Moving Identities: A Self-Identity Based Digital Time Capsule

Stories of the Journey of Self-Identity Through Autoethnography

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Table of Contents

Table of Contents Cont.

Abstract

The Moving Identities Project is an ongoing, arts-based research inquiry project that explores the idea of an individual representing and expressing their ever-changing self-identity through the method of autoethnography through intentioned free-movement. This project is in its first stage of data collection with more stages to come in the near future. This project is housed in an online, digital identity time capsule and it is supported by the core theories and ideas of Community-Based Participatory research (CBPR), Arts-Based Research (ABR), General Identity Theory, Self-Identity Theory, movement inquiry, autoethnography, intentioned free-movement, photography, videography, dance, community arts, and storytelling. The main research question of this thesis and project is: How are individuals able to express years of self-growth through nonverbal, intentioned free-movement expression and photography? Other research questions include: What are people's intuitive, physical movement reactions to different points in their life? How do these movements change as their physical and mental self has grown? What can we observe by looking at the differences in these free-movement reactions? Participants are not from any one population. *The Moving Identities Projec*t is all inclusive and open to everyone that would like to participate regardless of ability, age, and background. This thesis focuses on the 14 core project participants and their submitted content within the first stage of data collection. The participant range is diverse in demographic information and age. Project participant ages range from 19 to 77 years old, and participants hail from Massachusetts, Philadelphia, Illinois, and California. Each individual project participant completed a Participant Confirmation Form and an Identity Folder that includes: two photos representing themselves, one past and one current, two 30 to 45 second videos of intentioned free-movement to two songs, and one answered list of 10 follow up project reflection questions. The content uploaded is diverse, thought provoking, and evocative of each participant's journey of their changing self-identity over a time span of their choosing. This project and thesis are one of a kind in the world of ABR. The use of autoethnography through intentioned free-movement is an exciting and unique way for participants to convey their thoughts about their changing self-identity through non-verbal self-expression.

Keywords: Arts-Based Research, ABR, Community-Based Participatory Research, CBPR, Autoethnography, Identity, Self-Identity, Movement, Movement Inquiry, Intentioned Free-Movement, Dance, Photography, Videography, Storytelling, Community Arts

Part I: Introduction

Autoethnography Through Movement: The Journey to Moving Identities

Community and identity. These two words are the driving force behind why as an avid

community arts practitioner and movement advocate, I do what I do and believe in what I believe.

I am from Lowell, Massachusetts, where the street dance community is strong, vibrant, and

flourishing. Artists from all modalities in the Lowell and Greater Boston community support one

another and make this community a warm and accepting place that sparks creativity in myself as

a dancer. I feed off of the ever-growing love and gratitude that I have for my city and the wonderful

humans within it, humans who have taken time to journey deep into not only *why they are*, but the

journeys in life that have made them *WHO they are*, and *how their identities have been shaped*.

My love for dance and my strong belief in finding one's own self-identity comes from the

electricity and drive that all of the artists and movers in our communities express on a daily basis.

Dance to me is not only a form of self-expression, but also a form of self-empowerment, and an

exploration of one's own self-identity, feelings, and emotions. We are humans first, and dancers

second. Dance should allow complete freedom of expression and creativity in those using it as a

form of art. Movement is a gift, and every person moves differently in their own unique way.

Dance is art and art is love. The experience of movement can truly be used to unlock one's own

journey into self-love and self-identity. Dance is that portal to humanness that I feel we can all

encompass and love. Dance brings people together, and community in dance and the arts is what

I champion, always.

My lifelong love of community, the arts, performance, movement, intentioned free-

movement, identity, and education started from the time I was in my early adolescent years. A

choir kid and dancer at heart, I was always so enthused to be a part of any art and performance

art experiences that came my way. I realized from a young age that the privilege of being a colleague of other artists within a collective arts-based movement was where my spark for life, for creativity, and for artful teaching came to be. It was when I emerged into my college years that my sense of belonging in the arts world became concrete, and the experiences I encountered solidified my love of community arts even more so. Being a part of an arts-based community in Lowell, and Greater Lowell, MA opened me up to so many other arts filled and fervent communities of hard working, creative, and intelligent humans. It was at this time that I joined numerous movement collectives, ran and managed movement teams and groups, taught movement workshops, and became an avid student in the world of dance and movement art myself. Working and creating alongside other artists of all ages and walks of life gave me so many important tools to become a fully impassioned and connected artist. Our wide Greater Lowell, Boston, and New England community of sharing and teaching art encouraged and created all of the artful teaching that became instilled into me. Our community only grew larger the older I became, and it continues to grow and expand with each coming day. It wouldn't be until I learned more about arts-based research at Lesley University a few years later that I fully recognized movement as a valid form of autoethnography. My spark was ignited, and I was so eager to become even more involved in the community arts world.

My wonderful, artful experiences and exposure to the world of community arts is what led me to my journey into being a Master's Candidate in Lesley University's Arts, Community and Education M.Ed. Program in the Autumn of 2019. Throughout my time in the Community Arts Education Program, I have been so grateful to have had the opportunities to explore various community arts related topics and projects. The courses I have taken have introduced me to so many exciting ideas and given me many opportunities to apply my newfound knowledge and

skills directly into my work in my own arts-based community. One of my first experiences at Lesley was leading my first ever community arts research exploration in downtown Cambridge. I, alongside my fellow classmates, interviewed other humans, gathered data, and saw the budding ideas bloom from said collection. The data collected led us to create and formulate our first community arts research project idea, one that was based around what arts-based pop up event the people of Cambridge and Somerville wanted to see on a well-known bike path for the following Autumn. At Lesley, I was taught so much about self-identity and self-empowerment, specifically how the arts, performance arts, and movement arts can be catalysis of change and advocacy for everyone and anyone in this life. My time at Lesley officially introduced me to the concept of autoethnography, and the important impact it had as a tool to aid in humans being able to share their own stories of identity. A storytelling course that I took was where for the first time I was able to take a deep dive into my own self-identity as a human, artist, mover, and educator. What in my life had brought me to where I was at that very point? I learned so much from hearing the stories of my classmate's explorations of identity. This exploration of self-identity created an atmosphere of vulnerability, and even more important than that, a community of acceptance through the lens of shared empathy for others, for their stories, for their identities, for WHY and WHO they truly were. Towards the end of my Lesley University journey, my eyes were opened to all of the different modalities that encompass arts-based research. I was filled with interest and delight at the fact that autoethnography though movement, video, and picture, were all valid forms of research. This discovery is how the initial idea for *The Moving Identities Project* bloomed and came to be almost a year and a half ago.

The Moving Identities Project: Statement of Purpose & Project Overview

The Moving Identities Project is a movement and music centered digital story time capsule that uses autoethnography through intentioned free-movement and text to collect individual stories of growth and see how a participant's journey has contributed to self-growth and changing self-identity through the years. This visual sociological collection of stories will be recorded using video, and photographic methods.

To give a general overview of the project process, the project data is being gathered by two main apparatuses. The initial data collected is through an online form that I created entitled, *The Moving Identities Project Digital Time Capsule Participant Confirmation Form* via Google Forms. The main data being collected for the full digital time capsule is currently being run on the main Google Drive Folder titled, *The Moving Identities Project Digital Time Capsule*. This project is an ongoing project, but for the purpose of this thesis, those currently participating fall into Stage 1 of the ongoing data collection process. There are **s**ix key components to *The Moving Identities Project* that all potential participants must submit to have their own fully submitted project folder. Their folder will then be on display in the project's ongoing digital time capsule main folder, and the link to the capsule will be an open one to be viewed and shared publicly after this Stage 1 data collection process has been completed. **The main research question of this project is:** How are individuals able to express years of self-growth through nonverbal, intentioned free-movement expression and photography? **Other research questions include:** What are people's intuitive, physical movement reactions to different points in their life? How do these movements change as their physical and mental self has grown? What can we observe by looking at the differences in these free-movement reactions?

Project Goals

I have multiple current goals for *The Moving Identities Project.* These goals include: that CBPR (Community Based Participatory Research) is successfully used in this first stage of raw data collection and that the project continues to extend even after this thesis is written and published. That this project helps participants start a conversation with themselves and that this process gets them to think more deeply about their own lives and journeys. The hope is that participants feel that they have contributed to something bigger than themselves. That those who participate enjoy the process and the look back process and that they feel fulfilled after having participated. Finally, that this digital time capsule can be ongoing and create a continuing discussion around self-identity and intentioned free-movement within the community arts and non-arts worlds.

Part II: Background Information
Needed Conversations & Sparking Crucial Self Expression

The Journey Continues: Sparking a Community Arts Discussion on Movement & Self-Identity

As our community of movers grew, so did the collective idea that dancing and movement played a much bigger role in all of our lives beyond the benefits of creating and performing. Those incredible experiences were only the beginning, the surface of what movement could truly do for others. I quickly became enthralled in the growing collective idea that movement has a much deeper meaning behind it. To myself and our arts community, movement, and the act of dancing, quickly became recognized and appreciated as a valid form of not only self-expression, but of therapy. Movement was the gateway to release so many emotions that were bottled up deep inside, those that were almost too daunting to speak of out loud. The

parts of our self-identities that were too confusing to talk about, to verbally release, seemed almost easier to express and share in the form of intentioned free-movement. Dance classes became therapy sessions. Workshops became more than just choreography classes; they became deep dives into the depths of the human emotions of those willing to take the challenge to participate. Cyphers, where a person(s) dances in the middle of a circle of people watching them, became soul sessions, and whenever you entered the coveted circle, the phrase "show us who you really are," became much more commonplace within our artist communities. Movement, and intentioned free-movement, were now also becoming widely acknowledged by many in our arts communities as forms of storytelling, of telling about one's own self-identity and journey. Participating in a cypher circle, or story circle, has always been a "challenge by choice" activity for anyone interested in sharing. The minute a mover decides to hop into the circle is the minute that their story of WHO they are, their self-identity, begins to be shared. The individual within that circle soon becomes entranced into a flow state of mind, where with each move, they dig deeper and deeper into WHO and WHAT they want to share about themselves. It is in that very moment that their movement creates a conversation between themselves and the music. This individual conversation then draws the attention of those who are presently watching, and they too are now a part of this conversation. The exchange between a mover's story of self-identity and the music almost always directly leads to a bigger, more in-depth, exchange through movement for everyone who is involved in the cypher. These conversations flow beautifully from the individual level to the group level and always spark conversations around self-identity, and the process of movement and expression, long after the cypher circle has dissipated. This spark ignites and spreads throughout not only the dance and movement community, but it continues to fuel even more excitement around self-identity and self-expression within the

general community arts, and even the non-arts, worlds of individuals looking to appreciate and

become inspired by these stories of self. A cypher discussion of self-identity through intentioned

free-movement directly leads to a community discussion of the same topic through verbal means.

This simply leads to more humans connecting through the means of storytelling through

movement, i.e., a type of autoethnography. Each time one exchange is had, visibility and

vulnerability are at the forefront of the experience. The physical and metaphoric walls that

humans put up, either purposefully or unconsciously, slowly start to become more transparent as

an individual allows themself to be vulnerable, to be seen. Cypher exchanges and community

conversations are one in the same. *The Moving Identities Project* is fully based off of this very

concept of autoethnography through intentioned free-movement. Those who participate will be

taking a firsthand dive directly into helping to perpetuate these important and needed therapeutic

conversations around the journey of self-identity, and the acceptance of vulnerability, for the

general public to view, discuss, learn and grow.

A Need for Crucial Self Expression

         A project like this one is crucial because it can be open and expanded to people of all

backgrounds and demographics. A visual and auto ethnographic centered collection of individual

stories of self-growth through imagery is allowing a different outlet in which people can express

how they feel about their past selves, their current selves, and the transformation between the

two. The outlet of intentioned free-movement and dance that this project will be based around

will help those who do not usually express themselves, or feel confident expressing themselves

through words or verbal means, to be able to unapologetically let their expression free flow from

their body. This expression is up for much more interpretation than if they were to discuss about

their growth in words, and I believe that that type of open interpretation is really important in

itself, especially since people can feel like they don't have the right words to speak or that they

may feel judged for speaking about themselves in a certain way. This process is a vulnerable one

that may have some participants feeling uncomfortable, but the only way one can truly grow is to

sit in their uncomfortability, find peace with it and with being vulnerable, and then growth will

occur as a result.

