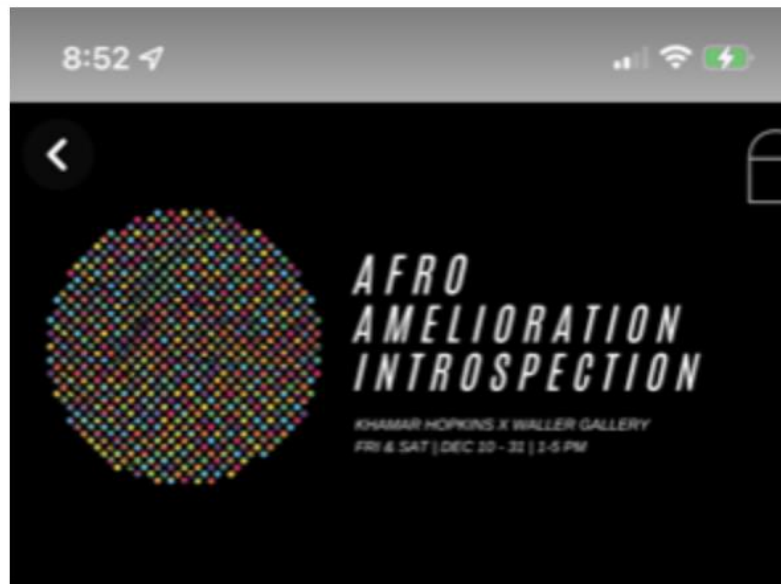*DO YOU THINK BLACK PEOPLE SUFFER FROM INCREASED RATES OF MENTAL HEALTH CONCERNS WHEN COMPARED TO WHITE PEOPLE?*

IN WHAT WAYS DO YOU THINK BLACK PEOPLE ARE AFFECTED BY INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA?

WHAT KIND OF INSTITUTIONAL SUPPORT DO WE HAVE FOR INTERGENERATIONAL TRAUMA?

Appendix Q: Flyer Posted