

...HAD FRIENDS THAT HAD THE POLICE CALLED ON THEM AND IT

TRANS

TEN STORIES OF IDENTITY

SOUTH

...at me and see a guy in a dress. The men's bathroom happen to

DO YOU GO IN?

SO, HE SCARED TO GO TO THE BATHROOM AT ALL

PUBLIC

...my friends came out as in middle school - and the girls she was sharing a hotel room with found out and beat her bloody

Alli Crandell | Tripti Pillai
Joshua Parsons | Shonte Clement

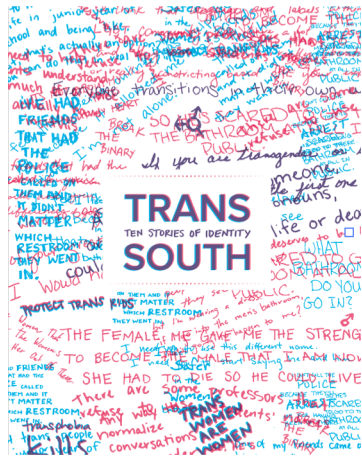


athenaeum
PRESS

AT COASTAL CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

theathenaeumpress.com

Trans/South Quick Facts



BOOK



DIGITAL INSTALLATION

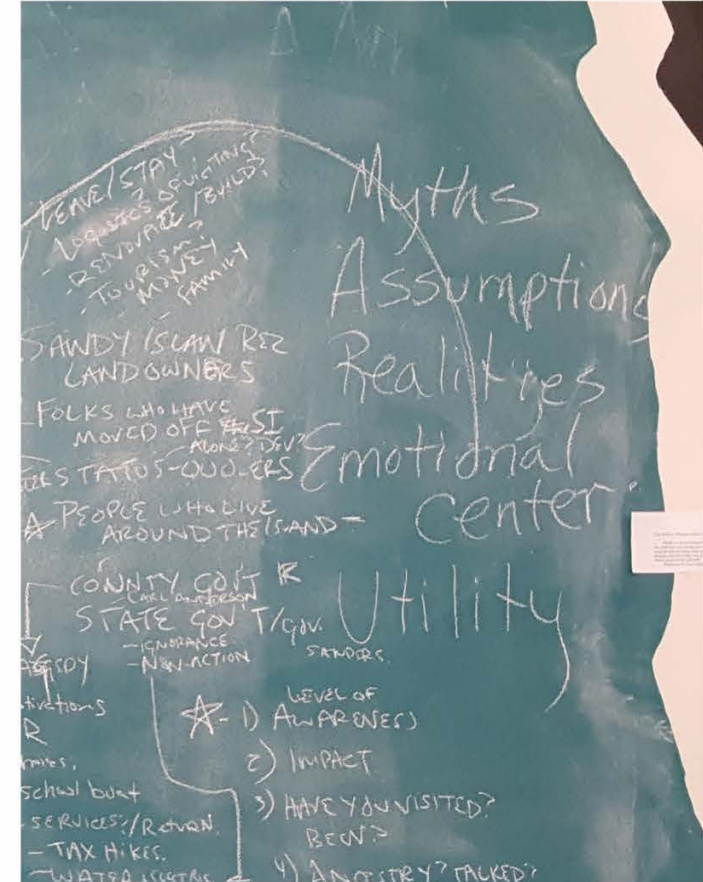


EVENT SPACE

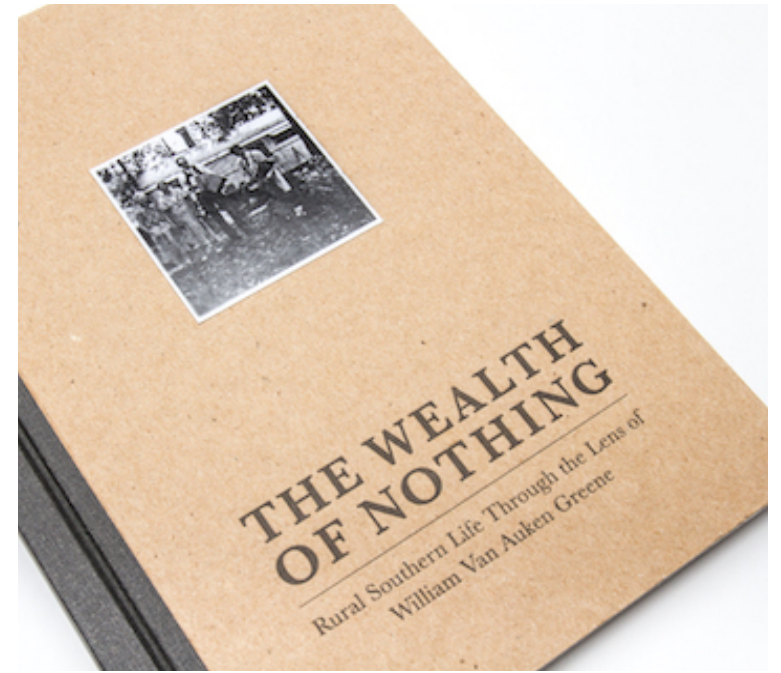
1. Started in Fall 2018 => Summer 2019
2. 10 students, 9 undergrads + 2 grads
3. At Coastal Carolina University (Conway, South Carolina – near Myrtle Beach)

