

PORTRAIT OF SELF



Text and Workbook by Hugh Merrill

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Chameleon Arts and Youth Development is a highly successful community arts agency that uses interdisciplinary artistic practice to create exceptional works of art that change and enrich the communities they serve. Since 2006, Chameleon has facilitated over one million dollars in community arts and youth development programs, which served these organizations: Jackson Family Court in Kansas City, Missouri; Office of Homeless Liaison, Kansas City, Kansas Public Schools; and the Rose Brooks Shelter. The Kansas City, Missouri School District and the St. Marks Child and Family Development Center have also benefited from Chameleon's arts programming. Chameleon has received funding from many of Kansas City's most noteworthy foundations, including: the Muriel McBrien Kauffmann Foundation, Francis Family Foundation, Bank of America, R.A. Long, Sosland, and Oppenstein Foundations, as well as the KC Arts Fund and the Missouri Arts Council. The H & R Block Foundation and Target have been recent supporters for new programs.

Chameleon uses *Portrait of Self* as its core approach for collecting stories and resources from youth populations for its community arts projects and supporting academic classroom education. We are publishing this book to provide the journaling and archiving process to educators, community workers and artists with the hope that they will find it of value in facilitating and designing their own similar programs. You can download the book for free as a PDF at www.chameleon-ayd.org. The sale of the book goes to help fund Chameleon Arts and Youth Development.

*"I credit Chameleon with significantly improving the lives and self-esteem of our homeless youth. They not only teach art, dance, drumming, and creativity, they help participants to make art that validates their life experiences in society. Their **Portrait of Self** journaling curriculum celebrates the intrinsic beauty of our children. Through exhibitions and presentations at regional and national education and arts conferences, the works have both regional and nationwide impact. They empower and propell audiences to question their understanding of who is homeless and require that viewers lose their detachment from this societal tragedy."*

–Staci Pratt

Director of the Office of Homeless Liaison
Kansas City Missouri School District

Table of Contents

Introduction	7
History and Process	11
Portrait of Self Archiving Workbook	12
Actions	21
Outcomes	31
Bio and Credits	40



Introduction

by Adelia Ganson

Everyone is an artist. All people have the ability to make meaningful, insightful, and healing work.

Hugh Merrill says: “Community art is a process that nurtures awareness and celebrations of others’ aliveness . . . a process to move the community from the habit of consuming and watching culture to the ritual of producing and articulating culture.”

Portrait of Self (POS) is Merrill’s proprietary method of archiving information for use in collaborative community and public arts projects. Each student or participant is invited to bring with them chosen effects, photographs or other items they feel are representative of them.

A process designed to help participants express the many factors that make up who they are, one of the most effective aspects of *POS* is that it creates a learning situation where anyone can produce original, creative work. Simplicity is key as the work is inspired from nothing more than personal observations made in the course of everyday life.

Xerography, photography, drawing, and collage are all explored to create a library of images for potential use in creative projects and exhibitions. These items are collated, sorted and re-contextualized by artist/facilitators, the participating community and students who re-examine the raw data and turn it into visual communication and personal expression. The archives of information created by varying communities have been turned into large graphic murals, art books, installations, performance, poetry, and digital projects.

A collaborative project at the Kemper Museum of Art in Kansas City, Missouri in 1998 evolved into in the *POS* curriculum. Merrill’s collaboration with French conceptual artist Christian Boltanski resulted in the citywide community arts project *Our City: Ourselves* exhibited alongside Boltanski’s *Who We Are: Portrait of a Community* event. An advertising circular in the Kansas City Star newspaper invited local residents to bring personal items and photographs to the museum for direct participation in the gallery show. These items were Xeroxed and a large-scale collage was created that instantly reflected the audience, and by extension, the greater community.

At that time, Merrill’s primary interest was in people who were marginalized by society and how they disappeared into political rhetoric or simply fell through the cracks in the social safety net. Boltanski’s interests were fundamentally different, yet similar. He was interested in people who had physically disappeared, leaving behind photos and keepsakes as well as personal possessions. These items function as ghostlike ephemera with no place to go, belonging to no one. Through this contrast, the project became the impetus for much of Merrill’s community artwork from 1998 to the present.



Portrait of Self is a tool and a process, not a project.

