Reframing the Narrative: Urban Art, Civil Discourse, and #OptOutside

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To my parents:

Thank you for supporting me through this process and the entirety of my academic career and life so far. I owe it all to you.

To Asia:

You put up with my various mental states and still willinging stick around. That says it all. Thank you for providing the rain to my glitter.

To Nii Armah Sowah:

African Dance is the best therapy I could have ever asked for in this process and in life. It kept me sane and gave me a space to live, learn, and dance. I am forever grateful for that.

The city is a monumental stage for thinkgs to "go on" because it perpertuates both a spatial relationship between its inhabitants and its symbolic structures and psycho-social relationship amoung its dwellers. These two perpertuations must be perturbed to wake up the city and to save it from the bad dreams of the present, the nightmares of the past, and the castastophes of the future. I would like to propose the possiblity of a design practice that would interrupt these processes and could eventually help to heal the city's wounded psycho-social relations and its catastophic reality. [1]

Krzysztof Wodiczko, Designing for the City of Strangers (1997)

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[1] Krzysztof Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings* (London, UK: Black Dog Publishing Limited, 2016), 121.

Abstract

The #OptOutside campaign used by popular lifestyle brand REI promotes the cause people should utilize their time and access to the natural landscapes to participate in outdoor activities. As this idea has become popularized and promoted, communities like Boulder, who maintain similar values of the outdoor lifestyle, have become a symbol for this ideology. But when we apply this narrative to the entire community, including the homeless segment, there exists a divide, where the weight of #OptOutside in a voluntary and recreational sense for everyone, is lost because it does not fit the ideas and values of the homeless population. The homeless segment is not separate from the larger population but employing a narrative such as this creates social exclusions which inherently promote a divide and discourage discourse on homelessness in the community. Developing and employing a design intervention focusing on social activism can call attention to this exclusive narrative and bring these ideas to the forefront, the goal being to rethink the way the discourse is conducted. Specifically the ways in which Krzysztof Wodiczko frames discussions on the roles of art and design can be utilized to create an alternative method in the design realm to engaging with issues in the built world. Utilizing these practices to frame this new methodology of creating conversation, my design intervention aimed to bring to light the outdoor narrative in Boulder which excludes the voice of the homeless population. These ideas are perpetuated through adoption of ideologies like that of the REI #OptOutside campaign which became a signifier of this divide in the intervention and subsequently the grounding theme. Utilizing practices such as interrogative design by Wodiczko, offer a new methodology for engaging with social issues like homelessness, as designers. As those designing the built word, finding new ways to engage with the issues which subsequently occur in our this world is critical to creating dialogue within communities and understanding varying perspectives.

Preface

Krzysztof Wodiczko, a Polish artist, designer, and significant writer since the eighties (1980's), possesses the ability to understand and respond to conditions of the urban world. His works have gone to inspire my own work deeply. He combines art and design practices with reflections on the power of space in cities, which broadened my own understanding of the built world. In his writings, he specifically calls attention to not just the physicality of the built world, but the relationships which exist and are reflected in the built environment. Through an understanding of the past, present, and future, we can begin to deepen our engagements within the built world, specifically persisting social conditions. By using knowledge of the past, it is possible to develop better practices in the present in order to frame a better future. The city is a place to call upon the existing people, places, and relationships, and if as artists and designers, we do so, change can be made.

This project has been a work in progress since I first learned about street art in the summer of 2015. During that summer, I studied abroad in London, England where I took a "Philosophy of Art + Beauty" course. The course focused two subjects which I now hold very dear to me: British Punk Rock and Street Art. The exposure to and exploration of street art came to influence my entire academic design career up to this point. From the start of the class, it became evident street art is an integral part of the city. It is a language and way of communication which conveys ideas in the forms of the built environment. In the beginning, it resembled only beautiful murals, creative street creatures, and words on walls. But as I dove into the heart of it, the streets became a subject of their own and the number of different practices and philosophies demonstrated the broadness of the subject. Artists such as Vhils, who utilizes explosives to carve out portraits, or Swoon, who layers paper with intricate patterns together to create powerful figures, each have dynamic and inspiring practices. What became so remarkable to me is the ways artist choose to utilize their practice to speak to what is happening in the world around them, both in local and global contexts. For example, street artist Cranio uses his art as a way to speak to issues in the world by depicting the indigenous populations in Brazil being exploited and forced to accustom to non-traditional practices. These artists stem from within communities and utilize their unique perspectives to change and shape the way we understand our environments, often calling attention to ideas which do not reach the forefront of discussion.

In my own studies as a design student, my passions have pushed me towards understanding the social components related to the built world. Often, this part of design is not the tangible component, but it is the lived component. It is through my understandings of space and the ways we can craft space to elicit specific responses, patterns, or movements, that I began to dive into the ways art can do the same. Specifically, I am fascinated in the ways artists act as activists, manipulating space to comment on what exists physically and socially. The idea of creating something as a reaction or commentary to the worlds I have been taught to design is utterly fascinating, especially in thinking it has the power to change our relationships to these spaces.

In my time in Boulder as a design student, the value set which is specific to the community differs greatly from the other places I have been fortunate to live. After an eight-month departure in which I spent time in my hometown in Indiana and travelling around Europe (while based in Copenhagen), I found myself in a state of shock upon arrival back to Boulder when looking at the community. Despite my previous knowledge and acceptance of the issue of homelessness in our community, never once had I been so acutely aware of its presence. My passion for street and urban art had grown immensely during my time away and it became clear that utilizing it to bring attention to homelessness in the way I was now understanding it could be pivotal in expanding someone else's mindset as well. Though at many points, I felt disheartened in the way topics like this often do not reach the forefront of discussion, I hoped to do so through my work. Deeply inspired by similar practices I drew inspiration from advocates, artists, and designers in an effort to create my own art piece with a new methodology, aimed at bringing light to a narrative which could be changed. For myself, this change works to examine situations more carefully and in turn, creates an honest narrative that does not overlook or brush aside issues, but instead strives to deeply understand and better them.

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> As visual artists and designers, as practical experts in making ideas, thoughts and experiences become visibly visible by finding their purpose and giving them a public form; in making them effectively appear in public and become affectively useful, we can take others to react and be visible in public space. [2]
>
> **Krzysztof Wodiczko**

Introductions to Art in the Public Realm

The public environment is theoretically open and available for everyone to be in. A stage like this beckons thoughts and ideas to be brought to the forefront, specifically by artists and designers. In doing so, as Wodiczko suggests, these ideas can grow into actions, giving way to changing perspectives, often through art. From regulation, motivation, and medium, art in this domain can be expressive, engaging, and statement worthy. It adds color and life to a space or directs attention to issues otherwise overlooked. The goal of this section is to understand four types of urban art and the qualities that make them unique and powerful. The term public, for the sake of my argument, is any space deemed as accessible by the general masses such as streetscapes, parks, or sidewalks. The space is open to most; however, many would argue there are limitations to this because of law enforcement and regulation put on these spaces. Art, from my perspective, is any piece(s) or production(s) created by a person with intentionality, not restricted to medium. Art in the public sphere then, based on my own ideations of public space and art, are the following: street art, guerilla art, public art, and graffiti. Understanding the similarities and differences in these practices is critical to the development of a method which extracts and utilizes the successful practices of each.

Street Art

Street art works in many dimensions and it is in this category that many art forms in the public realm overlap. Street art falls on a linear spectrum, somewhere between public art and graffiti, being placed on streets and walls but being about something larger than a simple tag, "a writer's name and

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[2] Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings,* 30.

signature"[3]. The most important quality of street art, per scholar Nicholas Riggle, is the relationship to public space and its physical presence on the street.[4] If street art existed in a museum, a home, or anywhere other than the street, the meaning behind the piece would be effectively subverted.[5] This makes the audience on the street key to this practice.

Street art also possesses a certain curiousness stemming from ephemerality. Because a piece is located on the street, there is an overt understanding that it is temporary and subject to its domain.[6] The piece could last a day or years depending on other artists, weather, or law enforcement. At the same time, the artist is largely a separate entity from the piece. Instead of the works being about the artist their self, the focus is on making art for public display: art by the people, for the people.[7]

Figure 1: Street Artist Vhils uses explosives on the side of buildings to create his pieces. In doing so the art becomes part of the street. (Vhils Portrait. London, England. Natalie Bognanno. July 11, 2015.)

The legality of street art as well creates a curiousness to the art form. Often artists create pieces which appear striking because they are done in a blatantly illegal way.[8] The sheer act of painting a wall in the middle of night, perhaps in a prohibited place, calls attention to the piece because of how ostentatious and potentially dangerous it was to create it.[9] Recognizing the risk, but also the power associated with claiming space in the public, draws attention to the piece and act itself.

An example of street art can be seen in the work of Vhils, an artist who pushes the bounds of street art by using explosives to create portraits on walls across the world. His careful technique allows him to create complex pieces with a dynamic medium

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[3] Patrick Verel, "New York City Graffiti Murals: Signs of Hope, Marks of Distinction" (PhD diss., Fordham University, 2015), 5.

[4] Nicholas Riggle, "Street Art: The Transfiguration of the Commonplaces," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 68, no. 3 (2010): 243–57.

[5] Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings*.

[6] Riggle, "Street Art."

[7] Jillian Gein, "(De)Facing the Wall. The Traditions, Transactions and Transgressions of Street Art," *Irish Journal of French Studies* 12 (2012): pp. 83–111, https://doi.org/https://doi-org.colorado.idm.oclc.org/10.7173/1649133128067397.

[8] Tony Chackal, "Of Materiality and Meaning: The Illegality Condition in Street Art," *The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 74, no. 4 (October 1, 2016): 359–70, https://doi.org/10.1111/jaac.12325.

[9] Chakal, "Of Materiality and Meaning".

(Figure 1). The nature of his work, from physically manipulating walls, makes his art part of the street while his unique methods make the piece's eye catching, inspiring wonder as to how he creates these works.

In reflecting on its impact, street art makes statements and projects them into the public. What is important to street artists is their drive to create art and share it with the world, often demonstrating their own unique perspective and calling attention to specific spaces and ideas.

Guerilla Art

The term guerilla, in a general context, often relates to something illegal or unsolicited, while in the terms of art practice as referred to by Jillan Harris, relates to something quite powerful, that being community heritage.[10] Also, known as 'heritage art', guerilla art utilizes community infrastructure to bring attention to issues via unsolicited practices. Harris discusses the practice in reference to one piece in particular.

Figure 2: The Eliza statue can be seen featured in a protective match and nursing gear calling attention to sickness outbreaks in Perth. (Eliza Statue, Perth, Australia. Digital Image. RandomPerth. November 15, 2011.)

Eliza, a statue lying a few meters off the coast in the water, in Perth, Australia, marks the historic location of the old bath houses[11]. The Eliza monument acts as a canvas for the community to comment on ideas or events, though the alterations to the statue are never permanent and are often humorous (Figure 2). Core this instance of guerilla art is altering the appearance of the figure but done in such a way that "the integrity of the original piece is preserved."[12]

The significance of this art practice is in its respect for the integrity and historic relevance of a place.[13] In creating a piece of guerilla art, one does not try to undo a history or morph something of significance to represent present day ideas or practices. Instead it relies on the platform of a place

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[10] "Definition of Guerilla," Oxford Dictionaries, accessed March 2, 2018, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/guerrilla.; Jennifer Harris, "Guerilla Art, Social Value and Absent Heritage Fabric," *International Journal of Heritage Studies* 17, no. 3 (May 1, 2011): 214–29, https://doi.org/10.1080/13527258.2010.535212.

[11] Harris, "Guerilla Art, Social Value and Absent Heritage Fabric".

[12] Harris, "Guerilla Art, Social Value and Absent Heritage Fabric".

[13] Harris, "Guerilla Art, Social Value and Absent Heritage Fabric".

or monument to make the art noticeable. It finds a harmony in the past and present and utilizing both to move forward.

Public Art

Public art can see as a triangular figure which art, social practices, and the spatial setting work together to form the practice (Figure 3).[14] The rise of public art, then known to be art in the public sphere or community arts, began in the late 1950's. Branching from other art movements, such as pop-art and the avant-garde, political climates, and social movements, art in the public sphere was
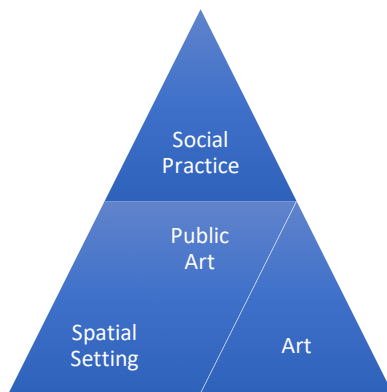
Figure 3: Public art can be seen as the intersection between social practice, spatial setting, and art working together.

largely experimental, stemming strongly from social issues.[15] Art in public took the forms of performance, painting, sculpture, and radical displays starting conversations about existing conditions of places in time and space.[16] In the 1990's, Malcom Miles, tied the phrase "public art" to certain characteristics it held throughout the years. The key characteristic is the space in which it occupies and its capabilities towards evoking a response given the interaction between the piece and the public space.[17] The interaction of two factors, space and art, create a realm with which a

dialogue can develop. The third characteristic key to his definition lies in the relationship between history of a place and the art piece. A strong correlation between understanding the existing context of a community as well as its history developed as a critical component for creating effective and engaging public art.[18] This characteristic creates a sense of site-specificity, going beyond public art as "work created by artists for places accessible to and used by the public" and into something that makes sense in the context of that setting alone.[19] As public art has been created outside of the

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[14] Cameron Cartiere and Martin Zebracki, eds., *The Everyday Practice of Public Art: Art, Space and Social Inclusion* (Abingdon, Oxon; New York: Routledge, 2016).

[15] Cartiere and Zebracki, *The Everyday Practice of Public Art*.

[16] Cartiere and Zebracki, *The Everyday Practice of Public Art*.

[17] Malcolm Miles, *Art, Space and the City: Public Art and Urban Futures* (Psychology Press, 1997).

[18] Dolores Hayden, *The Power of Place: Urban Landscapes as Public History* (MIT Press, 1997).

[19] Jack Becker, *Monograph: Public Art: An Essential Component of Creating Communities*. (Washington DC: Americans for the Arts Monograph, 2004), 1-16. Available at: https://www.americansforthearts.org/sites/default/files/PublicArtMonograph_JBecker.pdf (Accessed 12 Jan. 2018).

traditional monument sense, the history, power, diversity, and social structure of the place which art is being placed, has become increasing crucial. These factors are something deeply engrained in location, and engaging with these allows for public involvement in the project.[20]

A key example of engaged and non-sanctioned public art rooted in existing community is the Heidelberg Project which began in the 1980's to revitalize a run-down street in Detroit, Michigan. A street known for being largely poor with an excess of drug use, violence, vacant lots, and abandoned houses, on Detroit's East Side was transformed into a giant art gallery by Tyree Guyton, a community member who grew up in the area (Figure 4). Using paint and materials found in the houses, Tyree and his grandfather 'used art as a weapon' to combat the existing problems associated with the area and turn it into a vibrant street of which people could be proud.[21]

Figure 4: The Heidelberg Project transformed a neighborhood into a large public art piece, rooted in the existing infrastructure and social conditions. (The Heidelberg Project, Detriot, Michigan. Digital Image. TheHeidelbergProject. Accessed November 18, 2017.)

Public art, like street, art can be sanctioned or unsanctioned.[22] Public art programs exists in many cities across the world where there is often a call for art. Artists submit work to be created which is proceeded by a series of approval processes through a governing body. Problems can arise in this process because of the range of opinions which one might encounter. In doing so, the project can often sway away from the original intention or the ideas of the artist. If there are topics an artist wants to call attention to, it can be difficult with public art if the community desires and values do not coincide. This is especially true if an artist is working to combat existing ideas or call attention to flaws they might see and understand about a community. Public art can create 'civic discourse' but often time and the process of approvals can deter from the original ideas and prevents unfiltered direct artist to community expression.[23]

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[20] Miles, *Art, Space and the City.*

[21] "History," The Heidelberg Project, accessed December 5, 2017, https://www.heidelberg.org/history/.

