



RAYOS • MAGOS

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### **Previous work**

I have included the past year of projects that I have actively been involved in during the pandemic year of 2020. The first slide acts as a table of contents that shows what the slides will describe. I have incorporated a bio of myself. The following slides are broken up into sections regarding public projects, murals, and individual work/projects. The last two sections document my recent artist residency in Mexico City, which I hope to use as a basis of this new Palo Alto, MLK residency project. As one looks at my body of work, they can notice the diversity in mixed media arts practices that I have. I can work from small to large scale projects within a limited timeframe and with limited to wide ranging resources.

### **Previous Community engagement**

I have engaged with the community through various roles from being an active educator working with youth to working as a community mental health therapist serving children and families as well as the adult population. These roles have shown me the various ways of serving and working in the community. Below I will describe a few experiences that describe and highlight my ability to create and manage a project in the community.

One example of an art project that I created was in Japantown at The Arsenal art gallery where I exhibited mixed media collage work in a group. This project required me to collaborate with two other local artists in creating a show about us as local creatives born and raised in San Jose. After the show, I ran a community workshop with about 15-20 attendees varying in ages, gender, backgrounds, and careers (see slides 5-6). I opened the workshop talking about the collaged works that I had made in the show. Then I followed with dialog around the significance behind the concept of psychological archetypes, which resulted in a focused collage making around the theme of Hero/Heroine. Each participant was encouraged to share and talk about their arts process as well as their finished piece. Naturally as a facilitator I was able to hold space for the attendees as well as field questions and attend to each participant's needs in order to make them feel safe.

As an artist I have also created public art installations and murals over the past few years. These public arts projects pushed me as an artist who mainly has worked out his room and/or art studio for the majority of my art career. By working in larger formats and community spaces I have had to learn to translate my smaller works into larger public works. The beauty behind public art that I enjoy is the immediacy of community feedback and engagement in the process and development of each project. Whenever I have created murals in downtown San Jose, I welcome community members to engage with me in conversation about the work.

Another larger community-based project that has influenced my thinking around public art has been the Day of the Dead altar installation (see slide 12). I created the unique piece with the support of the School of Arts and Culture at Mexican Heritage Plaza. This project was unique in the sense that as a mainly 2-dimensional artist I had to create an installation in a 10x10 space outdoors due to the pandemic. As an artist I have the ability to adapt to my surroundings and utilize that as fuel for my creative process. I had a month to create something aesthetically appealing and impactful for the Latinx community. The Day of the Dead altars project forced me to grow my 2-D concepts into 3-D sculptures. As a result, I spent about a month and a half on project development and creation. Alongside me I solicited support from a few local artists and family members in order to address time constraints. My ability to lead a team and guide the creative process into a successful production demonstrates my dedication, motivation, and ability to collaborate.

### **Target audience:**

I want to focus on Latinx and BIPOC identifying folks (18+ and older) living and working in Palo Alto. I want to focus my interests on addressing mental health awareness, de-stigmatize mental illness, and tie it into the sense of belonging, human connection, and resiliency of coping during the pandemic.

### **Project Proposal**

The project looks to engage the Latinx and BIPOC community living and working in Palo Alto via a decorated photo booth. The goal would be to utilize the photo booth as a type of confessional booth or story telling space, without the religious component. The beauty of using a photobooth is that it provides space and privacy in order to maintain participants' confidentiality. In using a photo booth there is a sense of nostalgia, fun, and spontaneity. The hope would be to decorate the photo booth in making it visually appealing, comforting, and safe for participants to share their stories.

The booth would be stored inside a safe space such as city hall or library. By placing the booth in one of these designated locations serves multiple purposes. One is that the location where the booth would be held would be considered a safe space. Secondly, the location would be an easily accessible place that is frequented by a diversity of citizens throughout the day. Lastly, the booth would need to support accessibility to participants in order to reach a wide range of responses and stories. The booth can also be mobile and placed every few weeks in a new community location (i.e. community mental health clinics or community spaces).

The booth would support people in telling their story around belonging, human connection, and the impact of social distancing on their mental health during the pandemic. My hope would be to have participants make sense around their gains and losses during the pandemic. Storytelling in this format can be powerful because it offers the chance for people to reflect and express what's been on their minds.