It is a process of learning non-linear creative thinking skills, visual organization, visual literacy, and research skills. The process can be used to integrate creativity, visual arts and academic learning. The process is meant to add value, new possibilities, and alternative methods for learning to a teacher's suitcase of skills.

This basic workbook is a means of gathering resources by which art and academic projects can be enriched. The workbook teaches students to document their daily activities, record memories and learn creative and non-linear thinking processes. The outcome of the workshop can lead to visual arts, theater, creative writing or academic projects. This process can be applied to keeping journals and learning research skills. How the process is put to use is up to the interest and imagination of the facilitator or teacher.



History and Process

Hugh Merrill was invited to create a community art project as visiting artist to the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri in 1998. Merrill developed the archiving project *Portrait of Self*, a collaborative community and conceptual artwork. The difficulty of finding a meaningful way to exhibit personal archives was solved from a conversation with artist Christian Boltanski in a brainstorming session concerning Boltanski's then upcoming exhibition at the Kemper Museum. The participants would photocopy selected information in their archives and the photocopies would be the resource for installation and the creation of large graphic murals. *Portrait of Self* is a process for individuals to make art out of their daily lives, and through installation, to turn the museum over to the community, uniting art and life.

In 1977, country music singer and visual artist Terry Allen wrote a song about a truckload of art. It rolled west from New York City, carrying precious objects made by famous artists. The word Peterbilt on the truck became enveloped in flames as it went up in smoke, "burning by the side of the highway."

Noted American artist Eric Fischl knew the song, and envisioned a truck of his own, filled with precious objects. A truck full of blue-chip art, with many of the country's most notable artists work inside, it is a fine art exhibition in the form of a retro-fitted semi tractor-trailer. *America: Now and Here* includes art by Eric Fischl, along with Susan Rothenberg, Tom Friedman, Jeff Koons, Chuck Close, Cindy Sherman, and many others.

Chameleon Arts and Youth Development, Hugh Merrill's not-for-profit organization, is committed to increasing arts and cultural access for marginalized populations in Kansas City's urban core. Chameleon designed arts programming for the *ANH* inaugural event in April 2011 in Kansas City, Missouri at the Leedy-Voulkos Art Center. The project will continue through the fall of 2013 in the form of an exhibition at the Spiva Art Center in Joplin, Missouri. Joplin is recovering from a category five tornado that raged through the town in May of 2011. POS is an integral part of the ANH project. This inclusive effort is not just visual artists; musicians, playwrights, poets, and others are also invited.

The process has been selected as one of the National Endowment of the Arts Millennium Community Art Grant candidates. Artists and facilitators have successfully created artwork with these agencies: The Kansas State School for the Blind, Jackson County Family Court, Missouri Juvenile Justice System, Academy of Fine Art, Barstow School, the Kansas City Art Institute, Paseo Academy of Fine and Performing Arts and Studio 150 in Kansas City, Missouri. POS was the basis for a graphic mural installation at Western Sydney University, Australia and the Goddard Gallery at the State Fair College Sedalia, Missouri. It was also the foundation for a public artwork in Dania, Florida sponsored by the Art and Culture Center of Hollywood, Florida.

Portrait of Self Archiving Workbook

Portrait of Self is an arts and educational project to help young people talk about the many influences that create their sense of self. A self-portrait in the most traditional sense is the reproduction of one's own reflection in a mirror. *Portrait of Self* is an archive of drawings, poetry, writing, photography, and other artistic practices. The student creates this archive as a representation of the complexity of life. *Portrait of Self* is an investigation of the sources that make up the history of who we are.

This workbook is designed to help challenge habitual ways of approaching issues of social and personal content. *POS* represents a path for participants to react to and with which to investigate their heritage, families, lifestyles, memories, and values using artistic practice and archiving collection methods. It allows students and teachers to investigate difficult personal and social issues such as: race, consumer culture, sexual orientation, gender, and religion. The text is not meant to solve social or personal problems, but to provide participants and students with an ongoing means for investigation.

How To Use This Text

I hope that this means of expression will provide artists, teachers and students with an important tool to investigate their own identities and cultures. Students/artists may investigate their sense of self through artistic practice, using writing, dance, photography, poetry, and the visual arts. The students/artist and faculty explore a series of questions, statements, and problems leading to the creation of a personal archive. The archive is made up of the participant's responses to the various problems, lists, and questions. The archives are works of art that may be displayed in an exhibition at the end of the project.

