Reclaiming the Archives: White Supremacy and Testimonials of Resistance in an Art & Design College

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ABSTRACT

This paper uncovers the white supremacist origins of curriculum and pedagogy in an Art and Design College, while presenting a video testimonial project in which participants speak their truths regarding racialized encounters on campus. Using a Critical Race Theory framework, we trace a lineage from the early Eurocentric formations of American Art and Design higher education to current racial hostility on college campuses. Counternarratives are presented as a methodology of resistance, culture change, and archival reclamation.

Keywords: Art and Design Education; Counternarratives; Critical Race Theory; White Supremacy

In this article, we trace a history of white supremacy in our art and design college by unearthing racist images in our archival library textbooks and identifying the presence of such history as a defining legacy. We then describe a video intervention project in which a group of campus activists generated archived testimonials that foreground racialized experience on campus and entered them into the institutional archives. Through a Critical Race Theory (CRT) viewpoint, we interpret these manifestations as evidence of institutionalized white supremacy and hope that their unearthing incites the capacity to support institutional transformation.

There is a sense of urgency in art and design education as we are tasked with preparing the next generation of fine artists and designers who will shape contemporary culture. These photographers, architects, teachers and art directors are making daily decisions about how and who is represented in mainstream culture. This representation has been so problematic for people of color on a number of societal and political levels in U.S. history that an insistence that Black Lives Matter in 2019 is necessary. As educators, we are facing our own complicity in an educational system that continues to exalt the Eurocentric at the expense of the dignity of

all cultures that fall in the margins. We need other frameworks to refocus on the past and invite counternarratives to subvert an existing educational structure that debilitates all who are in it. To approach the future of art and design education we must unsettle our dominant practices today, uproot and reckon with our past, and insert our counternarratives into the archives.

Critical Race Theory

Unearthing the history of art education within institutes of art and design can significantly illuminate our current dominant practices. First, it can bring awareness to past practice, policy and thought and its "lingering influences…to assess the validity for today's art education" (Chalmers, 1996, p. 20). A historical approach allows us to consider the past and its influences on our current time (Stankiewicz, 2001). Pinder's (1999) critique on Black representation in Western art history textbooks pointed out that "it is as if they are writing in this [African American] art history with their left hand and erasing it with their right" (p. 533). Chalmers (1996) suggests that few art educators have linked the history of art education to social, political, and cultural histories or other histories of education in general.
CRT will guide this examination of Massachusetts College of Art and Design (MassArt). MassArt began as Massachusetts Normal Art School as the first free standing art school in the U.S. in 1873, in response to the Massachusetts Drawing Act of 1870 that mandated drawing as a subject in the public schools. The Massachusetts Normal Art School graduated the first art teachers, artists and designers in the U.S. who were trained to answer the needs of the industrial revolution. Massachusetts Normal School took its cues from the European art academies and modeled its curriculum and pedagogy from this tradition. This legacy is essential as we view MassArt from a CRT lens.

One tenant of CRT is that race and racism are endemic and fundamental to the underpinnings of U.S. society (Ladson-Billings and Tate, 1995; Savas, 2014; Yosso, Parker, Solórzano & Lynn, 2004). We can credit Ladson-Billings and Tate (1995) with connecting CRT to the foundation of racism in education. Ladson-Billings (1998) also demonstrates how racism in education normalizes and fixes whiteness in particular opposition to other categories of race. A historical study of MassArt will illustrate this tenant and expose how racism is an embedded part of the fabric of curriculum and pedagogy of art education in the U.S. .

The second tenant of CRT we will explore is the act of counter-storytelling which will be illustrated in a video exploration of contemporary voices at our institution. The inclusion of counter storytelling highlights the importance of experiential knowledge

to gain a fuller context and understanding of racism in education (Ladson-Billings, 1998). It gives voice to students who have experienced discrimination and encourages an exploration of problematic educational structures (Crichlow, 2015). A CRT framework also allows the echo of historical structures to be heard in contemporary voices and wonders what fixes instances of racism in place. The alumni, current students, faculty and staff who shared their stories express some of the same opinions and questions that CRT scholars ask about the project of white supremacy, marginalization of people of color and the structures that maintain it (Crenshaw, K., Gotanda, N., Peller, G., Thomas, K, 1995).