Part III: The Core Concepts & Theories Within *The Moving Identities Project*

Other Kinds of Past Movement Inquiries

    After taking a deep dive into the research within the fields of movement and identity, it is

clear to see that there have been different types of movement inquiries in the past, but not ones

similar to *The Moving Identities Project.* Research around the topics of movement and identity

have tended to encompass a few other kinds of topics, a large majority of them being around the

identity of dancers and movers and what specific aspects make someone identify themselves as a

"dancer" (Drogari, 2019). Along with this "dancer identity" topic area, other research within this

field has mostly been around dance and culture, how sacred movements help those identify with

their specific cultures and traditions (Crabtree, 2019), and on how one's own total identity

(personal and social) is different during adolescence and how that can be portrayed through some

specific dances in genres like, modern, contemporary, and even ballet (Thomas, 2015). There is

even some research on how dance and movement can accompany literature in the classroom

through the lens of storytelling and play (Hester, 2018). With all of this unearthed, at no time

throughout my extensive research had I found any past projects or distinct research on the

specific topic of intentioned free-movement and dance being used as a tool to help portray the

story of ones' own changing self-identity through an autoethnographical or storytelling lens. This

is when I knew that my creation, *The Moving Identities Project*, was truly an original and one-of-

a-kind research project for a new area of ABR (Arts-Based Research) and CBPR. In the next

sections of Part III, I will break down all the specific core concepts and theories, like

aforementioned ABR and CBPR, that make up the unique framework of *The Moving Identities*

Project.

General Identity Theory

Looking into the first of multiple specific core concepts and theories that comprise

the framework of *The Moving Identities Project*, I wanted to take a deeper dive into the realm of

General Identity Theory and how this key concept plays a major role in this work. In my research

on identity, I first began by searching for definitions of the word "identity" in its general sense of

meaning. The 2021 Merriam-Webster Dictionary states that the essential meaning of the word

"identity" is, "1. Who someone is: the name of a person. 2: The qualities, beliefs, etc., that make

a particular person or group different from others" (n.p). With the essential meaning in mind, it is

now important to look at the elements of what ones' general identity is comprised of. This type

of more generalized identity, sometimes called personal identity, is different from ones' own

self-identity. The concept of self-identity will be defined later in this paper. In an article from

2010, The American Psychological Association defines and breaks down the term identity and

what comprises it by stating that,

> Identity is an individual's sense of self defined by (a) a set of physical,
>
> psychological, and interpersonal characteristics that is not wholly shared with any
>
> other person and (b) a range of affiliations (e.g., ethnicity) and social roles.
>
> Identity involves a sense of continuity, or the feeling that one is the same person
>
> today that one was yesterday or last year (despite physical or other changes). Such
>
> a sense is derived from one's body sensations; one's body image; and the feeling

that one's memories, goals, values, expectations, and beliefs belong to the self

(APA, 2010, p.3).

One's own identity is clearly defined as being multifaceted and compromised of many moving and ever-changing parts. PhD, CPsych, Faculty of Kinesiology and Physical Education, Lynda Mainwaring of the University of Toronto, talks about how important the concept of identity is and how it varies over time. Identity is a very dynamic concept and how we as humans see ourselves is ever changing and growing, day by day, hour to hour, and even by the minute. Identity development is a constant process. Identity is always evolving, and evolving requires semi consistent interaction on personal, interpersonal, and community levels (Mainwaring, 2019). Lastly, it is important to look at how identity is formed, what makes You, You? An article from Psychology Today (2021) on the basics of identity stated that identity formation in humans includes three key tasks. The article went on to state thesis tasks as, "Discovering and developing one's potential, choosing one's purpose in life, and finding opportunities to exercise that potential and purpose… Identity is also influenced by parents and peers during childhood and experimentation in adolescence" (n.p). There is so much to unpack in terms of general identity theory, but this project is intended to go much deeper into another side of identity theory. All humans have a general, or personal identity, a social identity, and a self-identity. While all three are involved in the overall development of humans throughout their lives, the theory that *The Moving Identities Project* is truly rooted in is the theory of self-identity, its importance to each individual, and how one's self-identity changes and evolves throughout their lifetime.

Self-Identity Theory

Moving further into identity theory and how it connects to my project, the next deep dive

into the main aspect of my project is centered around self-identity theory, and ones' own

relationship to their self-identity as it changes over periods of time in their life. Looking at what

self-identity is defined as, researcher Manos Tsakiris (2015) of the International Encyclopedia of

the Social & Behavioral Sciences (Second Edition) states that,

> Our psychological sense of self-identity seems to be grounded in explicit and
> conceptual representations, such as one's own memories, personality traits,
> beliefs, and attitudes. A sense of identity over time is given by autobiographical
> memory. The sense of identity is generated by the fact that all these experiences
> are related to me, rather than to someone else (p.419).

What makes Self-Identity Theory different from General Identity Theory? There are a couple of

key characteristics. In the article "Self-Identity and Personal Identity," author John J. Drummond

(2020) states that,

> The key to understanding self-identity is identifying the transcendental structures that
> make a temporally extended, continuous, and unified experiential life possible. Self-
> identity is rooted in the formal, temporalizing structure of intentional experience that
> underlies psychological continuity. Personal identity, by contrast, is rooted in the content
> of the particular flow of experience, in particular and primarily, in the convictions
> adopted passively or actively in reflection by a self-identical subject in the light of her
> social and traditional inheritances (p.1).

Drummond is really focusing on how the temporal aspect of one's own identity, or the aspect of

it in regards to time, is always changing throughout one's life. A person's self-identity is

completely unique to them and to their own timeline in life. The intentional experiences that an

individual goes through during the course of their life help to define one's own self-identity at any given point in time and as these experiences grow, change, and alter over time, one's self-identity during any moment can be defined differently by that person alone, as a result. In contrast, an individual's personal identity is more defined by the specific circumstances and social areas a person is in and around and their stance and circumstances surrounding them. Personal identity is more rooted in what characteristics make that individual different from someone else, instead of how the person truly sees themself, i.e., their self-identity. Self-identity focuses solely on how one truly sees themself void of comparison to anyone else and of anything regarding outside or social influence. When you take away outside factors, influences, and agents of change, all that is left is a person's unique viewpoint of themself in the world and how they see themselves and what they experienced from their point of view in each life moment, not how anyone else sees them or the situation. No other person can truly "tell" anyone how their soul or feelings are in each moment. An individual's true self-identity that they speak of is the only thing that can define them and how they see or saw themselves during any one particular moment in life. This is why the concept of self-identity is one of the main concepts in *The Moving Identities Project.*

Movement Inquiry & Storytelling Through Dance

"Dance is a storyteller. Movement becomes the language while body is the medium for story to emerge" -- Rev. B. Kaufmann

With the core theories of General Identity and Self-Identity now fully explained, the next key concepts that make up this project are that of movement inquiry and storytelling through movement. *The Moving Identities Project* is clearly named after and centered around movement and identity, its two more principal concepts. Movement art and movement for the sake of storytelling both play a critical role as the main art form components in this project. To take a

deeper look, we first must define exactly what "movement" is. The 2021 Merriam-Webster

dictionary states that the essential meaning of the word "movement" is, "the act or process of

moving especially: change of place or position or posture" (n.p). The very act of moving our

bodies is something that almost every individual does nearly every day to some degree, whether

it be moving for the sake of walking, for the sake of exercise and dancing, or even moving while

laying down or asleep. It is easy to see how movement and moving one's body is such a

predominant occurrence in our every day lives, but the concept of movement as an artful, dance

form is the type of movement that *The Moving Identities Project* is rooted in. This type of

concept is called Movement Inquiry, and this exploration of movement leads us to the realm of

dancing. In exploring these concepts, it is important to look at how movement and dance are

perceived as forms of non-verbal communication between the mover's body and those who are

perceiving their movements. In her book, *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in

Contemporary Dance*, author Ann Cooper Albright (2010) of Wesleyan University talks on the

concept of dancing and movement and how crucial they are in both communicating how one is

feeling, and in eliciting certain emotions through their specific movement. Albright states,

> Perceiving dance means more than a flat visual gaze, it also means attending to
>
> kinesthetic Aura somatic and special sensations. In discussions of how modern
>
> dance communicates to its audience, dance critic John Martin uses the term Meta
>
> Kinesis. Because of the inherent contagion of bodily movement, which makes the
>
> onlooker feel sympathetically in his own muscula, the dancer is able to convey
>
> through movement to the most intangible emotional experience… Unlike most
>
> other cultural productions, dance relies on the physical body to enact its own
>
> representation. But at the very moment the dancing body is creating a

representation, it is also in the process of actually forming that body. But more

simply, dancing bodies simultaneously produce and are produced by their own

dancing (p.3).

In her book, Albright truly dissects the importance of movement inquiry and dance by doing a

wonderful job of breaking down one of the most important elements of the dancing and

movement process, communication. Dancing for aesthetics and for certain movement to look

"beautiful or pleasurable" to the general eye is definitely a part of dancing, but the most crucial

aspect of dancing that both the mover and the audience remember most is the feeling that they

were being communicated to, and more specifically, what was being communicated to them

directly through that movement. *The Moving Identities Project* is rooted in the idea of

autoethnography, or personal storytelling, through the means of movement and of non-verbal

means. The individual who is moving is trying to convey how they were feeling about their self-

identity in a specific moment of their life, and this process of moving is meant to cause what

Albright mentioned as "Meta Kinesis," or the act of making any audience that is watching the

mover feel empathy and connect to their story in even a small way. In a 2019 article from the

UK's West End School's blog, storytelling through dance and what can be learned from enacting

it is explained. The article goes on to say that for a dancer, storytelling and dance is about

exploring ways that the body can convey meaning with intent, and this meaning can be

interpreted as a performed narrative or story by the audience that is watching. For the audience,

this is about finding ways to understand the body as it explores the story through visual means

and this can mean that because there will be multiple viewers watching the mover, there will

always be multiple interpretations of the dancer's movement and of their story as a result.

Watching these narrative dance pieces introduces the audience to different ways of

communication through the body, such as facial expressions, certain types of gestures, or hand

movements, and this demonstrates how different dialogues, stories, and narratives can be

expressed without any spoken word. This leaves room for a much more open interpretation of the

story, and it gives a whole new dynamic to the term "conversation" (para.1). Researcher Aili

Bresnahan in Stanford's Encyclopedia of Philosophy 2020 research article titled, *The Philosophy*

of Dance, states that, "Richard Shusterman has developed his own phenomenological theory,

which he calls "Somaesthetics," in order to explain an embodied engagement with art, including

dance, that includes a sort of kinesthetic awareness of interior, somatic processes" (para.26). This

type of movement through storytelling is what makes *The Moving Identities Project* so unique.

The Importance of Free Movement Dancing

Connecting directly to the baseline definition of movement and dance is another one of

the core ideas behind the concept of *The Moving Identities Project*, the belief that free-movement

and dance are important, even vital, parts of an individual's life and well-being. In the 2021

Stylist.co Magazine article titled, *Free movement: why and how you should give embodied*

practice a go, yoga teacher and free movement coach, Cat Meffan, talks about the practice of

free-movement, what it is, and how it is beneficial. Meffan describes free-movement as moving

with how you feel and not having any structure to your movements, there are no rules to how

you can move and that in of itself is very needed and beneficial. She continues on to describe the

benefits of free-movement by stating, "Free movement is fully yours. By doing free movement

you get a sense of the totality of your whole body, your emotions and your physicality" (para.3).

The concept of free-movement is worked into *The Moving Identities Project*, but different from

how Meffan uses free-movement. Meffan's practice is about truly letting go mentally, but *The*

Moving Identities Project is based off of "intentioned free-movement," which is a blend of

letting go of the body and not worrying about how it moves, while also moving with a set intention in mind. Those participating in my project are trying to truly sit with and feel with whatever emotions are elicited from their two different points in life that they chose to connect their transformation of identity to. Once those feelings come up to the surface, participants are encouraged to let themselves fall into intentioned free-movement to express how they felt in a non-verbal way. The intentions they set are all that their movement is based off of, the free-movement part comes into play because participants do not need to move in any controlled, or choreographed way, and they aren't even trying to freestyle their movements, as freestyling requires thinking ahead most of the time. The only thing that they must carry with them is the intention that they set once they sit into their feelings. Whatever emanates from their bodily movements is all up to the participant letting go of their body and emoting whatever their limbs and unconscious mind choose to let go of, ultimately to communicate to whoever is watching them move.

