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### **Concept**

This project<sup>1</sup> comes as a result of enrollment in participation in a multi-disciplinary course offered in the Spring 2016 semester at the University of Texas at San Antonio. The aesthetic project accompanying this paper is centered on three of the key principles of today's Black Lives Matter movement: Diversity, Black women and Unapologetically Black\*. Through the product, I acknowledge the narrative of multiple Black women, social justice movements, a push towards liberation, and how I am reflected of such work. It is through this project I highlight the ways in which what we as a society gain as a result of embracing diversity within our growing society ultimately benefits all of us and not a select few.

### **Theoretical Relevance**

Borrowing from the theoretical framings of Critical Race Feminism and Afro-Futurism, this project serves to present the possibility of narratives of resistance regarding Black women as scholars, activists, and more. Critical Race Feminism (Wing, 1999) comes as an outgrowth of Critical Race Theory. Through CRF, the multiple experiences of women of color—specifically Black women in this project—are moved into the center. It is through this transition of standpoints, that scholars can acknowledge the multi-dimensional, intersecting identities of women of color. As a framework which is anti-essentialist, CRF presents the task of drawing narratives which genuinely and honestly reflect the entire being of Black women.

Acknowledging such being leads to the utilization of Afro-Futurism as a theoretical frame. Afro-Futurism was initially coined by Dery, as a way to describe Black speculative

1. The developed aesthetic was created using EasyMoza and printed at the UTSA COEHD Lab.

fiction, which explicitly drew upon the experiences of Black people to change the social and political world (Link and Cannavan, 2015). However Nelson (2002) description of Afro-Futurism as a way of looking at the position of Black people which addresses themes of alienation and aspirations for a utopic future more appropriately support this work. The acknowledgment and sharing of Black women's narratives functions to disrupt the dominant narrative, while also planting seeds of hope towards liberation.

### **Reflection**

The Afro-Futurity of Black women and their narratives being acknowledged and heard within the context of our course and even larger society is radical. Through #BlackLivesMatter and #SayHerName, we engage in a form of change which not only validates the lives of people who have not always been recognized, but struggle daily for be fully acknowledged for their being and contributions. As such, I've developed an aesthetic that at the surface reflects my professional headshot, but is composed of multiple images of multiple individuals from all walks of life whose narratives and stories impact my being here. It is through their contributions I embrace a work which was not necessarily designed for me, but I strive to make it my own.

### **A Note to Readers**

This work was developed as a result of my reflecting of and about the contributions of Black women who have not always been acknowledged within the context of social movements or even in education, but continued to do the work anyway. It is through the selflessness of Black women engaged in radical forms of feminist liberation that Afro-Futurisms are possible. Please consider this work with a critical imagination which honors and acknowledges Black women.

*If it isn't institutions of racism, it's patriarchy. Black women are committing a revolutionary act just by existing—I'm here!! —R.S.Roby*