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CEZZARTT: BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH THE ARTS

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CEZZARTT: BUILDING COMMUNITY THROUGH THE ARTS

A Project

Presented to the

Faculty of

California State University,

San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment

of the Requirements for the Degree

Master of Arts

in

Communication Studies

by

Cesar Aguiar

May 2023

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ABSTRACT

In this project, I propose Building Community through the Arts in San Bernardino California. In the recent decade, the city of San Bernardino has lost so much of its motivation and dedication to care for the art community. The local art community has always been present, however, overseen by the lack of resources and efforts in bringing the art community back to life through events, art shows, gatherings, or awareness within the city. The purpose of this project was to educate and bring awareness to the city and its people regarding the forgotten art community in the city of San Bernardino. An autoethnographic documentary video was created to showcase the process of The Unexpected Connection exhibition curated by myself with the help of the community at the All Eyes on Me Studio, in San Bernardino, California. Overall, the video did accomplish the desired result. That is, demonstrating how important it is for people to connect with their community through the arts. Future research may consider having a larger location to host an event and thus be able to include more artists. In addition, future events may include collaboration amongst more local artists to exchange new ideas as a whole and bring a bigger community together.

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CONNECTION BETWEEN THE ARTS AND PEOPLE

Introduction

In a city there is a community, in that community there are people who have an interest in either music, art or both which create a term called artistic communication. However, in their community, where can someone find this art community in the Inland Empire? In specific, where in San Bernardino could people find a space or place where music and art help build the community? The city rarely presents a community for the arts. How can people value and connect the cultural and social practices to make the community a better place with and through the arts? How can people give a better understanding and meaning of a place where the community is involved through both the arts and music? There are many factors that play in understanding the community and understand human connection and interaction with one another.

According to Vi et al., (2017) people have multiple senses which are touch, taste, smell, visual, and hearing, that help to interact and perceive objects with their surroundings and their environment (p. 3). Vi et al. states that the senses of touch, taste, and smell are described as secondary lower senses to a person and the visual and hearing are the dominant senses for a person to experience a location and make it memorable to that person through their experiences (p.1). The visual and hearing senses can stimulate a creation of emotional engagement and meaningful experiences in a setting where music and art take place (Vi et al., 2017). For example, Robert Kreuzbauer (2017) mentions art makes and creates a connection between the viewer

and the artist by the personification of the expression of the artist and its meaning (p. 1). As for music, sound waves create a connection between communication and behavior within individuals in both physically and mentally (Hagtvedt & Brasel, 2016). Music and art have the same thinking structure that sends powerful information of emotion, feeling, and connection through the context of social communication by the use of the tools of the arts to help a community grow (Bilova et al., 2020, p. 137).

According to Bilova et al. (2020), art and music have the same thinking structure process that gives out powerful information of emotion to individuals through the context of social communication using sound, frequency, and pitch (p. 137). In sound, frequency are sound waves that are measured in hertz (Hz) which gives a fundamental core foundation for sensory information to the consumer to engage with their cognition and behaviors amongst each other in their community (Hagtvedt & Brasel, 2016). Sound plays a role in human interaction, emotion, and engagement and can affect environmental context which can bring people together in a setting or place such as music festivals, mases, screenings, etc., (Meng et al., 2020). Meng et al. (2020) states that “expression and experiences is affected by emotion through sound which visual and hearing sensory information takes place to an individual” to allow them to connect with one another (p. 6). These correspondences occur because of the everyday experiences of stimulating dimensions and creating a mental link between music and art to an individual and their community (Hagtvedt & Brasel, 2016).

To pursue a better understanding of how a community can come together through the arts, I attempted to explore this phenomenon using social identity theory as a theoretical lens with the help of artistic communication, and sensory information. In

this paper, I explore how The Unexpected Connection Exhibition would be a collaboration between myself and the community in an effort to connect the cultural and social practices to help make the community of San Bernardino a better place through the arts and the documentary of the exhibition. Community bonding, sensory information, and social identity theory have been applied to look at how these concepts influence an individual toward their community, art, and music. The project focused mainly on the collaboration artworks and music between me and the artists to bring the community together as a whole at the “All Eyes on Me Studio” in San Bernardino CA.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Art