There are no correct answers to the questions the text and workshops raise and no specific time period for completion of the archive. The questions and statements are not specific to any one creative discipline, but can be addressed through drawing, writing, acting, discussion, and digital or social media. The choice of artistic practice depends on the love, interest, and passion of the participants. Participants should creatively add to the text with their own questions, lists, and points for discussion. I recommend that the participants respond using a variety of artistic practices; they do not need to be trained in a particular creative discipline [such as drawing] to attempt to use it in responding to the questions. The participant's work does not need to be judged by traditional standards of quality; the questions ask for an honest response. It is important that each participant's work is saved and placed in their individual archive. The total accumulation of documents, drawings, writings, photographs and lists represent the individual's portrait.

Workshop Menu: Directions for Getting Hungry

- Commit yourself to the problem and trust in the situation.
- Don't prejudge or be embarrassed.
- Don't be judgmental.
- Learn to make decisions without rational thought.
- Trust your body.
- Nothing is a mistake; all is an experiment.
- Work leads; it is the people who make that eventually discover.
- There is no possibility of creating work and analyzing it at the same time; they are different processes.
- Concentrate on making work.
- Enjoy yourself and play with a child's intensity.
- Be self-regulating and disciplined; discover your habits and break them.
- Beware! Observation is a form of pre-thinking and prejudice.

Don't be afraid of being dumb!

- Stay hungry.
- Activities do not have to be done in order.
- Add your own problems.
- Do it your way.
- Use different artistic practices.
- Save everything.



Workbook Questions

How we see the world and the people in it is determined by our memory. Seeing is an act of remembering. We see the world through our experiences and prejudices. The following work is meant to break down the habitual way we look at the world and ourselves to provide a fresh start.

Perception is communication between the environment and the mind. Is art the record of an individual processing this communication?

Create a map of your first neighborhood. Mark on the map all the places that you were bad. Continue to mark all the places you were good, and write down all your friends. Who was the first friend you got into a fight with? Keep adding as you work to recall lost memories.

What processes mark the growth of the brain into the mind? How is observation turned into memory? What is the shape and form of memory and thought? How does memory function? How does creative thought occur?

Habit has authority over thinking. Reverse your ideas. What would you *not* do to a piece of paper? How would you *not* make a drawing? How would you *not* express yourself? How would you *not* make a self-portrait? Make them.

Write about the first time that you “hated” another person. Use a pencil, erase your writing and place the writing in an envelope and seal it. Write the word “hate” on it. Make a list of all the children who were your friends. Circle the one that became your first enemy. Do a portrait of him or her. Write the story about this person and you on the drawing. Change the word hate to love.

Some of our qualities will not change or will only slowly evolve over a lifetime such as: race, age, physical needs, biological makeup, and religion. What symbols represent these qualities for you? Collect the symbols that represent you. Create a self-portrait by making a collage out of the symbols.

Memory is a definition of self. It distorts the process of thinking and seeing. To think and see the world uniquely takes no active effort beyond existence. To express that unique view takes method.

Save the covers of all your notebooks and binders. Do they have drawings on them?

Save all the notes you receive and get back the ones you wrote. Make a special container to hold them. Place them in the container. Are other people allowed to open the container and read the notes? Will this change the way you design your container?

Save all the doodles that you make. Doodles are drawings. Place them in a large brown envelope.

Remember your first house? Go there in your imagination. Walk around in it, draw/write/record your memory on a sheet of paper, keeping your eyes closed. Do a second drawing with your eyes open. Write the story of your life in this house on the drawing. Use this as the source for a new creative work.

Some of our qualities are in constant change; such as physical appearance, friends, age, status, lifestyle, location, values, marital status, pregnancy, education, employment, and income. Make a portrait of your self in constant change.

How will time and life change you? Who will you be when you are 60 years old? Will you live in North Carolina in a trailer park? Write a poem about being old and looking back. Make a portrait of yourself as an old person. Combine the drawing and verses from the poem.

Trust your body. The hand is intelligent. Drawing is the dance of the hand. Make a drawing while you are dancing. Place a sheet of paper on the floor, turn up the music, dance on the paper, and save it. It is a document of how you move.

