



**RED MOUNTAIN
COLLECTIVE**

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FOUNDATION FELLOWSHIP
PROPOSAL

MARCH 2015

Foreward //

The following proposal for Red Mountain Collective was developed as an initiative of Come Together Birmingham, a project with the mission of creating shared experiences and open dialogue for Birmingham, Alabama community members to achieve healing and reconciliation from segregation and Jim Crow.

DECEMBER 1, 2014

Yeah.

“DO YOU HAVE ANY BLACK FRIENDS?”

Six pairs of eyes were fixed on me, waiting for a response.

I felt the blood rush to my face. A wave of shame washed over me.

“No. Not that I’m close to,” I replied.

“That’s what you’ll tell people. You are a white girl from the South. Because of the environment you grew up in, you don’t have any black friends. You don’t think this is right. You want it to change. That is why you are doing this.”

My mind was racing. The words were blunt, but sounded so clear and obvious. This was the first time I had heard anything like this spoken out loud. It was all true.

Who am I?

What in the hell do I know?

What gives me the right to speak to something like this?

Who would listen to anything I have to say anyway?

The questions that had been buzzing around in my head were momentarily quieted.

My thesis advisor looked steadily at me, waiting to ensure that her words had sunk in. I nodded my head.

“Yeah.”

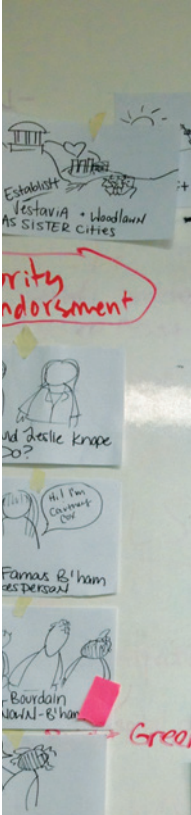
COMMENT LIKES SHARE

“We’re still only a couple generations removed from segregation and Jim Crow. There is a lot of healing yet to do, and that reconciliation is some of the most important work my generation is undertaking.”

*- Brooke Hatfield,
The Bitter Southerner*



Left Image // Personal blog post on ComeTogetherBham.com





Designing with Sustainability in Mind

The concept for establishing a social justice art and design residency was born out of the desire to create a sustainable solution designed to support a limitless amount of social interventions. After completing a brainstorming session where I generated 100 possible interventions to bring community members together, I realized that nearly all of them were one-off projects. In order to create real change, I felt that the solution had to provide a steady stream of interventions and allow for creativity in addressing a wide range of issues.

What Does Reconciliation Look Like?

This is a question that has followed me throughout this year. It has proven to be a difficult question to answer. I looked to others to help inform my response. What I discovered, was that even those who are working within the reconciliation space are unsure of what this means and exactly what they're working towards. When speaking with community members, I asked how they felt reconciliation could be achieved. While some answered with

what could be considered the politically correct answer: "increased diversity", I personally preferred the more refreshingly honest answer of: "all the old people have to die".

This year has been a time of pushing myself outside of my comfort zone. It has been a transition from living in a predominately white community in the Deep South to living in the predominately black neighborhoods of Harlem and Flatbush. It has been a time to reflect on difficult, and sometimes painful, questions that have no clear cut answers. It has been a time of waking up to my privilege. The surreal nature of these reflections and transitions have been amplified by the increasingly tense atmosphere surrounding the police violence against people of color. Being swept up in protests of people chanting "We already fought and died for this", living one neighborhood down from where two police officers were shot and killed in an act of retribution, and waking up each morning to read the latest headline of how yet another young man of color has had his life cut short because of senseless police brutality— these are all things that have deeply impacted not only how this thesis project has been framed, but also my outlook on America and the place I call home.

The conclusion I have come to when considering this question of: “What does reconciliation look like?” is that there is no right answer. It is a personal question, and has to come from within. The trick is that you must know your answer, and to drive change you must clearly and compellingly articulate that vision outwards.

After a year of reflection, this is mine: Reconciliation looks like having neighbors that do not look like you. It looks like going to work with coworkers that do not look like you. It looks like worshipping with those that do not look like you. It looks like attending school with classmates that do not look like you. It looks like sharing meals, or perhaps a beer, with friends that do not look like you.

Reconciliation looks like a thriving Birmingham and robust downtown life. It looks like equal education opportunities, and

schools that are no longer “white schools” and “black schools”— simply suburb schools and city schools that are fully integrated. It looks like decreased crime rates— removing ourselves from the “top 20 most dangerous cities” list. It looks like increased access to jobs, as well as the creation of new jobs. It looks like the breaking down of the many fragmented municipalities that currently separate us and the establishment of one large Birmingham municipality.