According to Hilary Hosea (2006) she states that “art is a vital part of human culture, that the capacity to create is innate and that it develops humans intersubjectivity” (p. 72). Art gives us an ability to express ourselves in a unique way where we can see the world and or tell a story in a painting, drawing, or sculpture through the thoughts and experiences of the artist while impacting the viewer in the setting. Art exhibitions are a great way to bring ideas together, form connection between people, bring public awareness and knowledge for future development through the arts (Molaro et al., 2014). According to Molaro et al. (2014) they got an idea where they wanted to create a one night art exhibition to bring and build a community between the local art and the science communities of Tucson, to engage “the public together in celebration of the beauty and elegance of the universe” through the arts and science in

their community (p.1397). Molaro et al. mentions that the purpose of the event was to showcase a different side of the science world where it isn't as dull, boring, and clinical to the people and to see that the practice of creating scientific knowledge takes an enormous amount of creativity like the process of a painting or an art form (p. 1397). Creating a space of an art exhibitions has many benefits that helps individuals in their community connect in various forms to express information visually and audibly.

There is a term called Art communication (artistic communication) that is formed to transmit messages from different forms of art such as music and art, by delivering and expressing information to a person visually and audibly (Fingerhut et al., 2021). According to Carmen Pardo (2017), listening to appropriate sounds or music in a setting or art space can paint a picture visually to aural perception (p. 35). For example, every individual has a preference for their music genre that effects the person's values on what they like and don't like (Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2011). In addition, what people listen to can predict preference structure in what their values and morals are and can set a tone or mood in a setting to see the interaction and social behavior amongst each other in their community (Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2011). According to Fingerhut et al. (2021), they explain how music could be conceptualized as a contributing factor towards interaction and understanding with one another giving identity which builds connections within that community with preference and social class. For the art, it is more of preferences that can lead personality into different paintings giving the paintings meaning and value from the individual's perspective of the art (Gardikiotis & Baltzis, 2011).

In the 1950s through early 1970s, one branch of art that came out in that period was performance art and installation art, which was referred to as “Happenings” by many artist (Routledge, 2020, p. 103). The phenomenon of a “Happenings” was a gathering between the artist and their community in which the artist engaged with their Happenings and the viewer had to actively participate in each piece to detach themselves from observation to engagement with each piece (Routledge, 2020). The Happenings were never the same or had a consistent style of those Happenings, because some would vary in size and settings. According to Routledge (2020) the artist who staged the Happenings had a fundamental belief that art could be used in the everyday life of an individual and brought Abstract Expressionism and a new form of art which grew out of the social changes occurring in the 1950s (p. 105). In the Happenings, audience participation was a major factor because anything could happen at any time in each performance that would make the unique performance different from the one before. Routledge (2020) mentions that Allan Kaprow who created the term “Happenings” wanted to expand on the idea of going beyond painting on a canvas and creating a space for the viewer to become the art (p. 107). He also mentions that Kaprow was able to build an environment for the viewers to be the art using music, sounds, and various objects to interact with for the performance art (p. 107). Essentially, artists express their emotion into each of their own works, in a way where the viewer can connect with an artwork in an emotional way and bring meaning to a piece through their own interpretation especially in a gallery, studio, museum, or art center (Hagtyedt & Brasel, 2016). Exploring the combination of music and art allows the person to

experience many stimulatory sensory information that can either make an event memorable that can bring a community together (Vi et al., 2017).

The combination of music and art can present both the viewer and listener to express and feel their own perspective, meaning, and values using their sensory information (Gerard Béhague, 2006). According to Béhague, art expresses diversity and multiculturalism through the perception of an individual's characteristic traits and individual's life experiences. Marciszewska and Marciszewski (2021), mentioned that art can attribute to communicating in a way where it shapes the attitudes through society and community (p. 749). Music and art go hand in hand as both forms of art allow an individual to process sensory information and assert the individual or social group with those elements of touch, feel, taste, hear, and visual in a setting (Béhague, 2006).

Artist both in the music and art world express themselves through their works of art to give a meaning not just on their craft but to give back to their community. The people who view the art in these exhibitions, are there to engage with the art and build connections by making their own interpretation of the work in a setting using their sensory information (Pireddu, 2020). I was be able to examine my personal experience in the creation and documentation of The Unexpected Connection Exhibition and how I brought everyone and everything together in San Bernardino through the music and art. By taking into consideration the expressions of emotions of an individual towards the city of San Bernardino, I was able to give a better understanding on why the city does not support local artist in San Bernardino and challenge the system by taking matters into my own hands to create and curate this event with the help of the community.

