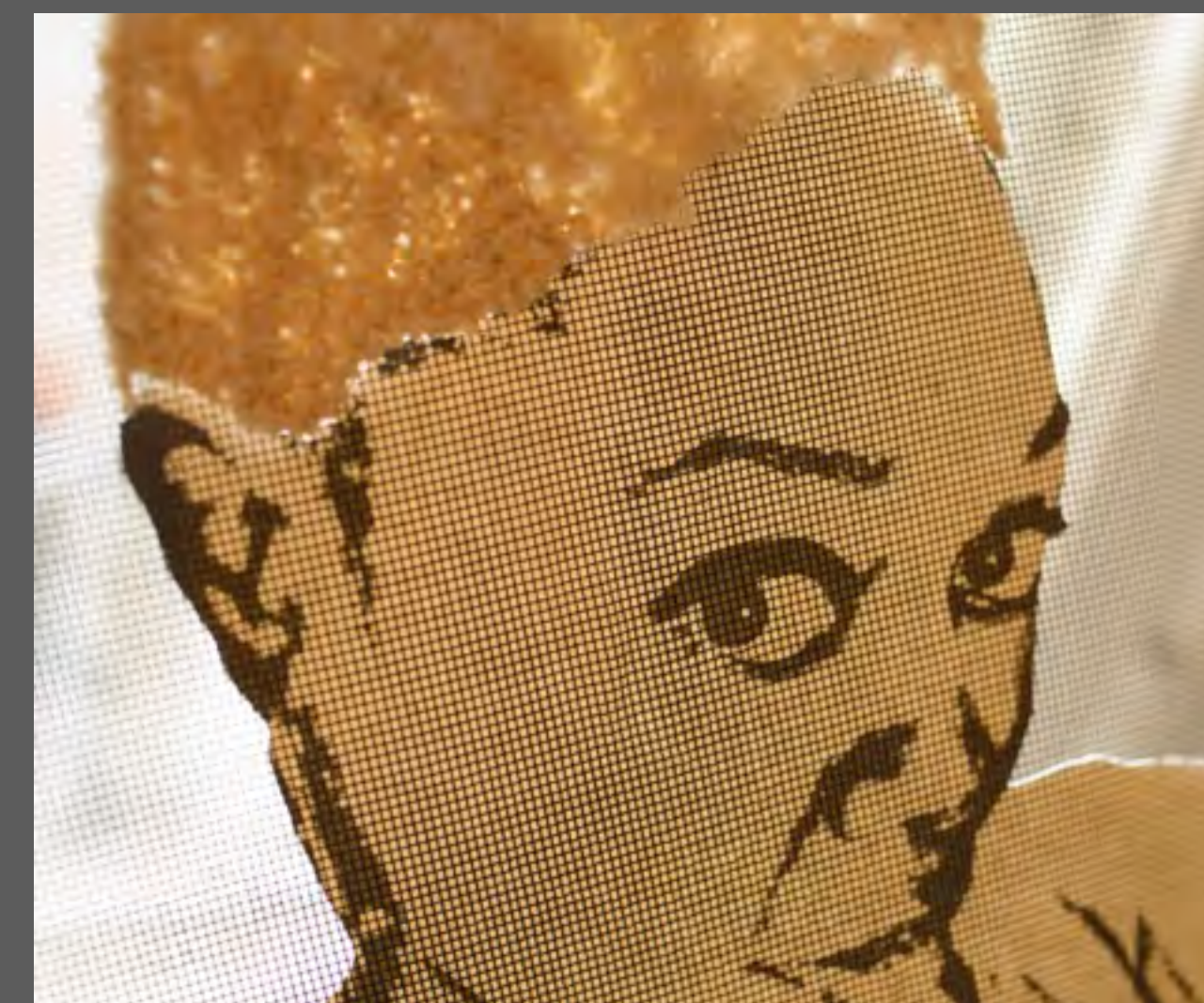




I AM: REFLECTIONS ON IDENTITY

Through Writing and Visual Communication





AIGA 2017 DESIGN CONFERENCE MINNEAPOLIS

Design Education Symposium









MYTHS VS. TRUTHS

- The earth is flat
- Man cannot fly
- Blacks are intellectually inferior
- Gay marriage cannot exist
- Women cannot lead



WHAT IS COLORISM?

