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The Role of Designers in Promoting Healthy Masculinity With an Approach to Stopping Violence Against Women and Girls

Fatemeh Abolbashari
University of Arkansas, Fayetteville

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The Role of Designers in Promoting Healthy Masculinity
With an Approach to Stopping Violence Against Women and Girls

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by

Fatemeh Abolbashari
University of Alzahra
Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design,2009
University of Tehran
Master of Arts in Graphic Design,2014

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University of Arkansas

The thesis is approved for recommendation to the Graduate Council.

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Thomas Layley Hapgood Jr., M.F.A.
Thesis Director

_____   _____

Marty Maxwell Lane, M.G.D.   Abra R. Levenson, Ph.D.
Committee Member   Committee Member

_____

Bree A. McMahon, M.G.D.
Committee Member

Abstract

While awareness about violence against women and girls is growing, there is still a lack of evidence about what changes behavior to prevent it from happening. As a graphic designer, I wanted to find the root problem of this issue and work towards a solution. Through my research and questioning, I concluded that this problem begins with men's thoughts on hierarchy, language, and behavior, and supported by a prevalence of toxic masculinity in men's culture.

Where does this violence come from? What has society done to raise this kind of man? Violence against women and girls is being couched in ideas about masculine superiority and natural dominance. Most expressions of masculinity, whether in the images we see of how 'real men' should look or the stories we tell about how 'real men' should behave, are often violent and aggressive. Sadly, when changing the story, including women's empowerment initiatives, we do not engage with men as part of the solution. As half the world's population, effective interventions must involve men to address the underlying discriminatory social norms that promote male power, control, and use of violence (Virtual Knowledge Center to End Violence against Women and Girls 2010).

When discussing the subject at hand, the lack of public and visual design educating men and boys about their role in stopping violence against women and girls has moved me as a designer to provide avenues to solutions through my interactive pieces. Although organizations work with and educate boys and men in a preventative manner, these activities are held as classes, workshops, and conferences in private places with no public visual campaign raising the awareness about this issue in our communities. My designs make use of physical interactions to link the viewer to the information through action and response, making them aware of the effects of their presence has in a space.

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Problem Statement

Research Question:

How can designers promote healthy masculinity in order to stop violence against women and girls?

Sub Questions:

What is the role of designers in social change?

How can designers provide tools and information to educate men and boys about healthy masculinity?

How can designers involve men and boys in a solution for stopping violence against women and girls?

How can designers utilize new technology to interact with the audience and engage them in the artwork?

Thesis Direction

I have always been passionate about solving problems and helping people. When I started my project at the university, I started working on domestic violence and the lasting effects of women's silence, which had a significant role in my life and the world around me. The complexity of the problem evolved in several ways, leading to my pivot towards toxic masculinity and understanding the culture that supports it. I had to investigate several perspectives through solving this problem, including the psychology of the issue, which revealed the most crucial part of this work is asking men and boys to take responsibility for their behavior and a larger role in improving their culture. I cannot directly solve this problem; instead, I can advocate for a solution by designing artwork that offers tools and resources to promote healthy and respectful masculinity.

My current concern for my works is their interactive participation in public places. Because of the coronavirus pandemic, I cannot show them in public places without accounting for the potential

transfer of the virus through touching aspects of the designs. This situation has no doubt asked many designers to create solutions to avoid such contact. For future artworks, I intend to design their function to be activated through proximity sensors, visual illusions, digital art, and augmented reality features that do not require direct handling until this pandemic has ended.

Design and Social Responsibility

Design can be applied to all sorts of problems and challenges which are complex and multi-faceted, necessitating clever approaches to solving them. Designers can have a significant role in social problem awareness through their knowledge of design processes and engaging with the public. Through design, we can sequence experiences for a range of audiences, explaining the problem, providing the information that includes the audience as part of the solution. A vital part of understanding a social problem and a precursor to preventing it is an understanding of the causes, linking research to wholistic corrections through design campaigns.