Film Screening

I am not a film maker, director, or editor in the film world. However, I do have some knowledge on how to work a camera and what to capture in videos from my past experiences with my music videos and content for my music. Film is another form of art and I wanted to document the entire process through the lens of my experiences creating the art exhibition to create a film about music and art bringing a community together in San Bernardino. According to Sarah Hanssen (2020) film screening serves a purpose of building community through film if it is displayed in a public setting to showcase the film (p. 37). Eilean Hooper-Greenhill (2000), mentioned that art exhibitions are a great way for a person to establish fundamentals and self-understanding within experiencing new forms of communication and interaction within the artwork and within the individual and their community (p. 11). I am a person who enjoys documentaries, art and music, I was able to experience great art exhibitions from well-known established museums, art festivals and local galleries all around the United States. One of the things that I have observed from the art exhibitions, was how the community is involved with the setting and how music was used in these exhibitions to enhance the audience's experience and interaction with the art and each other. In some exhibitions, I did experience and notice music, but the music was used part of the installation to be part of a single work in an isolated room. Another observation with music in an art exhibition was when an exhibition had a room with a projector showcasing an art film which had small speakers on the upper left and right side of the wall. Those were the only times where I experienced and notice visual, sound, or music in an art exhibition. In some cases, exhibitions are the conceptual mediation to offer the

public creation and appreciation of their community (Palau-Pellicer, et al., 2019). This allows visual and music to positively influenced the individuals and affected their cognitive and behavioral responses towards each other and build connection with each other (Loureiro et al., 2019).

However, from my own experiences with the exhibitions that I went to, I did not see or hear much music in the background of the exhibitions. Not to mention, that there is a lack of documentaries on art, music, and community building that made me question these art forms together. There were documentary films in just art of the artist or musicians talking about their experiences performing and engagement with their audience or cultural understanding of community building but was difficult to find a film that had all in one. This made me wonder if making a documentary about music and art can be used together at a setting or place to bring the community together and have a better understanding of the artists perspective on these events to bring the community as a whole in San Bernardino California.

Description

I have worked in the music industry and curated art and music shows for more than 12 years. My involvement and positive relationships with musicians and artists in the community helped me in getting access to witness events in my art exhibition at different galleries, museums, and studios and the same for my music shows. Working as a touring musician with my band called Unsound Sunday and curating art shows of my own works of art and music, gave me the opportunity to bring those two forms of art together to see if I can help the art community in San Bernardino come together. Art

and music have also become an outlet for me because it is a form of expressing and showing my emotions and experiences through various styles of mediums in my artwork and my music. I wanted to see if music and art can work as collaborators between each artist and their community to come together and share their ideas and creativities in the exhibition by having both forms of art in one setting. Hooper-Greenhill (2000), mentions that museums, galleries, or art centers are a great way for a communicator (artist) to send messages through their media in art to the receiver (individual). Being both the musician and the artist, I was able to have the opportunity to showcase and document a collective group exhibition called “The Unexpected Connection Exhibition” and use this exhibition to create the documentary. The site that I conducted this project at was the “All Eyes on Me Studio” in San Bernardino California. The All Eyes on Me Studio was a great place to conduct this project because I wanted a space where art and music were supported and valued equally in a community and had no limitation on how I can display the work of art with each local and national artist. Not only was I able to formulate and display the art in a meaningful and professional manner, people were able to have the opportunity to have an experience of viewing the art alongside live music.

The All Eyes on Me Studio is a big studio that allowed me to have space to capture the people coming in looking at the art and watching the artist perform. The studio has a main room which is an acoustic room and has a backroom where I was able to put a stage for the live bands to perform. The Unexpected Connection Exhibition was displayed in sections of styles, theme, and sculptures to make it easy for individuals to look at the art. The main room had 6 big white walls, one window wall. I was able to create a mural where the band performed and display 40 artworks on the

walls in a straight eye level line, and one sculptures of different mediums around the hall room.