- Differential treatment based on skin color
- Internalized form of racism
- Traceable back to slavery



Lucky Brown Ad, circa 1930s. Design by Charles C. Dawson, Valmor

WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

- Stereotypes affect our understanding and actions
- Subconsciously harbor feelings/ attitudes about others
- Media & news origins of implicit associations



Photo: Richard Alan Hannon, AP, © 2005.

WHAT IS IMPLICIT BIAS?

- **Stereotypes affect our understanding and actions**
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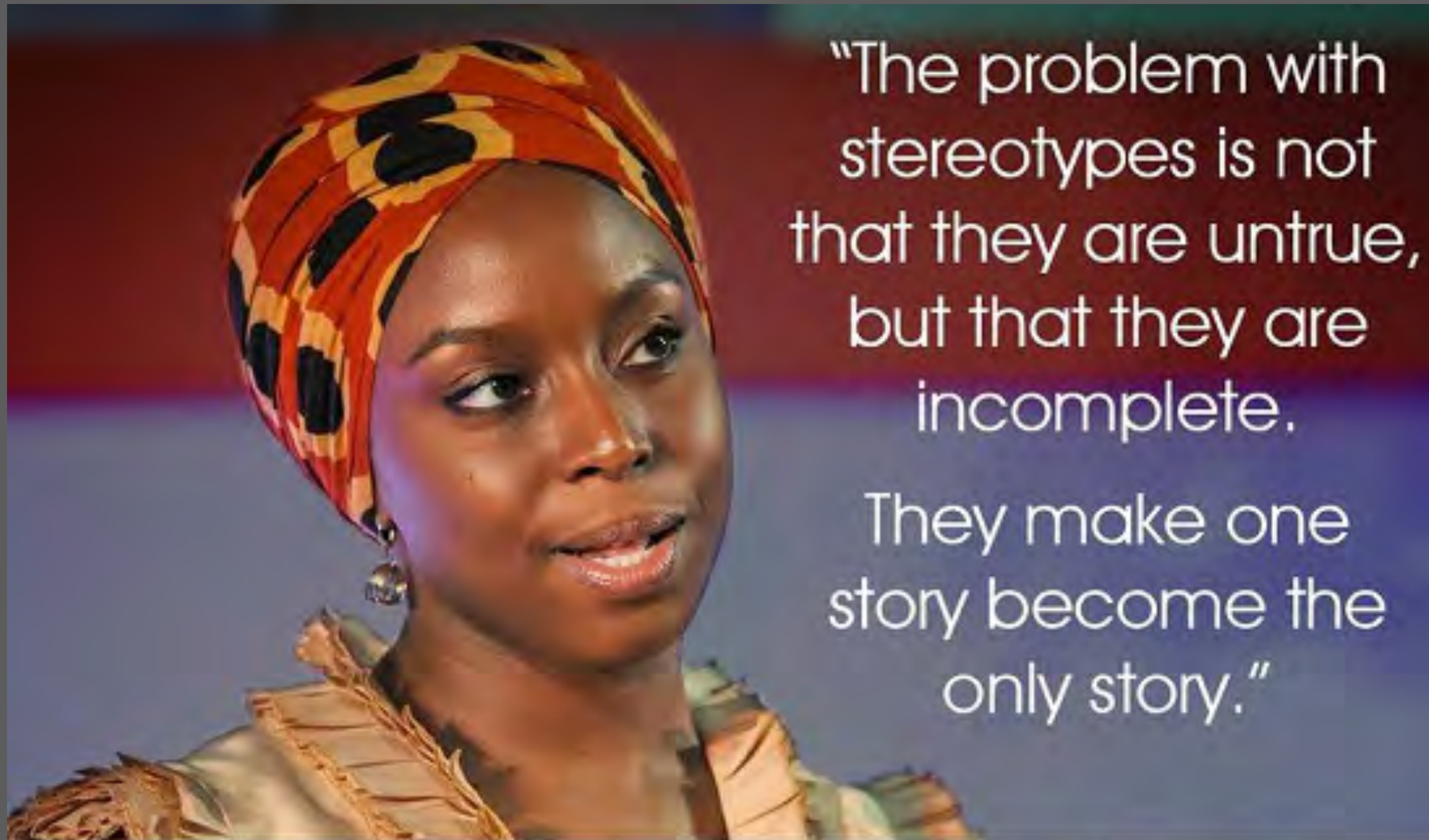


Photo: Laura Reinhardt, World Vision, ©2017.