Bringing about healing and reconciliation from centuries of violence and oppression is a wicked problem. There is no easy answer and no silver bullet. Many different issues must be tackled, and perhaps most of all, time must be allowed to help heal. But there must be intention and there must be open dialogue. These issues cannot be swept under the rug any longer. //

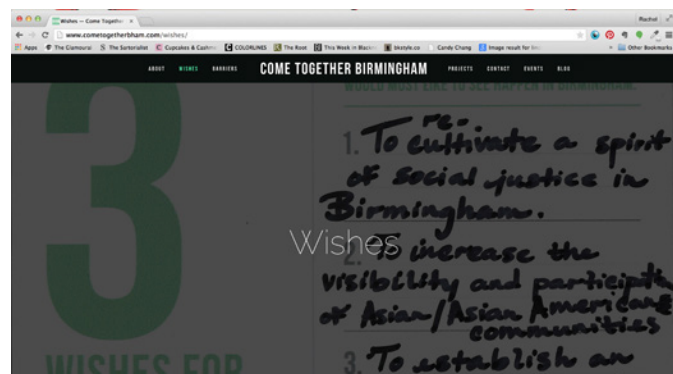
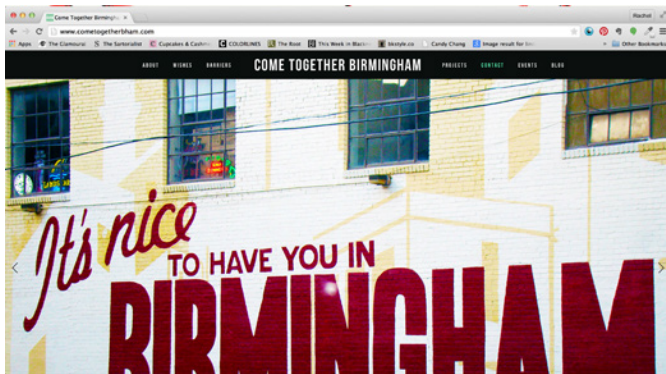
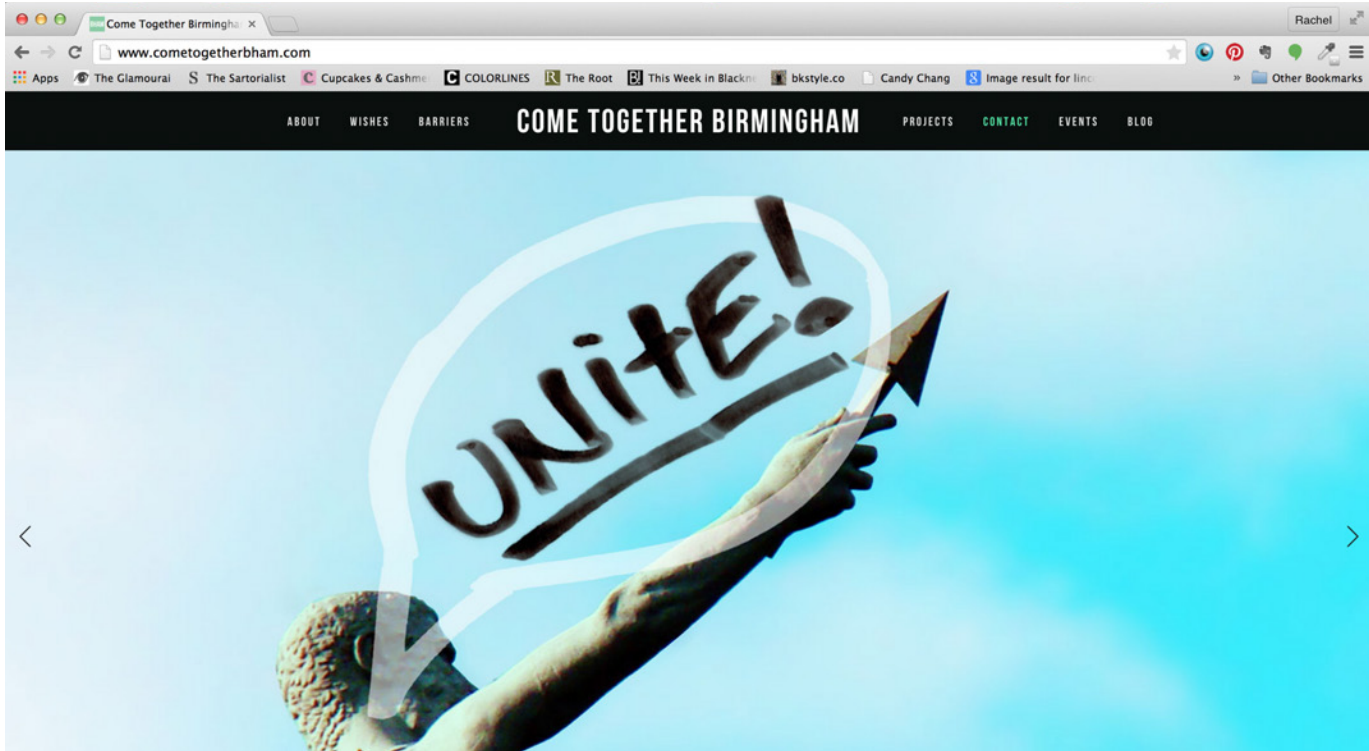


COMETOGETHERBHAM.COM

Come Together Birmingham is a project that invites Birmingham neighbors to join in the discussion of race relations here in our city. It is a safe space to share stories about growing up and living in Birmingham, (or about moving here just last week). It's a place to share your deepest hopes and dreams for our city, and a platform to ask how we can continue to improve it.

