

MUJERES MEXICANAS DEL DISEÑO GRÁFICO: SHOWCASING  
THE CURRENT WOMEN CREATIVE DIRECTORS  
OF GRAPHIC DESIGN IN MEXICO CITY

by

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## **DEDICATION**

*Con mucho cariño para mis padres ¡Siempre sonríe!*

Un sentimiento especial de agradecimiento a mis queridos padres, Matías Barajas Flor & Ana Lilia Saldaña de Barajas, cuyas palabras de aliento resuenan en mis oídos, cuyo amor por mí no conoce límites, por inculcarme valores y así ser una mujer feminista independiente, por enseñarme el valor de nuestra cultura y apoyarme siempre. Este logro es para ustedes, mamá y papá. Gracias por estar conmigo siempre.

*To my loving parents.*

A special feeling of gratitude to my dear parents, Matías Barajas Flor & Ana Lilia Saldaña de Barajas, whose words of encouragement ring in my ears, whose love for me knows no limits, for instilling in me values and thus being an independent feminist woman, for teaching me the value of our culture and always supporting me. Thank you for always being there for me.

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS.....	v
LIST OF FIGURES .....	viii
LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS.....	xi
ABSTRACT.....	xii
 CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION.....	1
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	3
Bauhaus Women’s Graphic Design History .....	3
United States Graphic Design Gender Statistics.....	6
Diversity & Inclusion in Design Conferences .....	22
Mexico Graphic Design History .....	25
III. GENDER EQUITY IN GRAPHIC DESIGN.....	54
Gender Equity Focus on Mexico City .....	54
Intersectional Feminism.....	54
Gender Equity Projects in the United States and Europe .....	57
Addressing Gender Equity in Graphic Design with AIGA Women Lead Initiative Model.....	65
IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY .....	66
Qualitative Exploratory Social Research Study.....	66
A Synopsis of Machismo, Marianismo and Familism and how they are perceived in the Mexican Culture .....	72
Contemporary Mexican Women Designer Interviews Analysis .....	75
V. CREATIVE PROCESS.....	80
Interactive Traveling Exhibition Design Overview .....	80

VI. CREATIVE OUTCOME.....	89
Interactive Traveling Exhibition Installation Overview .....	89
VII. CONCLUSION .....	102
Future Creative Research.....	106
APPENDIX A.....	108
Environmental Graphic Design Outcome.....	108
APPENDIX B .....	131
Exhibition Promotional Materials.....	131
APPENDIX C .....	137
Exhibition Photographs.....	137
REFERENCES .....	144

## LIST OF FIGURES

Figure	Page
2.1 Section I: Who's designing in 2019? Age Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census .....	9
2.2 Section I: Who's designing in 2019? Gender Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census .....	10
2.3 Section I: Who's designing in 2019? Gender + Employment Type Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census.....	11
2.4 Section I: Who's designing in 2019? Gender + Design Discipline Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census.....	12
2.5 Section I: Who's designing in 2019? LGBTQIA+ Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census .....	15
2.6 Section I: Who's designing in 2019? Ethnicity Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census .....	16
2.7 Section III: Who's designing in 2019? Salary Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census .....	18
2.8 Section III: Who's designing in 2019? Salary + Gender Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census .....	19
2.9 Section V: What do designers think about the future of their industry? What are the most important issues facing design? Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census .....	21
2.10 Calavera de la Catrina (Skull of the Female Dandy) .....	28
2.11 The skeleton of the people's editor (Antonio Vanegas Arroyo).....	29
2.12 José Guadalupe Posada, Calaveras, broadsheet, 1903 .....	30
2.13 Vicente Rojo Plural 1971 .....	31
2.14 Vicente Rojo Logotipos. ....	32

2.15 Clara Porset with Alfonso Rojas.....	35
2.16 Clara Porset chairs, 1952 .....	36
2.17 Eduardo Terrazas, Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, Mathias Goeritz, Peter Murdoch, and Lance Wyman (1967) .....	39
2.18 Aztec carving .....	41
2.19 Toltec warrior statues.....	42
2.20 Aztec sundial created from Olympic symbols .....	43
2.21 Mexico68 Olympic Games Identity.....	44
2.22 Mexico68 Olympic Games Identity, Mexico City, Mexico, 1966 .....	45
2.23 Olympic stadium design Mexico68 Olympic Games Identity, Mexico City, Mexico, 1966.....	46
2.24 Tlatelolco Memorial logo, Tlatelolco University Cultural Center at UNAM Mexico City, Mexico, 2014.....	48
2.25 Contemporary Designers & Apprentices of the Madero Press in Mexico City Timeline designed by Flor Barajas.....	51
3.1 Guerrilla Girls, You're Seeing Less Than Half The Picture 1989.....	58
3.2 Guerrilla Girls, Guerrilla Girls' Definition Of Hypocrite 1990.....	59
3.3 Photography of the Women in Graphic Design 1890–2012 .....	61
3.4 Kafei and Vergara, Missing Pages publication photography.....	62
3.5 Kafei and Vergara, Missing Pages interactive installation photography .....	63
4.1 Table I Participants Demographics .....	69
5.1 EVA typeface family banners .....	81

5.2 Demonstration in front of the National Congress for the law on Votes for Women, Buenos Aires, 1948.....	82
6.1 Design Perspectives, transparencies .....	91
6.2 Interactivity of the juxtaposition with the transparencies I.....	92
6.3 Interactivity of the juxtaposition with the transparencies II .....	93
6.4 Designing Perspectives, Texas State University Art Gallery, January 2020. Visitor interacting with flashlight.....	96
6.5 Designing Perspectives, Texas State University Art Gallery, January 2020. Projection effect on the wall I .....	97
6.6 Designing Perspectives, Texas State University Art Gallery, January 2020. Projection effect on the wall II .....	98
6.7 The Common Experience Events Department of Texas State University Main calendar website featuring Design Perspectives, January 2020 .....	101
7.1 Barajas' Design Week Mexico Letter of Acceptance .....	105



## LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

Abbreviation	Description
AIGA	The American Institute of Graphic Arts
AGI Open	Alliance Graphique Internationale Open
AI	Artificial Intelligence
AR/VR	Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality
CITI	Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative
IRB	Institutional Review Board
LGBTQIA+	Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Pansexual, Transgender, Genderqueer, Queer, Intersexed, Agender, Asexual, and Ally community
UCLA	University of California, Los Angeles
UNAM	National Autonomous University of Mexico
WLI	Women's Leadership Initiative

## ABSTRACT

Designer and researcher Flor Alexandra Barajas followed the model of The American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) Women's Leadership Initiative (WLI) for the development of this research-based thesis. The AIGA Women's Leadership Initiative model works around three goals: to celebrate the achievements of women in design; to cultivate awareness of gender-related issues; to build knowledge, leadership skills, and connections facilitating relationships within and beyond the design industry.

This research-based thesis project documents the exploratory social research study, the environmental graphic design of an interactive traveling exhibition called *Designing Perspectives*, and an ongoing collaborative manifesto, titled *¿Porque soy Mexicana!.* Barajas designed these two creative outcomes to celebrate the mutual influence and support of each Mexican woman designer who participated in the exploratory research study.

This project intends to highlight cultural identity awareness by encouraging knowledge of contemporary Mexican women in graphic design in Mexico City. The intention being that future generations of up-and-coming world-wide designers will be able to identify these Mexican women creative directors and view them as inspiration for their design practices.

The interactive traveling exhibition, *Designing Perspectives*, generates and continues the conversation about the interconnectedness of gender equality and diversity in the design industry in Mexico City. Therefore, *Designing Perspectives* has fulfilled the

objective of being an interactive traveling exhibition because it is part of the *Inédito* exhibition at *Design Week Mexico* in Mexico City. The *Inédito* exhibition is an international exhibition part of *Design Week Mexico* hosted in Mexico City from October 9, 2020, to February 8, 2021, at the *Espacio CDMX* art and design gallery. The main goal of *Designing Perspectives* is to recognize contemporary Mexican designers and, in doing so, confront the male-dominated field of design by generating awareness and instigating productive conversations while the audience is immersed in the interactive exhibition.

## I. INTRODUCTION

This research-based thesis project documents the exploratory social research study and the environmental graphic design of an interactive traveling exhibition called *Designing Perspectives*, and an ongoing collaborative manifesto, titled *¡Porque soy Mexicana!*. This project intends to highlight cultural identity awareness by encouraging knowledge of contemporary Mexican women in graphic design in Mexico City. To depict the purpose of this project, designer and researcher Barajas followed the AIGA Women Lead Initiative model, around three goals: to celebrate the achievements of women in design; to cultivate awareness of gender-related issues; to build knowledge, leadership skills, and connections facilitating relationships within and beyond the design industry.

In addition, Alice Twemlow, Ph. D, the co-chair of the Master of Arts in Research, Writing and Criticism program at the School of Visual Arts in New York, and co-director of the Master of Arts in Design Curation and Writing at Design Academy Eindhoven, states in her book *What's Graphic Design For?*, “designers who want their work to inform, delight, [change human consciousness] and connect will need to know much more about the people they are talking to, their beliefs and backgrounds” (Twemlow, 2006 p. 80). Therefore, to develop this research-based thesis project, a human-centered design approach, and the exploratory study of social research were fundamental to understanding the Mexican women designers interviewed.

Additionally, an ongoing collaborative manifesto called *¡Porque soy Mexicana!* was designed to celebrate the mutual influence and support of each Mexican woman designer that participated in the exploratory research study. The manifesto also served to

describe the purpose of the thesis research document, *Mujeres Mexicanas del Diseño Gráfico: Showcasing the Current Women Creative Directors of Graphic Design in Mexico City*.

Designing Perspectives intends to demonstrate how the communication design discipline can positively impact society by provoking a change in human consciousness (Twemlow, 2006) through instigating and continuing the conversation about the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity in the design field in Mexico City, all while the audience immerses themselves in the interactive exhibition. By doing so, this project can be an educational tool for future generations of up-and-coming designers as they identify these Mexican women creative directors and view them as inspiration for their design practices.

This project-based thesis, *Mujeres Mexicanas del Diseño Gráfico: Showcasing the Current Women Creative Directors of Graphic Design in Mexico City*, is committed to empowering women in design and advancing discourse on the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity in design. It aims to recognize contemporary Mexican women designers and by doing so, to confront the male-dominated design field by bringing awareness to, and instigating productive conversations around, the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

### **Bauhaus Women's Graphic Design History**

In this section, Barajas introduces the ultimate groundbreaking art and design school, Bauhaus—the most famous art college of the twentieth century (Arnason, 2010). Besides, Barajas discusses the research of gender inequality in the Bauhaus by Ania Baumhoff in her book *The Gendered World of the Bauhaus* (Baumhoff, 2002) and Magdalena Droste in her book, *Bauhaus* (Droste, 2002).

The Bauhaus was a school founded by German architect Walter Gropius (1883–1969) in 1919 in Weimar, Germany. Two already existing schools, Weimar Academy of Fine Art and the School of Arts and Crafts, were fused to create the new Bauhaus. Gropius, an architect considered way ahead of his time, embodied the designs and ideas of modernism at the Bauhaus school, both in theory and in practice. The Bauhaus movement left such an impact that the advancements made at the time are still influencing areas of design more than 100 years later (Bretschneider, 2012).

According to Gropius, one of the Bauhaus philosophies was to equip artists to understand the creation of art and craft in the design discipline and give them an understanding of the theory of art (Bretschneider, 2012). The most renowned design discipline pioneers, architects, painters, sculptors, artists, and craftsmen of the time, such as Wassily Kandinsky, Paul Klee, Josef Albers, Marcel Breuer, and Laszlo Moholy-Nagy, started their education and careers at the Bauhaus. It was an environment that encouraged experimentation with materials and techniques. Students were taught to be socially responsible artists who were present in the community, not secluded from it. Still today, the Bauhaus is thought of as a remarkable example of modernism, which holds up

style and functional design (Bretschneider, 2012). But was the Bauhaus revolutionary in terms of gender equity?

In an attempt to answer this question, there have been numerous studies on gender equity at the Bauhaus. One of the first to conduct research about gender imbalance of the artistic avant-garde of the Weimar Republic was Ania Baumhoff (2002). Her book *The Gendered World of the Bauhaus* (Baumhoff, 2002) examines the gender policy of the Bauhaus, showing that gender inequality was present in the groundbreaking German art and design school. In addition, Baumhoff wrote:

In fact, the democratic tradition which is associated today with the Bauhaus was undermined by an ambiguous conception of craftsmanship and by a conception of art based on notions of male genius, which differentiated between three categories of art: fine art (*Kunst*), such as painting and sculpture; arts-and-handcraft (*Kunstgewerbe*), like pottery and weaving, and handcraft or craftsmanship (*Handwerk*), such as carpentry. Moreover, these categories were themselves gendered: high art and handicraft were male domains, but arts-and-crafts was female occupation, with comparatively low status. While the first Bauhaus statutes, such as its admission policies, explicitly prohibited sexual discrimination against women, the *de facto* Bauhaus policy did just that (Baumhoff, 2002, p. 19).

Baumhoff's extensive research found the gender policy disparities of the Bauhaus. The courses offered to women were more aligned with crafts and textiles instead of sculpture and painting (Baumhoff, 2002). Despite the Bauhaus being seen as the ultimate model of modernity, the women studying at the Bauhaus during the 1913–1933 period were segregated to the textile workshop, under the direction of designer and weaver Gunta

Stölzl (1897–1983), and created abstract textiles suitable for use in Bauhaus environments (Griffith Winton, 2016). The workshop trained many prominent textile artists, including Anni Albers (1899–1994), who continued to create and write about modernist textiles throughout her life (Griffith Winton, 2016).

The artistic avant-garde of the Weimar Republic turns out to have been much more socially conservative than previously imagined because women were assigned to the Weaving Workshop, which was then operated like “a women’s department” (Droste, 2002). In addition, Magdalena Droste, Bauhaus Archive researcher, states in her book, *Bauhaus*, in the “Women, Men, Couples” chapter states, “There was, on the whole, little change in the role of women at the Bauhaus. Traditional gender models persisted, in which women were seen as/ or considered/ or treated as “natural beings” and men as “cultural beings” (Droste, 2002, p. 28). Further, Droste briefly mentions how Lucia Moholy, László Moholy-Nagy’s wife, and Ise Gropius, Walter Gropius’s wife were both successful women at the Bauhaus in Dessau, but “virtually invisibly” (Droste, 2002). Droste wrote,

“the price both women paid for working in the shadow of their influential husbands was that their names disappeared behind those of their partners, and their own achievements were never really recognized” (Droste, 2002, p. 29).

In summary, the Bauhaus school of art and design is a remarkable example of modernism. Still, the research conducted by Baumhoff and Droste shows gendered policy disparities in the school where women were assigned to the crafts and textiles called “women’s department.” Besides, the talented Lucia Moholy and Ise Gropius, two of the Bauhaus pioneers’ wives, remained in their husbands’ shadows. Therefore, to continue



the research and the conversation about gender imbalance in design, the next section looks into the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity in the United States design industry.

### **United States Graphic Design Gender Statistics**

To discuss the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity in the United States design industry, we must start with a solid understanding of the most recent statistics from The American Institute of Graphic Arts (AIGA) Design Census of 2019. AIGA is the profession's oldest and largest professional membership organization for design—with more than 70 chapters and more than 18,000 members around the world. The organization's aim is to be the standard bearer for professional ethics and practices for the design profession. According to the AIGA website there are currently over 22,000 members and 73 chapters, and more than 200 student groups around the United States. AIGA members practice all forms of communication design, including graphic design, typography, interaction design, branding, and identity. From content that defines the global practice to events that connect and catalyze, they work to enhance the value and deepen the impact of design across all disciplines on business, society, and our collective future (The American Institute of Graphic Arts, 2019).

The Design Census was created by Google and the AIGA in collaboration with Accurat, a data visualization design and research studio based in Brooklyn, New York, and *Eye on Design*, the award-winning editorial platform founded in 2015 and published by the AIGA. Each April all U.S. designers are invited to take the Design Census survey with the aim of creating deeper and more informed conversations about where the design

industry is now, and where it is headed. A total of 9,429 people participated in the 2019 Design Census, and its raw data are available on a free and open-source platform as a collaborative resource for examining the complex economic, social, and cultural factors shaping design practice in the United States today.

A total of 9,429 people participated in the 2019 Design Census. The 2019 AIGA Design Census was open to the public for five weeks starting April 1, 2019. It was shared directly with AIGA's members and attendees of the AIGA Design Conference and the broader U.S. design community via social media paid advertising, and *Eye on Design's* readership. The methodology used on the 2019 AIGA Design Census was a Python code created in collaboration with Google, Accurat, and *Eye on Design*. This Python code enabled them to work with quantitative and qualitative data, regardless of the number of responses, as some questions enabled the user to select multiple-choice answer options (Design Census, 2019).

To get a more accurate picture of the current state of design in the United States, including how designers work, how much they get paid, and what their hopes and dreams (and concerns) are for the future, they started with Section I: "who is designing in 2019?" that includes data about Age, Gender, Employment, Design Discipline, Salary, and LGBTQIA+ identity. For example, in Section I of the AIGA Design Census, *Age Data Visualization* (see Figure 2.1), we can observe that most designers in the United States are between the ages of 20 and 40. The *Gender* data (see Figure 2.2) shows that more women than ever are in the design workforce, at 61 percent; women are 5,798 of the total 9,429 people who participated in the Design Census last year. The *Gender + Employment Type Data Visualization* (see Figure 2.3), we can observe how women outnumber men in

all categories of job types. For example, 1,587 designers identified as female work full-time in-house compared to the 1,008 designers identified as male. In the women self-employed/small business owner category, there are 441 female designers compared to 393 male designers. In academia, the statistics show 193 female designers and 157 male designers that work as educators. The students' category describes the most relevant statistic; there are 259 female designers than 94 male designers. In the *Gender + Design Discipline* Data Visualization (see Figure 2.4), the Notes section explains that designers could answer multiple options for design discipline. It is divided by female and male because the number of respondents who identify as non-male or non-female was too small to be statistically significant. Statistically, women designers are more likely to work on social impact and illustration while men are more likely to work in tech-based design disciplines like Augmented Reality/Virtual Reality (AR/VR), Artificial Intelligence (AI), game design, motion graphics, and interactive design.

The following data visualizations are from the 2019 AIGA Design Census organization website [designcensus.org](https://designcensus.org) (Design Census, 2019), and they are displayed here to aid visualization of the data comparisons written in the earlier section.

# Age

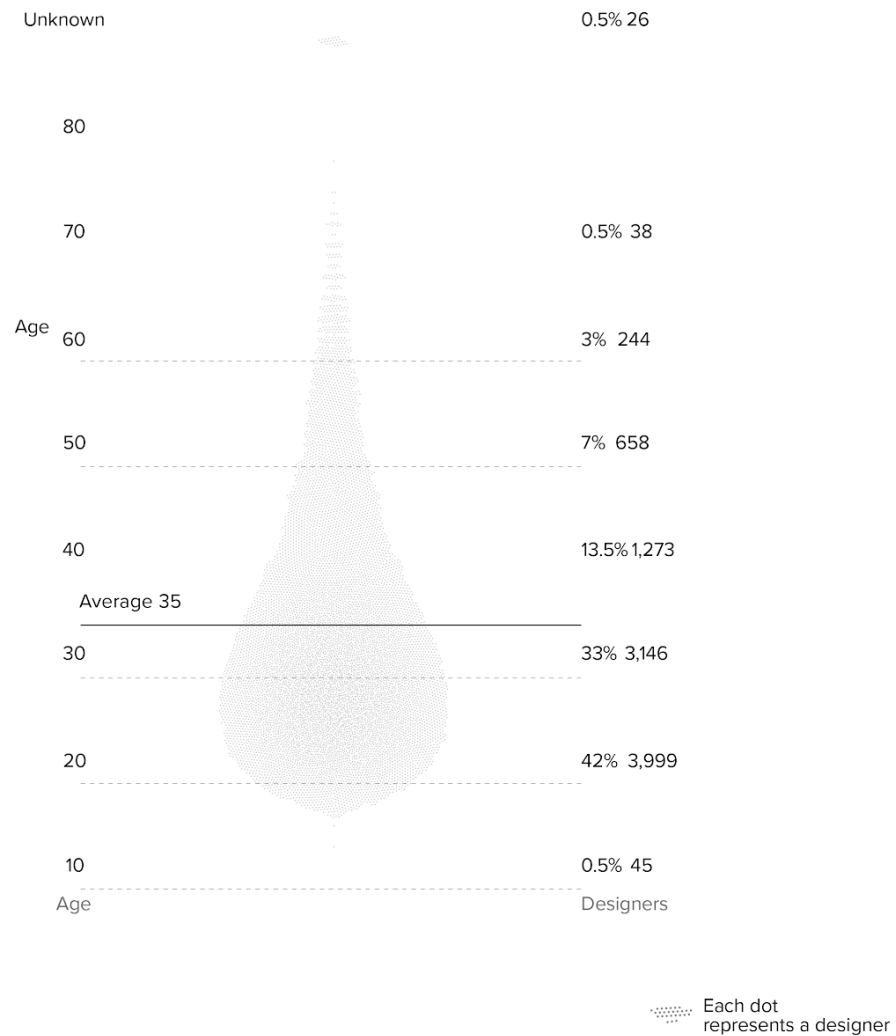


Figure 2.1 Section I: Who's designing in 2019? Age Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census

# Gender

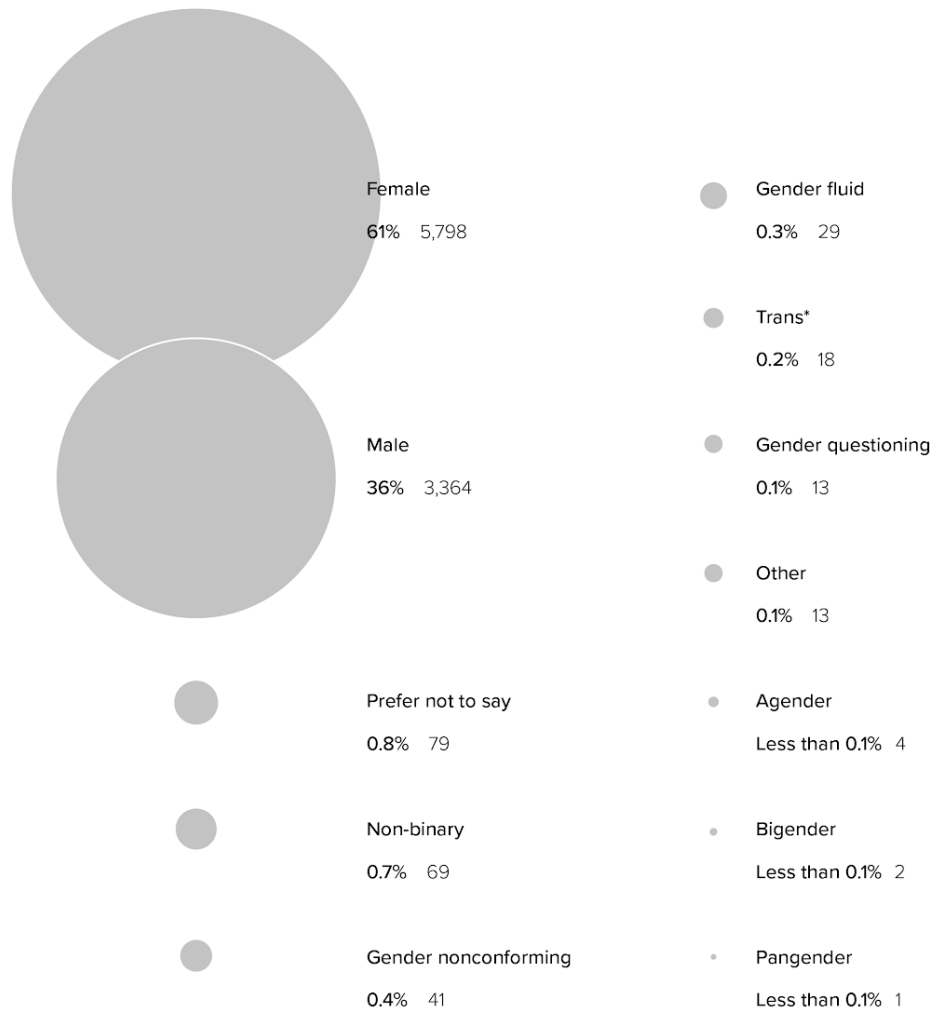


Figure 2.2 Section I: Who's designing in 2019? Gender Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census