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What are we adding to the
library of visual literacy?

THE DANGER OF THE SINGLE STORY



Meme graphic: Social Justice Council, ©2015 (Photo credit: TED)

“ How [stories] are told, who tells them, when they're told... are really dependent upon power. Power is the ability not to just tell the story of another person, but to make it the definitive story of that person

— *Chimimanda Ngozi*

Women's Studies

Undefined

In a world full of so many different options and ideas, I have lost myself. I have become undefined. But, I know I am not alone, this feeling of being undefined transcends age, or race, or sex. I am not always lost, most of the time I have goals and ambitions that I work towards. However, today I am searching. Searching for a path of a clue as to who I am or what I want to do. I don't know who I am or where I am going today, but that is okay. I have accepted that as human beings we will not always follow a clear path and that as we go through changes, we might not always know ourselves.

Changes are inevitable. They come as we learn and experience, new ideas and options. Whether we are rejecting or accepting them, they reveal new paths to us. Many new paths have been revealed to me in a short amount of time. These paths are beautiful and intricate, yet extremely overwhelming. So, although I do not know where I am at and I do not know how to define myself today.

I know that they path will continue and that I will be able to define myself once again.

Women's Studies

Eyes opened or closed, it can be seen. Nonetheless it is neglected and avoided by both the oppressed and the oppressor both for different reasons. I know both from experience. You may ask who I am because you don't see me or know of me, but in order to know who I am, you need to know who I was.

I began as the young girl who was quiet and muzzled by her own fear. First, I was taught that a man owned me. He told me where I can go, how I can dress when he allows me to leave, and that I am his property. Always had to answer to my father, never my mother and essentially trained to obey a future husband. That was my purpose. Second, I was taught that would never be greater than a man. On the playground I couldn't run with the boys because I ran "like a girl". Girls are always trained to grow up knowing that being a woman will never be as gratifying as being a man would be. Society teaches girls to shrink themselves and make themselves smaller. They tell us girls, "you can have ambition but not much" or "You should aim to be successful but not too successful otherwise you would threaten the man". Don't be smart, don't be successful, but instead keep your mouth shut, do what you're told, and look pretty doing it.

I am the oppressed.

Women's Studies

I've never thought that my voice was heard in the way that I wanted ... I got interested in feminism when I entered the university. Moreover, my focus is gender studies, particularly young Russian women in STEM. About a year ago me and my university friends started feminist discussion club, and it's been about 8 meetings so far. We meet people with different backgrounds, gender identities, nationalities, and, of course, believes, and discuss some passages from classic texts, like Simone de Beauvoir, or some videos, or current events. Russian society is not like American. It is way more patriarchal and less friendly ... I was told like a hundred times that “feminist point of view is just your opinion”, “statistic about violence is a lie, it is just how you interpret it”, ... If you publicly call yourself a feminist, people automatically think that you are a feminist encyclopedia and you must answer all of their questions any time...

So, for me the question is—is that still value that my voice is heard by some while it is aggressively rejected by most? Even so, does it really matter? My life has changed with feminist ideas, I became more aware of many things...

Sometimes it's too unbearable, so I think maybe I don't need any activism at all.

Women's Studies

In my life I haven't had much experience with oppression because I am a white male in today's society. Of course, I am aware that racism and sexism are still very much alive in today's world. The closest I've ever been to feeling oppressed or in better words belittled by someone was my sophomore year of high school. For most of my life and adolescence I grew up in a very wealthy community in San Diego, California. It was the type of place where extremely wealthy families stayed when they weren't vacationing. The only thing wrong with this picture-perfect landscape was that I didn't grow up rich.

For most of my life I grew up in a middle-class family without financial issues. But after my parents divorced I lived with mostly my father and that's when I first started to experience what most people consider being poor. Experiencing things like having your power go out in the middle of you doing math homework because your Dad had to choose between paying this month's rent or paying the power. We almost exclusively shopped at dollar stores for non-essential groceries.

I had very wealthy friends whose homes I would spend a lot of time at because they had things I didn't have like internet, trampolines or a pool. My friends never made me feel bad about being poor, they understood my situation. It was my time spent at school where I felt belittled. In high school it's dumb to think but people really care about and pay attention to how you dress. All my peers had expensive name brand clothes and shoes, whereas I had a few t-shirts, mostly plain colors, a few pair of shorts and two pairs of pants and one pair of shoes to last me the whole year. My clothes were old and worn, often with rips in them. I constantly felt like my classmates were staring at me in disgusts because I wore the same outfits every week and many if not all of them never wore the same outfit more than a few times.