The artworks were neatly put on the walls and the sculpture were placed in a way were the individual would walk around leaving room and space to fully examine the work of art. Each art piece had their own unique style; some had mix media, depth, and dimensions such as wood, tape, cardboard, chalk, oil sticks, oil pastels, acrylic, wire, spray paint, clay and others only acrylic paint on canvas. The main room had great acoustics that if one was standing on the opposite end of the other side of the wall, they would be able to listen and hear what the individual was talking about. Individuals who would observe the art exhibition were talking with each other connecting with each piece in the main room. When individuals walked in the room with music most talked louder and interacted with each other much more in the room. The open space of the studio allowed the individuals to walk freely and give enough space to stand, stare, and listen to see the art and listen to the music. I was able to interact and explain each individual art piece with everyone and was able to inform the individuals that the community made this event happen by coming together as a whole. Since I was able to document the process of the exhibition from start to finish, one of the methods I was able to use to gather my information and documentation was to use a video camera to film and record at the exhibition. The project was conducted on Friday February 10, 2023 from 7:00 p.m. to 10:00 p.m. and the process took a whole month to curate.

Statement of the Problem

The process of the exhibition took a lot of hard work and time to curate a successful event. The process began when Romulo Casillas contacted me to buy a painting of mine. When we got together, I saw his work and how much he gives to the community in San Bernardino. I mentioned to him if he works for the city because I have noticed he is always at meetings with the city people, coordinating events, filming, volunteering for fundraisers, and doing a lot for the city and the art community. However, I noticed that there was a problem with the city not helping their art community in anyway and even to those who actually take the time to attempt to improve the city. The more I began to see that the city never helped Romulo even though he volunteers his time, brought ideas to the table and gives so much to the community they just disregard him. This got me thinking about how someone in their community is doing so much for their community in the city, that the city overlooks those ideas or does not even pay attention to what someone is trying to do to build a better community as a whole through the arts. I asked him that I saw and witnessed how the city of San Bernardino does an injustice for the arts in their city. Lack of support from the city, no motivation to make the city better through the arts, made me question why doesn't the city try and help the art community? He asked me that he was a big fan of my work and saw that I curate many shows, art exhibitions, and was impressed that I do it on my own in other cities. I asked him that I wanted to be more involved in the city of San Bernardino and do something big to bring the art community together. Romulo mentioned that a professor of Cal State San Bernardino has a studio in downtown San Bernardino called All Eyes on Me Studio and I mentioned to him if there was any way I can curate a show there for the art community. This conversation happened September

24, 2022 and our first official process of the exhibition happened October 4, 2022 with just planning what I wanted to exhibition to become.

The theory of social identity, which was developed and proposed by Henri Tajfel in 1986, defined social identity to be the “characteristics of perceived membership in a relevant social group” that is comprised of two components of “cognitive perspectives and affective perspectives” (Chiang, et al., 2016, p. 781). According to Chaing et al. (2016), the first component is cognitive, which deals with the personal identity in relation to other members of a community that refers to the perception of self-image (p. 781). The second component is affective, which involves “emotional attachment and/or affective commitment to a community” (Chaing et al., 2016, p. 781).

Individuals use the social aspects of their lives to shape who they are and form the way they adjust in the world by how they think and what they do with their behaviors and emotions around others (Guan & So, 2016). For example, as a child, I always faced obstacles and had multiple failures growing up which were attributed into my path of success. As a child living in poverty in Los Angeles, illiterate, and having a broken family allowed me to grow stronger as a person from the inside creating various bonds with others through some sort of communication in my community. It was not easy but the fact that I was able to communicate well to get a point across and mold to others brought this emotion and feeling into wanting to help people in my community grow. Once I discovered how to play and create music, I was able to express my feelings and emotions about my past experiences and the way the “system” is in our community. Then I was able to find another form to express myself, through art by painting a visual picture of my experiences, feelings, and emotions on a canvas to express my social

interactions on a regular basis with my community to share my ideas with my community through the arts.

The way an individual communicates, volunteers, and gives back to their communities with one another influences, forms, and develops behaviors through their social interactions (Guan & So, 2016). For instance, the way I create music and create different sounds influence the listeners to move a certain way or think about what I am saying to reflect on my lyrics. Another example: some individuals call my art “synthetic-cubism” or “modern Picasso” because of the way my art interacts with them and the way it forms in a geometric, abstract, and cubistic style. Communicating with others expresses belonging into groups and builds an image and a reputation in a group setting (Guan & So, 2016). According to Guan and So (2016) the “interactions and relationships with one another contributes to a more understanding of a persons’ attitudes, behaviors, and beliefs” which allows the community to come together to create a better place for the arts (p. 590). Guan and So (2016) mentions that groups or an individual can possess various attributes towards influencing others in their community (p. 592). For example, individuals who identify and serve to have a concrete group at an art exhibition can approve behavior to align with their values and influences towards the exhibition (Guan & So, 2016). Conducting this project has helped me see how a community can benefit from music and art through an art exhibition. This allowed me to see that if a community contribute their time and efforts as a whole, we can make a better place in the city through the arts in the community of San Bernardino. Guan and So (2016) explain that the more an individual uses their identities with a group the more it advocates to create a particular behavior within that group of their community (p. 591).

