

S310: Interactive Multimedia

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Final Project - Research Statement

Subject/Content:

Labels, they are everywhere and everyone uses them. Consciously, subconsciously, verbally, mentally or in writing. A label can be put on a box of ingredients, an artwork, or a human being.

I want to explore the use of labels in the context of an art gallery. An artwork label aims to summarize information about the piece and give contextual information to the viewer. It details things like materials used, date of making, motivation behind the work, collection title and perhaps most importantly, the name of the artist.

What *does* it mean for the artwork in a gallery setting to be labelled? Is the fact that there is a label accompanying something in the gallery *make it an artwork worthy of reflection and contemplation*?

What can it mean for the viewers in a gallery setting to be labelled?

We all present as a certain combination of traits and characteristics to the outside world; smart, weird, tall, depressed, funny, conservative, black, graduate, foreign, basic, disabled, blonde are some of them. These idiosyncrasies are not unique by themselves, not by any measure. They're only one-of-a-kind in the combination they exist through each and every one of us. But labels tend to become isolating/grouping variables, putting us in certain boxes and excluding us from others. How much of a label are we, and can a human be sufficiently described solely through adjectives? How do societal labels and personal identity relate to each other? And can labels be used as commonalities that connect us in the seemingly random and chaotic universe?

I want visitors in the gallery to take some time to reflect on the labels they associate themselves with, and study ALL the labeled pieces inside the gallery. I aim to spark empathy and connection through the process of making people vulnerable and associate with each other more.

Form:

Gallery installation at entrance with Arduino, a display and mini label printer. Visitors will be able to type in responses to some prompts and print a label. This is attached to their body in a comfortable manner as they walk around and view the artwork.

Tools:

Mid-fidelity hardware prototyping using Arduino Development Kit

Hardware:

Computer OR Arduino Genuino/Uno + 2x16 LCD Display Screen

Mini Thermal Printer: <https://www.adafruit.com/product/2751>

Tutorials and Libraries: <https://learn.adafruit.com/mini-thermal-receipt-printer>

Strategies:

Slowness, Reflection, Critical inquiry of social constructs.