No one ever said, or did anything mean to me but they would treat me differently but just the feeling of not fitting into the culture of anything around me made me feel isolated almost every day.

Women's Studies

So I have been rambling my brain to come up with any type of experience I have come across related to our conversation and it occurred to me I have never had an experience where I was looked down upon because I am female, talked down to because I am a woman, no one has ever told me I can't do something because I am a girl. What I have personally experienced in my life is all encouragement to do and be the best I can and no one has ever backlashed me for trying anything.

Growing up I was always with my father who was of course in a male strong group which in turn made me think strong minded (technically to think like a man). I have always been the only female in most social settings I always hung out with boys/men because that is what I was use to growing up and they never once singled me out for being a girl. I look back now and realized I am very lucky to have experienced life as I have. My mother has always called my life a blessed life because things just happen for me and now after our first class session I'm realizing "my blessed life" as my mom calls it has such a deeper meaning and makes me that much more grateful for the life I have been given.

My father and I use to own our viga(log) business which I basically again dealt with all men who respected me and the work I did with my father I've never known someone to say what she can't be doing that work she's a girl. They were all proud of me for doing the work I was and helping my father because most kids now and days wouldn't. And just rambling here when I was in a relationship with my twin's father it was never a thought that I was to do the house work alone or do his laundry it was a combined effort in what had to be done. We both worked all the duties shouldn't be left to just one person. No one has ever singled me out as a single mom because I and have done what I needed to, to provide for my children and technically I am not a single mom their father and I share 50/50 custody and help each other out as much as we can we co parent great together and our parents help us out a great deal as well. Along with my other daughter and her father he lives about 4 hours away but he helps out as much as he can.

Life has been pretty good to me and for that I couldn't me more grateful.

Women's Studies

Intersected Oppression

After reading through Audre Lorde's article "There is no Hierarchy of Oppression," I began to think about my past and the different aspects of oppression I have faced personally. I am now 32 years old and the oldest of 3 sisters. My mother is hispanic and my father is of Irish/English and German descent. I came out with a mix of features. I have light olive skin, freckles and dark eyes and hair. When I go to visit my Father's family in Missouri I'm considered Mexican, but when I'm here I'm white. I've never truly fit in anywhere I've lived. Then, being a female, it seemed my opinion or voice was always dismissed as invalid.

... We moved to a small town called Green Ridge, MO. It was a very small town with a very specific demographic. My classroom seemed like a pond of blonde hair and I was the drop of mud right in the middle. It was a small class, maybe 15 students. I was in class with some of my paternal cousins, two very blonde, blue eyed boys. The teacher knew my family, but it became very clear she didn't approve of my existence. She would punish me for simply looking out the window, or reaching for an eraser during an exam. She wrote several notes home about my "deviant and disruptive behavior." ... My sisters and I were alone.

... We ended up moving to another small town ... But I managed to muddle through.

...As an adult, other signs of oppression as a female became very clear. As a woman, I was expected to "take care" of my boyfriends and later my husband by cleaning, cooking, taking care of the children and making sure their "other needs" were always met, while at the same time putting my needs, goals and dreams last.

... I was 24, I now had a 9 month old daughter that was going to look up to me and more than likely follow my example. I wanted it to be a good example that I was proud of... I am a warrior who has faced great obstacles and made it through, and now I have the experience to be able to be who I want to be ... I'm strong enough to get through them and I don't have to be afraid to speak up and let MY voice be heard. I now understand the only thing that was ever my fault, was not speaking out against it and enlightening ignorant people.