Today

1. **About the Athenaeum Press**
2. **Project Proposal**
3. **Process**
4. **Product: Book & Digital Experience**
5. **Negotiations/Lessons Learned**



REGIONAL :: ANALOG + DIGITAL :: SELLABLE



#ACH2019 #SF2



Trans/South: Ten Stories of Identity



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Arts and Humanities Global Experience (AHGEP) Workshops at Goldsmiths, University of London

- Mijke van der Drift (Project Impact: The Personal as Critical and Ethical Methodology)
- Neda Genova (Project Impact: Shifting Locational/Regional Historiographies)
- Oana Parvan (Project Impact: Politico-Aesthetics)
- Gitanjali Pyndiah (Project Impact: Poetics of the Marginalized)
- Jay Bernard (Project Impact: Archival Aesthetics as Revolutionary Strategy)

"Non-Normative Ethics: Trans as Refusal and Escape"

"Postcommunist Surfaces: The Case of Sofia"

"Looking At and Interacting with 'The Arab Spring' "

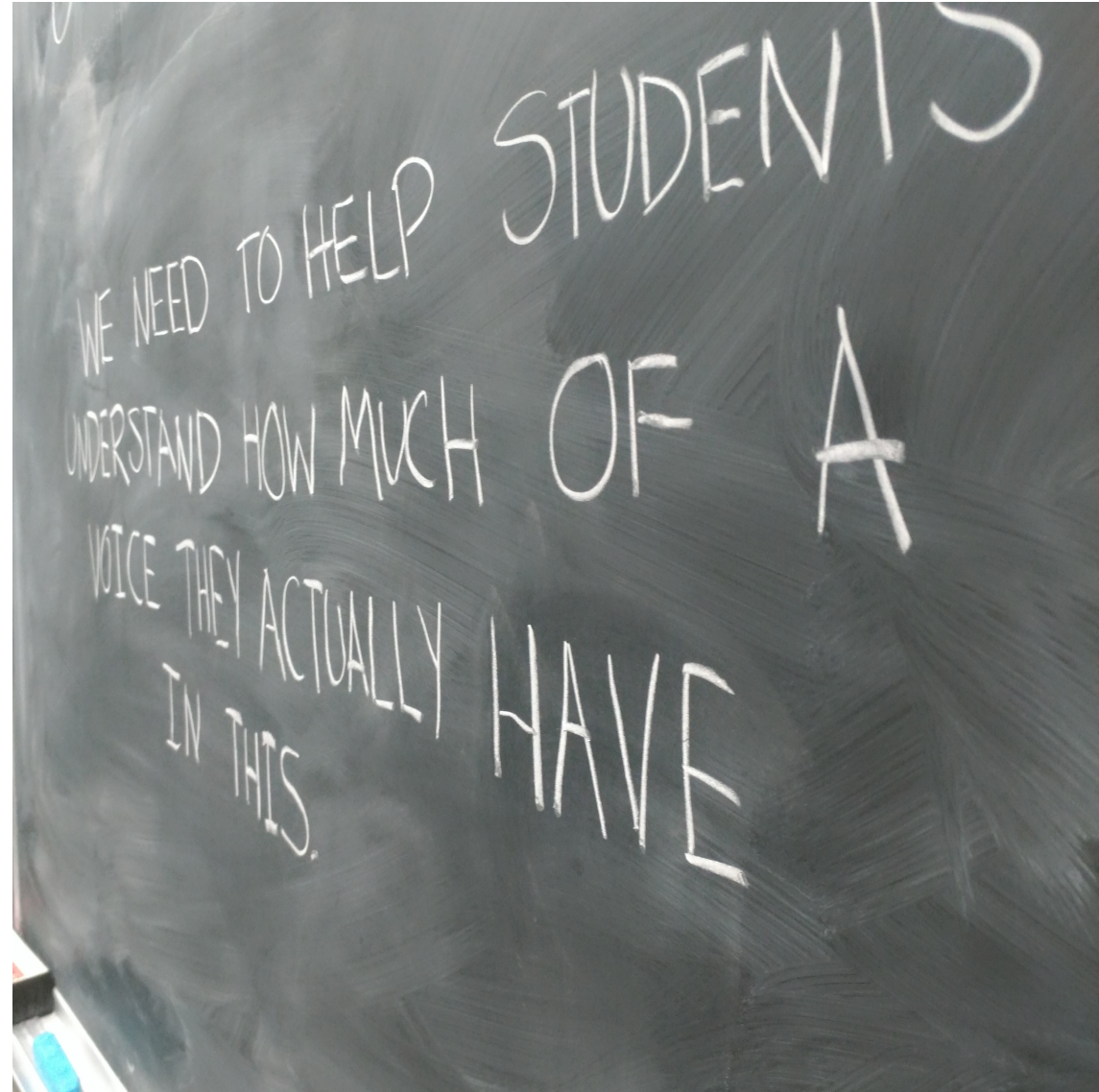
"Sonic Resonance of Homing in Tongues"