Art and music can create behaviors in groups and bring out quality of life measures within each other or independently (Dain et al., 2015). Dain et al. states that art and music brings social interactions to a group of people and allows communication to flow using visual and hearing art forms together in an art exhibition (p. 1037). The individuals identified the sensory information as a contributing role in influencing how they felt and interacted with the art exhibition and other individuals in the exhibition. Using social identity theory has allowed me to observe whether or not people create and form connections with social interactions, body language, and communication in this Unexpected Connection Exhibition at the All Eyes On Me Studio in San Bernardino.

METHODS

According to Pearce and McLaughlin (2007) “artist are drawn to the world out there as documentarists and have since the Lumières but they shaped and informed people by the world in here by their personal experience, cultural and sexual identities, their political and aesthetic engagements through film” (p.14). The process of the documentation happened at my house on November 11, 2022 when I was practicing with my band Unsound Sunday and happened to get my good friend Eduardo Franco and Nixon of Dumb Bitches with Internet to perform with us at the day of the event. I was able to document the process of collaborating with them and already show my community that working together can create something memorable for everyone in the music and art world if we all come together. I wanted to document the entire process, so I asked one of my good friends Bernz if he was able to help with my documentation by

filming the ins and outs of what I was doing for the exhibition from the beginning to the end. December 13, 2022 was the cleaning day. I got the approval to use the studio for my event, but the studio was a mess and I had to clean the entire place and took about a day to clean the entire studio with the help of Romulo. January 14, 2023, I had a meeting with a local stage production in San Bernardino to help see if we can use a stage for the performers for the event. Because of what we were trying to do for the art community the stage production offered their services with no charge to help participate in this event. That same night right after we set up the stage that we had to move to put inside the studio for the bands. Not to mention that I created a mural inside the studio where the performers were going to play the same night after the stage set up. February 4, 2022 was the hang up day, where I hung up all the artwork in the studio. Throughout the time that I was documenting the process I was painting and collaborating with each artist on their artwork as well. The opening day was Friday February 10, 2023 and the moment we released the tickets for the show, it sold out in just two days. The ticket holders had to wait in a line outside the door until the opening time which was at 7:00 p.m. The moment that the doors open people were eager to see the exhibition because of how the community came together to create this exhibition.

Producing the Film

Producing the film was the most challenging part of the whole event. The reason why it was the hardest part was because I have no knowledge on how to create a documentary or how to work a camera. I wanted to look at examples and references on how to create a documentary of music, art, and building community but I also did not

want to follow a guide or reference to see if it would affect my vision on the way I was able to bring the community together. I was able to find some in each different section but were not the same thing I was trying to express. The only small experience that I did have was creating music videos, directing, and creating content for my music. However, it was not in a professional level or used fancy cinematic film gear to create my content. I needed to adapt and learn how to work a camera and see what program and materials I would need to help create this autoethnographic documentary from filming, to editing, to publishing.

Data

The exhibition welcomed adults, different sex, and different ethnicities and most had experienced an art exhibition in San Bernardino but not with national artist and local artist in a same room. The way I collected my data was audio recording and video recording. Before people would enter the exhibition, I would announce that everyone going inside the art exhibition would be in an autoethnographic documentary project for my project class assignment and would have a verbal consent form giving me permission to record and use information extracted from the art exhibition. During the time of the exhibit I was able to witness the people's emotion of joy, happiness, and gratitude toward the event. Throughout the exhibit, I was able to interact with each other with the art, music, and artist on their experience of the exhibition.

Before the doors opened to the public, I made sure to have everything ready for the exhibition from the artwork looking perfect to the stage and lighting for the performance. Once the doors opened the people were entering the door, I was able to

greet them saying and waving “hello” and watching their faces be amazed from the artworks. It was great seeing familiar faces and new faces looking around at the art space. I was standing and looking at some of the artwork while interacting with each other about the art pieces. The room was full of people and hearing them say, that they could not believe a studio like this existed here in San Bernardino and that they were amazed to hear and see an exhibition with so much talented artist in San Bernardino.

