

CK Final

I wanted to do a piece that reflected how this class greatly changed my perspective on race relations in society. Instead of trying to do a piece that encompassed my transition from the beginning of class to today, I wanted to focus more on one of the many moments in this class that greatly impacted me. My initial thought was to do a piece on my realization that the community back at home in the Rio Grande Valley in fact a rather racist community, in particular to African Americans. The reason why I didn't end going with that aesthetic was because I knew without knowing that my hometown was discriminatory and prejudice and I wanted to pick a topic that completely blindsided me and altered my perspective of society in a single moment, thus I went with The New Jim Crow.

This piece that is displayed here has 2 parts. There is the front cover and what's hidden underneath. The front cover is actually the front cover of the 1994 Crime Bill. The 1994 Crime Bill was proposed and passed as a bill that would target the "rise in crime" that was occurring but instead lead to the mass incarcerations, of which the LARGE MAJORITY of that population was African American males. Once you're in the system, it's over, because the New Jim Crow has already taken you. The New Jim Crow is in reference to the fact the Penal System that is used as a way to oppress minorities and to maintain white supremacy. The way this system works is that once you are officially labeled a "felon" your rights almost disappear. You can now be discriminated against based on race and it would be completely legally justified because of this new label you will now forever carry, such as employment and housing discrimination.

The second sheet is black scratch paper that says, "The New Jim Crow" towards the bottom and has an image of an empty prison with a single pair of shackles attached to the back wall. The initial symbolism is obvious, the 1994 Crime Bill stealthily empowered The New Jim Crow system that had begun taking place many years ago, thus the hiding of the second page. The tearing is to show the some of the wool has been removed from my eyes. The reason why not all of the paper is torn off is because only some of the wool has been removed. Even though I have come a long way since the beginning of this course I still have a much longer way to go and many more avenues to explore, I will forever keep on learning.

The Lone Cell with the single pair of shackles is a little different. What I had in my mind while making this was to create a space that seemed as if the audience member themselves is about to be put into this barren isolated room shackled to the wall. My goal with that part is to invoke an emotional response from the individual audience members. I want them to reflect on the full image for a few moments and then I want to ask them about how it makes them feel and what they see. By doing this I will be able to gain further insight into the perspectives of the lives that are not my own and learn more about the people around me. Ultimately I would love it if this piece got discussion going amongst my audience members.

After note: The piece did get the response I wanted from most people. An excellent discussion occurred between Dr. Brooks, Paula's niece and myself. We discussed the perceptions of racisms and multitude of forms it comes in, primarily talking about the difference in the types of racism between California and Texas.