"Surge and/or Silence? "

Context and Impetus for the AHGEP Proposal to the Athenaeum Press (Spring 2018)

TRANS* IS NOT A MONOLITH THE SOUTH IS NOT A MONOLITH

Even as there is an increasing level of trans* awareness in national and global conversations about identity and rights, trans* individuals remain on the peripheries of communities, their bodies rendered paradoxically visible and invisible, their voices subsumed into broader political conversations about gender and sexuality. The fundamental purpose of the project is to present trans* individuals' nuanced voices and diverse histories in terms of their *personal* experiences of belonging and unbelonging, and of being and becoming themselves within their local and regional communities in the Carolinas. In the process of our critical making, we hope to bring about thoughtful conversations among trans* and non-trans* students, faculty, staff, and members of the regional community.



Some of What We Read Together

- Beatriz Preciado, "The Pharmaco-Pornographic Regime: Sex, Gender, and Subjectivity in the Age of Punk Capitalism"
- Marquis Bey, "The Trans*-ness of Blackness, the Blackness of Trans*-ness"
- Carolyn Cooper, "Sweet & Sour Sauce: Sexual Politics in Jamaican Dancehall Culture"
- Gloria Anzaldua, "How to Tame a Wild Tongue"
- Mosireen, "Revolution Tryptich"
- Felix Guattari, "Machinic Heterogenesis." *Chaosmosis: An Ethico-Aesthetic Paradigm*
- Jay Bernard, *Surge*

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Trans/South: Ten Stories of Identity

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Interview Process

Who to interview?