Movement, dancing, and intentioned free-movement are all core concepts within *The Moving Identities Project*, but outside of this project, dance and movement in general have multiple benefits for the human body and mind and are extremely vital to an individual's identity and overall daily well-being. Licensed Clinical Counselor Erica Hornthal of The Women's Alzheimer's Movement authored the 2019 article, *How Dance and Movement Can Help Foster Identity.* In her article, she states the numerous benefits of movement and tells of how vital it truly is. Hornthal states that,

> Movement is a vital component of life. Although it is often associated with exercise, it's important for us to remember that movement is an overarching umbrella involving body language, non-verbal communication, gesturing, posture,

and expression. It is the first language we know and the only language we can

never forget. Movement of the body allows for movement of the mind as well. If

the mind seems distant, disconnected, or confused, acknowledging or even adding

movement into someone's day can allow for reconnection, rejuvenation, even a

rewiring of the brain. Movement aids in neuroplasticity, cognitive reserve, and,

again, fostering and harnessing identity by using the most primitive and inherent

form of communication we know: body language (p.3).

Hornthal brings to light many wonderful ways that movement and dance are crucial modes of

communication of identity in humans, and that movement connects us all even when words

cannot. All of this reasoning leads to why the use of intentioned free-movement and dance in *The*

Moving Identities Project is so important to the overall project concept of communication of an

individual's changing self-identity through nonverbal means.

ABR: Arts-Based Research: My Definition & Other Definitions

My Gathered Definition of Arts-Based Research

Arts-based research (ABR) is a qualitative method of data gathering that

encompasses a plethora of multimodal art forms to help aid in the collection of data and

individual stories.

Other Definitions of Arts-Based Research

Arts-based research is a term that is not universally defined in the same way, as many

scholars and researchers define ABR, and its specifications, differently. In the 2019 Oxford

Research Encyclopedia of Education article, "Arts-Based Research," author J. Greenwood

(2019) defines ABR in her own way. She states that,

Arts-based research is an umbrella term that encompasses an eclectic array of

methodological and epistemological approaches and strategies that utilize one or

more of the arts in investigation. The field is a constantly evolving one, and

researchers have evolved diverse ways of using the communicative and

interpretative tools that processes what the arts allow. These include ways to

initially bypass the need for verbal expression, to explore problems in physically

embodied as well as discursive ways, to capture and express ambiguities,

liminalities, and complexities, to collaborate in the refining of ideas, to transform

audience perceptions, and to create surprise and engage audiences emotionally as

well as critically. A common feature within the wide range of approaches is that

they involve aesthetic responses (para.1).

Greenwood continues on about what she sees as the key elements of ABR. She exclaims that the

key elements of ABR are that,

It is research; and one or more art forms or processes are involved in the doing of

the research. How art is involved varies enormously. It has been used as one of

several tools to elicit information (Cremin, Mason, & Busher, 2011; Gauntlett,

2007; Wang & Burns, 1997) and for the analysis of data (Boal, 1979; Gallagher,

2014; Neilson, 2008), and so it serves as an enrichment to the palette of tools used

in qualitative research (para.1).

Greenwood's definition of ABR is just one of multiple definitions that are out in the qualitative

research world. In the 2017 article, *Arts-based Methods in Socially Engaged Research Practice:*

A Classification Framework, from the work, *Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary*

Journal, authors Wang, Coemans, Siegesmund, and Hannes state what their collective definition

of ABR is. They tell of ABR gaining a recent increase in popularity within the qualitative

research world and that it is applied within various disciplines in health, psychology,

anthropology, and education. They state that, "Arts-based research uses artistic forms and

expressions to explore, understand, represent, and even challenge human experiences. We further

identify five main forms of arts-based research: visual art, sound art, literary art, performing art,

and new media" (para.1). Even with numerous definitions of arts-based research existing and

still emerging in the world, these main ideas behind ABR seem to hold true for all who define

this well-known qualitative research method.

Patricia Leavy & Movement as Dance ABR

Patricia Leavy is an American sociologist, novelist, public intellectual, and arts advocate.

She has published more than thirty fiction and non-fiction books. Leavy promotes an arts-based

research paradigm which combines the arts and sciences. Arts-based research focusing on dance

and movement is one of two key concepts of ABR being used in *The Moving Identities Project*.

In her book, *Method Meets Art: Arts-Based Research Practice, Second Edition*, Leavy has an

entire chapter dedicated to dance and movement in the arts-based research world. In Chapter 5 of

Leavy's book, *Chapter 5 Dance and Movement as Inquiry*, she dives deeply into dance and

movement as valid forms of ABR. Leavy (2015) states that, "Dance in many ways is one of the

most abstract art forms, that incorporates words as well as movement. Dance is a very significant

factor in story-telling with one's body" (p.149). Dance is extremely abstract because every single

human moves differently and that is what is so special about it. Storytelling through movement

has been used for centuries through drama and dance, and a lot of the time the body can speak

even louder on behalf of the person moving than if they were to use verbalization. "Dance can be

used to create empathetic connection, to raise awareness, and to educate and promote social

justice. Performance based and dance-based methods have heavily merged over the years"

(p.149). Creating empathy through movement is something that I feel dance in its purest form

does even better than spoken word can at times. The phrase "actions speak louder than words"

comes to mind, as dance and movement are one big energy exchange that is open to all types of

interpretation. If someone who is moving is trying to empathize with the story of another human

being, movement will help a person truly put themselves in the shoes of the one they are trying

to empathize with because they will be able to feel that exchange of energy and feel where the

other person is at in life during that point in time. Verbalization and empathizing through words

are most definitely some things that can happen, but whereas words can become misconstrued

and mangled or authenticity can be lost, a person who is moving and sitting in their authenticity

would be able to better empathize or connect with the person that they are trying to empathize

with. Leavy continues on to state that, "Dance and movement, including improvisational

movement, is thought of by Marxist researchers and others as having a "transcendent,

consciousness raising potential. (p.149). Dance is extremely transformative, and it helps aid in

self-expression and self-actualization because of the fact that movement, movement with others

or movement by oneself, all have to do with energy and the exchange of energy. When a person

is moving in authenticity, during the feeling of that movement they are truly connecting with

themselves in that moment, and they might be unlocking certain feelings or emotions through

that movement that they may have had a much harder time coming to terms with if they were just

speaking it verbally. A person that is moving usually becomes more conscience of the process of

self-expression through movement, and because of this, the more conscious they will become of

their own feelings and of what they feel is most true to themselves. Expression through bodily

movement will help them to self-actualize and maybe do that shadow work that they have

needed to do for quite some time, effectively bringing them closer to the highest form of themselves. Leavy concludes by stating, "Dance is used to champion risk taking, as individuals challenge standard, societal assumptions, and movement helps to propel the self into a different and higher vibrational consciousness" (p. 156). Dance is a big risk for many people and is especially a risk for people who do not necessarily identify themselves as dancers or movers. Taking the risk to move means that a person is doing a lot in terms of breaking down their own walls of ego and of feelings that they will be judged or exposed because of the movement. I have seen many people who had been afraid to move in front of others, or even just in front of themselves, and once they stopped looking in the mirror and got over the fear of what they looked like, they were able to open themselves up to blossom and to express how they truly felt. Getting past that point of ego is definitely a way to dive deep into a higher vibrational consciousness.

Autoethnography: Storytelling Through Movement

Moving into another of the main ABR concepts behind *The Moving Identities Project,* autoethnography, and specifically autoethnography through intentioned free-movement, is the other leading type of ABR being used in this project. Autoethnography can be visualized in many ways, either through written word, pictures, video, or live movement and dance. Looking at a recent definition of the term, author Christopher N. Poulos in his 2021 book, *Essentials of Autoethnography,* breaks down what the term means. Poulos states,

> According to Adams et al. (2015), autoethnography is a qualitative research
> method that: 1) uses a researcher's personal experience to describe and critique
> cultural beliefs, practices, and experiences; 2) acknowledges and values a
> researcher's relationships with others; 3) uses deep and careful self-reflection—

typically referred to as "reflexivity"—to name and interrogate the intersections

between self and society, the particular and the general, the personal and the

political; 4) Shows people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live,

and the meaning of their struggles; 5) balances intellectual and methodological

rigor, emotion, and creativity; and 6) strives for social justice and to make life

better (p.4).

Autoethnography is an observational and data driven method of narrative research that is based

around tales of compelling social and cultural life stories of unique individuals. These stories are

meant to be striking, evocative examples of one's own images, memories, or feelings in life. The

act of autoethnography involves the researcher crafting a specific narrative that is based off of

their own personal experiences in their life, and this type of arts-based research is meant to be

displayed to an audience and put up for numerous types of interpretation. Although a majority of

auto-ethnographical research is based off of writing, autoethnography can be done in numerous

ways, including using visuals for photovoice, videography, and through movement and dance

(Poulos, 2021). *The Moving Identities Project* is rooted in autoethnography through movement

and about how each individual participant can explain their ever-changing self-identity story

through the means of photos and intentioned free-movement that is recorded through the means

of videography. Writing was used in some cases, as some participants wrote out their follow up

responses, and others decided to do a verbal, video response instead.

Community Arts & Its Prevalence

With the main core concepts now described, let's give a little background on the

term "community arts," why it is being used, and how it is important to this project. The UK's

Tate.org (2021) defines the term "community arts" as such, "Community art is artistic activity

that is based in a community setting, characterized by interaction or dialogue with the

community and often involving a professional artist collaborating with people who may not

otherwise engage in the arts" (para.1). The concept of community arts has existed in

communities since the late 1940's. When it first emerged, it began to empower those living in

their community to use art to join together for the greater good. The idea of community arts

evolved from the idea of cultural democracy and this idea describes practices in which cultural

and artistic expression are generated by individuals in their own communities rather than by

institutions of central power. Early initiatives of community arts doings included actors and

musicians working in their communities to create public works of art, such as visual and

performance art and by the 1960's during the height of social change, community art was seen as

a way of giving a voice to many individuals in all different kinds of societies across the world.

The idea of community arts is rooted in breaking down boundaries between individuals and the

idea that art needs to only be enjoyed by those who can afford it, or those in an upper class (Tate,

2021). Community art makes art more accessible to a wider audience and is created by the

people who are living in their own communities, which makes it all the more special because of

how relevant it is to those the beings and communities who created it. This idea of community

arts is exactly what *The Moving Identities Project* is rooted in and where its home will be for the

long term. As written in detail earlier on in the background section of my thesis, this project

blossomed out of years of my own participation in the community arts world, both in the Lowell,

MA and greater Lowell areas. The Master's degree that I will be obtaining from Lesley

University is a Masters of Education in Arts, Community and Education, and *The Moving

Identities Project* is a wonderful culmination of every aspect of community arts that I have been

able to learn and implement during the last decade of my life. The community arts world is a

very unique and special one, and my project was created to be an ongoing staple of conversation

and community art created for and by other community artists from numerous communities

spanning from the New England area and around the world.

CBPR: Community Based Participatory Research & Its Importance

      The Moving Identities Project is classified as a CBPR project, or a Community-Based

Participatory Research project. This means that all of the data analyzed from this project, (aside

from the research around the core concepts and theories), was collected by me as head data

gatherer and analyzer, and it was all contributed directly by willing individuals in numerous

communities who wanted to participate. They did this by sending in all of their own information

and data to be analyzed as the main part of the research. In the 2018 research article titled,

Understanding community-based participatory research through a social movement framework:

a case study of the Kahnawake Schools Diabetes Prevention Project, the article's numerous

authors define what CBPR is. They state,

> Community-based participatory research (CBPR) is an approach to research that
>
> involves collective, reflective and systematic inquiry in which researchers and
>
> community stakeholders engage as equal partners in all steps of the research
>
> process with the goals of educating, improving practice or bringing about social
>
> change (Tremblay, et all, para.4).

CBPR is deeply rooted in the idea that all researchers and community members are important

and vital voices as project stakeholders. This idea is explored further in the 2004 article,

Community-based Participatory Research: An Approach to Intervention Research With a Native

American Community. It is here that the articles authors give their own definition of CBPR, the

historical background and context of it, and they list its many strengths and advantages. The authors state,

> CBPR as focusing on social, structural, and physical environmental inequities through active involvement of community members, organizational representatives, and researchers in all aspects of the research process. Partners contribute their expertise to enhance understanding of a given phenomenon and integrate the knowledge gained with action to benefit the community involved… CBPR falls under the rubric of action research. The beginnings of action research have been credited to Kurt Lewin, a social scientist, who, in the 1940s, developed the method as a way to use research for making planned social change.4 Lewin used action research to blend the experimental approach used by social scientists with "programs of social action to address social problems. (Holkup, et all, para.7).