> "Design is powerful because we don't just solve the problem: we define them. We spend a lot of time trying to understand the fundamental issues that should be worked on, not the superficial issues that are easily observed." (Norman 2013)

Violence Against Women and Girls

An estimated 35% of women worldwide have experienced either physical or sexual violence. The United Nations defines violence against women and girls as "any act of gender-based violence that results in, or is likely to result in, physical, sexual or psychological harm or suffering to women and girls, including threats of such acts, coercion or arbitrary deprivation of liberty, whether occurring in public or private life." Such violence takes many forms - physical, sexual, but also emotional and economic. The lack of women's empowerment is a critical form of inequality. While there are many barriers to empowerment, violence against women and girls is both a cause and a consequence of gender inequality.

The Root of the Problem

Not all men and boys are violent; of course, there is emerging evidence of an under-reporting of women's perpetration of violence in the home and against children. However, it remains overwhelmingly true that men are the main perpetrators of violence. Global evidence shows that, in most cases, men who are violent or discriminatory are copying behavior that they learned as children, sometimes through first-hand experience both at school and at home, and often against their mother. Men's violence and discrimination against women and girls are rooted in a history of male domination that has deeply influenced the definition of manhood in our society. This definition of manhood has three primary aspects that promote and perpetuate a toxic culture;

1. Teaching that women and girls are of less value than men.

2. Females are the property of men.

3. Women and girls are to be viewed as sexual objects (A Call To Men Organization 2019).

Causes for the Prevalence of Men's Physical Violence

There are vast amounts of evidence that demonstrate men and boys are more likely than other gender identities to perpetrate nearly all violent crimes, including intimate partner violence, sexual violence, child sexual abuse, homicide, and are, sadly also disproportionately likely to die by homicide and suicide. While some research shows that biology may play a role in shaping a tendency toward certain forms of violence among some men, the nature of men and boys is not the sole predictor of their violent acts. If men and boys aren't born violent, then these phenomena implicate the way that our societies function overall, and the culture perpetuates toxic masculinity.

The Shape of Society in Men's Violence

Reinforcing patriarchal power messages are deeply interwoven as part of our social fabric, generating power structures in society that generally advantage men over women, as well as particular men over other men. Masculine norms often encourage acts of violence by men to

uphold these structures. Messages about manhood also tend to gender the heart in feminine terms; men around the world are taught to refrain from showing any emotional vulnerability or weakness and are expected to show only a limited range of emotions. This process of limiting the range of men's allowable emotional expression sets a more direct path toward anger and aggression.

As it was stated in Brown article (Jeremy Brown 2019), Rachel D. Miller, a marriage and family therapist, agrees, saying that the consequences of forcing boys to tamp down their emotions can be dire. "When emotions are not felt and processed," she says, "they come out or are coped with unhealthy ways such as violence, alcohol or drug use, physical ailments, and mental health issues."

Preventing Men's Violence

We need to actively examine and deconstruct the structural and political factors underlying men's violence, beginning with understanding the links between masculine norms and violence, utilizing ongoing research and programming to disrupt these links to create a world free of violence. To prevent violence around the world, we should dismantle patriarchal power and harmful masculine norms. We should move beyond the notion that violence is natural and normal for men, displacing any violence prevention model that ignores the roles of patriarchy, power, and structural inequalities in driving the perpetration of violence. Messages about what it means to "be a man" cannot fully explain men's violence, but evidence shows that they are far less innocuous than they may seem.

To secure a fair life for women and girls, free from violence, and achieve gender equality, men must be raised to respect women and develop a healthy masculinity. This process will make a

difference at an individual level and challenge societal norms that perpetuate masculinity and objectification of women.

Involve Men in Ending Violence Against Women and Girls

The demanding impact of our perception of masculinity is one of the biggest challenge men face today. By giving men the tools to be better fathers, husbands, brothers, and leaders, we can show them how to change and be effective men in their lives and society. For many years, violence against women and girls has been a women's issue but is a human issue. The question is, "Why would men want to get involved in ending violence against women?" The answer should be because men have daughters, sisters, friends, mothers, co-workers, and other women and girls in their lives whose safety they greatly care about but lack the skills or tools to create that safety on a larger scale. Men tend to have less knowledge and awareness of the magnitude of violence against women and girls (Lorente 2009).