[22] Becker, *Monograph.*

[23] Becker, *Monograph.*

Graffiti

Graffiti's rise in the 1970's in New York City marked significant changes in the cultures of the outside boroughs beyond the city center. Coupled with the rise of hip-hop, tagging one's name with spray paint began to thrive as a way for people to take back the streets in ways they felt they were not able to before.[24] Differing from that of public or street art, graffiti takes on a different subject matter, writing;

> "1) Graffiti is illegal writing, usually a pseudonym, on a public surface.
> (2) The material use of the street is not essential to the meaning of a piece of graffiti.
> (3) Given the definition of street art, then, graffiti is not street art."
> Mere vs. artistic graffiti: "Mere graffiti is really what premise (1) has in mind. It is graffiti that says, "so-and-so was here."[25]

Graffiti's roots lie heavily in the legality of the practice, utilizing others private or public property to mark one's territory.[26] As Verel describes, the presence of graffiti in an area marks 'damaged goods' or a place that has failed to prevent the criminalized acts of artist at work on their property. Places without graffiti be undamaged, seen as preserving wealth and integrity of a place.[27]

Figure 5: Tagging names on train car became a way of transcending physical boudaries in Graffiti culture. (Zephry Tag, New York City. Digital Image. ZephyrGraffiti. Accessed February 22, 2018.)

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[24] Mr. Bob Dobalina, "Style Wars (1983)", Youtube, August 23, 2013, https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0EW22LzSaJA.

[25] Riggle, "Street Art," 251.

[26] Patrick Verel, *Graffiti Murals: Exploring the Impacts of Street Art* (Atglen, PA: Schiffer Publishing Ltd, 2015). ; Riggle, "Street Art."

[27] Verel, *Graffiti Murals*, 21.

The culture behind graffiti pushed boundaries of arts relationship to space, often construed as negative by political entities such as the mayor of New York City. Graffiti crews and artists began to tag trains and subway cars which would carry their tags from one edge of the city to the other (Figure 5). This allowed people to have their names and styles surpass their geographic locations and transcend one of the largest cities in the world.[28] This made it possible for someone living in the Bronx to have their name seen by CEO's, NYC commuters, people in Newark and beyond. It empowered artists to make a statement with their name and style knowing it could be seen by thousands of people every single day, making a mark and spreading through its transient nature (Figure 6).
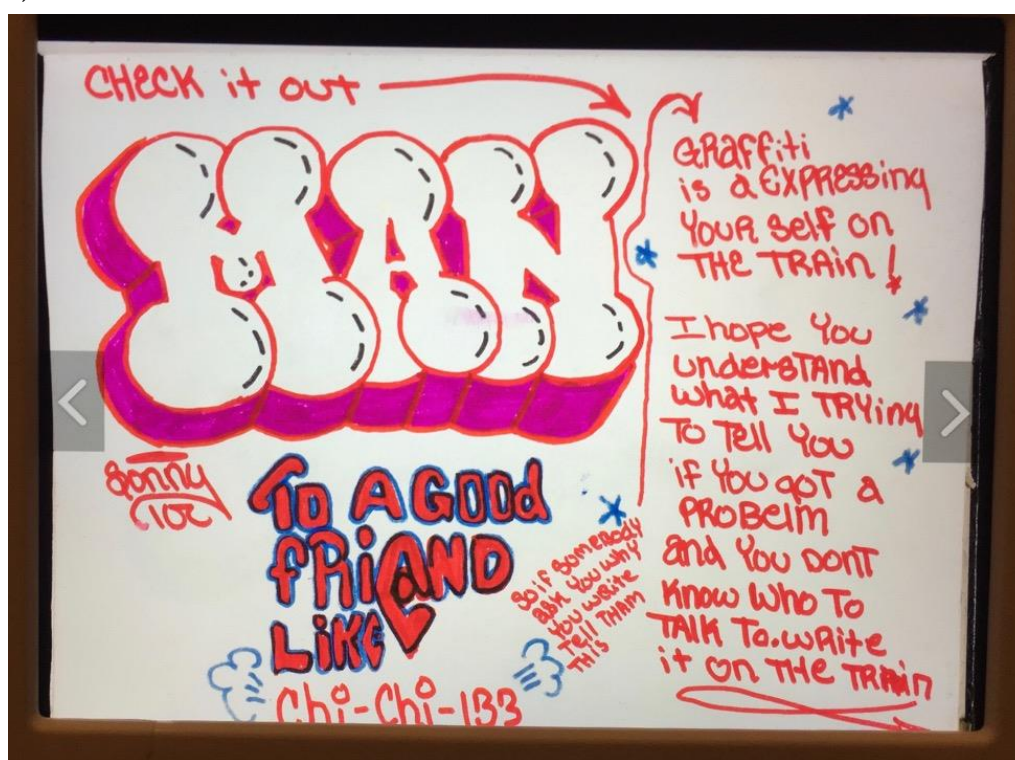
Figure 6: Taken from a sketchbook of Futura 2000 in the exhibition "City as Canvas: New York City Graffiti", Futura 2000 reflects on what it means to write on a train, expressing ideas and projecting them to the world. (Zephry 2000 Digital Notebook, City as Canvas Exhibition. Indianapolis, Indiana. Natalie Bognanno. December 22, 2017.)

Graffiti culture empowered people who lived outside of city bounds and enabled them to feel a part of something larger.[29] Claiming one's graffiti tag and representing one's crew by tagging in

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[28] Carlo McCormick et al., *City as Canvas: New York City Graffiti From the Martin Wong Collection* (Skira Rizzoli, 2013).

[29] Cameron Mcauliffe, "Graffiti or Street Art? Negotiating the Moral Geographies of the Creative City," *Journal of Urban Affairs* 34, no. 2 (May 1, 2012): 189–206, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9906.2012.00610.x.

as many places as possible allowed artists to feel a taking back of the streets or places they might not have been welcome before.[30] This pushed boundaries and allowed for questioning of what the edges of art could be and who could make art, transcending formal practices.[31] The work of graffiti artist is essential to understanding art in public realm and while some argue, graffiti is not art, it calls upon the issue of power in the built world. Like Jillian Gein's ideas on street art being a transgression, graffiti demonstrates a mark of power and place making in seemingly 'placeless' spaces.[32] It is a one-to-one art form, artist to space, with the intentions not being found in the piece itself but the act and implications behind it.

Key Themes in Urban Art Practices

In understanding urban art, there are key themes which can be extracted from comparing the definitions of each and what makes each a significant practice. One overarching idea is the role of public in comparison to art in a formal space. Vito Acconci writes on the public space as a controlled environment, given to the people under the establishment of the state. This 'gifting' despite being underneath the umbrella of the term 'public', is not in fact public and comes with a series of social constraints on the space. These constraints still make it public, but instead becomes a controlled area in which certain practices are forbidden given the underlying agreements with larger agencies:

> "Public space is made, not born. What is called "public space" in a city is produced by a government agency (in the form of a park) or by a private corporation (in the form of an office building's plaza or atrium). What is produced is a "product": it's bartered, by the corporation, in exchange for the right to build their building higher. It's granted, by the government agency, as a public benefit, as part of a welfare system. What's produced is a "production": a spectacle that glorifies the corporation or the state, or the two working together (the two having worked together in the back room, behind the scenes, with compromises and payoffs). The space, then, is loaned to the public, bestowed on the public. Public space is a contract between big and small, parent and child, institution and individual. Public space belongs to them and they in turn belong to the state."[33]

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[30] McCormick et al., *City as Canvas: New York City Graffiti From the Martin Wong Collection*.

[31] McCormick et al, *City as Canvas: New York City Graffiti From the Martin Wong Collection*.

[32] Hayden, *The Power of Place*.

[33] Vito Acconci, "Parks, Streets, and Vehicles," *Grand Street*, no. 54 (1995): 24, https://doi.org/10.2307/25007915.

Acconci's ideas bring about ideas of the capabilities of space. Every place comes with an established set of rules because of the agreements made between the public and a governing body. Jillian Gein argues the same when she references, Benedict Anderson's ideas of museums in his writing *Imagined Communities*. He specifically looks at the role of museums as a place which the state can demonstrate tradition and culture to the people at large.[34] No longer is the city a space created by the people, for the people, but instead is a place which has been prescribed to the people with an adjacent set of rules.[35] In this way, the addition of urban unsanctioned art to the space "allows for public participation beyond politics", artists then acting as 'urban curators'. [36]

> "…an "independent cultural worker" who is able to sidestep the constraints imposed by the "myth" of the architect, by bureaucratic building law, and by market economics, to create relationships of "greater connectedness" between people and environments."[37]

The ability to circumvent the hold of the higher authority and social standards allow for a freedom of thought and expression.

The translation of these unsanctioned thoughts onto the wall or into the public space becomes a break or a mark. Beyond just physicality, according to Gein, street art becomes a transgression in the built world.[38] If we view the city as a place of preservation and urban art as a practice by the people, for the people, we can understand the argument of street art as a transgression; a breaking away from prescribed ideas as a reprieve.[39] Here lies one power of urban art, a deviation from our everyday lives, opening the doors for civil discourse.

Transgressions are also fleeting moments; they exist and then they are gone. There is a power in the ability to capture someone's attention with an art piece before it is gone again requiring them to recall only from memory in its absence;

> "Transgressions are short-lived affairs; they do not so much seek to abolish the rule as suspend it, and for a moment only … The transgressor reinscribes the border he

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[34] Benedict R. O'G (Benedict Richard O'Gorman) Anderson, *Imagined Communities: Reflections On the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*, 2nd Edition (London: Verso, 1983).

[35] Gein, "(De)Facing the Wall. The Traditions, Transactions and Transgressions of Street Art."

[36] Luca M. Visconti et al., "Street Art, Sweet Art? Reclaiming the 'Public' in Public Place," *Journal of Consumer Research* 37, no. 3 (2010): 511–29, https://doi.org/10.1086/652731.

[37] Visconti et al.

[38] Gein, "(De)Facing the Wall. The Traditions, Transactions and Transgressions of Street Art."

[39] Gein, "(De)Facing the Wall. The Traditions, Transactions and Transgressions of Street Art."

violates. Taboos are constraints that must be violated and preserved. Transgression asserts limits … The taboo is 'jolted', not terminated. Transgressions suspend taboos without suppressing them … The experience of transgression is one that mixes dread with ecstasy."[40]

As Julius claims, the fleeting moment in which an art piece exists is enough to call attention to an issue before it is gone. Perhaps a passerby sees a street piece everyday on their commute, before one day it has been replaced with something else. The recognition of its absence calls the viewer back to the piece, what it was, and what it meant.

These two interpretations of transgressions are critical for understanding the power of art in the public. One shows the power of time in transgression, outlining just how sacred a few moments of one's attention can impact a person. The second demonstrates the power of an art piece to be impactful in its reactionary nature to the world in which we live and break from such and way to offer a new perspective. Both ideas force urban art to take on a dynamic nature.

Integrating the movements and features of the existing street condition can make a piece extremely complex and engage audiences beyond visual practices. The role of dynamism and performance in urban art has persisted since the mid nineteenth century and shaped art as seen today.[41] Specific groups such as Fluxus in the 1960's pushed these ideas heavily and can be seen in projects over the course of the latter half of the nineteenth century through the present.[42] The work of this group opened the doors to encourage the infinite potential forms and ideas which could be integrated into art and the world. The works removed the artist as the main focal point and instead worked to keep projects open ended, often with no end goal in mind. In doing so, the art became reactionary to conventional methods of society and formalized practices within the art world. Rooted in the avant-garde, the group and the work experimented and generated as much art as possible to change the way people experienced and created pieces.[43]

Regardless, the public setting lends itself to urban art reaching a large number of people. Because of these capabilities, the ideas which are pushed forward in these pieces have the power to call attention to issues and ideas which might not normally be a focal point of civic discourse. There

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[40] Anthony Julius, *Transgressions: The Offences of Art* (Chicago, IL: University of Chicago Press, 2002), 23.

[41] Cartiere and Zebracki, *The Everyday Practice of Public Art*.

[42] Cartiere and Zebracki, *The Everyday Practice of Public Art*.

[43] "Fluxus – Art Term," Tate, accessed February 25, 2018, http://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/f/fluxus; "Fluxus Movement, Artists and Major Works," The Art Story," accessed February 25, 2018, http://www.theartstory.org/movement-fluxus.htm

is power in this capability, especially when urban art is considered a transgression. Urban art can break from popular ideas in the public setting and utilize the break to speak to overlooked ideas or perspectives, potentially shifting the way people understand issues. The setting gives way to engaging directly from artist to community in a larger discourse where ideas presented are not those which have been inherently prescribed. The unique perspective of the artist can be spoken out and pave the way for providing new perceptions which might interrupt power structures and traditional methods of expression in order to encourage a different dialogue.

Chapter II: Perceptions of Homelessness

> The city operates as a monumental stage and script in the theater of our way of life, perpetuating our preconceived and outdated notions of identity and community, preserving the way we relate to each other and the way we perceive other and ourselves…
>
> Media art, performance art, performative design: they must interfere with these everyday aesthetics if they wish to contribute ethically to a democratic process.
>
> They must interupt the continutity of existing social relations and perceptions that are well entrenched in the theatre of the city.[44]
>
> Krzysztof Wodiczko

Understanding Social Conditions

If the city is a stage within which we are all actors, a sudden break in the scene could draw significant attention, specifically when that disruption deviates from existing ideas we maintain at large. As Wodiczko states, it is the duty of art and design to break these existing ideas which are so often perpetuated by our environments and the physical and visual ways we experience space.[45] This idea relates specifically to varying social conditions which exist within our cities, in the case of this project, homelessness in the context of Boulder.

Homelessness is a complex issue that cannot be solely understood by examining numbers and contexts to which the condition exists. Instead, there are a variety of nuances which need to be examined to gather a fuller picture of homelessness. My understanding began by looking at the number of people who are affected by homelessness in the context of Boulder. Through understanding what I visually see every day in my community in a numerical context, it became easier to frame the context of how deeply rooted the issue is. There are components of homelessness which go beyond the visual, in which I looked to scholarship on the homelessness as well as ethnographic studies to frame the complexity of the issue, specifically in addressing stereotypes associated with the visual engagement. These studies illuminated many points in the

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[44] Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings*, 175.

[45] Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings*.

homeless narrative by understanding the ways people who have lived this experience would communicate their experience. My exploration of the lived experience was twofold, conducting informal conversations with a formerly homeless individual and current homeless activist and exploring the art and writing homeless people create to express their experiences. These two practices allowed me to expand the range with which one might engage with the issue and draw inspiration from those who found a voice in their art and work.

The (Social) Science of Homelessness

A Point-In-Time survey conducted by the Metro Denver Homeless Initiative occurs annually and surveys members of the homeless community. The survey asks reasons for being homeless as well as background information on the individuals situation such as how many previous times they have been homeless and place of stay on the night the survey is administered.[46] These numbers provide an understanding of the problem relative to community size and how far reaching and different each experience is. The 2017 Point-in-Time (PIT) survey taken in the city of Boulder calculated a total of 600 members of the community remain homeless while others go uncalculated because of inability to respond.[47] The numbers across the board vary but it should be noted that 134 identified as 'Newly Homeless' meaning in recent months became homeless, while one-hundred twenty-four (124) people identified as chronically homeless (25.8% of total homeless population)[48]-"having experienced 4+ episodes of homeless in the past three years".[49]

Addressing Stereotypes, Mental Illness, and Survival
Understanding the experience of homelessness and the impact it has on a person's humanity is key to translating it into an art piece in an understandable way. It is often through our government policies, the attitude of seeing the homeless population as separate from the rest population begins.[50] There is a dehumanization which occurs by seeing others as seperate from the rest of the

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[46] "Point-in-Time Reports," MDHI, accessed October 4, 2017, http://www.mdhi.org/pit_reports.