# Gender + Employment type

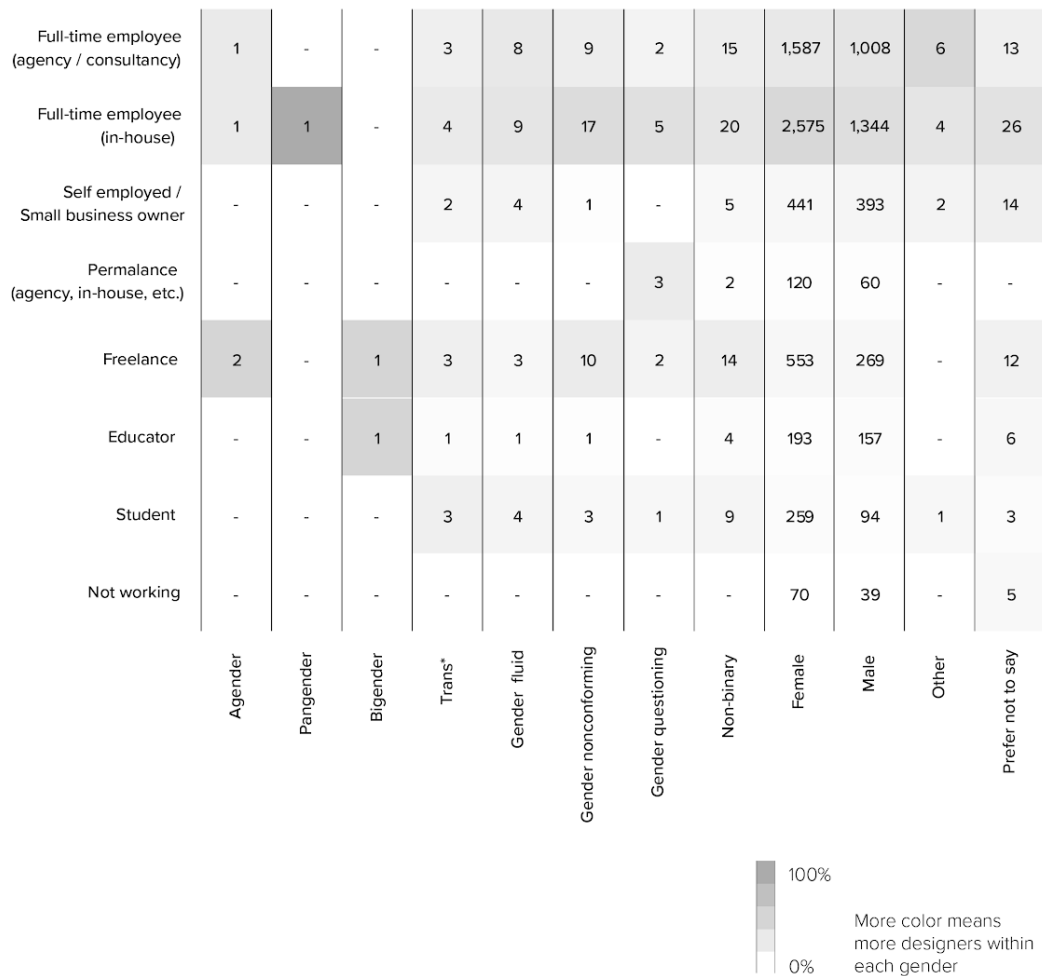
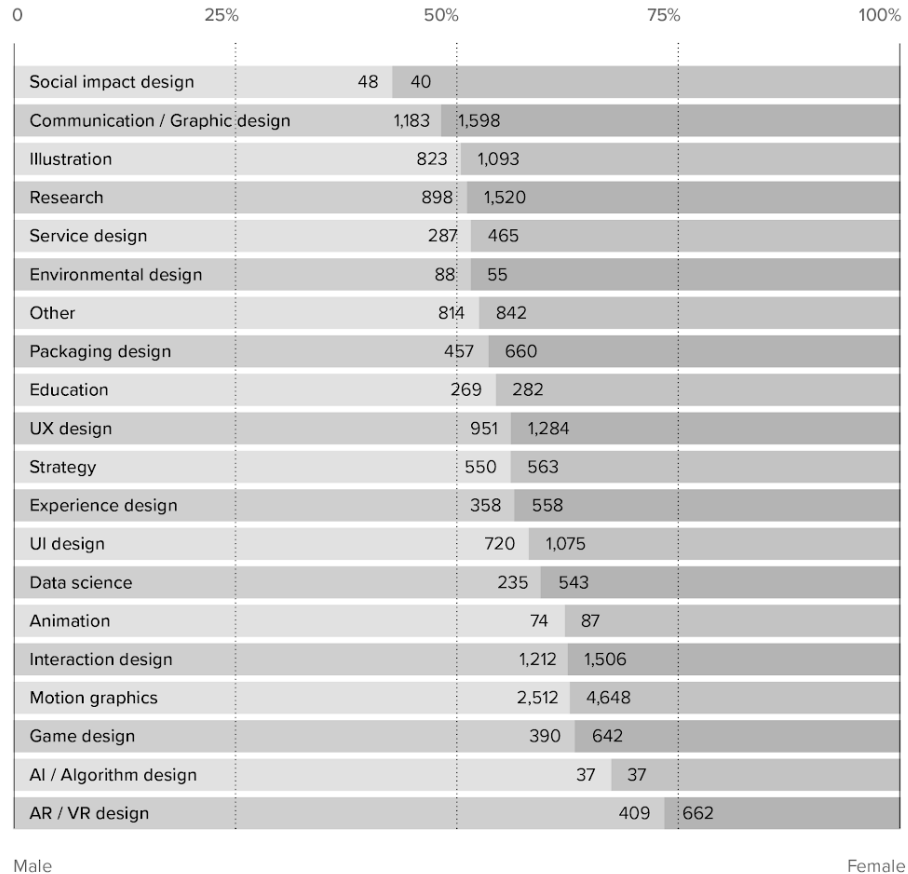


Figure 2.3 Section I: Who's designing in 2019? Gender + Employment Type Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census

# Gender + Design discipline



Notes:  
Every designer could answer multiple options for design discipline.

The respondents who identify as non-male or non-female was too small to be statistically significant.

Figure 2.4 Section I: Who's designing in 2019? Gender + Design Discipline Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census

Beyond gender in graphic design, by observing these two data visualizations—the *EthnicityLGBTQIA+* and the *Ethnicity LGBTQIA+* graphs—the data shows the number of designers who identify as LGBTQIA+ as 15 percent, or 1,436 designers of the total 9,429 people who participated in the Design Census (see Figure 2.5 and 2.6). This data opened a window of possibilities for the AIGA Design Census to research further the impact of the interconnectedness of sexual orientation and ethnicity in the design field, and how it can benefit the LGBTQIA+ community.

In addition, in the *Ethnicity* data visualization (see Figure 2.6), we can observe that most designers in the United States who responded are White/Caucasian (71%) and Asian (36%). The ethnicities with lower percentages of representation are Latina/Latino/Latinx/Hispanic (8%), which is a low percentage number representing 732 designers. The number of Bi-Multiracial respondents was 5 percent, with 443 designers. The number of Black/African American respondents was 3 percent, with 318 designers.

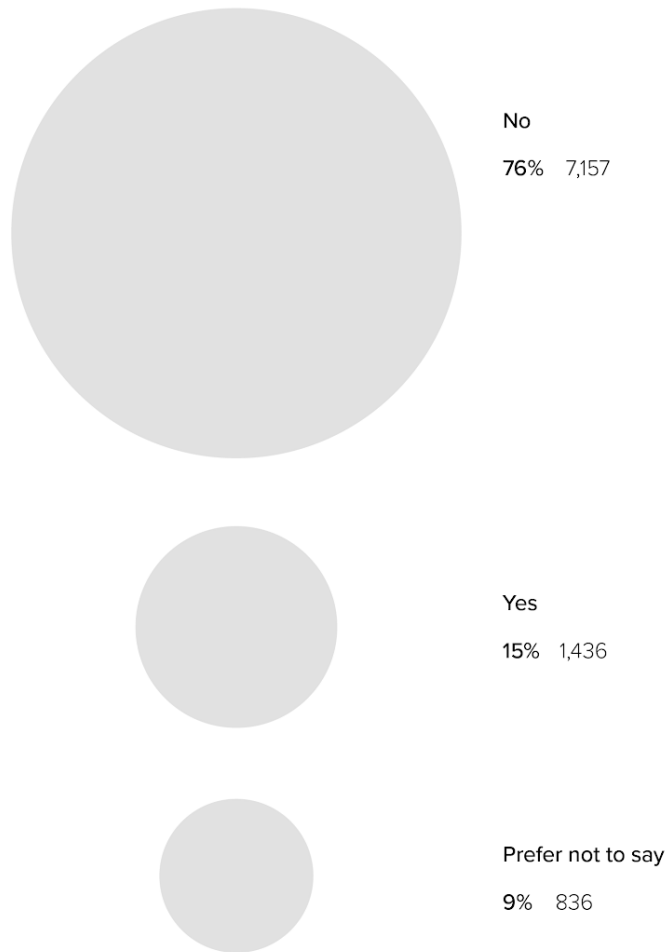
In comparison with the latest United States Census Bureau data estimates suggest about 40 percent of Americans identify as racial or ethnic minorities (US Design Census, 2019). In addition, nationally, the most significant racial demographic groups as of 2019 were White Non-Hispanic (76.3%), Black Non-Hispanic (13.4%), Asian Non-Hispanic (5.9%), American Indian/Alaska Native Non-Hispanic (0.2%), Two or More Races (2.8%). Separately, Hispanics of any race accounted for 18.5 percent of the U.S. population. Some estimates presented here come from sample data, and thus have sampling errors that may render some apparent differences between geographies statistically indistinguishable (US Design Census, 2019).



Therefore, if we compared the Latina/Latino/Latinx/Hispanic (8%) designing today in the United States against the 18.5 percent of the U.S. population, we will observe how the majority of designers today, White/Caucasian (71%) are the ones designing for the United States population. After observing this data, the following questions come up: Does having a predominately white/caucasian race workforce affect a company's creative output in the United States? Since we tend to design for ourselves, are we fair to the whole of society? Now, let's take a closer look at the AIGA Design Census data visualizations of Section III: *How much are designers making today?*

Section I: Who's designing in 2019?

# LGBTQIA+



*Figure 2.5* Section I: Who's designing in 2019? LGBTQIA+ Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census

# Ethnicity

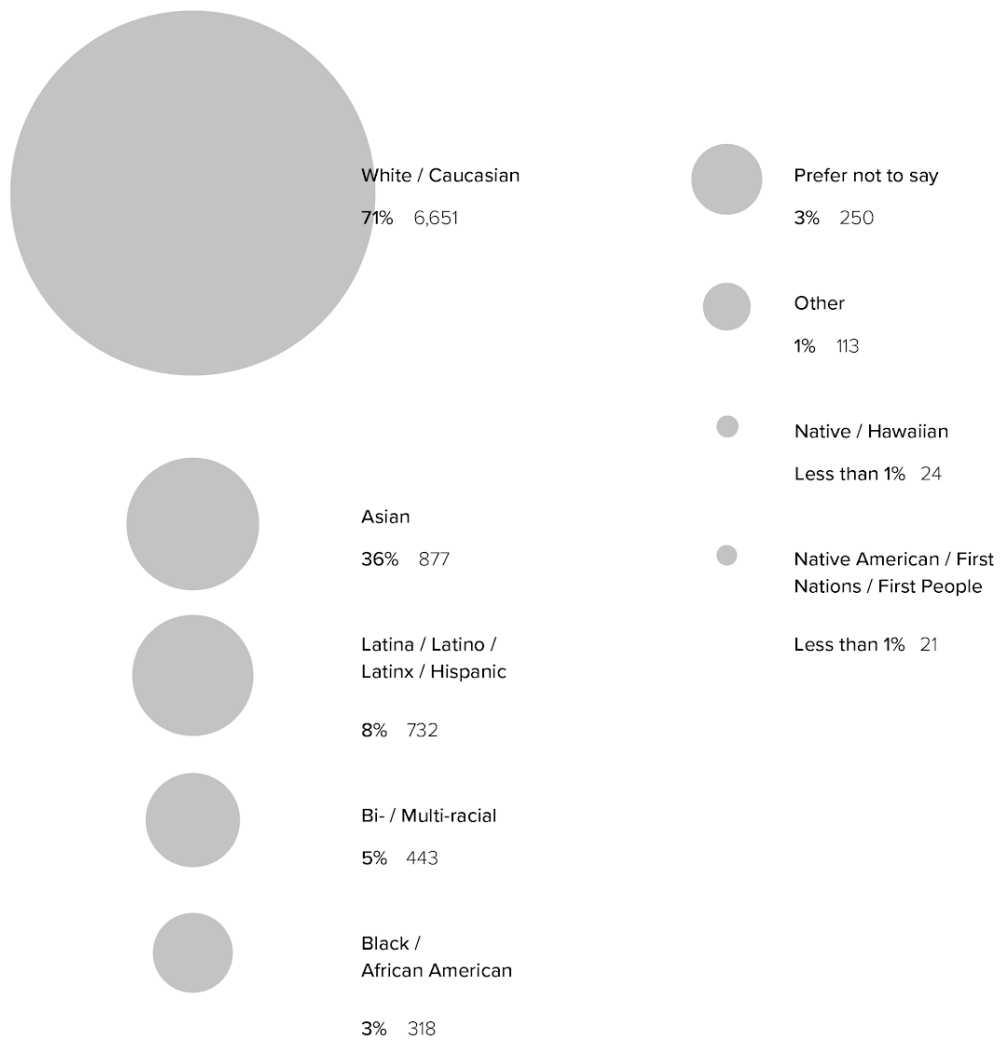


Figure 2.6 Section I: Who's designing in 2019? Ethnicity Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census

Section III of the AIGA Design Census focuses on *How designers are compensated for their work?* For example, a closer look at the *Salary Data Visualization* (see Figure 2.7) reveals some disparities in what designers are paid. According to the AIGA Design Census, most designers who answered the survey make between \$50,000—\$74,999, regardless of gender. Perhaps unsurprisingly, the smallest number of designers (2.5%) make more than \$200,000 a year, which tracks with a lower percentage of high-level designers who answered the survey. Global creative directors command the highest pay, at an average \$146,777 annually, while junior designers are paid the least, at \$44,837 a year (Design Census, 2019). In the AIGA Design Census *Salary + Gender Data Visualization* (see Figure 2.8), we can observe that men are more likely than other genders to make more than \$150,000 a year. This tracks with national data showing that women hold just 11 percent of leadership positions in the design industry and make 80 cents on the dollar compared to their male counterparts (Design Census, 2019). While fewer than 3 percent of designers identified as something other than male or female, almost all of them make less than \$25,000 a year.

# Salary

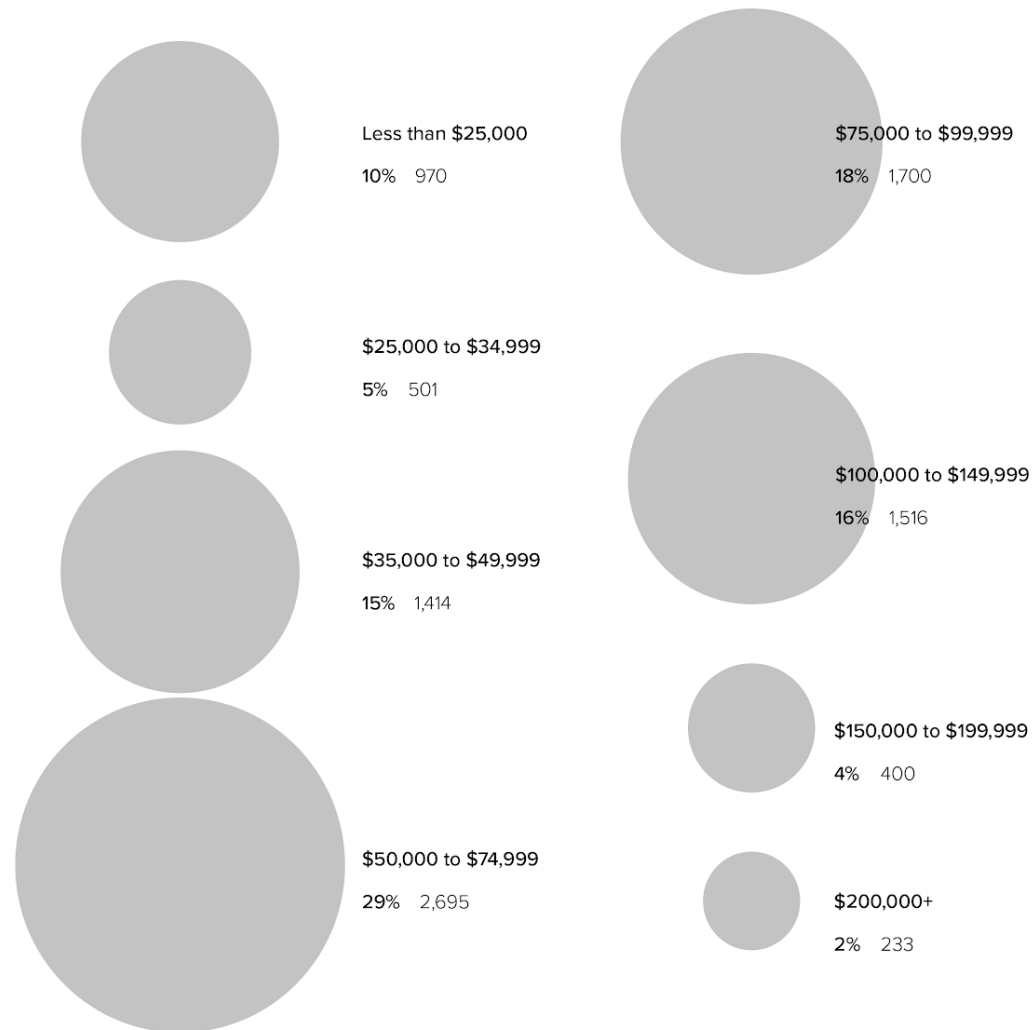
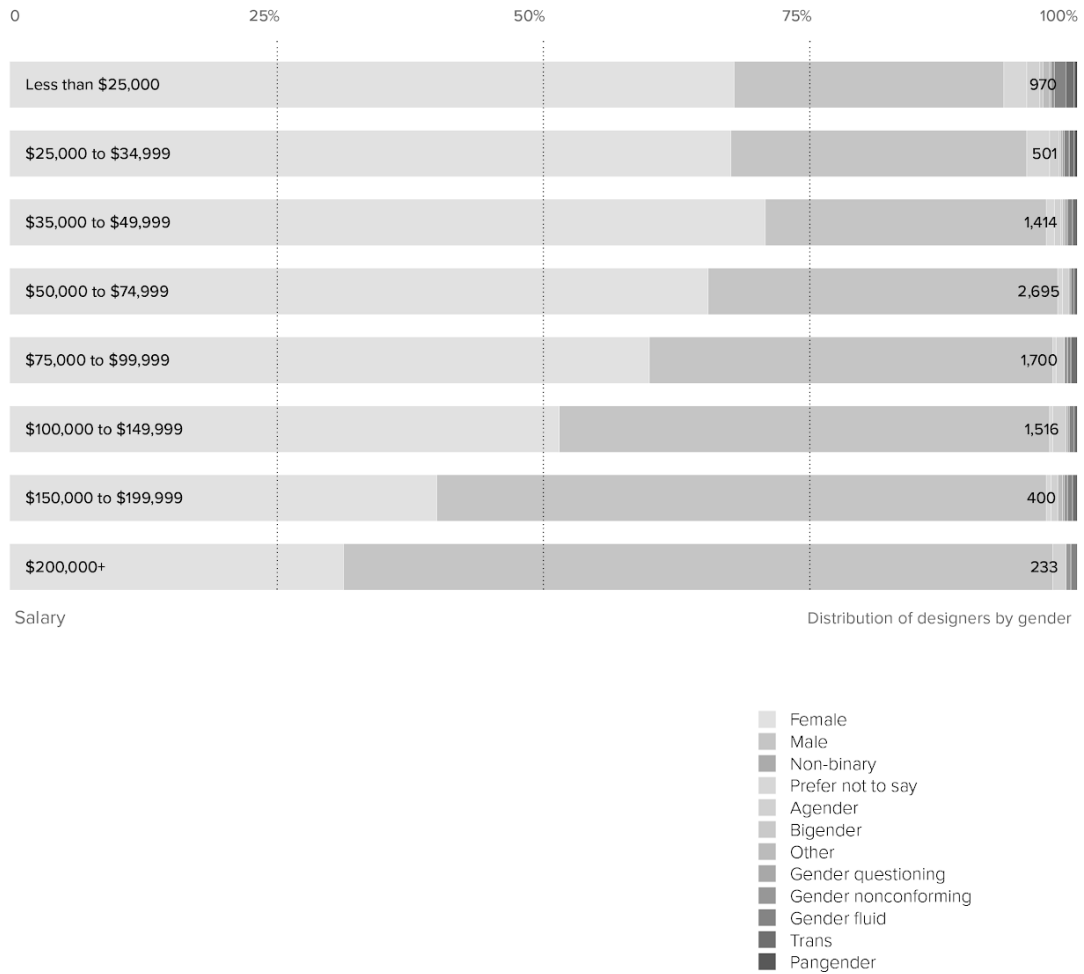


Figure 2.7 Section III: Who's designing in 2019? Salary Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census

Section III: How much are designers making?