Many men in society, if provided with information and sensitization about the issue, can become potentially influential allies in the struggle to end violence against women and girls within their families, communities, and decision-making circles. Men can and are increasingly becoming involved and playing more positive roles in addressing violence against women and girls by publicly challenging the beliefs, values, and social norms that condone gender inequality and violence. Further teaching and encouraging alternative ideas of manhood among their peers and in society will begin to favor non-violence and justice between the sexes (Flood 2008).

Toxic Masculinity in Culture

According to Hofstede, a masculine culture or masculine society is one that stresses different expectations for men and women. In a male culture, men are expected to be assertive, competitive, and focused on material success. Women are expected to be nurturing and focused

on people and quality of life. As boys grow up, their peers, parents, and even girlfriends tell them, "boys don't cry," "don't be a girl," or "be strong." They learn to feel ashamed of emotionality and vulnerability. They are expected to prove their masculinity, often through aggression (Gruber and Borellli 2018). "Manhood is thought of as something universal, even primal, and thus perceived as unchangeable. But masculinity is a social construct. It has a history, and its future is not written yet." (The Conversation 2017)

Lasting Effects of Toxic Masculinity

When boys are told not to cry or feel, there are lasting negative effects on their health and relationships. "Research by the Harvard School of Public Health found that those who suppress their emotions are one-third more likely to die prematurely than people who regularly express what they are feeling. The issue of rage, anxiety, depression, and unhealthy coping mechanisms can manifest. According to the Center for Disease Control, the suicide rate is four times higher in men than in women." (A Call To Men Organization 2019)

Changing the Habits

Sociologists and psychologists, such as Stephen M. Whitehead and Victor J. Sadler, tell us that only by connecting with their emotions can men look at themselves critically and change their behavior. Embracing healthy, respectful masculinity helps prevent violence against women, sexual assault, sexual harassment, bullying, and many other social ills. Healthy, respectful masculinity links to improved physical health and emotional well-being for men; a lack of emotional diversity is not just significant for young boys but continues to be so as emotionally restricted young boys mature into adult men with more rigid emotional repertoires. Experiencing the full range of emotions may not only benefit men and boy's psychological health but have far-reaching benefits for society at large (Gruber and Borellli 2018).

The Role of Designers in Social Change

Designers have a strong role when joining forces together to aid initiatives addressing problems society faces. For social change to truly take place, designers have to recognize the complexity of the individual and how their actions culminate in culture and society. In addition to changes in individual behavior, societal change requires a system redesign alongside a transformation in culture and societal norms. That is wherein the interplay of the systems approach, and the human-centered design approach comes in.

As designers who desire to contribute to social change, we have to recognize the relationship between systems and humans, and the pivotal elements that shift thought. To put it simply, every time individuals act, they contribute to the operation of the system, but as people have built them, they can be redesigned better for society. A key to designing social change is understanding of how the design of experiences influences individual actions, which, when performed by many individuals, creates wide-scale, societal change. To design effective experiences, I look to the approach of design that integrates three principles described by Masuma Henry, executive director for Artefact, for Human-Centered Design that introduces positive alternatives in society:

Principle 1: Agency

"Agency is a belief in one's capacity to influence their thoughts and behavior, no matter how small. We have to ask ourselves: Are we providing users, especially those who are underserved, or marginalized in society, a sense of agency that is appropriate within the context in which they live?"

Principle 2: Access

"Designing for access means designing experiences that utilize the tools and services readily accessible within one's day-to-day life. Access means making it easy for a user to do something

because few barriers stand in the way. Both HCD and systems thinking provide methods to understand what's available and what opportunities exist to increase access."

Principle 3: Action

"Lastly, no experience can achieve social change unless individuals can take action easily. Designing for action means understanding how humans behave and leveraging findings in behavioral economics and psychology to steer the individual toward the desired behavior. Systems thinking tools like change matrices help designers narrow down the change we are trying to affect. At the same time, HCD tenets around prototyping allow us to ensure that once solutions are put into the market, users can and will take action easily toward that change." (Masuma Henry 2016)

The principles of agency, access, and action offer a framework to base our designs around the complexity of these problems, addressing the inequities between the under- and well-served and the cultural context in which they live. By utilizing these principles in our designs, the shift in the mindset of our audience begins to create a lasting redesign in the paradigm of social consciousness.