[47] MDHI, "Point-in-Time Reports."

[48] MDHI, "Point-in-Time Reports."

[49] Department of Housing and Urban Development, "Homeless Emergency Assistance and Rapid Transition to Housing: Defining "Chronically Homeless", Federal Register / Vol. 80, No. 233, December 4, 2015.

[50] Jason Adam Wasserman and Jeffrey M. Clair, *At Home on the Street: People, Poverty, and a Hidden Culture of Homelessness* (Boulder: Lynne Rienner Publishers, 2010).

population: an othering. This is not a recent occurrence however; today it is these ideas which have been perpetuated throughout time that continue this type of thinking.[51] It is important to understand and distinguish perpetuated stereotypes and ideas versus what actually exists through ethnographic research.

The issue of homelessness is no stranger to stereotypes and often, these do not convey a realistic or overarching narrative. One of the prominent stereotypes and figures associated with homelessness is the lone, wandering, male figure.[52] Statistically, this stereotype persists because of the reality that there generally are more males than females on the streets and often these males are alone, however, this stereotypes often overrides associations with the fact that homeless families, women, youth and children exist.[53]

Mental illness and substance abuse is also a common association with homelessness because of the actions people might observe homeless members partaking in such as searching through garbage or talking to oneself while wandering aimlessly. Researchers Ellen Baxter and Kim Hopper were some of the first researchers to investigate mental illness in the 1980's. They argue mental illness amoungst the homeless are merely effects of the homeless condition.[54] Many of these behaviors as "survival adaptations" homeless community members take on to survive. There are those who do face mental illness when entering the homeless community, but many who fall into the category of mentally ill develop as an "effect of homelessness" rather than the cause of their homelessness.[55]

Another extremely important component of homelessness is the diversity of experience. A primary topic discussed by Jason Wasserman and Jeffery Clair in their book "Braving the Streets: The Anthropology of Homelessness" is survival through addressing living on the streets and in shelters, panhandling, food sources, amongst other topics. The goal of this topic is shedding a light on how many different circumstantial possibilities there are as a homeless person. A person can be classified as homeless for losing their home and living with a friend or relative, sleeping on the

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[51] Wasserman and Clair, *At Home on the Street*.

[52] Irene Glasser and Rae Bridgman, *Braving the Street: The Anthropology of Homelessness* (Berghahn Books, 1999), 19, http://www.berghahnbooks.com/title/GlasserBraving.

[53] Glasser and Bridgman, *Braving the Street*.

[54] Glasser and Bridgman, *Braving the Street*. (p. 68)

[55] Glasser and Bridgman, *Braving the Street*. (p. 66-68)

streets, squatting in abandoned houses, or living in a shelter, but it goes beyond just the act of sleeping on the streets.[56]

It would be impossible to generalize the experience because of the variety of reasons for homelessness including refuge from domestic abuse, rejection by family in the LGBTQIA community, or job loss.[57] The various trials and feelings associated with being homeless are dependent on various identifiers by individuals and the subsequent treatment received for such. These might include ones gender, age, race, or sexuality.[58] An example can be seen with woman and children and how they are often more readily accepted at shelters over men and because of this are the less visible figure of homelessness on the street.[59] Despite stereotypes, such as the older lone male, lumping people into the same reasons for homelessness, there are many reasons which make up more of the narrative than these stereotypes.

Understanding the falsities with these associations is key to combatting and preventing the perpetuation of the current narrative as it dehumanizes and paints false images which are projected to the public. Regardless of whether one can directly intervene in situations and help the homeless community directly, it is important that people acknowledge this segment of the population as part of a larger community and not a separate entity. It is when their narrative remains separate from the larger community narrative, people forget the place they hold in our community and instead of helping or considering these people at all, we become habituated to their conditions and remain indifferent.

Perpetuation of Ideas in Law

One of the tactics the city of Boulder adopted to deal with the homeless crisis is the introduction of laws which penalize the act of being homeless. One of the most important is the Camping Ban, instated in Boulder to prevent people from sleeping outside,

"Boulder 5-6-10 Camping or Lodging on Property Without Consent.

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[56] Glasser and Bridgman, *Braving the Street*.

[57] Wasserman and Clair, *At Home on the Street*.

[58] Emily Meanwell, "Experiencing Homelessness: A Review of Recent Literature," *Sociology Compass* 6, no. 1 (January 1, 2012): 72–85, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1751-9020.2011.00432.x.

[59] Wasserman and Clair, *At Home on the Street*.

(a) No person shall camp within any park, parkway, recreation area, open space, or other city property. …

(d) For purposes of this section, camp means to reside or dwell temporarily in a place, with shelter, and conduct activities of daily living, such as eating or sleeping, in such place. But the term does not include napping during the day or picnicking. The term shelter includes, without limitation, any cover or protection from the elements other than clothing. …"[60]

Bans such as this make it so that people who fall subject to this kind of penalization are told they do not have the right to survive. It creates negative infrastructure for homeless members of the community while simultaneously portraying a negative narrative to the larger Boulder population. This duality and segmentation of the group from society perpetuates a divided narrative without offering a solution and dehumanizing them.

The University of Denver conducted a study addressing the ways Boulder chooses to deal with homelessness, specifically the adoption of the Camping Ban and the cost of citations to the homeless population and the city. The study showed that the city of Boulder issued nearly twice the number of citations than surrounding cities while the number of facilities available to support the homeless population was not large enough to accommodate.[61] Another study showed that over half of the homeless population had been approached by the police in some capacity, often ticketed for being homeless.[62] These small acts of issuing citations can have severe consequences as it leaves many with a record which can prevent them from getting jobs or additional help. Given resources are limited, yet people are still penalized when resources are not available, it paints the image a person cannot win. If we understand the law to be what is right, penalizing homelessness portrays it as something inherently wrong but examination of the many reasons people fall into homelessness and are penalized would show otherwise.

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[60] "7719 - Muni Code Amending Section 5-6-10, 'Camping or Lodging on Property without Consent,' B.R.C. 1981" City of Boulder, accessed October 12, 2017. https://documents.bouldercolorado.gov/WebLink/DocView.aspx?dbid=0&id=17465&page=1&cr=1.

[61] Rachel Adcock et al., "Too High A Price: What Criminalizing Homelessness Costs Colorado" 17 (2016): 1.

[62] Tony Robinson, "No Right to Rest: Police Enforcement Patterns and Quality of Life Consequences of the Criminalization of Homelessness," *Urban Affairs Review* (February 2017): https://doi.org/10.1177/1078087417690833.

The Art in Homelessness

Poetry on Homelessness

Beyond studies, I sought to engage with the topic on a personal level, exploring art done by the homeless and formerly homeless. I could add layers to my understanding which stemmed from a direct expression of experience. The power in words and visuals these people express based on experiences shed new light on my understanding. I examined close to fifty poems, writings, and photographs done by homeless or formerly homeless, each with its own unique style and composition. The honestly and integrity conveyed in the writing was moving, shedding light on the small details which might not be considered otherwise. Much of the writing came from poetry collections online and blogs done by homeless. Others were found in the book, "My Eyes Feel They Need to Cry" which documented a researcher's exploration of homelessness. The researches discusses stories, artworks, and poetry shared during workshops which homeless or formerly homeless created art as a form of therapy. Many shared their stories and the ways in which they turn to art to express and reflect on the situations they have experienced.

One very famous poem on the subject titled "Homeless, Not Hopeless" conveys the essence of the idea that often we associate homeless as being helpless. Instead the issue runs much deeper than that, especially when we understand how these people view themselves and their situations (the full text of the poem is provided in Appendix B: Full Text of Poems);

> "Necessary part of your society
> Translators of your dreams
> Carriers of your burdens
> Angels, we open gates
> Of your blessings
> We are the lack
> That takes your lack
> We are homeless, not hopeless…"[63]

There exists a duality in the way the author conveys the state of being homeless. He addresses the fact that these people are working and active members of the city but people see them as outside of society. They see themselves as those who take our burdens away from us and in that way, help the larger community despite others thinking they are the ones who need help. He also has a way with explaining the heaviness of the weight of the experience in his word selection, when these are the people who have physically little but in their hearts and minds so much. The simple line of

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[63] Sola Owonibi, "Homeless Not Hopeless," 2007.

"homeless not hopeless" works convey such and combat the way people might perceive the homeless condition as something eternal which cannot be fixed.

In my readings, two themes became very apparent in the writings which seamlessly work together despite their opposition: hope and despair. Many of poetry works I examined emotionally responded to their situation with feelings of either hopefulness or that of despair. This dichotomy and the ways in which people shape their world or life view is compelling. Specifically, the way these readings coincided with my research into the ethnography on homeless, a perspective of hope is something not generally considered. Stereotypes point to associations with drug or alcohol problems which is not the general case when it comes to homeless. Combined with reading stories of hoping and dreaming, a narrative not commonly discussed, my thinking completely changed (full test of poem provided in Appendix B);

> "They smile at the vanity of their palms
>
> And stare fondly at me, who,
>
> Like a lost child, am dreaming the world away
>
> In a cold storyteller's arms"[64]

Regardless of the many reasons people fall into homelessness, the ability for a person to find hope and express that goes against many of the mainstream ideas on the topic and became a critical narrative which shaped my ideas. The stories these people shared, directly combated mainstream interpretations or stereotypes which exist. The somber, dirty homeless person on the street became a person, that just like everyone else, has feelings and participates in even the simple act of daydreaming.

Often writers reflecting on this situation would incorporate both themes but reflect with acknowledging how it impacted them as people (full text provided in Appendix B);

> "My experience being homeless was traumatic,
>
> yet the most meaningful times,
>
> like being a father it allowed me to see

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[64] Stephen Stepanchev, "Homeless," *Poetry Foundation*, 1992.

that one must fight, one must work.

One must stand like a rapper

battling freestyle for the crown."[65]

There are two sides to every story and I believe a common misconception about homelessness is the way in which we think people feel about being homeless. The poetry and writing suggest that this not the case and instead, there are many different experiences people have both in the moment and reflecting. These stories carry both feelings of hope and despair, a duality of the situation.

Dialogues

Prior to the core development of this project when negotiating what the project could become in the realm of art, I engaged in informal conversations with a formerly homeless community member. Our conversations were not sanctioned by the Institutional Review Board given our acquaintanceship and the informal nature of our discussions. Because of such, the ideas shared helped to only contextualize my project and offer ideas from our conversations but in no way offer generalizations on the matter. The identity of the individual remains anonymous but the dialogues we shared shed light on the experience and helped myself to develop a deeper personal understanding.

The stories and experiences he shared molded the ways I understood the circumstances and various scenarios which people within the homeless community face. One particular area of influence in my considerations stemmed from the work this individual does. His history within the community inspired him to combat many of the issues, stereotypes, and negative perspectives which exist about homelessness. The activism this person now engages in, directly correlates to fighting these ideas and sharing the stories and experiences homeless community members have, something my project intends to do as well.

A similar topic we discussed with frequency are the complications many people face being formerly homeless with limited resources. For example, not having access to a mailbox is a small detail someone might take for granted, but when a person is homeless, it can immensely impact the time it takes to get into housing and working program. The resource pool for aid is so small that if

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[65] Lewis H. *HOMELESS* (2009), quoted in: Martha Aladjem Bloomfield, *My Eyes Feel They Need to Cry: Stories from the Formerly Homeless* (East Lansing: Michigan State University Press, 2014), http://ebookcentral.proquest.com/lib/ucb/detail.action?docID=3338319. P. 125-26

one small detail is overlooked, it can set people back for extensive time periods, perpetuating the homeless cycle. This alone can be extremely stressful and without proper resources and guidance, can happen easily.

These issues led me consider the larger role the outlying Boulder population in this scenario. From the inside, it can be difficult to change and call attention to problems which exist within the system when one is facing them. On the opposite side, shedding light on the issues and combating exclusivity can make a difference for many of these people. It made me truly consider who my audience should be in my art piece. These conversations played into my choosing to target the Boulder community 0p—9---[with the design intervention. The ways homelessness is dealt with and projected has perpetuated an identity that prevents a deeper understanding of the issue beyond stereotypes. The stories, poetry, and ethnography by and of the homeless, shed light on the humanity which exists within each of these individuals. Branching beyond stereotypes, homelessness is far more nuanced and individualized than one might understand from visual observation, common dialogue, or images portrayed through legal developments. By engaging with these stories more deeply than what can be understood from a removed and outside perspective, the exclusion of this segment of the population can be recognized and in turn, change the way this identity is portrayed. By bringing light to this issue, the discourse which exists, can be altered to more accurately reflect the condition and the way it fits into society at large.

Chapter III: Extracting Tactics from the Arts

The Avant-Garde and the Art World

> We need today a recognition of the presence and an understanding of the complexity of the transformative avant-garde, especailly in the context of the sometimes fashionable and shallow endorsement of "social art" by official art institutions, but also in the face of the return of an aesthetically conserative intellectual skepticism towards the artist traditon of social engagment and contemporty civic practice…

> These projects any 'not work' but 'they work' because rather than 'resolving' existing problems they work to formulate and articulate new points of view' they uncover neglected and emerging issues and they do so through design. [66]

Krzysztof Wodiczko

As Wodiczko points to, the creation and execution of the "social arts" in the public, differ greatly from the larger art world. The practices have enormous capabilities to shape our understanding of the world and bring to life ideas in the public which might otherwise go overlooked.[67] Looking outside museums and private spaces, these ideas can be presented to the larger community where,

> "The built environment becomes a canvas, and often a palimpsest, in the sense that even though the original is overwritten, traces of it remain, restoring private to public, and engaging hitherto passive passersby, galvanizing them into an active interaction."[68]

Practices of creating art in the built environment include elements of interativity with the use of the public audience as a way to engage people with their built environment and issues which persist. The following chapter examines historically significant or unique art pieces in relation to key themes extracted from urban art practices in Chapter One before cross-examining the ways which these themes might apply to the homelessness narrative. While not all pieces included are both socially inclined and urban art pieces, each possesses an element which makes it critical in the development of a socially inclined urban art piece. In employing Wodiczko's thinking, examining existing practices

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[66]Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings*, 75.

[67] Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings*.

[68] Visconti et al., "Street Art, Sweet Art?"

of interrogative and socially inclined design and analyzing their strengths, contributes to further developing a new method of creating discourse in relation to design practices and urban conditions.

Core Tactics in Art and Its Relationship to Homelessness

The following sections break down the important tactics employed by artists in their work to call attention to social issues or engage an audience. Each piece has been highlighted and analyzed in the ways it exemplifies the tactic. The tactics have also been related back to the narrative of homelessness and the ways they are exemplified in that context. These tactics are those which I utilize in my own design intervention discussed in Chapter IV.

The Streets

One of the most blatantly similar relationships between homelessness and urban art is its location on the physical streets. For homeless community members, their lives are lived on the streets, sleeping, eating, and living. Aside from shelters, those of the homeless community experience life immersed in the urban environment next to cars, streets, and people. To an extent, their dependence on the urban environment as a place of living makes it so they become part of the environment itself. No longer are people seen as humans but instead, part of the street and its many layers, morphing into the cityscapes and walls which they find themselves living.