Start with trans voices

1st Circle

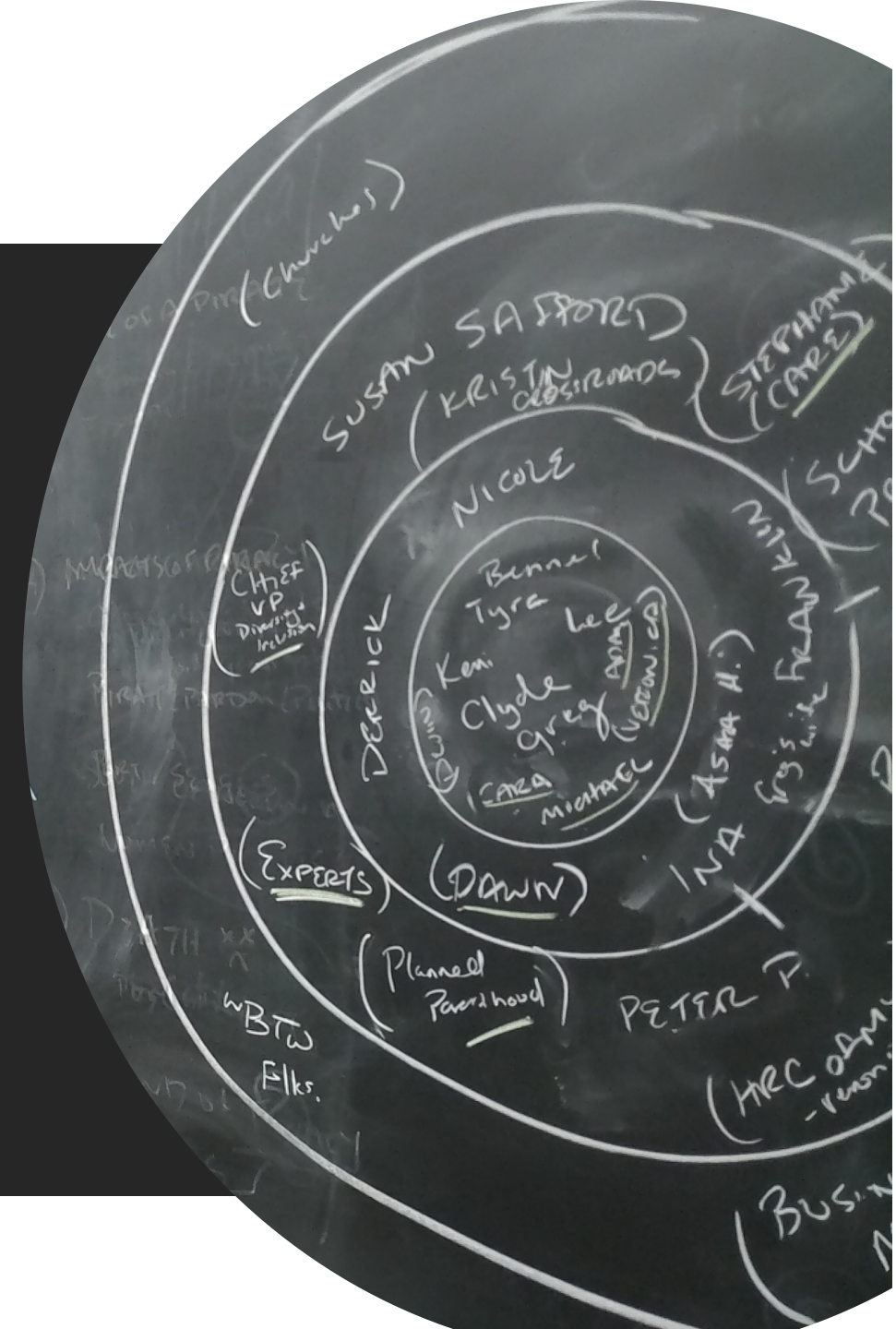
Trans
Gender non-
conforming

2nd Circle

Family
Friends
Allies

3rd Circle

Doctors
Professors
Religious
Leaders
Police
Teachers
Counselors



Voices from the Project: Trey



I actually moved out to LA for a year, because I just wanted to get completely away from The South and find like an area...opposite of all the judgement and kind of stuff here. What I found in being out there—I mean there was definitely work to do out there, but I feel like I was really called back to be in The South. To be like, “This is where more stuff needs to happen. This is where there’s less people who are understanding of who trans people are, who LGB people are. There’s a lot more need for the education, and a lot more need for the supportive space.” So, there was a part of me that when I was out there that was like, “I feel like I’m needed back in North Carolina more than I’m needed here. To do this work.”

Voices from the Project: Dawn



So, my perceptions of The South: I do feel like it's a more kind and gentle type of place as compared to Detroit city. However, I also feel like it's harder to be who you are. I do feel like up North people can be more in your face. Maybe even more prejudice in your face, but maybe here more prejudice behind closed doors. So, I deal better with in your face, because at least you f***ing know where you stand. I deal better with that, but do I want to see my son go through that? No. I'd rather it be behind closed doors, because I will go to jail. I will hurt somebody. Legit.

Voices from the Project: Ina



Again, speaking as an ally, my experiences are different. I know that. But I like to compare it to my self identification as a feminist. When I step off campus as a feminist, I do feel uncomfortable most of the time. Obviously, there's a big difference. I usually don't feel any fear for my safety usually, unless it's in my identity as a woman.

Interviews to Stories

- 26 Interviews
- Transcribed + Reviewed
- Find Themes
- Draft, Revise, Draft, Revise
- Send to Interviewee for Review
- Ask Interviewee for Bio
- Revise
- Design

Tyra (Joshua) — 402367 words

N Valerie McLaurin

Tyra looked down at her phone and checked her Instagram account, 308 likes on the picture she posted. It was the first picture she had posted as Tyra, not Tyja. The warm feeling washed over her when she saw the number. Her heart was beating out of her chest. She posted it. She had decided to take the chance. She had no idea how people were going to react. Would her followers support her? Would they publically shame her for every risk she felt she had to take in order to accept herself as Tyra. The overwhelming feeling of being loved. It made her feel free and finally confident in who she is. She knew that it was for people to understand the change she was going through in her identity. Hours later, she saw a direct message from an account she did not follow. The message was from a former student at her old high school. They mentioned that they too felt that they were not the color in the south, and they were afraid to come out. Tyra looked back on the experience that had gotten her to this moment. She thought about all the negative feedback she had gotten in the past. She thought about how alone she felt in her small town. How she felt no one could understand what she was going through and how she so desperately wished someone could help her. She had come a long way since then, she knew she started somewhere. She knew that if someone reached out to her for advice, she would have. She messaged the high schoolers and told them it is okay. She reassured them that they are not alone in this. "Everyone transitions in their own way." She said "it's nice to know there is someone from her hometown going through this and that she could help them out through the transition." Tyra thanked them for sharing their story with her, and let them know she would be available to talk if they ever needed someone to talk to. She realized if not for the support she was doing was risky. If she didn't do it now, who knows when she would get the chance. She decided to pull the trigger and posted her first official picture as Tyra. She knew she would definitely receive some support, but had no idea just how much support she would receive. She decided to delete all the pictures as she was formerly known. She gave them one last look before hitting delete, recreating her existence as she preferred it.