We will also suggest that the history of art education is linked to other histories of education, in particular, the ideas of recapitulation theory that guided education policy in Europe and the United States in the mid to late 19th and early 20th century. This theory was: "inherently ethnocentric and racist because it depicted people of color as inferior and inchoate" (Fallace, 2015, p. 3). There were four beliefs that guided recapitulation theory: 1) All global societies existed on a scale of development from savagery, barbarianism and civilization; 2) All global people travel on the same stage of psychological development; 3) Sociological stages of development align with psychological development; 4) Non-White people were stunted in an earlier stage of sociological and psychological development (Fallace, 2015). Zerffi (1876), a leading English author and teacher, wrote the most influential text on art history training in the 19th century and reveals ideas consistent with recapitulationsist thinking:

> The Negro fixes our attention only as a savage; the yellow man has a line of his own, and has remained stationary in his artistic development; the white man has surpassed through the savage stages…the white man exclusively we owe art in its highest sense. (p. 27-28)

Zerffi illustrated a belief that particular groups of people entered linear stages of development such as barbarianism, savagery and civilization. White races were assigned to the civilized category, Red or Yellow races were half-civilized and Black or Brown races were barbaric (Fallace, 2015; Rimmer, 1877; Stimson, 1903). Another revelation from this citation is the superiority of the "white man" who solely possesses the ability to create art in its best form. This language reflected a common understanding of the time and reinforced a hierarchy of a Eurocentric curriculum that would be taught in art schools in England. The European models of art education were the standard to emulate and Zerffi remained influential as schools of art were soon to be established in North America (Chalmers, 1996).In North America, recapitulation theory was applied to the education

of Blacks and Native Americans (Fallace, 2015). Letters from an abolitionist missionary hoping to set up schools for Native Americans in New Mexico illustrate the perpetuation of a hierarchy of the white race:

> They look upon us as a superior race. They look up to us for the models of perfection in military prowess, in arts and sciences, in morals, in everything. Hence it is American influenced sanctified American influence -that must renovate this land, dissipate its might of ignorance and degradation, and fill it with the light of civilization (Gephart, p. 1851).

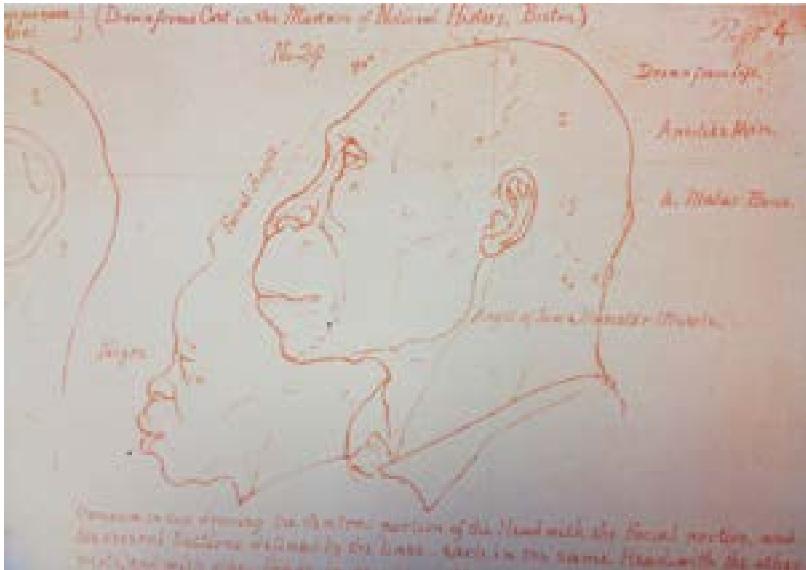
Education in boarding schools for Native Americans directly referenced eradicating savage and barbaric ways through curriculum, in the words of Commissioner Morgan to the Bureau of Indian Affairs: "with an atmosphere of civilization, maturing them in all that is good, and developing them into men and women, instead of allowing them to grow up as barbarians and savages" (Morgan, 1896, p. 404). The echoes of recapitulation theory are clearly heard from the voices of an English art educator, a missionary and a Bureau of Indian Affairs commissioner. It is helpful to consider the ideas that framed early history of education in the U.S. and how these influences may have shaped broader approaches and policies that included art and design curriculum and pedagogy.