The Role of Designers in a Digital Age Promoting Healthy Masculinity

The traditional role of design has been to improve the visual appearance and function of messages and information. Designers construct messages that attract attention, cause viewers to think about their meaning, and stay in their memories over time. While traditional practices use computer technology to produce visual, audio, and time-based forms, most of today's design work focuses on people's digital experiences and the role technology plays in their everyday lives. Designers imagine new roles for technology in solving the increasingly complex problems of

contemporary society. Designers address the nature of people's interaction with digital information, as well as the visual form and subject matter of communication (AIGA 2017).

I have created interactive pieces that incorporate various forms of technology to raise awareness in promoting healthy masculinity with the focus of preventing violence against women and girls. I designed messages using new media and spatial techniques, merging technology with traditional design to transform my artwork while hopefully conveying the content to my audience more effectively. In my exhibition, I constructed a site for the physical experiences of my audience, creating a dynamic that is no longer static but activated by their movement. Through my efforts, I want to educate men by using artworks that not only attract their attention but engage with their presence in space, informing them about their roles in the issue both physically and mentally about how they can become positive agents.

I intended my work to be more than an aesthetic object on a wall; these pieces are a place for experiences and interactions through visual art. Through interactive digital art, I pair a variety of digital technologies with contemporary design, reaching out to audiences through proximity sensors, augmented reality applications, QR codes, that actively engage and promote participation in my artwork. With interaction and experience design, we can shape the relationship they build with others and support their engagement with the culture and physical environment. Designing the condition for an experience requires more than the arrangement of form and content, it is built on models of conversation and community, rather than simply objects and information. In my designs, I draw attention to the physical environment and try to create a space for viewers to share their thoughts with the community with examples such as my blackboard project and an Instagram hashtag campaign that they would encounter in different places. Within each piece, a multitude of factors come together to foster a memorable experience since I want

them to implement the messages in their life and recall the event periodically throughout their life after they have been with the artwork.

The most exciting feature of interactive digital art is to aid the audience's participation with the works and expand static works into new spaces, both physical and virtual. Digital technology can be used as a direct medium to access works while providing an extended experience of participation, including promoting peer-to-peer audience interaction that takes place on a different platform. While audiences experience interactive digital art, individuals rapidly undergo subconscious processes while engaging the artwork, restructuring inter-responses to the ideas presented on the subject matter. All of the effects of interactive digital art assist more active participation by transforming the environment the encounters take place in, simultaneously reframing the conversation around a new experience.

Audience and Engaging in Information and Messages

Audience members come into proximity with information and messages with their specific motivations, personalities, and methods of understanding cultural experiences. As designers, we have to consider how they engage with information and are affected by their lived experiences. For individuals to understand the messages and ideas present in the artwork, there should be a variety of delivery methods that align with their cognitive ability to engage with perspectives other than their own.

David Rose's Receptivity Gradient (Figure1) provides a measure for behavioral change throughout five distinct positions; Not ready to know, ready to know, ready to hold an opinion, ready to act, and ready to advocate (Jeri-lynn Gehr 2015). I designed my exhibition, and the narrative of my artwork's according to the David Rose Audience Receptivity Gradient, ranges from accepting ideas to becoming an advocate for the cause.
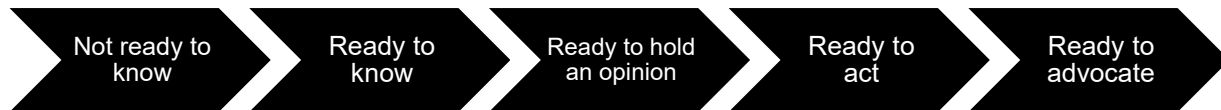
Figure 1: Idea Receptivity Gradient, Davis Rose

Most people are aware of violence occurring against women and girls but come to the subject with varying degrees of what they consider harmful and what their role can be in bringing about change. Through the first and second works in my exhibition, they will be introduced to the main problem in this issue through phases associated with the subject and a firsthand account of violence against a woman; these works are for the audiences who are not ready to know and ready to know.

