DEBBIE T. DAVIES MISSION STATEMENT THE I LOVE YOU PROJECT

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I am a New York based multi-media visual artist. My work has been shown in London, Berlin, Frankfurt, Tokyo, Kyoto, Barcelona, and New York. My current goal is participating in global collaborative projects and curating; with a focus on interactive social art. I am a painter, photographer, and videographer. I also create sculptural art from recycled materials.

The most important part of my work right now is The I Love You Project. It is a global interactive social art project which was conducted in Spain and Germany. This is a collaborative effort incorporating original music composition and video editing by other artists. I use a digital microscope camera – actually a child's toy – to record video of participants saying "I Love You". I also shoot still portraits. The experience itself of videotaping people is part of the project. Subjects have their own experience saying these three words to a stranger, at times in the presence of other people. Neighbors who never met come in as strangers and depart as friends. Our social circle expands. Further, I feel that peace and love between people of diverse backgrounds cannot be achieved unless we start a one on one relationship with strangers. The final result of the project is an exhibition where photos are displayed and the edited video with the soundtrack of the participants' voices is screened. During the opening receptions participants meet other participants and it's a festive and poignant event. This project is a traveling exhibit and the intention is to reproduce it in every country.

We conducted the first I Love You Project in Barcelona, Spain in the neighborhood of Raval in March 2011. The exhibition was an immersive experience sharing the multi-cultural faces and voices of the people who live and work in Raval. The digital camera creates unexpected portraits that play with skin tone, contrast, and light. Silent video, edited by Kendall Smith, plays with a delay, creating a dreamy quality. The accompanying soundtrack, which is a combination of recorded voices and original music by Julius Schön, completes the experience. Participants were delighted to see their faces on screen and hear their own voices saying I Love You.

Participants represented eighteen different languages reflecting the diversity of Raval. Furthermore, the experience itself - saying "I Love You" into the camera, caused participants to react in unexpected ways - showing the power of this phrase. This interaction, and the connection participants had with the artists and other participants, is what made this project so emotional.

The community of Raval has experienced tension due to intolerance and crime. This community houses a large population of immigrants, and is predominantly working class. Through this project, we hoped to unite the members of the community, and show Barcelona and the world that change is accomplished through love.

In August 2012 we commenced The I Love You Project in Germany. We shot subjects in Bockenheim (Frankfurt) and Giessen. This time we recorded over 30 different languages. The project continues in Berlin and we hope to exhibit it in 2013.

I recently founded an artist collective, HyperOptik Creative, with the intention of collaborating with other artists through interactive experimental media and socio-political subject matter. While the I Love You Project is focused specifically on love and peace; HyperOptik Creative projects will deal with a wider range of issues.