

MELISSINI MOTITI'S PROJECT PROPOSAL

UNIT 6: PUTTING IT INTO THE WORLD.

Positionality Portraits: Art as Connection and Reflection

Artistic and Cultural Value:

This project explores the intersection of visual art, storytelling, and intercultural dialogue by combining portrait drawing with conversations about personal positionality. Drawing strangers on the street and engaging them in reflective dialogue transforms a traditionally solitary artistic process into an act of public engagement. The conversations invite participants to share their perspectives, identities, and experiences, fostering moments of connection and empathy across diverse cultural, social, and personal contexts. This project aligns with the principles of UNESCO's Intercultural Competences by emphasizing active listening, openness, and the co-construction of meaning between artist and participant. Additionally, the creative output of portraits and recorded conversations becomes a visual and auditory archive of human experiences, offering artistic and cultural value by capturing the complexity of everyday lives.

Community Engagement:

This project is designed to engage a diverse public community both in-person and online. By setting up a portable art station in public spaces, such as parks, markets, or busy streets, I will invite passersby to participate in a "free venting" session where they can share their thoughts and experiences while I draw their portrait. The in-person interaction fosters immediacy and intimacy, creating a safe space for participants to express themselves.

The project's digital component expands its reach. By filming the drawing process and recording the conversations, I will create short, visually engaging videos to share on social media platforms. These uploads will include captions summarizing key points of each conversation, ensuring accessibility for viewers with hearing impairments. Through hashtags and targeted content strategies, I aim to connect with a global audience interested in art, mental health, and intercultural storytelling. The social media platform will serve as a space for further dialogue, encouraging viewers to comment, share, and reflect on their own positionality.

Self-Assessment Opportunities:

Throughout the project, I will employ reflective practices to evaluate its impact and effectiveness. Key strategies include:

- Journaling:

After each street session, I will document my observations, participant reactions, and personal reflections on the engagement process. This will help me identify recurring themes and areas for improvement.

- Participant Feedback:

Whenever possible, I will ask participants for brief feedback about their experience, and what they gained through the conversation and the artwork of themselves.

- Social Media Analytics:

Tracking engagement metrics such as comments will provide insight into how the project resonates with online audiences. I will also review the tone and content of comments to gauge the quality of audience interaction.

- Peer Review:

Sharing the project outcomes with classmates, mentors, and peers for constructive criticism will offer valuable external perspectives.

Final Reflection:

At the end of the project, I will produce a comprehensive report synthesizing these observations and evaluating how well the project met its artistic, cultural, and intercultural goals.

Visual Documentation and Bibliography:

The final proposal and report will include:

- Photos or stills from the street drawing sessions and social media videos.
- Screenshots of online engagement metrics and key comments.
- Sketches and completed portraits of participants.

Bibliography that will help shape my perspective with the project:

UNESCO. (2013). Intercultural Competences: Conceptual and Operational Framework.

Bourriaud, N. (1998). Relational Aesthetics. Les presses du réel.

Hooks, B. (1994). Teaching to Transgress: Education as the Practice of Freedom. Routledge.

Bishop, C. (2012). Artificial Hells: Participatory Art and the Politics of Spectatorship. Verso Books.

Mirzoeff, N. (2015). How to See the World. Pelican Books.

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