

RECLAIMING IDENTITY THROUGH SPACE:

Designing for the Multiracial and Multicultural

Senior Project Write Up
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ABSTRACT

The population of multiracial and multicultural individuals in the United States has steadily risen, but few public spaces have been designed to represent them or express their identities. Individuals in this group can find themselves feeling isolated from spaces because they feel like “imposters” or that they have to choose only one part of their identity to belong. How can we create public spaces that encourage people to express all parts of their multiracial or multicultural identity in a way that is inclusive, educational, and encourages cultural exchange? Through research of existing design methods and practices, this project addresses how public spaces can be created to include multiracial and multicultural individuals. I provide design methods and practices in four categories: cultural exchange; cultural education; safety and inclusion; and expression. These methods are compiled into a set of guidelines and best practices to guide designers through the creation of multiracial and multicultural spaces. These guidelines fill a gap between white and other mono-cultural spaces to create public spaces where multiracial and multicultural individuals can find belonging in. As a product created for designers, these guidelines bring the multiracial and multicultural identities into conversations and processes that they would not normally be a part of. This project reflects my own desire to see my multiracial and multicultural identity and others like me reflected in public spaces and serves as an example of why spaces like this are important and why representation matters.

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INTRODUCTION

Project Question:

How can we create public spaces that encourage people to express all parts of their multiracial or multicultural identity in a way that is inclusive, educational, and encourages cultural exchange?

Introduction:

My senior project culminated in a set of design guidelines for the inclusion of multiracial and multicultural identities in public spaces. The goal of this project is to fill the gap between the design process and the multiracial and multicultural identity.

Context:

When discussing the history of multiracial individuals in the United States, it is important to start with the court case *Loving v. Virginia*. In 1967, this landmark court case finally legalized interracial marriage in America. In the 50 years since interracial marriage bans were overturned, the number of multiracial individuals in the United States has steadily risen. According to Pew Research, it is estimated that now 6.9% of American adults can be considered multiracial (Parker). This translates to over 9 million multiracial Americans. These numbers are not representative of individuals who identify with two or more cultures such as immigrants or those who have lived or worked in another culture. So the number of Americans who are multiracial or multicultural is even greater than 9 million. Even with so many multiracial or multicultural individuals in the United States, it is difficult to find places that reflect these multiracial or multicultural identities. Multiracial or multicultural individuals growing up in the United States have a unique experience pertaining to their identity. These individuals are “living at the intersection of different identities” that can lead them to feel like racial imposters (Donnella). This racial imposter syndrome makes it difficult for these individuals to feel accepted in their full identity. The experience of each multiracial or multicultural individual is different, but most experience stressors related to their identity. Alongside discrimination and microaggressions, multiracial and multicultural individuals can feel a constant pressure to choose one part of their identity to adhere to and need community where they feel comfortable expressing both. This feeling of needing to choose only one identity translates to the way multiracial and multicultural individuals interact with public space.

In order to fully understand this project and why I am motivated in to create this material, it is necessary to understand my personal identity and background. I am multiracial myself being half Japanese and half white. Additionally, I am Yonsei which

translates to 4th generation Japanese American and means that my grandparents and great grandparents were interned by the US government during World War II. My family has assimilated to American culture in order to fit in better in the post-WWII climate and are what most people would consider to be “whitewashed.” For this reason, I understand what it feels like to feel pressured to feel isolated in my identity in public spaces and is the base of my motivation for this project. Understanding my background also contextualizes why I use both the words multiracial and multicultural in my research question as well as throughout my project. Ethnically I am half Japanese and half white, but culturally I would identify as half white and half Japanese American. I have never been able to relate or understand what it is like to be culturally Japanese, but I understand and experience what it means to be Japanese American and growing up in a country my family was previously interned in. This is why I make this distinction.

The scope of my senior project is focused on public spaces. A public space being “an area or place that is open and accessible to all peoples, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age, or socio-economic level” (UNICEF). I chose public spaces specifically because of the purpose that they serve. The primary factors of concern being accessibility for everyone and acting as a community space. So if a multiracial or multicultural individuals feels that the public space is not accessible to them and was not a community space created for them, that public space is failing to fulfill its purpose. If this is the case, public spaces can act to invalidate their identity rather than serve its purpose to the community. White public spaces are the norm. They have come to be what is expected as well as the given baseline for what a public space looks like. The profession of planning is predominantly white and male, so the public spaces they design reflect this identity. With systematic application, this norm of white public space as well as the identity of its designers becomes the dominant narrative. Although multicultural spaces do exist, they are much smaller in number and not a piece of the norm of mostly white public space with the occasional mono-cultural public space. For this reason, it is clear to see why multiracial and multicultural individuals feel isolated in public spaces where they would be forced to choose only one part of identity in order to see it reflected in the space.

Significance:

The importance of this project stems from eliminating the pressure for multiracial and multicultural individuals to adhere to only one part of their identity in public spaces. By incorporating the inclusion of the multiracial and multicultural identity into the design process, public spaces can be more inclusive of multiracial and multicultural backgrounds that allow them to express their full identity. This incorporation brings the multiracial and multicultural identity into conversations it would not normally be a part of. Additionally, creating spaces that allow those who don’t feel that they fit into that

identity, to experience cultural exchange and enjoy the inclusive and educational nature of the space, encourages people to critically examine their public spaces. Additionally, representation matters. The lack of spaces representing multiracial and multicultural identities can only be remedied by creating inclusion in spaces where people feel that they can express themselves in and feel at home. This set of recommendations adds another important piece to the design process and demonstrates to designers why elements should be considered to include multiracial and multicultural identities.