Create yourself as a person with no heritage, no race, no gender, no age, no religion, no sexual orientation, no education, no occupation, and no family. Are you happy now? Are you a cartoon character? A super hero? Are you reduced only to your biology?

List all the things you love, all the things you hate and keep the lists going. Which list is the longest? Make a drawing that is a war between the two lists.



Make a drawing about your family, in three ways: draw as you drew when you were 5 years old; then as when you were 12 years old; and finally, as you might draw when you are 30 years old.

Make a drawing with the qualities that make you part of a group, gang, team, family, nationality, or race. Use symbols. Where does the self begin to get lost? Where is the line between you as a person and you as a member of the group? Make a drawing of your face and divide it into two sections, making one side you as an individual and one as part of the group.

Get a friend to trace the outline of your body on a large sheet of paper two times. One tracing represents your nationality and ethnic heritage, the other your personal life. Fill in the interior of the tracings with information that represents each category. Do the tracings overlap? What does it mean if they do?

Play creates wonder, or have you forgotten? Learn to play again. Make a work that makes fun of your most serious thoughts.

Turn your life into a board game, draw the board and create the characters. Can you win or lose the game? Are there rules? When does the game end? What do you win? What is the greatest hazard?

Art is play, art is serious, art is play, art is serious, art is play, and art is serious. You are play and you are serious. Do a self-portrait showing both qualities.

When was the first time you understood ownership? When was the first time you realized you could not get something because of money, gender, status, race, body size, looks, or lifestyle? Make a history of your life based on not getting what you wanted.

Keep a list of all the things you want to buy. Keep adding to it, scratching out the ones you buy or receive.

Make a list of every item you use in a day.

Habits determine how new ideas are received. We constantly reinforce our old habits. New information is always received in terms of old ways of seeing. To be creative we must see the world with new eyes. Photograph yourself as soon as you wake up every day for a week.

What is the earliest piece of clothing that you remember wearing? Make that piece of clothing out of paper and paint. Write a verse describing the room in which you would have worn that garment. Make a list of all the clothes you remember having as a child, and keep adding to the list throughout the project.

Create a maze to protect your best friend from harm. What hides in the maze?

Linear thinking leads to a single conclusion and possibility is lost. The rational system leads to continuity, selection, focus, but at the cost of seeing other possibilities.

Collect ephemera from your past: toys, church programs, movie tickets, clothes, hair, combs, and other insignificant objects. Make them important by treating them as a treasure; they quantify your existence. Add them to your archives as photocopies.

We see what memory selects for us. Seeing is individualized by each person's past experience.

Collect all the writings, drawings, objects, lists, ephemera, and place them together in a view box. Think about what should and should not be seen. Arrange the items according to their public and private values.

Work as a collaborative group to create an installation by photocopying documents from your archive. As a group use the photocopies to produce an exhibition/installation. Invite lots of people from your community. How can they participate and add to the exhibition?

These questions are a process to help you investigate your life, and to help you break your habits of seeing and perceiving. Now it is time for you to make up your own questions and use the creative methods you have learned to go forward in continuing to record your life's journey.

Good luck.

Actions

Chameleon Arts & Youth Development, Hugh Merrill, and *America: Now and Here* invite you to explore these arts actions and to make them your own. They are designed to encourage poetic thinking and the study of alternative conceptual creativity.

Our City: Ourselves and *Mix Up* have been used for over ten years in arts programming for at-risk and homeless youth in Kansas City's downtown, as well as public arts projects and local workshops. *Creating a Better President*, *Statues of Liberty*, and *My American Zine* were designed specifically for *America: Now and Here*. We hope you will modify and explore their potential under various circumstances with diverse participants. Everyone has the ability to gain from an increased ability to think creatively, and these investigations help people find a way to do that.

We hope you will keep in touch with us about the outcomes of your workshops or other forms of expression. Easily adapted to a variety of media, these actions can help participants to learn as they create.