As one of the most integral qualities to street art, graffiti, and public art, the common location morphs the practices into become part of the built world. Despite the various distinctions within each of the urban art practices outlined in Chapter One, the ability to distinguish the practices and cross-examine them stems from their common location on the streets and in the public. It cannot be removed from the urban condition without losing its integrity and because of that, the relationship becomes codependent.[69] By being on the street, it is subjected to the elements evident in the wear and tear it is exposed to over its lifetime. It might be covered up, painted next to, or torn down, all a matter of the uncontrollable street condition. Regardless of its form over time, urban art often becomes a marker for a space, just as homelessness is often associated with certain spaces.

Sometimes there is crossover, where urban art can be employed to call attention to such spaces with these associations. In a clear example of street art, MEEK utilizes the street to draw

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[69] Riggle, "Street Art."

attention to homelessness through a conceptual portrait of a homeless person in his piece "Begging for Change" (Figure 7). [70] The stencil piece calls attention through its cleverness of word choice and careful positioning in a railway station which draws the attention of commuters every day.[71] Not only does piece capture the attention of many in the public eye, but its positon on the street coincides with the topic the artist is speaking to, subsequently completing the story and making it stronger.

Figure 7: In his piece "Begging for Change" (2004), street artist MEEK portrays a homeless figure outside a railway station, a place with an existing association to the homeless narrative. (Begging for Change by MEEK, Melbourne, Australia. Digital Image. APictureOfPolitics.wordpress. Accessed March 12, 2018.)

On the streets, there is an opportunity to tell a story to the public, a contrast to the controlled environments like museums. Urban art can break this, as does the piece "Invisible Homeless" by Luke Jerram (Figure 8).[72] Done in collaboration with the Homeless Youth Organization in Bristol, England, the piece attempts to start a conversation on the issue of homelessness. Jerram uses glass and cardboard to create an ambiguous human figure, lying out in the open, subject to the elements on the street. The emphasis on capturing the human figure makes the piece trigger a sense of empathy in people, as if seeing a real human sleeping on the street. It becomes dynamic because of the fact that one must physically reposition oneself in order to avoid walking over it. This small interaction, of moving oneself, calls attention to a views actions. The piece is also dynamic in the way it changes in various conditions. In the daylight, one might see the

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[70] "MEEK - Begging for Change," Space Invaders, accessed March 23, 2018, https://nga.gov.au/Exhibition/SPACEINVADERS/Default.cfm?IRN=162193&MnuID=3&ViewID=2.

[71] "MEEK - Begging for Change."

[72] "Invisible Homeless," Luke Jerram, accessed October 27, 2015, https://www.lukejerram.com/invisible-homeless/.

faint figure, but in the evening, it takes on a new light, illuminating itself on the street. The piece can hardly be understood from only viewing it during the day. The message becomes stronger as it adjusts to circumstances of its environment. It calls on the idea that we can turn a blind eye in the light, but at night, instead of being a shadow, it beckons us to look and because of such, recognize it on the street.

Figure 8: "Invisible Homeless" engages the community by illuminating the issue of homelessness on the street in a lifelike interpretation. (Invisible Homeless by Luke Jerram, Bristol, England. Digital Image. LukeJerram. Accessed March 18, 2018.)

Transgression as Dissent

In comparison to homelessness, the same theme of transgression can be extracted. In relation to time, many who fall into homelessness enter facilities and programs which work to help people get back on their feet and find jobs or housing. The period of time people might spend on the street is limited and not viewed as a permanent condition. Writing and poetry along with my informal conversations referenced this as well. Perhaps in the moment the condition feels all encompassing, but in reflection, it might resemble that of a fleeting period that was powerful and life-changing, yet did not last forever.

Similarly, there is a power of transgression in urban art and its deviance from traditional ways of life and perspectives. Street art and graffiti, when added to a place create dissent from the existing built systems: "if street art is transgressive then it is not simply a question of flouting aesthetic boundaries but also one of recognizing an oppositional cultural and social practice".[73] Ai Weiwei utilizes this practice in his work "United Refugee Lifejackets".[74] Comprised of 14,000 lifejackets worn by refugee's from across continental Europe, Weiwei uses lifejackets as a symbol of the refugee and popular locations to convey a message about the nature of the European refugee crisis (Figure 9). The use of the lifejackets makes the piece almost impossible to miss while making a profound statement on the nature of the crisis and sentiments of the artist. Despite the piece being sanctioned, it does an excellent job of subverting an urban space that reaches many people. The piece travels to various cities, each time changing its arrangement to morph the building and fit the

Figure 9: Using the prominent platform of the Konzerthaus in Berlin, Ai Weiwei wraps the columns with lifejackets, the symbol of the refugee and the crisis in Europe. (United Refugee Lifejackets by Ai Weiwei, Berlin. Digital Image. ThisIsCollosal. Access March 1, 2018.)

location. In creating a piece such as this, Weiwei engages with a difficult issue countries in Europe are facing. While many European citizens are likely aware of the crisis, utilizing the jacket to symbolize the humanity of a refugee, offers a new perspective on this issue. Positioning the piece on popular buildings which already gain significant attention, subverts the focal point of the building and redirects attention to the piece and the issue it engages opening the door for a dialogue.

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[73] Gein, "(De)Facing the Wall. The Traditions, Transactions and Transgressions of Street Art."

[74] Kate Sierzputowski "Ai Weiwei Wraps the Columns of Berlin's Konzerthaus with 14,000 Salvaged Refugee Life Vests" Colossal, accessed March 18, 2018, http://www.thisiscolossal.com/2016/02/ai-weiwei-konzerthaus-refugee-life-vests/.

A second example of urban art as a transgressive practice is seen in Joel Artista's work in the Za'atari Refugee camps. The murals across the camp in Jordan act as pops of color and add life to an otherwise dismal and sterile environment many refugees find themselves in here (Figure 10). To engage the community, Artista works with the young kids in the camp to develop and paint murals both to distract from and enhance the environment, a separation from their daily lives and the struggles.[75] The piece he creates also educates and references problems faced in these camps. Access to water, food, and education are all demonstrated in these murals, yet are painted in a way that calls upon a happier nature. The community engagement is core to this work, understanding the issues which are being faced by these people but using art as tool to bring light and awareness to them. There is a duality to the art Artista creates which focuses on advocacy, calling attention to the lacking resources, yet creating something beautiful which transgresses from the environment and daily activities to foster a sense of relief, happiness, or warmth.

Figure 10: Joel Artista's work in refugee camps in Jordan brings a sense of relief to an otherwise dismal environment. Working with communities to craft these murals offers a break from the lives many of these refugees face. (The Za'atari Project by Joel Artista, Za'atari, Jordan. Digital Image. JoelArtista. Accessed March 18, 2018.)

Homelessness could also be viewed as a break from society in the way the narrative is projected and the discourse is framed. The homeless community as is, remains a segmented from society and when they are viewed in the context of community, they are a separate part. In seeing them as separate, when attention is called to the problem, it becomes a break from mainstream society as well. These ideas are perpetuated through use of stereotypes like the ideas that these

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[75] Gein, "(De)Facing the Wall. The Traditions, Transactions and Transgressions of Street Art."

members are often viewed as having mental illness or substance abuse problems (see Chapter Two). We can understand this separation a physical way as well. Just as urban art visually pulls us away from prescribed spaces and buildings, the homeless community, when we see them, is often segmented in the public space we share. Often these spaces are avoided because of such, a transgression in the public.

Dynamism in Art + Homelessness

Since their birth, street art, public art, and graffiti, have taken on a dynamic nature. Despite the common displays of mural art on city streets, artists have been experimenting with various styles and mediums of art for years. One of the key groups that coined this experimentation is Fluxus in the 1960's.[76] The group rose during the Avant-garde art movement as a reaction to previous art practices. The core of their mission was to push the boundaries of art in music, poetry, performance, sculpture, etc. but required experimentation and interaction with an audience. The inclusion of an audience made their practices extremely dynamic and provided an alternative experience for passersby's or viewers. One of the seminal practices was a performance conducted by Allison Knowles titled "Making a Salad" (1962) in which she prepared a large salad, tossing and serving it to an audience (Figure 11).[77] The piece has been recreated in various locations across the globe since it was first done by Knowles during the time of Fluxus. Despite how much time has passed, it continues to be a piece which pushes how art can engage the world instead of being separate.

Figure 11: "Making a Salad" has been a seminal piece in the history of engagment in art. The piece has been recreated many times, each time engaging bystanders and making them part of the art piece. (Making a Salad by Allison Knowles, London 1962. Digital Image. FeastingOnArt. Accessed March 18, 2018.)

Following the Fluxus movement, various artists continued to push the boundaries like that of Mierle Ukeles. Between 1979-80, Ukeles designed and executed an art piece titled, *Touch Sanitation Performance*, where she spent two years

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[76] Cartiere and Zebracki, *The Everyday Practice of Public Art*, 230.

[77] Cartiere and Zebracki, *The Everyday Practice of Public Art,* 230.

reaching out to every sanitation worker in New York City (8,500 people) and shaking each of their hands, expressing gratitude for the work they do (Figure 12). This work which often goes overlooked is essential to keeping the city and spaces in a condition which people want to live, removing trash and ensuring streets are tidy.[78] This work acts as a catalyst for understanding the power of art to be something other than a permanent physical piece. Instead, it can be small acts and performances which in the end, can send strong messages and offer new perspectives on people and places. It undermines preconceived notions and requires a reflection on how we view various people, specifically those which we might not consider or acknowledge daily, yet are an influential part of our community.

Figure 12: Mierle Ukeles spent two years shaking hands with each of the cities sanitation workers in a performative art piece which engaged the workers who keep New York City clean. (Touch Sanitation Performance by Mierle Ukeles 1979-80, New York City. Digital Image. TheNewYorker. Accessed March 18, 2018.)

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[78] Cartiere and Zebracki, *The Everyday Practice of Public Art.*

These two pieces paved the way for the combination of art, design, and technology to work together. Artist, designer, and writer, Krzysztof Wodiczko's (New York City, 1978-80) "Homeless Vehicle Project" combined the three categories. Known for his many essays and provocative art pieces which combine physical projects with deeper social projections, his interpretation and response to the number of homeless people he noticed in New York City during the winter of 1987-88, is another seminal work, essential to dynamic art. The project built vehicle consisting of a mobile cart, sleeping area, and storage space for members of the homeless community.[79] The people who were directly impacted by this project were the homeless as the recipients of the vehicles, however, Wodiczko's primary intention lies in the larger community audience. The size of the individual vehicles size and the larger social impact made grand statements to passersby. The physicality of the individual vehicles made them impossible to be overlooked but encouraged questioning of the relationship of the homeless community to the larger New York City workforce. The project allowed homeless people to sleep and store their belongings anywhere and the positioning on sidewalks, in front of businesses, and on the streets put the condition in the direct line of view. It

Figure 13: The Homeless Vehicle Project made homelessness more visible, putting the vehicle in front of buildings for New Yorkers to see. (Homeless Vehicle Project by Krzysztof Wodiczko, 1978-80, New York City. Digital Image. MuzeumSztukiNowoczesnej. Accessed March 18, 2018.)

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[79] Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings,* 144.

provoked an examination of how people are affected by these conditions when put in people's direct line of view instead of being able to pass by it and disregard. It was the direct disruption which beckoned attention to the condition, where the disruption posed a new way of understanding the overlooked condition (Figure 13).

Aside from disruptions, reinterpretation and the ways artists presents issues to the public have been a task artists strive to overcome. In 2010, Conflict Kitchen, a project executed by Jon Rubin and Dawn Weleski in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, called attention to United States international relations. The project consisted of pop-up stands featuring cuisine from the countries the United States was on poor terms or in conflict with (Figure 14).[80] The goal of the project revolved around providing people with a better understanding of these countries through both exposure to cuisine and conducting various talks and discussions. By giving people an outlet to experience the country, ask questions, and develop a personal connection, people could internalize and empathize with the country in an indirect way, developing a deeper understanding and awareness.

Figure 14: Conflict Kitchen provided a space develop a deeper understanding of the countries the US was at war with in order to generate a deeper understanding and fix misconceived notions. (Conflict Kitchen, Pittsburgh. Digital Image. FineDiningLovers. Accessed March 18, 2018)

Just as the dynamism of art stems from a long history of avant-garde practice and boundary pushing, experimental artists, understanding the dynamic nature of homelessness stems from

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[80] Cartiere and Zebracki, *The Everyday Practice of Public Art*, 240.

complex anthropological studies combined with personalized understandings on the varying experiences of homelessness. There are many subcategories which fall under the topic of homeless that make it a different experience for each person. Varying conditions, events, and characteristics elude to a few of the ways the nature of the condition is farther reaching than stereotypes would explain.

A key text which breaks down these various subtopics under homelessness is "Braving the Streets" which examines the anthropology of homelessness. The authors examine causes of homelessness, global conceptions of homelessness, ways in which homelessness is discussed, attributing factors, the experience of homelessness, and ways in which people can get out of homelessness.[81] The broad exploration of these topics and the common conceptions people have of each of them coupled with statistics to explain why these conceptions exist. Their validity is key toward generating a holistic approach for understanding the various factors under the topic while so combating preconceived and incorrect notions.

The Point-In-Time survey addresses the issue of understanding the dynamic nature of homelessness when it collects its data in the seven counties surrounding Denver, including Boulder County. The survey asks those taking it certain questions such as the reasons for being homeless, duration of homeless, gender, age, if they have kids, if they are with a partner or alone.[82] While the point of the survey is to gather data, the data and fact that so many different options and reasons for homelessness are included, shows how varying the can be.

A final source for understanding the dynamic nature stems from the artistic work homeless people generate either through poetry or writings and their stories. In reading much of the poetry as well as looking at the art produced by members of the homeless population, it is apparent that each person's interpretation of their situation is varying and diverse. Despite the ability for an outside perspective to place and overarching ideology on the condition, people within the population view their situation in a diverse number of ways.

Utilizing Irony

Irony has proven to be successful in the realm of art for referencing existing values. A range of artists have used their practice in ironic ways to demonstrate an issue or create a new perception.

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[81] Glasser and Bridgman, *Braving the Street: The Anthropology of Homelessness.*
[82] MDHI, "Point-in-Time Reports."

Whether the piece is simply innovative, intentional, or both, many of works which possess this element, have become extremely well known. This could be attributed to the familiarity utilizing irony possess. Irony uses ideas which are already known to the participant but does so in a way that is contrary to its meaning.

The Heidelberg Project in Detroit began in 1986 (see Chapter I) and has been a catalyst of the scale of art and the ways in which projects can become a platform for discussion on certain issues and social conditions.[83] The project does a lot to call attention to the issue it is trying to tackle specifically through irony. The unorthodox installation materials and scale of the project make it something loud and noticeable (Figure 15). The first part of irony relates to the strong social class ties art galleries have. Work in gallery spaces are usually very expensive and gallery culture tends to belong to those in the art world, usually with the money to spend on art with high price points. By taking the concept of a gallery and applying it to a seemingly forgotten and run-down neighborhood in Detroit is purely ironic. It tackles the issue of art and class and ideas about how one can access art.

Stemming from this idea, also comes material choice. The various stuffed animals and paint Guyton uses in each of the installations is debris from the neighborhood, something that might otherwise have been waste. Instead it is turned around into becoming a large-scale installation with a big message.

The final component of irony in the piece is the fact the project calls attention to Detroit neighborhoods being forgotten, yet does so by taking forgotten materials and spaces and making them known. Each component of the project was once forgotten in some way but now has been given a second chance and life. The various pieces each speak to ideas such as the neighborhood being forgotten and run down, resources being scarce, and the lack of life or color. But the meanings and ways we understand them are shifted for the audience in ways they are displayed as a collective.

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[83] Cartiere and Zebracki, *The Everyday Practice of Public Art*, 234.

