



Radial Portraits-United Diversity

A relational art program presented by artist Andrew Owen A01

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DESCRIPTION:

Radial Portraits - United Diversity is an interactive, relational art programs that includes participants in the collaborative creation of photo-based artworks, live, on-site. The program is quick and entertaining, and produces immediate, unique and truly remarkable artistic results.

SET-UP: The program involves setting-up basic photographic equipment, including two soft-box photo lights on tripods, digital cameras, instant photo printers, and assorted power and data cables. An empty wall is required to hang small coloured backdrop cards to photograph participants against, and to temporarily assemble the artworks upon. Several chairs for participants to sit, and a folding table to arrange the printers and cameras are also required.

CONSENT: Participants provide formal consent by signing a simple media release form; minor participants must have a release form signed by a parent or guardian. As the final artworks are composed from close-up images of many people, no single person is clearly identifiable, and the personal identity of individuals is not publically revealed.

PROCESS: Participants are invited to sit in a chair in front of a coloured backdrop card. Close-up images of participant's facial features are photographed at 1:1-scale, and immediately printed on-site at 1:1-scale as glossy 4 x 6 inch prints with an instant digital photo printer, *without employing a computer or Photoshop*.

A succession of images of many participants' facial features is photographed in a circular pattern, like to a clock face, radiating outward from the nose, hence the name Radial Portraits. As the program progresses, the many photographic prints with close-up images of facial features are temporarily assembled by the participants into hybrid portraits of many people's facial features combined as one or more faces.

As more and more prints are created during the course of the program, more hybrid portraits are created, and the many close-up images are rearranged and reconfigured into series of Radial Portraits composed from prints of facial features that work best together. The variations of facial features that can be combined is virtually endless; however, it becomes apparent that some combinations work better than others, and over the course of the program several excellent hybrid portraits are composed of prints of close-up facial features.

STATEMENT:

Celebrating diversity and equal respect for all people regardless of ethnicity, colour, gender, sexuality, age, ability, religion, caste, education, profession, etc., are ever increasingly important principles; however, visually representing diversity without resorting to visual clichés - such as a group of smiling ethnically diverse schoolchildren wearing ethnic costumes - is difficult, and unable to represent a broader scope of diversity, such as sexuality or physical abilities.

Supporting diversity includes the acknowledging many specific sub-cultures, for example, Chinese-Canadians, senior citizens, or the LGBT community; however, hyphenated cultural terms such as "Asian-art," "women's art," or "gay-culture" are somewhat exclusive terms, that are not necessarily inclusive of all people. Regrettably, the celebration of different cultures often inadvertently excludes others.

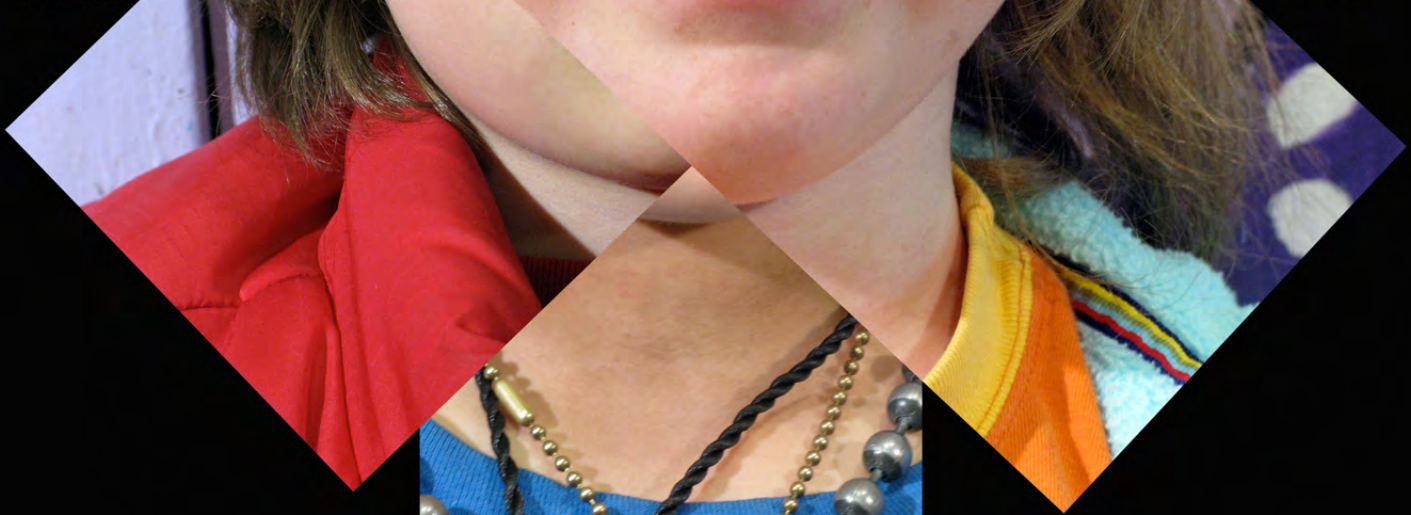
The Radial Portraits - United Diversity art program overcomes these issues by abandoning artificial distinction between people based on outmoded notions of "difference." Manifesting images of people that are post-ethnicity, post-gender, post-sexuality, post-age and post-ability. Employing a non-discriminatory, relational creative process to give expression to the distinction-free flux that is the ever-changing dynamic diversity of Toronto people.













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