Our City: Ourselves

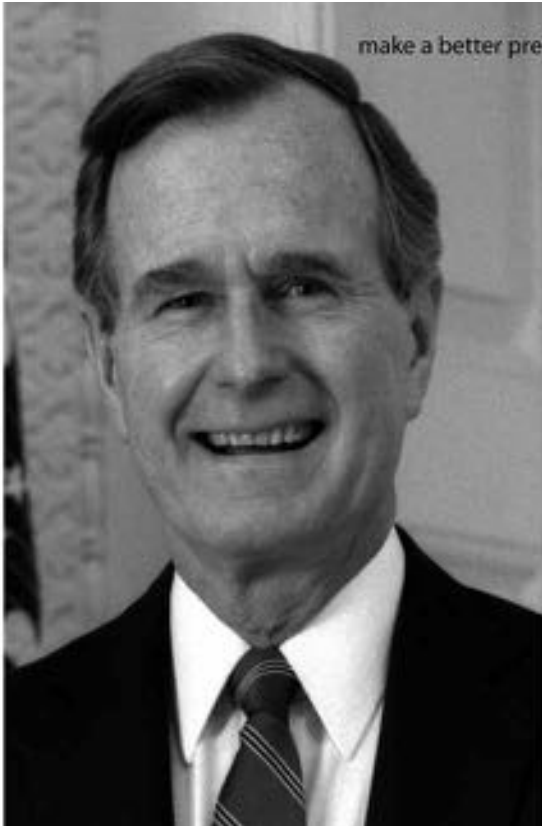
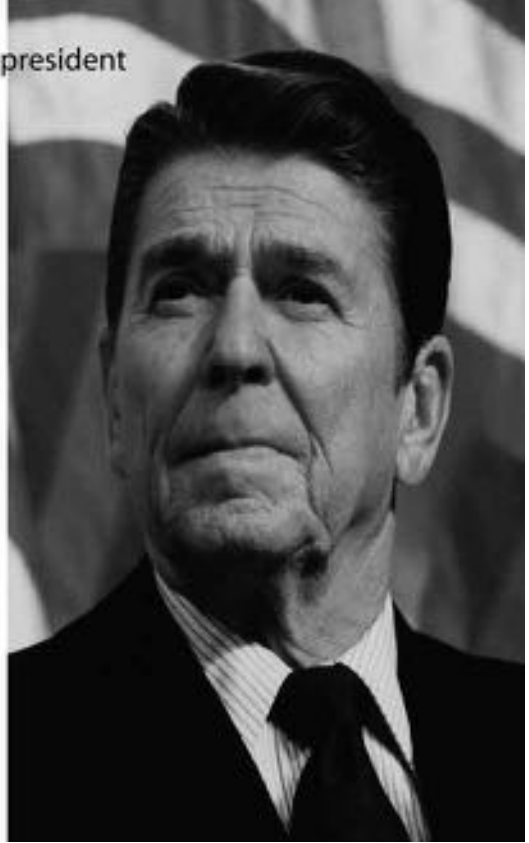
In 1998, a collaboration between artists Christian Boltanski and Hugh Merrill at the Kemper Museum of Contemporary Art in Kansas City, Missouri, became the premise for this highly acclaimed and expressive process. The public was invited to bring family photographs, letters and other personal memorabilia to the museum to be copied and then pinned to the gallery wall. Thousands of people participated in the project.

Six comment books were placed in the gallery and the public was invited to write down their thoughts on the exhibition. Boltanski's interest was to turn the museum over to everyday folks, who under other circumstances would never have participated in an art museum exhibition. Since the event at the Kemper Museum, the process has been used as a vehicle to engage communities including: Dania Beach, Florida; Berlin, Germany; Sydney, Australia; and now Joplin, Missouri.

The process is able to reach a broad audience and there is little cost involved in the project. Merrill designed a circular for the Sunday Kansas City Star newspaper which invited the metropolitan community residents to participate in the Kemper Museum event. In Dania Beach, elementary school children got the word out to their community. Both projects were highly successful in bringing people together.



Make a better president



make a better president by combining



Creating a Better President

The public is invited to create their own “better presidents” by building collages made from the faces of our presidents, presidential candidates, celebrities, and other public figures

To facilitate the project, the artist or institution provides the participants with Xerox copies of presidential portraits. When the project was performed at the Leedy-Voulikos Art Center in Kansas City for the inaugural exhibition of *America: Now and Here*, images of these heads of state were included: John Kennedy, Richard Nixon, Jimmy Carter, Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton, George Bush, George W. Bush, and Barack Obama.