Moving towards the next step, ready to hold an opinion, boxes containing colorful tubes holding messages have been placed and sources to educate men on healthy masculinity and to respect women and girls, applying to everyday life or in peer-to-peer situations. The lenticular pieces also are suited for the ready to hold an opinion step as it evolves the toxic phrases into positive phrases that promote gender equality.

My blackboard project invites people to share their ideas and opinions about the question "What does it mean to be a man?" by writing them on board in a public place for everyone to see. When the audience is sharing their thoughts, right or wrong, they engage in a debate, moving from a passive role to an active participant. This work falls into the fourth category of ready to act.

For the members of the audience who are ready to advocate, I see the show as a site for them to use in order to help others move through the first four steps. An exhibition is a consolidated place where the audience can have a range of experiences with resources present to assist in moving

through each phase of the Idea Receptivity Gradient. At the end of the viewer's engagement with the work, I hope they promote the ideas in their life and use the information to educate others.

Language Choice in Messages

It is essential to invite men to redefine the norms of masculinity, as they will need to enact the changes in a reformed concept of masculinity actively. As it is pertinent to discuss the changing roles and position of men, the language we use to do so is crucial and carries its burden of consequences. Activist and scholars agree that efforts to engage men and boys need to include messages that inspire them to become involved (Alan Berkowitz David Mathews 2004; Flood 2005), providing positive reinforcement through the experience (CV et al. 2007).

Through the emotional design lens in visual communication design, the delivery of content in designs has a significant effect in making connections with people. I used emotional design as a tool in my work: For instance, in the "I'm part of the solution" project, I use the words as if they are talking to themselves, feeling empathy, and a sense of involvement in the work context. It places them in the center of the solution, using an "I" statement reinforced with a positive feeling. Pairing their emotional responses with a conscious understanding of the content helps to create a stronger link to the subject matter.

My work makes use of the audience's physical motion to deliver a message focused on accurate and positive education. The site of the artwork is designed to show them what occurs from becoming involved, for example, in the lenticular posters: the message is at first muddled and unclear; by shifting their position back and forth, they can see the delivery of both stances while solving a visual puzzle. The duration of the piece shows how their actions are rooted in their alignment with either toxic or positive language, developing positive emotional responses that are respectful to women.

These tools of participation become new skills of engagement they can use in a variety of situations. In my piece headlined, "I'm part of the solution," they can relate to the work in a way that is most personal to them. Participants then receive a takeaway gift that offers direct access to sources to aid in their emotional life and caring about the topic that prompted them to engage. This pamphlet affirms the interaction with the message while educating them on the benefits of healthier masculinity, showing their emotion, and linking their stake in the subject to responsible actions.

The call for positive masculine behavior does spring from an emotionally complicated area, one that has both victims and perpetrators. My work would be incomplete without pieces that contain the direct effects of violence against women, delivering personal accounts of violent behavior and scenarios of common toxic behavior. It is necessary to be truthful and honest about the full scope of the subject at hand, honoring the victims' experiences while publicly addressing the effects to inform the audience they must resist silence, glossing over, and covering up. All I want from my viewer is for each of them to make one small change in their lives, acquire a new skill, and apply it to the right situation. My works offer positive messages and information with compelling reasons to use them.

Words Are Powerful

Language and word choice have a tremendous impact on what we think of ourselves and others. Survivors of violence experience the impact of negative words every time someone questions their actions or doubts about their experience. We often underestimate the importance of choosing an appropriate language to discuss violence against women and girls. We should find new ways to talk about this issue; for example, we say, "She is a battered woman" when instead

Figure 2: Fatemeh Abolbashari*, Words are powerful*, installation view 1, inject print, 2020.

Figure 3: Fatemeh Abolbashari*, Words are powerful*, installation view 2, inject print, 2020.

we should change the subject of the instigator "He beat her." We say, "Why does she stay?" instead of "Why does he hurt her?". These phrases miss neglect the truth by redirecting the focus from the perpetrator to the victim, placing the responsibility on the wrong party. To make it clear that a person chooses to be violent to a woman or family, we should train ourselves to correctly identify the cause of the problem. In this work, there is a gradual change in four frames from a

passive phrase to an active sentence that informs us of the malevolent person and reveal our long-practiced habit of obscuring the one who generates the situation.