Seeing their body language already gave me an indication that they were fascinated by the work of each individual artist and could not believe famous musicians, actors, and local artist came together to create a beautiful space. While I was performing, I was able to see every single person enjoying their time and happy to experience such a successful event. People were very drawn to how the art community came together collaborating in each piece with me, and got sponsors such as the local stage production, a local brewery for drinks, empire clothing to make shirts for the event, Bernz media to help document the entire process, and even got the permits I needed for the event with less to no cost. They all saw what the whole idea was about trying to build a community with the arts that they wanted to be part of the event to help in any way they can.

At the end of the show, when I stopped playing music, right away people wanted to talk to me and explain to me their experience of the exhibit. When people finished their tour of the exhibit, I had a line on front of me and around me to talk to me about the exhibit and their experience of the night. The first couple of people, I was able to start off asking them, if they enjoyed the exhibition? The people were amazed on how I was able to pull off this event in such a short amount of time and bring the local community

together and get national artist to help create this event for the art community. The people started to feel certain connections with the artwork and music and were explaining to me how it made them feel wanted and connected with the community through this event. One of the findings that almost everyone shared was that the art presented was all a collaboration piece and felt like unity in a space. People also mentioned that there should be more events like this in the city of San Bernardino to help the art community grow. Talking and embracing the presence of the guest, local artist, musicians, small business owners, and actors felt wanted in a city through the arts in this event. With their own experiences towards the music and art in the exhibition the community were able to come together as a whole to create this space of wholeness. Creating this event helped me uncover how truly a person feel about the art community in the city of San Bernardino. It helped me see that the art community wants to make events like this one happen, but they do not have the resources of know where to look for those resources to create something like this in the future or make a recurring event.

Project Timeline

The project timeline took about a month to plan and prepare. The beginning stages of the idea coming together was in September 24, 2022 and the process of making the calls to the artist, planning out the event, and documentation was October 4, 2022. The process of the documentation happened at my house on November 11, 2022 by getting together with my band and recording band rehearsal. December 13, 2022 was the cleaning day which took all day moving all the furniture and covering up holes

on the floor so people would not fall and trip. December 22, 2022, getting approval to paint and fix the studio for the event. February 1, 2023, having several meetings with a local stage production in San Bernardino to help see if we can use a stage for the performers for the event and getting licenses for liability and insurance for the space. That same night moving the stage to the studio for the performance and around 11p.m. to 1a.m. created a huge mural. February 4, 2022 was the hang up day, which took all day because we had to bring the art to the studio and hang up the art. The opening day was Friday February 10, 2023 and ended February 11, 2023.

Limitations

All interactions were face-to-face while keeping safety protocol, allowing the community to feel comfortable in the project. Due to the nature of the project and involvement with the people, my opinion may have surfaced in the findings. One of the concerns that came across, was that my status as a public figure would possibly alter the project in some way. However, this facilitated the process to find the community to take part in this project because some individuals did not know that I also created art or curated events, so they were more motivated to see the event in the city of San Bernardino.

Throughout the project I found obstacles in my findings, one of them was while conducting this project I felt that there was no support whatsoever with the city of San Bernardino to help one bit in creating this event for the art community. Witnessing this first-hand allowed me to reflect on my personal experiences with the music and art

world and how I can help bring the art community up by creating more events like this giving artist opportunity to unite as one.

My experience and knowledge from both the music and art aspects the procedures, values, and goals has help me understand the musical culture and the subdivision culture of art. Even though there is a status of my name of a “public figure” I identified limitations related to my status and membership and I reflected on my background, identity, and perspective that may have influence the research throughout the data collection process.

During my involvement in the music business and art business, I have experienced ideas on how to combine both art forms into one working place helping each other bring people together for job purposes and creative purposes in the community. When I saw and heard the same thing every single artist were telling about how the system in the art and music world is unfair, I connected the two and wanted to combine both forms of arts and documented the event to find a solution on how to help these art forms to come together in a work setting for future exhibitions around the city. In my time with both areas of the arts, I expressed my idea on how to be more inclusive with others who are trying to accomplish things in the art world. It took me by surprise that being an artist was the exact same struggle musician face. From this project I was able to gather information on opportunities for encouraging communication with each other through art and music in the community of San Bernardino. This project presented self-expression and brought both forms of art to influence people to build a strong art community together. As a person that creates art and music, this caused me to

advocate for other artists and musicians to work together into creating a field work together in their community.