Figure 15: The Heidelberg Project revitalized a run-down neighborhood with materials from houses and lots to create a street long art gallery. The project provides commentary on art in the public in relation to the art world. (The Heidelberg Project, Detroit. Digital Image. MotorCityMuckraker. Accessed March 18, 2018)

An earlier example of irony is work is "*La Familia Obrera (The Working Family)*" a piece by Oscar Bony in 1968 (Figure 16). The piece was quite controversial for the time given the subject matter and piece itself. Bony brought in a working-class family and had them sit in a museum space for eight hours. Over the course of this period people could walk and see them sitting, while at the same time, recordings of sounds from their home played as background noise.[84] The piece was visceral and beckoned a lot of questions from viewers who experienced the piece. Questions on the topic and the medium were common but succeeded in getting people to ask questions while bringing attention to the class disparities.

Despite not being a piece in the urban environment, a variety of aspects of the piece were ironic and critical to conveying the issue of class disparities. With the target audience to being museum patrons, the irony of the piece allowed attention to be brought to an issue patrons might not normally acknowledge. The most apparent example of irony is the use of an actual family to execute the piece. The family lived a traditional working class life, yet was launched into a museum to be viewed by those who likely lived outside the working class. The separation of the two classes hit the viewer when they entered the room and already, the disparity is made extremely apparent.

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[84] "Oscar Bony. La Familia Obrera (The Working Class Family). 1968" The Museum of Modern Art, accessed February 25, 2018, https://www.moma.org/collection/works/187729.

A secondary layer of irony to this is the salary the father of the family made. The salary from participating in this art piece was twice as much as the salary he made in his daily career.[85] One final layer of irony goes back to the characters and the differences between the viewer and the subjects. The subjects of the work would likely not have had the money or time to come to the museum to experience the piece. The closest they might have gotten is as paid subjects of the piece instead of patrons. The number of working-class families who would have been experienced this piece is likely to have been extremely low in comparison to those of the upper-classes. The ironic layers that come together to develop the piece add to the complexity of thought while still shedding light on an existing situation and performing it in a new way.

Figure 16: "La Familia Obrera" calls attention to class divide by putting a working class family on display at a museum for people to see. (La Familia Obrera by Oscar Bony, 1968, Buenos Airees. Digital Image. ArtistasYExperiencias. Accessed March 18, 2018.)

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[85] "Oscar Bony. La Familia Obrera (The Working Class Family). 1968"

One of the champions of irony in work is Banksy. His work stems almost entirely from presenting existing ideas in a sarcastic manner to force the reconsideration of one's perception.[86] The ranging subject matters he tackles through his art provoke feelings and questioning of existing power structures in our world and the ways in which they can be challenged (Figure 17). His work became a significant developmental point for my own work. The clever and subverting ways his art makes us understand and consider issues are powerful. His statements are bold and leave the viewer without question as to what he is trying to communicate, yet what he is saying is often ideas audiences know to be true; he "presents conventional wisdom as insights"as New York Times writer Dan Brook writes.[87] Despite Brooks criticisms of this method in Banksy's art, I think this gives his work power. The problem is not that he is presenting insights as wisdom, but instead is problematic that people already understand what he is presenting to be true yet no one is talking about it or changing the discussion. He brings these points to the forefront because perhaps no one else will, despite the importance of these topics as conversations. It is important to recognize this method as way which can be successful in calling attention to issues, not through presenting new ideas, but instead presenting known ideas in a clever way in order to make people consider the topic displayed.

Figure 17: Banksy's work utilizes the power of irony to call attention to issues such as global warming. (I Don't Believe in Global Warming by Banksy, London. Digital Image. DeMilked. Accessed March 18, 2018.)

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[86] Dan Brooks, "Banksy and the Problem With Sarcastic Art," *The New York Times*, September 10, 2015, https://www.nytimes.com/2015/09/10/magazine/banksy-and-the-problem-with-sarcastic-art.html.
[87] Brooks, "Banksy and the Problem With Sarcastic Art".

Reframing the Narrative

The various tactics explored and the ways they related to homelessness are all utilized to enhance and develop my own design intervention aimed at calling attention to a social condition through means of advocacy. As a designer and artist realizing these problems in the community I exist in, I hope to create a project which transcends everyday perceptions of homelessness and offers and alternative viewpoint for community to consider and act. By utilizing my own capabilities as an artist to "transcend constraints" and develop a connection between idea and place, I hope to display my own interpretation of the narrative which exists in the community.[88] Through engaging with the subject matter, I utilize the city as a stage, to disrupt the existing ideas and provide a different way of thinking about the topic of homelessness, one that is inclusive of the community members and the realities of our place[89]. For a topic, such as homelessness which might not necessarily be at the forefront of discussion, yet is something seen daily in the community, I project my ideas and voice into the public to bring attention to this issue but allow for commentary as well. This alternative viewpoint can be engaged with by the audience in the hopes a new civic discourse might occur branching away from stereotypes. Each of the previously discussed tactics and themes were employed in the design intervention through a carefully designed, iterative process explained in the following chapter.

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[88] Visconti et al., "Street Art, Sweet Art?"
[89] Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings*.

Chapter IV: Building #OptOutside

Interrogative:

1. Of, pertaining to, or of the nature of questioning; having the form or force of a question.

2. Of a word or form employed in asking questions.

Design as a reseach proposal and implementation can be called interrogative when it takes a risk, explores, articulates, and respond to the questionable conditions of life in today's world, and does in a questioning manner. Interrogative design questions the very world of needs of which it is born…

Design must articulate and inspire communication of real, ofen difficult lived-through expererince rather than operate as a substitute for it (i.e., the kitsch of Sharper Image design)…

Design must put in doubt its search for all such often well-intended design solutions or self-deonstructions, to open the way to explore, discover, uncover, and expose the hidden dimensions of lived experience.[90]

Krzysztof Wodiczko

The #OptOut project developed out of the ideas of interrogative design. In working with 'everyday life conditions' I beckon people to ask questions outwardly towards the community and inwardly on their beliefs, through designing a live urban art piece which articulates the narrative of homelessness as I understand it. In doing so, it attempts to articulate the narrative as it remains now, while offering a reframing of how it could be changed. Designing the project comprised of history and site analysis, composition of characters and structure, and concept development. After the completion of the design, various iterations of the project were conducted and analyzed, adjusting more strongly hone in on the overarching goals of the intervention. Finally, the piece is structured around series of themes and tactics which arose through analyzing engaging and powerful art forms and along with homelessness (Chapter III).

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[90] Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings*, 142.

The Design

The process of designing the piece stemmed largely from my background in environmental design. The process began with understanding the basic components of the project included the various urban art forms and the core components of each that makes them provocative and powerful as mediums of expression. This combined with a personal understanding of the conditions of homelessness to best incorporate the topic and the social advocacy component. Analyzing successful art practices that comment on social conditions through art or developed engaging practices illuminated the tactics necessary to achieve my goal of calling attention to the exclusive narrative of homelessness in Boulder and the way it can be reframed.

Rooted in Concept / Utilizing #OptOutside

Cross comparisons of urban art and homelessness, specifically homelessness in Boulder, shed light on a larger problem, that being the narrative fails to acknowledge the homelessness in an accurate light. After examining the values associated with the city as both a community member through my observations over four years and conversations with others inside and outside the city, I landed on a concept developed by popular lifestyle brand REI. Their #OptOutside campaign was developed in 2015 to promote outdoor active living on Black Fridays, a way to encourage people to recreate outdoors, experiencing the wonders of the natural world instead of partaking in consumerist practices of excess shopping the day following Thanksgiving (Figure 18). The company closes their stores and pays their employees' leave on this day and encourages people to spread the idea through
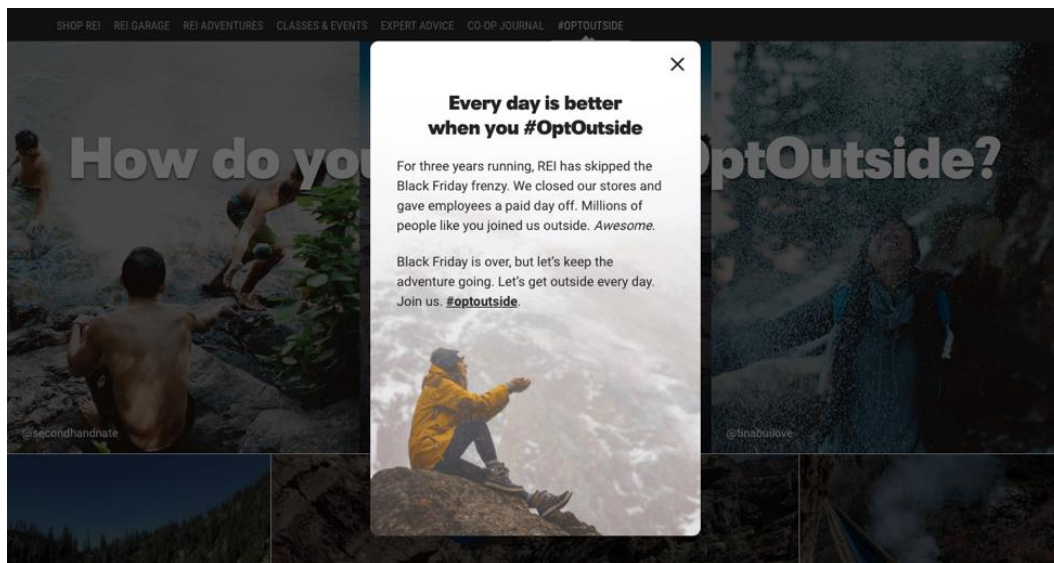
Figure 18: REI launched the #OptOutside campaign as a means to encourage people to spend more time in the outdoor world and share those experiences on social media instead of participating in shopping on Black Friday. (REI OptOutside. Digital Image. REI. Accessed March 18, 2018.)

posting pictures of themselves "Opting Outside" on social media. In doing so, people not only spread the values of the brand but project the image of treasuring being outside voluntarily instead of spending money and being indoors. The power of the idea as a hashtag allows people to see this not just locally but across the globe (Figure 18).

In the scheme of Boulder, my past four years in the city have exposed me to a very similar narrative as the brand. Often, when asked what I love most about Boulder, what I say or hear is remarks having to do with the cities location next to the mountains and in the Foothills. In being so close to these wonders like the Flatirons, opportunities to experience these places are abundant, and many, like myself, frequently partake in doing so: camping, mountain biking, hiking, trail running. While there is nothing inherently wrong with projecting this image outward, a problem arises when this narrative becomes the only narrative adopted and accepted inside the city and community. There are many who do not partake in this lifestyle who are seemingly excluded, especially when looking at the homeless population.

The city of Boulder has been facing the issue of homelessness over the course of the past century (see Chapter Two). The condition is nothing new to the city, however, the topic is often overlooked in discussions because priority is given to a narrative which does not include this population. Specifically, this population gets absorbed into the narrative that Boulder values being outdoors and maintaining access to these spaces, however, if this narrative is applied to the number of homeless people in the community, the narrative no longer works. Instead, a community which is quite affluent overpowers the voices of those who have far less, especially considering the perspective with which outdoor space is viewed. There is no harm in valuing an outdoor lifestyle from a city-wide perspective or an individual perspective. The problem arises when this idea is applied to the entire population of a community and neglects to acknowledge the differing viewpoints on outdoor space.

The project I designed utilizes the #OptOutside campaign through means of juxtapostion to express the dichotomy we see when examining these two parallel outdoor narratives. People in the city of Boulder could fall into two categories, homeless and not homeless, together making the entirety of the population. Despite their overlap in the making up the entire city population, their stories are largely separate. The heart of #OptOutside is encouraging people to take advantage of the spaces we have access to utilizing them as a place of choice, while the homeless community does not have this choice. Instead, public and open spaces comprise their place of living. Limited indoor

spaces welcome this population except for shelters or the public library. When we frame the idea of #OptOutside from the larger community narrative but apply it to the perspective of a homeless person in the community, we see a stark contrast of ideas arise. These ideas exclude their lack of option to be outside and their lack of ability to participate in the outdoor lifestyle as REI brand sponsors or as the non-homeless population might have the means (Figure 19).

Figure 19: The larger narrative of outdoor appreciation adopted by the larger community of Boulder takes on a new meaning when applied to the homeless perspective.

Building a Stage / Curating the Performance

Through examining the various practices of artists over the past fifty ears, many of those that were successful, in my opinion, incorporated dynamic elements, specifically those which were live and performance oriented. In curating my own performance, I drew heavily from these pieces as a means of inspiration to inform the project and the ways it could convey the paralleling yet unequal narrative. The pieces which had to be considered were use of actors and how each component related to the goal of the project: visually portraying the existing narrative to bring it to light and alter the way we understand it.

The sign and the message behind the #OptOutside tagline is the core of the project, calling immediate attention to the contradictory nature of the ideas behind the tagline and the homeless condition. It acts as the physical manifest of the project, distilled into a symbol. Just as just the lifejackets in Ai Weiwei's "United Refugee Lifejacket Project" (see Chapter III) represent the symbol of the refugee, the sign became of the symbol of homelessness in the exclusive narrative (elaboration on the subject in the following section).[91] Crafting the signs needed to go beyond simply scrawling the words across a piece of cardboard and needed to enhance the dichotomy presented in the ideas. In the case of the homeless narrative, the sign was simple piece of ripped cardboard with "#OptOutside" simply scrawled. On the contrary, the outdoorsperson carried sign that also says "#OptOutside" but was nicely written with the REI font and logo matching what might appear on a company sticker or website. Utilizing cardboard kept a sense of continuity within the piece and played into the cardboard sign as a symbol for homelessness.

The focal sign element needed to be accompanied by an actor to hold it, one that represented the homeless perspective in the narrative and an actor to represent the opposing larger community narrative (Figure 20).With the recruitment of two people who worked alongside myself through this project, the actors to portray these perspectives came to life. The choice to use an actor to represent the homeless perspective became evident for a variety of reasons. The first was the ability to curate and control the evolution of the performance (see next section on iterations). In my informal conversation with my previously homeless acquaintance, discussions about the various problems which can arise from using homeless people as participants were heavy. Given the fluctuating lives many homeless people live with jobs, shelters, and moving around with frequency, constant contact and planning for events can pose challenges. Similarly, identities are often desired to be anonymous and with the extensive public exposure the project merited. Having an actor provided the ability to change various compositions and times with ease. The personification of the identities in the project are also largely conceptual because there is, of course, nuance to identities within the larger community and the people acted more strongly as reinforcement to the piece instead of as the focal point.

The project used two actors to highlight the dichotomy of the homeless perspective versus the larger community narrative. By representing these Boulder values directly against the homeless

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[91] Sierzputowski "Ai Weiwei Wraps the Columns of Berlin's Konzerthaus with 14,000 Salvaged Refugee Life Vests"

representation, the contradiction becomes more evident. In choosing my actors, I wanted to bring to light a different perspective of homelessness that is perhaps not as actively portrayed. Straying away from the older, lone male figure type (see Chapter II) became one of the goals in executing this idea. At the same time, the use of this actress, made it more clear she was in fact an actress conducting a portrayal which added to the development of the piece (see following Themes and Tactics section).

Figure 20: The portrayal of the narrative is exemplified through the cardboard sign with REI branding and the human persona to represent homelessness.