The public was invited to a Saturday workshop where artists/facilitators worked with kids and the general public. The preprinted copies of the faces were cut up and reconstructed into images of their perfect leader. There was a copier in the gallery space and the participants could enlarge or reduce the images if they wanted to. When the participants completed their “perfect president” collages, they were asked copy their work and pin it to the exhibition wall set aside for the project. By the end of the four-hour workshop, there were over 100 new presidents; all a combination of both the right and left of Democratic and Republican personalities.

The project can be extended to an online process asking people to use portraits of the presidents to create a collage image of their leader of choice. They are then invited to upload their portrayal to a Facebook page or web site for exhibition. *Creating a Better President* is especially valuable in teaching social studies and history.

MIX Up: The American Family

A series of photographs of people with differing racial, ethnic, and cultural backgrounds is the first step of this investigation. At the event at the Leedy-Voulikos Art Center, various genders and ages, from babies to seniors, were all represented. Digitally printed photos, just a little larger than their true proportions, were cut into three strips: eyes, nose, and mouth areas. The photos were then traced onto cardboard and the cardboard, which was then cut out into the corresponding face shapes. The photos were glued to the cardboard backing, making a sturdy “mask.”

A photographic studio with a backdrop and lights was set up in the gallery as a workshop location. Participating photographers then invited the visitors to choose and hold up the “diversity masks” to their own face to fashion a new American-hybrid face. The photographs were then uploaded onto our Facebook and Flickr pages, where the participants could download the photos.

The photographs are suitable for enlargement and have the potential to become a gallery exhibition, extending their life beyond the workshop. Visitors were encouraged to participate in the event by bringing their own cameras to shoot photographs of their friends and families with mixed faces when our professional photographers were not available. For the upcoming workshop in Joplin, the participants will be shown digital images of combined faces and interviewed on video. Their commentary will then be played at the exhibition in the form of video projections.



name a great american quality
that changed the world



and one that hurts the world

what is america's favorite bird



and why

My American Zine

A "zine," short for magazine, is made by artists as a way to publish their drawings, poetry, writings, and rants. The design is often purposely crude, raw, and printed on a copier or computer printer. A zine can be a single copy and seldom are there over 1000 copies made. The designers are young, fresh, and open-minded.

My American Zine is being facilitated in collaboration with America: Now and Here and consists of pre-drawn zine pages. The unassembled pages are prompts to help the community respond visually and intellectually, expressing their humor, thoughts, and beliefs. Tables are set up in a gallery with American Flag table cloths. Crayons, markers, pens, and color pencils were available as well as scissors, tape, and glue sticks. We also provide a copier for the workshop.

The participants are asked to create their own collages or pages from the visual resources provided. The participant's pieces are then reproduced on the copier and pinned to the gallery wall. Participants can then Xerox any of these pages and add them to their own work. The pages are then saddle-stitched together (stapled) to make the final publication.

The table can be left as an ongoing project over the length of the exhibition or it can be a self-contained workshop event.



Statues of Liberty

We started the project by taking a series of photographs of iconic American monuments: the Statue of Liberty, Lincoln Memorial, and Mount Rushmore. We enhanced the images in Photoshop and then had them printed as large 5x10 foot vinyl banners.

We then set up a shooting studio in the gallery with the banners as backdrops for the workshop. Participating photographers invited the visitors to select objects from a table laden with Americana objects such as small flags, Uncle Sam hats, American eagles, and similar items. There were also markers and 18"x24" sheets of paper on the table so the visitors could make their own signs.

Folks then stood in front of the banners and had their photographs taken. The photos were then uploaded onto our Facebook/flickr page where the participants could go and download the images.

We encourage communities interested in the project that do not want to invest in the photographic banners to use large sheets of roll paper to draw their favorite American monuments to use as backdrops. The images can also be made out of paper maché.



Outcomes

The Portrait of Self archiving process has been employed by Hugh Merrill and Chameleon Arts & Youth Development for over 10 years in a wide variety of settings, ranging from workshops with homeless and adjudicated youth to graduate students. The process has proven highly effective for accumulating visual resources for implementation of arts projects resulting in diverse outcomes.

Participants have painted murals, constructed installations, and created personal journals. *POS* has been an excellent method for community artists to help others tell their life stories, strengthening the bond between artists and participants, and engaging non-artists in meaningful creative actions.