By this time she had moved from her hometown to Myrtle Beach. Veronica worried she was the "first transgender person in Myrtle Beach." "...in AA." She came out to him anyway. "Well, you're just like my grandfather years ago."

Creating Spaces for Conversation



TRANS VIEWS

TRANS DAY OF VISIBILITY PANEL



DAVE ROSSI



GREG GREEN



JULIE SINGLETON



XAN LUTSKY



Trans/South Book

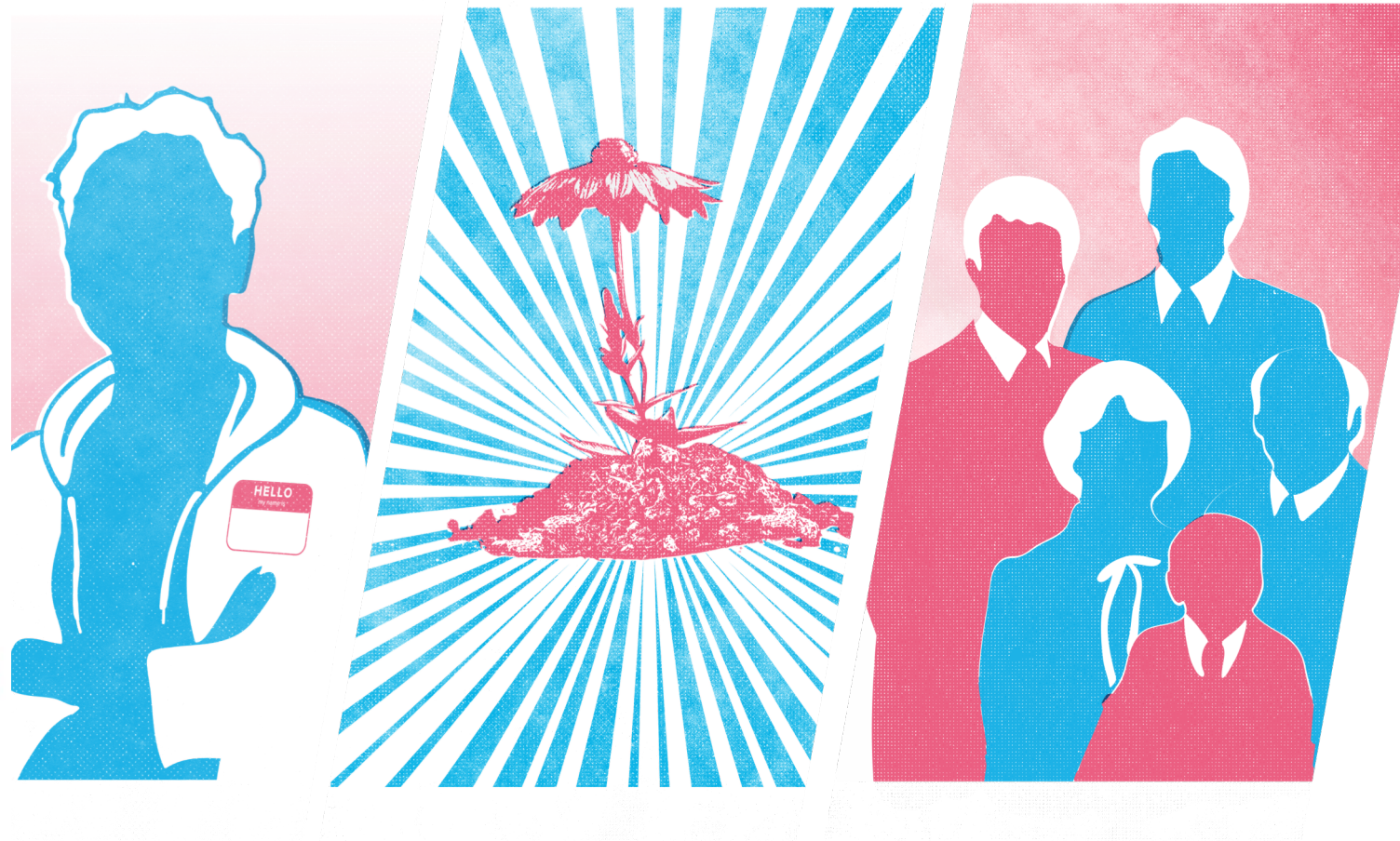
Beach,” “in the program,” or even “in AA.” Veronica came out to him anyway. “Oh, well, you’re just like such and such who was here five years ago.”

you are transgender or intersex, or whatever, it's okay, you're not the first one to be this way.