These guidelines are ultimately a tool. They are first of all a tool for designers to use to implement these principle into their designs. In this way, my project enables actual practical implementation to achieve public spaces that are inclusive of multiracial and multicultural individuals. Just as importantly, this project is a tool for community members. These guidelines can be used as a means of community empowerment. With the knowledge of the methods to achieve the inclusion of multiracial and multicultural identities, community members can advocate for the changes they want to see and present the designer and planner for their communities with methods to achieve those outcomes.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The Multiracial and Multicultural Identity

To answer my project question of “How can we create public spaces that encourage people to express all parts of their multiracial or multicultural identity in a way that is inclusive, educational, and encourages cultural exchange?”, it was important to start with the identity of multiracial and multicultural individuals. Multiracial and multicultural individuals have a unique experience because of the history of multiracial and multicultural people in the United States as well as historical racism and discrimination in this country. Although the history of multiracial people and interracial couples dates back much further, interracial marriage was only legalized in the United States in 1967. Interracial marriage bans were deep set in racism based on the belief that anyone considered “white” should never marry anyone considered “colored.” These bans were a form of institutionalized racism that acted as a “legal” form of segregation and made interracial marriage or even cohabitation a felony. In the landmark court case *Loving v. Virginia*, the U.S. Supreme Court ruled that bans on interracial marriage were unconstitutional and struck down all laws prohibiting it (History).

The landscape for multiracial individuals and interracial couples has completely changed since interracial marriage bans were overturned. With the changing of the laws to approve of (at least legally) interracial marriage, public opinion has begun to shift from only a 4% approval rating in 1958, to a 87% approval rating in 2013 according to Gallup. This data only shows opinions from those who identify as black or white, but still reflects the trend of growing approval. In the 50 years since *Loving v. Virginia*, the number of multiracial individuals in the United States has steadily risen. According to Pew Research, it is estimated that now 6.9% of American adults can be considered multiracial (Parker). This translates to over 9 million multiracial Americans. These numbers are not representative of individuals who identify with two or more cultures such as immigrants or those who have lived or worked in another culture. So the number of Americans who are multiracial or multicultural is even greater than 9 million. Even with so many multiracial or multicultural individuals in the United States, it is difficult to find places that reflect these multiracial or multicultural identities.

Multiracial or multicultural individuals growing up in the United States have a unique experience pertaining to their identity. These individuals are “living at the intersection of different identities” that can lead them to feel like racial impostors (Donnella). Racial impostor syndrome can make multiracial or multicultural individuals feel like they are inauthentic in parts of their identity because they feel that they are not enough of any of their given ethnic or cultural identities. This is often closely linked to how people perceive them and choose to interact with them based off this perception.

This racial impostor syndrome makes it difficult for these individuals to feel accepted in their full identity. The experience of each multiracial or multicultural individual is different, but most experience stressors related to their identity. A common question a multiracial or multicultural person may be asked is “What are you?” Alongside microaggressions like this and discrimination, multiracial and multicultural individuals can feel a constant pressure to choose one part of their identity to adhere to and need community where they feel comfortable expressing all of their identities (Greig). Communities and spaces where multiracial and multicultural individuals can express their full selves can be hard to find.

This feeling of needing to choose only one identity translates to the way multiracial and multicultural individuals interact with public space. When in white or monocultural spaces, multiracial or multicultural individuals will experience pressure to assimilate to one identity within the physical space. In a space that only represents one of their identities, this often means that they can feel forced choose to adhere to the identity fitting in the space. Although this does not always mean they are totally disregarding their other identity, they are not able to express their full multiracial or multicultural identity. This pressure and expectation in public spaces can lead to anxiety in interacting with the space, feelings of isolation, and generally not feeling welcomed. Public spaces where multiracial and multicultural spaces can find acceptance are important for their inclusion within a community and important in keeping them from feeling like “racial impostors.”

Public Space

To understand the field within the scope of this project, it was important to understand what a public space is and the purpose it serves as well as the cultural and social implications public space holds. Beginning with the definition of a public space from the UNESCO, “A public space refers to an area or place that is open and accessible to all peoples, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, age or socio-economic level. These are public gathering spaces such as plazas, squares and parks. Connecting spaces, such as sidewalks and streets, are also public spaces.” Public spaces serve as community spaces allowing for social and economic exchange and as an extension of the community. In order to serve this purpose, as outlined in the definition, public spaces must be accessible for everyone. Having both of these elements is necessary in order to have an effective public spaces that serves its purpose.

Historically this failure of public spaces to serve their purpose can be seen most prominently in communities of color. Even looking just briefly at the history of communities of color in the United States, the racism in housing and planning policies is blatant. Policies like redlining and racially restrictive covenants segregated people of

color into less desirable areas of the city where they have less access to opportunities. Often times, undesirable industries, highways, new developments, and the like take place in the areas communities of color have been restricted to. This further takes away resources from these communities and makes it so the neighborhood and public spaces cannot serve the community as effectively.