Creative Non-Fiction

**I was told that it's what's
on the inside that counts.**

**I was told that beauty is only
skin deep.**

**I was told that I can do anything I put
my mind to.**

**I was told that if I try hard enough, people
will see me for who I am inside.**

**I was told that everyone is beautiful in their
own way.**

**I was told that I should
start wearing makeup
to work.**

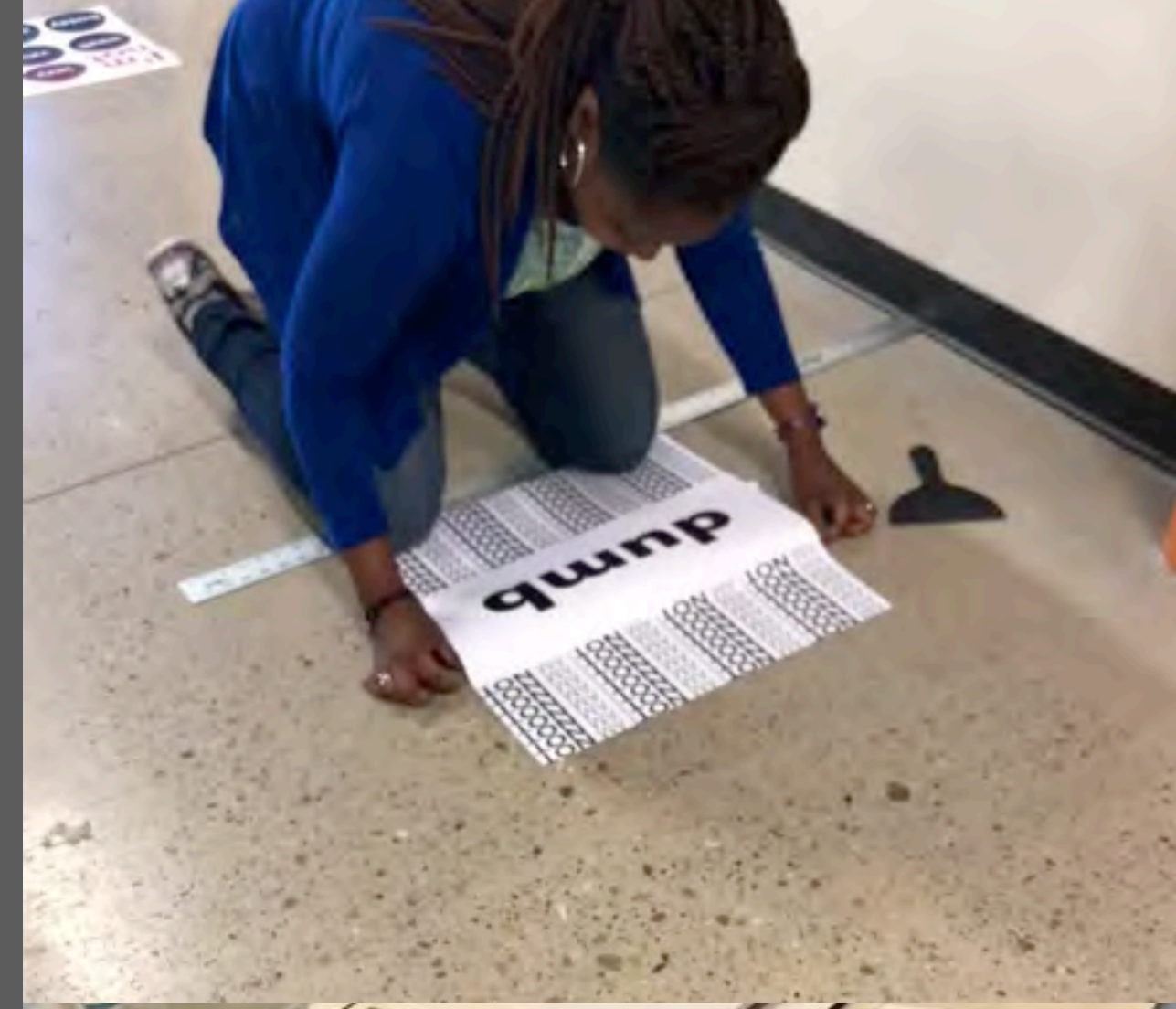
In between stepping on toes and not giving a fuck about what anyone knows
In between walking, talking, living your truth and covering justifying to be your best