Initially started as a thesis project by Birmingham native, Rachel Dixon, this site

blends personal stories with the voices of the community-- past and present. It is also part of an initiative to develop an Art + Design Residency, which has the vision to catalyze Birmingham as a hub for diversity and creativity in the South. The goal of this residency is to support local and international artists and designers with housing, studio space and a network to create community projects. Updates on the progress of its development will also be posted on this website.



Advisors and Community Member Interviews



Despina Papadopoulos,
SVA Thesis Advisor



Hannah du Plessis,
SVA



Marc Rettig,
SVA



Karen Proctor,
SVA



Terry Beckham,
Birmingham Museum of Art



Sharon Duckworth,
AIGA Birmingham



Tammi Sharpe,
B'ham Civil Rights Institute



A. Michelle Craig,
B'ham Civil Rights Institute



Sam Pugh,
B'ham Civil Rights Institute



T. Marie King,
Community Activist



Dr. Bala Baptiste,
Miles College



Lillis Taylor,
Bib & Tucker Sew-Op

Organizational Partners



Operational Partners



Katelyn Hancock,
Community Engagement

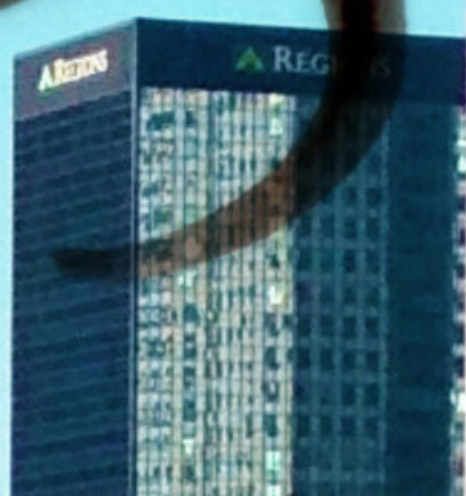


PJ Cowan,
Development + Partnerships



Brandy Bajalia,
Resident Recruitment

Better
than



RED MOUNTAIN COLLECTIVE

is a social justice art and design residency. Its vision is to establish Birmingham, Alabama as a hub for diversity and creativity in the South. In service of this goal, the residency is dedicated to improving race relations, and to breaking down its long held social and economic barriers.

DESCRIBE HOW YOUR PROJECT ADDRESSES AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOUNDATION'S TWO FOCUS AREAS: INEQUALITY

“Birmingham is probably the most thoroughly segregated city in the United States.” Although much has changed and great progress has been made in the fifty years since Martin Luther King, Jr. wrote these words from inside Birmingham Jail, there is still much work left to do. Despite the advances that have been made, my hometown of Birmingham remains the most residentially segregated city in the state of Alabama and the 26th most segregated in the country. White flight of the 1960s saw the majority of the white population fleeing from their Birmingham city neighborhoods over the geographical barrier of Red Mountain. They began developing new, all white, municipalities to avoid the federally mandated integration of schools.

Today, not much has changed. “Over the Mountain” is a common phrase used to describe those living in the middle to upper income suburbs just outside of the Birmingham city limits. The economic disparities between the majority white population living “Over the Mountain” and the majority black population, still living within the city limits, is immense. According to the most recent Census data, people living below the poverty level in Birmingham city sits at 30.2 percent, while the

average of the four municipalities that form the “Over the Mountain” communities is only 6.6 percent.

The inequity of our education systems is yet another sadly, well known fact. In 2013, Vestavia Hills High School, an “Over the Mountain” school, boasted a 98 percent graduation rate, the highest in the state. By contrast, in that same year, the Birmingham city schools reported a 66 percent graduation rate. The continually poor performance of the city schools is one of the greatest deterrents for white residents considering moving back into the city.

These economic and educational inequalities create drastic, often insurmountable barriers. Roadblocks exist even among diverse community members of the same socioeconomic backgrounds, partially due to limited social capital. Though segregation does perpetuate social stigmas, and racism is still an ongoing issue, intentional discrimination is not always the cause for the lack of diversity. Birmingham’s status quo of separation acts as a reinforcing feedback loop by maintaining a culture of exclusion that is passed down from generation to generation.