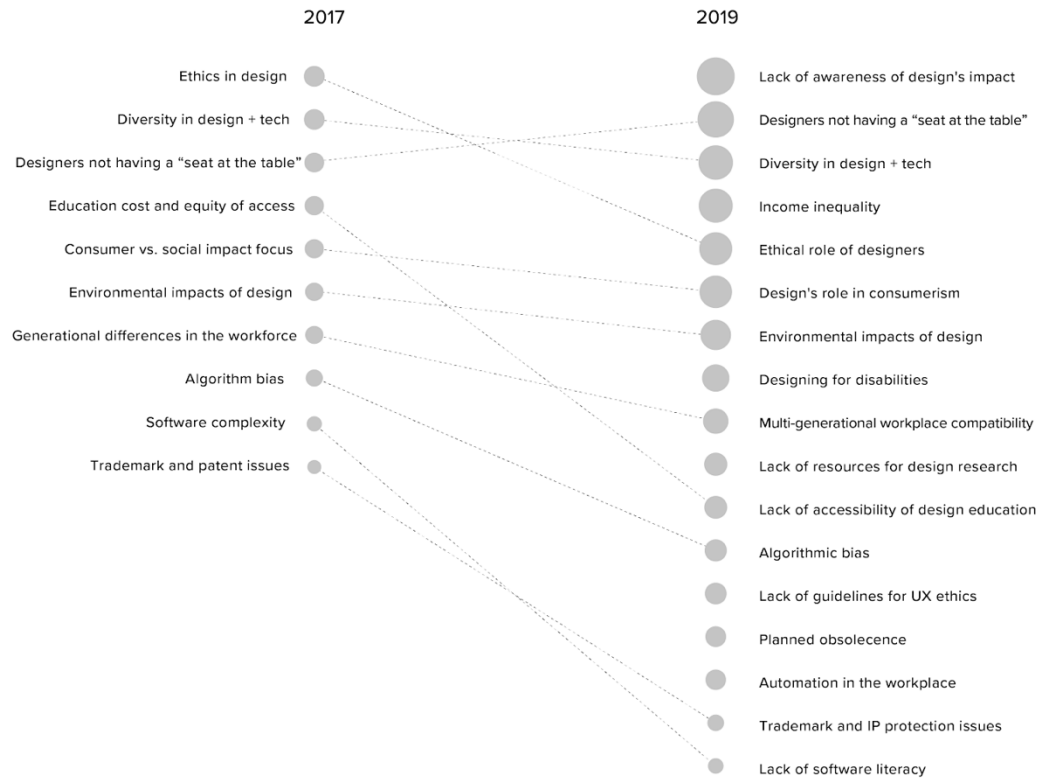
# Salary + Gender



*Figure 2.8* Section III: Who's designing in 2019? Salary + Gender Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census

In addition to recording and presenting salary and gender in graphic design statistics, the AIGA Design Census Section V focuses on *What designers think about the future of the industry*. The following data visualization is *What are the most important issues facing design?* (see Figure 2.9) shows the third most crucial issue facing design in 2019 is diversity in the *Diversity design + tech* category within *What are the most important issues facing design?* data visualization. Also, the AIGA Design Census states, “Beyond the boardroom, plenty of designers are concerned about the lack of diversity in design and technology” (Design Census, 2019). Barajas found this section of the AIGA Design Census relevant to her thesis research since Section V has examined the data and analyzed the current state of the design industry between gender equity and diversity. Leading Barajas to ask these follow-up questions: Why do women hold just 11 percent of leadership positions in the design industry but outnumber men in every category, especially in school as students? Why is there a gender pay gap whereby women make 80 cents on the dollar compared to their male counterparts? Why is there still an unequal representation of ethnicities in the design industry? And finally, why does diversity matter in the design industry?

## What are the most important issues facing design?



*Figure 2.9* Section V: What do designers think about the future of their industry?  
What are the most important issues facing design? Data Visualization by AIGA Design Census



## Diversity & Inclusion in Design Conferences

The most recent research about gender inclusivity in design conferences was documented in Morley's article for *Eye on Design*, "*We Surveyed Gender Equality at the World's Biggest Design Conferences—and the Numbers Are In*" (Morley, 2019). As a response to gender inclusivity in design conferences, designers Silva Baum, Claudia Scheer, Lea Sievertsen created a digital platform called *Notamuse*. *Notamuse*, an ongoing collaborative woman self-started project, focuses on the lack of female graphic designers' visibility in the design public in contemporary graphic design in Europe. For their investigation, they counted speaker lineups that *Eye on Design* attended or covered at conferences between winter 2017 and winter 2018. Their goal was to evaluate "which conferences were worth supporting, and which must do better when it comes to gender inclusivity" (Morley, 2019).

Conference organizer committees are responsible for the speaker lineups; therefore, there should be gender balance on these design conferences committees. As Madeleine Morley states, "If the majority of those given the stage are men, the implicit suggestion is that the most valuable perspective is that of a man" (Morley, 2019). Additionally, Morley writes,

Our investigation found that, on average, U.S. conferences had a gender breakdown of 54.6% women, whereas in Europe the average was 35.7%. Across all the speakers, when looking at how many spoke on stage alone rather than with partners or in groups, 36% were women and 64% were men (Morley, 2019).

These statistics show that there is a bias towards men in design conferences, and women are less likely to receive the same representation. Morley and *Notamuse* mention their

data lacks racial diversity inclusion since they researched conferences as a whole, but they did not survey each speaker to identify their race or ethnicity. Morley states,

Gender inclusivity isn't the only issue when it comes to lineups: The design industry must be more inclusive of racial and ethnic minorities too, as well as other underrepresented groups, is there meant to be a parenthetical here? Just want to make sure it's either deleted or closed off including those underrepresented when it comes to age, sexual orientation, socio-economic status, and physical ability (Morley, 2019).

Another example of the lack of gender inclusivity in design conferences is the 2018 Alliance Graphique Internationale Open conference hosted in Mexico City. *Notamuse's* statistics of this conference show that 37.5% were women speakers, and 62.5% were men speakers. The amount of time women spent onstage at this design conference was 30.1%, versus 69.9% for men. Why is there lack of representation of women designers in design conferences?

A concept that can help understand the lack of representation of women designers in design conferences is unconscious bias. Unconscious biases are social stereotypes about certain groups of people that individuals form outside their own conscious awareness (Navarro, 2018). For example, Dr. Magdalena Zawisza, briefly describes:

What exactly is unconscious gender bias and why do we have it? Unconscious, or implicit, bias happens outside of our control and awareness. It's automatic and reflects the associations we acquire as we socialize into the culture we grow up in (2016).

Zawisza explains that the unconscious gender bias has its roots in the social world in which we live, and to decrease this unconscious gender bias, there must be an equal participation of men and women in social gender roles (Zawisza, 2016). Taking one of Zawisza's suggestions, which is to create awareness of bias by encouraging the equal participation of men and women in different aspects of society, in this case, in design conferences, a change must be achieved in which each design conference or panel has equal participation of men and women as the speakers.

Dr. Giazú Enciso Domínguez, a Mexican professor, explains how unconscious bias works in our society by explaining the contribution of the following feminist epistemologies:

- the dissolution of the reason-emotion dyad
- the problematization of the association emotion to feminine and reason to masculine
- the concept of experience as a source of knowledge production

(Enciso Domínguez & Lara, 2014).

Enciso Domínguez states how our society is divided into two large spheres, producing gender stereotypes that affect our perception of the world, creating unconscious gender bias. The feminist perspective explains how society has been built based on gender differences. That is, we have produced and reproduced these divisions; it is not natural but learned.

According to Enciso Domínguez's research, this series of associations pose a kind of emptiness in women with respect to rationality, "therefore it is defined as being emotional, not highlighting this as a quality but as an absence of reason. In other words,

the feminine as irrational” (Enciso Domínguez & Lara, p.281, 2014). The preliminary research on gender inclusion in design conferences is central to Barajas' research on diversity and gender inclusion in design. Besides, it is also crucial for the research as it sets the stage to evaluate the data from the Alliance Graphique Internationale Open 2018 conference organized in Mexico City and gives an opportunity to introduce the concept of unconscious bias as a potential reason for the lack of women's representation at design conferences.

### **Mexico Graphic Design History**

In this section, to understand the problem of gender imbalance in Mexico design, Barajas researched Mexico's graphic design history. This section will provide a brief how the *Popular Graphics Workshop*, the visual identity of an American designer Lance Wyman of the 68' Olympics games, the Bauhaus influence in Mexico, and the *Madero Press* all contribute to current graphic design in Mexico. However, Barajas agrees with professor Kloss Fernández del Castillo of the *Mexican Association of Schools of Graphic Design*, there is not enough documentation of how graphic design began in Mexico (Kloss Fernández del Castillo, 2006). Therefore, the scarce documentation of the history of graphic design in Mexico leaves a notable lack of representation of Mexican women designers in Mexico.

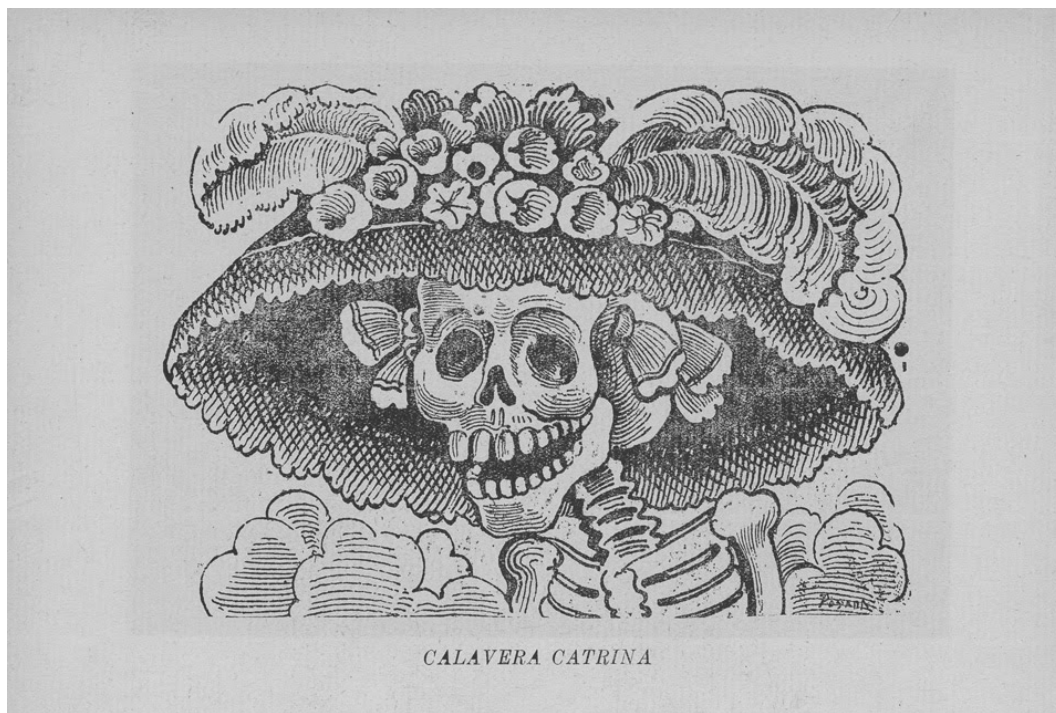
### *The Popular Graphics Workshop*

When thinking of great Mexican graphic designers who made an impact on the country's design history, people often think of Jose Guadalupe Posada, a notable printmaker known for his political illustrations of *Calaveras*, especially *La Catrina* (Buffington & Salazar, 2018) (see Figure 2.10, 2.11, and 2.12). In addition, Vicente Rojo, designer and typographer from Barcelona, Spain, known for his extensive design work for the *Palace of Fine Arts* in Mexico City and the *Madero Press* (Rojo & Montalvo, 2007) (see Figure 2.13 and 2.14) and Lance Wyman, an American designer, the creator of the Mexico 68 Olympic games visual identity (Castaneda, 2014). These three men—a Mexican printmaker and illustrator, a Spaniard designer and typographer, and an American designer—were the most renowned and constant names during the research about graphic design in Mexico.

Designer and author Luis Almeida talks in his article for *Print* magazine *Made in Mexico: Today's Graphic Design* (Almeida, 1997) about how the post revolutionary period in Mexico (1910–1920) was a turning point in the arts, the development of its scientific community, and the beginning of Mexican graphic design history. Almeida, explains:

The postrevolutionary period and its one-party governments allowed a stability that was reflected in Mexico's greatest esthetic contribution—mural painting. Later, the *Popular Graphics Workshop* and the lithography, woodcuts, and relief etchings of José Guadalupe Posada (1852–1913) also had a profound influence on Mexican printmaking and graphics (Almeida, 1997, p. 106).

The *Popular Graphics Workshop* and José Guadalupe Posada's political illustrations of *Calaveras* purpose was artistic experimentation, and their ultimate goal was to find an aesthetic language that was still not graphic design. It wasn't until the second half of the twentieth century when the Olympic Games were held in Mexico that graphic design became a profession in Mexico. The Olympics was the design project, and the design team was headed by Lance Wyman. According to Luis Almeida, (1997) "The 1968 Olympics mark the true beginning of modern design in Mexico. It was then that design first became recognized as a useful cultural discipline" (Almeida, 1997, p. 106). Therefore, the beginning of modern design in Mexico ironically started with a non-Mexican male designer hired by the Olympics committee to create the iconic 1968 Olympics branding campaign that put Mexico on the map of graphic design.



*Figure 2.10 Calavera de la Catrina* (Skull of the Female Dandy), from the portfolio 36 Grabados: José Guadalupe Posada, published by Arsacio Vanegas, Mexico City, c. 1910, zinc etching, 34.5 x 23 cm. Image obtained in the Metropolitan Museum of Art project Archive





Figure 2.11 The skeleton of the people's editor (Antonio Vanegas Arroyo) Image obtained in the Metropolitan Museum of Art project Archive



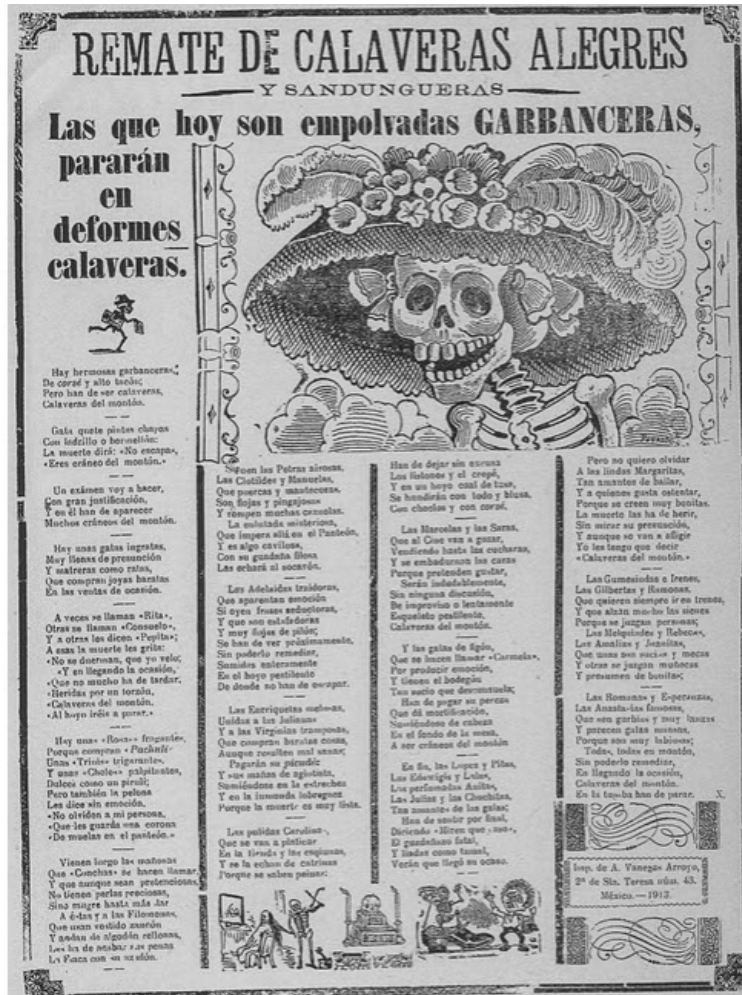


Figure 2.12 José Guadalupe Posada, *Calaveras*, broadsheet, 1903. Image obtained in the Metropolitan Museum of Art project Archive

plural

a b c d e f g h i j k l m n  
o p q r s t u v w x y z  
: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 0 :

*Figure 2.13 Vicente Rojo Plural 1971.* Image obtained from Luc Devroye, School of Computer Science, McGill University Montreal, Canada Archive



*Figure 2.14 Vicente Rojo Logotipos.* Image obtained from Luc Devroye, School of Computer Science, McGill University Montreal, Canada Archive

### *The influence of Bauhaus in Mexico City*

In the year 1949, José Chávez Morado founded the *Plastic Integration Workshop in La Ciudadela* to teach and practice public art. Later on, it became the headquarters of the *Artisan Workshop of the Ministry of Communications and Public Works*, led by Carlos Lazo and Raúl Cacho (Kloss Fernández del Castillo, 2006). Raúl Cacho met Hannes Mayer, former director of the Dessau Bauhaus in Mexico in 1940, and both dreamed of organizing a Mexican Bauhaus (Kloss Fernández del Castillo, 2006). By 1950 Raúl Cacho was working with Carlos Lazo on the design of the *City University*, implementing urbanization, landscape, buildings, public art, and furniture and objects (Kloss Fernández del Castillo, 2006).

A notorious example of the influence of the Bauhaus in Mexico was the modular architecture's influence in 1952 when Carlos Lazo assigned Raúl Cacho a project of 500 houses for workers, the so-called *civilized caves of Belén de las Flores* (Kloss Fernández del Castillo, 2006). This ambitious project integrated architecture and urban planning by building the complex on a modular principle using industrially prefabricated components like in the houses of Törten Housing Estate in Dessau (Droste, 2002). This project was not completed, however, because Carlos Lazo yielded to political pressure that accused them of being “forbidding communists” and canceled the project (Kloss Fernández del Castillo, 2006).

Another example of the influence of the Bauhaus and graphic design as a discipline in Mexico in the 1960s is Clara Porset, an exiled Cuban woman designer (see Figure 2.15) and former student at the Bauhaus. Clara Porset, influenced by Bauhaus's ideas, believed that design could reshape cities, elevate the quality of life, and solve

large-scale social problems that inspired her 1952 exhibition *Art in Daily Life* (see Figure 2.16) (Kloss Fernández del Castillo, 2006). The exhibition *Art in Daily Life* was the first design exhibition in Latin America at the *Palace of Fine Arts* in México City. It showcased modern furniture designs from local materials and handmade and industrial manufacturing techniques (Kloss Fernández del Castillo, 2006). Despite her success as a woman designer in Mexico during the 1960s, she suffered the same as the women designers at the Bauhaus school, never really recognized and in the shadow of Mexican male designers.



*Figure 2.15* Clara Porset with Alfonso Rojas. Photography by Elizabeth Timberman. Esther McCoy papers, Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution



*Figure 2.16* Clara Porset chairs, 1952. Photography by Julius Schulman. J. Paul Getty Trust. Getty Research Institute, Los Angeles

*Mexico 1968 Olympics pinnacle branding campaign goes full circle*

On October 12, 1968, the Olympics were held in Mexico, the first country in Latin America to host the Olympics games. Mexican architect Ramírez Vázquez, president of the Olympic Games Committee, was in charge of the development of the branding campaign and hired an international team of designers, lead by American designer Lance Wyman (see Figure 2.17). 1968's Olympic games branding campaign team included signage expert Peter Murdoch, architect Eduardo Terrazas, publication designer Beatrice Trueblood, sculptor Mathias Goeritz and established a before and after in the use of graphic design as a multicultural communication link for the first time in Mexico (Balcazar, 2019).

Outside of the Olympic Games, 1968 was a year defined by intense social restlessness on more than one continent (Kurlansky, 2005). In the United States, in April of 1968, one of the greatest leaders of America's greatest moral struggle, Martin Luther King Jr., was shot dead in Memphis at age 39. Two months later, Robert F. Kennedy was shot dead in Los Angeles, after winning the California Presidential Democratic primary and becoming the leader in the race for the party nomination and perhaps the presidency itself. American combat in Vietnam had been underway for several years, and in March 1968, American troops committed what became the most notorious mass slaughter of civilians of that war, the massacre at My Lai. The foreign war and the protests at Columbia University in New York City exemplified the wave of the student activism that swept the globe in 1968, including mass demonstrations in Poland, West Germany, Mexico City, Paris, Italy. On May 6, known as "Bloody Monday," students and police clashed in Paris' Latin Quarter, resulting in hundreds of injuries. As the protests



continued, millions of French workers began striking in sympathy with the students, eventually leading President Charles de Gaulle to dissolve the National Assembly, call for immediate elections and threaten military intervention (Kurlansky, 2005).

The spirit of rebellion even seeped into the Summer Olympics Award Ceremony in Mexico City. After being awarded gold and bronze medals, respectively, in the 200-meter sprint event in the Summer Olympics in Mexico City, U.S. athletes Tommie Smith and John Carlos bowed their heads and raised their black-gloved fists in a recognized salute to the Black Power movement during the playing of “The Star-Spangled Banner” (Kurlansky, 2005). Smith and Carlos were consequently thrown off the U.S. Olympic team. Despite their removal, they were seen as heroes in the black community, and their silent protest against racial discrimination lives on as one of the most iconic images in sports history (Kurlansky, 2005).



*Figure 2.17* Eduardo Terrazas, Pedro Ramírez Vázquez, Mathias Goeritz, Peter Murdoch, and Lance Wyman (1967) photography obtained at The Gradient magazine

According to an interview in *Design Week* with Lance Wyman in 2016 titled “*Lance Wyman: It's important to remember that you don't know everything*” (Dawood, 2016) Wyman describes how he and his design partner Peter Murdoch spent time at the *Museum of Anthropology*, where they studied artifacts from pre-Columbian Mexico, like the Aztec Sun Stone and Toltec warrior statues (see Figure 2.18 and 2.19). In the next figures (see Figure 2.20 and 2.21) we can observe shapes derived from Mexican artifacts were used alongside experimentation with geometry to incorporate the year ‘68’ and the Olympic five rings, forming the final visual identity (Dawood, 2016) as well as the Mexico68 Olympic Games Identity, Mexico City, Mexico, 1966 (see Figure 2.22).

Furthermore, the *Radiant Discord: Lance Wyman on the '68 Olympic Design and the Tlatelolco Massacre* article in *The Gradient* magazine author Emmet Byrne states, “there are designs that, for one reason or another, transition from being simply *of* their time to *defining* their time” (Byrne, 2014). Lance Wyman’s identity in 1968 exemplifies how design can be transcendent, to be a brand identity used as a cultural artifact during the Olympic games (Byrne, 2014) as we can observe the photography of the Olympic stadium design (see Figure 2.23).