There are multiple strengths of CBPR. Some of these include that it is collaborative, it explores local knowledge and perceptions, it is an innovative adaptation of existing research, it empowers people by giving them a platform for their information to be shared, heard, and used, and this participation makes any CBPR based project even more credible, and it builds trust in communities (para.6). The authors continue on to say, "Additionally, knowledge gained from participatory approaches to research continues to increase understanding of what it means to work within the subjective spaces created when people from diverse cultures collaborate to work toward a common goal" (para.6). *The Moving Identities Project* would not exist in its totality today without all of the wonderful individuals who believe in the project and its value, so much

so that they took the time to contribute to this digital identity time capsule by completing and

uploading all aspects of their folders. Their contributions of showcasing their changing identities

via autoethnography through intentioned free-movement, photo, video, and writing, are being

viewed and discussed, and will continue to be analyzed, in this time capsule, forever.

Part IV: Exploring *The Moving Identities Project*

A look into my journey to *The Moving Identities Project* in photos and videos throughout the
years: **https://photos.app.goo.gl/BPTvs9hS5qAxk8By9**

The Moving Identities Project: Statement of Purpose

The Moving Identities Project is a movement and music centered digital story time

capsule that uses autoethnography through intentioned free-movement and text to collect

individual stories of growth and see how a participant's journey has contributed to self-growth

and changing self-identity through the years. This visual sociological collection of stories will be

recorded using video graphic, and photographic methods.

Main Research Question

How are individuals able to express years of self-growth through nonverbal, intentioned

free-movement expression and photography?

Other Research Questions

What are people's intuitive, physical movement reactions to different points in their life?

How do these movements change as their physical and mental self has grown? What can we

observe by looking at the differences in these free-movement reactions?

Research Methodologies

For *The Moving Identities Project*, the art forms that are going to be used are: Visual

autoethnography, intentioned free-movement/dance, music, videography, and photo.

Moving Identities is meant to be a non-verbal, non-written self-expression of a person's

own journey of self-transformation over the time frame that they choose they feel is right. This is

inherently auto ethnographic because they are going to be sharing their own stories. The means

of intentioned free-movement and dance will be used for self-expression as opposed to written or

verbal language.

Current Project Goals

I have multiple current goals for *The Moving Identities Project.* These goals include: that

CBPR is successfully used to receive at least ten, fully completed folder submissions of raw data

in this first stage of data collection. That *The Moving Identities Project* starts off with this first

session of data collection and that the project continues to extend even after this thesis is written

and published. That this project helps participants start a conversation with themselves and that

this process gets them to think more deeply about their own lives and journeys. The hope is that

participants feel that they have contributed to something bigger than themselves. That those who

participate enjoy the process and the look back process and that they feel fulfilled after having

participated. Finally, that this time capsule can be ongoing and create an ongoing discussion

around self-identity and intentioned free-movement within the community arts and non-arts

worlds.

The Project Process Explained: Six Steps to Full Project Participation

There are seven key steps to fully participating in *The Moving Identities Project*. Once all

six of these steps are completed, a project participant would have uploaded a finalized

Participant Confirmation Form and their own completed Identity Folder within the digital time

capsule. Their personal Identity Folder houses the five other components of their full submission.

The six full process steps are listed on Project Promo Flyer 2/3, but I also want to list them in

this section and dive into more detail. Each step and each part of the project process connects to

the project's overall core concepts and theories, and the project's core focus on community

willing, participant-based data collection is what the entire CBPR concept is all about.

Step 1 is that a participant must follow the Google Form link, or the QR Code on Poster

1, to access and fully fill out the project's Participant Confirmation Form. This is where they list

their basic demographic information, as well as answer a few questions specifically pertaining to

the project itself. All of the questions asked in the Participant Confirmation Form will be broken

down during the data analysis and discussion section of this thesis. The initial step of completing

this form starts the process off strong by using the concept of self-identity, as the participant is

being asked from the beginning to describe themselves from their point of view and within their

own defining characteristics. Two of the "type your own response answers" asked in the survey

are, "How would you best describe your ethnicity? (What ethnic, cultural background do you

most identify with)?" and "Where are you from? (Either where you were born, or where you

most identify with)." Many options are given for most question answers, or the participant is

given the opportunity to type in whatever they think best pertains to them and their self-identity,

as seen in the questions listed prior. One of the last and important questions on the form is the

question of consent. A confirming participant must check off that they consent to the project

process and to being good with having any information that they submit and upload be publicly

displayed on the digital time capsule for all to see. Step 2 initiates the act of the confirmed

participant creating and uploading their own person Identity Folder. The participant continues to

the Google Drive link and they make their own folder titled with their (First and Last name).

Then, they open the "Kara Danas Example Folder" and make their own copy of the "Make Your

Own Copy: My Moving Identity" Google Doc to be placed into their own folder.

Steps 3 through 6 encompass uploading all content within the participant's own Identity

Folder and Google Doc to the digital time capsule to be seen and shared! Step 3 is that the

participant chooses two photos of themself- one from their past and one more current. They

should represent a time of transformation in their life. They then share information about each

picture, such as their age when the photos were taken, the locations, and even what event or

moment they were from. Step 4 is that the participant chooses two songs, one part of each song

for each photo life moment. These songs need to be carefully chosen to help express what the

participant was thinking about themselves and their self-identity during the moments in the

photos they chose. Thinking about what feelings come up for each picture and what songs

capture those moments in life perfectly, is what should be thought about during this vital process

step. This is where the participant will be setting their own chosen intention for their intentioned

free-movement response. The act of choosing the photos and the music to go along with

intentioned free-movement is all a part of the ABR and autoethnographic component of this

project. This all ties back to the Self-Identity Theory, where participants willingly and carefully

choose how they want to represent themselves and how they themselves, and only them, feel

about their own moving identities throughout their lives.

In Step 5, the participant needs to record two 30 - 45 second videos of them responding

with intentioned free-movement to both of their life photos, moving to each song that they chose

for each pic. Video 1 will be a movement response that matches the first throwback photo, and

Video 2 will be in response to the second image of them currently that they feel represents

themself and where they are at now in their life transformation. Participants can record from any

angle on any usable video device. This step truly encompasses the project's core concept of

autoethnography through intention free-movement, and it shows just how powerful movement

and dance are to expressing one's own self-identity journey. Step 6 is the final project step.

Participants must upload either a recorded video, or written, response to answer the short series

of follow up questions about how this project experience was for them. Below are the images of

The Moving Identities Project Promo Poster Series.

Figure 1: The Moving Identities Promo Poster Series Poster 1/3: Survey Link QR Code

There are 6 steps to participating in Moving Identities!

1: Please follow this GDrive link, or the QR Code on poster 3, to begin your content upload into your own folder and GDoc!
Instructions are stated below and where to upload what, either folder or GDoc, is clearly laid out within the Example GDoc folder:
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14UOff3rK_fiZnt5-KIkusbJhEUotvkXi?usp=sharing

2: Please continue on to the GDrive link and make your own folder titled with your (First and Last name). Then, open the Example folder and make your own copy of the GDoc to be placed into your own folder. Proceed to upload all of your content within your own folder and GDoc to be seen and shared!

3: Choose two photos of yourself- one from your past and one more current. They should represent a time of transformation in your life. Share info about each pic by answering the qus in that section.

4: Choose two songs, one for each pic moment. Think to yourself- What feelings come up for each picture? What song captures that moment?

5: Record two 30 –45 second videos of you responding with free movement to both of these life photos, moving to each song that you chose for each pic. Video 1 will be a movement response that matches the 1st throwback photo, and Video 2 will be in response to the 2nd image of you currently that you feel represents yourself and where you are at now in your life transformation! (Record from any angle on any usable video device)!

6: Upload either a recorded or written response to answer the short series of follow up questions about how this project experience was for you! (Qus will be listed in the example GDoc for you to copy into your folder & answer however you see fit).

TRUST THE PROCESS AND ENJOY THE PRODUCT!

Figure 2: The Moving Identities Promo Poster Series Poster 2/3: 6 Steps to Completion

Figure 3: The Moving Identities Promo Poster Series Poster 3/3: Digital Identity Time Capsule Link QR Code

Closing Reflection Questions for Project Participants

Participants will also, either over a verbal video response or through written out

responses, answer these series of follow up questions about how this project experience was for

them. The questions are listed in the example "My Moving Identity" Doc for them to copy into

their folder and answer however they see fit. The questions include: Is there a significance to the

music you chose for both life moment images? What emotions were elicited from the memory of

that photo of yourself from that time period? Did you feel/ move differently when you were

younger versus closer to now? Was this exercise easy or difficult for you? What was easier and

what was harder? Did you enjoy this or was it more triggering for you? How did you feel by

looking at your younger self? Did you want to protect younger you? Do you feel freer now, or

did you feel freer back then? Did this activity make you vulnerable at all? If so, why? Did you

enjoy this experience overall?

Selection of Participants: A CBPR Process

The Moving Identities Project is a Community-Based Participatory Research (CBPR)

Project. I am not trying to focus on any one population. This project is all inclusive and open to

everyone that would like to participate. Humans of all abilities, ages, and backgrounds are

welcome to join. There is no dance experience needed to participate. An individual only needs to

have a want to move and share. Anyone willing to share their own imagery and story of self-

identity transformation through the means of intentional free-movement and personal imagery is

invited and encouraged to participate. Outreach for the data collection process was done via

social media platforms by posting the Project Promotional poster Series on Facebook, Instagram,

and Snapchat. This approach allowed for a wider demographic of potential participants to be

reached, not only those who identify themselves as "dancers," but many others as well.

Materials Needed: Participant Recruitment & The Data & Evidence Collection Process

I want to start by giving a first-person narrative breakdown of what materials I created for the participant recruitment and data collection processes, and how the collection process turned out for *The Moving Identities Project.* As aforementioned, even though the initial concept for this project was created over a year and a half ago, the actualization of the process and the first stage of CBPR data collection began in late September 2021. Prior to even gathering any data, numerous details regarding what the actual project process, and what the best data collection method would be, had to be thought of with deep intention and a great attention to detail. I really wanted to think thoughtfully and thoroughly about these major parts, as the project would not have been able to come to fruition without a great attention to detail surrounding the initial building and planning stages. In order for the project process to be finalized, I wanted to get as many opinions from individuals as I could about which platforms were not only the best for data collection, but about what to them in their experience would be the easiest and most streamline platforms and methods to use. I held great discussions and brainstormed with numerous people, my graduate school colleagues, my professors, many friends, and artists and educators, all of whom are also in their own unique categories within the community arts world. After speaking with others and bouncing around numerous ideas for around four weeks, by the beginning of October, I had hashed out what platforms I would be using for data collection, how I would be collecting everything, and my Promotional Poster Series had been created and was ready to share out to the masses.

Google Drive: *The Moving Identities Project* Digital Time Capsule

There ended up being numerous materials needed for this project and its data collection

and analysis to run smoothly. The first of these materials that I created was *The Moving Identities Project Digital Time Capsule* main folder on Google Drive. I had decided towards the beginning of the project actualization process that in order for me to collect all of the data, photos, intentioned free-movement videos, and response question answers that I could, I would need to be able to have participants upload their content in a streamlined way that was easy enough for anyone and everyone to understand. Knowing that the Google platform is generally a universally used one for Gmail and Google Drive, I ended up deciding that at least for the first stage in the data collection process that I would use Google Drive for participants to upload all of their data and content in. The actual process of creating the Google Drive main project folder and adding in all of the details and content that I wanted in it, before it went out as a live fully accessible and shareable link, took much more time than expected, about two weeks to be exact. I knew that at least for the means of launching this project that I would be housing this main project folder within my own, personal Google Drive, so I went ahead and actually bought more storage to upgrade to (2TBs) with my own money just so I would not have to worry about not having enough digital space to house everyone's personal Identity Folders and content. In the two weeks it took to fully set up the Google Drive main folder how I wanted it to be, I had to go into the deep settings of the folder and make sure that it was a public link and open and accessible to all who wanted to participate. I also went in and created my own example folder that currently has every aspect of what a full Identity Folder should look like. I did this so once confirmed participants were able to access the Google Drive folder link, they would have an example to look at of what to upload and how to do so. I then created a "Make Your Own Copy" version of a *My Moving Identity* document, that all project participants would make their own duplicate of and add into their folders. Along with their photos, videos, and responses, the *My*

Moving Identity document is where participants will re-type in their demographic and personal

information, the same as what was on the Google Form, but it is also on this document so that it

can be publicly viewed. This personalized document also is where a completion checklist is

housed, so participants can check off their steps as they upload their content, an area for them to

put the song title and artist of the two songs that they chose, and where they can type their

answers to the project follow up questions or simply look at them up on screen while they are

recording their verbal follow up response video. After all of this had been created, for security

reasons I also went ahead and created a duplicate, private and secure carbon copy of the project's

main folder and all of the participants' folders inside of it. I made this secure copy that only I

have access to just in the case that someone that got ahold of the public link decided they were

going to go into the main folder drive and delete folders or responses. I always want to make

sure that I have a secure, "view only" second copy just in case. This "view only" version will be

the one that I send back out to the project participants after the first data collection stage is done

and it will be the one that goes public for all to view. I will keep transferring more files into it as

more data collection stages happen in the future.