The intention of talking about the grief process would further bring awareness to the importance of mental health. Ideally the project would look to de-stigmatize mental health issues and support mental health awareness, especially in Latinx/BIPOC identifying peoples. Another goal would be to support further processing about self, identity, culture, and learned experience around the pandemic. Participant outreach would occur via social media ads, posters in the downtown area, and word of mouth in order to reach a larger diverse audience.

Questions would attempt to ask specific questions related to Latinx/BIPOC community's sense of belonging and connection within the Palo Alto community as well as ask for suggestions on how to make Palo Alto more equitable and inclusive in the process. Questions could be translated into Spanish for monolingual folks in order to address any language barriers. Each participant would be invited to come into the photo booth and would sit for 5-10 minutes answering a select series of 5-10 questions.

The questions would revolve around identity, culture, belonging, community, coping skills, resiliency, grief and loss. The final question could be open ended where participants could speak about something that wasn't asked. Through the process of answering each question participants would have the ability to opt out of answering the question if it felt too invasive and/or provoking.

Participants would then be able to transition from answering questions taking a series of photo booth pics with a variety of filters created by the artist. The goal here would be to support the participants in transitioning from sharing their stories to recreating and celebrating their identity. Here participants would be able to play with the filters and tell

a new story with the imagery. By using filters participants would maintain their anonymity and have more freedom to be authentic in responses.

### **Artist Intervention:**

As the artist I would take the responses from the participants over the month and begin to comb through the qualitative data searching for themes in responses. Through the themes I would begin to create an art piece based off of the responses. For example, if I were to use the photo booth images I would turn these into mixed media collages that could be used in a large banner. The focus on Latinx/BIPOC people could be about highlighting their belonging to Palo Alto.

Another potential example would be to turn the responses into sculptural work. This could be in the form of a symbolic piece such as sculptural hands that join together forming an infinity symbol. The potential meaning would signify that we are all in this together.

I believe that my work as an artist is to gather information and then translate it into visual form. Therefore, the work of the project is to develop the project as it grows. My role would be to meet and get to know people in the community in order to hear their story and tell their story. Aside from the photo booth installation, I would also create PSAs around mental health with potential collaged imagery and positive statements that reflect belonging, resiliency, and coping with stressors of everyday life/pandemic life.

### **Project Goals:**

Goal 1: storytelling as a form of mental health wellness and healing

Goal 2: celebrating diversity through imagery

Goal 3: social connection/belonging in Palo Alto

Goal 4: celebrating essential workers

### **Creative Community Engagement :**

I can run public workshops related to collaging and mask making from the studio in order to find participants for the project. I can do public creative collaborative pieces (i.e. mark making, note writing, post-its, community mural board) in front of city hall and/or library to engage people and meet Latinx/ BIPOC identifying people. I can visit non-profit orgs and present my project to them. The photo booth could potentially be mobile where it could be taken to community mental health clinics. Each location could have

the booth for a week. In being mobile the booth would be able to gather more information from a wider audience of Latinx people who live and/or work in the Palo Alto area. The photo booth could also be located at Cubberley to centralize its location.

Another type of community engagement would be participatory and interactive. Participants would only need to have a smartphone and Wi-Fi connection in order to post the image on social media. As the artist I would create a hashtag and backgrounds with positive words that would be plastered up around town. Individuals can find these places out in public like a scavenger hunt. Participants can take selfies with a background that has positive words related to mental health, resiliency, belonging, etc. Then people can tag the artist, hashtag, and the project all at once. This type of engagement would allow participants to be in charge of how they posted and aligned with the words related to the topic of belonging.

### **Potential Questions:**

What kind of togetherness creates feelings of belonging/connection?

What does community look/feel like for me?

Do I feel most connected in large group settings, or smaller, more intimate situations?

How and where have I found community in the past?

Am I rethinking my current connection to others

What do I want to reflect on what I need in community?

What is the relationship between quantity and quality of connections?

What's one thing that has helped you during the pandemic?

What's one thing that's helped you cope with the pandemic?

What's been the most challenging thing you have had to cope with during the pandemic?

What's helped you feel connected with the community?

What's helped you feel like you belong

What's some words of advice you would give the community at this moment in time?