Behind The Wall of Silence Is a Man

We are physical beings who engage the world with multiple senses; the designed experience of artwork should activate as many of our senses as possible to achieve the most memorable experience. When encountering an artwork, we note that it can occupy space, move, make sound, produce light, or change over time. Physical experiences embody the audience's familiarity with the world, engaging on a visceral level, creating connections that transcend a static moment, and leave lasting connections with the viewers.

This work is activated by the viewer's distance to the piece and engages the sense of hearing; when the viewer moves toward the front of the work, a proximity sensor will recognize their body and transform the experience. The interaction begins by lighting up the frosted message on the plexiglass and playing an audio clip recounting a story about men's violence. As you listen to the audio, you can imagine yourself like the voice in the story, observing the woman behind the glass and thinking about your role in that situation. I want men to know how vital their reaction to violence against women and girls is. I want them to change their position from just a passive bystander to be an advocate. By giving them, this encounter through the artwork first, my goal is to prime them to respond if need be in a later situation.

Figure 4: Fatemeh Abolbashari, *Behind the wall of silence is a man,* mixed media, 2020

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Figure 5: Fatemeh Abolbashari*, Behind the wall of silence is a man,* installation view, mixed media, 2020.

What Does It Mean to Be a Man?

The power of a physical experience lies in its ability to create community through their shared experiences instantaneously when people participate in a physical experience; they have a direct influence on the perception of the audience. The most effective way to encourage engagement is to provide a space for sharing and showing other people participating in it. When someone starts to write on a blackboard, the other members of the audience feel compelled to act.

The interactive blackboard asks people a question by lighting up a series of prompts for the viewers; when you first walk by the blackboard, a proximity sensor will recognize your body and start to light up the question in a box on the top left of the board. After a few seconds thinking on the first sentence, the box on the bottom left will light up and direct you to the "Tell Us" box full of markers so you can complete your answer to the question by writing on the blackboard. This blackboard guides the viewer through the conversation to participate and share with others.
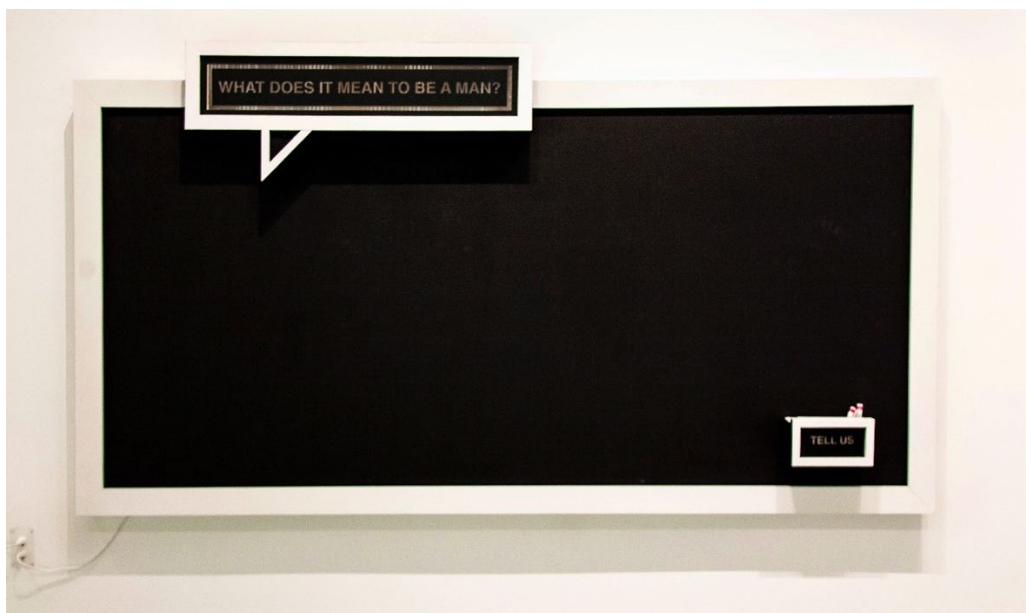