The mannerisms employed by the actors speak to the relationship between the two characters. The homeless perspective acted through a lens of exclusion, someone who might be looked down upon because of their situation, of dismay. Because the narrative is exclusive, the actor projected feelings of rejection, especially when there are limited resources to remedy the homeless problem. This informed the gestures of carrying her head down, sitting on the ground, and making the actor retreat within herself to convey feeling small and the theme of despair (see section on "Art in Homelessness"). Instead of opening oneself and presenting to the world, they are straying from the larger world. The Opting Outside actor portrays the opposite. Smiling, standing tall, use of

enthusiasm, all overshadow the homeless actor to make them seem even smaller. Their portrayal of the love of outdoors, happiness and joy for being able to have the option to be outside makes them seem larger than life and fit directly in with the audience they are surrounded by. Standing tall and proud adjacent to the opposing actor fills the space and pushes the opposite role farther down into the ground. Similarly, their bodies would remain consistently at a distance, the homeless actor hunching over, pulling knees to her chest and refraining from larger engagement as if to disappear while the opposing would stand smile at passersby, almost stepping over the homeless actor on the ground. These movement adjusted over the course of the performance as the narrative changed to convey different interactions (see following section on "Trial and Error").

One of the most difficult challenges in utilizing actors and engaging with the audience was deciding what to do if someone asks the actors what they are doing during a performance. It was important to the work and for myself, that the dialogue followed the lines of explaining they are a representation of an artist's understanding of the relationship between homelessness and the Boulder community and were conducting such through tan intervention. The goal is to encourage people to recognize the narrative being portrayed and consider the ways it could be altered. A thorough explanation and understanding of the project took place between myself the actors so were confident in their explanations when this occurred as well as my being present and recording so I was able to participate in these discussions as well.

The attire of the characters needed to match their roles in order to convey their part in the piece as well. In doing so, each element was carefully crafted to match the overall message of the dichotomous nature. Outdoors person was equipped hiking gear, looking as if they were ready to go backpacking. Their wardrobe needed to resemble that of a person who was planning to actively Opt Outside, in the case of my actor, backpacking. Hiking pants, shirt, boots, a backpack, and a water bottle all gave the appearance of someone who might be actively going out into the wilderness. The homeless perspective was completely opposite, resembling that of a homeless person. In assembling this outfit, attention to pieces which appeared worn and heavily lived in were sought after. The use of a ripped flannel and pants which had been exposed to element and a protective hoodie layer all came together to build the outfit. Though not as extreme as it could have been, the goal was to convey the essence, calling attention to the larger conversation to be had and demonstrating a different version of homelessness other than the stereotype such as a youth rejected from home.

Recruiting an Audience / Location

In the ideation phase, the criteria for location required only that an audience be present, but it soon became clear, the ability to go deeper within a site and frame the project was especially critical. In doing so, the project became stronger while developing a symbiotic relationship as the site enhanced the project and the project found its grounding on the site. As seen in public art practice, there must be a careful understanding of the history of a site and the community when placing a piece in the public domain.[92] Because of this, I examined locations in Boulder which maintain historical significance to homelessness in the context of the city. The two most prominent locations included the Pearl Street Mall and the Central Park area adjacent to the Glen Miller Bandshell. Further research pointed to the Bandshell as a place of significance to homelessness in the history of Boulder making it ideal for that criteria. However, inspiration from Fluxus, meant developing criteria beyond just historical significance, specifically the presence of an audience to engage and even further, an audience who resonates with the #OptOutside notion. The following criteria developed as a result: an audience would be present on location, it holds significance to the history of homelessness, it comments on the social dynamic of homelessness in the larger narrative, and finally holds significance to the practice of creating art in the public realm. Through an exploration of the

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[92] Cartiere and Zebracki, *The Everyday Practice of Public Art*.

history of the condition in city of Boulder, the Central Park location, East of Broadway Avenue came to the forefront as a place meeting the entirety of this criteria (Figure 21).

The Central Park location meets the first requirement of the presence of an audience because of the confluence of various people and activities in its single location. The Boulder Creek Path crosses directly through the center of park bringing in bikers, pedestrians, runners, and commuters. This core artery within the city brings in a significant population crossing through the site most of whom are choosing to #OptOutside through their participation. Their presence allowed them to engage in ways similar to Knowles "Making a Salad". In her case, she served a salad to people surrounding the event of conducting and making it. In the performance, while not as tangible as serving anyone food, people could stop, ask questions and interact which happened on multiple occasions over the time of the performance.

The second condition, that it be significant to the history or current homeless narrative is evident in the presence of the Glen Miller Bandshell, a historic site to the city. The use of the

Figure 21: The Central Park location and the surrounding entities all tie into the homeless narrative, grounding the project in the space.

Bandshell not only served as historic engagement in the history of the condition which I tried to represent, but also in employing guerilla art and utilizing the significance of the space to the community as a way to call attention.[93] The Bandshell sits on the corner of Broadway Avenue and

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[93] Harris, "Guerilla Art, Social Value and Absent Heritage Fabric."

Canyon Boulevard, the historic railroad street [for timeline see Appendix A]. The presence of the train on Canyon Boulevard brought in what used to be known as drifters, people who would travel the rail lines, often leading them to Boulder.[94] The present-day site where the Bandshell exists, used to be a place of congregation for these drifters who would camp close to the railways. Eventually the tracks were converted to the road it is today, but after the building of the Bandshell, the site still marked a location for congregating. For the past century, the city has had strong opposition to this, especially in the 1960's-70's, when hippy groups from the East Coast moved into the area, setting up camps. In the city's eyes, it detracted from the vision the city wished to project. Over time, the city worked to prevent these groups from congregating in this space so a larger portion of the community would utilize the space. Issues with sanitation due to the large camps and populations of drifters and hippies deterred many.[95] Eventually camping bans and regulations enacted by the city pushed many of these people from camping and sleeping on the site as it is today, but the ties to the space are still evident.

The third condition of the site providing a commentary on the social dynamic at play in the community is exemplified through the farmer's market as well. Often, when homeless people are seen at the farmer's market, their exclusion from the larger community is extremely apparent. The engagements the two groups are partaking in is exactly opposite, the larger community purchasing local produce, while the homeless members are panhandling. Many turn a blind to these people. The visual cue of overlooking these people has created a non-verbal separation apart the fact they might be asking for money to help them while they sit amidst a market they likely cannot afford to purchase produce from. Outside the market, the divide continues as most of homeless remain congregated around the Bandshell separate from the grassy areas.

The final criteria, the site holding significance to the practice of art in the public realm, stems from not only the Bandshell, but the presence of the Boulder Museum of Contemporary Art (BMoCA). Street art cannot be street art without the street (the public) - while guerilla art needs a monument or place of significance to form its platform.[96] The Bandshell, in the case of the Central Park, forms the backdrop for engaging a place of significance to the piece. On the contrary, BMoCA

[94] "History," Friends of the Bandshell, accessed December 5, 2017, http://www.boulderbandshell.org/testimonials/.

[95] "Glen Huntington Bandshell," Colorado Preservation Inc., accessed December 5, 2017, http://coloradopreservation.org/2014-list-colorados-most-endangered-places/glen-huntington-bandshell.

[96] Riggle, "Street Art"; Harris, "Guerilla Art, Social Value and Absent Heritage Fabric."

provides a direct antithesis to my project; urban art addressing homelessness. There is direct contrast of the art which exists and is celebrated within the confines of the museum against my own art piece. Wodiczko points to this in this commentary on "social arts" (see epigraphy of Chapter II). As previously discussed, the museum acts as a place of preservation and prescription, while art outside that realm breaks away from such, allowing people to share their ideas without permission.[97] Finally, the museum is a place of leisure that people spend money to access and enjoy, something homeless people would likely not be doing. Instead, from inside the confines of the museum, these community members can be seen across the way at the Bandshell, a commentary on class divide.

Trial and Error

The movement from initial ideation of the piece to conducting it in the real world took many experimentations with mediums, ideas, and defining characteristics of the piece. The iterative process is something core my design background, developing ideas, reflecting on the strong and weak points, and revising to better the weak components.

Ideation

The exercise of developing the piece began with quick sketches and models that could eventually be extracted to become a large prototype. Captured within each of the ideas was the clear connection to homelessness and the goal of modifying the existing narrative
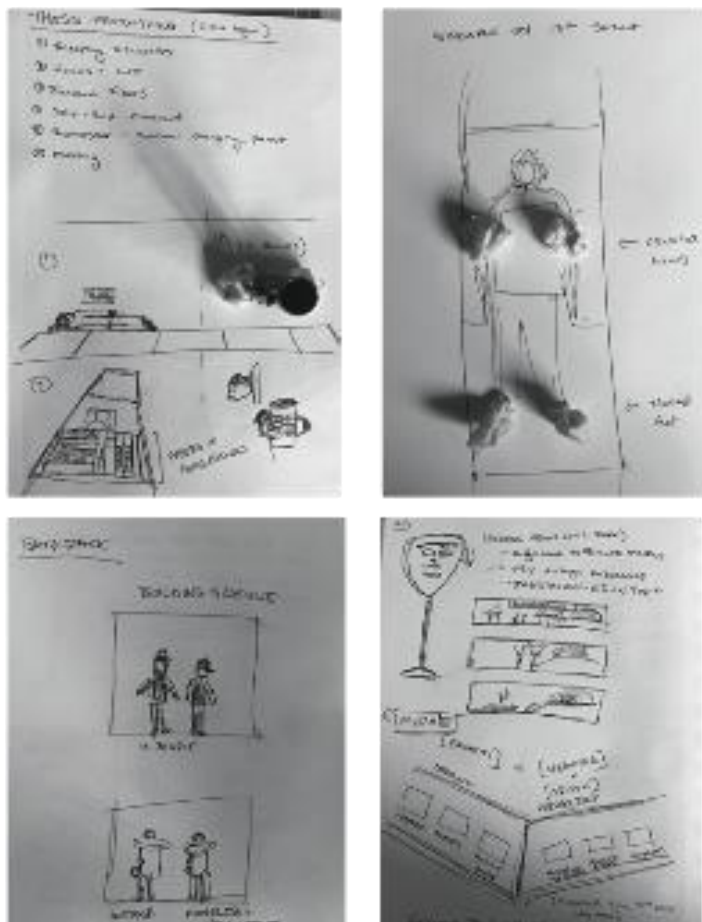
Figure 22: First iterations of the urban art piece focued on including various ways of engaging with the community through looking through viewfinders to altering walking paths

we have in Boulder. Core to these initial ideations is the role of the intervention being dynamic and

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[97] Gein, "(De)Facing the Wall. The Traditions, Transactions and Transgressions of Street Art."

engaging in some way. Starting small with these ideas, pieces engaged the audience by making them relocate themselves on a pathway, look through a viewfinder, or change the tactile nature of a surrounding building (Figure 22). The smaller nuances in the pieces would hopefully give way to something larger, a mental shift in one's previous train of thought through the interruption it would cause like having to move from a straight walking path as transgression.[98]

The projects initial iterations included an #OptOutside sketch, however, the other ideas, while subtler, possessed elements which were strong as well. One idea was an installation of a viewfinder, something which might be found on a hillside tourist stop which directs a view towards a city or monument. The idea behind this project was to physically alter the way passersby understand spaces in Boulder, specifically the ones with distinct ties homelessness. The viewfinder would have a small level which would point to The Bandshell and add, layer by layer, various components of the site related to the larger community's view (the farmers' markets, people doing yoga) with contrasting ideas of homelessness (a night scene where someone is sleeping or conducting their daily life activities in the space) (Figure 23).

Prototyping + First Iteration

Following the ideation phase of the project was a small prototyping phase which two pieces were taken off the page and put into the world. The two-selected included a preliminary version of the #OptOutside piece and the second being a dual mural/photographic exploration of homelessness on two opposing building facades. The iterations were small, the photos being only 6" by 4" and pasted up on the Pearl Street poster stands. The #OptOutside exploration took about an hour and involved a singular actor posing in Central Park in Boulder. Stemming from the practices of the Fluxus group and Mierle Ukeles' work in engagement with the site and people, the live performance with the REI tagline on a cardboard sign with the introduction of the singular homeless actor began.

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[98] Gein, "(De)Facing the Wall. The Traditions, Transactions and Transgressions of Street Art."
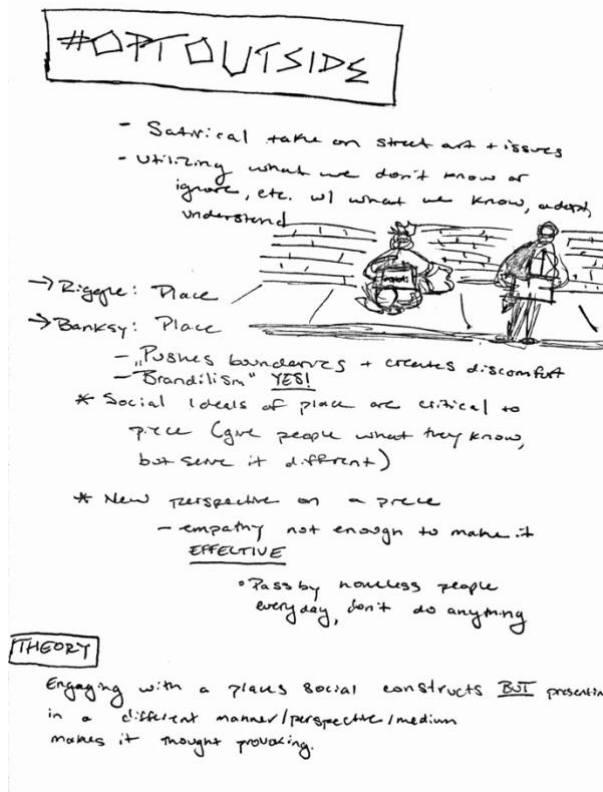
Figure 23: A preliminary sketch of the #OptOutside project, showing initial sketches of the actors as well as concept and theory developments.

On an afternoon with temperatures in the forties and fifties, there were an abundance of people already "#OptingOutside". Similarly, the number of homeless people in the area were up to the twenties at most but created a dichotomy between the small singular set up of my project versus what the actual members of the homeless community were doing. As stated from Chapter I section on Public Art, ensuring the engagement of an issue within the community both physically and spatially is a core component, especially when attempting to engage in civic discourse.

The homeless actor posed with the sign moving around the site to engage with different people in various locations, posing in different ways. The presence of the many people opting outside coupled with the homeless population on the site provided an ideal audience to display the work. The movement of the actors around the site combined with the dynamic people and activities occurring on the site was inspired and resembled works such as Allison Knowles with "Making a Salad" (see

Chapter III). Her piece is largely a procession and I wanted to utilize this concept in the movements through the site.

Figure 24: The actors location moved throughout the site focusing at points on the Bandshell, other times in the midst of movement zones along the path.

Figure 25: Engagement with the intervention allowed for dialogues to take place on the subject in real time.

I wanted to utilize the human aspect of homelessness in this iteration as well to enhance the sign so I gathered inspiration from Luke Jerram's "Invisible Homeless" in utilizing human form and physicality to communicate the idea. After combining these ideas together, the final production was executed with a singular actor, representing the homeless narrative, holding a cardboard sign with the branding and words "REI Co-Op #OptOutside" in various locations throughout the park (Figure 24). Passerby's would turn heads, sometimes make a verbal remark, or even stop to ask questions (Figure 25) (see following section on Themes + Tactics).

After this preliminary trial, immediately there were aspects which needed to be readjusted to hone the message more clearly and amplify the piece to convey goal of the project. Looking at Ai Weiwei's "United Lifejacket Refugee" piece, I gathered there needed to be more 'massing' to the piece, adding additional layers and reinforcing the significance behind the sign. Many of my original iterations of potential projects include a very clear dichotomy in the project. I wanted the two sides of the irony spectrum to be more clear and introduce a clear duality of the narrative. At the base, the project intends to encourage new thoughts on the idea of homelessness and offers a new perspective, but if people do not understand the initial component, all further insight is eliminated because the base has not been effectively formed. The use of a singular character with REI branding merited confusion with whether the piece was simply advertisement was questioned and encouraged the development of a secondary character.

Second Iteration

Incorporating reflections from the first iteration and building on those practices developed the use of two characters, the outdoorsperson and the homeless. This was done for two reasons, one being the ability to address more issues and themes in the relationship of the narrative and secondly to provide clarity.