Project Promotional Poster Series

Once the Google Drive folder was created, the second of these materials that I created

was the project Promotional Poster Series on the free online application, Canva. The idea to do a

promotional poster for this project came to mind pretty early on in the project brainstorm

process. I wanted to make something that would be eye catching and aesthetically pleasing, a

poster to fit my overall project theme. Even more crucial, I wanted to create a poster where it

would be easy to read and digest the information provided, and something that would be easily

post-able and shareable on social media platforms. I knew that I wanted links to be on the initial

poster, but a nice conversation that I had with my graduate thesis cohort quickly led me to the

idea of creating and using my own QR Codes to be put on the poster for easier link accessibility.

With that in mind, and with me wanting to explain the project's steps to some capacity, I quickly

realized that I would be needing not only one poster, but a three Promotional Poster Series.

Having now three posters to work from, I knew that I wanted a QR Code made for the link to the

Google Form, and a link to the actual Google Drive folder for the main digital identity folder for

the project (I will talk later on about how and why I decided to use Google Docs). With all of

this in mind, I went to a free online QR Code generator, and I created my own QR Codes from

scratch using the application. I then chose a wonderful, pre-made design from Canva, one that I

felt best went with the colors and overall aesthetic of my project, and I went to work. I edited the

design and the pre-selected colors and fonts a bunch to my liking, and I added in all of the

information I felt was important enough to share and promote. Making these posters took about

one week of fully editing the series to my liking before I deemed them ready enough to share

with the public.

Google Form: Participant Confirmation Form

The third of these materials was the Google Form that was created. After speaking with

quite a few individuals on what the most user-friendly platform was to collect data, I decided on

using Google Forms. The project's Participant Confirmation Form took around two hours to

create. I wanted to be as inclusive and as accurate on the form as possible, so I really took the

time to craft each individual question with thoughtfulness, care, and proper terminology in mind.

I kept some questions, and the ones aforementioned, open-ended even because I wanted to stay

true to the concept of everyone being able to define their own self-identity to their liking. I did

not want to box anyone in with their answers, and on the check box questions, I was sure to

include as many options as possible. I also had to make sure that I added in the main project

consent question, so those who wanted to participate would have a clear and solid idea of what

they were agreeing to sign up for. I will list the exact Google Form questions and infographic

response trends later on in the data and analysis section.

Online Project Promotion: Social Media Postings & Individually Contacting People

The last step to the overall project process, and one of the most crucial, happened once

the last three aforementioned items were completed and ready to launch. This was the process of

finally putting this content, my brainchild, out into the real world via social media and direct

contact with numerous individuals. This direct contact is what sparks the CBPR process to begin.

After months of pre-planning and creating content to be released and used by potential

participants, the second week of October 2021 is when I finally launched the Promotional Poster

Series on social media platforms and shared it directly with as many individuals I knew. I wanted

at least a six-week window where people could choose to fully participate if they felt compelled

to do so, but I also knew that with holiday season looming that it may be more of a challenge to

get fully committed participants. Just as I have been throughout this entire project, I was

determined, and I did not let any potential negative thoughts cloud my way. I had made a soft

deadline of Thanksgiving weekend to be done the first stage of data collection, but I ended up

extending the hard deadline to officially be by the first week of December. This initial, first stage

collection process ended up being just about two months long, from mid-October to mid-

December 2021. When I first launched the Promotional Poster Series, I had posted it to all of my

social media platforms, Facebook, Instagram, and Snapchat, and I posted it onto my main

"timeline," as well as onto my page's "stories." Numerous people were viewing my content, and

I was trying to re-post and re-share the Promotional Poster Series every day. During this time,

many people ended up commenting and reaching out to me with questions about how to become

involved and I broke it down for them and sent them all of the information that they needed. This

went on for quite some time. Simultaneously, during this time where I kept re-sharing the

Promotional Poster Series, I was also deeply committed to individually private messaging

hundreds of people with an entire message that I typed up summarizing the participation process

alongside the attachments of the Promotional Poster Series. My main ask during this

communication was that people understood my project and became excited to hear more about it,

to eventually participate themselves. I made sure that people who showed some kind of interest

filled out the Participant Confirmation Form, and after almost two full months of me consistently

messaging, following up, and reminding folx, the responses really started to flow in. I have said

it many a time, and I will continue to repeat this about this project and about life in general. I will

always Trust The Process to work out for me and for any projects that I create in the future.

Data and Evidence Analysis

After a solid two months of data collection and waiting patiently for fully

completed responses to be uploaded into the project's main folder, I can proudly say that this

project received 14 fully completed submissions during this last two months of data collection. I

ended up having a fairly diverse group of individuals decide to contribute. I want to fully analyze

the 14 completed submissions that were received into the digital identity folder within Google

Drive. Before I take a deep dive into the 14 course admissions and the themes that I see

throughout the submission demographic data as well as the content, I want to make it a point to

mention and to display the data of the 21 original participant confirmation forms that were filled

out. 21 people, including myself, had filled out the Participant Confirmation form in the hopes of

fully participating and contributing all of the content needed to create a finished folder. Even

though every single participant was willing and wanting to fully contribute, seven individuals

that had filled out the form with the intent of contributing ended up not being able to contribute

due to other outstanding circumstances. Only a few of those seven individuals ended up ghosting

me or not following back up with me, regardless of us being in consistent contact. Even though

that was his appointing, the majority of the other of the seven individuals were really distraught

that they could not participate, but timing and life had different pathways for them at this time

and they followed up with me and confirmed that if I was doing any further data collection

stages that they would love to participate in the future. At the end of my thesis, I will be creating

a personal response video through intentioned free-movement about how I felt this entire project

and data collection and analysis process went.

    After careful consideration and a lot of thought, I want to still give an honorable

mention to the other seven individuals who had filled out the form and taken the time to do so

but ended up unfortunately not able to fully participate. I believe that the data that they shared,

even as partial participation, is important enough to mention, and the infographics of that

statistical demographic data are listed below. To begin, the statistics of the original 21

individuals who filled out the participant confirmation form are listed below.

A Look into the Initial 21 Participant Confirmation Forms & Submission Data

Your age at time of participation
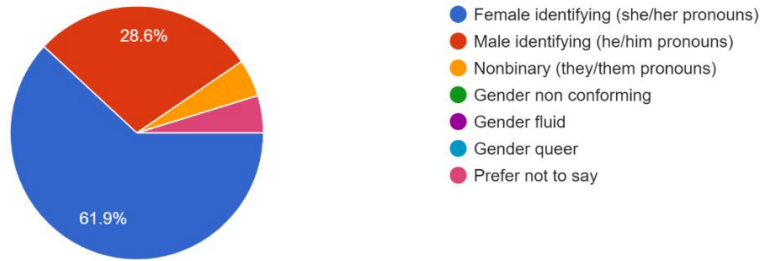21 responses
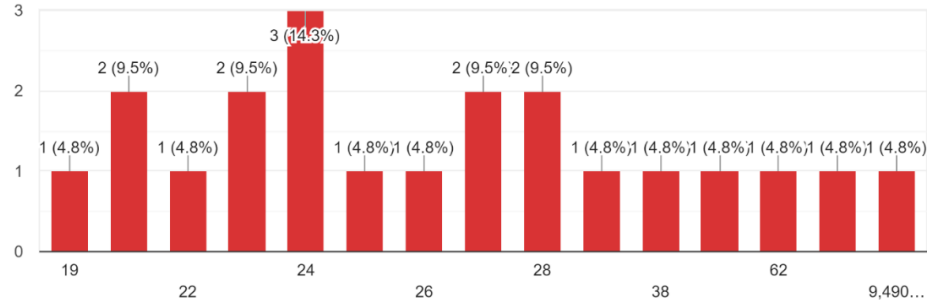
Where are you currently living? (City and State)
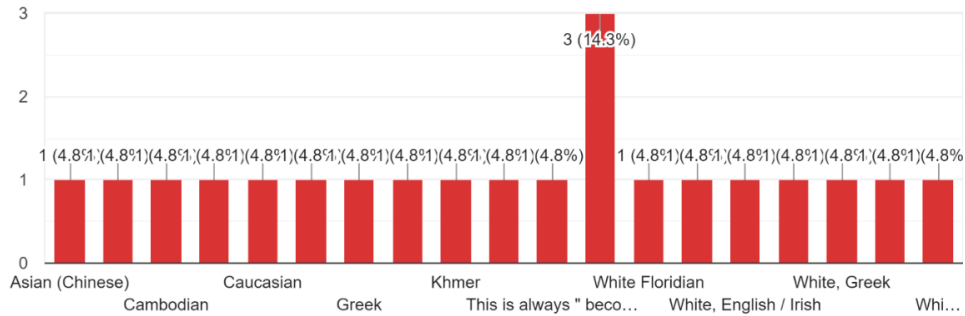21 responses
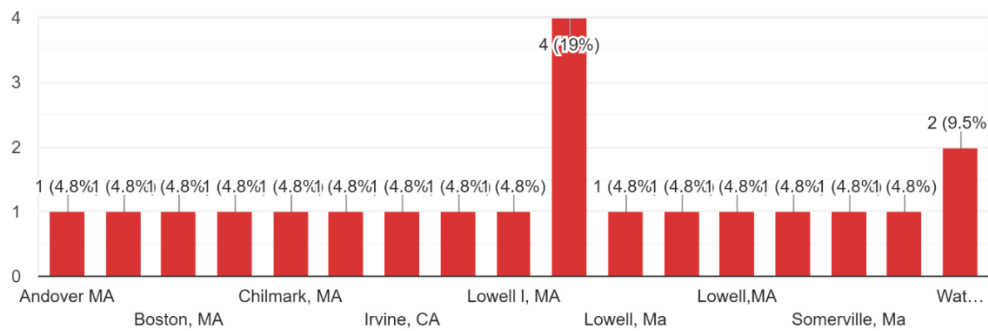
The first two questions within the participant confirmation survey have to do with an individual's age at time of participation and where they were currently living, specifically the city and state they are currently residing in. In terms of the 21 initial forms received, the age ranges of who is willing to do this project range from as young as 19 years old all the way through 77 years old. The 9490 days listed was someone's unique decision to state that they were 26 years old, but in the number of days. The initial Participation Form recorded participants from all over the country, with the majority of them living in different towns and cities within the state of Massachusetts. One participant is currently residing in California, another is in Philadelphia, and another is based in a small town in Illinois.

What gender do you currently identify most with?

21 responses

- Female identifying (she/her pronouns)
- Male identifying (he/him pronouns)
- Nonbinary (they/them pronouns)
- Gender non conforming
- Gender fluid
- Gender queer
- Prefer not to say

How would you best describe your ethnicity? (What ethnic, cultural background do you most identify with)?

21 responses

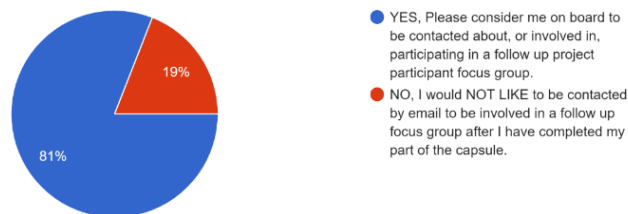Where are you from? (Either where you were born, or where you most identify with).