Origins of Art Institutes

The CRT tenant that racism is endemic can be seen in the curriculum and pedagogy of the early art institutes where European artistic traditions were seen as the ideal and other cultures were inferior and tokenized (Chalmers, 1996). For example, the description of a life drawing class in 1879-1880 illustrates this point: "A life class was started, to meet for three hours on two afternoons a week, and employed a picturesque old negro for its model" (Bronson, 1932, as cited in Barrett & Martinez, 2008, p. 52). The "negro" was seen as an object, like a specimen for the art students to study. No other information was provided about the drawing lesson. In fact, the mention of the "old negro" was the only time a description of a subject in art class was identified. This drawing class illustrates how American society has practiced an ongoing objectification of Black culture and bodies (Cantanese, 2005).

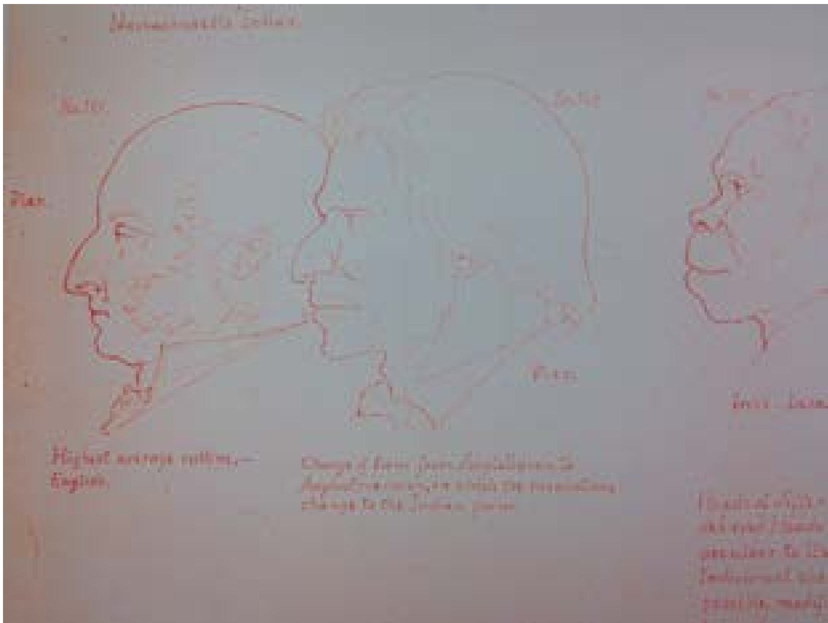
Two important texts, *Art Anatomy* (1877) by William Rimmer and *The Gate Beautiful* (1903) by John Ward Stimson existed at the time of the founding of MassArt and may have influenced and reinforced the focus of European superiority in society and in art education. William Rimmer was a highly regarded physician, artist and art educator

described by some as the Michaelangelo of North America (Weidman, Harris & Cash, 1985). He postulated ideas about art that directly connected to recapitulation theory. His text *Art Anatomy* (1877) is filled with visual examples that emphasize the hierarchy and ideal of European culture. This text also may have influenced the movement to establish mandatory drawing in Northeast U.S. schools since it was released during the height of the movement (Davis, 2003). Rimmer's approach to drawing anatomy was influenced by two strategies. One was comparative anatomy and the other was the pseudo-science of physiognomy that used physical features to analyze personality types (Davis, 2003). Rimmer borrowed the technique of comparative anatomy from Pieter Camper (1794) who compared the facial angles of animals to different races of man (Davis, 2003). For example, Rimmer illustrates "negros" in comparison to apes, as seen below in Drawing 1. This comparison suggests that "negros" have features more apelike than human.



Drawing 1. *Apelike Man Detail* from Rimmer (1877). *Art Anatomy*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Rimmer further emphasizes features that set apart the English male in comparison to an Anglo-Saxon male from America. Features of the English male are described as "highest average outline" in comparison to an Anglo-Saxon male in America whose form begins to be more Indian like. Seen through a CRT lens, the technical descriptions of the drawings take on a new meaning and the drawings themselves further illustrate the endemic nature of racism in his text.



Drawing 2. *Massachusetts Indian Detail* from Rimmer (1877). *Art Anatomy*. Boston: Little, Brown and Company.