*Figure 2.18* Aztec carving obtained at *The Gradient* magazine



*Figure 2.19* Toltec warrior statues obtained at *The Gradient* magazine

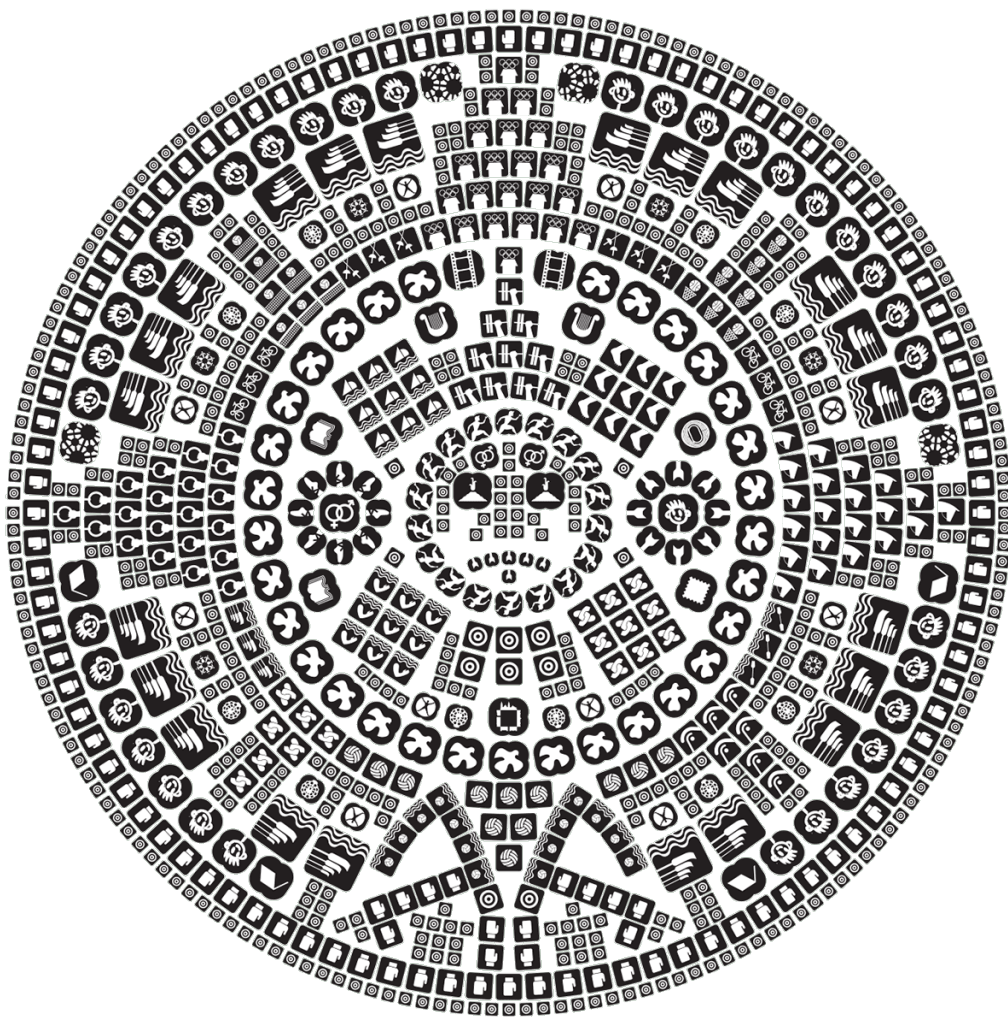
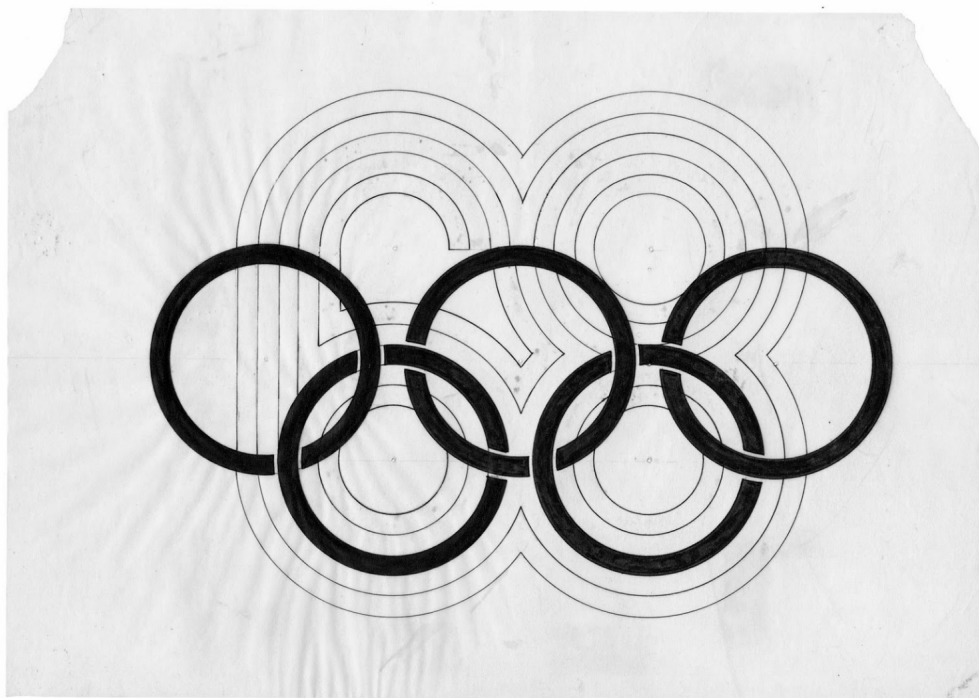


Figure 2.20 Aztec sundial created from Olympic symbols obtained at *The Gradient* magazine



*Figure 2.21 Mexico68 Olympic Games Identity, Original compass sketch obtained at *The Gradient* magazine*



*Figure 2.22 Mexico68 Olympic Games Identity, Mexico City, Mexico, 1966*



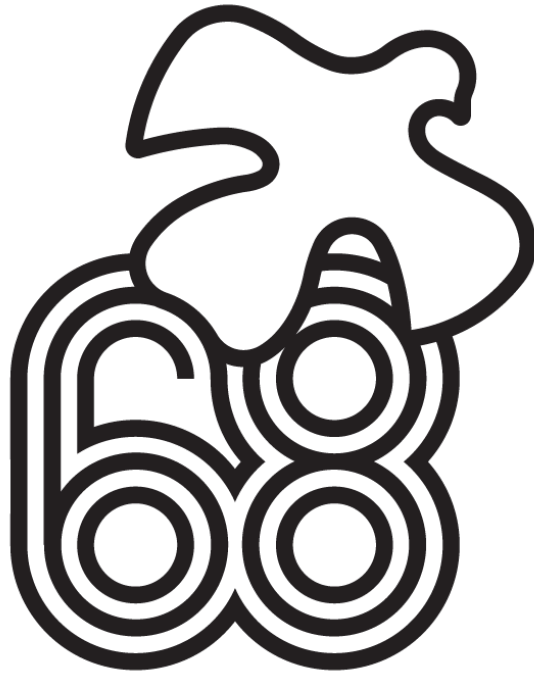


*Figure 2.23* Olympic stadium design Mexico68 Olympic Games Identity, Mexico City, Mexico, 1966 obtained at *The Gradient* magazine

While the design team was working hard on the 1968 Mexico Summer Olympics branding campaign, Mexico experienced deep social unrest as students flooded the streets in protest. The protest movement demanded a more transparent dialogue with the long-ruling government Institutional Revolutionary Party, freedom for political prisoners, an end to corruption, and government accountability for widespread and violent repression (Kurlansky, 2005).

Ten days before the Mexico Olympic 68 Games' opening ceremony, Mexican army forces opened fire on crowds of unarmed student-led, anti-government, pro-social justice protests, killing hundreds and injuring thousands in what became known as the Tlatelolco Massacre (Kurlansky, 2005).

Lance Wyman cites one of his most memorable and rewarding projects to date as working on the visual identity for a university museum in Tlatelolco in Mexico and he states, "The identity goes full circle" (Dawood, 2016). The icon, which reincarnates the Olympic Mexico '68 logo alongside a dove symbol, serves as a memorial to the Tlatelolco massacre (Dawood, 2016) (see Figure 2.24).



*Figure 2.24* Tlatelolco Memorial logo, Tlatelolco University Cultural Center at UNAM Mexico City, Mexico, 2014

### *Graphic design as a discipline in Mexico*

According to professor Kloss Fernández del Castillo in his article for the *Mexican Association of Graphic Design Schools*, describes Lance Wyman's iconic branding campaign of the 1968 Olympic Games as the turning point for the professionalization of graphic design discipline Mexico (Kloss Fernández del Castillo, 2006). The first institution that included a graphic design program in its curriculum was the Iberoamerican University in 1968 (Kloss Fernández del Castillo, 2006), and in 1974, the first woman to obtain the graphic designer's title was Ana María Peláez Villegas (Kloss Fernández del Castillo, 2006). Graphic design as a career began in Mexico at the Iberoamerican University in 1968. The successful branding campaign of the XIX Olympic Games could have been the turning point for the recognition of graphic design as a discipline in Mexico.

### *The Madero Press' influence on the contemporary designers in Mexico*

During the same period, *Madero Press* was founded and served, too, as a training ground for a number of contemporary designers in Mexico. According to Almeida, “the first press to support its recognition of the value of good design with an in-house design department—began large cost-efficient print runs in connection with the publication of sizable editions for mass distribution” (Almeida, 1997, p. 106).

For example, in the following timeline *Contemporary Designers & Apprentices of the Madero Press in Mexico City* (see Figure 2.25), designers such as Adolfo Falcón (b.1944), Rafael López Castro (b. 1945), Luis Almeida (b. 1946), and Bernardo Recamier (b. 1953) worked under the supervision of Vicente Rojo (b. 1932). Germán Montalvo (b.

1956), like López Castro, are known throughout Latin America for their outstanding poster design and have contributed to the education of many young design students.

The three women designers mentioned in the graphic design history book of *Made in Mexico: Today's Graphic Design* (Almeida, 1997) are Peggy Espinoza (b. 1954), who specializes in designing children's publications, Azul Morris (b. 1954), whose most important work has been redesigning the magazine *Artes de México*, and María Figueroa (b. 1955) also spent their formative years in the *Madero Press*. Others who benefited from the training in the *Madero Press* are Efraín Herrera (b. 1953) who has since moved on to be part of the staff of the newspaper *La Jornada*; Pablo Rulfo (b. 1954) a dynamic, restless designer currently working on the magazine *Alfil*; Miguel Marín (b. 1955) and Rogelio Rangel (b. 1963) who both began their careers as designers at the *Madero Press*. Luis Almeida, states:

They worked under the supervision of Vicente Rojo (b. 1932), whose knowledge of typography, expertise in the technical aspects of printing, and experiments with color and high-contrast film made him an invaluable and influential presence in the graphic design history of Mexico (Almeida, 1997, p. 106).

Therefore, the legendary *Madero Press*, under the creative direction of designer Vicente Rojo, achieved complete training in printing for these contemporary Mexican designers, and their collective work marked a stage of graphic design history in Mexico—the recognizable identity of the *Madero Group* (Almeida, 1997).

## Contemporary Designers & Apprentices of the Madero Press in Mexico City

*Under the supervision of Vicente Rojo, the legendary Madero Press led a large team of printers and designers to mark a stage of graphic creation in Mexico—the recognizable identity of the Madero Group.*

### 1932

Vicente Rojo (b. 1932), designer & typographer from Barcelona, Spain, known for his extensive design work for the Palace of Fine Arts in Mexico City and the Madero Press.

### 1945

Rafael López Castro (b. 1945), designer known throughout Latin America for distinguished poster design.

### 1953

Efraín Herrera (b. 1953) Designer trained and experienced in printmaking at the Madero Press; his work had a notable influence on Mexico's design.

### 1955

María Figueroa (b. 1955) Graphic designer began her career at the Madero Press. Miguel Marín (b. 1955), belongs to an upcoming generation of Mexican graphic design. He trained professionally at the legendary Madero Press, which was also a unique publishing company and functioned as an exploratory design house of design ideas and concepts, which reflects on Marín's design.

### 1944

Adolfo Falcón (b.1944), designer and apprentice of Vicente Rojo during the 1960's in Mexico City.

### 1946

A Mexican industrial designer collaborated with Vicente Rojo at the Madero Press, and in 1985, he went to the magazine *Redacta* where he was ahead of the Editorial and Industrial Design. Almeida was a founding member of 'QUORUM—Mexico Designer's Council.'

### 1954

Peggy Espinoza (b. 1954), Mexican editorial and graphic designer specializes in designing children's publications and was part of Madero Press for eight years. She founded *Petra Ediciones* in 1990. Director of Art and Design of the newspaper *Siglo 21*. Azul Morris (b. 1954), Mexican graphic designer whose most outstanding work has been redesigning the magazine *Artes de México*. She worked as an assistant to Vicente Rojo at the Madero Press, and in 1985 she studied her postgraduate degree at the School of Design in Basel, Switzerland. Pablo Rulfo (b. 1954), a dynamic Mexican designer, moved on to work on the magazine *Alfil* in Mexico.

*Figure 2.25 Contemporary Designers & Apprentices of the Madero Press in Mexico City Timeline*  
designed by Flor Barajas

### *Mexico graphic design today*

This section describes the creative industry's current situation in Mexico based on the research article *Prospective analysis of graphic design in Mexico* published in September 2020 by Mexican professors Susana Rodrigo Gutierrez, Carolina Trejo Alba, and Ervey Leonel Hernandez Torres from the *Autonomous University of Baja California* and members of the *CITEC Engineering and Technology Center*. According to their research article *Prospective analysis of graphic design in Mexico*, graphic design as a discipline and a career in Mexico has had tremendous growth since the last decade (Trejo Alba, Rodríguez Gutiérrez, & Hernández Torres, 2020). In addition to their research, an article in *Forbes Mexico*, called *Mexico City*, the mecca of world design (Trejo Alba, Rodríguez Gutiérrez, & Hernández Torres, 2020) The information from the *Mexican Institute of Competitiveness*, summarizes the national creative industry's growth as follows:

In the last ten years, it is estimated that in Mexico, about 7% of the gross domestic product came from the creative industries and has grown at 0.18% in this period.

If they grow according to their potential and probabilities, the creative industries could increase in the coming years between 3% and 4% per year. For example, the interior design industry represents 0.14 of gross domestic product. It is on the rise with a general expansion overview of the estimated annual discipline of 20%.

Design in its different branches is the third career nationwide, with the most significant young people's incursion: 46% (Quesada, 2016).

Furthermore, Design Week Mexico and the Mexican government promoted the candidacy of Mexico City as the World Capital of Design, leading Mexico City to win the headquarters for 2018. It is the first metropolis in Latin America to be awarded the

headquarters of Design Week (Quesada, 2016). Emilio Cabrero, director of Design Week Mexico, stated, “These events position Mexico and the participants on the international level. Plus, it brings significant investment into the city. The idea is to contribute to the international design industry and to achieve cultural exchanges” (Quesada, 2016).

In summary, the graphic design history in Mexico started with an iconic graphic design by an American male designer, the Mexico 68’ Olympic Games branding identity, which produced an international projection of the legacy of Mexican culture in graphic design and established graphic design as a career in Mexico (Almeida, 1997). The *Madero Press*, under the creative direction of designer Vicente Rojo, provided a complete training in printing for contemporary Mexican designers, and their collective work marked a stage in the history of graphic design in Mexico (Almeida, 1997). Still, only three female designers are mentioned in the book about graphic design in Mexico. In addition to the influence of the Bauhaus in Mexico, Clara Porset lacks the same representation level as the graphic designers of their time. Due to the scarce documentation of the history of graphic design in Mexico, the findings of this research are that the graphic designers described are almost all men. Therefore, notable Mexican women designers in the 1960s do not have the same level of representation in graphic design in Mexico as their male counterparts.



### **III. GENDER EQUITY IN GRAPHIC DESIGN**

#### **Gender Equity Focus on Mexico City**

During her research on the history of graphic design in Mexico, Barajas, a proud Mexican American woman designer, wondered: Why is there more documentation of men in design books? Why is there still a lack of representation of women's work today?

Although established in the early sixties, Mexico's graphic design industry is relatively new globally. Barajas focused her research in Mexico City because Mexico City is considered the hub of design in Mexico, with many international design events taking place in the capital city, such as Design Week Mexico, World Design Mexico, and the 2018 Alliance Graphique Internationale Open - AGI Open. Therefore, by implementing intersectional feminism in her thesis research Barajas' discloses the lack of representation of female Mexican designers throughout graphic design history in Mexico and leaves an opportunity to shine a light on contemporary Mexican women designers.

#### **Intersectional Feminism**

In 1989, intersectional feminist theory was introduced by Professor Kimberlé Crenshaw of the UCLA School of Law and Columbia Law School in the essay *"Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine"* (Crenshaw, 1989). The theory of intersectional feminism presents a conceptual framework to analyze complex systems of oppression that marginalize and discriminate against non-dominant people due to their social identity. This conceptual framework serves the purpose to disclose "the nuance and complexity of social power inequities at the intersection of varying identities, not just as they relate to

gender but also race, sexual orientation, class, age, ability, and more” (Place, 2019). Feminism *must* be intersectional because systems of oppression should be examined through a lens in which we are forced to consider different dimensions in individual experiences rather than rounding up together large social groups. Therefore, Barajas' follows the theory of intersectional feminism conceptual framework in this research to disclose today's gender equity and diversity in design.

### *Intersectional Feminism Methodologies in Design Practice*

Although intersectional feminism originated in legal doctrine, it has since been widely adopted outside of legal scholarship in the social sciences and the humanities nationally and internationally as an essential analytical tool to study and examine the ways in which structures of power interact to produce distinct conditions of social inequality that affect groups and individuals differently. Ali Place, a designer and educator committed to equity and inclusion through design, in her article *Designers should be all feminists* (Place, 2019) for the The AIGA Design Educators Community blog, states "designers should be feminists. Feminism is a natural ally to design, given its commitment to issues such as agency, fulfillment, identity, diversity, and empowerment" (Place, 2019). Therefore, designers should care about implementing intersectional feminist methodologies in their design practice.

Barajas, a feminist, followed the steps described Place in her article *Designers should be all feminists* (Place, 2019) to apply an intersectional feminist approach to her design thesis research. The following steps *1.Critically examine power, 2.Focus on human-centered design research, 3.Understand the historical context, 4.Embrace*

*complexity + plurality* and 5. *Speak out*; are the beginning of the design thinking process of disclosing the complex social issue of gender imbalance in design, focusing on Mexico City through an interactive traveling exhibition called *Designing Perspectives*.

1. *Critically examine power*, Barajas did the uncomfortable work of acknowledging her privilege and implicit bias.

2. *Focus on human-centered design research*, conducted interviews with each Mexican woman designer, instead of designer-centered research methods like “bodystorming” and fictional personas based on stereotypes.

3. *Understand the historical context*, in this case, understand the history of graphic design in Mexico.

4. *Embrace complexity + plurality*, get comfortable with the reality that her research about the gender imbalance in a socio-cultural machista country can be complicated, and interviewees might not be comfortable sharing their own experiences. Social problems are complex, and a solution cannot be wrapped up in a neat and tidy toolkit. Instead, design for a plurality of open-ended, responsive outcomes that address not only individual issues of discrimination, but also the underlying causes of systemic oppression.

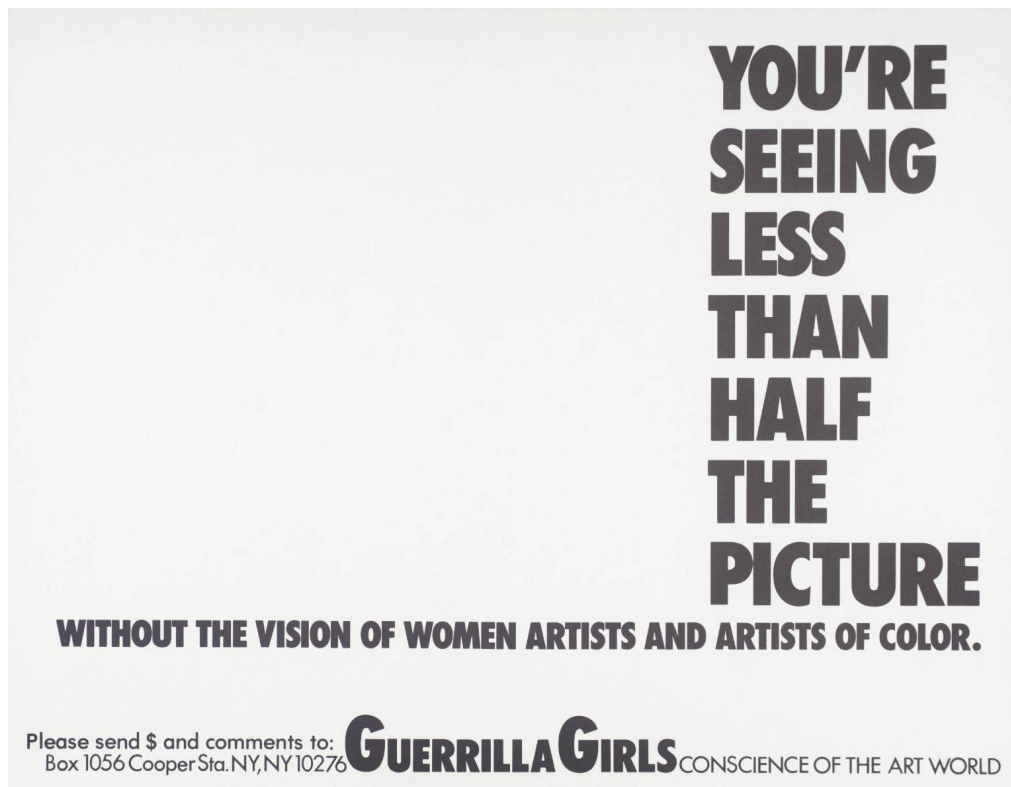
5. *Speak out*, Barajas uses her platform as a graduate student at Texas State University to be a voice of change.

In the feminist spirit of challenging the status quo, and using her platform as a graduate student at Texas State University, Barajas’ project, an interactive traveling exhibition called *Designing Perspective*, aims to make contemporary Mexican women designers visible by bringing awareness to and instigating productive conversations

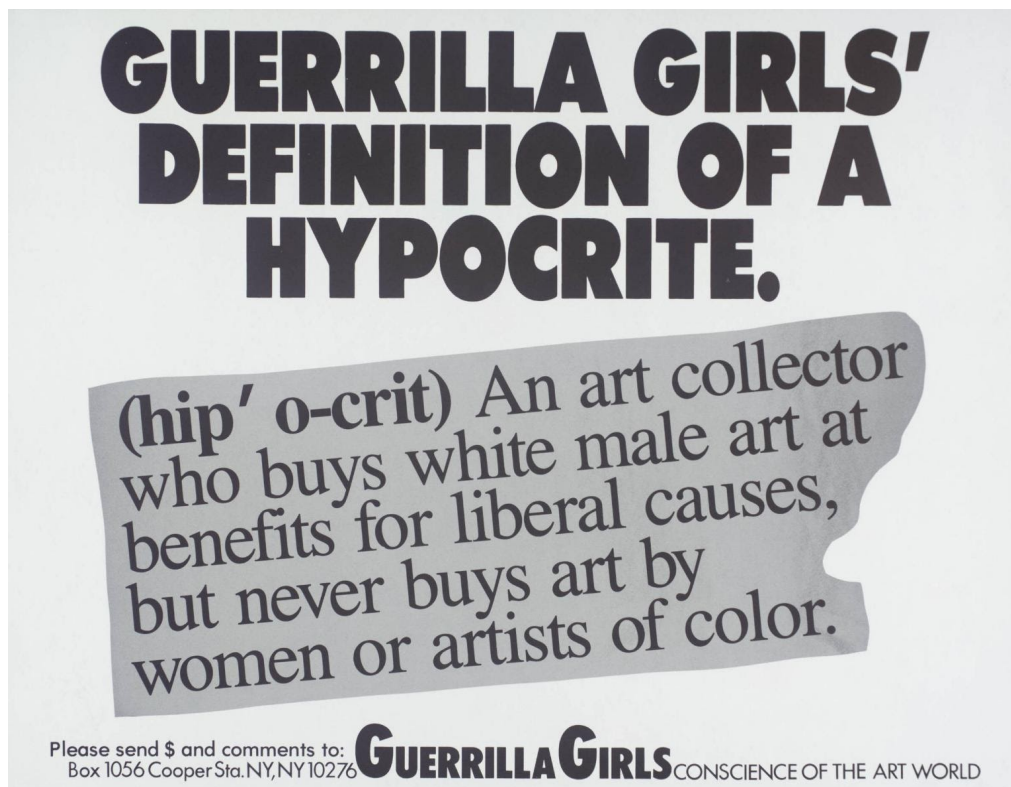
around the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity in design. This exhibition will be described later in Chapter V *Creative Process, Interactive Traveling Exhibition Design Overview*.

### **Gender Equity Projects in the United States and Europe**

In this section, Barajas describes some self-initiated projects by female designers around the United States and Europe dedicated to the recognition of women in design. For example, the *Guerrilla Girls*—the award-winning collective founded in 1985, aims to highlight the exclusion of women and non-whites in the art industry (Guerrilla Girls, 1985–2020) by implementing intersectional feminism that fights discrimination and supports human rights for all people and all genders. The *Guerrilla Girls* are feminist activist artists, and their anonymity keeps the focus on the issues, and away from who they might be. They wear gorilla masks in public and use facts, humor and outrageous visuals to expose gender and ethnic bias as well as corruption in politics, art, film, and pop culture (Guerrilla Girls, 1985-2020). They do projects and exhibitions worldwide, including New York, Los Angeles, Minneapolis, Mexico City, Istanbul, London, Bilbao, Rotterdam, and Shanghai, to name just a few. In 2018, Barajas had the opportunity to appreciate their famous series of posters in *Tate Modern Permanent Collection Room with Andy Warhol and The Guerrilla Girls, 2016–Present* in the Tate Modern gallery in London (see Figure 3.1 and 3.2).