21 responses
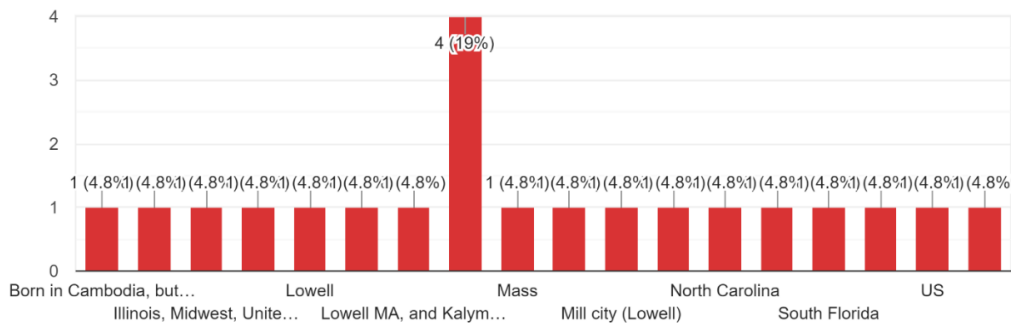
The next three questions in the participant confirmation form have to do with what gender an individual most identified with, how they currently describe their ethnicity, and where they most identify with being from. The question about gender identity is a multiple-choice type

of question, where I make sure to list as many inclusive options as possible, and the other two questions are "type in your own response questions" because I did not want participants to feel boxed in by their answers. In terms of the original 21 individuals who were interested in participating, more than half of them were female-identifying. The next largest group was male-identifying, and only one individual identified as nonbinary and one put that they would rather not say. In terms of different identified ethnicities, there was a large array of unique ethnic and cultural backgrounds that spanned across different populations around the world. White and or Caucasian ended up being about one third of individuals who initially filled out the Participation form, and other cultures of Asian, African, and European descent were also listed. For the question of where someone is from, there was a good mix of individuals who stated where they were born and where they were not born from, but a place that they most identify with. Most of the places mentioned were around the U.S., with a lot of them being from the Massachusetts area.

By willingly participating in this project, you are consenting to your provided info being publicly displayed and accessed in this public community arts digital time capsule.
21 responses

● YES, I consent

100%

After my project info is fully submitted (completed GDoc in GDrive folder), I would like to be contacted by email in regards to participating in a ...ussion Group with all current project participants.
21 responses

● YES, Please consider me on board to be contacted about, or involved in, participating in a follow up project participant focus group.
● NO, I would NOT LIKE to be contacted by email to be involved in a follow up focus group after I have completed my part of the capsule.

19%

81%

One of the last two questions in the Participant Confirmation Form include the question of consent, and that an individual would be willing to participate in the project and to have their information publicly shared. Everyone that filled out this form consented 100% to both of these aspects. The final question is to gauge about which individuals would be interested in participating in a potential follow-up group in a virtual setting to further discuss their involvement in the project and how the process was for them. The majority at about 80% of participants stated that they would be interested in participating in a focus group later on down the line, and about 20% said that they were all set and only wanted to contribute to the initial project and did not want any future involvement on their end.

The 14 Core Project Participants' Confirmation Forms & Completed Submission Data

After analyzing the demographic data of the initial 21 Participant Form responses, let's take a dive into the core responses from the 14 official project participants who successfully completed and submitted their Identity Folders and forms. These individuals and their data are currently on display in *The Moving Identities Project* digital time capsule for all to see. The names of the individuals who are in the core 14 that fully submitted their projects, in no particular order, are: Michelle Mailloux, Kara Danas, Tinson Lam, Kosmia Vaporis, Alia Munley, Johanna Danas, Priscilla Sanville, Jeffrey Tsai, Daniel Briggs, Grace Njogu, Allison McCarron, Evan Caverly, Jasmine McCurry, and Tim S.

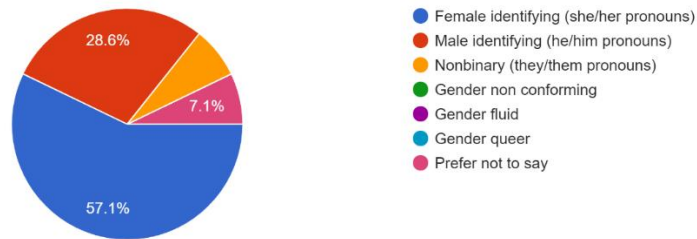Your age at time of participation
14 responses
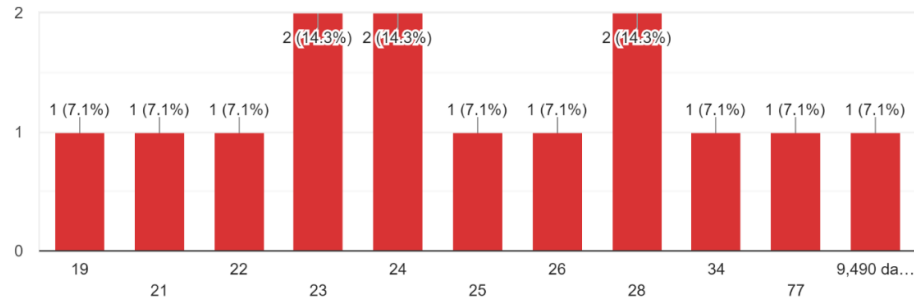
Where are you currently living? (City and State)
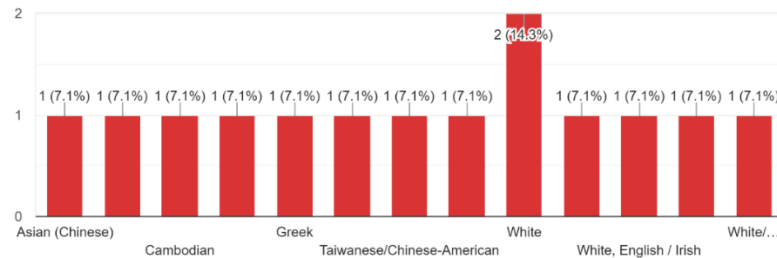14 responses
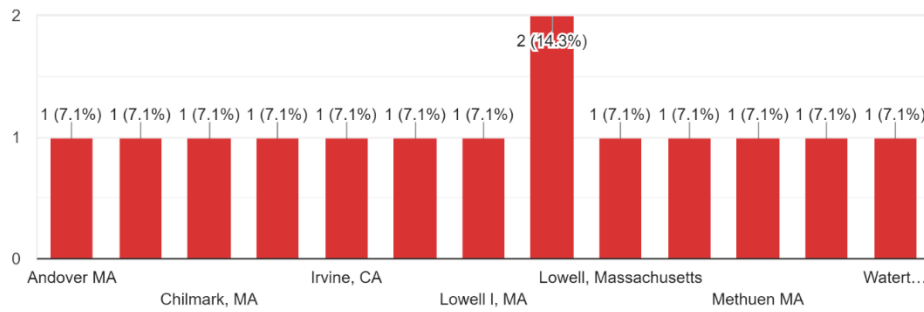
Taking another look at the first two questions within the Participant Confirmation form that have to do with an individual's age at time of participation and where they are living currently, the age range of who fully participated stayed the same, from as young as 19 years old all the way through 77 years old. The 9490 days listed is someone's unique decision to state that they were 26 years old using number of days, and this data stayed in because that individual ended up being one of the core 14 who completed their submission. The total list of participant ages for this stage one of data collection ended up being 19, 21, 22, 23 (2), 24 (2), 25, 26 (2), 28 (2), 34, and 77 years old. The initial participation form recorded participants from all over the country, with the majority of them living in different towns and cities within the state of Massachusetts. One participant is currently residing in California, while another is currently based in a small town in Illinois, and one is in Philadelphia. These stats hold true since all three

of these participants from states other than Massachusetts ended up being in the core 14 project

completers. The complete list of states that this project spans across are Massachusetts,

Pennsylvania, California, and Illinois. In summary, the majority of participants in this first stage

of data collection are individuals between 19 and 30 years old that live primarily in

Massachusetts.

What gender do you currently identify most with?
14 responses

- Female identifying (she/her pronouns)
- Male identifying (he/him pronouns)
- Nonbinary (they/them pronouns)
- Gender non conforming
- Gender fluid
- Gender queer
- Prefer not to say

How would you best describe your ethnicity? (What ethnic, cultural background do you most identify with)?
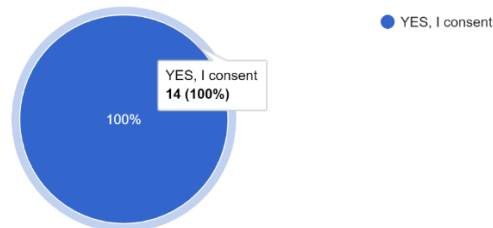14 responses

Where are you from? (Either where you were born, or where you most identify with).
14 responses
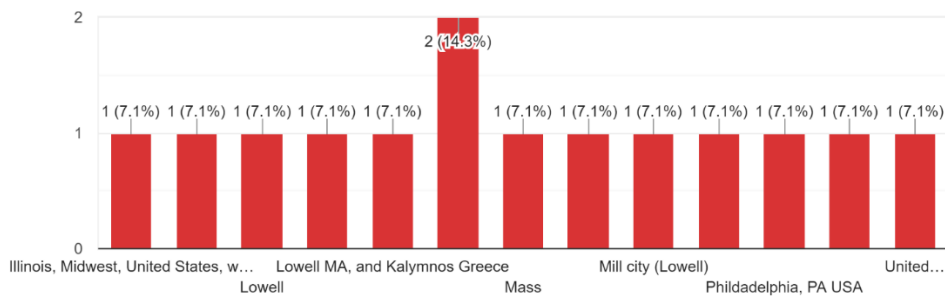
Revisiting the next three questions in the Participant Confirmation form that have to do with what gender an individual most identifies with, how they currently describe their ethnicity, and where they most identify with being from, some of the percentages did change. In terms of the core 14 individuals who participated, only slightly more than half of them identified as female-identifying. The next largest group was male-identifying, a tad over 25%, only one individual identified as nonbinary, and one put that they would rather not say. These stats stayed mostly the same. In terms of different identified ethnicities, White and or Caucasian ended up being about two thirds of individuals in the core 14 submissions, and other cultures of Asian, African, and European descent are also still listed. For the question of where someone is from, there is a good mix of individuals who state where they were born and where they were not born, but a place that they most identify with. Some of the places mentioned were around the U.S., with many of them being from the Massachusetts area. About two thirds of participants ended up answering that they most identify with places outside of the United States, and this ranges from different countries in Asia, Africa, and Europe; like Cambodia, Kenya, and Greece to name a few.

By willingly participating in this project, you are consenting to your provided info being publicly displayed and accessed in this public community arts digital time capsule.

14 responses

● YES, I consent

YES, I consent
14 (100%)

100%

After my project info is fully submitted (completed GDoc in GDrive folder), I would like to be contacted by email in regards to participating in a ...ussion Group with all current project participants.

14 responses
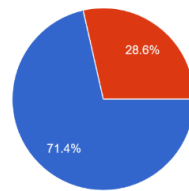
- YES, Please consider me on board to be contacted about, or involved in, participating in a follow up project participant focus group.
- NO, I would NOT LIKE to be contacted by email to be involved in a follow up focus group after I have completed my part of the capsule.

28.6%

71.4%

One of the last two questions in the Participant Confirmation Form include the question of consent, and that an individual would be willing to participate in the project and to have their information publicly shared. Everyone that filled out this form consented 100% to both of these aspects, and this still stayed true with the 14 core participants. The final question is to gauge about which individuals would be interested in participating in a potential follow-up group in a virtual setting to further discuss their involvement in the project and how the process was for them. Majority at about 71.5% of participants state that they would be interested in participating in a focus group later on down the line, and about 29% said that they were all set and only wanted to contribute to the initial project and did not want any future involvement on their end. Four of the 14 core participants did not want to be included or contacted about being in a follow up focus group.

Main Themes & Core Findings

The general main themes that I gather from all participant information submitted are:

- Most project participants hold on to a joy from their youth.

- The timeframes people chose to identify with are different. Most chose a span from early childhood to their current adulthood, while some had a smaller gap in age and others a longer gap.

- There is a common theme of individuals "leaving from someplace" to be able to find their true selves now.

- Most said that in their youth they felt more "trapped" in a sense.

- Most people stated that they felt freer now in their life, when they became older, and they realize it is because of the choices made to be free and the ability to be, instead of being free in the sense of "not having a care in the world because you are a child." Participant Allison McCarron stated it perfectly by saying, "I feel a different kind of free now. I felt free back then because I didn't know any differently. I feel free now because I have reason to live freely." Now as adults, many said that they have the choice to consciously be free and go whenever their heart takes them.

- Participants range from a mix of arts inclined folx to folx who simply wanted to contribute, but who do not see themselves as "dancers" or "artists," per say.

- Most individuals that contributed to this project play their own, known active role within the community arts world themselves.

- Almost all participants are currently, or have recently been involved, in the world of academia and Higher Ed. Most participants are either currently active in a college setting of some form, or they have just graduated.