As she learned to live as herself, Veronica co-founded a support group “for people to after waiting and trying to figure everything out, Trey realized “No, that’s not what I believe about God. That’s not what I believe spiritually. This is just who I am.” He came out to his mother. She was very upset, but not enough to kick him out. She told him, “I love you. I don’t agree with it, but I’m always gonna love you.”

*I need you to use this different name.
I need you to start saying he and him*

Trey moved out to Los Angeles “to get completely away from the South.” It only lasted a year. There was work to do in California, but the South kept calling him. He felt that the South was “where there’s less people who are understanding of who trans people are, who



I dealt with some people at first who didn't really know what to make with me. And by the end, I maybe changed their perspective or they felt more comfortable around me and as a result, felt more comfortable with the idea of trans people. So I think showing people who we are as opposed to just telling them and expecting results - I think that might be helpful.

I know there are many other places that are supposedly liberal. open places and yet you hear about transgender people being killed there and discriminated against.

That's where the conversion therapy comes in. I've thought that my family might do that at one point, because they were questioning me whether I was gay or not. I was about 12, 13, 14 years old or something like that, but I was having a conversation, and we were having a conversation, but I knew enough at the time that I was transgender so I knew I wasn't gay.

I WANT TO STAND ON THEIR SIDE AGAINST WHATEVER SYSTEM IT WAS THAT WAS OPPOSING THEM, AND RALLYING OTHERS TO DO THE SAME BECAUSE I BELIEVE THAT'S WHAT JESUS WOULD DO.

As an ally, my experiences are different compared to trans people. Social media keeps me motivated. I post a lot about my transitions because other people can't

Estrogen won't take away masculine features. So, a lot of times if trans women want to pass for female in this society there's a lot more requirement for surgery. Generally, the one they need most is facial-feminization surgery, and that can be 40-60,000 dollars, and insurance is like 'that's a cosmetic procedure' and won't touch it.

So my biggest concern is safety. Like, what bathroom do you go in? And what line do you stand in? What is the appropriate time to say my name doesn't match my gender on my license? I don't fucking know.

You just have to worry about everything when you go out... whether you're going to be safe or not.

NOBODY WAS REALLY SURPRISED. THEY WERE NEVER LIKE, "OH MY GOSH, WE NEVER SUSPECTED THIS!" THEY WERE JUST HAPPY THAT I COULD FINALLY BE MYSELF. I MEAN, THEY WERE HAPPY FOR ME.

There are apparently some professors on campus who will absolutely refuse to use students' names, right that don't go along with the ones printed on paper.