Inclusion is often difficult when one's existing network does not encompass those who are different from them. Knowing how to take those first steps outside of existing networks and into entirely new ones can be both intimidating and difficult. Communication and interaction with community members of diverse races and backgrounds is the first step to engendering empathy, and to breaking down centuries old barriers. For it is only then that we can begin to work together to address the deep rooted inequalities that exist within our city.

Red Mountain Collective seeks to bridge this gap by harnessing the transcendent power of art and design to challenge and overcome Birmingham's systemic inequalities. The residency will be deeply embedded within the community, and will actively encourage community involvement and participation. Artists and designers will focus on engaging racially and socioeconomically diverse residents to create shared understanding and goals for a more inclusive future. This will be achieved through creative social interventions, planned and implemented by the artists and designers, that will employ open dialogue and community organizing activities.

Despite its brutal injustices, Martin Luther King, Jr. also held out hope for Birmingham: "I like to believe that Birmingham will one day become a model in Southern race relations. I like to believe that the negative extremes of Birmingham's past will resolve into the positive and utopian extreme of her future; that the sins of a dark yesterday will be redeemed in the achievements of a bright tomorrow. I have this hope because, once on a summer day, a dream came true. The city of Birmingham discovered a conscience."

DOES THE PROJECT USE AT LEAST ONE OF THE FOUNDATION'S FOUR APPROACHES: ARTS AND CULTURE, CONSTITUENCY BUILDING, DISRUPTIVE IDEAS, RELIGIOUS TRADITIONS AND CONTEMPLATIVE PRACTICES? (PRIMARY AND SECONDARY)

Arts and Culture // Red Mountain Collective will use art and design as the lens through which to build a sense of community and interconnectedness in Birmingham. As stated by Judith Marcuse, a pioneer in the field of art for social change, "Art and its values, the sheer experience of it, can open doors to a magical, transformative energy—energy which is profoundly potent, clarifying and affirming for individuals and community." Similarly, the Collective believes that art has the power to free people from the restrictions of convention and empowers them to imagine how the otherwise impossible might be made possible. It gives people a nonviolent platform to challenge the status quo and asks audiences to see things not as they are, but as they could be.

While artists are masters of compelling audiences to view the world in a whole new light, designers are experts at laying out and executing the plans to achieve this new world order. As suggested by Ivan Chermayeff, "Design is directed toward human beings. To design is to solve human problems by identifying them and executing the best solution." To this point, designers are trained to flourish under constraints. Equally important is the designer's role to make the unclear clear. This is an essential skill when trying to bring clarity to large systemic issues that are often clouded with ambiguity. As a result, joining artists and designers together in collaboration creates a powerfully dynamic team, one that Red Mountain Collective believes can hold the power to shift paradigms and ignite positive social change.



Right Photo // Participants from the second of two *Come Together Birmingham: Co-Creation Workshops* held in early March 2015. This workshop was held at Bib & Tucker Sew-Op in the Woodlawn neighborhood of Birmingham, Alabama. There was a total of 10 community members that participated in the workshop session pictured.

Constituency Building // Red Mountain Collective's primary purpose is to improve race relations and break down long held social and economic barriers. To achieve this goal, the Collective strives to build social capital, and to forge a sense of community and interconnectedness citywide. Birmingham community members of every race, religion and socioeconomic background will be called upon to come together for the common goal of creating a better, more inclusive Birmingham. Through strengthening community ties across the many different stakeholders, a collective understanding may be formed in order to redefine city goals and build new grassroots strategies to actualize these co-created goals.

Emphasis will be placed on ensuring that all voices are heard, particularly those that have been repeatedly marginalized and ignored. As I learned from running community co-creation workshops with a diverse set of community members, making certain everyone feels welcome at the table is, in many ways, the most important step to building trust and a sense of community. The Collective will pay special attention to crafting invitations tailored to make all community members feel welcome and needed. It will also strive to break down the professional and social silos (as one community member referred to as "bubbles within bubbles") that so often keep residents bound to the status quo of separation.



FOR MEMBERS: Carol, Jacqueline, Anne,
Abelton, June, Rhonda

1. HOW TO USE THESE NOTES: Use as much space as you need to record
initial, educational, occupational, 1980 & 2000

2. MEMBER WITH AN UNUSUAL NAME:
Equal rights, not pertinent to all pages
1980

3. HOW MANY THE NUMBER OF MEMBERS: In words, followed by your name and address, as
public awareness, educational, 1980, on the
left, date, school #, in program, 1980 program

4. MEMBERS' CURRENT PROJECTS: Date, time & address for each project (include address)
1980, 1980, 1980, 1980, 1980, 1980
Educational reports - personal & jobs
Teaching & learning - education, making - 1980 program day
last date

1980, 1980, 1980, 1980



PROJECT DESCRIPTION

Red Mountain Collective Description //

Red Mountain Collective is a social justice art and design residency. Its vision is to catalyze Birmingham, Alabama as a hub for diversity and creativity in the South. In service of this goal, the residency is dedicated to improving race relations, and to breaking down long held social and economic barriers. The impact created will be two-fold. The first point of impact will occur within Red Mountain Collective itself, as the artists and designers live, work and collaborate throughout the duration of the two - five month residency session. The second point of impact will happen within the community, as Birmingham residents of different races and socioeconomic backgrounds are engaged in a wide array of creative social interventions initiated by the artists and designers.