Figure 6: Fatemeh Abolbashari, *What does it mean to be a man?* installation view 1, mixed media, 2020.
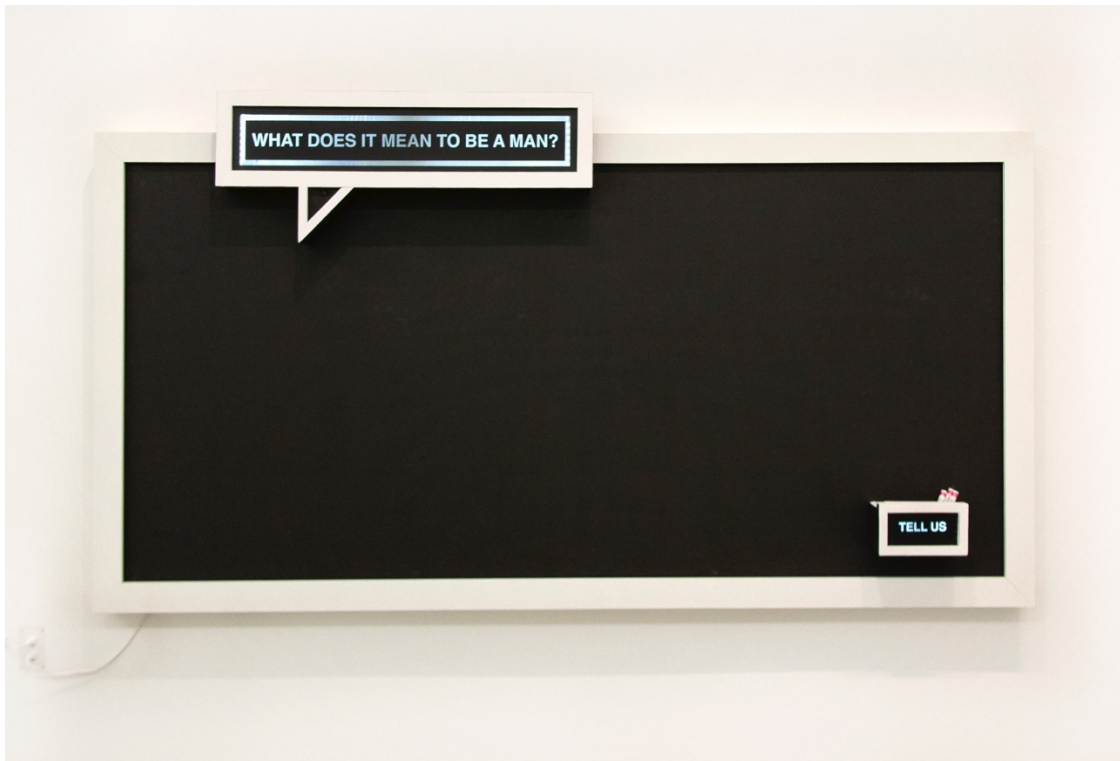
Figure 7: Fatemeh Abolbashari, *What does it mean to be a man?* installation view 2, mixed media, 2020.

Although men are reshaping "what it means to be a man", there are still proponents of traditional gender stereotypes and machismo. The question "What it means to be a man?" represents a subtle challenge and an opportunity; how can you redefine what masculinity means? Since this blackboard will install in public places, the answer to this question will encourage the viewers to rethink the roles of men and boys, their expectations, and the many perspectives on the subject.

Change

This work is about toxic phrases we use to say to men and boys that promote toxic behavior. In this work, I want to say to transition thoughts, actions, and expectations to a more favorable position. I want to help men and boys understand the negative impacts of traditional ideas about masculinity in their lives and the lives of the women and children they care about them. By making.

the lenticular illusion, I want to reference the complexity of this issue and my audience's role in

that, then curate a path to follow, leading a viewer through the experience.

Figure 8: Fatemeh Abolbashari*, Change,* installation view 1, mixed media, 2020.

Figure 9: Fatemeh Abolbashari*, Change,* view from front, left and right, mixed media, 2020.

Figure 10: Fatemeh Abolbashari*, Change,* installation view 2, mixed media, 2020.

Analyze Sentences in Posters

"You play like a girl", "Thank you!"