The project was set in the same location, Central Park, but became about the expression of the relationship of the two characters. For the second test, I equipped the actors with the tools and knowledge necessary to better engage in discussions if asked. Similarly, I outlined the relationship between the characters and how these would be expressed through a series of poses and engagements. These engagements spoke to the existing dynamics within the community, specifically that of power and the way the larger community frames itself versus the homeless narrative being one of division and exclusion. The existence of this larger narrative as separate from our everyday lives and bringing this to life on a stage to show the separation, resembling that of "La Familia

Obrera" (see Chapter III) and putting people on a pedestal for display to call attention to this distance.

The poses and dynamics speak to power struggles in the relationship. Taking into consideration physical leveling through sitting and standing, the characters posed in ways that makes the outdoors character seem bigger and entitled to that space. In each of these poses, utilizing the outdoor environment enhanced the display. In one particular shot, the homeless actor's face was shaded underneath the bridge, adopting a somber motif, while the REI character stood tall, in the light (Figure 26). The use of this provided visual cues for each of the character's representations and

Figure 26: Elements of the space were used to enhance the feelings and dynamic of the performance such as the shadowing of the homeless actor's face.

Figure 27: The actors location moved throughout the site focusing at points on the Bandshell, other times in the midst of movement zones along the path.

feelings in the setting. Similarly, utilizing heights to allow the homeless character to be looked down upon enhanced the rejected narrative (Figure 27).

The characters were also positioned in spaces which people had to physically walk through the piece. In a bridge composition, the two characters stood on opposing sides of the bridges acting in the characters (Figure 28). People would then walk across the bridge first encountering the outdoors actor, followed by the homeless actors squatting on the opposing side. Observing from both sides, people were visibly tense when passing through, sometimes speeding up their pace, often taking a double take. The sheer act of walking through the performance called attention to the fact that they were in an art piece, adding a layer of engagement.

Introducing the dynamic of the two characters merited success in some ways. The explicit nature of the project was immediately conveyed and understood to the audience members, however, because of this, it dissuaded from direct engagement. This could have been a result of putting the piece on a stage and removing the actors from the audience. In the first iteration, the singular actor became a part of the larger environment, but the inclusion of the two actors working together made it evident they were conducting a performance separate from the general other activities taking place. With the two actors, however, there were more factors which needed to be controlled. In considering the dynamic tactic, the two characters allow for a dynamism but every single component of the actors needed to be part of the whole performance. I had to consider spacing, facial

Figure 28: By placing the piece on the path, people physically had to walk through the piece allowing attention to be called to the piece and requiring the audience to engage.

expression, clothing, body language, dialogue, and interactions all as part of the composition. This worked to my benefit because it adding layers of depth. Each component had a direct correlation to the larger message while pushing me to understand how the parts could work together to become a larger composition instead of just an actor holding a sign with a message.

A criticism of my second iteration was the execution of the REI outdoors person. This role for this actor made them feel slightly uncomfortable as well which required further reflection. In working on this project, I came to understand there are many ideas which could be both controversial and push boundaries. In my first iteration, to an extent I felt slightly uncomfortable, but in working to justify these practices based on my vision as an artist and designer and stemming from existing practices, I became comfortable with my goals and vision. The reflection on her feelings and ideas in the project, opened my eyes to other people's potential reactions. At first, the negative reaction in my mind was just that, negative. After contemplation and further discussion with the actor, it became clear that this comfortability stemmed from a potential separation from the problem, the distance creating a lack of understanding and feeling of inability to convey the problem in a way that was meaningful. This shed light on the active roles many of us do play in the scope of homelessness. While the intention of the project is not meant to make, people feel guilty, understanding the audience's contribution to this scenario could be coupled with a sense of guilt. Because I have engaged with this issue on a deeper level, spending time delving into the human and lived experience of the problem, I developed and empathy and understanding, but most people in the community will likely not have this experience. This justified the project even more in my view, illuminating the fact people should have a way to engaged with these ideas and understand how exclusive the narrative has become, creating a distance from these issues.

Pseudo-Third Iteration: The Symposium
Not classified as an official run-through, I utilized the Honors Symposium platform to bring the piece to life in front of a formal audience. There are many problems which arose because the environment the symposium lends itself to but for demonstrating the essence of the project, it was successful. During the presentation, I had my homeless actor sit at the front of the room, embodying her persona for the duration of my talk. I called the audience's attention to it at the beginning and had to immediately account for people not being able to see. I asked people to move to a position where they could see the figure for a moment and then take their seats again. The presence of the actor throughout the presentation made it dynamic and allowed people to get a base

understanding for what the performance entails. During the presentation, as I introduced the outdoorsperson perspective in my talk, I had my second actor, equipped in REI outdoors gear, come to the front and pose alongside. These two perspectives together engaged again, in a non-verbal dialogue in which power structures were made clear, similar to the second iteration. Small details again such as the homeless actor being positioned at the front of the room, facing towards the audience and sitting on the ground, but clearly separated from the larger group engaged the idea of social divide and exclusion, specifically when those were discussed within my project. What is also interesting, is how I had to call people's attention to the stage and the actor. Had I not done that, people might have seen her positioned at the front and proceeded to turn a blind eye and leave it unquestioned as many do with homelessness in the public realm.

What was effective about this rendition of the performance is the meta levels of understanding the performance. On the surface, there was a clear divide between the audience and the stage where the performance was taking place. This means without an audience, the piece has no meaning whatsoever and given this, the viewers took a role in the performance despite being in an audience position. At the same time, I wanted to encourage people to imagine themselves in the larger narrative the piece is getting at and how people in the crowd might resonate with the role of the REI Outdoorsperson. This dichotomy of seeing art and being removed from it but also imagining oneself in the art creates a duality in one's understanding. It emphasizes this social divide but creates a personal connection resonating more so than seeing something from afar.

Despite this not being an official conducting of the performance, pulling the piece from its traditional place in Central Park and putting it in front of a controlled audience allowed me to understand it in a different light. As mentioned, the most important part is the role of the audience as being separate from the piece, but the backbone of the piece in their engagement and ability to see themselves existing in the narrative. This divide and bringing awareness to it showed a tangible version of a social divide. By putting the actors on a stage, it made the piece stronger I believe, because it called everyone's immediate attention to it. Integrating the stage foundation to make it more noticeable is something to integrate in the final version of the piece.

Fourth Iteration

The fourth iteration of this piece is a culmination of the original integrity of the piece plus reflections and changes made each time the piece was executed. It has become extremely evident, how difficult it is to create a piece that is engaging, powerful, dynamic, creates a conversation, and

bring awareness. Each iteration allowed me to develop a better understanding for how to make that better and improve the pieces that fell short. In this last iteration, I attempted to combine all the wisdom I learned from conducting the piece on multiple occasions. Utilizing the idea of the stage, taken from reflection on the symposium execution, I want to put my actors on a hypothetical stage to make it even more of a performance. The power in understanding dividing social roles has become important to my piece and understanding how these ideas overlap beyond the physical presence of this divide and into the social realm is key.

The fourth iteration employs all the previous tactics, the two actors and their signs but focused on explaining the sequence of the narrative, how it builds from existing ideas as individuals and finally to a resolution. Instead of a series of poses, the entire movement of the piece was mapped out to explain the narrative and complete a story. The piece begins just as my process did with one singular homeless actor and their sign. The pose on the steps was one of the original places which garnered quite a bit of attention from passerby's and was critical to developing attention and representing the narrative from the homeless perspective. The performance begins in this same position with the singular homeless actor on the steps and under the bridge (Figure 29). Following this movement, the REI #OptOutside actor is introduced and here we see the second iteration of the piece introduced (Figure 30). In the sequence, the power dynamics are expressed once again. Movements such as the REI actor standing overhead, carrying a smiling demeanor, enjoying the outside spaces, and maintaining enthusiasm are all employed. The characters once again, stand parallel to one other in spaces and positons that require audience members to physically move through the piece. In doing so, audience members become aware and part of the composition. After carrying this dynamic, there is a shift and the homeless actor stands to meet the opposing actor. No longer are the demeanors those of a person facing despair or feeling small but growing into an equal positioning with the REI character (Figure 31). The opposing character no longer is simply smiling and enthusiastic, but instead we see a leveling, an equality between them as they meet eye contact. The demeanors have changed as the two come to level with one another, finding a recognition in the role each plays, but also in the humanity in each of the characters. It is through this symbolic nature, it is understood the two characters are human at their cores needed to develop and understanding for the other. Conducting a dialogue, moving beyond stereotypes, and engaging with one another, the two groups meet each other halfway. The final component of the sequence goes beyond the meeting of body language and demeanor and incorporates a sign change. Instead of the #OptOutside signs both posed with before, we see instead a flip, from #OptOut to #OptIn (Figure

32). The #OptIn does not represent indoors space at its core, but instead an inclusive narrative, taking time to understand the perspective and stories just as I did in my researching phase. It is through this research that I began to form a clearer picture of what it could feel like to be in the positon of homelessness. In conversations with homeless members, expressions of how difficult it can feel in these experiences because one's voice is rendered less powerful. Similarly, can be difficult to speak up from the inside the homeless narrative making articulating these stories and ideas outwards of the utmost importance as an artist and a designer of these built environments.

Figure 29: In the first of the four sequences, the homeless character as they fit into the narrative today is displayed with the #OptOutside sign. Their gestures and body language illuminate the feelings of exclusion and despair associated with the stereotype.

Figure 30: The second of the sequences introduces the second actor, representing the communities larger role and dynamic in the narrative. The power dynaimic and dichotomous expressions show the inequality and social divide.

Figure 31: The third of the sequnces show a leveling of the characters matching now in body language.

Figure 32: The final of the four sequences show the two characters together, each with their respective signs. The duality of the two together represent the inclusive narrative that can be created through conducting exercises such as I did, shedding light the narrative which exists on both sides and opening the way for civil discourse.

By presenting the stages of the piece, the piece is intended to fully explain the dichotomous nature of the narrative with a resolution portion at the end. In my work, engaging with homeless and formerly homeless members allowed me to develop a greater awareness and empathy for the problem. In doing so, I sought to bring this attention to the community for the piece. I would not have done so however, had I not become acutely aware of the issue through my departure from Boulder and returning. Many people might not have the same opportunity which is why the piece is strongly rooted in understanding a problem persists. Without understanding this, only offering a solution would not be as effective. It is essential people develop and empathy for the problem before they might be so inclined to fix it. Given this, the narrative is conveyed through the steps outline above, beginning with the singular homeless actor as we understand from the narrative today, introducing the larger community to understand the dynamic in the larger scheme of the community, before slowly moving to a place where to two actors can find a balance, working to understand one another, meeting halfway, and developing and empathy and resolution. It is through this understanding I believe, people will grow their desire and empathy to make a difference and change the course of the narrative. In displaying this sequence and bringing it light, I hope the question of how the narrative is structured now and how it can be change can become a focal conversation in civil discourse. There is potential for the discourse to be changed through presenting these in the public domain. Utilizing the power of this platform to bring to light and recognize of the problem, if even just for a transgressive moment, to alter the course of how people view and understand the problem.

Tactics

Through consideration of many art practices and cross-comparison, various tactics along with the overlapping themes of homelessness and urban art were all employed in the creation of this project. The strong overlap between the important aspects of homelessness and art in relation to expressing social conditions in my examination created key qualifiers within my project (see Chapter III). The piece utilizes location and the iterative process along with three tactics distilled from previous artists and concepts which I believe strongly contributed to their success as works and artists.

Use of the Street

The first of the tactics in my intervention is it being in the public realm. Just as examined in Chapter III, key to "social art" practices are the fact that works happen in the public an essential space to the

homeless as well (as seen in Chapter III). The relationship of both to the street is key to their nature and definitions and because of that, is one of the most important components[99]. This theme is exemplified most apparently in the location of my intervention. The project could have revolved around being photographed in a studio setting or controlled environment but instead the intervention was thrown directly onto the street, taking place in a very populous area where there are many factors which cannot be controlled. There is a large amount of unknown in this space and attachment to any sort of control the environment is relinquished by forcing me to control only what I could in my project.

The mental connection between street art and mural art is extremely common, but public art practices and street art, through their history, has paved the way for art to branch beyond that.[100] The medium of performance branches of this stereotype and allows for civil discourse to occur because of the space. The interaction and the audience exposed to the ideas was far greater through the use of performance and paved the way for real discussions to take place on the site in the middle of the intervention. The ability to stop and ask questions validated people curiosity and interest and through these dialogues, actual changes to the narrative and discourse began.

Transgression
The second of the tactics, outlined by Julius and Gein amongst others is based on two principles. The first is the something is fleeting in the scheme of time as in being temporary in space.[101] The second is that it acts as a break or separation from the prescribed and existing environment.[102] The first of the tactics or themes I reflected on is transgression (see Chapter One: Key Themes). This theme was strongly exemplified in this project. The physical presence of the project was short lived, lasting around an hour occurring four different times. The fleeting nature meant some people saw parts or all of it while others did not. It evokes a close to ethereal quality due to the limited experience it provides, similar to that of graffiti on subway cars.

Expanding on the idea of the transgression, the piece acted as a deviation from the existing nature of the space, particularly in that park.[103] Instead of being a reprieve, it was a blatant break

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[99] Riggle, "Street Art."

[100] Cartiere and Zebracki, *The Everyday Practice of Public Art*.

[101] Julius, *Transgressions*.

[102] Gein, "(De)Facing the Wall. The Traditions, Transactions and Transgressions of Street Art."

[103] Gein, "(De)Facing the Wall. The Traditions, Transactions and Transgressions of Street Art.".

from the social engagements which normally occur on the site. In the arguments of public space, there are certain actions and permitted activities which can occur because of the designation as public. Despite it being 'open', it has been prescribed to us and certain activities are expected on the site such as running, utilizing open space, but not necessarily creation of art (although not illegal in this case) which breaks these traditional use and conservation of spaces.[104] In Central Park, generally the homeless members in that space congregate close to Bandshell, occasionally roaming around the park, but with less frequency. Similarly, those of the population that are panhandling focus on the street corners surrounding the park instead of within the park as most people are exercising or moving. My piece broke these notions by taking the homeless perspective, normally tucked away by the Bandshell, and place it immediately on the path. This alone captured many people's attention by physically alter their path. In contrast to the art museum adjacent to the part, the piece broke those social bounds to an extending, taking the idea of art being captured in that specific space and moving it outward into the public.

Dynamic (Off the Wall)

For a piece to be off the wall, it must be engaging in its form and function, seeking to involve and audience and embrace the possibility of expansion beyond its set location.[105] One of the promising markers of success is the engagement that took place with my intervention. Things as small as observing people run by, observe what was occurring, and return to their previous movements was quite intriguing. Often I could catch a puzzled look on someone's face which meant they were forced to consider the message and the piece. Regardless of whether it stemmed from a place of confusion on advertising or whether they understood the meaning and were simply contemplating, the visual cue was merited a moment of success. The ultimate level of success was the physical engagement people had with the piece, people stopping to talk to me or the actor about the piece. In that moment, people physically stopped their preexisting plan and thought process to engage with the project. This engagement and conversation would not have been possible had the piece been a simply wall mural. The piece opened the way for a dialogue to take place through the transgressive nature. The conversations incorporated ideas shared from the audience perspective and the

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[104] Anderson, *Imagined Communities*; Acconci, "Parks, Streets, and Vehicles."

[105] Mark Feldman, "Inside the Sanitation System: Mierle Ukeles, Urban Ecology and the Social Circulation of Garbage," *Iowa Journal of Cultural Studies* 10, no. 1 (2008): 42–56; McCormick et al., *City as Canvas: New York City Graffiti From the Martin Wong Collection*.

perspective I was attempting to share, but created a dialogue which otherwise would not have happened.