The planning profession as a whole is predominantly white and male. According to Census data, the total population of city and regional planners in the United States is just over 80% white alone for race and the gender split is around 60% male and 40% female. The field is certainly male dominated, but the disparity between planners who are white and those who are persons of color is enormous. Designers and planners create designs that reflect their own identities as well as what they are familiar with. This means that the overwhelming majority of planners are designing spaces that reflect their white identity. This is not a hard and fast rule, but the lack of designers who can reflect the identities of people of color is clear in the lack of this presence in public spaces. These numbers may see changes in future years as programs of urban planning see greater diversity within their programs. According to Data USA, in 2016 there was an almost perfectly even split of degrees earned in urban planning with 50% being awarded to white students and 50% being awarded to students of color. Even with this greater diversity on the rise in university urban planning departments, it is still not reflected in the occupation itself and therefore not bringing about the reflection of diverse identities in public spaces.

The majority of public spaces are designed for white people with the minority of spaces being designed for monocultural communities of color. This is a direct result of the racist history in planning and public spaces isolating communities of color from white communities as well as a product of the white dominated planning profession. Spaces adhering to only one of these identities leaves very little space for those who are multiracial or multicultural. Multicultural spaces are an even smaller minority of public spaces than monocultural public spaces, but they can be found in practice. Multicultural public spaces act to bridge cultural divides and encourage interaction between community members. According to the Project for Public Spaces, “ a 'successful' multicultural environment is one where various group's sense of comfort is combined with good physical design to create an atmosphere that can nurture many preferences” (Knapp). These spaces are less common because they directly contradict the factors working to reaffirm the dominant narrative that white public spaces are the norm. Multicultural public spaces can break down societal norms and create spaces that welcome all people and bring the community together.

Existing Design Guidelines

In order to gain an understanding of how design guidelines should be formatted, I looked at examples across the board in the realm of urban design and planning. Created at the professional level, these design guidelines reflect a comprehensive approach to the design process varying based on the scope of what they were created for. The first scale was countrywide organizations. The guidelines I used as an example were created by the American Planning Association and are entitled “Characteristics and Guidelines of Great Public Spaces.” The characteristics portion of this guide provides elements that make for great public spaces but does not provide methods or practices to achieve it. For the guidelines portion, it also does not provide methods but rather asks questions to test whether or not public spaces have characteristics or features present. This forms a set of guidelines that acts more like a checklist to prompt designers to think critically about what is present and how it contributes to the space. Since this set of guidelines does not provide actual methods to achieve design outcomes, I didn’t want to follow this format of characteristics and questions. The aspect that I tried to translate into my product through the composition was the way the guide prompts critical thinking about the space as it is and could be.

The next scale was guidelines within the scope of a city. For this scale I looked at the City of San Francisco’s “San Francisco Urban Design Guidelines” and the City of Seattle’s “Seattle Design Guidelines.” Although for different cities in different environments, the guideline documents themselves follow a very similar outline. They both begin with an introduction describing the values, purpose, and application of the guidelines to orient the reader before jumping into the guidelines themselves. The recommendations for urban design are divided into three sections centering around the ideas of site, architecture and design, and the public aspect. Each of the categories contains guidelines that are the desired outcome or product, the significance of this guideline and methods and practices to achieve them. The scale of these guidelines adheres to the city making them more specific than general guidelines, but still broad enough to be implemented across a large city. The factor from these guidelines examples I replicated in my own product was the basic outline for the guidelines themselves following the format of: the guideline, methods, and significance.

The final scope I looked at was design guidelines created by a single organization. I looked at the Gehl Institute’s “Inclusive Healthy Places” and OpenCity’s “Design for Diversity Toolkit.” Both of these frameworks were created to specifically address issues of equity and provide a tool to create more equitable outcomes, but they achieve this goal through different means. The Gehl Institute provides a framework to create inclusive healthy places following the four guiding principles of 1) Context, 2) Process, 3) Design & Program, and 4) Sustain. Within each of the guiding principles, the guidelines outline the drivers, indicators, metrics so that they can be included and considered within the design process to promote better health outcomes. This set of

guidelines is heavily focused on principle, and although I was able to work these principles into the formation for my guidelines, they do not represent the format I decided to use because they do not provide methods. These guidelines create a great tool, but do not do so in a way that I wanted to with my project. OpenCity's design guidelines follow a format very similar to the city scale design guidelines. It's introduction is much briefer presenting the same ideas of values, purpose, and application in less depth. The guidelines themselves follow the same format again as the cities of a guideline that is the desired outcome or product, the significance of this guideline, and methods and practices to achieve it. Since this toolkit was created by an organization, it has 5 main guidelines that it focuses on in order to create inclusive diverse spaces. The guidelines also include two in depth examples of effective application of the guideline as well as an example of a missed opportunity to employ the guideline. Like with the city guidelines, I chose to follow the format of the guidelines themselves and prompted by this toolkit, chose to include an in depth example demonstrating the principle. My final product most closely resembles the format of this toolkit.

Although not a scale of design guidelines, I also researched the format of the zine. Although their format has evolved over the years, zines are still based in the fact that they are a derivative of the magazine in the form of self-published booklets. Part of the history of zines is the involvement in political movements. Because they are easy to create and self-published, they could be used to spread information, educate others on an issue, teach people how to take action, and prompt people to demand change. This was a connotation I wanted to carry with the future development of my project since I want this to be a tool of empowerment for communities. Since zines have visual interest and a format that is easy to follow, they are highly accessible. In order to be an inclusive tool that can be used by any member of the community, the zine is a great fit for communicating my design guidelines.

Design Guidelines

My guidelines are composed from concepts and methods from a diversity of sources. To understand the basis for each of them, this section of the literature review is divided up to address each guideline.