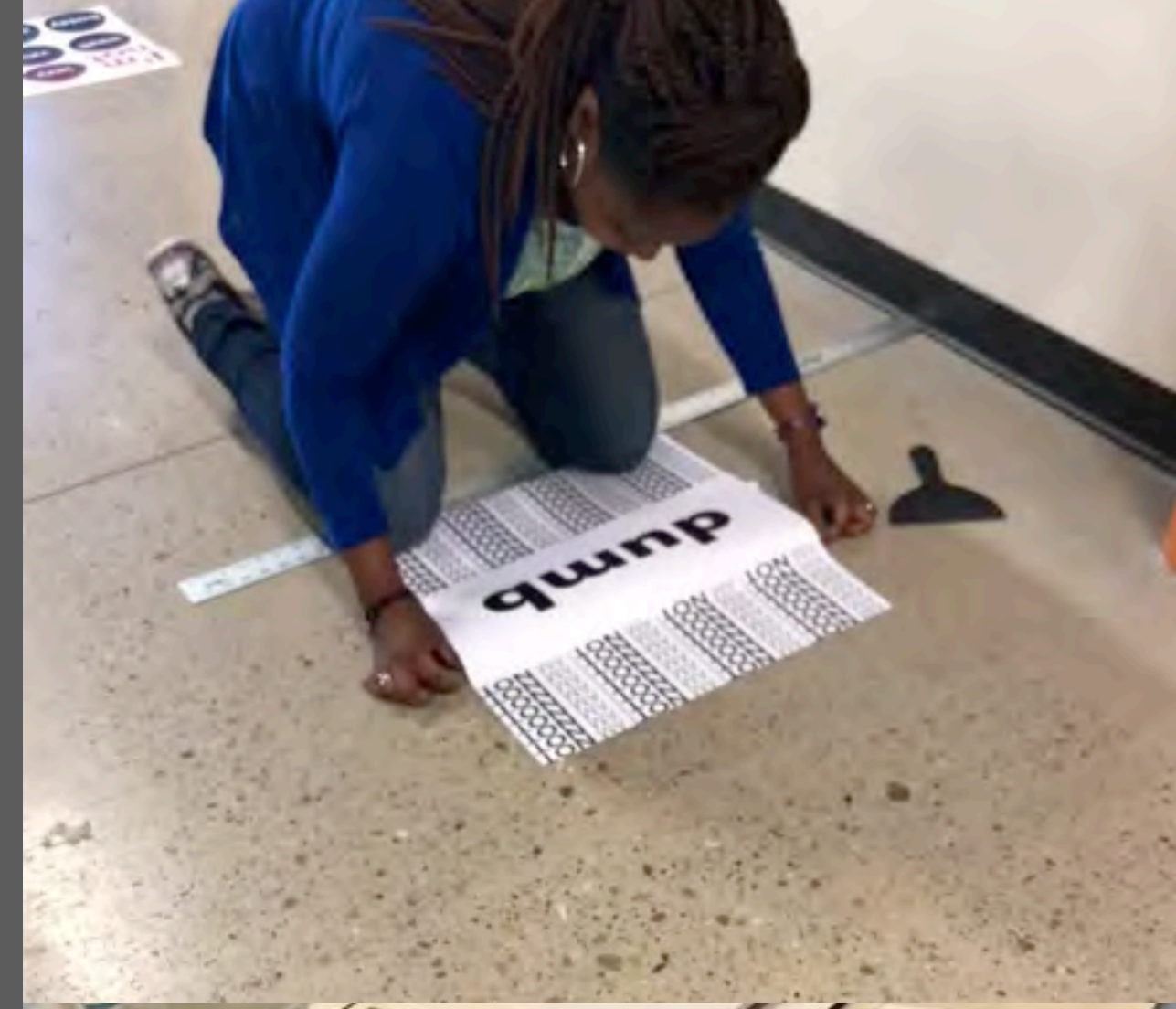
...pression because I am a white male in today's society. Of course, I am aware
...y's world. The closest I've ever been to feeling oppressed or in better
... school. For most of my life and adolescence I grew up in a very
... where extremely wealthy families stayed when they weren't
... that I didn't grow up rich.
... my parents divorced I lived with mostly
... experiencing things like having
... paying this month rent or