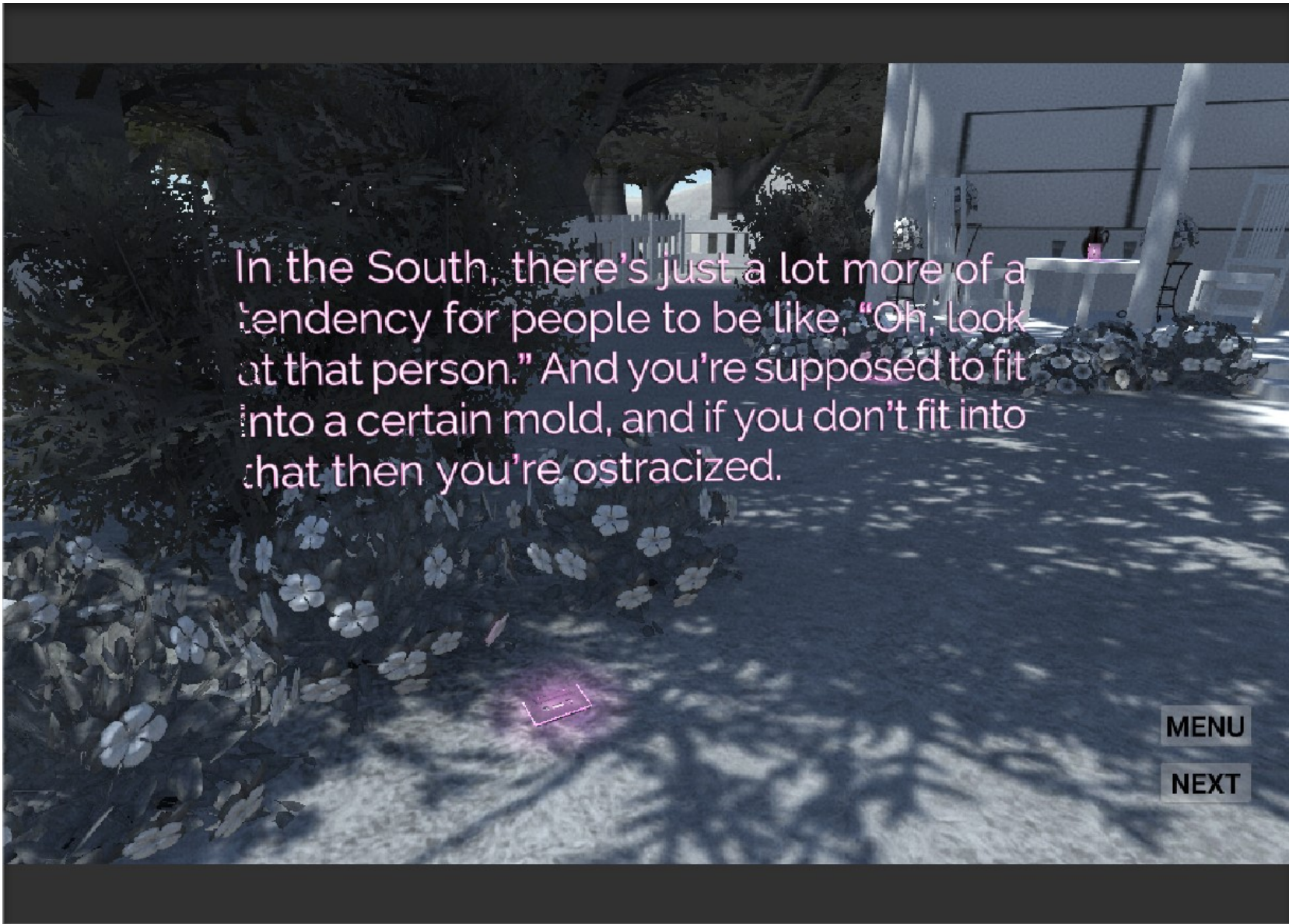
Back home and being transgender is so new that most people can't really accept it or they're so close minded they won't accept it.

I've had friends that had the police called on them and it didn't matter which restroom they went in.

I started to meet trans people in real life in like junior year of high school and being like, "Wait, that's actually an option? You can do that in real life?"

Let people tell you who they are. That's the other thing that I wanted to mention about the south. We need to kill the ma'am and sir because I feel like that's the first thing that people hear when they walk in the door of most places.

I remember there used to be a very good magazine by the International Gender Foundation that talked about trans issues. The refreshing thing about that was it was not porn. So was talking about serious issues, and that was enlightening. That was back in the 70s before the internet."



In the South, there's just a lot more of a tendency for people to be like, "Oh, look at that person." And you're supposed to fit into a certain mold, and if you don't fit into that then you're ostracized.