Rimmer also uses generalizations and classifications as a way to rationalize his thinking. Below he writes about form:

> The form of the lion stands for the form and qualities of all lions; that of one horse for all horses; and if the forms of different animals be so placed, or are so found, that they may be seen together, they not only represent the different qualities found in each, but stand, besides, for the difference between them. (Rimmer, p. 111)

Upon reading this description, it becomes easier to understand how Rimmer applied this type of thinking to classifications of people. One "negro" represented all "negros." Rimmer's text helped to reinforce the ideas and images of racial stereotyping (Davis, 2002).

John Ward Stimson, another notable art educator who taught at Princeton, the Metropolitan Museum and served as superintendent in New York asserted the importance of art and drawing. His influential text *The Gate Beautiful* (1903) had drawings that also illustrated the ideas of recapitulation theory. This chart illustrates the chief types of man progressing in form and color to the ideal white.

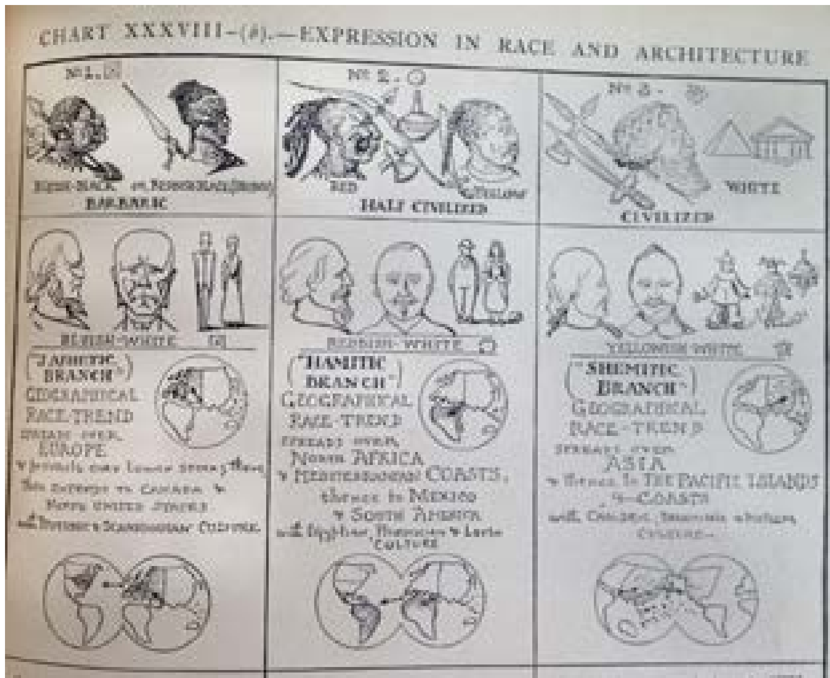


Chart 1. *Expression in Race and Architecture* Detail from Stimson (1903). *The Gate Beautiful*. Los Angeles: J.F. Rowny Press.

This is a page from the book *The Gate Beautiful* by John Ward Stimson published in 1903. Like Rimmer, Stimson (1903) was influenced by physiognomy where he assigned physical characteristics to understand the difference between the barbaric and the civilized:

> We may see these same characteristics of evolving Form and triple Style extend over three stages of Barbaric, Half-Civilized and Civilized man and directly reflected in his arms and arts. Even among those later and higher race migrations, which whiter and more civilized man pursued under the pressure of a higher ambition and ideality, we can still remark distinct tendencies to broadly classify under Three Main Types of social disposition and temperament, based on similar prime relations in force and form. (p. 396)

Stimson makes a direct correlation between how an "angular exterior" of the Northerner is valued for preoccupation with science, wealth and activities related to gaining power. Stimson (1903) takes his thinking a step further to describe and assign ideals of beauty in art:

> Beauty is a very different thing from Art, or even from Individuality and Character in art…Thus a Chinese monster in bronze, a grotesque Japanese dragon, an Aztec idol, a Polynesian war club may be crowded with artistic individuality and even significant character of the age or civilization producing it, without at all producing beauty. (p. 165)

Similarly, Chalmers (1996) recognizes sentiments about beauty in the text *The Grammer of Ornament* by Owen Jones (1856) in which Jones describes Islamic design as decorative and ornamental work, but ultimately still savage. These examples reinforce the superiority of European art as civilized and ideal while tokenizing and classifying art from all other cultures as inferior. Rimmer and Stimson influenced the exercise and training of life drawing in the 19th century (Davis, 2002) and most likely shaped the curriculum and pedagogy of art education in the U.S.