Red Mountain Collective imagines that the final form of these resident proposed interventions will vary and incorporate different mediums. Potential artist and designer community projects could include: guerrilla art campaigns, truth and reconciliation commissions, scavenger hunts, documentaries, pop-up shops or sensory playgrounds, to name just a few examples. The diverse range

of outcomes allows the Collective to challenge Birmingham's status quo from different angles, while engaging a multitude of stakeholders.

Context for Need //

Birmingham has a long history of racial oppression and segregation. It is a history that many people within the community would prefer to stop focusing on, and subsequently "just move forward" from. The majority of these people are members of the white community. Through interviews I conducted cross-generationally within this demographic, a number of respondents believed that segregation was no longer a problem, and that the issue of racial discrimination is a thing of the past. Of the individuals I interviewed within the African American community, there was overwhelmingly unanimous agreement that Birmingham is still a segregated city, and that there is much work to be done in improving diversity and economic opportunity. This points to perhaps one of the largest barriers to inclusion and racial equality. How might a problem be addressed when roughly half of the population is unaware that there is even a problem at all?

Provocative Proposition // By helping racially and socioeconomically diverse community members transcend the status quo and unite in imagining a more inclusive future, artists and designers have the power to establish Birmingham as a model in Southern race relations.

Red Mt. Collective's Arguments and Ideas // Artists and designers will imagine and execute innovative social interventions that engage community members of different races and socioeconomic backgrounds around one or both of the following criteria: open dialogue regarding the improvement of race relations in Birmingham, and/or creative community organizing activities.

Building on Existing Efforts and Innovative Approaches // During the past five years, Birmingham has been experiencing urban revitalization. In the wake of these renewal efforts, there have been a number of arts-based grassroots organizations. These organizations are providing much needed creative and educational resources to urban school children, as well as creating economic stimulus through commercial and residential development efforts. Many of these organizations are deeply entrenched in urban neighborhoods and have already established ties with local community members. I have been fortunate to have the opportunity to learn from and collaborate with a few of these non profits while conducting early-stage prototyping for Red Mountain Collective.

Currently, however, there are very few artist-in-residence programs in Birmingham. The programs that do exist only support a single artist at a time, and with the exception of one non profit gallery, they are all run by larger institutions. More importantly, none of these residencies focus on social justice or race relations. In fact, according to various community member interviews, one of these institutions is actively struggling with its negative image within the African American community, and has faced difficulties attracting their attendance partially due to their past involvement with Jim Crow.

On the other hand, there are no designer-in-residence programs in the state, and a very limited few nationally. With the social impact design field growing at a rapid pace, and new masters level programs being established at top design schools internationally, now is an ideal time to engage this new field in community-based residency programs. The use of design-thinking and human centered design is at the core of Red Mountain Collective's development, and will continue to be used to creatively problem solve at the community level.



➤ **Above Photo** // Come Together Birmingham: Co-Creation Workshop participants and community members outside of the workshop filled out their 3 wishes for Birmingham. See responses at www.ComeTogetherBham.com.

WHY NOW? WHY IS THIS THE RIGHT MOMENT IN TIME FOR YOUR PROJECT?

With national awareness focused on the tragic deaths of Michael Brown and Eric Garner, addressing race relations has never been more timely or critical. The current public outcry against police violence towards men of color has placed a spotlight on this issue, along with an increasing sense of urgency. The United States has been given little choice but to reflect on uncomfortable realities. Deep wounds, inflicted by centuries of racial oppression and violence, are beginning to fester and reopen. The fact is that we as a country have never truly dealt with the trauma of slavery or Jim Crow. As those systems were broken down by the tireless efforts of abolitionists and civil rights activists, subsequent efforts to create healing and reconciliation were, by and large, skipped over. As a result, what we have been left with is systemic violence, and tensions that are reaching a boiling point with nowhere to go. This tension needs a release valve, and to be channeled into collective action for positive and sustainable social change.

Meanwhile, Birmingham's trend towards urban revitalization, along with increasing pride and investment in its burgeoning creative downtown scene lends the perfect setting to introduce a social justice art and design residency to act as this release valve. I had the opportunity to partner with AIGA Birmingham organizing two co-creation workshops in prototyping for Red Mountain Collective. In return for their support, the workshops helped them take a step towards their social impact design programming goals. Similarly to AIGA, many Birmingham design organizations are facing the new frontier of social design, are actively looking for entry, but are not quite sure where to start. The groundwork has been laid, and now is the time to garner support from these organizations to develop a design-thinking driven, social enterprise.