### **PROJECT TIMELINE:**

#### **1st month**

- develop theoretical framework,
- Ask questions, hypothesis around particular issues related to the Latinx/BIPOC community living in and around Palo Alto
- Themes and questions would be around: mental health, belonging, acceptance, community integration, diversity, equity, inclusivity,

- Develop 5-10 questions, can involve the community by asking them questions around belonging, community, identity, diversity, equity, and inclusion specific questions
- Based on responses then you can narrow down the questions
- Begin reaching out to the orgs for data, stats,
- Create a photo booth/confessional booth,
- Booth would specifically represent a cultural hub for people to speak in confidentiality,
- Photo booth would ask 5 -10 pre-determined questions, final question would be open ended so that participants would add responses that they weren't asked

### **2nd month:**

- conduct interviews with local orgs, community members
- What are challenges, obstacles, difficulties that Latinx/BIPOC people experience as being part of the Palo Alto community
- What are the benefits, pros, beauties of being part of the community?
- What would help you feel more accepted, involved, engaged, valued as a community member?
- What has helped you cope with stressors of the pandemic? What are some of your coping skills? What aspects of community support has helped you the most?
- What does diversity, equity, and inclusion look like in Palo Alto as a Latinx/BIPOC identifying person?

### **3rd month:**

- begin wrapping up the project research phase, data gathering
- Analyzing data, creating themes based on discoveries
- What are some of the pre-conclusions that you've gathered?

### **4th month:**

- start the art making process, work with themes
- Utilize local materials, paper, paints, etc.
- How can you incorporate local businesses?
- Document the process with video, film, pics, interviews
- Create a specific IG, FB, social media presence for the project in order to focus the Latinx community and broader community on the development of the project

### **5th month:**

- continue the art process, art making, collaging,
- Each participant would be gifted a copy of the final product/piece

- Continue documenting the process and the sharing of the process with participants

### **6th month:**

- planning of the final product/piece
- Inviting the participants, community members, having translators for the final revealing
- Coordinating of the orgs, bringing attention to the orgs and how to raise money for their projects
- Having a final art show, which would include all of the research, documentation, notes, artwork, sketches, etc.

### **Potential Community partners/nonprofits:**

I have not contacted these organizations yet and look forward to doing so once the proposal is accepted. Some of the challenges of contacting these orgs is navigating their online webpage and finding useful contact numbers for speaking with the administration necessary to approve such a community based project.

### Mental Health Community Based Orgs

#### **Youth Based Orgs**

- AllCove
- Children Health Council
- Cassy
- Kara
- ACS

#### **Adult Based Orgs**

- Peninsula HealthCare Connections
- MayView Clinic – Ravenswood Family Health Center
- Gronowski Center
- Caminar – Family and Children’s Services
- La Selva Group

### **Final artwork:**

**Banner:** collage of all participants in the project. The banner image could be formed into a particular shape such as a mask, heart, or fist.

**Sculpture:** could potentially be in the form of multi-colored hands holding and forming a particular shape such as a mask, heart, or fist.

**Notional Budget:**

- Photo Booth cost: \$5-6k custom built
- Decals and decal design: \$200-500
- Printing Paper: \$200
- Delivery of booth:\$100
- Tech Support: \$100-200
- Technical design, QR codes, Software support: \$1-2K
- Vinyl Banners/back drops/PSAs = \$1-2K
- Art Materials:\$2000
  - Paint
  - Paint brushes
  - Mixed Media Paper
  - Canvas Roll

**Resources:**

<https://www.dosomething.org/us/articles/> - displaced - or -  
disrupted - students - coronavirus - guide#heading -- mental -  
health

<https://nsuworks.nova.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=2970&context=tqr>

<https://www.nimh.nih.gov/health/statistics/mental-illness>

<https://stanmed.stanford.edu/2017winter.html>

<https://studentaffairs.stanford.edu/what-we-can-do-about-loneliness>

[https://www.ted.com/talks/laurel\\_braitman\\_the\\_mental\\_health\\_benefits\\_of\\_storytelling\\_for\\_health\\_care\\_workers/transcript?language=en](https://www.ted.com/talks/laurel_braitman_the_mental_health_benefits_of_storytelling_for_health_care_workers/transcript?language=en)



**CENSUS POP:**

Total pop. In Palo Alto (Apr. 2020) 68,572

White = 58.9%

Asian alone= 32.5%

Black = 1.8%

Latino = 5.6%

Am.Ind = 0.3%

Nat.Hawa/Other Pacific Islander alone = 0.1%

2/more Races = 5.0%

White alone, not Hispanic or Latino, = 54.9%

Foreign born = 35.3%