WELCOME

Making visitors feel welcomed is key to getting people to come into the spaces and encouraging them to stay. It is important that visitors feel that they can come into the space regardless of their background and be accepted fully in their identity (OpenCity). Open environments that show people they are not bound to be only one thing welcomes and invited them into the space and community. Making the space feel distinctly human

and familiar creates a stronger relationship between people and the place (OpenCity, 12). Language is a key element of welcome because it can determine in a split second whether or not someone feels like they can use the space. Having multilingual signage and staff signals to visitors that the space was created to accommodate and include them (OpenCity, 12). Additionally, making the space look like it is a bit worn in and is used by others makes individuals feel welcome because this signal that others clearly must have been welcomed as well. Also a part of appearance, if the space is easy to access and does not have any design elements that could demonstrate to a passerby that someone might not want them to come into the space, people will feel that they are able to just walk in and be welcomed alongside anyone else (OpenCity, 12).

BROAD APPEAL

Broad Appeal enhances public spaces by planning them to host a variety of uses. This variety is important because people from different cultures use public spaces differently based on their experience and what is familiar to them (OpenCity, 8). In this way, people transform “the parks of their adoptive community into familiar spaces, creating an ‘autotopography’” and a deeper sense of place (Agyeman, 2). This can be achieved through creating spaces with a variety of uses, flexible uses, public furniture, and an enjoyable environment (OpenCity, 8). These methods open up spaces for more people to see the way that they use public spaces reflected in the design of the space.

UNIVERSAL DESIGN

Universal Design is “the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability” (CEUD). Universal Design acts to enable a wider range of users to be able to participate in the space. In this way, it improves the quality of life for users and better meets the needs of all members of the community (Copos). Seven principles of Universal Design were developed by the Center for Universal Design in NCSU: 1) Equitable Use, 2) Flexibility in Use, 3) Simple and Intuitive Use, 4) Perceptible Information, 5) Tolerance for Error, 6) Low Physical Effort, and 7) Size and Space for Approach and Use (CEUD). Universal Design benefits every person who uses the space by making it more accessible, inclusive, and usable.

CULTURAL EXCHANGE

Cultural Appropriation is the use of cultural elements from a culture that the user is not a part of without permission. Cultural Exchange is the mutual sharing of cultures involving give and take from both parties. We want to avoid cultural appropriation and encourage cultural exchange. To avoid cultural appropriation, it is most important to understand where something comes from and that it should not be taken as something that white

culture can absorb and claim as their own (Johnson, Biakolo). In order to create space for cultural exchange, spaces should be designed specifically to accommodate people to stop and have conversations rather than just creating places that people continuously pass through without a second thought (Ageyman, 2). An important element of facilitating this ability to stop and interact is furniture. Places where people can sit and talk or stand and not be in the way of other activities is key for allowing people to participate in cultural exchange (Copos, 202). In addition to designed elements, programming and events that bring people together can allow them to bring people together and share their cultural while experiencing another (OpenCity, 16)

SAFETY

Safety is a key element of any good public space and critical to the well being of the space and its users. Design elements to create safe public spaces are centered around ensuring that visitors know what is going on in the space at all times and being able to act in situations where they may feel unsafe. This safety can be achieved through clear sightlines throughout the public space as well as having multiple points of entry that make it easy for people to move throughout the space (OpenCity, 4). In the commonly known rules of safety by Jane Jacobs, it is critical to have “eyes on the street” and a clear demarcation between what is public and private. The eyes on the street mean there is continuous surveillance from the buildings and activities around the space making it so people are able to look out for one another. The clear demarcation between public and private characterizes what is for the community and where the line is drawn between other people’s property. Finally, making spaces that are attractive to everyone for use and social reasons means the space will see higher use. With higher use comes less fear and a greater overall feeling of safety (PPS).

PARTICIPATION

Participation is a key part part of any good planning process and critical to the representation of the voices of multiracial and multicultural communities. Further than just the level of participation, the practice of co-designing with the community allows for public spaces to be more meaningful and more effectively reflect the needs of the people who will be using them (Copos). This in effect allows the community to shape their environment alongside the designers. For this to be the most effective, it is important to gather participation early in the design process (OpenCity). The planning process needs to be inclusive of all the members of the community and should be designed by a diverse group of planners who reflect this community and understand its needs (OpenCity). Even with all of this participation and diversity on the planning side of designs for public spaces, it is only effective if designers are listening to these voices with the correct approach. In order to design public spaces to properly serve the

community, designers need to consider the community as the expert and treat their expertise accordingly (PPS). If participation is throughout the whole community and all voices listened to, the representation of the needs and expertise of multiracial and multicultural community members will be included as well.

COMMUNITY SPECIFIC DESIGN

Even with the best intentions, public spaces not specifically designed to suit a community will serve them much less effectively than one that is. Designers need to learn what the needs of the community are so that they can create designs to serve those needs through public space (Copos). Without this factor, community members will not feel that the space was designed for them. On top of reflecting the community's needs in the space, it is important to reflect the community's character. This is critical for community members to be able to themselves reflected in the public space, but also ensuring that the space fits in as a part of the community and does not alienate people by not appearing to be for them (Copos). In order to bring about a sense of community ownership, designers should employ placemaking techniques. In allowing this ownership and collaborative efforts from the ground up, designers can empower the community and create spaces that they feel truly belong to them (equity and inclusion).