- No one participant said that the project was unbearably triggering to do. Most said it was fun and enjoyable to reflect on their lives in this way.

- Overall, most participants are proud of their current selves for ending up in places that they never would have imagined when they were younger.

- This project really got the majority of participants to come out of their comfort zones, and they liked that aspect of it.

- All participants stated that the project was fun and that they enjoyed the project experience overall.

Analysis of Completed Digital Time Capsule Folder Content

Looking into the 14 complete folder submissions, it is important to analyze the content within the completed submission folders. Participants were to upload two pictures that represent two different times in their life where they felt that their self-identity was different, two 30 to 45 second intentioned free-movement video responses where there also chose two separate songs that they felt connected best with their two identity photos. Lastly, participants uploaded their answers to the 10 follow up response questions about the process and how it was for them. In regards to the photos chosen by the participants, each participant ended up using photos that had themselves in them as the subject of the photos. The photos ranged from all different periods in life, some spanning the difference of a year, some of almost 20 years, and some even longer than that here. However, the majority picked photos from early childhood to pair alongside a more current photo of themselves. The two oldest projects participants used photos from their early adulthood for their past photos, and more current photos of themselves for their newer ones. Regarding the songs chosen, a common theme was that individuals used older songs for their

older photos and more current or contemporary songs for their newer photos. It was only in a

couple of the submissions that participants decided that it did not matter what date a song had on

it, they simply used what came to mind even if it was a newer song for the older photo and an

older song for the newer photo. Each participant who submitted recorded two videos that were

on average about 40 seconds in length, some used 30 seconds for each video and others went a

little over one minute. All the videos seem to have been filmed on a phone camera. Most of the

videos were filmed by the participant themselves and there were only two submissions where the

participant had someone else film their video for them. Lastly, each participants' answers to the

response questions varied in depth and length. It was a mix of some people using short responses

that were short, sweet, and to the point that didn't go too deeply into detail, verses some of the

participants who wrote almost a paragraph for each answer and dove deeper in their thoughts.

Overall, all of the 14 submissions were wonderful and had a breath of life and a refreshing depth

to them.

     The evaluation tool for this project process is highlighted in the closing reflection

questions that each project participant individually answered. There are 10 questions to be

answered and those questions are the closing reflection questions that are listed above in the

project process section. This evaluation tool directly correlates with how much I feel that this

project was a success. Not only did I beat my initial goal of having 10 full project folder

submissions with the 14 submissions that I ended up having, but I can tell how loved and

appreciated my project is simply from the response answers the 14 participants gave. Everyone

answered all 10 questions, but listed below are the most significant quotes directly from all 14

project participants themselves that I feel truly represent how successful this first initial stage of the project is.

Significant Quotes

- **Alia Munley**: "Overall, yes I enjoyed it. However, I wasn't expecting some more difficult feelings to arise after completing it or reflecting on the process. It wasn't more triggering, but I believe both are true. I enjoyed it and it triggered a part of me. I think the comfort of knowing this was a movement exercise helped me face some of those scary feelings. Like the act of participating in an activity/movement I have limited experience in made space for mistakes, heavy feelings and silliness because the stakes felt much lower."

- **Alison McCarron**: "I wouldn't say it was difficult because of my musical theatre background, but it definitely got me thinking about connecting music to my sense of self instead of putting on a character. I don't often move for myself, so it was nice to move and not think."

- **Daniel Briggs**: "I think my younger self couldn't imagine where he'd be now. People don't leave my hometown and they certainly didn't back then, so doing things like going to Harvard and moving to Boston would feel surreal. If nothing else, I think young me would have been inspired."

- **Evan Caverly**: "I really enjoyed this exercise. I think that it wasn't an overall triggering experience. Going back to that time can be difficult sometimes, but this was a healthy way to go back… This was very vulnerable. I think movement, it's very vulnerable, it's one of the most vulnerable things that you can do. I think the first vulnerable thing you can do is speak and use your voice, and one of the other most vulnerable things is moving and expressing yourself through movement. I think those are very powerful. I think whenever I go to dance

or move in a way that's purposeful, I think that it is making yourself very vulnerable. Anytime you have a moment to reflect on your past and choose song choices from your past that would represent your past, then move to it… I think that's pretty darn cool."

- **Grace Njogu**: "Looking at my younger self made me feel that every day we evolve into better versions of ourselves."

- **Jasmine McCurry**: "I enjoyed it. It helped me remember that young me that was so full of love and life. I need to visit with her more often…. This project helps me reconnect with my body and myself. It was exciting looking at myself and picking what song would connect with the picture. It's like a conversation with myself. Loved that."

- **Jeffrey Tsai**: "It would have been difficult had I not been satisfied with the way I was expressing my thoughts on the photos but coming in with the mindset of wanting to present an organic and on-the-fly reaction kept me from that problem!... Yes, I did enjoy it. I don't look at my old photos much, so I think looking at it grounded my opinion on the past and present a bit more. And I'm always down to dance."

- **Johanna Danas**: "I'd say this activity made me slightly vulnerable. Outwardly expressing your inner child isn't necessarily something I think most people do often, because it can be hard to translate and communicate how you truly feel on the inside. For me, adding movement to my emotions helped make more sense of them. Expressing my current self was definitely easier to outwardly communicate… I greatly enjoyed this exercise, I love dancing and I am overjoyed whenever I am able to express myself through dancing, and freestyling. I have become far more confident in my ability to move without hesitation or becoming overly critical of myself."

- **Kara Danas**: "I really enjoyed the exercise I did not find it triggering. I always feel that movement is a form of release, especially nonverbal release, so I was just releasing out in the wilderness as y'all saw, and I really enjoyed all of that."

- **Kosmia Vaporis**: "I tend to reflect on my past a lot, so that I might learn and grow from it, so it was not too difficult; but I think it is always hard to address yourself as you truly are, without the mask of merit and status… I would say that I am a tiny bit more free than before, but display more freedom than before through a switch in mindset. A wise man once said, "when we can't change our circumstances, the wise thing to do is to change our attitude about those circumstances."

- **Michelle Mailloux**: "In some ways it's different. When I am not thinking, I move exactly as I did when I was a youngin. I just flail around and spin and feel happy and forget the current state of the world. When I am thinking and calculated I move very differently, and I almost like my thought-free movement better even though it is literally just jerky flailing goofiness."

- **Priscilla Sanville**: "Having now completed the dance response, it was very moving for me to hold the relationship to the pigeon and the image of myself a few years ago with the awareness of my aging but the amazing fullness of dance that is still in me and how far I have come since the years of overcoming many challenges as a Polio survivor. The music was an important part of this experience for me… The exercise in the beginning felt a bit overwhelming but as I got into it, it just kept flowing. I loved finding pictures and reflecting on times past and who I am now. And validating how much dance is part of my identity. I enjoyed reflecting on how overtime I have claimed my body with all its imperfections and truly know I am a dancer! It is my first language."

- **Tim S.**: "I've never seen a project like this before and so that excites me. Also, this project forced me to revisit my family photo album and I'm glad it did. I caught myself smiling a lot when going through that album. So Thank you!"

- **Tinson Lam**: "This activity made me feel extremely vulnerable. Expressing myself through movement is typically difficult for me because I want everything to be calculated and precise, but this activity really allowed me to step out of my comfort zone… This experience was enjoyable overall! It was the first time I experienced expressive movement and I had the opportunity to reflect on my past and current self. This experience is also a judgement-free zone. I would definitely consider delving into expressive movement in the future."

All of these quotes give me a wonderful and positive outlook on this stage and for future stages of this project to come.

Part V: Conclusion - My Future Journey & Project Next Steps

The End of My Graduate School Journey

       With the last two and a half years of my Lesley University Graduate M.Ed. Program

journey coming to a close, so does the journey of *The Moving Identities Project's* first data

collection stage. I have learned and absorbed so much knowledge from my graduate school

experience, and this thesis project would not have been possible without me taking what I have

learned from the inquisitive and thought-provoking array of graduate courses I have completed

during my time at Lesley. The last seven semesters of my educational career have truly prepared

me to create, manage, and follow through on my thesis. I have used a culmination of valuable

lessons and skills in my community arts courses in order to make my dreams of actualizing *The*

Moving Identities Project come to a bright reality. In this Arts, Community and Education M.Ed.

program, I have truly learned to trust myself and my skill set as a community artist. The first

course I ever took with Kit Jenkin's allowed for me to meet new colleagues in the community

arts field, explore my resources around me, and write a grant proposal. Most importantly, I

would never have imagined that my first experience with data gathering from people on the

streets of Cambridge and Somerville would truly be my first real experience with CBPR and its

process. The community-based participatory research that I did in Kit's class led me to be

confident in the CBPR approach that I took with *The Moving Identities Project.* As the semesters

went on, my breadth of knowledge only grew larger as the courses I was lucky enough to take

directly correlated with my love of art, expression, and storytelling. My class with Prilly Sanville

is where I first learned about the concept of autoethnography, photovoice, and what it meant to

be an artist and community advocate that can make an active and positive change in society.

Class with Denise Driscoll opened me up to the world of digital literacy. I felt and still feel so

accomplished that I created my own community arts-based website in one semester, and I will

most definitely be using that platform to house and showcase my art and creative pursuits, like

The Moving Identities Project, for years to come. Drama courses with Dr. Michael Kemeh

(Shabaash) and Storytelling with Dr. Ambika Raj were safe spaces for me to really hone in my

storytelling and drama skills. I learned so much about the art of storytelling with one's body,

visuals, and words, and in these courses is where it really hit me just how life changing and

important hearing and collecting other people's stories about the journeys of their lives can be.

Storytelling, and being able to share and grow from the stories of others in those classes, is what

heavily influenced the main concept behind this project. A year and a half ago is when my Arts-

Based Research class with Professor Young Song changed the entire trajectory of the rest of my

Lesley graduate school journey. It was in Young's ABR course where my idea for *The Moving*

Identities Project first came to be, and for that, I am forever grateful. Now, at the end of my

graduate school and thesis journey, I can honestly say that I have gained so much confidence,

knowledge, and insight on what it truly means to be a community artist. The classes, professors,

mentors, colleagues, and friends I have made throughout both of these journeys will impact me

and my future in the community arts world for years to come.

The Future of *The Moving Identities Project*

        After a very successful first stage of data collection, the future for *The Moving Identities*

Project seems very bright. The creation of this digital time capsule has already begun a

community conversation around storytelling and self-identity through the means of

autoethnography through intentioned free-movement. My goal was to have a successful project

presentation for my thesis, and I had a very successful and fun presentation that I felt a lot of the

people who came to watch connected with. I now even have a few more people asking me to

participate in my project since they had seen me present it, so that is already a positive

repercussion of *The Moving Identities Project* being created. The first stage of data collection

exceeded my initial goal of 10 participants because I received 14 full submissions. That was

really heartwarming and exciting to see. My goal of promoting the project to be a safe space for

individuals to come and express their changing self-identity through the means of intentioned

free-movement worked out very well. All 14 participants stated that they had fun doing the

activity and that it was a warm and welcome change to be able to reflect back on their lives in a

positive way. Just the fact that the entire project will be added into the community arts and ABR

realm, and that discussion around the project will continue even past its initial creation, is an

exciting thing to think about.

Regarding a list of next steps for this project, the very next step is to create a focus group

follow up session on online with the 10 out of 14 participants that wanted to participate in a

group discussion. Come the new year in early 2022, I will be creating a Google Poll to see what

date the participants would be ready for a follow up focus group where I can ask some questions

about what they enjoyed about the process and how it could be improved. I would be emailing

those participants and staying in contact with them. I will also be finalizing the link to the

project's digital time capsule and posting that link on social media for the entire community to

view. Once the first stage of the data collection is posted, my hope is that others will view

everyone's hard work and get inspired to want to contribute themselves. For the next stages of

data collection, I would really like to get a broader range of participants. I will post the promo

posters on even more social media platforms and maybe even potentially pay for some ads to be

placed on those platforms. I would also like to actually print out the promo poster series and put

them up all over the Lowell, Greater Lowell, and New England areas in numerous establishments

so that people can actually use the QR Codes on the posters and learn more about the project.