To Challenge Our History

By acknowledging this difficult evidence of racism in art education, we may begin to subvert policies and practices that made everyone other than white people invisible or marginalized in our classrooms. In most art and design higher education institutions, if Western Art History is the only art history required of art and design students, we hear echoes of recapitulation theory and the superiority of the Western European ideal. To this day, there is still a scarcity of Black artists in Western Art History survey texts, and when they are included, it is within a context of being primitive, naïve or othered (Pinder, 1999). We may not have the same images circulating in our drawing classes but in many ways we uphold the same white supremacist sentiments.

There is indeed a sense of urgency in art and design education, as decisions about representation are often made by the art directors, designers and photographers we educate. There are direct linkages of the historic texts of Rimmer (1877) and Stimson (1903) to Gucci's Black Face sweater (Bauck, 2019) and H&M (West, 2018) depicting a Black child wearing a hoodie with the words, "Coolest monkey in the jungle." These products illustrate a historic amnesia that perpetuates stereotypes and degradation. The H&M ad does not see Blacks as a primitive race or as an *Apelike Man* that Rimmer describes. Instead, the contemporary image takes this racism a step further. The young Black child in the hoodie *is* a monkey. Failing to thoroughly understand our history will increase the likelihood of repeating it. Those generating our current visual culture, the domain for which we prepare our students, lay bare this repetition happening in plain sight.

CRT does not allow us to dismiss these connections.

It is important to locate ourselves in the past and in the history of art education in relation to a broader context. Acknowledging the origins of art education in the U.S. is to subvert and tell the story of where we have been and how these racist origins demand a sense of urgency to haunt and teach us where we need to go next.

Racism on College Campuses Today

These past pathologies take new shape on our campuses today. Recently a limelight has been shed on the preponderance of racist incidents on college campuses across the U.S. Today's stories of targeted racialized attacks are tragically abundant, from dramatic racial profiling by armed campus police (Blow, 2015) to more subtle assaults in which Black community members are reported as being suspicious (Jaschik, 2018; Victor, 2018). The use of social media has been a key strategy for illuminating these often-alienating encounters, leading to a national conversation regarding the trouble with our campuses' racialized climates.

We learn that students of color, in addition to being vastly underrepresented in higher education (Harper, 2012) are by necessity seeking degrees in institutions that perpetuate white supremacy in practice, design, and legacy (Carnevale & Strohl, 2013). Although there are attempts to address issues of "diversity" on many college campuses, these efforts often fall short in their lack of aggressive strategy, their clumsy assumptions that those victimized by racism should be taxed with undoing it, and their pandering to white fragility (Hikido & Murray, 2016; Lam, 2018).

Real Talk: Race on Campus

College campuses have long been sites of activism, and the conditions for catalyzing change have taken many forms across generations. On our campus there have been seasons of student resistance that have been institutionally erased, although not vacant from the minds of those who build upon their legacy. The *Real Talk: Race on Campus* project grew from a cross-generational spark to foreground the cyclical and shared experiences of students of color across the decades. Current students insisted on the urgency to speak their truths while archiving the narratives of their collective traumas so that their stories would not be silenced and forgotten.

On our particular campus in 2013, those of us who were attuned to and/or were the victims of campus racism were very clear about the regularity of racialized trauma. In our public Northeast college, many activists and educators had been working to combat

racism on campus, and most worked their anti-racist efforts into their classrooms. Our dominant culture, however, showed little commitment to acknowledging the troubled climate for community members of color. Although obvious to anyone attuned to issues of race, it was only beginning to emerge in data form that students of color were significantly less likely to find the climate of their classrooms supportive and welcoming (Health Resources in Action, Inc., 2015).

Groups of student activists and faculty including Beth Balliro, one of the authors of this article, began to build a momentum for collective action. In 2014, Beth joined forces with student activist Sakina Bramble-Hakim to conceive of *Real Talk: Race on Campus* and they began to co-direct the undertaking. The methodology, creative design, and project impact are described below.