Also worth noting, Red Mountain Collective is designed to be site specific, tailoring to the specific cultural norms and historical contexts of Birmingham; however, the fact that systemic racial injustices extend far beyond Alabama and into communities, small and large, all across this country is not forgotten. The Collective will serve as a fully built out program in measuring the impact of how art and design residencies might tackle large systemic issues at the grassroots community level. If proven successful, it could serve as a model for other communities nationwide.



Right Photo // Come Together Birmingham: Co-Creation Workshop participants provided their insights for what the current barriers are that are keeping Birmingham community members of different races from living and socializing together. See responses at www.ComeTogetherBham.com.



3

BARRIERS IN BIRMINGHAM

*Racial distribution map created by Dustin Cable at University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

PLEASE WRITE DOWN THREE THINGS THAT YOU THINK ARE CURRENTLY KEEPING COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT RACES FROM LIVING AND SOCIALIZING TOGETHER.

1. Social conditioning (inertia)/cultural differences
2. Economic disparities
3. Fear + suspicion due to the past and stereotypes

3

BARRIERS IN BIRMINGHAM

*Racial distribution map created by Dustin Cable at University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

PLEASE WRITE DOWN THREE THINGS THAT YOU THINK ARE CURRENTLY KEEPING COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT RACES FROM LIVING AND SOCIALIZING TOGETHER.

1. MONEY (Education, opportunity)
2. Unfamiliarity/Unknown
3. History / Resentment, anger, Traditional views (Lack of empathy on both sides)

3

BARRIERS IN BIRMINGHAM

*Racial distribution map created by Dustin Cable at University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

PLEASE WRITE DOWN THREE THINGS THAT YOU THINK ARE CURRENTLY KEEPING COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT RACES FROM LIVING AND SOCIALIZING TOGETHER.

1. Communication
2. allocation of resources
3. honesty in addressing what effects the past has on our present.

3

BARRIERS IN BIRMINGHAM

*Racial distribution map created by Dustin Cable at University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

PLEASE WRITE DOWN THREE THINGS THAT YOU THINK ARE CURRENTLY KEEPING COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT RACES FROM LIVING AND SOCIALIZING TOGETHER.

1. Afraid of change! stuck in their ways!
2. Sad to say but still racism.
3. ~~Don't~~ People just don't know of different things that are going on to ~~involve~~ involve different races.

3

BARRIERS IN BIRMINGHAM

*Racial distribution map created by Dustin Cable at University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

PLEASE WRITE DOWN THREE THINGS THAT YOU THINK ARE CURRENTLY KEEPING COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT RACES FROM LIVING AND SOCIALIZING TOGETHER.

1. Education Inequality.
2. Civic orgs lack diversity. (churches, clubs, (prot groups))
3. Downtown living/socializing needs more integration.

3

BARRIERS IN BIRMINGHAM

*Racial distribution map created by Dustin Cable at University of Virginia's Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service.

PLEASE WRITE DOWN THREE THINGS THAT YOU THINK ARE CURRENTLY KEEPING COMMUNITY MEMBERS OF DIFFERENT RACES FROM LIVING AND SOCIALIZING TOGETHER.

1. TANGIBLE - Financial/income levels- neighborhoods, etc.
2. Emotional - desire for a sense of belonging/community - people stay where they're comfortable
- 3.

TARGET AUDIENCE

Red Mountain Collective's Audiences //

There are two target audiences. The first are the emerging social practice artists and social innovation designers that will be recruited to join the collective as residents for the period of one consecutive two to five month session. A total of 12 residents will be supported by Red Mountain Collective annually (six residents per session). The diversity of each cohort is vital for the success of the residency. Emphasis will be placed on ensuring racial and cultural diversity, in order to maximize the opportunity for the cross-pollination of disruptive ideas and innovation. Artists and designers will be recruited locally, as well as from across the United States and internationally.

The second target audience is Birmingham residents of different races, religions and socioeconomic backgrounds. This includes those who will be engaged in the creative social interventions initiated by the artists and designers, as well as those who will participate in the residency itself. Participation can take the form of being on the Community Advisory Board or becoming a Community Advisor.

Community Advisory Board: Community Advisory Board members will be appointed to serve as a jury panel to review residency applications and their community project proposals. Advisory board members will serve for one year, and will meet to review submissions in the few months prior to each of the sessions. Board members will represent a variety of Birmingham residents and could include individuals from neighborhood associations, local non-profit organizations and educational institutions, or they could be community activists, local artists and designers, urban planners, etc.

Community Advisors: Red Mountain Collective will appoint each resident a community advisor based on the artist's or designer's project and the

expertise of the advisor. Consultations will be held throughout the project's duration in order to assist with execution and implementation, as well as to make certain the community's interests are being served.