*Figure 3.1 Guerrilla Girls, You're Seeing Less Than Half The Picture 1989 displayed in the Tate Modern Permanent Collection Room with Andy Warhol and The Guerrilla Girls, 2016–Present exhibition in the Tate Modern gallery in London*



*Figure 3.2 Guerrilla Girls, Guerrilla Girls' Definition Of Hypocrite 1990 displayed in the Tate Modern Permanent Collection Room with Andy Warhol and The Guerrilla Girls, 2016–Present exhibition in the Tate Modern gallery in London*

The book *Women in Graphic Design 1890–2012* by Gerda Breuer and Julia Meer (Breuer & Meer, 2012) presents the most historically significant female designers and traces their outstanding career paths through short biographies, essays and conversations with well-known contemporary American, Dutch, Swiss, and German female designers such as Irma Boom, Paula Scher, Sheila Levrant de Bretteville, “Swiss Miss” Tina Roth Eisenberg, Katja M. Becker, Anna Berkenbusch, Heike Grebin, Gisela Grosse, Miriam and Nina Lambert, Iris Utikal, and Judith Grieshaber (see Figure 3.3).

In the Spring of 2018, a thesis project called *Led By Example* by Farah Kafei and Valentina Vergara from the Pratt Institute was mentioned in Emily Gosling’s *Eye on Design* article *How Can We Bring a More Inclusive History to Design Education?* (Gosling, 2019). Designers Kafei and Vergara, in response to their frustration with the gender imbalance amongst their professors and design history education, created their thesis project called *Led by Example*, and the creative outcome was manifested in various ways; a publication called *Missing pages* documented female designers throughout history in striking monochrome and neon green, with distorted typography (see Figure 3.4). An interactive installation called *Missing Pages*, where pages from the publication were printed at a bigger scale and hung around the Pratt Institute (see Figure 3.5), and a free panel discussion event *Against All Odds*, which focused on gender disparity in graphic design education and its effects.



*Figure 3.3* Photography of the *Women in Graphic Design 1890–2012* book by Gerda Breuer and Julia Meer (Breuer & Meer, 2012)



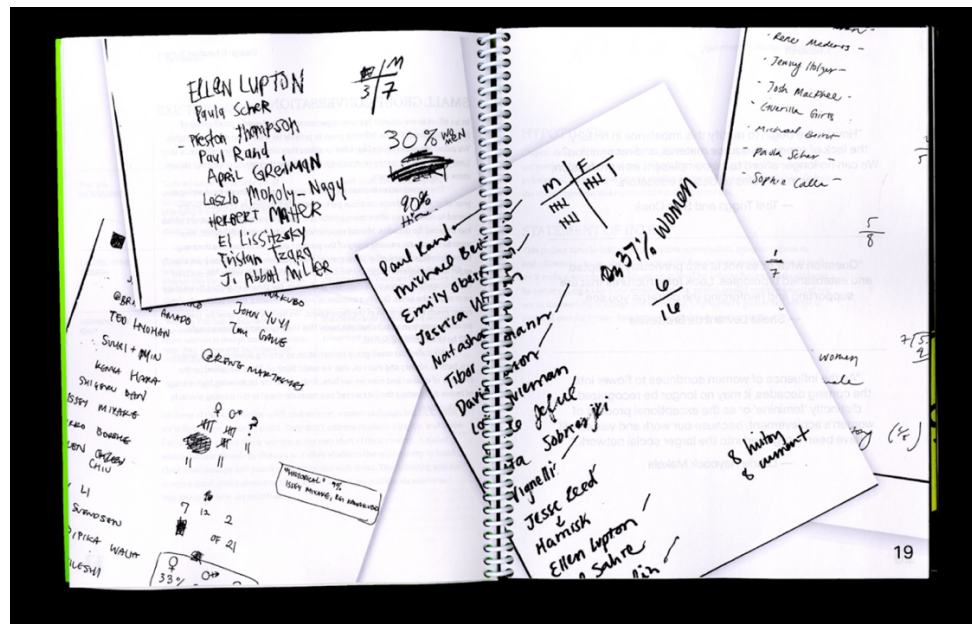


Figure 3.4 Kafei and Vergara, *Missing Pages* publication photography obtained from the *Eye on Design* magazine



*Figure 3.5 Kafei and Vergara, Missing Pages interactive installation photography obtained from the Eye on Design magazine*

By looking at these women designers' self-started projects, we can observe that in the recent decade, Caucasian contemporary female graphic designers in Europe and the United States are gradually being recognized. But where is the racial diversity and inclusion of these several women designers' projects? Are their projects focused on gender imbalance, while leaving out diversity? All these self-initiated women designers' projects, books, and thesis projects lack racial and ethnic diversity, as there are few Latinx, Asian, African American women designers mentioned. The lack of diversity is notable, and it leaves the opportunity to develop research and focus on Mexican women designers' documentation in Mexico City.

Male and female graphic designers have been working actively and successfully in Mexico, but why are only three women designers mentioned in the graphic design history book of *Made in Mexico: Today's Graphic Design* (Almeida, 1997)? Even today, the lack of representation of female Mexican designers in Mexico City leaves a significant opportunity to shine a light on the Mexican women designers who have been overlooked in relation to their male counterparts. Barajas sets out to repair this omission and intends to contribute to the graphic design field by collecting the experiences of contemporary female creative directors and their contributions to Mexico City's growing design industry. The collection of data gathered by conducting interviews with these Mexican women designers serve as an educational tool to understand their challenges and successes as women designers in Mexico City.

## **Addressing Gender Equity in Graphic Design with AIGA Women Lead Initiative Model**

Barajas, a Mexican female designer about to enter the design field, found the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity in the design field as the two factors that seized her attention and provided the purpose for her thesis research. Following the AIGA Women Lead Initiative model, this thesis proposes to highlight cultural identity awareness by disseminating knowledge of the contemporary Mexican women in graphic design in Mexico City.

According to the AIGA Women Lead Initiative, “*Women today outnumber men in AIGA’s membership—as in design schools and disciplines—yet leadership, representation, and parity remain a challenge*” (Women Lead Initiative, 2020). Founded in 2014 by Su Mathews Hale and Deborah Adler, the AIGA Women Lead Initiative aims to address persistent biases and inequities inclusively and constructively through programming around three goals: Celebrate the achievements of women in design, cultivate awareness of gender-related issues, while building knowledge, leadership skills, and connection by facilitating relationships within and beyond the design industry.

## IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### Qualitative Exploratory Social Research Study

Barajas's research methodology was to conduct a qualitative exploratory social research study to explore social behavior and mental processes but with an emphasis on how Mexican women designers think about gender and diversity imbalance within the design in Mexico City. In order to start an exploratory social research study in academia, Barajas had to complete the Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative (CITI Program) Protection of Human Research Subjects training course, plus get approved by the Texas State Institutional Review Board.

On July 23, 2019, Barajas' exploratory social research study titled *Mujeres Mexicanas del Diseño Gráfico: Showcasing the Current Women Creative Directors of Graphic Design in Mexico City*, was reviewed and approved by the Texas State University Institutional Review Board at the Exempt Review Level Category 2 Surveys, Interviews, or Public Observation. It has been determined that risks to subjects are: (1) minimized and reasonable; and that (2) research procedures are consistent with a sound research design and do not expose the subjects to unnecessary risk. Reviewers determined that: (1) benefits to subjects are considered along with the importance of the topic and that outcomes are reasonable; (2) selection of subjects is equitable; and (3) the purposes of the research and the research setting is amenable to subjects' welfare and producing desired outcomes; that indications of coercion or prejudice are absent, and that participation is clearly voluntary.

The responsibility of an academic researcher is to educate the participants about the study's purpose, the procedures, the risks and benefits, and to obtain their consent before involving them in the research study, and also to keep them informed during the study. The purpose of the exploratory social research study was to conduct web-interface interviews with female creative directors and studio owners working in Mexico City in order to understand the gender inclusivity, specifically in the graphic design field in Mexico City. The data collection was from 26 participants. Each of them participated in the one-hour interview process. During the interview, the questions asked helped better understand the required education, their approach to design, success measures, and the achievement surrounding these women designers' work.

### *Participants*

The exploratory social research study subjects were Mexican women designers or creative directors ranging in age from 25 to 65 years old that either own or have owned a design studio in Mexico City. Since an objective indicator of success was needed for this study, these women designers have already established a successful design practice with a substantial body of work while being owners of their design studio.

### *Recruitment of Participants*

The method to recruit the participants was chain-referral sampling, a nonprobability sampling technique where existing study subjects recruit future subjects from among their acquaintances. For example, Barajas' thesis committee members knew women creative directors in Mexico City and introduced Barajas to these participants, which led to a rolling snowball effect. These participants helped recruit subjects from among their

acquaintances via email. Barajas also searched public information sources such as design association lists, media outlets, and the web, to identify potential participants. The goal was to sample women representative of professional success in graphic design in Mexico City within the following criteria for participation in the study.

**Private sector:** Creative directors or graphic designers in a graphic design studio.

**Entrepreneurial sector:** Mexican women designers who have owned their design studio for at least two years.

The breakdown of the sample is shown in Table I Participants Demographics (see figure 4.1).

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**Table I Participants Demographics**

Total participants of 26 with and average age of 36 years of age

Mexico		Percentage
<i>Individual Demographics (Twenty-three percent of the participants have children)</i>		
Single	17	65%
Married	9	34%
Divorced	2	1%
<i>Professional Demographics (Individuals can hold multiple professional positions)</i>		
Graphic Designer	22	84%
Creative Director	16	61%
Design Studio Partner	14	53%
Entrepreneur	12	46%
Academic	13	5%

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*Figure 4.1* Table I Participants Demographics



### *Data collection*

Barajas based her data collection on the collaborative book Miles and Huberman, *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook* (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Matthew B. Miles, a social psychologist, had a career-long interest in strategies for educational reform. Besides, A. Michael Huberman's long-term interests were in scientific epistemology and adult cognition and knowledge use. In their collaborative book, *Qualitative data analysis: An expanded sourcebook*, Miles and Huberman devote considerable attention to the planning, design, and execution of qualitative research, as well as detail the rationale for multiple methods of qualitative research and to explain how these methods can be used to solve problems and set up future research. According to Miles & Huberman, qualitative data analysis measures allow researchers to provide ways of discerning, examining, comparing, and contrasting, and interpreting meaningful patterns or themes (Miles & Huberman, 1994). Therefore, qualitative analysts should also be alert to inter-connection patterns in their data that differ from what might have been expected. Miles and Huberman define these as "following up surprises" (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 270). For instance, the potential of "following surprises" are the unexpected patterns during the qualitative analysis. To discover and manipulate these kinds of unexpected patterns, which can often be very informative, requires an ability to listen for and be receptive to the discussions with the participants during the qualitative analysis.

Interviews were conducted in the participant's native language. In this case, all interviews were held in Spanish. The interviews lasted one to two hours and were audio-

recorded. To protect data from the interviewees, the audio-recorded interviews are password protected and secured in the University Server Texas State Outlook One Share Drive for three years. There was no direct benefit to the participants, nor either compensation to the participants in this research study. However, the information that they provided helped the continuous research of women in the graphic design field in Mexico City.

### *Interviews*

The interview protocol was designed to allow for interpretation of responses in terms of the participants' cultural values. General demographic information was collected for each Mexican woman designer. Specific open-ended questions related to their design careers included: "Overall, to what do you attribute your success?" and "What external factors have contributed to your success if any?" Questions related to overall life success and family social support were: "Who are the most important people and how have they contributed to your success?", "Would you describe yourself as a successful person?" Questions related to gender imbalance in the design industry were: "What is the difference between gender equity, gender equality and women's empowerment?", "Why is it important to take gender concerns into account in the design industry and practice?"

Interviews consisted of approximately one hour of discussion and questions using the video conferencing software Zoom with an option to answer questions in writing. Depending on the nature of the interview, the timing of the interview was adjusted to better accommodate the interviewee. The participants completed and signed a consent form to acknowledge their rights regarding the interview, and to participate in the study. Therefore, risks are nothing outside of their daily activity. The interviewee was allowed

to decline to answer any questions or end their participation at any time. The interview included a section requesting personal experiences in the design field. In every effort to protect participants' confidentiality, if the participant felt uncomfortable answering any of these questions, they were able to refuse to answer or leave them blank.

### **A Synopsis of Machismo, Marianismo and Familism and how they are perceived in the Mexican Culture**

The terms of *Machismo*, *Marianismo*, and *Familism*, need to be concisely defined before we move on to the qualitative data analysis of the exploratory social research study, and the results to see which patterns and “following up surprises” emerged within and across the Mexican women designer interviewees. In the collaborative research paper *Exploring the role of machismo in gender discrimination: a comparison of Mexico and the US* (Segrest, Romero, & Domke-Damonte, 2003,) Dr. Sharin L. Segrest, Associate Professor of Management at the University of South Florida St. Petersburg and cross-cultural researcher, explores how the construct of machismo can influence gender-based discrimination across cultures. The evidence indicates that masculine gender roles are not innate, but rather heavily influenced by cultural factors.

#### *Machismo*

In the scholarly journal article *Macho and Shame*, “machismo” is described as a form of masculinity, which typically has a negative connotation and used to describe how male dominance and superiority are encouraged by parents and societal forces (Bilmes, 1992). In *The Impact of Machismo on Hispanic Women*, a scholarly journal article, the term “machismo” is a Spanish word usually used as derogatory in describing an attitude of male dominance and superiority which is legitimized through patriarchal social systems

and reinforced through cultural values and norms (Mayo & Resnick, 1996). The Spanish word “macho” can also simply signify masculinity and can even be used in a positive sense, referring to gender pride and identity (Bilmes, 1992).

#### *Origins of Mexican Machismo*

In the book *Profile of Man and Culture in Mexico* by Mexican philosopher Samuel Ramos, Ramos explains how Latin societies have been influenced by Roman law, which firmly incorporated males as patriarchs. For example, the origins of Mexican “*machismo*” are thought to be associated with Spanish conquest (Ramos, Earle, & Irving, 1975).

#### *Machismo has positive connotations*

In his book *Psychology of the Mexican: Culture and Personality* distinguished Mexican psychologist Diaz-Guerrero emphasizes that machismo has not only negative elements, but also positive elements such as self-respect and a sense of responsibility to the family as a provider (Díaz-Guerrero, 1976). Diaz-Guerrero, in his scholarly journal article, *The Development of Coping Style*, also explores machismo in the context of other Mexican values such as the affiliate obedience, virginity, consent, fear of authority, family status quo, respect over love (“*respeto*”—connoting more emotional and dutifulness), family unity/honor (“*familismo*”), family harmony or smooth relations (“*simpatía*”), indirect communication, positive emotional expressivity (words of endearment), and cultural rigidity (Díaz-Guerrero, 1979).

### *Marianismo*

The term “*marianismo*” was first used by political scientist Evelyn Stevens in her 1973 essay “*Marianismo: The Other Face of Machismo*” (Stevens & Pescatello, 1973).

Stevens is credited with coining the term “*marianismo*” as referring to the stereotypical Latin American female counterpart to machismo. In the book *The Maria paradox: how Latin-American women can find self-worth by incorporating Old World tradition into New World lives*, *Marianismo* is based on the image of the Virgin Mary and connotes saintliness, submissiveness, and frigidity (Gil & Vasquez, 1996). *Marianismo* is important due to its limiting and stigmatizing effects on Hispanic women and has a role in perpetuating machismo attitudes.

### *Familismo*

*The Mexican American Extended Family As An Emotional Support System* research study (Keefe, Padilla, & Carlos, 1979) discusses that while family bonds are important in all human societies, the ways of expressing value for family varies across cultures.

“*Familismo*” is one culturally grounded way of valuing family that emphasizes an ideal for family relationships to be warm, close, supportive, and that family be prioritized over self (Keefe, Padilla, & Carlos, 1979). The research study *Exploring the Complexities of Familism and Acculturation: Central Constructs for People of Mexican Origin*, states psychological well-being was positively associated with Mexican cultural identity and family support, whereas psychological distress was associated with greater family conflict and lower family support.

## **Contemporary Mexican Women Designer Interviews Analysis**

This section describes the analysis of the Mexican women participants' interviews in the study. The analysis results were divided into themes of *Career success equals education abroad*, *Life success equals making a difference*, *Family social support equals success*, *Gender imbalance depends on your attitude*. This section also includes the conclusions and the hypothesis for future research of the qualitative exploratory research study. Twemlow, in her book *What is Graphic Design For?*, states that “designers who want their work to inform, delight, [change human consciousness] and connect, will need to know much more about the people they are talking to, their beliefs, and backgrounds” (Twemlow, 2006 p. 80). Therefore, with this in mind, one can conclude that conducting exploratory social research allows the researcher to be creative in gaining the most insight on a subject, in this case, Barajas' contemporary Mexican women designer interviews analysis.

The audio-recorded interviews were reviewed, and themes were identified that addressed career success, life success plus family social support, and gender imbalance in the design industry. From there, in conceptualizing and experiencing the Mexican women designers' answers and discussions from the interview questions, the data were collapsed into main themes to see which patterns emerged within and across the Mexican women designer interviewees. Next, following the qualitative measures of data analysis, Barajas found “following up surprises” (Miles & Huberman, 1994, p. 270): as Miles and Huberman defined them, patterns of interconnection in the data different from what might have been expected. Finally, to explore the issue of gender imbalance in the design industry in Mexico, Barajas focused on comments where the women explained their

points of view on gender equity in the design industry in Mexico City. Several themes surfaced from the data regarding successful Mexican women designers' stories of how they view career and life success and the family social support they receive and the gender imbalance in the design industry in Mexico City.

### ***Career success equals education abroad***

The study participants were pleased that they had earned their level of success and validated it more than they questioned it. Career success meant having a passion for what you do and being able to get an education outside the country of Mexico. Some of these women answered with comments like, “si no hubiera tenido la oportunidad de estudiar en el extranjero creo que no tuviera el prestigio o éxito que tengo ahora” [“If I had not had the opportunity to study abroad I think I would not have the success that I have now”] “tener la oportunidad de estudiar una maestría en el extranjero es un privilegio” [“to have the opportunity to study a master's abroad is a privilege”] One woman told the story of her passion for design and her desire to study design abroad; ultimately she began her design career as an entrepreneur and became a creative director of her own design studio.

### ***Life success equals making a difference***

For the Mexican women designers in the study, a strong, stable family was also identified as the main marker of life success. The women talked about having someone to share their life with and being or having a good business partner as hallmarks of life success. Another element important to the Mexican women designers' idea of life success was a sense of purpose in the world. Various designers explained how they are involved in

altruistic organizations in their spare time, others reached a level of taking design projects because they felt the importance of giving back to others and making a difference.

### ***Family social support equals success***

All Mexican women designers in the study mentioned they gained support from their families in some way. Overall men, such as fathers and husbands, were very influential in the Mexican women's social support and career success, more so than any female influence. For example, spouses were frequently cited as providing emotional support. Fathers were often cited as an influence on their careers because they are seen as role models. In a country like Mexico, where a sexist environment continues to exist, their spouse's approval is an important factor for professional success. The participants often mentioned their spouses' emotional support, such as helping at home, dividing their children's responsibility, and merely being proud of them.

### ***Gender imbalance depends on your attitude***

Several Mexican women designers in the study acknowledge a gender imbalance exists in the design industry in Mexico. These women shared different stories in which they felt gender discrimination, not within their staff but with someone outside their design studio. The participants who acknowledge that gender imbalance exists in the design industry in Mexico argue that gender inequality is a matter of attitude, meaning, recognizing gender inequality comes from growing up in a not machista household and education. These women were comfortable talking during the web-interface interview and aware of the gender imbalance in the design industry and were able to have a discussion.



Despite overall positive reception to the survey, four participants were not comfortable with the gender imbalance questions. These women answered with comments like, “no tengo ni una opinion sobre el tema” [“I do not have any comments about the theme”], “no quiero sonar feminista” [“I do not want to sound feminist”], and “No creo que exista, al menos no he sentido discriminación” [“I don't think it exists, well, at least I have not felt discrimination”]. Mexico is a country where *machismo* continues to exist, and it is complicated to realize and recognize gender inequality if growing up in an environment in which *machismo* is allowed, and *marianismo* is perpetuated.

### *Conclusions*

This exploratory study shows that social support, particularly from family, is an integral part of the Mexican women designers' career success and life in general. While the interviews with successful women in the design industry in Mexico City provided substantial and informative data, the results cannot be generalized to the larger population of working women in the design industry in Mexico due to the limited number of participants studied and the narrow focus on ‘successful’ designers. However, the sample size was appropriate given the exploratory nature of the study and the challenges in identifying and gaining access to participants.

The construct of *machismo* appears to be related to sexist attitudes associated with gender-based discrimination in the design industry. However, as demonstrated in the data, inadequate evidence exists to consider this outcome. Instead, the powerful effects of cultural values are paramount in defining societal expectations about gender roles both inside and outside of the workplace.

This research contributes to our knowledge about the design industry in other cultures, and further the gender imbalance dialogue in the design industry of Mexico. Future research could build on this exploratory study in the following ways. Follow-up in-person interviews with these participants or additional women in the design industry in an environment in which every Mexican woman designer feels comfortable could be conducted in order to probe more in-depth on these constructs, particularly on the gender imbalance issue/topic/question.

#### *Hypothesis for Future Research*

The hypothesis emerging out of this exploratory social study research is that in order to achieve gender equality in the graphic design industry in Mexico City, we need to first start by implementing policies of equity in the workplace and fostering equity in society. Besides, it is impossible to ever truly understand someone else's life experiences, which influence their point of view on gender equality and, therefore, the foundation for the explicit and implicit biases that feed into inequality.

## V. CREATIVE PROCESS

### Interactive Traveling Exhibition Design Overview

Following the AIGA Women Lead Initiative model's three goals: Celebrate the achievements of women in design, cultivate awareness of gender-related issues, while building knowledge and leadership skills and connect by facilitating relationships within and beyond the design industry, this project's objective was to highlight cultural identity awareness by empowering knowledge of contemporary Mexican women in graphic design in Mexico City. To do so, an interactive traveling exhibition called *Designing Perspectives* was designed to spark and continue the conversation of the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity in the design industry in Mexico City. The creative process is broken down here into phases like the choice of the typeface, the creation of a manifesto, the goal of the interactive exhibition design, why a traveling exhibition, and how to avoid Mexican stereotypes.

#### *Typeface*

The typeface used for the title in the *¡Porque soy Mexicana!* manifesto and the transparencies of the interactive exhibition, *Designing Perspectives*, is Eva, designed by typeface designer Tré Seals, from Vocal Type Co. type foundry (see Figure 5.1). Eva is a font family inspired by banners carried during the 1957 women's demonstration in Buenos Aires in front of the National Congress By Law For Universal Suffrage (see Figure 5.2). The typeface is called Eva as a tribute to the great pioneer of women's suffrage in 1946 in Buenos Aires, Argentina, First Lady Eva Perón.



*Figure 5.1* EVA typeface family banners. Image obtained at Vocal Type Co



*Figure 5.2* Demonstration in front of the National Congress for the law on Votes for Women, Buenos Aires, 1948. Unknown author archive *General de la Nación*. Image obtained at Vocal Type Co

## *Manifesto*

In Italian, a “manifesto” is also a flyer or poster, while in various Romance languages manifestare/manifestar/manifestar means not only to communicate but to demonstrate, to protest. The manifesto word itself, “the word *Manifesto* Latin origins—*manus* (hand) + *festus* (struck)—suggest a pugnacious effect, a kind of literary punch” (Merjian, 2017, p.28). For example, an artist’s manifesto is crafted to persuade and convert readers, and manifestos are public declarations describing a person or group’s policies, goals, and opinions (Merjian, 2017, p.28). Manifestos played a critical and defining role in many artistic movements of the 20th century as Futurists, Dadaists, and Surrealists embraced their power to challenge orthodoxy and fundamentally change visual practice (Gasset & Fernández, 2008).