The project inception involved a confluence of exchanges. Beth and Sakina first met when they joined a Civic Engagement Committee, a formal body created to advance official campus initiatives. Beth was a new white faculty member with extensive experience in Urban K-12 schools who was experiencing culture shock at the lack of discussion surrounding culturally-responsive teaching. Sakina was an African-American senior completing a socially-engaged art program who felt that her gifts were disregarded and the racial climate was caustic. Having entered the committee work with good faith that they might affect change, they were both soon disillusioned with the lack of activism in the group. Their bond through action grew and was fueled by their shared outrage at the festering racial climate and lack of overt response.

Simultaneously, Beth was reporting the inspiration of the younger activist to her alliances outside of campus, many of whom were alumni of color from the institution. She learned that one of these individuals, a filmmaker, had engaged in similar activism decades before as the leader of the Black Student Alliance. He recounted feelings of such deep isolation and racial profiling that he committed to never set foot on campus again. He would, however, be excited to meet the young activist and support her work. Throughout the project he provided guidance and technical support, while the co-directors brought the project to fruition.

It is important to note that although Beth did submit for an Internal Review Board review, this project was not designed or deemed as research, but rather as an artist-activist work. She was able to secure funding for the project through a serendipitous process which accelerated the project's completion. Methodologically, it was enacted through collective, participatory practice and Beth drew from CRT to establish approaches for her leadership.

One particularly relevant tenet of CRT as articulated by the eminent legal scholar Derrick Bell (1980) is the concept of "interest convergence", the belief that "(t)he interest of blacks in achieving racial equality will be accommodated only when it converges with the interests of whites" (p. 523). Striving to minimize the transactional benefits of engaging in such a project, Beth established some methodological conditions for her practice, which are described below. These principles of practice were established through Beth's personal reflection and goal setting.

1. Because funding was secured to bring the project to life, student activists, artists, and filmmakers were to be compensated for their time but Beth would not receive any financial compensation.
2. There would be no form of campus compensation for Beth in the form of course releases or diminished committee responsibilities.
3. Because Beth was in the midst of coursework in a doctoral program, none of the project could be "utilized" to advance her degree.
4. The project was to be co-constructed with a collaborative leadership model. When difficult judgement calls were to be made, Beth would default to the student co-director.
5. The project was to be enacted with strategies to mitigate the vulnerabilities of students and the potential for retaliation for their participation.

This project began with an off-campus alumni event which connected current student activists with those of past generations. In a celebratory atmosphere, the alumni and students shared their artwork and engaged in facilitated projects and dialogue. A small group of alumni of color generated the first video testimonials, recounting memories of being on campus. To initiate the *Real Talk* project, a series of public viewings of these videos was held for the larger community to build involvement and momentum.

Beth and Sakina then commissioned three of the student activists to design and build a video booth (Figure 1 below). One undergraduate graphic designer generated a logo to be used throughout the project; one socially-engaged artist in the graduate program designed the exterior concept imagery of neighborhood living rooms; and an undergraduate industrial design major designed and fabricated the lightweight structure.

Figure 1. *Real Talk: Race on Campus* Video Booth, Installed in Campus Lobby. (2015).

The activists then declared a *Race on Campus Week* in the Spring of 2015. The booth was open for all to enter and tell their stories. Students actively recruited community members whom they knew had poignant stories that they had previously shared, but only in the intimacy of friendship. Student activists generated the three questions below, which were asked of those sitting in the video booth:

1. List a few adjectives that describe your experience with race at Mass Art?
2. Has there ever been an instance when you were aware of your race at Mass Art?
3. In terms of race relations at Mass Art, is there anything you would like to see continued or changed?

What resulted is a collection of forty-eight recorded testimonials. Administrators, faculty, staff and students from a variety of demographics chose to participate and more than half of the testimonials came from students of color. Theirs were the videos which the activists chose to share during subsequent public forums and screenings. The content of these testimonials cannot be essentialized, but there were significant themes that emerged which are recounted below.