Existing Relationship to Target Audience //

I am a Birmingham native, and I am currently receiving my MFA in Design for Social Innovation from the School of Visual Arts in New York. In Birmingham, I have already partnered with AIGA Birmingham and anticipate continuing to work with them throughout the development of the residency. I have also gained an activated audience through holding community co-creation workshops, in which I invited diverse Birmingham community members to explore conceptual ideas for the development of the residency. Together we discussed what barriers currently exist that are keeping Birmingham residents of different races from living and socializing together. We examined the contexts of these barriers and possible solutions to overcome them. In the second half of the workshops, I asked the participants (many of them designers and artists themselves) to brainstorm innovative community projects harnessing the solutions they had put forth. Their final ideas can be seen at www.ComeTogetherBham.com.

Rationale for Focusing on Population and Intended Influence //

Red Mountain Collective's two target audiences, the artists and designers and the diverse Birmingham community members, are both of equal importance. The two will engage in a symbiotic relationship of learning and creating collective understanding and goals.

My rationale for focusing on emerging artists and designers can be summarized and cited to a series of reports, "Best Practices At-A-Glance: Serving Emerging Artists", conducted by Arrowmont School of Arts and Crafts and the Alliance of Artists Communities: "Survey respondents

indicate emerging artists – compared to mid-career and established artists – are more apt to make use of technology and new media in their art-making, more interested in critiques and studio visits during a residency, more interested in social interactions with other artists-in-residence, more interested in participating in public programs and community engagement, and more inclined to stay connected with the organization after the residency.”

Communication and Outreach Strategy // To recruit residents, I plan to reach out to my networks at the School of Visual Arts and Design Ignites Change networks, AIGA Birmingham, and local and national colleges and universities. I also plan to join the Alliance of Artists Communities, in order to advertise the residency.

My outreach strategy to extend tailored invitations to diverse Birmingham community members includes attending neighborhood association meetings, networking through schools and local universities and colleges, as well as collaborating with local non profit organizations who are already on the ground. In researching for this project, I have also already successfully made connections with the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, the Birmingham Museum of Art, and smaller grassroots organizations working within urban neighborhoods: Desert Island Supply Company and Bib and Tucker Sew-Op.



IMPACT

Description and Metrics of Impact // Red Mountain Collective's expected impact is twofold. The first is to bring diverse artists and designers together into an immersive experience of collaboration and teamwork in order to build a collective understanding of race relations amongst each cohort. This will be measured quantitatively by tracking the number and diversity of the residents. Qualitative metrics will include the collection of feedback reports at the end of each session from the residents about his or her experience, as well as tracking alumni activity both in their careers extending past the residency or further involvement within the Collective.

The second expected impact is to create open dialogue and community organizing events among diverse Birmingham community members. The quantitative metrics will be measured by tracking the number and diversity of community participants at each event, and the qualitative metrics will be measured by short surveys about their experience of the event. More specific metrics will be built into each social intervention by the artist or designer who creates it.

Red Mountain Collective's Outcomes // Social Interventions: Birmingham residents of different races and socioeconomic backgrounds will be engaged in various creative social interventions initiated by the artists and designers around one or both of the following criteria: open dialogue regarding the improvement of race relations in Birmingham, and/or creative community organizing activities.

Resident Presentations: Two presentation events will be hosted for each residency session. The first will be given upon the cohorts' arrival to the Red Mountain Collective. Birmingham community members will be invited to meet the artists and designers and learn about

their proposed community projects. Audience questions and feedback will be encouraged after each presentation. The second presentation will be a showcase of the residents' final project for community members to see the final outcomes.

Workshops for Community: Throughout each residency session, residents and guests will run creative classes and workshops free of cost to Birmingham community members.

Fellowship Work Product // The final Fellowship Work Product will be the establishment of a non profit organization.

INDIVIDUAL PROFILE SUMMARY

I am a white caucasian female born and raised in Birmingham, Alabama. Specifically, I was born and raised in Vestavia Hills, a predominantly white, middle to high income "Over the Mountain" community. Incorporated in 1950, the municipality of Vestavia Hills was founded by white flight, and proved to be a haven for those fleeing the Birmingham school system in the wake of the Brown vs. Board of Education decision in 1963. Their goal of escaping the integration of schools proved successful for a full 15 years after Brown was passed. In 2006, my graduating year, the school still only had an eight percent attendance rate of African American students, a number of whom were bused in from outside of the district as part of a court ordered integration law left over from the 1970s.

The fact that I was born not five miles from where Martin Luther King, Jr. sat in a jail cell and wrote "Letter from Birmingham Jail", a mere 25 years earlier, was not something I grew up thinking about. Though in school we learned about the Civil Rights Movement, it seemed to be something disconnected and removed from our present everyday lives.

During my research earlier this year, I interviewed my high school history teacher who is still teaching at Vestavia. I wanted to get a renewed perspective on what is being taught in “Over the Mountain” schools about the Civil Rights Movements in the context of Birmingham’s role in its history, as well as students’ reaction to it. What he told me was that when he plays footage of the Birmingham marches for his students, it peaks their interest. They know that it’s their hometown being shown, but that, in fact, many of them don’t actually recognize the downtown footage. They never go over the mountain. They stay on their side, and they don’t know anything else.