Barajas included the prototype of a manifesto, as one of her creative outcomes, to the thesis to celebrate the mutual influence and support of each Mexican woman designer that participated in the research study, called *¡Porque soy Mexicana!* The manifesto was a pamphlet printed on the risograph lab in the Art and Design Department of Texas State University, served to describe the thesis research’s purpose, *Mujeres Mexicanas del Diseño Gráfico: Showcasing the Current Women Creative Directors of Graphic Design in Mexico City*. The manifesto pamphlet image is in the *Appendix B Promotional Materials*.

### *¡Porque soy Mexicana! Manifesto*

For the creative Mexican women designers that are proving themselves as prominent founders and entrepreneurs in the design world at large.

To recognize the numerous works and contributions of these women designers that are otherwise not credited or represented will profoundly disrupt our perceptions of graphic design beyond the geographic borders of their home and design hub of Mexico City.

To spark and continue the conversation, so future generations of up-and-coming designers can better understand the importance of these creative directors' work, view them as inspiration in their own practices, and start to write their own her-story for years to come.

To celebrate the mutual influence and support of each other then and now. For the talented that wants to collaborate and build a community. A new age of women of color designers is coming—It's time to redefine what a Mexican woman creative looks like.

### *Interactive Exhibition Design*

Barajas decided to integrate an interactive component in her exhibition design by looking into the book, *What is Exhibition Design?* “Exhibition design is an integrative, multidisciplinary process of conveying information through visual storytelling and the environment” (Lorenc, Skolnick, & Berger, 2007). Barajas opted to tell a visual story by creating an interactive exhibition to recognize Mexican women designers. The ultimate goal of an exhibition is “the visual storytelling and visitor interactivity have a direct influence on how the exhibition is perceived by the visitor” (Solís Rivero, 2012, p. 11); therefore, rechargeable flashlights or the ease of using the flashlight on any phone gives the visitor access to interact in the exhibition in various forms (see Appendix A-Environmental Graphic Design Outcome). An interactive traveling exhibition called

*Designing Perspectives* was created to spark and continue the conversation of the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity in the design industry in Mexico City.

The book, *Engaging Spaces* features *Kossmann.dejong*, an Amsterdam firm specializing in exhibition design, states “when the viewer takes a direct role in the development of the story during the interactive exhibition, the exhibition has more impact than a one-way communication channel” (deJong & Kossmann, 2010, p. 78). Hence, the Communication Design Program students at Texas State University, the future generation of up-and-coming designers, and the visitors of Texas State University Art Gallery, played the most important role in the interactive exhibition. They identified these Mexican women designers while designing their perspectives with the light reflections and transparencies of the interactive exhibition, *Designing Perspectives*. The infinite juxtapositions that the visitor can create with the transparencies communicate the same message recognizing contemporary Mexican women designers. The next chapter, *Creative Outcome*, in the section *Interactive Traveling Exhibition Installation Overview* contains images that describe how the visitors identified these Mexican women designers while designing their perspectives with the light reflections and transparencies of the interactive exhibition, *Designing Perspectives*. The infinite juxtapositions that the visitor can create with the transparencies communicate the same message recognizing contemporary Mexican women designers.

### *Traveling Exhibition*

Exhibitions may tell different stories in different environments, however they are consistent in the way they require collaborative effort to succeed, their need for a clear narrative approach, and the way they have to balance the needs of creating a space with



communicating a message (Lorenc, Skolnick, & Berger, 2007, p. 46). Therefore, during the creative process, the idea to develop *Designing Perspectives* into a traveling exhibition arose to test different exhibition environments as art galleries outside an institution or university art galleries throughout the United States and Mexico. A traveling exhibition shows the infinite possibilities of advocating for the interconnectedness between gender equity and diversity in design in different environments. Another essential element considering traveling exhibitions is the flexibility to accommodate the interactive exhibition in the different installation sites. Furthermore, traveling exhibitions are designed to communicate the same message in different settings, while maintaining the same storyline, narrative, and visitor experience (Lorenc, Skolnick, & Berger, 2007, p. 100). An essential element considering *Designing Perspectives*, an interactive traveling exhibition, is the flexibility to accommodate and communicate the same message in multiple settings while maintaining the same storyline, narrative, and visitor experience—to recognize contemporary Mexican designers in Mexico City graphic design. Therefore, Barajas designed a 16x16” detachable wood and metal base frame to easily transport the interactive exhibition to another location (see Appendix A-Environmental Graphic Design Outcome).

### *Mexican Stereotypes*

A *schema* is a term used to describe the breakdown of our complex social environment based on prior knowledge. We have a schema for human groups, also known as stereotypes. Stereotypes are born when our schema receives media attention (Devine & Elliot, 1995). For example, only a handful of people develop a stereotype about Mexico through personal experience. The stereotype most of the time comes from news

coverage, advertisements, and popular movies, such as the most recent Disney Pixar movie *Coco*, the animated film that celebrates or depicts the Mexican tradition known as *Día de Muertos*, the Day of the Dead tradition. The film draws its cultural inspiration from several Mexican variations of this tradition, which also happen to be those most commonly found in the United States (Vidaurre, 2017). Barajas' challenge was to avoid stereotypes of Mexico. For example, the Day of the Dead decorations such as *el papel picado*, the colorful paper flags, an empty coca-cola bottle, or a marginalized low-income neighborhood. Enough is enough.

So, how to represent Mexico but not fall into the same clichés and still communicate a message? Well, exhibition design is an integrative, multidisciplinary process of conveying information through visual storytelling and the environment (Lorenc, Skolnick, & Berger, 2007). Exhibition design harnesses physical space and visual storytelling to create environments that communicate. The solution was to integrate lighting, audio, graphic design, experience, and interaction design to create multilayered narratives around a theme or topic.

The use of lightning to represent the vibrancy of colors of a market in Mexico, during the interactive exhibition, vibrant lightning colors were looping reflected on one of the walls. As well, the use of audio was a vital element to enhance the experience and to represent the city of Mexico as the metropolis and chaos that is today. An hour recording of sounds from the *Plaza Zocalo* in downtown Mexico City, which end up as a collection of sounds of traffic, policemen shouting, people talking, birds, dogs, vendors' chants, all of it a beautiful chaos to feel immersed in the heart center of Mexico City. The next chapter, *Creative Outcome*, in the section, *Interactive Traveling*

*Exhibition Installation Overview*, contains images that describe how the lighting fixtures of the interactive exhibition, *Designing Perspectives*, created a colorful visual harmony to transport the audience to feel a part of Mexico City. Also, *Appendix C—Exhibition Photographs* contains various images of the interactive exhibition, *Designing Perspectives*, showcasing the lighting effects created by the lighting fixtures and the transparencies' shadow reflections.

## VI. CREATIVE OUTCOME

### Interactive Traveling Exhibition Installation Overview

The creative outcome of this project-based thesis is an interactive traveling exhibition called, *Designing Perspectives, Visual Storytelling of Women Creative Directors in Mexico City*, and it was part of the *MFA THESIS 2020 Exhibition* in the Texas State University Art Gallery II. As mentioned before, the ultimate goal of an exhibition is “the visual storytelling and visitor interactivity have a direct influence on how the visitor perceives the exhibition” (Solís Rivero, 2012, p. 11). Therefore, Barajas conceptually designed an interactive exhibition, *Designing Perspectives* to tell a visual story of these contemporary Mexican women designers. The following *Appendix C–Exhibition Photographs* contains the images of *Designing Perspectives, Visual Storytelling of Women Creative Directors in Mexico City* interactive exhibition at the Texas State University Art Gallery in January 2020. The objective of this interactive traveling exhibition, *Designing Perspectives* thesis project is to highlight cultural identity awareness by empowering knowledge of contemporary Mexican women in graphic design in Mexico City, as well as spark and continue the conversation of the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity in the design industry in Mexico City.

The visitors are encouraged to play with the transparencies of the interactive exhibition, *Designing Perspectives*, and learn the names, and the words extracted from the manifesto *¡Porque soy Mexicana!* describing these Mexican women designers. If the viewer takes a direct role in the development of the story during the interactive exhibition, the exhibition has more impact than a one-way communication channel (deJong & Kossmann, 2010, p. 78). Therefore, the visitors played an essential role in the

exhibition, *Design Perspectives*. The purpose of the Communication Design Discipline is to communicate a specific message to a specific target and manifest itself in the form of persuasion, protest, information, and recreation (Twemlow, 2006, p. 46). To create a powerful impression and communicate a message while interacting with the transparencies. The most emblematic buildings of Mexico City like *The Palace of Fine Arts*, *The Angel of Independence*, *The UNAM Library*, *The National Cinema* are on a smaller scale against the names and headshots of these Mexican women designers. The infinite juxtapositions that the visitor can create with the transparencies communicate the same message, the women designers being the most significant part of this exhibition, therefore achieving the objective of recognizing contemporary Mexican women designers (see Figure 6.1, 6.2, and 6.3).



*Figure 6.1 Design Perspectives, transparencies. Photography by Flor Barajas*



*Figure 6.2* Interactivity of the juxtaposition with the transparencies I. Photography by Flor Barajas



*Figure 6.3* Interactivity of juxtaposition with the transparencies II. Photography by Flor Barajas

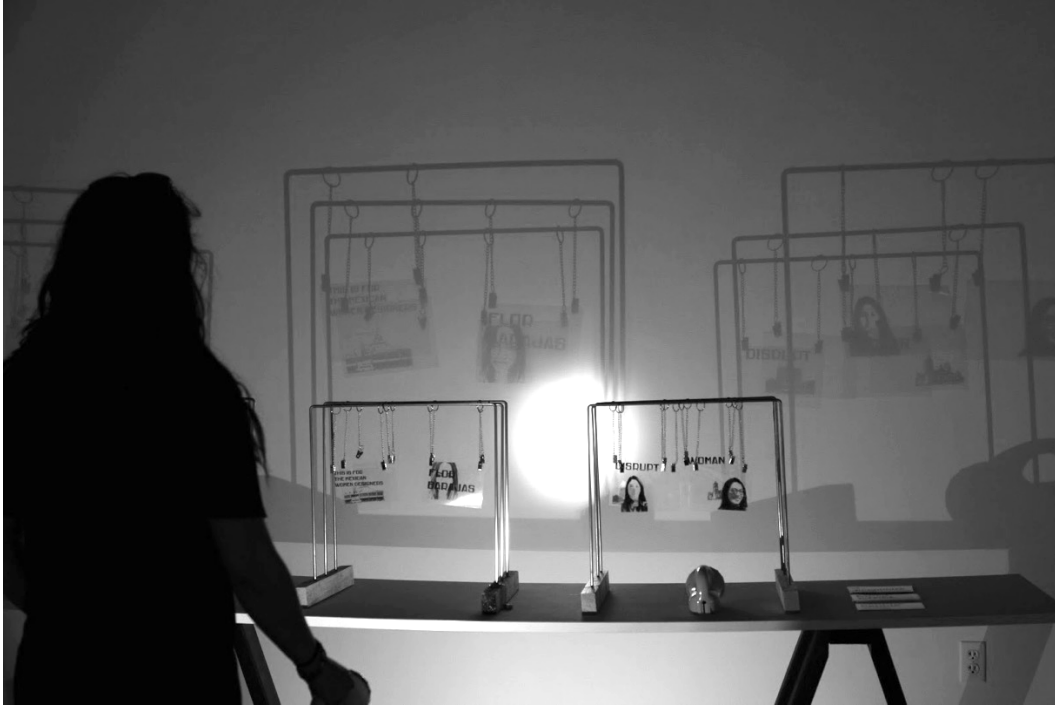


As mentioned before, exhibition design is an integrative, multidisciplinary process of conveying information through visual storytelling and the environment (Lorenc, Skolnick, & Berger, 2007). One of the challenges during the creative process of this installation was to avoid the same clichés of representing Mexico. However, how does one obtain a non-stereotypical representation of Mexico in this piece, and still represent Mexico and communicate a message? Exhibition design harnesses physical space and visual storytelling to create environments that communicate. The solution was to integrate lighting, audio, graphic design, experience, and interaction design to create multilayered narratives in *Designing Perspectives, Visual Storytelling of Women Creative Directors in Mexico City*. The objective of this interactive traveling exhibition, *Designing Perspectives* thesis project is to highlight cultural identity awareness by empowering knowledge of the contemporary Mexican women in graphic design in Mexico City, as well as spark and continue the conversation of the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity in the design industry in Mexico City.

The solution was the use of lightning to represent the vibrancy of colors of a market in Mexico, during the interactive exhibition, vibrant lightning colors were looping and reflected on one of the walls (see Appendix C-Exhibition Photographs). As well, the use of audio was a vital element to enhance the experience and to represent the city of Mexico as the metropolis and chaos that is today. As visitors enter the Texas State University Art Gallery II the collection of sounds from downtown Mexico City created an immersive experience and transported the viewer to the Plaza Zocalo, the heart center of Mexico City.

The visitors played the most important role in the interactive exhibition (deJong & Kossmann, 2010) while interacting with the transparencies and the flashlights provided, to create light reflections on the wall (see Figure 6.4) the viewer identified the contemporary Mexican women designers and learned through observing the juxtaposition reflections on the wall. The visitors designed their perspectives with the interchangeable transparencies while learning about the contemporary Mexican women designers and observed the reflections on the wall created by the juxtaposition with the transparencies of the most emblematic buildings on a smaller scale against the photos of the Mexican women designers and words extracted from the *¡Porque soy Mexicana!*.

The projections on the wall made the contemporary Mexican women designers larger on scale, created a powerful impression, and achieved the purpose of the Communication Design Discipline which is to communicate a specific message to a specific target and manifest itself in the form of persuasion, protest, information, and recreation (Twemlow, 2006). The women designers are the most significant part of the interacting exhibition, therefore achieving the objective of recognizing contemporary Mexican women designers (see Figure 6.5 and 6.6).



*Figure 6.4* *Designing Perspectives*, Texas State University Art Gallery, January 2020. Visitor interacting with flashlight. Photography by Chantal Lesley



*Figure 6.5 Designing Perspectives, Texas State University Art Gallery, January 2020. Projection effect on the wall I. Photography by Chantal Lesley*



*Figure 6.6 Designing Perspectives, Texas State University Art Gallery, January 2020. Projection effect on the wall II. Photography by Chantal Lesley*

A single-color battery light bar illuminates one of the walls and the beginning of the exhibition; strategically placed to illuminate the poster with the instructions. The poster served to describe the instructions of the interactive exhibition, *Designing Perspectives; Visual Storytelling of Women Creative Directors in Mexico City* and the poster was printed in the size of 24x36 inches in the printing lab of the Texas State University Department of Art and Design (see Appendix A-Environmental Graphic Design Outcome).

**Designing Perspectives;  
*Visual Storytelling of Women Creative Directors in Mexico City.***

*¡Hola!* As a proud Mexican woman artist and designer, I welcome you into the chaotic bustle of the largest city in North America—Mexico City. You are now walking by the historic Plaza del Zócalo in downtown where you can hear the commotion of cars, construction, and life! I have created an ongoing collaborative manifesto *¡Porque soy Mexicana!* to describe the purpose of my thesis research, *Mujeres Mexicanas del Diseño Gráfico: Showcasing the Current Women Creative Directors of Graphic Design in Mexico City. Designing Perspectives* invites you to further understand how current Mexican women designers are forging a path of their own in the field of graphic design beyond the geographic borders of their home in Mexico City. I challenge you to design your own *Perspective*. Use your phone flashlight to project the interchangeable transparencies and spot the contemporary Mexican women designers. Play with the words from the manifesto *¡Porque soy Mexicana!* Observe the juxtaposition of the most emblematic buildings on a smaller scale, recognizing the women designers being the most significant part of this exhibition.

The *¡Porque soy Mexicana!* manifesto served to describe the purpose of the thesis research, *Mujeres Mexicanas del Diseño Gráfico: Showcasing the Current Women Creative Directors of Graphic Design in Mexico City* and celebrate the mutual influence and support of each Mexican women designer that participated in the research study. The manifesto was printed as an 11x17 inch multi-purpose poster in the Texas State University Department of Art and Design's risograph lab served as promotional material for the exhibition. Moreover, during opening night, printed copies of the poster, folded in

half as a pamphlet, was a keepsake for the visitors attending the exhibition (see Appendix B–Promotional Materials).

*Designing Perspectives, Visual Storytelling of Women Creative Directors in Mexico City* was part of the *MFA THESIS 2020 Exhibition* and was exhibited at the Texas State University Art Gallery II in San Marcos, Texas, in January 2020. Therefore, the audience was a combination of undergraduate and graduate students, professors, and university administrative staff. During the three weeks of the exhibit, several emails from Texas State University students asked if they could use the photographs, they took during their visit to the exhibition for their class projects. One of the emails was from a Public Relations student expressing her pride in being a Mexican American and how she had identified herself in this exhibit. The 2020 theme for the Texas State University Common Experience Events Department was Truth, and one of the staff members reached out to ask permission to include Design Insights in their event calendar (see Figure 6.7).



Tuesday, January 21, 2020

  Subscribe  My Events

Tuesday, January 21 | 9 a.m. – 9 p.m. Texas State Galleries, Gallery 2, Joann Cole Mitte Building

## Design Exhibition | Designing Perspective

Official Common Experience Exhibition

Part of the Communication Design M.F.A. Thesis Exhibition



### Designing Perspective: Visual Storytelling of Women Creative Directors in Mexico City

As a proud Mexican woman designer and speaker, **Flor Barajas** is finding ways to reveal truth and increase discussion of diversity in the design industry using her platform as a graduate student pursuing her M.F.A. in Communication Design at Texas State University. Her artist's point of view is to share her experiences and stories about Mexican women designers and creative directors by introducing a piece of her continuous thesis research — *Mujeres Mexicanas del Diseño Gráfico: Showcasing the Current Women Creative Directors of Graphic Design in Mexico City*. The exhibition demonstrates what she has learned through interviews with these Mexican women designers, which is a minority culture in the design itself, and creating an immersive experience based on their design studios in Mexico City. *Designing Perspective* invites the audience to understand how current Mexican women designers are forging a path of their own in the field of graphic design, beyond the geographic borders of their home in Mexico City.

*This exhibition runs January 21 through February 7, 2020.*

## Website

Texas State Galleries

 ADD TO CALENDAR

 FORWARD TO FRIENDS

*Figure 6.7* The Common Experience Events Department of Texas State University Main calendar website featuring Design Perspectives, January 2020



## VII. CONCLUSION

Barajas, a Mexican American female designer about to enter the design field, found the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity in the design field as the two factors that seized her attention and provided the purpose for this thesis—*Mujeres Mexicanas del Diseño Gráfico: Showcasing the Current Women Creative Directors of Graphic Design in Mexico City*. Barajas conceptually designed an interactive traveling exhibition *Designing Perspectives*, to recognize contemporary Mexican designers in Mexico City graphic design and instigate productive conversations around the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity in design.

*Mujeres Mexicanas del Diseño Gráfico: Showcasing the Current Women Creative Directors of Graphic Design in Mexico City* thesis is an appropriate step in the right direction of implementing intersectional feminist methodologies in their design practice. Therefore, Barajas opted to conduct a qualitative exploratory research study focusing on women's creative directors of their design firms in Mexico City to explore gender imbalance within the graphic design field in Mexico City. Subsequently, the exploratory research study's data analysis shows the different phases of how these women designers approach the gender imbalance within the graphic design field in Mexico City. Barajas noticed the women designers' lack of recognition in Mexico City and at an international level. During her creative process, she came up with the creative outcomes, a manifesto *¡Porque soy Mexicana!* and an interactive traveling exhibition, *Designing Perspectives*. With today's contemporary global interconnectedness, this thesis research's creative outcome, an interactive traveling exhibition, *Designing Perspectives*, and a manifesto *¡Porque soy Mexicana!*—sought to contribute to the Communication Design discipline by

empowering knowledge and bring awareness of the impact of the interconnectedness of gender equity, diversity, and inclusion in design.

Focusing on a user experience design approach, Design Perspectives intends to demonstrate how the communication design discipline can positively impact society by provoking a change in human consciousness by instigating and continuing the conversation about the interconnectedness of gender equity diversity in Mexico City design. At the same time, the audience immerses themselves in the interactive exhibition. Therefore, the Palace of Fine Arts, the most emblematic buildings of Mexico City, the Angel of Independence, the UNAM Library, and the National Cinema, are on a smaller scale against these Mexican women designers' names and headshots. The infinite juxtapositions that the visitor can create with the transparencies communicate the same message—the women designers are the most significant part of this exhibition, therefore achieving the objective of recognizing contemporary Mexican women designers.

An essential element considering *Designing Perspectives*, an interactive traveling exhibition—is functionality. The flexibility to accommodate and communicate the same message in multiple settings while maintaining the same storyline, narrative, and visitor experience—to recognize contemporary Mexican designers in Mexico City graphic design. Barajas's research-based thesis's creative outcome—an interactive traveling exhibition—Designing Perspectives, will fulfill the purpose of functionality because it got accepted into the Design Week Mexico 2020 in Mexico City.

Barajas' *Designing Perspectives*, an interactive traveling exhibition, will be part of the *Inédito 2020* exhibition event during Design Week Mexico at the *Espacio CDMX* design gallery in Mexico City. The following image shows the acceptance letter to Design Week Mexico (see Figure 7.1) signed by the co-founder designer Andrea Cesarman from the *Mexico Territorio Creativo* design studio and Design Week Mexico. Barajas will be one of the three international designers participating in *Inédito 2020*.



Av. de los Compositores 4  
II Secc Bosque de Chapultepec  
11100, CDMX, México  
+52 (55) 2791 5117  
www.designweekmexico.com

Ciudad de México a 03 de julio de 2020.

Estimada Flor Barajas

Cada año, Inédito se lleva a cabo a través de una convocatoria abierta a nivel nacional e internacional donde se crean piezas que se exhiben dentro del marco de DWM en Espacio CDMX. Este año tuvimos la fortuna de cerrar nuestro registro con múltiples propuestas que sin duda son grandes ejemplos de diseño y dedicación, las cuales nos permitieron apreciar el talento de los mejores diseñadores y estudios nacionales e internacionales, entre ellos el suyo.

Es para mí un gran placer poder anunciar oficialmente que forman parte de la selección de Inédito 2020, programa que tiene como objetivo incentivar la maestría y el talento de los diseñadores para crear un vínculo en el que surjan nuevos lenguajes, piezas novedosas y extraordinarias, así como nuevas respuestas a través del diseño a estos tiempos tan cambiantes. Nuestro deseo es que se genere un espacio de creación y diálogo entre diseño e industria, el cual responda a esta nueva normalidad. Las exhibición de las piezas participantes en Inédito se llevarán a cabo del 09 de octubre al 08 de febrero del 2021 en Espacio CDMX por lo que esperamos que estés tan emocionado como nosotros de ser parte de nuestra sexta edición.

A nombre de todo el equipo de Design Week Mexico y México Territorio Creativo les doy las gracias por haber participado en este arduo proceso de selección. Es un honor para nosotros, contar contigo y tus proyectos y esperamos que su presencia tenga un impacto significativo en DWM y permita un intercambio cultural enriquecedor.

¡Muchísimas felicidades y bienvenidos a Inédito 2020!