Racial Profiling

In the collected testimonials, there were multiple accounts of racial profiling by a number of Black male students and one Black female professor. Most of these accounts involved an unnamed community member alerting our public safety office that a suspicious individual was on campus. In the case of the professor, who incidentally is the chair of her department, public safety arrived on the floor of her department and apologized once they realized the mistake. None of the student narratives included such acknowledgement of fault. We learn of the definitive impact of racism in the student account below:

> Right when I first moved into the dorm ... I was with my roommate at the time… this white kid with spiky hair (pushes hand over center of scalp) ... a punk kid ... apache leather jacket … we were moving in and we needed to get our student IDs, so we walked to Public Safety ... and there was a Public Safety officer outside and it seemed like he looked only at me, and he completely walked by my friend and just stopped me like this (puts out hand) and said, 'What are you doing here?' and I was shocked … because I have never had to explain why I was where I was … and my first experience here in Boston is someone *literally* saying 'I don't belong here'. And I said, 'I am just going to get my ID' and he steps a little closer and says, 'Really' as if he doesn't believe me. But then my white roommate says, 'Hey, yeah he's with me, we're gonna go get our IDs, we live in the res'... and the public safety officer just nods and says, 'OK', and then walks by me and kind of like nudges me in the shoulder as he does. And that was an experience that pretty much, for the lack of a better word, 'colored' exactly how I would view my Mass Art experience from then to now. (Balliro & Bramble-Hakim, 2017)

The effects of racial profiling, particularly for Black men, have been well documented on college campuses and in the public arena at large (Smith, Yosso & Solórzano, 2007). We can trace the roots of such aggressive and caustic profiling to the racist origins of our institutions as outlined in the outset of this article. With such extraordinary underrepresentation, Black men appear particularly vulnerable on our art school campuses (Balliro, 2016). These accounts of racial profiling by public security are dangerously fraught as many campuses begin to weaponize such officers with firearms.

White Peer Cultural Incompetence

A lack of cultural vitality and representation is a detriment for all students. The lack of racial diversity on historically white campuses is widespread, but is further exaggerated in art school settings (U.S. Department of Education, 2007). A number of student testimonials articulated a feeling of shock when confronted with white cultural incompetence. One student recounts:

> As a freshman, you go on a boat cruise and you get to meet all of the freshman of your same class… I met this girl and we started dancing and talking ... And she was like ‘oh my gosh, I love you so much ... You’re just like my Black friend at home, you know, you dance like her, you talk like her, you even *act* like her’... that kind of upset me but I was in such a state of shock that she said that, that I didn’t react or anything … that instance kind of set the tone for my years coming … Knowing that I’m different and I basically am a stereotype for Black individuals. (Balliro & Bramble-Hakim, 2017)

Peer group experience in higher education is formative as students affirm their identity and sense of belonging (Harper, 2012). Gross underrepresentation and a lack of cultural competency training for incoming students can have profound effects on the racial climate and general well-being of the community.

Tokenization by Staff & Administrators

Tokenization, particularly in environments that seek to appear more inclusive, is an additional hardship affecting students of color. The practice of institutions flaunting racially inclusive optics has deep consequences for those seeking recognition for their merit irrespective of their racial identity (Blanco Ramírez & Palu-ay, 2015). In the testimonial below, a student describes being asked to attend a high-profile party for the Mayor. She recounts her disturbing awakening when she realized the true reason she was invited:

> I thought I was there because I was really involved on campus and I worked for the office that threw the party. I thought that was why I was invited but … So I get there and people are asking me why am I there… And then the president at the time introduced me to the previous mayor and she … said my name, and I went and introduced myself and shook his hand… and we got into a conversation and she tells me to tell him where I was originally from, and I am from Haiti, I was born there. And I said that I was born in Haiti, and I guess that was *why* I was brought to

> this event … just cause like 'this girl, who is from a third-world country… ooh, Mass Art has changed her life' or something like that. It was just really odd that I was invited just because of that one thing and it wasn't because of the fact that I am a hard-working student who is also involved in a lot of the offices … or what this institution is all about… so that was really heartbreaking. And there are a bunch of other experiences that are similar to that one (Balliro & Bramble-Hakim, 2017).

It is evident that this student, and others who described similar encounters with tokenization, felt betrayed by those whom she at first thought recognized her gifts. It is of consequence that this particular student became one of the lead activists of the *Race on Campus* project.

Alienation in the Classroom

We see similar effects of racism on campus in the more intimate terrain of the classroom. In an art and design environment, student work often embodies identity and culture, therefore racialized transgressions can affect the alienation of students deeply.