I am the right person to carry out this project, because I am an insider. Coming from a relatively closed community, residents tend to be wary of having outsiders come in to “poke and prod”. This has been an issue that has come up a number of times when conducting interviews and workshops within both the white and African American communities. The relief is palpable when I assure them that, not only was I born and raised in town, but I also received my undergraduate degree from the University of Alabama.

An insight I gained from speaking with a fellow at the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, is that getting the white population to speak about

their experiences of the Civil Rights Movement is challenging. The majority of archived interviews that exist within BCRI are from African American accounts. Throughout the yearlong process of this project, I have discovered that, in general, the black community is more open and willing to speak about Birmingham’s past, as well as current racial inequities. It is the white community that is uneasy or unwilling to speak up. With this in mind, I feel that I am well positioned to draw white voices into the conversation. I have already successfully engaged both white individuals and predominantly white organizations in discussions of race and reconciliation.

There is also an advantage to my studying in New York. The diverse experiences and people I have had the chance to work and collaborate with, combined with the distance I’ve gained from my hometown, has given me new perspectives on where I come from and what it means.

I am expected to receive my MFA in Design for Social Innovation from the School of Visual Arts in May 2015. Red Mountain Collective is a part of my final thesis project. I plan to extend this project past my graduation, and I am currently in the process of working to secure funding. Once the residency is established, I plan to continue its development through the role of Executive Director.



TIMEFRAME

First Quarter //

OUTCOMES: The intended outcomes for the first quarter of the Fellowship will be to solidify Red Mountain Collective's business structure, and to begin networking and building relationships with other artist communities and residencies. Work will also begin on the development of the Collective's website, which will play an integral role in communicating and advertising RMC's vision and activities to artists, designers and Birmingham community members.

ACTIVITIES:

- . Finalize Red Mountain Collective's business model
- . Set quarterly funding goals based on finalized business model
- . Research and apply for additional funding
- . Join Alliance of Artists Communities' Organizational Membership
- . Attend Alliance of Artists Communities 2015 Conference in Providence, RI
- . Start design and development of Red Mountain Collective's website

Second Quarter //

OUTCOMES: Goals for the second quarter will center around securing housing, studio space and equipment for the residents of Red Mountain Collective. In addition, after allotting six months for the design and development of RMC's website, it will be scheduled to launch by the end of this quarter. I will also continue to seek out funding opportunities, as well as networking and expanding current Birmingham community and corporate partnerships.

ACTIVITIES:

- . Network and expand Birmingham community partnerships
- . Engage in corporate sponsorship relationship building
- . Locate and secure housing for future artist and designer residents
- . Secure studio space for future artists and designer residents
- . Launch Red Mountain Collective's website
- . Advertise for the residency (announce when Residency Applications will be opened)

Third Quarter //

OUTCOMES: Third quarter outcomes include opening the digital Residency Application for submissions, and actively recruiting top emerging local, national and international artists and designers. This time will also be spent on putting together a Community Advisory Board to juror applications in the fourth quarter.

ACTIVITIES:

- . Post Residency Application for artists and designers - March 1st, 2016
- . Continue advertising and actively recruiting applicants
- . Recruit Community Advisory Board
- . Continue to seek out and secure funding to satisfy quarterly goals



Fourth Quarter //

OUTCOMES: The focus in the last quarter will be selecting the first cohort of artist and designer residents, and making all of the necessary preparations to run Red Mountain Collective's 2-5 month pilot session. (This session will be scheduled to begin roughly 2-3 months after the residents' receive their acceptance notifications in late August 2016.)

ACTIVITIES:

1. Convene Community Advisory Board to jury applications and select the pilot cohort
2. Notify accepted residents
3. Recruit Community Advisors for each resident
4. Promote new residents and upcoming pilot through press releases and social media
5. Finalize and manage preparations for pilot residency session





NCF ENGAGEMENT

Engagement with NCF // I hope to receive mentorship from the Nathan Cummings Foundation's staff and board throughout the year, and particularly as I begin to finalize Red Mountain Collective's business model. I would like to learn best practices for ensuring Red Mountain Collective will be sustainable over the years, and to explore alternate earned income revenue streams, so as not to rely solely on donations and grants. In addition, I would like to reach out to the Foundation's networks to spread the word about the residency, and attract top emerging artist and designer talent.

Added Value // Guidance from Nathan Cummings Foundation staff and board will help build a strong foundation from which Red Mountain Collective can grow, flourish and sustainably support artists and designers to ignite positive social change in Birmingham. In return, the Collective will work tirelessly to meet NCF's mission of building a socially and economically just society through fostering arts and culture that enriches communities. Red Mountain Collective will also publicize the Foundation's support, and help expand its network and reach.