This phrase sends a message to boys that girls are inferior, in essence, permitting them to view girls as unworthy. This can be especially confusing, as boys generally have many positive female role models in their lives in the form of mothers, grandmothers, sisters, and aunts. Yet this phrase instills the idea that all of these people are somehow diminished. "Constantly being told that women are less-than, or not people to be admired or emulated, can lead to internalized entitlement and a belief that even the most reprehensible of men is somehow innately better than the most intelligent, creative, compassionate, talented, and powerful woman," (Jeremy Brown 2019).

Once on the other side of the poster, the message transitions to "Thank you!". We should raise our boys to be proud if told "you play like a girl," in response, he would say Thank You! to what is a positive statement. This change would reclaim the power from the toxic message and create equality in our language.

"Boys will be boys", "You are responsible about your actions"

This standard phrase often dismisses men's and boys' misbehavior, their fighting or acting out in some way, and is perhaps the most damaging. It teaches boys that they are not responsible for their actions and are not going to be held accountable for their behaviors. Also, it steals their self-efficacy. It says men and boys can't help themselves. It can become particularly problematic because grants the excuse for men and boys to give into potentially violent action, fueling domestic violence and sexual harassment and assault. It is time to stop glossing over aggression and inform them of the important truth.

"That's not for boys", "Play with the pink doll"

It has become socially acceptable for girls to dress like boys, cut their hair short, and play with boys' toys. However, if a boy dresses like a girl, plays with dolls, or even grows his hair long, he might be treated as though there is something wrong with him. "This prohibits boys from exploring their natural instincts to be caregivers as well, and as they mature into adults leaves them with blind spots in their parenting," (Jeremy Brown 2019) If girls can be fully expressive, a boy must be given the same. The binary view of gender is harmful and restrictive for everyone.

"Do not cry, a real man doesn't cry"," You can cry"

Similar to not showing any emotion, men and boys are often taught that crying or showing any sign of weakness or vulnerability is to be avoided. This leads boys to believe these emotions belong more to girls, so only certain emotions are permissible or acceptable. "Part of why so many

men struggle with relationships and managing their anger is because we, as parents and a society, have told them that expressing emotions other than anger shows weakness and being weak is not acceptable,". "Anger is easier to grab than pain, sadness, or fear. And when all you are given is a hammer, everything looks like a nail." (Jeremy Brown 2019). By saying, "You can cry" we affirm boys' full range of emotions, offering positive reinforcement to natural behavior.

"Man Up", "Show all your feelings"

Boys are often made to feel shame for expressing their emotions, inferred almost to the point of not having the capacity for feelings, let alone voicing them aloud. Even mothers can fall into the trap of telling their sons to "man up" and keep their emotions under wraps. "When we tell our sons they're too sensitive; we not only invalidate their feelings; we teach them to suppress and neglect their emotional needs altogether, which can have a detrimental effect on males across their lifetime." (Jeremy Brown 2019).

I'm Part of The Solution

All audiences provide something to an experience, even something as simple as their attention I feel should be rewarded through the experience by giving something back in return. This return can take many forms, from material takeaways to beautiful animations. In-kind, they can feel there is something to learn, discover, interpret, and reinterpret through an experience of engaging artworks. With my piece "I'm part of the solution," I reward their curiosity with a small gift in the colorful tubes. It subtly places information for the next step in their hand by thanking them for the act of viewing and participating.

Figure 11: Fatemeh Abolbashari*, I'm part of the solution*, mixed media, 2020.

Figure 12: Fatemeh Abolbashari*, I'm part of the solution*, inside tubes, mixed media, 2020.

Figure 13: Fatemeh Abolbashari, Gallery view, 2020.

Conclusion

I see my work as part of the tradition of design that engages people to participate in campaigns by integrating design as a tool for solving complex problems with. It is challenging to begin the work of righting wrongs without compelling ways to deliver your message; good design harnesses the subtleties of interaction with compelling information. Going forward, my work will continue to explore embedding technology, new media, and phycology to create equitable campaigns to help stop violence against women and girls. In the near future, I would like to see we live in a world free from violence and inequality, through my designs I believe I will have the most significant effect in my role as part of the solution.

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