My Next Steps as A Community Artist

The Moving Identities Project and my time at Lesley University in the community arts

department really has helped me to solidify my place as a community artist and has gotten me

excited for my future in this field. I am really looking forward to the next steps in my

professional career, and to grow myself as a community artist and educator. I am also looking

forward to owning my idea of *The Moving Identities Project*, and I want to continue to grow the

stages of data collection that I do. This is an ongoing project, and I want more participants to

keep joining as the months and years go on. I definitely want to add my project promo posters

and a link to the project Participant Confirmation form to the end of my email signature so that

anyone who I am in contact with within the community arts world can take a peek at the project

and see if they would be interested in contributing. I have a love for teaching dance and

movement workshops, so I had also created a self-love, self-empowerment, and identity

workshop series called *Ignite Your Light*. I would love to take aspects of *The Moving Identities*

Project and intertwine some of the main components to this project into a potential new

workshop series or into my current set of workshop series that I like to teach. I think making the

activities become an in person experience, as opposed to just an online uploaded experience,

would bring this project to the next level and it would be able to reach people in person. This in-

person component would bring a whole new asset to this project. Team building and

workshopping with *The Moving Identities Project* is definitely something that I would love to in

the future of my professional career as a community artist. My journey as a Lesley University

Community Arts M.Ed. Master's Candidate is coming to a close, and I can truly say that I would

have never wanted to get my M.Ed. from any other institution. I am extremely grateful that both

my M.Ed. journey and my thesis project journey have turned out as wonderful as they have. I am

very excited for the future of this project and for my future as a community artist. I am forever

grateful to Lesley University for helping me to grow my wings in the community arts and art

world. I can now honestly say that I have I truly learned the meaning of Trust The Process. What

a beautiful and fulfilling process it has been.

My personal response video through intentioned free-movement about how I felt this entire

project and data collection and analysis process went:

https://drive.google.com/file/d/1HVZrAlemAn55rDqIb4WuUID-ZTXPeQ1H/view?usp=sharing

Annotated References

Bresnahan, A. (2020). *The Philosophy of Dance*. The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy.

https://plato.stanford.edu/archives/fall2020/entries/dance/

> In this research paper based on the researcher's findings, Bresnahan tells of researcher
> Richard Shusterman and how he has developed his own phenomenological theory, which
> he calls "somaesthetics." This was a good source because Bresnahan discusses the
> philosophy behind dance and states that certain felt bodily responses constitute deeper
> meaning. This leads to a more open interpretation of movement for those watching.

Cooper Albright, A. (2010). *Choreographing Difference: The Body and Identity in*

> *Contemporary Dance*. Wesleyan University Press.

> In this book of nonfiction based on the researcher's extensive findings, Cooper Albright
> breaks down the concept of perceiving dance as it attends to kinesthetic, aura, somatic,
> and special sensations. This was a good source because Cooper Albright tells of how
> communicative modern dance can be, and she brings up the term, "meta-kinesis." She
> continues on to describe how dance relies on the psychical body to enact its own
> representation for all to interpret.

Crabtree, R. (2019). *Identity: An Expression of Life Through Dance. Undergraduate Honors*

> *Thesis*. East Tennessee State University.
> https://dc.etsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1608&context=honors

> This research paper was a good source because it credits the idea of dancer identity
> briefly mentioned in my thesis paper under: *Part III: The Core Concepts and Theories*
> *Within Moving Identities - Other Kinds of Past Movement Inquiries.*

Drogari, E. (2019, January). *Dancing the self: Cypriot sociocultural identity and contemporary*

    choreography. Doctoral Thesis. University of Roehampton London.

    https://pure.roehampton.ac.uk/portal/en/studentTheses/dancing-the-self

    This research paper was a good source because it credits the idea of the connections

    between dance and sociocultural identity briefly mentioned in my thesis paper under:

    Part III: The Core Concepts and Theories Within Moving Identities - Other Kinds of Past

    Movement Inquiries.

Drummond, J.J. (2020, August 7). *Self-identity and personal identity.* Phenomenology and the

    Cognitive Sciences. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-020-09696-w

    In this research paper based on the researcher's findings, Drummond describes the

    differences and defining factors between self-identity and personal identity. This was a

    good source because Drummond tells of the rooted characteristics within an individual's

    identity and what makes a person's self-identity so unique.

Gray, C. (2021). *Free movement: why and how you should give embodied practice a go*. Stylist.

    Co Magazine. https://www.stylist.co.uk/fitness-health/workouts/what-is-free-movement-

    embodied-practice/560100

    In this blogpost based on the researcher's findings, Gray writes about the concept of free

    movement, told of and trade marked by yoga instructor and lifestyle coach, Cat Meffan.

    Meffan breaks down the basic concept of free movement and talks of how she uses it in

    her daily life practice. This was a good source because Meffan describes the details of

    exactly what free movement is and all the benefits that the practice has.

Greenwood, J. (2019, February 5). *Arts-Based Research*. Oxford Research Encyclopedia of

Education.

https://oxfordre.com/education/view/10.1093/acrefore/9780190264093.001.0001/acrefore

-9780190264093-e-29

In this research paper based on the researchers' findings, Greenwood provides her own

definition of the concept of art-based research and describes all the details that it

involves. This was a good source because the author tells of the core defining

characteristics of ABR and the key elements that unify ABR work.

Hester, Z. (2018). *Storytelling through Movement: An Analysis of the Connections between*

Dance & Literature. Undergraduate Honors Thesis. East Tennessee State University.

https://dc.etsu.edu/honors/470

This research paper was a good source because it credits the idea of the connections

between dance and literature briefly mentioned in my thesis paper under: *Part III: The*

Core Concepts and Theories Within Moving Identities - Other Kinds of Past Movement

Inquiries.

Holkup, P. A. et all. (2004, July). *Community-based Participatory Research: An Approach to*

Intervention Research With a Native American Community. National Center for

Biotechnology Information, U.S. National Library of Medicine.

https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2774214/

In this research paper based on the researchers' findings, Holkup explores the historical

context of the concept of community-based participatory research. This was a good

source because the author tells of the core defining characteristics of CBPR and of the

many strengths and advantages of using CBPR to help strengthen community bonds and

individual participation in the research process.

Hornthal, E. (2019). *How Dance and Movement Can Help Foster Identity*. The Women's

Alzheimer's Movement. https://thewomensalzheimersmovement.org/dance-movement-

alzheimers/

In this article based on researchers' findings, Hornthal tells of how movement is a vital

component of life. This was a good source because the article describes all of the

beneficial ways that movement and dance are good and necessary for a healthy physical

body and mental state. She also goes into how movement is a vital way for our loved

ones to be able to communicate to us, even when their verbal means are inhibited. This

goes for people with Alzheimer's, and people in general.

Leavy, P. (2015). *Arts- Based Research; Second Edition.* Guilford Press, New York

In this book of nonfiction based on the researcher's extensive findings, Leavy breaks

down the concept of Arts-Based Research and the many art forms that can be

implemented with the ABR process. In Chapter 5 of her book, *Dance and Movement as

Inquiry*, Leavy dives deep into the realm of and how important and up and coming dance

and movement are in the ABR realm. This was a good source because Leavy tells of how

dance can be used to convey meaning and express what words and verbalizing can not.

Leavy dives deep into the concept of self-expression and numerous examples and case

studies are given as to how dance and movement inquiry have been used in the arts-based

research field.

Mainwaring, L. (2019, July 14). *Identity Matters*. International Association for Dance Medicine

    & Science. https://iadms.org/resources/blog/posts/2019/july/identity-matters/

    In this blogpost based on the researcher's findings, Mainwaring breaks down the basic

    concept of identity, and describes how one's identity, specifically those who dance, can

    change overtime. This was a good source because Mainwaring describes the details

    behind what exactly makes up a person's general identity, and she states that each

    individual's identity is multifaceted and complex. She states that identity development is

    a constant process, and that identity is always evolving. This evolving requires semi

    consistent interaction on personal, interpersonal, and community levels.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (2021). *Identity*. Merriam-Webster.com.

    https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/identity

    In this article based on researchers' findings, the essential meaning of the word "identity"

    is stated. This was a good source because the website describes the full definition of the

    word "identity," and it gives multiple definitions.

Merriam-Webster Dictionary. (2021). *Movement*. Merriam-Webster.com.

    https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/movement

    In this virtual dictionary page based on researchers' findings, the essential meaning of the

    word "movement" is stated. This was a good source because the website describes the

    full definition of the word "movement," and it gives multiple definitions.

Poulos, C N. (2021, January). *Essentials of Autoethnography*. The American Psychological

Association. https://www.apa.org/pubs/books/essentials-autoethnography-sample-

chapter.pdf

In this virtual book excerpt based on the researcher's findings, Poulos defines and deeply

dives into the concept of autoethnography. This was a good source because Poulos

describes how autoethnography differs from other forms of research. He discusses how

autoethnographers can often rely on various methods of data gathering and qualitative

research tools. He also dives into the five Conceptional Foundations of Autoethnography.

Psychology Today. (2021). *Basics of Identity*. Psychology Today.com.

https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/basics/identity

In this article based on researchers' findings, the basic concept of identity and how it is

formed. This was a good source because the article describes the three key tasks of

identity formation, discovering and developing one's potential, choosing one's purpose in

life, and finding opportunities to exercise that potential and purpose. The article also

states that identity is also influenced by parents and peers during childhood and

experimentation in adolescence.

Tate.org. (2021). *Art Term: Community Art*. Tate.org.

https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/c/community-art

In this blogpost based on the researcher's findings, the author writes about the concept of

community art and what the term means. This was a good source because the author

describes the history of how community art started, what community art is meant to do, and how this idea has helped people in communities thrive since the 1940's.

The American Psychological Association. (2020). *APA Dictionary of Psychology: Identity*.

APA.org. https://dictionary.apa.org/identity

In this article based on researchers' findings, the basic concept of identity and how it is formed. This was a good source because the article describes the components that an individual's identity is based on, such as: a set of physical, psychological traits and other characteristics that make someone uniquely them. This can be called their personal identity.

Thomas, E. (2015). *The Dance of Cultural Identity: Exploring Race and Gender with Adolescent Girls*. American Journal of Dance Therapy. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/283433086_The_Dance_of_Cultural_Identity_ Exploring_Race_and_Gender_with_Adolescent_Girls

This research paper was a good source because it credits the idea of the connections between dance and cultural and gender identity in adolescent girls briefly mentioned in my thesis paper under: *Part III: The Core Concepts and Theories Within Moving Identities - Other Kinds of Past Movement Inquiries.*

Tremblay, MC., Martin, D.H., McComber, A.M. et al. (2018, April 12). *Understanding community-based participatory research through a social movement framework: a case study of the Kahnawake Schools Diabetes Prevention Project.* BMC Public Health. https://doi.org/10.1186/s12889-018-5412-y

In this research paper based on the researchers' findings, Tremblay et all define the concept of community-based participatory research and describe all the details that it involves. This was a good source because the authors tell of the core defining characteristics of CBPR and how it has been used as a form valid of data collection over the years.

Tsakiris, M. (2015). *Self and Brain*. International Encyclopedia of the Social & Behavioral Sciences (Second Edition). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11097-020-09696-w

In this research paper based on the researcher's findings, Tsakiris describes the psychological sense of identity within each individual. This was a good source because Tsakiris tells that the sense of identity is given by autographical memory and experiences. He also discusses how self-identity is generated by the fact that all of a person's experiences are related to them, and not anyone else.

Wang, Q., Coemans, S., Siegesmund, R., & Hannes, K. (2017). *Arts-based Methods in Socially Engaged Research Practice: A Classification Framework.* Art/Research International: A Transdisciplinary Journal. https://doi.org/10.18432/R26G8P

In this research paper based on the researchers' findings, Wang et all provide their own definition of the concept of art-based research and describe all the details that it involves. This was a good source because the authors tell of the three major categories for classifying arts-based research: research about art, art as research, and art in research.

West End Schools. (2019, January). *West End in Schools Storytelling in Dance Jan 2019*

Schools. Westendschools.org. https://westendinschools.org.uk/blog/storytelling-in-dance

In this blogpost based on the researcher's findings, the author writes about the concept of

storytelling in dance. This was a good source because the author describes the details of

exactly storytelling in dance is and all the benefits that the practice has for those who

watch the process, such as an audience.

Resources

Boyhood Movie, 2014

A look into my journey to *The Moving Identities Project* in photos and videos throughout the years: https://photos.app.goo.gl/BPTvs9hS5qAxk8By9

Appendix

Google Drive: *The Moving Identities Project* **Digital Time Capsule Link:**

https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/14UOff3rK_fiZnt5-KIkusbJhEUotvkXi?usp=sharing

Google Form: Participant Confirmation Form Link:

https://forms.gle/NKP8P4LLZEVWqsGT6

The Moving Identities Project **Promo Poster Series Pictures:**