> During critiques everybody has like five or six minutes... I am always the first person to say something, I make sure I critique every person's work but when it comes to my work it's always rushed as if my work isn't important enough to critique at the same level as everybody else's ... when I say something the teacher is just like 'O.K', like what I am saying is so abstract, and so different than what everybody else is saying, its ... not as valid I guess… I am tired of learning about the same artists everywhere I look when I know there's more out there. Especially when it doesn't reflect me, and it doesn't reflect my history (Balliro & Bramble-Hakim, 2017).

Without a robust effort to confront the histories of white supremacy in the curricular content and aesthetic bias of our coursework, underrepresented students will be made to feel othered and diminished. What is striking about the above narrative is the generosity of the student wishing to engage with her peers, as well as the innate sensibility in knowing "there's more out there." To match this engagement with silence and erasure is markedly antagonistic. It is quite relevant that shortly afterwards, this particular student decided to withdraw from the college.

Distrust in the Creative Environment

To perform and generate one's artwork, a climate of trust must be in place in order to encourage risk-taking and vulnerability. Campus racialized hostility in its most visible or insidious forms can prevent the development of marginalized students' work.

> My professors don't understand ... my creative process... and they don't want to understand, so I become drained and I don't even bother with even ... trying when it comes to reviews…I just ask them to go in there and review it, critique it the way they want to-- they don't even need to hear what I have to say-- just 'cause they won't even understand it so there's no point of even trying... that's when it gets a little draining and unfortunate... And I feel like a lot of times I am teaching myself a lot so it's just (pause, swallow) annoying ... they don't know how to vibe with us when it comes to teaching, 'cause all they want is for you to put out what *they* know and they don't know how to have you produce what *you* want to produce… In terms of me being a person of color, a person who is an immigrant… it's having some sort of mentorship or someone or somewhere I can go to feel safe, just cause (tremble) I don't in the classroom (swallow)... I feel like a complete outsider here. (Balliro & Bramble-Hakim, 2017)

Without any sense of creative and intellectual safety, students like the one quoted above are presented with a stark disadvantage in arriving at their artistic goals. Their achievement may occur *despite* their art schooling and not as a result of teacher or institutional investment in their success.

Project Impact

Real Talk: Race on Campus collected testimonials that continue to be accessed years later and are available to viewers in our campus library, the same library that houses the problematic white supremacist historical texts. The testimonials have been presented to our top leadership, public safety personnel, all incoming students, and various internal and external communities. The composite of the testimonials reflects a particular time and space in which white supremacy reared its impact as felt through the experiences of individuals. Bearing witness to these violent infractions is sobering, motivating, and ultimately presents a mandate for change. Subsequent activism involved the organization of a Black-Lives-Matter teach-in in which a group of students engaged in an

interruptive action and presented a list of demands for institutional change. This action then sparked further all-campus interventions which have led to policy and staffing changes that have set us on much firmer ground for transformation. The conversation regarding racial aggression, marginalization, and violence has entered the institutional dominant culture in ways that seemed unimaginable just years ago. Although there is formidable work that lies ahead, we have entered an era of new leadership with newly articulated and formalized priorities that foreground the amelioration of white supremacy.

Conclusion

These occurrences of historic and current racism are not unique to our particular institution. Many historically white universities are contending with their legacies of racism through efforts of unearthing past violence and challenging namesake legacies of white supremacy (Brooks, 2017). Here we have outlined the ways in which our curriculum, pedagogy, and school climate may perpetuate the same legacies of white supremacy and how artist activism can be utilized to catalyze campus transformation.

As we strive for strategies to atone for the past, it is critical that we also identify the present manifestations of racism which are sometimes less conspicuous than an anatomical manual or an overt policy of exclusion. By foregrounding and archiving testimonials of the impact of campus racism and the empowered resistance of students, we can begin to identify and employ collective strategies for change. Art and design institutions have the capacity to become sanctuaries in which creativity is liberated and culture sustained (Paris, 2012). If we can advance our institutions to the forefront of cultural development and nurture our aspiring artists to best achieve *their* vision, this transformation can spark more cultural vitality in our society at large. In educational institutions of art and design, this mandate should supersede all others.

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