IDENTITY OF SPACE

Public spaces should act as a reflection of the communities that they are a part of. This can be achieved through reflecting the culture in design elements and programming to encourage cultural exchange (Copos, 202). By reflecting the identity of the community, designers are affirming that this identity is valid and should be celebrated. This should be done through design elements alongside traditions. Elements to celebrate culture through design can include "symbols, color, music, food, and play" (OpenCity). Incorporating these cultural elements allow them to outlast the people that come and go in the community and transmit the history and culture for communities in the future. Finally, designers can employ tactics to make the public spaces similar to what most people would consider to be home to create a sense of familiarity and cultural identity (Agyeman, 2)

EDUCATIONAL SIGNAGE

Educational signage can act as a tool to allow for transmission of the culture and history of a space. Representing the culture in a way that teaches the user about the culture allows them to learn how they can interact with the culture (Delhi). In a similar way celebrating the history of a neighborhood can inform visitors of the culture this place holds as well as create a sense of place and pride in the community (NRPA). In addition to celebrating this history, it is important to acknowledge the ownership of the land as

most lands were stolen from native groups. Finally demonstrating the pride in local culture demonstrates to visitors why the space is so significant and highlights the cultural identity of the community.

EXPRESSION

Expression is a key factor that allows for people to fully come into their identity in public spaces. This can first be achieved by elements that are already expression themselves such as art, music, and cultural celebrations (Nandagopal). Art as an element all on its own makes a statement that demands it be considered. The use of art in public spaces can spark conversation about its message and send a message about the culture of the community (Smythe). These elements act as points of connection for others and encourage them to express themselves through the same or new means. Displays that celebrate culture and community promote “place attachment, community awareness... foster face-to-face interaction, and encourage collaboration among community members” (Ferreira, 2). Allowing community members to “leave their mark” through a tool that allows them to express themselves creates a sense of ownership as well as individuality (Hu, 109).

METHODOLOGY

In order to compose a set of design guidelines, I pulled together existing information and practices to create a tool for the inclusion of multiracial and multicultural individuals. First, I conducted a literature review collecting information on multiracial and multicultural individuals and public spaces as well as compiling pre-existing design methods. The second part of my methodology was compiling the concepts and methods gathered from the literature review and synthesizing them into the composition of a set of design guidelines. Finally, I set up the design guidelines to be ready to be converted into a zine and performed the preliminary planning for this transition.

1) Literature Review

In order to effectively inform my design guidelines, I began with conducting research for my literature review. The first portion of my research centered around the experience of multiracial and multicultural individuals in the United States. In order to fully understand the experience, I began with researching the history of multiracial and multicultural individuals and interracial couples. The history of interracial marriage in the US demonstrates the roots of the struggle multiracial and multicultural people face. One of the specific struggles I researched was what is referred to as the “racial impostor syndrome.” This encapsulates the idea that multiracial and multicultural individuals feel pressure to choose one of their identities and feel that they cannot express their full selves. Finally, this research supports the evidence that multiracial and multicultural individuals feel pressure in public spaces to choose only one identity.

The second part of my literature review was researching public spaces. The first thing I researched was what a public space is and what its purpose is in the community. With this understanding, I dove into research of spaces that were not effective in fulfilling this purpose in serving multiracial and multicultural individuals. This issue stems largely from prevalence of white public spaces with the occasional monocultural spaces. In researching these spaces as well as multicultural spaces, I was able to understand how differently these spaces operate and serve their communities. Research also revealed the underlying issue that the planning profession is predominantly white. Through collecting the history of planning as well as the current state of the profession, this research qualifies how public spaces have come to look the way they are and the root issue behind them.

The third piece of my research was looking into what design guideline tools that already exist look like. In order to get the best idea of what the range of guideline documents could look like, I researched a different sizes of organizations or institutions putting our material as well as material addressing different aspects of the design for

public spaces. Starting with the largest scale, I began with the American Planning Association's "Characteristics and Guidelines of Great Public Spaces." Next I moved onto the smaller scale of the city level looking at the city design guideline for the City of San Francisco as well as the City of Seattle. Continuing to get smaller, I looked at guides made by a single organization such as the Gehl Institute's "Inclusive Healthy Places" and OpenCity's "Design for Diversity Toolkit" among others of a similar scope. Finally at the smallest level, I looked at designed guidelines also by a single organization but in a scale closer to an infographic such as Seattle's Equity & Environment Initiative's "Principles of Public Space for Communities of Colors." Through researching all of these different forms of guidelines, I was able to narrow down the scope of what I wanted my guidelines to look like as well as synthesize methods for guidelines to create a format that would work best for my project.

The final piece of my literature review was researching in my four categories: cultural exchange, cultural education, safety and inclusion, and expression. I distilled these categories from themes I saw emerging in my early research that were directly relevant to the inclusion of multiracial and multicultural individuals. I focused on these categories in researching the concepts as they relate to multiracial and multicultural individuals as well as communities of color in general. In the same categories, I looked for design methods relevant to achieving the goal of each category. I especially tried to pull information and concepts from organizations working to achieve similar goals to that of my project such as Project for Public Spaces and OpenCity.

2) Guideline Composition

With all of the research I had gathered for my literature review, I synthesized the information into the composition of the design guidelines.