MENU

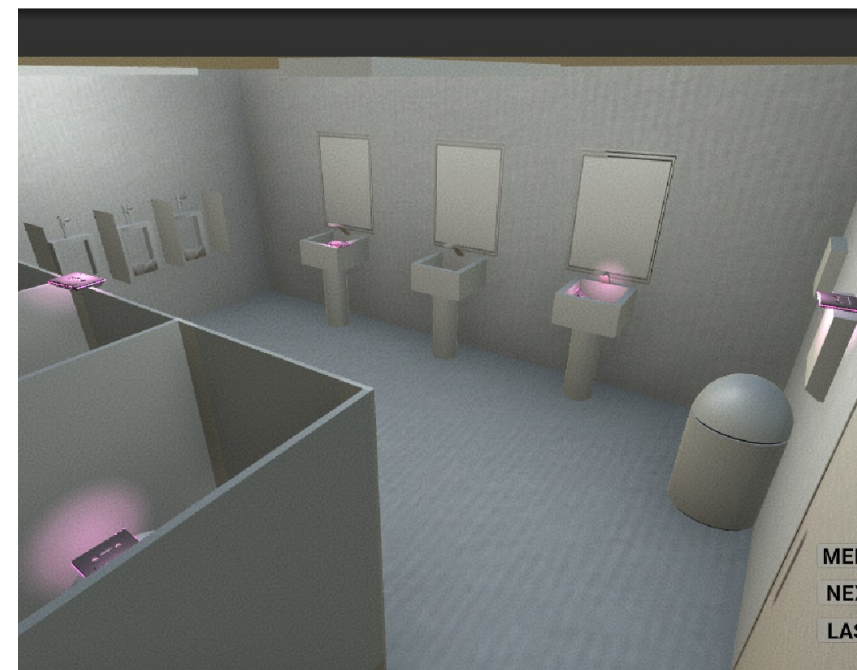
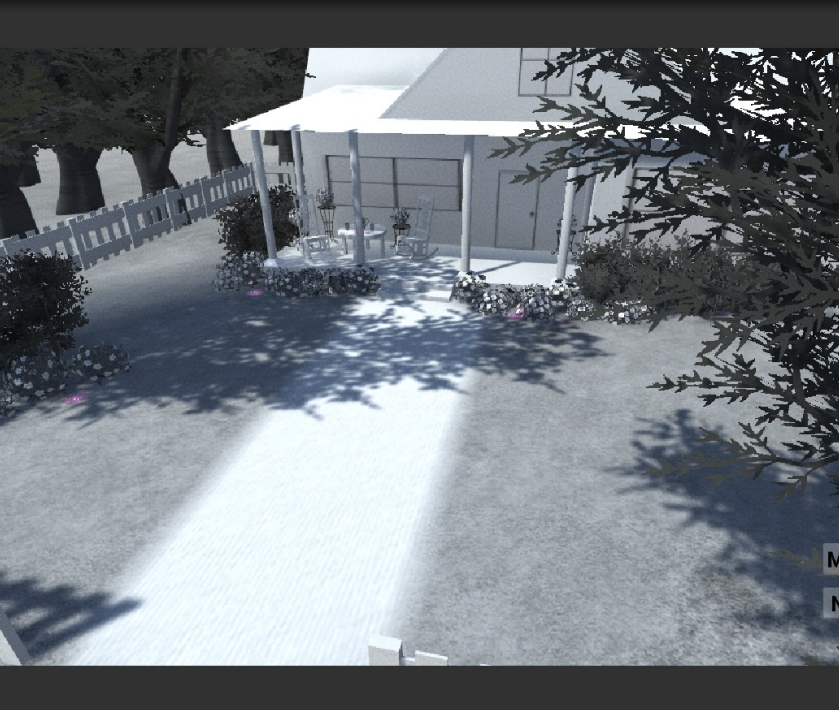
NEXT

Embodied Spaces Digital Installation



Inspiration

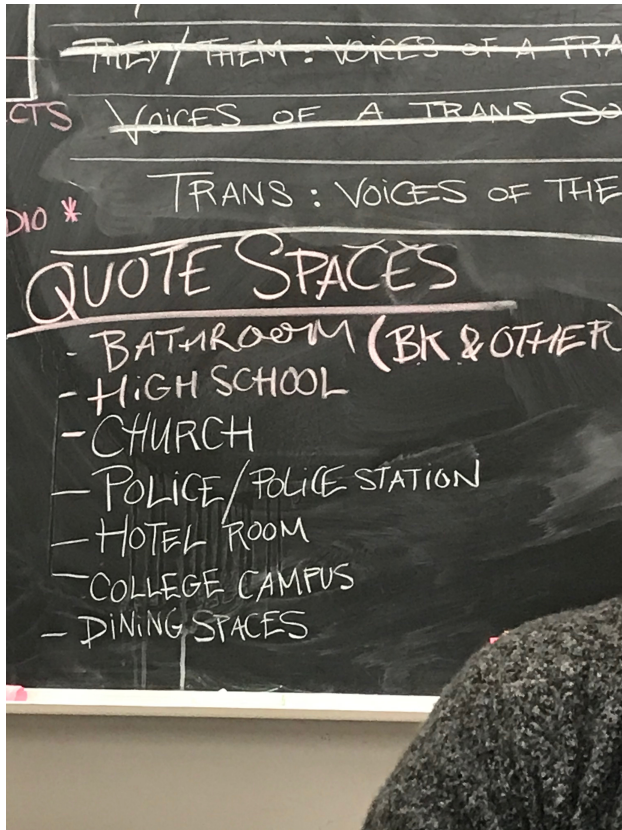




Trans/South: Ten Stories of Identity



Choices and Challenges



Though Clyde feels does feel of spots in Myrtle Beach., the worry for the worst. He feels Deep South, “surrounded by And unlike the University, the transpeople and genderqueer against in the world outside o LGBTQIA community, one o who will stand beside you pro smile.



Moving Forward

- Permission Forms that respect identity
- Extended timelines for iteration
- Multiple products for interviews
- Public process events
- “Flipping the recorder” for interviews

Thank you!

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