Irony

The use of irony in the intervention stems from the definitions of "The Incongruity Theory" in which ideas stick out, resonate, or are found to be humorous because they are presented in a manner that appears out of place.[106] As previously mentioned, much of the street art performance is grounded in the irony it presents. Utilizing irony was the strongest theme in the piece because every aspect of the piece had to be represented in an ironic way. No matter what part of the piece a person considers, an element of irony is present.

The first layer is the idea that people in Boulder choose to #OptOutside by enjoying their open space, hiking, biking, etc. In contrast, homeless members of the community are outside because they do not have an option to be many other places. In the larger narrative, when we apply the lens of the outdoor person and their ability to experience the outdoors as a conscious choice, we see the homeless population is segmented from this narrative. A secondary layer of irony from the REI campaign is in the hashtag promote branching away from consumeristic practices with spending a lot of money on Black Friday and instead, participating in an outdoor activity or simply being outside. Homeless people, through this lens, are left out of this discussion because they generally do not have the means to spend large sums of money in stores. A third level of irony lies in the use of actors to convey the ideas. Using actors who believe in #OptOutside values while also conducting a piece targeted at reframing the homeless narrative to show it is possible to have both. The message is not stemming from making a person feel guilty but instead, lies in the abilities to create a better dialogue that includes both sides of the narrative. It encourages understanding and communication between groups instead of exclusive ideas.

In creating a design intervention which seeks to call attention to the issue of homelessness in the public realm, a deep engagement with the practice and the topic were essential the success. As seen in previous and significant practices, engaging in the public realm can be quite challenge, especially when examining topics that go overlooked. Developing a systematic approach to creating and intervention allowed the piece to grow naturally. Starting by developing a strong base for the

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[106] John Morreall, "Philosophy of Humor," *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta, Winter 2016 (Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2016), accessed February 30, 2018, https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/win2016/entries/humor/.

project, that being #OptOutside and the way it comments on the issue of homelessness, conceptual developments of piece could be rooted in this idea. By having this foundation, the intervention was able to grow and adjust based on what needed to be changed, yet still be rooted in the social commentary the concept provides. The iterative process for the intervention was critical as well because of the unknowns which occurs working in the public domain. There is little which can be controlled in the public realm aside from my own work so the ability to execute an iteration and reflect, allowed the piece to change and adapt to different situations each time. In doing so, the piece became more clarified and rooted in the key tactics which I aimed to exemplify, each stemming from works which employed the same tactics in successful ways. Similarly, the use of an audience being in the public allowed the piece to enter into the realm of civic discourse. Aside from the presentation at the Honors Symposium, the piece was seen and engaged with by a variety of people within the community. Being placed in an area of strong significance to the homeless narrative and the values of Boulder, the environment became an integral part of the piece. Employing the tactics of transgression, irony, and dynamics enhanced the piece to engage people in various ways. In order to connect people to the narrative and ideas I am conveying in the piece, the composition needed to employ tactics which have proved successful in doing so. Each time, the use of the tactics developed to enhance the message and the goal being calling attention to the flawed homeless narrative in the way it fits into the larger scheme of Boulder's narrative. By incorporating a resolution component at the end of the intervention, the hope is that it can be recognized that practices, such as the one I conducted for this project, but even more simplified can shift the way we understand social conditions in our world. In doing so, interventions such as mine can alter the discourse which exists to more accurately reflect the nature of the problem and grow our understanding of the issue to prevent further exclusion and create resolution.

Chapter VI: Conclusions

The built environment is a stage in which all the people and places within are actors framing our larger perspectives.[107] On this stage is the power to break traditional views of these spaces and narratives which exist within communities, specifically through art. Art within our built environment breaks the prescribed and allows people to speak to issues and ideas which deviate from said prescriptions, transgressions.[108] These transgressions, whether they fall into the realm of larger public sanctioned art or in the realms of street art, guerilla art, or graffiti reach far beyond the physical. They enter a realm of social discourse which can alter our perspectives, views, and call attention to specific ideas. Artists have been doing so for years, but works such as those of Fluxus, Mierle Ukeles, and Krzysztof Wodiczko reflect practices which are dynamic and engage an audience. Through these so called "social-arts" is the potential to dramatically alter ideas by offering new perspectives in provocative, powerful, and artistic ways.[109] Within these practices and often successful projects of the past half century is the push for engagement with existing issues, honing in on their presence, develop an understanding, and present a new way to consider the spaces in which we exist, that stem from each artist's unique perspective.

The power in street art, graffiti, and guerilla art is the utilization of the perspective of the 'artist' or the common-person, being "by the people, for the people" which offers a unique framing each time.[110] This perspective combined with infinite mediums a piece can take, creates a unique viewpoint. From mural art to performance, large displays, and tagging trains, the practices and the assertions make a unique statement whether it is the utilization of scale to call attention to the piece like "United Refugee Lifejacket Project" by Ai Weiwei, interacting with people such as Mierle Ukeles in "Touch Sanitation Performance", Wodiczko with "Homeless Vehicle Project" or "Making a Salad" by Alison Knowles. These artists push the boundaries of how art can share unique views, specifically, when these artists choose to engage with social issues by engaging and interrupting public space. In doing do, artists frame the way civil discourse can be executed and brought to the attention of public. Creating engaging works of art for the public to interact with, allows people to

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[107] Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings*.
[108] Julius, *Transgressions*; Gein, "(De)Facing the Wall. The Traditions, Transactions and Transgressions of Street Art."
[109] Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings*.
[110] Visconti et al., "Street Art, Sweet Art?"

directly connect with a problem and promote discussion on the ways issues like homeless exist in communities and can be altered.

Interruptions in our lives break us free from the traditions and monotony of our lives, pushing us to see the world in a new way.[111] However fleeting, these smalls transgressions, for better or worse, hold the power to make us act or think differently, even if it is something as small as taking a few steps to the left instead of continuing on a path in a straight line[112]. Specific to the city of Boulder, acknowledging a persisting issue within our community through such interruptions can call attention to narrative that appears to have already been written. Though most might acknowledge the homeless population which exists, the way the community presents itself excludes this segment of the population, segregating them from the context.

The world is ever changing and shifting and just as the world does, narratives can be reframed to include and acknowledge those who might be left out or forgotten. By changing the narrative, acknowledging the issue, and bringing it to the forefront of discussion, communities, I believe can become stronger. I argue that by employing "socially-engaged arts" and interrogative design, a new method for creating discourse with the public in the design community can be developed. These artistic practices with Wodiczko's "Interrogative Design" can allow people to deeply engage with the issue through interruption of habituated tendencies, thought processes, and patterns. Differing from existing practices in the design world, this practice combines the use of art and design together to create a dialogue on practices in the built world. Emphasis on user development and site analysis provide an outlet to understand an issues history, develop an outlet in the present, to change the way it is dealt with in the future. This method is seen in public art, but can branch to the other types of urban art and practice as well, combining the most important practices of each: graffiti and its motivations and assertions of power, street art as transgressive, public arts engagement with the site and community understanding, guerilla arts use of platform to call attention to a piece, and interrogative design beckoning people to question their worlds and designing to communicate lived experiences so that other might not have to live through those experiences again[113]. Art can be profound, urban art can speak to the masses, and social engagement

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[111] Gein, "(De)Facing the Wall. The Traditions, Transactions and Transgressions of Street Art."

[112] Julius, *Transgressions*.

[113] Verel, *Graffiti Murals*; Riggle, "Street Art"; Julius, *Transgressions*; Cartiere and Zebracki, *The Everyday Practice of Public Art*; Harris, "Guerilla Art, Social Value and Absent Heritage Fabric"; Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings*.

can bring to light issues which persist in our communities, therefore socially engaged urban art can engage many people with issues which need reconsideration in profound ways.

In my own design intervention, I utilized interrogative design practices combined with other successful practices to create a way to speak to and about the issue of homelessness in the designed and built world. In doing do, I hoped to bring the problem to the forefront, specifically shedding light on the narrative as it exists now and how it can be changed through practices of engaging in a different way. In connecting with those who feel removed from issue and allowing them to connect with these ideas, people can develop a direct relationship with the topic and understanding its prescence in the design world through active expression. By employing methods of transgressions, short but powerful moments, I allowed people to enter in to the homeless discussion by calling attention to it in a unique and unforeseen manner, breaking from the activities normally seen at the park. In utilizing my own perspective and explorations on the topic as well, the public platform allowed for the opportunity to speak to these issues to a broad audience where normally, these ideas and conversation may have reached fewer people. In exercising this platform and power, I called attention to an issue I have come to understand as different than is generally perceived and utilized my capabilities as an artist and designer. As Wodiczko makes clear, it is the platform of artists and designers to call attention and utilize the built environment to not only ask questions themselves, but encourage others to question their environments and conditions.[114] Interrupting everyday platforms in order to question and change the world as we know it, especially when it comes to social conditions, can be done through and by the creation of art and designs which employ these methods. I intended to do so through my own project, #OptOutside, in attempt to question the homeless narrative and its framing in the larger community and subsequently reframe the way problems such as this persist. This new method of engagement in discourse employed by designers can provide a new way for understanding the world which we create, the people who exist in it, and the conversations which can be had.

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[114] Wodiczko, *Transformative Avant-Garde and Other Writings*.

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Appendix A: Timeline of Bandshell in Relation to Homelessness

In conducting site analysis, particular attention was paid to the Glen Miller Bandshell, a site of relevance to the history of homelessness in Boulder. I composed a timeline featuring major events at the site which relate to homelessness and its significance at this site.

History of The Glen Huntington Bandshell

1938 **1957** **1968** **1971-72** **1985** **1990** **1995**

Glen Huntington
Bandshell Built
_One of the few representations of the
Art Deco Movement in Boulder

landmark for the city

_Followed ideas stemming from the
City Beautiful movement earlier in the
20th century

Water Street train
tracks converted to
Canyon Boulevard
_Marked the end of train service to the
City of Boulder

in culture

Central Park Shut
Down
_Sanitation reasons force city to shut
down park

Bandshell becomes
site of STP Group

Bandshell Summer
Concerts Begin

police

Freedom Festival at
Civic Park
together of the community to save the
Bandshell from destruction
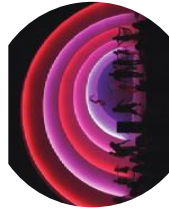
Bandshell Recognized
as Historic Landmark

Boulder approves application for

the Bandshell as a landmark

81

Appendix B: Full Text of Poems

Poetry is a significant method of conveying the homeless experience. The full text of the excerpts from the poems included in Chapter II are included here to share the full body of work the authors have written, commenting on the condition.

Homeless, Not Hopeless

We are the native of the street
Holed-up under bridges
We are necessary
We are part of your existence
Major fragment of the globe
As the day chameleon to night
You slump in the warmth of your beds
And the heat of loved ones
We also embrace the cozy
Cardboards laid on stinks
As the night inject us with cold breeze
And endurance
We sleep and dream
And have conferences with
The indigenes of the world
When its day, in bundle
We pack our belongings
And move on with our days
Standing, kneeling and bending
To beg for alms just for the day
Necessary part of your society
Translators of your dreams
Carriers of your burdens
Angels, we open gates
Of your blessings
We are the lack
That takes your lack
We are homeless, not hopeless
This makes us rife at hereafter
When death opens the gate
To the second phase

Sola Owonibi

HOMELESS

A red sun sets in ashes of clouds

While sleeping shadows rise

And the lake in Central Park fills with darkness,

The darkness that grips the dead,

The darkness that inundates the stars.

Interior shadow echoes it,

And the ghosts of great men glide

Over the grass toward their images

In bronze: grandiloquent gestures

Arrested in space and time.

They smile at the vanity of their palms

And stare fondly at me, who,

Like a lost child, am dreaming the world away

In a cold storyteller's arms.

Stephen Stepanchev

BEING HOMELESS

By Lewis H., 2009

My experience being homeless was traumatic,

yet the most meaningful times,

like being a father it allowed me to see

that one must fight, one must work.

One must stand like a rapper

battling freestyle for the crown.

Yes people It's going down.

Standing together as a force.

It's true that there was time

one never could know what about the times

when the only money we had was from selling drugs

searching my plugs

to only be robbed for every dollar

begging for extra money

to keep the gas paid.

But to try and still get your gas turned off.

Mind you it is frost bitten cold

and we also have a new born baby.

Maybe you can see

what it's like putting your clothes

in the window,

hot plates for a steamer,

Do I have experience

or am I a dreamer?

Appendix C: Preliminary Idea Mapping

In the ideation phase of this project, I examined street art pieces and the way they fit within the realm of art as advocacy and the various theories on street art. A tactic I employed to understand these connections came in the form of mapping the ideas, practices, and theories together.

Ai WeiWei: Refugee Life Jackets
Art + Activism + Artist

TEMPORALITY
(Feeling of the piece)

SENSE OF PLACE
(Attention to history)

MARKUSSEN
Design activism uses existing ideas + fabrics to create a distinctness of the places + spaces people already

HARRIS
Guerilla art engages communities through ◆■□▢◆◆□◆◆■ ◆■□◆◆ call attention to something. Often
ADVOCACY

ART AS ADVOCACY

GRAFFITI

VERTE■ ◆■■□◆◆◆■◆ ◆■ ◆□□ □◆◆■
≡◆□■ ◆□◆◆◆◆■◆◆■◆■◆ domain to create 'possession' of space and reclaim it.

HOMELESSNESS

EDUARDO COBRA
Olympic murals setting goal size as a tactic to get people to look at the art of the indigenous cultures around the world at the olympics.

JULIUS^^
"Transgressions are short-lived affairs; they do not so much seek to abolish the rule as suspend it, and for a moment only ... The transgressor reinscribes the border he violates. Taboos are constraints that must be violated and preserved. Transgression asserts limits ... The taboo is 'jolted', not terrified. Transgressions suspend taboos without suppressing them ... The experience of transgression is one that mixes dread with ecstasy"

RIGGLE
To be considered street art, the location or the street or public space must be essential to the pieces meaning.
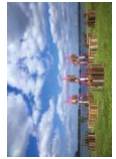
CHOCKAL
Endearment not only stems from ephemerality but also from the ◆■□◆◆■◆◆ ◆■□◆◆◆ ◆□◆◆◆◆◆ ◆□ street art as some but not all is illegal but often the illegality of the piece is core to its meaning

VISCONTI ET. AL.

STREET ART

LEGALITY

Banksy
Homeless + Street Art + Advocacy

HIRSCHMAN
"Ultimately a creative person must prioritize the audiences for which he/she is creating. The primary values that guide creativity must be those that arise from within those of peers or those of the public at large. Values from each of these sources may be called upon during the creative process, yet ◆ ■◆■◆◆ ◆□□ □■◆◆ ◆◆◆◆■ chosen over the other"

CONVERSATION B/W ARTIST + COMMUNITY

COMMUNITY
(Audience)

OBEY PROPOGANDA
Street art propoganda to support or go against world issues

BECKER
Public art is art utilizing space which is used by the public.

MILES
The space in which public art occupies, is necessary toward evoking a response of the public given its interaction with the piece in its environment

PALMER
At the heart of public art is the need for engagement with the community in order to understand what is partial to the community

BINGHAM-HALL
◆ through historical research of the ◆■◆◆ community will provide a deep understanding for the place and will allow for community support of public art.

REYES
Community issues can be addressed through socially engaged art which seeks to use art as a mechanism to deal with or promote the importance of issues.

PUBLIC ART

Joost Goudrian
Art + + Artist + Public

◆■◆◆◆◆□■ ◆□■◆◆◆■◆■◆◆◆◆◆◆
ens & Pelleman

"Field of Vision: A Garden for Others" Jenny Kendler