The composition of the guidelines followed the format:

- 1) Design Guideline
- 2) Application and Practices
- 3) How Does This Include Multiracial and Multicultural Individuals?
- 4) Real World Example

To begin with, I formed the guidelines, or desired outcomes, from themes present throughout the different sources I found related to each subject. In total, I narrowed the research down to 10 main guidelines I believed would work cohesively to achieve success in the four categories of: cultural exchange, cultural education, safety and inclusion, and expression. Once settled on the guideline, I compiled methods and practices that could be used to achieve that particular desired outcome. With the methods and practices completed, I frame the outcome with the inclusion of multiracial and multicultural individuals in mind. This is the piece that makes these guidelines different from the examples I found or other design guidelines in practice, because it

specifically highlights how this excellent design outcome can be achieved, but also include a traditionally isolated group. Finally, through my research, I include a real world example to ground the guideline in reality and give the reader an application they can see in action.

3) Zine Preparation

The final step of my project was to prepare the composition for a future step, a zine. The composition itself is a completed work on its own, but to make it more accessible and user-friendly, my post-grad project is to complete the conversion of my work into a zine. I began with deciding the format for translating my project outside of a formal text document. I researched the historical use of zines as well as how to make them and settled on this format due to its highly accessible nature and historical use as a tool of empowerment. In the scope of my senior project, the preparation of my composition for the zine was selecting an order that had a logical flow and told a story of how inclusion of multiracial and multicultural identities can be built up through application of these methods.

PRODUCT

Design Guidelines for the Inclusion of Multiracial and Multicultural Identities

Guide: Welcome

Foster public spaces with:

- Welcome for visitors regardless of their background or identity
- Open environments that encourage people to come as they are
- An appearance of use of space and human-scale, familiar elements to make visitors feel comfortable
- Signage, staff, and communication in visitors' native languages
- Accessible spaces with no barrier to entry where visitors could just walk in

By creating welcoming spaces with the inclusion of all people in mind, it signals to visitors that community members will be welcomed to the space as they are. By inviting everyone, multiracial and multicultural individuals are invited just the same and know that they will be welcomed in the full expression of their multiracial and multicultural identity.

- Example:
 - Parkdale Library, Toronto
 - The Parkdale Library took note of the diverse community using their space and developed the space to meet the needs of their users. In the setting of the library, this largely takes the place of language. The library worked to be able to welcome more community members through multilingual staff, signage and services in different languages, as well as books in different languages. Community members are welcomed to come experience the library and see their culture reflected in it.

Guide: Broad Appeal

Context: People from different cultures use public spaces differently based on their experience and what is familiar to them. This brings about a kind of cultural placemaking that shapes the character of the space and strengthens the connection between the community and their public space.

Broad Appeal can be achieved through:

- A variety of uses and activities that attract and engage a diversity of needs and interests
- Flexible uses that can accommodate a variety of programming and uses for the community

- Seating, especially movable, that allows a diversity of ability and groups to use the space
- Elements that everyone wants and benefit from that create a more comfortable climate
- Incorporation of cultural expectations and desires for public spaces

The more uses and cultures that a public space is designed to accommodate, the more people that it is able to include. For multiracial and multicultural individuals, this means that they are more likely to see the needs of one or more aspects of their cultural expectations for use reflected in the space. In this way, multiracial and multicultural individuals can experience inclusion by experiencing their needs and the needs of more than one community reflected in public space.

- Example:
 - Superkilen Park, Copenhagen
 - Superkilen Park was designed with contributions from community members that represented their country of origin. The diverse collection of elements from many different cultures present in the community encourages community members to engage with them. Paired with an appealing landscape, playground, and seating area, this park has elements to offer to every community member.

Guide: Universal Design

What is universal design?

Universal Design is the design and composition of an environment so that it can be accessed, understood and used to the greatest extent possible by all people regardless of their age, size, ability or disability (CEUD)

Spaces created with Universal Design should include:

- Usable and appealing design to all people and levels of ability
- Choice of use that allows users to follow personal preferences
- Methods of use and information that are easy to understand
- Minimal hazards and protection from error
- Uses requiring minimal physical effort or fatigue and accessible for all body types and abilities

Public spaces with Universal Design send the message that the space was created for everyone and can be used by anyone. If everyone can use the space, then multiracial and multicultural individuals are included as much as anyone else. By creating spaces to equally serve all users, multiracial and multicultural user can feel served to the same degree as other users in this specific aspect.

- Example:
 - 9/11 Memorial, New York City

- The memorial features full accessibility to all parts of the memorial regardless of ability, age, or size. The design of bronze plates with the names of the victims with space underneath the parapet to creates the same level of visibility from sitting position and standing position. The space was designed with the specific intention of creating the same, or comprable, experience for all visitors who enter the space.

Guide: Cultural Exchange

What is the difference between cultural appropriation and cultural exchange?

Cultural Appropriation is the use of cultural elements from a culture that the user is not a part of without permission.

Cultural Exchange is the mutual sharing of cultures involving give and take from both parties.

To avoid Cultural Appropriation:

- Don't make what is not white "different"
- Don't update spaces for white comfort
- Know and scrutinize the origins and ensure that the history is not being erased

To create Cultural Exchange:

- Design for meaningful interactions rather than the greatest number of people crossing paths
- Create opportunities for interaction through design and programming
- Implement furniture that allows people to sit together and connect as a group
- Create designs that cultivate patterns where visitors can interact or participate in a shared experience

Designing to create opportunities for cultural exchange creates spaces that are open and social. Focusing on exchange and avoiding appropriation signals to multiracial and multicultural individuals that they are invited to participate in a mutual sharing of cultures to connect with the space and community. In this way, the exchanges can be a space where multiracial and multicultural individuals can express their full identity and be met with acceptance.