Atentamente,

Andrea Cesarman  
Socia fundadora,  
Design Week Mexico



México Territorio Creativo = Design Week Mexico + Arch Days CDMX + Espacio CDMX

Figure 7.1 Barajas' Design Week Mexico Letter of Acceptance

## Future Creative Research

Through the design process and observation of the visitor's interaction with the *Designing Perspectives* during the exhibition opening, additional ideas for possible research projects evolved. The ideas for possible future investigations are:

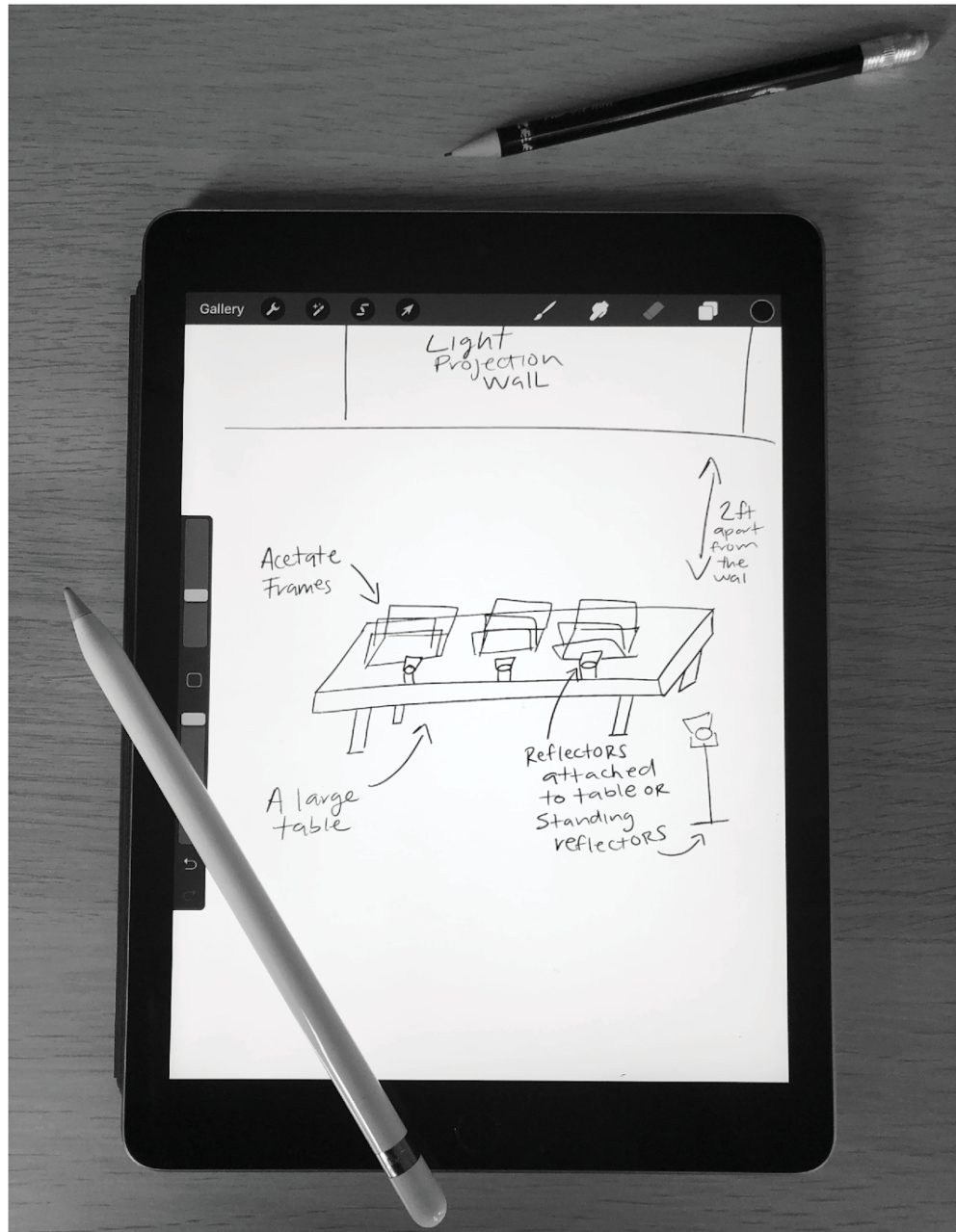
1. How would the creation of short documentaries about each Mexican woman designer impact this research? What would be the setting? Will the setting be each designer's design studio or office?
2. Can the screening of these short documentaries enhance the visitor experience during the exhibition? If yes, how could this be possible? What would be the impact?
3. What about the creation of a free access digital platform including each short documentary? What would be the benefits or disadvantages of the free access digital platform?
4. Can this digital platform be in the form of a social media campaign? Or a social media account? If so, what social media platform is the most successful? Would it have the same impact?
5. Could the creation of a podcast be successful? What would be featured in the podcast or what would remain confidential? Who would be the audience? Which online platform would be the best to stream? Should it be live streaming?
6. Could the creation of a book including each interview be beneficial? If so, would the book be created for publishing? Could the book be self-published? How would the book be marketed?

7. What about displaying the exhibition in another country? In this case, what would be the visitor experience if it was displayed in Mexico?
8. What about displaying the exhibition in different settings? Like, local museums, galleries or should it be a university galleries exhibition only? Would it have the same impact?
9. Could social media be part of the interaction? How would this enhance the visitor experience?
10. How about the use of augmented reality during the exhibition? What would be the benefits or disadvantages of the interaction?
11. What about further focus on the interconnectedness of race and gender equality in the design field? How would this affect or benefit the research? Would it have the same impact?
12. What about the interconnectedness of gender identity and diversity? Discussions about gender identity and diversity?

## APPENDIX A

### Environmental Graphic Design Outcome

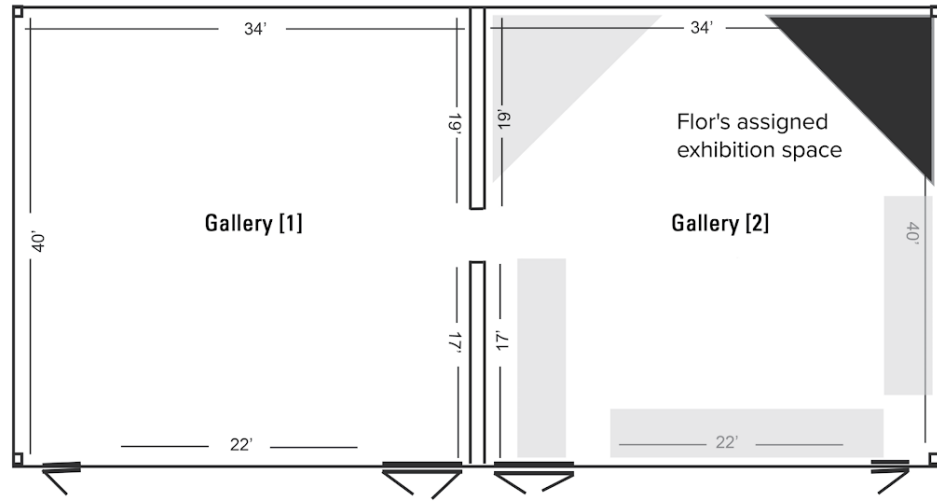
EGD OUTCOME



The environmental graphic design elements for this traveling exhibition align with the proposed goal to highlight cultural identity awareness by encouraging knowledge of contemporary Mexican women in graphic design in Mexico City.

The following schematics present the suggested storyline, the wall layouts, the proposed materials and specifications for each individual graphic component of the traveling exhibition.

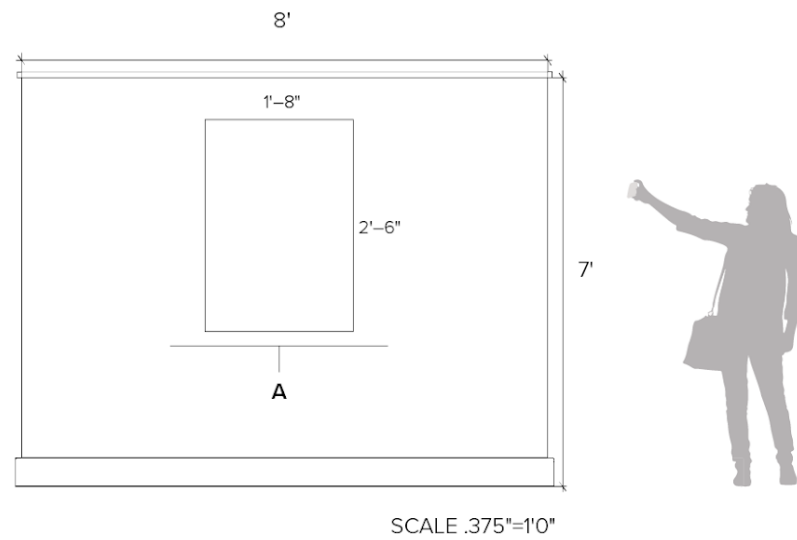




**Texas State University**  
**Gallery [1] + [2]**

Ceiling Height: 14'  
1/2" drywall with 1/2" plywood backing  
Floors: concrete stained in raw sienna  
Lighting: a pipe grid system, full spectrum, halogen lights





**A. Exhibit Title Poster Schematics.** Standard white bond paper, mounted directly to painted white wall. Printed dimensions 24x36 in. Text set FL, Proxima Nova Regular, 120/144 pt

**Designing Perspective,  
Visual Storytelling of Women Creative  
Directors in Mexico City.**

*¡Hola!* As a Mexican woman artist and designer, I welcome you into the chaotic bustle of the largest city in North America — Mexico City. You are now walking by the historic Plaza del Zócalo in downtown. I have created an ongoing collaborative manifesto *¡Porque soy Mexicana!* to describe the purpose of my thesis research, *Mujeres Mexicanas del Diseño Gráfico: Showcasing the Current Women Creative Directors of Graphic Design in Mexico City.*

*Designing Perspective* invites you to further understand how current Mexican women designers are forging a path of their own in the field of graphic design beyond the geographic borders of their home in Mexico City.

I challenge you to design your own *Perspective*. Use your phone flashlight to project the interchangeable transparencies, and spot the contemporary Mexican women designers. Play with the words from the manifesto *¡Porque soy Mexicana!*. Observe the juxtaposition of the most emblematic buildings on a smaller scale, recognizing the women designers being the most significant part of this exhibition.

36"

24"

**Designing Perspective,  
Visual Storytelling of Women Creative  
Directors in Mexico City.**

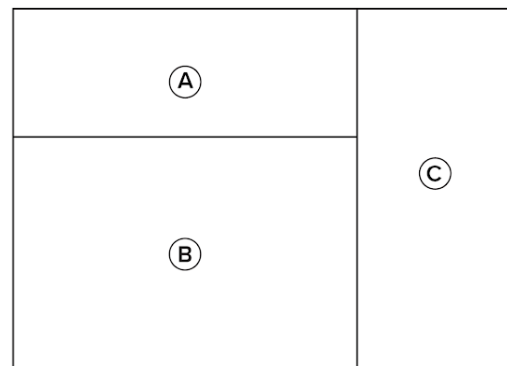
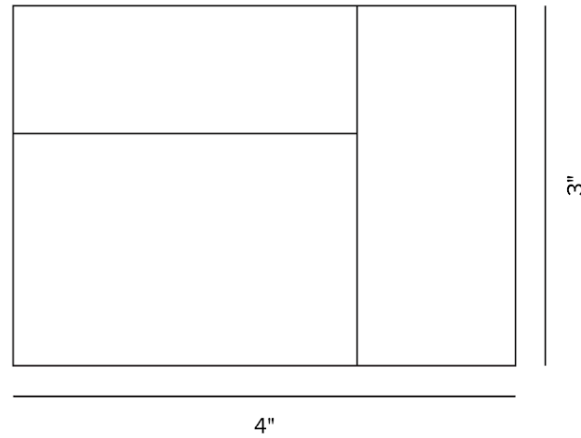
*¡Hola!* As a proud Mexican woman artist and designer, I welcome you into the chaotic bustle of the largest city in North America—Mexico City. You are now walking by the historic Plaza del Zócalo in downtown where you can hear the commotion of cars, construction, and life! I have created an ongoing collaborative manifesto *¡Porque soy Mexicana!* to describe the purpose of my thesis research, *Mujeres Mexicanas del Diseño Gráfico: Showcasing the Current Women Creative Directors of Graphic Design in Mexico City.*

*Designing Perspective* invites you to further understand how current Mexican women designers are forging a path of their own in the field of graphic design beyond the geographic borders of their home in Mexico City.

I challenge you to design your own *Perspective*. Use your phone flashlight to project the interchangeable transparencies, and spot the contemporary Mexican women designers. Play with the words from the manifesto *¡Porque soy Mexicana!*. Observe the juxtaposition of the most emblematic buildings on a smaller scale, recognizing the women designers being the most significant part of this exhibition.

---

**A Designing Perspectives  
Exhibit Title Poster**



A grid system was created for the acetate printed cards to create a juxtaposition of the graphic elements.

#### Acetate cards grid system

- A** Typography—a word obtained from the ¡Porque soy Mexicana! Manifesto.
- B** Photograph—a small scale of an iconic building of Mexico City.
- C** Photograph—a larger scale head shot of a Mexican women designer.

(A)

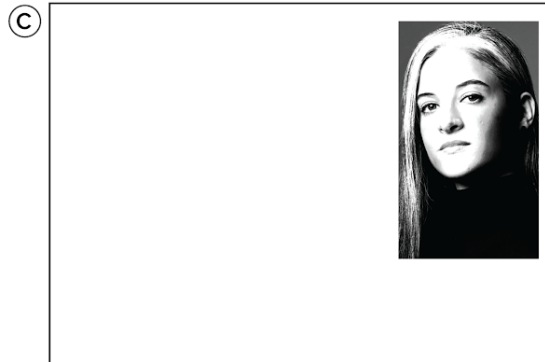
**MEXICANA**

(B)



(C)



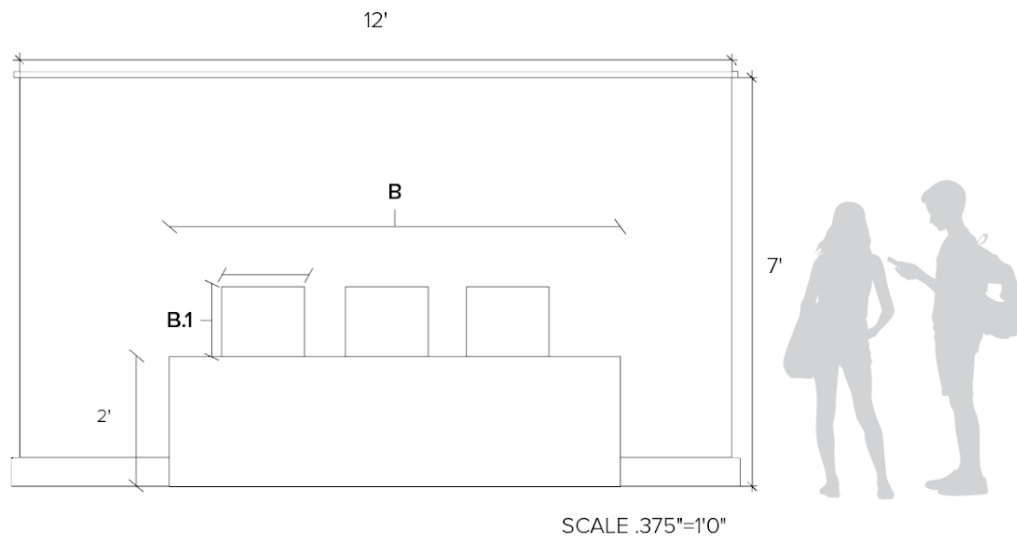


# MEXICANA



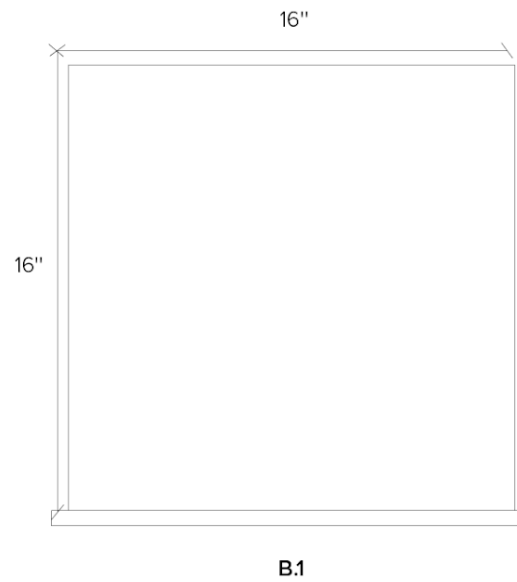


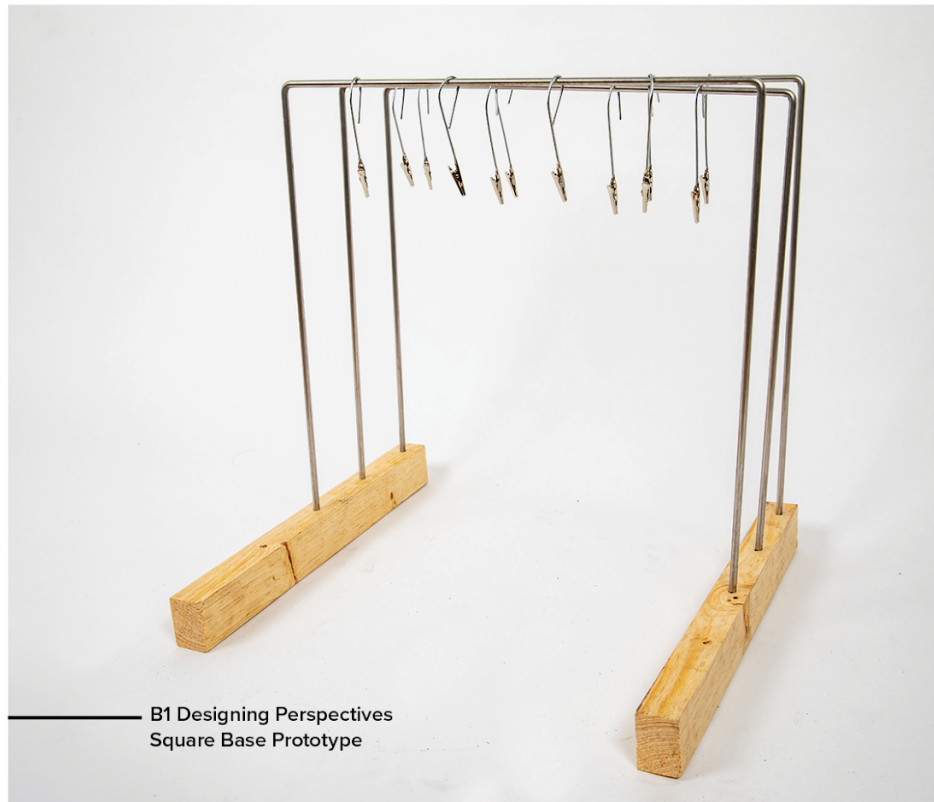




**B. Exhibit Interactive Table Schematics.** Standard rectangular wood table, dimensions 3'6" wide by 8' long, and a height of 2'. The interactive table needs to be 2 feet away from the wall.

**B.1. Square Base Prototype.** Barajas designed a 16x16" detachable wood and metal base frame to easily transport the interactive exhibition to another location. Rechargeable flashlights or the ease of using the flashlight on any phone gives the visitor access to interact in the exhibition in various forms.



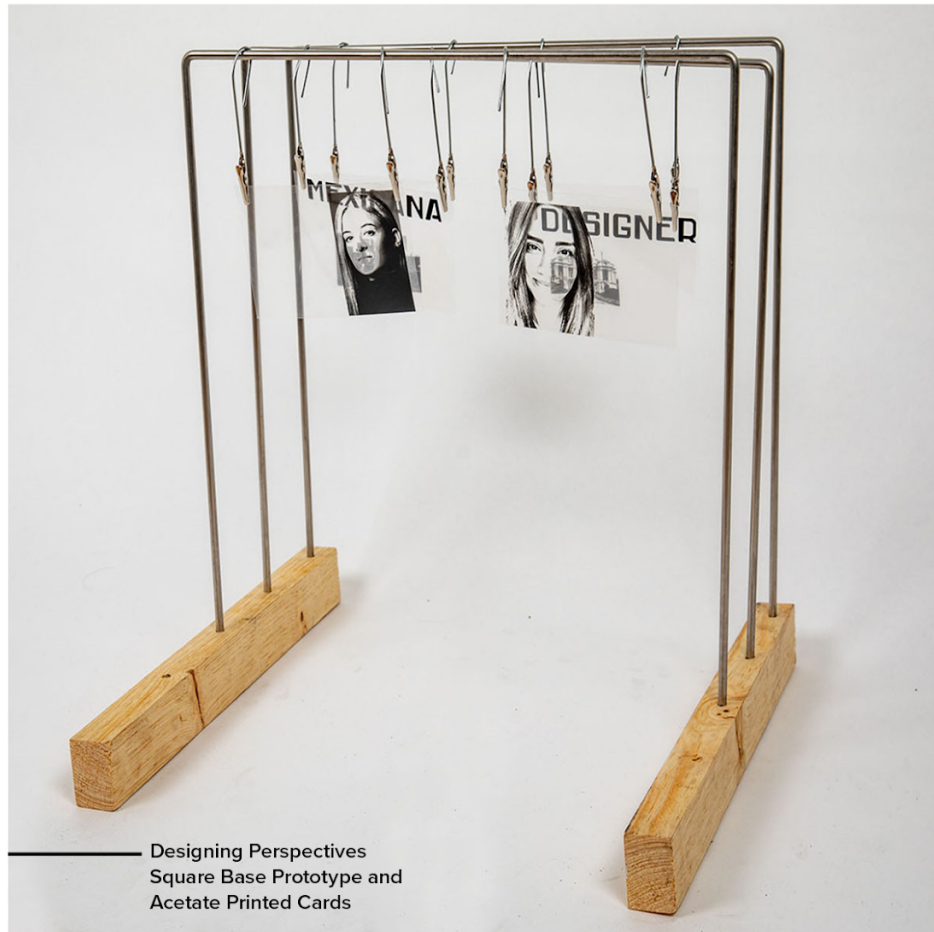


B1 Designing Perspectives  
Square Base Prototype





Designing Perspectives  
Square Base Alligator Clips



Designing Perspectives  
Square Base Prototype and  
Acetate Printed Cards

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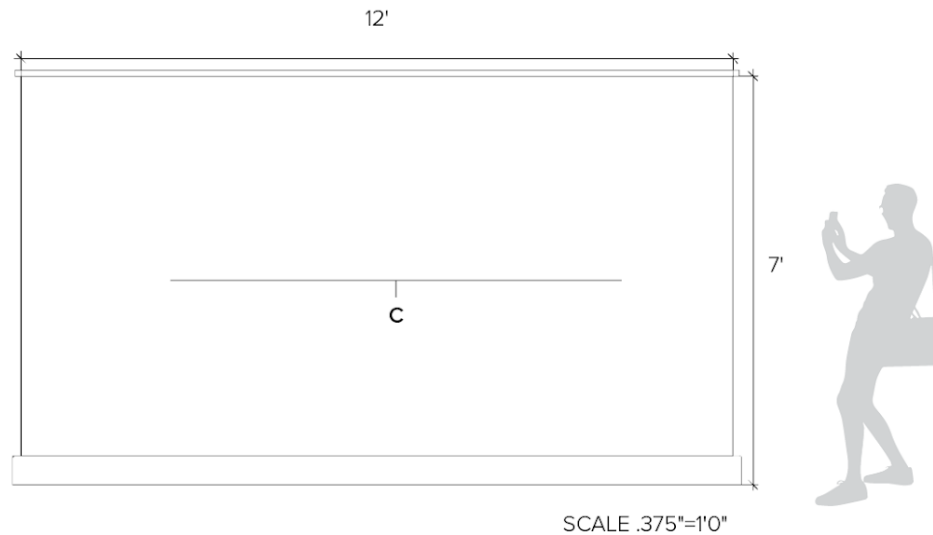
Designing Perspectives  
Interchangeable  
Acetate Printed Cards











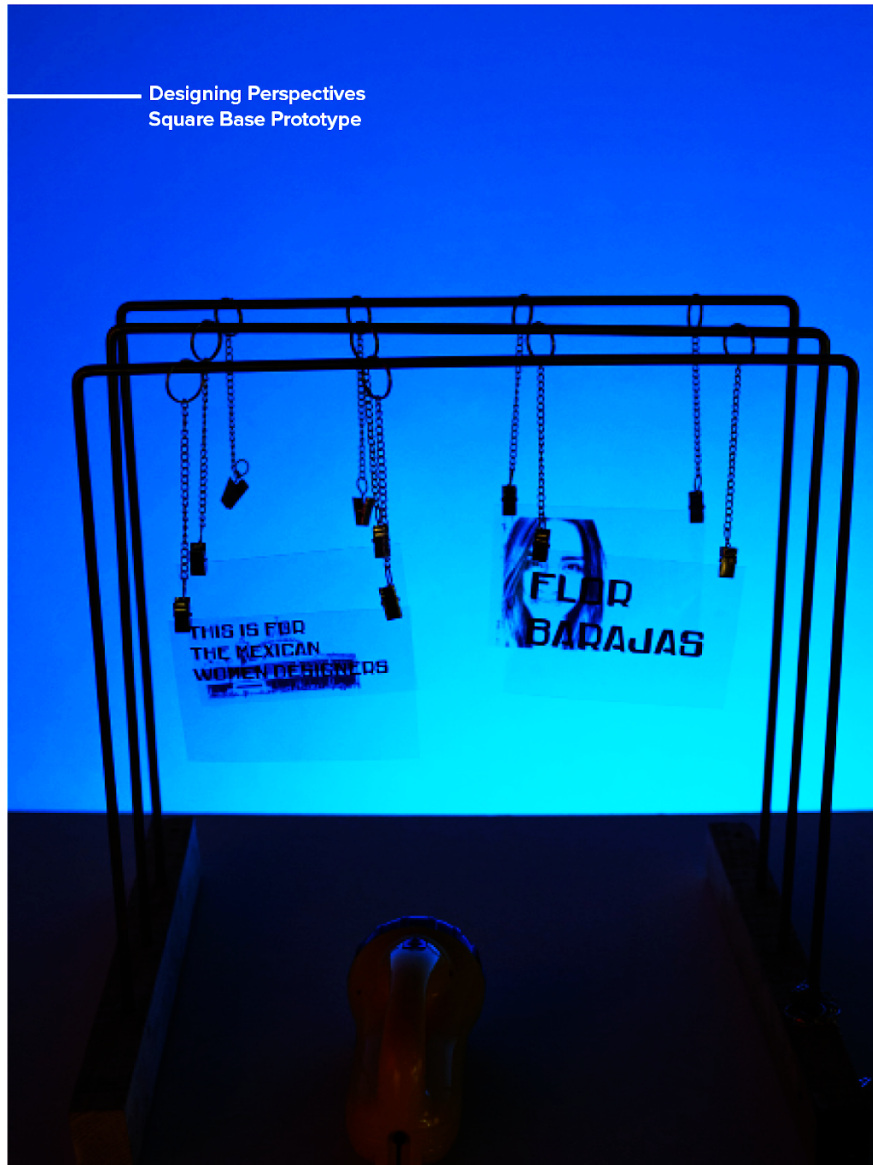
**C. Wall Reflections.** The visitors identified these Mexican women designers while using the transparencies and creating light reflections on the wall. The infinite juxtapositions that the visitor can design with the transparencies communicate the same message recognizing contemporary Mexican women designers.