Being able to create my own music and curate art exhibitions I am able to express and share my life, experiences, deepest thoughts, and emotions through these forms of art with other artist and musicians. Geoff Luck (2014) states that “we use music to modify our mood, augment current feelings to release tension” (p. 255). The way an artwork truly embodies the expression for an artist to their audience, all depends on the content that it is intended to communicate with the audience (Kreuzbauer, 2017).

Social identity theory helps this project to understand how each group and individual influences each other and their environment. Individuals bring in their own experiences and opinions to a place that can impact decision making when a group hear their peers around. At the end of the project, the community wanted to get more involved in the art community to create more events like this. I was able to provide all the resources I had, to give them all the information I know on how I did the event so they could use that knowledge and create something for their space of community. The people were fascinated with the artwork and mentioned that having live music was more of an add on to the experience of the art exhibition. Because of how successful the event was, the city and owners of the building now want to work with me to curate another exhibition with the same concept but at a bigger and nicer building which is called The Enterprise Building in San Bernardino. We are working on planning when will be the next art exhibition and now I am able to bring more local, national, and international artist to participate in the next event and have support from the city of San Bernardino.

ANALYSIS AND REFLECTION

San Bernardino

Living in San Bernardino, I have witnessed the lack of support that the city has given to its community. There are not enough resources within the community to help recover the city and people from poverty. There may be a small portion of programs that do help but it is not enough. The city has the potential to accomplish much more on a bigger scale for its people but chooses not to contribute for the community.

People living in San Bernardino feel that there is no light at the end of the tunnel because it is notoriously known for having bad living conditions, high crime rates, violence, low budgets for education and no work for their families (Strauss, 2018). According to Joe Mazingo from *Los Angeles Times* (2015) he states that “San Bernardino, once a sturdy, middle class All-America City, is now bankrupt, the poorest city of its size in California, and a symbol of the nation’s worst urban woes” (p. 1). Being in a city with high poverty neighborhood with low income, health problems, and lack of education not only affects adults but the future of the children that live in the city (Napoli, 2015). Reflecting on these issues and living myself in them as well, made me want to find the light for the city. That is why I wanted to use my skills, resources, and knowledge to create a space where the community is involved in a positive manner.

It is apparent that San Bernardino has massive economic and social problems, however I helped the community see the beauty of this city by bringing them together through art and music. I look forward to creating a space where people can freely express themselves through their art and feel that their voices are being heard in their

own community. Even though the city is struggling through all its issues, the community has the potential to make a change and formulate a new perspective of the city of San Bernardino. I utilized the social identity theory to create an event where the arts could be used to bring the community together.

Art Shaped the Community

During the event people did indeed demonstrate strong feelings of belongingness in the community group as proposed by social identity theory (Paruzel et al., 2020). People reacted to the collaborative works of art and music in the event by explaining their relationship between themselves and the art. Artists expressed themselves freely with their style of work and also allowed me to collaborate by providing me with opportunity to paint on their artworks to create a unique cohesive piece. By collaborating with various artists' the community came together collectively to create an event and connect with each other. Another factor that helped shape the way the community viewed San Bernardino was through the music. That is because "music has desirable effects that facilitates the recall of paintings" that can amplify the link between "memory and behavioural intentions" (Loureiro et al., 2019, p. 5).

Conclusion

Similar events that have historically focused on socioeconomic and political problems within the city while using art to build a better view on the city inspired me. For example, Asco how were a group of artists in the 1970s, were fighting against the stereotypes of east Los Angeles. People knew east Los Angeles as the area with gang bangers, high crime rates, violence, and because of those issues they brought a negative narrative to east Los Angeles (McMahon, 2011). Asco attempted to change the

narrative through their works of art and created a different perspective of the city within their community. I have always been engaged in the community but by successfully carrying out The Unexpected Connection Exhibition I was able to change the narrative of San Bernardino through the art. This event was very important to the community as a whole. Prior to this, San Bernardino youth internalized feelings of disempowerment. However, I was able to help empower the people bring unity, change, and togetherness through the arts.

APPENDIX A
DOCUMENTARY VIDEO

Cezzartt: Building Community Through the Arts video link

<https://youtu.be/7zfpCTOvRTI>

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