- Example:
 - Scadding Court Community Centre, Toronto
 - Scadding Court Community Centre is an open community space with community tables and movable seating. Food vendors from different cultures draw in a diversity of visitors who can share in a familiar or new meal. In addition, the space facilitates events encouraging interaction such as farmers markets, community dinners and festivals, as well as events to create space for cultural dialogue

Guide: Safety

Create safety through designs that:

- Utilize clear sightlines and good lighting to create high visibility within space so visitors can see what is happening
- Multiple points of entry connected to the surrounding community that make it easy to enter and exit the space
- “Eyes on the street” from active use in the building and continuous activity on the street or space
- Separation between what is public and private
- Combat fear by making spaces that are attractive to everyone with flexible uses and opportunity for sociality

If a public space is safe for everyone, multiracial and multicultural individuals can feel safe in that space. If a public space is not safe for any one group or community, multiracial and multicultural individuals won't feel full safety because a piece of their identity is no longer safe. Creating spaces that are safe for everyone makes multiracial and multicultural individuals feel safe and included in public spaces.

- Example:
 - Plaza Hidalgo, Mexico City
 - Plaza Hidalgo facilitates safety in its design through access from all sides of the plaza and a pedestrian friendly environment with clear sight lines. The space allows for flexibility of use and the plaza hosts a popular market on the weekends and is filled with activities on weekdays. These constant events and activities create “eyes on the street” that keeps the plaza safe.

Guide: Participation

Facilitate Participation through:

- Co-designing alongside the community incorporating their feedback and expectations in order to create meaningful spaces
- Gathering participation early in the design process to create collaborative community action
- Assembling a team of culturally diverse designers and planners to reflect the diverse group the space aims to attract
- Representing the interests of the entire community through an inclusive planning process
- Treating the community as the expert on their own needs and potential development opportunities

By incorporating the voices and desires of everyone in the community, you are including the perspective of multiracial and multicultural individuals. If their community is already

a place they can find belonging, designing alongside this community will extend that belonging to multiracial and multicultural individuals.

- Example:
 - City Repair Project, Portland
 - The City Repair Project is a community initiative to transform the streets of Portland to be safer and more human scale. After much debate, the community was entrusted with taking ownership to create community gathering spaces in community intersections. This project encourages residents to activate their spaces and fight for changes to improve their neighborhoods.

Guide: Community Specific Design

Design for the community should:

- Mirror the needs of the community in the features and design of spaces
- Recognize the local character and culture of the community and reflect it in the space
- Incorporate placemaking through empowering citizens to bring about a sense of shared community ownership
- Create spaces that connect as a cohesive piece of the community and its style and layout

Ensuring that the design for a public space effectively serves the community it was created for, it will work to serve multiracial and multicultural individuals in the same way. If a multiracial or multicultural person sees a space that excludes a part of their community or does not work to serve them, they can be led to feel that the same will be true for them.

- Example:
 - Mission Dolores Park, San Francisco
 - Mission Dolores Park is public space used by a diverse range of people from the community. It sits between the Mission and Castro district as works to specifically serve both of these diverse communities and provide them with a space where they can gather and participate in the many activities the park has to offer. It is surrounded by a high density of transportation lines meaning that it is a highly accessible public space.

Guide: Identity of Space

Public space should include:

- Expression of culture and identity to encourage cultural exchange
- Affirmation of the culture and identity of the community

- Incorporation of non-living cultural elements and living cultural traditions and practices
- Celebrate culture through design elements like symbols, language, music, food, and play
- Transmit heritage through space for future generations
- Design spaces that resemble home

Creating spaces that reflect the culture and identity of its users encourages freedom of expression. Creating this space to celebrate and express identity makes space for multiracial and multicultural individuals to express their identities in a similar manner.

- Example:
 - Hing Hay Park, Seattle
 - Hing Hay Park is located in the heart of the Chinatown International District and acts as a reflection of the pan Asian culture of the neighborhood. The park hosts a historical pavilion and in the new development includes an artistic gate resembling origami, terraced seating inspired by rice paddies, and cultural artistic elements present in the stairs and seating. The space often hosts cultural events relevant to the range of cultures found in the community.

Guide: Educational Signage

Use signage to:

- Provide tools for individuals to participate and interact with the culture
- Celebrate the history of the community and neighborhood
- Acknowledge the history and historical ownership of the land
- Establish and demonstrate pride in the local culture and location

By providing everyone with the tools to learn, designers can remove expectations of previous knowledge. In this way, multiracial and multicultural individuals can be free of the pressure to educate others and can interact with the culture of their own accord.

- Example:
 - Japantown, San Francisco
 - Educational sign posts teaching Japanese words in the same walkway with informative signage on the history of San Francisco's Japantown. These signposts act as an educational tool that invites an exchange of culture and invites participation.

Guide: Expression

Public spaces should:

- Facilitate elements such as art, music, and cultural celebrations that allow the community to connect to the space and other community members

- Implement public displays and art that celebrate culture and community
- Design interactive displays that allow each individual to “leave their mark” of self-expression through a contribution to a community-created display
- Allow art or displays to make a statement that prompts visitors to actively engage in the message it sends or start a conversation

Expression encourages further expression. Creating elements that express culture or elements that allow people to actively participate in expressing themselves, encourages multiracial and multicultural individuals to be able to express themselves. Opportunity of diverse expression demonstrates that multiracial and multicultural individuals can express their full identity.