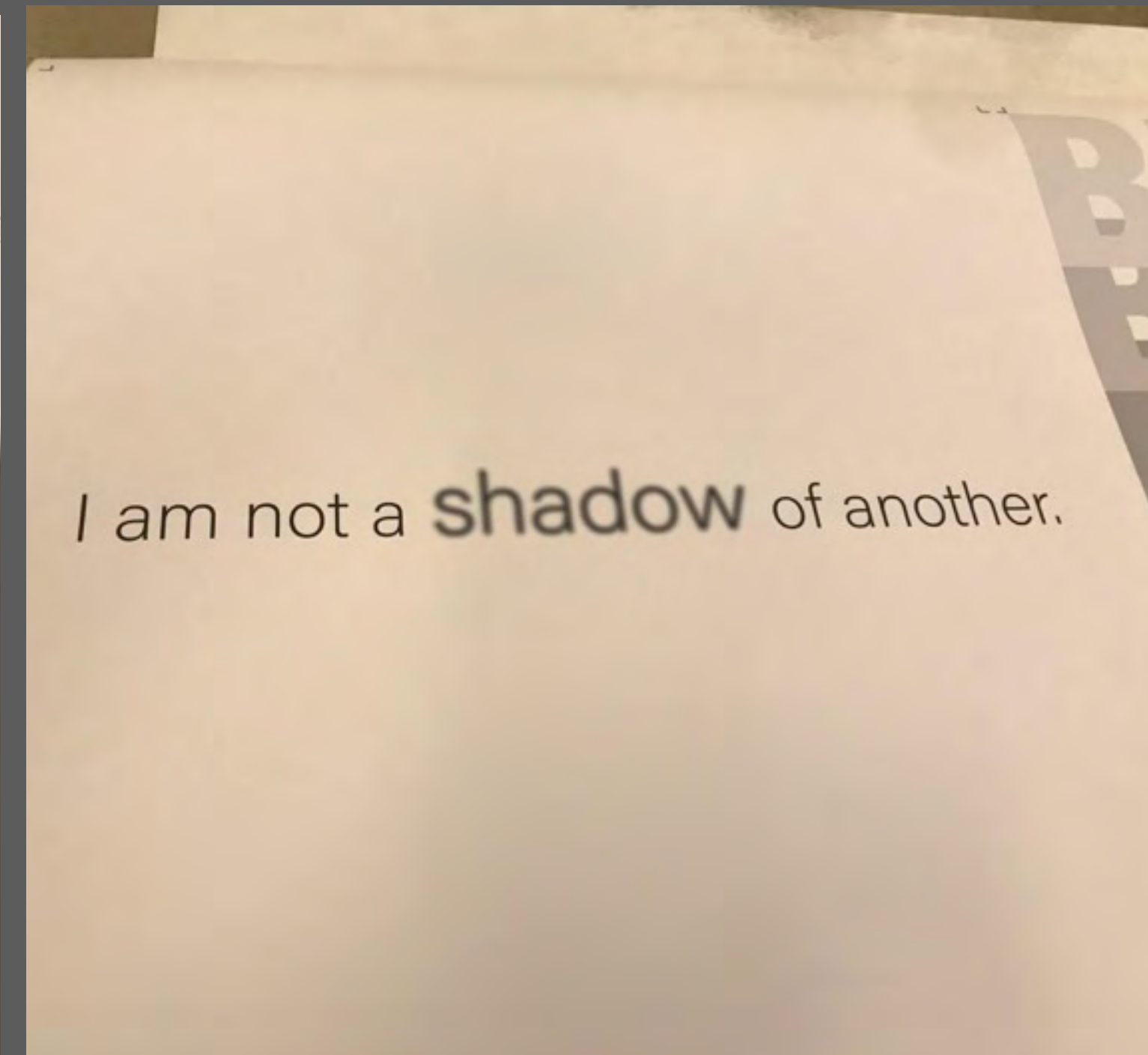
... I have been reading up on this in my spare time and I am not a professional
... occurred to me I have never had a conversation with someone who has been
... a woman, an older woman and an older man. I am not a professional
... encouragement to do so. I am not a professional.

... me and I am as much as I am
... the in-between

I AM









THE PERSONAL STORY IN MARKETING & DESIGN

- Recognize own biases
- Listen to others' stories
- Remove “authentic” from your vocabulary



“ ‘Authenticity’ can lead to
stereotypes and more bias from
companies [organizations]
marketing to people of color

— *Terresa Moses, Blackbird Revolt*

“ Brands should never make light of social issues related to people's suffering.. instead focus on ways [to sell] that don't exploit the pain and suffering of marginalized people

-Feminista Jones, Writer & Activist



The Look, Proctor & Gamble ©2019

The in betweens

In between the black and the white

In between the someday and the some night

In between these masks and the truth that is you

In between what we are and what we are told we are

Its all about the grey where most of us fit but don't most of us don't want to be

Because society paints pictures that are black and white, wrong and right

And none of us fit in to that bullsh*t, you see

Not one thing I be

Not the one thing that the world just wants to see

by Ali, NMHU Graphic Design Student