*Designing Perspectives*, an interactive traveling exhibition, was created to spark and continue the conversation of the interconnectedness of gender equity and diversity in the design industry in Mexico City.

C Designing Perspectives  
Wall Reflections



Designing Perspectives  
Square Base Prototype



## APPENDIX B

### Exhibition Promotional Materials



# ¡PORQUE SOY MEXICANA!

For the creative Mexican women designers that are proving themselves as prominent founders and entrepreneurs in the design world at large.

To recognize the numerous works and contributions of these women designers that are otherwise not credited or represented will profoundly disrupt our perceptions of graphic design beyond the geographic borders of their home and design hub of Mexico City.

To spark and continue the conversation, so future generations of up-and-coming designers can better understand the importance of these creative directors' work, view them as inspiration in their own practices, and start to write their own her-story for years to come.

To celebrate the mutual influence and support of each other then and now. For the talented that wants to collaborate and build a community. A new age of women of color designers is coming — It's time to redefine what a Mexican woman creative looks like.

## **ANA CISNEROS**

Baiku | [baiku.com.mx/](http://baiku.com.mx/) | [@baiku\\_estudio](https://twitter.com/baiku_estudio)

## **CRISTINA CRUZ**

Cool Hunter | [coolhuntermx.com/](http://coolhuntermx.com/) | [@coolhuntermx](https://twitter.com/coolhuntermx)

## **DAFNE MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ SANDRA GARCÍA SALDARRIAGA**

TypasType | [tipastype.com](http://tipastype.com) | [@typastype](https://twitter.com/typastype)

## **FLOR BARAJAS**

[@barajasflor](https://twitter.com/barajasflor)

## **GABRIELA BUSTILLOS SHELLY BALAS TANIA VILLALOBOS**

Sodio | [nasodio.com](http://nasodio.com) | [@nasodio](https://twitter.com/nasodio)

## **JASSIEL RIVERA**

[@monotypa](https://twitter.com/monotypa) | [@ductvs](https://twitter.com/ductvs)

## **MARIA MARIN DE BUEN MARU CALVA**

Proyectos Ninguem | [ninguem.mx](http://ninguem.mx) | [@proyectosninguem](https://twitter.com/proyectosninguem)

## **MONTSERRAT CASTAÑÓN**

Ángulo Cero | [angulo0.com](http://angulo0.com) | [@angulocero](https://twitter.com/angulocero)

## **SARA PALMA**

Mexic-Arte Museum | [@sarapalms](https://twitter.com/sarapalms)

## **SINDY ETHEL**

[@sindy.ethel](https://twitter.com/sindy.ethel)

## **YOCELYN RIOJAS**

[@yocelyn.rijas](https://twitter.com/yocelyn.rijas)



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To recognize the numerous works and contributions of these women designers that are otherwise not credited or represented will profoundly disrupt our perceptions of graphic design beyond the geographic borders of their home and design hub of Mexico City.

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## **CRISTINA CRUZ**

Cool Hunter | [coolhuntermx.com/](http://coolhuntermx.com/) | [@coolhuntermx](https://www.instagram.com/coolhuntermx)

## **DAFNE MARTÍNEZ MARTÍNEZ SANDRA GARCÍA SÁLDARRIAGA**

TypaType | [tipastype.com](http://tipastype.com) | [@typastype](https://www.instagram.com/typastype)

## **FLOR BARAJAS**

[@barajasflor](https://www.instagram.com/barajasflor)

## **GABRIELA BUSTILLOS SHELLY BALAS TANIA VILLALOBOS**

Sodio | [nasodio.com](http://nasodio.com) | [@nasodio](https://www.instagram.com/nasodio)

## **JASSIEL RIVERA**

[@monotypa](https://www.instagram.com/monotypa) | [@ductvs](https://www.instagram.com/ductvs)

## **MARIA MARIN DE BUEN MARU CALVA**

Proyectos Ninguém | [ninguem.mx](http://ninguem.mx) | [@proyectosninguem](https://www.instagram.com/proyectosninguem)

## **MONTSERRAT CASTAÑÓN**

Ángulo Cero | [angulo0.com](http://angulo0.com) | [@angulocero](https://www.instagram.com/angulocero)

## **SARA PALMA**

Mexic-Arte Museum | [@sarapalms](https://www.instagram.com/sarapalms)

## **SINDY ETHEL**

[@sindyethel](https://www.instagram.com/sindyethel)

## **YOCELYN RIOJAS**

[@yocelyn.riojas](https://www.instagram.com/yocelyn.riojas)



January 21st

February 7th

Flor Barajas  
Nathaniel Haefner  
Kelsey Johnson  
Yocelyn Riojas  
Teresa Wingfield

m f a

**2020**  
**Exhibition**

[a]

**Flor Barajas**

*Designing Perspective:  
Visual Storytelling of Women Creative  
Directors in Mexico City*

As a Mexican woman designer and speaker, I'm finding ways to increase the discussion of diversity in the design industry by using my platform as a graduate student pursuing my MFA in Communication Design + graphic designer based in Austin, Texas. As an artist, I share my experiences and the stories about Mexican women designers and creative directors by introducing a piece of my continuous thesis research as an interactive installation. I am showcasing what I have learned through interviewing these Mexican women designers, which is a minority culture in the design itself, and creating and immersive experience based on their design studios in Mexico City. The premise extends to the lack of diversity and gender imbalance in the design industry by calling this and next generations of Mexican women designers to step up and take action—and not conform to the sociocultural patriarchal system.

[b]

**Nathaniel Haefner**

*Ubiquity in Typeface Design:  
A Study of Popular Fonts and Typographic  
Understanding*

Many popular and widely-used typeface designs stem from historical contexts, but perhaps the key to designing a timeless font lies with user preferences. Typographers can look to the most common and universal typefaces to find out why people use them out of the abundance of choices, but can those qualities can translate into the successful design of a new set of typefaces? If the typefaces we see the most are where we place our largest emotional investments, then we will continue to choose the same typefaces because we recognize their properties and have assigned them personal meaning creating a new classification system based on emotion rather than mechanical properties. This study investigates ubiquitous typefaces through measuring mechanical properties and determining their relationship to non-physical and emotional characteristics to better understand how type design can address user preferences in a variety of typographic settings and bridge the gap between intended feel, measurable attributes, and common usage for a typeface.

[c]

**Kelsey Johnson**

*Collaborative Critical Practice:  
Designing a Children's Picturebook with  
Resettled Refugees*

People of color and other marginalized communities have long been underrepresented or misrepresented in children's literature in the United States. Only 13% of new children's books published between 1994 and 2017 include multicultural content. Even fewer picture-books for young readers are told from the perspectives of refugees. This disparity exists amid a rise in global migration and despite evidence that multicultural storytelling has a profoundly positive impact on young children of all races and cultural backgrounds. Born out of the conviction that designers must be "more conscious of the roles they play in culture, politics, and society, both serving and creating," (Heller and Vienne 2018) this project seeks to demonstrate a research model for how designers might confront complex social issues through collaborative critical practice. Situated in the context of Houston, Texas—a major hub for refugee resettlement—the designer and a local immigrant artist facilitated an art and writing workshop with five resettled refugee children from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to create an original picturebook. The collaborative team determined the ideation for the picturebook and verified direction along the way. Through a multi-phase process rooted in participatory and equity-centered design, the design outcome emerged to supplement the slim inventory of contemporary stories told by refugees.

[d]

**Yocelyn Riojas**

*Citizen As Designer:  
Activism and Participatory Design for Social  
Justice Spaces*

Growing up on the border in Southwest Texas, I witnessed the wall built, learned the meaning of citizenship, share two perspectives of two countries and cultures, and the contradicting values of people of color in politics. Where there is a lack of education, there is a need to supply it. My upbringing has influenced my work as a visual designer addressing immigration issues, developing toolkits with non-profits, educating how to organize campaigns through creative thinking, and amplifying the voices of immigrants and communities of color.

Political education and healing can build the bridge to help others graduate to achieve a level of social consciousness and political awareness. However, at times activist movements can lack accessibility due to funding or campaigns that do not have the resources to distribute to local communities. This project exhibits how design can be used as a social tool for collaboration by simplifying complex policies with cultural reflection and provide a visual representation in an educational format.

[e]

**Teresa Wingfield**

*Influencing the Future:  
Communication Design of 19th-Century  
Magazines and Its Influence on 21st-Century  
Innovation*

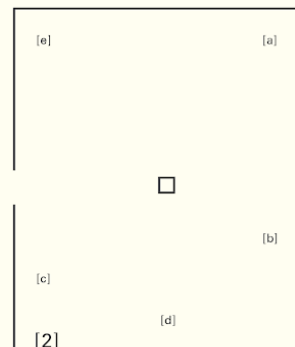
The role of communication design as a key component of the diffusion and adoption of innovation has yet to be examined. The relationship between communication design and innovation is critical to developments in many diverse fields. This research explores the influence of communication design on the adoption of innovations into everyday life by reviewing 19th-century popular magazines and 21st-century media of the United States. Communication design connects potential innovative ideas, methods, or technologies to people through skillful use of design, imagery, and content. It provides a forum for support helping move people to adopt the innovation into their daily lives. It is also a forum for feedback when familiarity generates demand for improvements. In response, makers innovate; the cycle continues. This research supports the historical influence of communication design on the adoption of new ideas and inventions, which in turn drives the design cycle of innovation from past to present.

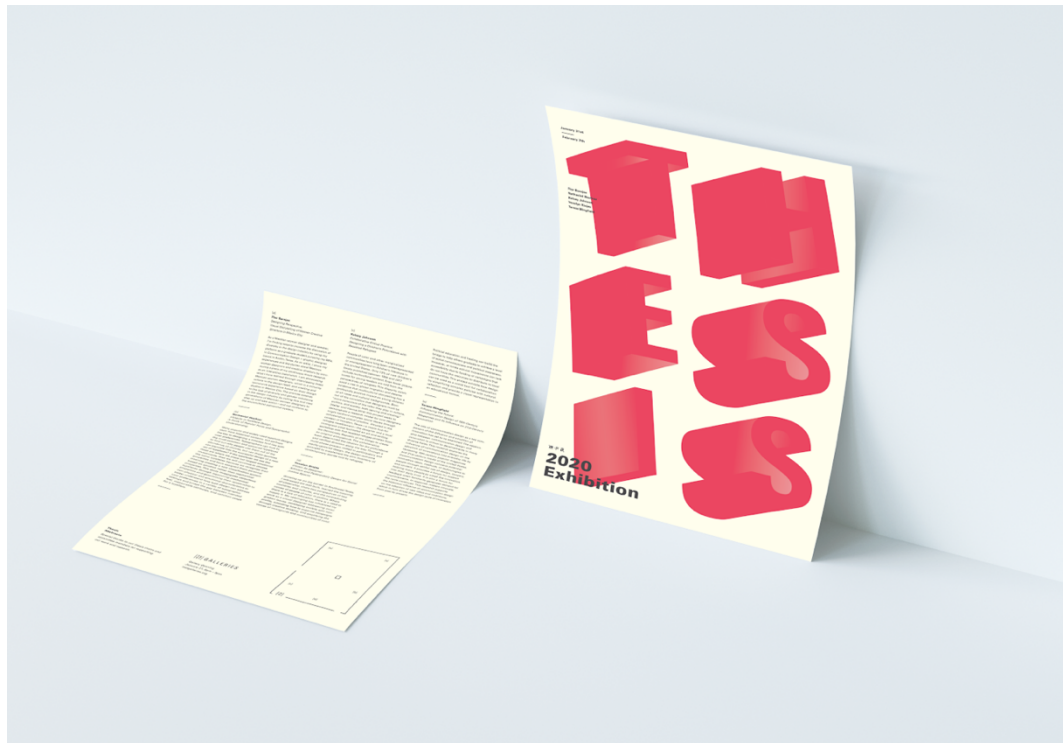
**Thesis  
Abstracts**

*Special thanks to our thesis chairs and  
committee members for supporting  
our work and research.*

**[TX  
ST] GALLERIES**

Gallery Opening  
January 21, 6pm – 9pm  
txstgalleries.org





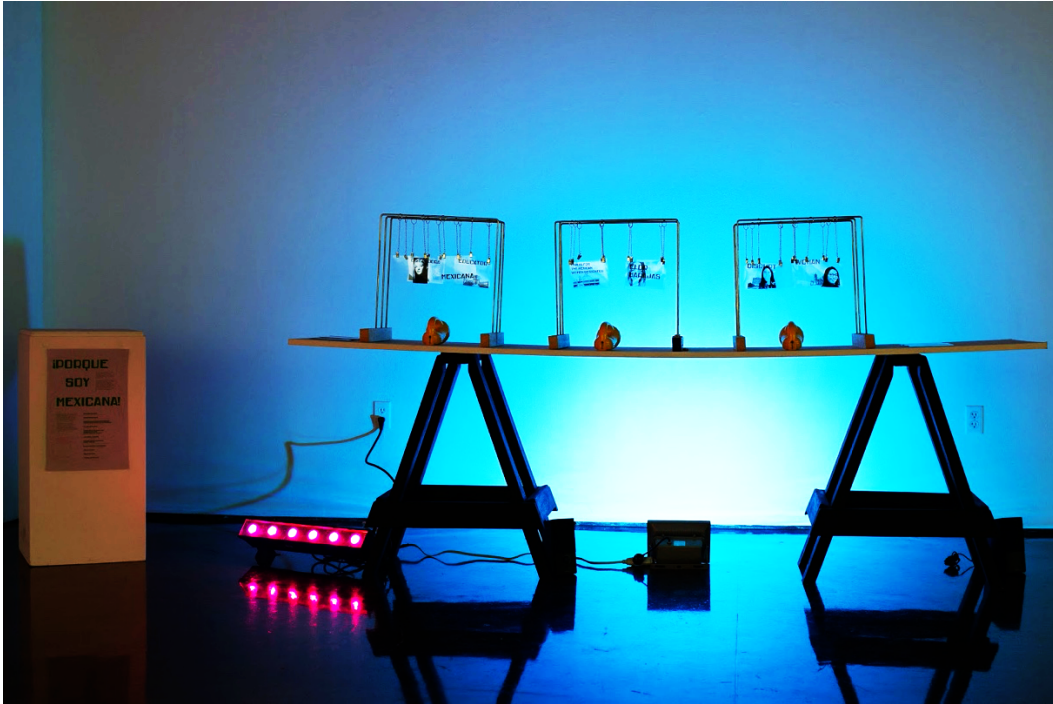
## APPENDIX C

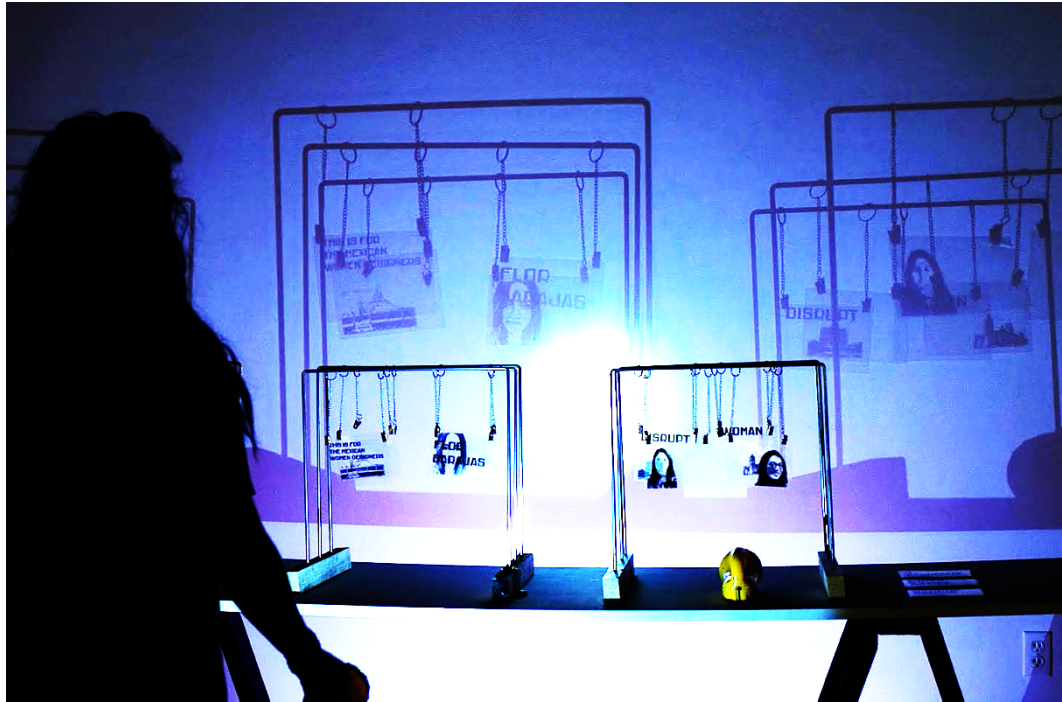
### Exhibition Photographs





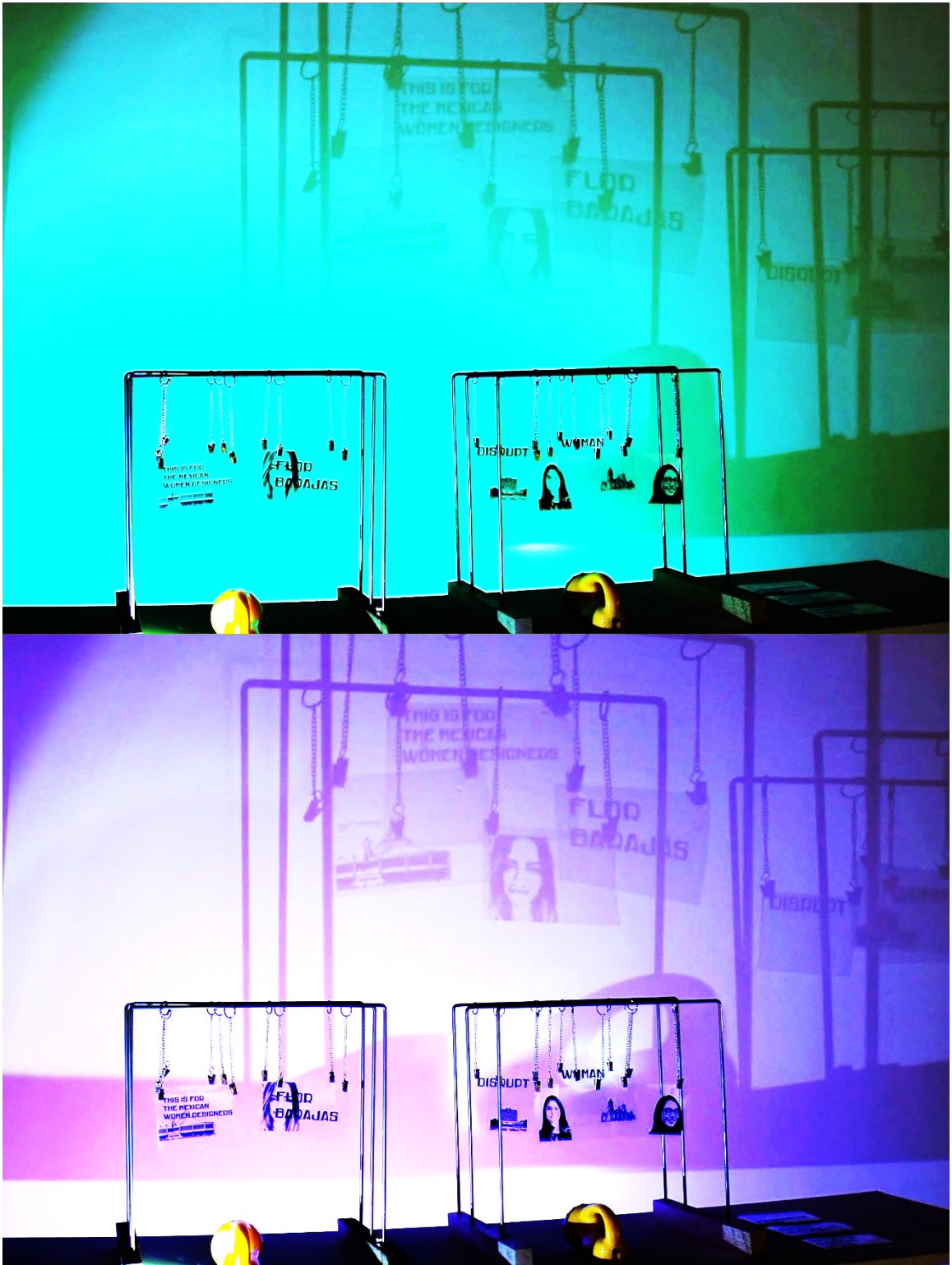














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