- Example
 - Wishboard Installation
 - Wishboard was an interactive art project that encourages users to interact with the display in anonymous self-expression. The display creates a neutral ground where visitors can express their expectations for the future and read and send messages to prompt discussion. Through prompting personal expression, this display encourages gathering and socialization that promotes community belonging. The responses from individuals mirrored their culture and enabled further expression outside of the display.

IMPLICATIONS

This primary goal and motivation for this project embodies the idea that “Representation Matters.” Although this project is a small-scale project with a specific scope of public spaces, it brings the multiracial and multicultural identity into conversations it would not normally be a part of. By no means is this project the end all be all of how inclusion of multiracial and multicultural individuals can be included in public spaces, but it offers up the perspective and demonstrates a small set of methods for inclusion of this identity in the realm of public space.

As the project currently stands, it is the completed guideline composition. This was the goal I set out to create with my project, but I would like to continue to move forward with it to make it a more accessible and usable product. For this reason, I am going to compile my guideline composition into the form of a zine. This does not change the project itself or the guideline composition, but rather presents it in a different form. This project should be a tool for progress and empowerment and continuing with the project into the form of a zine allows for this kind of change.

NEXT STEPS

The biggest step forward is taking my finished guidelines and turning them into a zine. With the order and overall formatting of the guideline composition completed, the rest of the zine is design work. The zine will come together with the composition in a easy to navigate and visually pleasing design flow as well as illustrated examples demonstrating each of the design guidelines. The last step of the zine process will be printing and binding physical copies of the zine as well as preparing a digital copy. With these I can begin distributing them to planners and designers as well as distributing them as a tool of empowerment to community members.

The next certain step is presenting my work to actual planners and designers. I was graciously invited by CEP alumnus, Julio Diaz, to present my work to the City of Federal Way’s Parks Planning Commision. We do not yet have a date set for the presentation, but dependent on the final completion of the zine and openings on the committee agenda, I hope to present to the committee this September or October.

ANALYSIS OF RESULTS

In this project, I produced a set of guidelines outlining a concise number of methods to achieve the inclusion of multiracial and multicultural individuals. In the grand scheme of all the ways public spaces can include multiracial and multicultural individuals, this is only a small part. The gap itself between the design process and the inclusion of the multiracial and multicultural identity is very real. This project reflects the need for this inclusion that is not matched by the source material focusing or considering this identity in particular. It is not that people do not care or do not want this inclusion, but they need the methods and tools to feel that they can work toward it as well. Multicultural spaces are still an anomaly, but tools like this can be an effective ways to make them a normal part of our public spaces.

Very little of my guidelines are ideas that are totally new or have never been heard before. The majority of practices already exist and are present in the design community, but are not framed in the way of the inclusion of multiracial and multicultural individuals. Any practices that are “new” are derived from research and information already established. So again, although the methods from my literature review are synthesized, they are already present in our knowledge as designers. The key factor for taking these methods and making them an effective practice for including multiracial and multicultural individuals, is framing them in how they can be used in the unique case of directly combatting the isolation and racial imposter syndrome multiracial and multicultural individuals feel in public spaces. Although the hard part is to find tactics that directly work against this isolation and bring about inclusion, once framed correctly, their effectiveness and purpose is clear.

Although these practices are directly focused on the inclusion of multiracial and multicultural individuals, they can benefit any community. The goal of all the design sources I synthesized in my literature review were focused on creating better public spaces for the community, so using these as my basis means this goal of creating better public spaces is still present in the guidelines I have compiled. Additionally, the inclusion of multiracial and multicultural individuals in public space means that more community members feel included and can find belonging in these public spaces. These guidelines benefit the multiracial and multicultural individuals greatly in their public spaces, but benefits the entire community by making more accessible and inclusive spaces for everyone.

Through this project, it has also become clear that inclusion is for everyone. This may sound obvious, but if a public space design is excluding any person or group, it is not truly inclusive. This is especially important in considering whether or not multiracial and multicultural individuals are part of this inclusion. If a public space excludes any group, especially a group that is a part of the multiracial or multicultural individuals

identity, multiracial and multicultural individuals will see that there is not acceptance for the whole spectrum of identities. In this way, it will demonstrate to them that there is still an “other” that the space will not accept. Multiracial and multicultural individuals fall into this category, they often have to check a box that says so, and this alienation of the “other” in public space will alienate them. In order to make multiracial and multicultural individuals feel that they can express their full identity, the public space needs to be accepting and inclusive of all identities.

Finally, this project functions as a tool, and a much needed one at that. People want this kind of inclusion and often are not directly trying to isolate multiracial and multicultural individuals, but the resources are not out there to inform them of how to achieve this inclusion. This project is a starting point as a tool to demonstrate what methods and practices can be employed to create spaces where multiracial and multicultural individuals can find belonging. Outside of being a tool for designers as well as community empowerment, this tool reveals an underlying issue in our public spaces that is the basis of why we need specific methods and consideration for the inclusion of multiracial and multicultural individuals. So regardless of how it is received or who reads it, this project can hopefully act as a tool to prompt people to critically examine their public spaces. Through its message and methods for inclusion, these guidelines can hopefully clue readers into the ways that their space are or are not inclusive and encourage them to fight for more inclusive public spaces in the future.

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