I WORK FOR OPPORTUNITY



FACES OF THE HOMELESS

Faces of the Homeless

(2008)

A group of homeless youth from Kansas City, Kansas is an example of how the process can benefit people in need. The 30 children in the project lived in cars, slept on couches in others' homes, or moved from one low-rent motel to another. To many people, the word "homeless" brings to mind older men or women holding up signs along highway off ramps. The reality is much different, as the average age of a homeless person in Kansas City is seven years old.

With the help of the Office of Homeless Liaison at the Kansas City, Kansas Public School District, the children were able to step back from the edge of a cliff. They went from facing a life of violence, drugs, and gangs where many drop out of school, to promising educational and personal situations. Through arts and academic programming, many of these children went on to attend colleges, or universities. As the children's self-esteem grew, they eagerly agreed to participate in a poster project. *Faces of the Homeless* depicts the real faces of the homeless along with their aspirations.



Dania Beach Elementary School

(1999-2000)

Portrait of Self was used to collect visual information from students and their families at the Dania Beach Elementary School in Florida. The students faces were photographed and used to create a collaborative graphic mural installed across the outside of the school buildings, creating the illusion of the children are looking out at the neighborhood.



Missouri Fine Arts Academy

(1997-1998)

A group of high school art students accepted to the Missouri Academy of Fine Arts summer program developed content through the *POS* process. The students used their childhood memories and experiences to craft a dance and performance piece with original poetic text and music. The work was staged at Missouri State University, in Springfield, Missouri.



Daum Museum

(2001)

A variety of resources produced from related activities made Merrill's installation at the Daum Museum possible. The museum is located on the campus of State Fair Community College in Sedalia, Missouri. A series of large-scale narrative black-line and blue prints were placed along the walls, where they eventually spilled over onto the floor. The public was invited to participate, and tables were set up with paper, drawing supplies, and a Xerox machine so that people could add their stories and voices to the exhibit.



Studio 150 and Kauffman Foundation

(2002)

Kansas City area high school students were selected to participate in a summer program for the arts where Portrait of Self was used to create content for a series of street graphics. After their completion, the pieces were installed on the sidewalks in front of the Kauffman Foundation Conference Center in Kansas City, Missouri. Participants were asked to make visuals representing their hopes and dreams for the future. Visitors to the Kauffman Center, or people just out walking their dogs, could stop and see the insights of these remarkable students.



Art of Memory

(2004)

In 2002, Merrill was commissioned to produce artwork for the Sanford-Kimpton Health Facility in Columbia, Missouri, which was completed in 2004. Designated a 1% for the arts public project, *POS* was used as a means to collect personal stories and family information from the doctors, staff, and folks that used this center. From the mass of personal information, the artist created large graphic collages that were digitally printed and installed through out the various clinics and spaces in the building. The images resonate as artwork for the broader public and represent cherished memorabilia for the personnel working in the building.



Random Acts of Kindness

(2011)

In 2011, a group of community art students at the Kansas City Art Institute used the *POS* process to design a tangential project enlivening the routines of people catching the bus at 31st Street and Troost Avenue. Troost is the historical dividing line between the African American and neighboring working-class white neighborhoods. The folks riding the bus were served coffee on cold February mornings and given apples to snack on. The students also set up a book exchange and provided commuter art bags filled with games, drawings, and poetry for the bus riders.

Bio & Credits

Hugh Merrill is an artist and educator in Kansas City, Missouri. He is the executive director of Chameleon Arts & Youth Development, a non-profit organization in Kansas City's urban core serving homeless and at-risk youth. He is currently working on two series of mixed-media pieces for an exhibition in conjunction with Eric Fischl's *America: Now and Here* social arts project in Joplin, Missouri in the summer of 2013. His work can be found online at <http://www.hughmerrill.com>.

Adelia Ganson is an artist, writer and artisanal perfumer. She works with Chameleon Arts and Youth Development in Kansas City to create arts and cultural opportunities for communities in the urban core. She is currently working on two books, one about social arts practice and the other about decorative arts and crafts. She has been a writer for *Review: Mid-America's Visual Arts Publication* and has been a contributor to CNN.

Amanda Rehagen is an artist, illustrator, designer, and writer. Since 2002, she has served as graphic and web designer for Chameleon Arts & Youth Development, maintaining the website and helping to promote their work in Kansas City's urban core. She has also designed a number of projects for Hugh Merrill, including the book *Divergent Consistencies*, which charts his studio and community art career. She can be found online at www.lunar-circuitry.net.