

Virtual Memory Quilt

Inspired by the 1985 NAMES HIV/AIDS memory quilt that was created to memorialize the lives of people who died because of HIV/AIDS, this art project was meant to bring local community members together to create a virtual memory quilt that commemorated and celebrated the struggles and resilience of marginalized communities amidst the COVID19 pandemic.

The project timeline and process is rather simple. For two weeks project organizers collected both visual and written submissions from anyone who wishes to be involved. Then, they proceed to virtually “sew” these creations together to design our virtual quilt. We decided to create our own website for the virtual quilt, but these submissions could have also existed as a sort of makeshift community photo album that could’ve been put on facebook or elsewhere.

Now the idea was that the memory quilt have four sections: 1 dedicated to essential workers, 1 to communities of color, 1 to students and teachers, and 1 dedicated to the idea that “a change is gonna come.” The hope was that by sewing all of these stories, objects, and experiences together, community members could have a moment to reflect on the ways in which their lives and identities are intersecting, and to really think about what it means to struggle and survive through a crisis together.

More so, in order to really make this a *community* art project, we came up with four different ways for people to get involved:

1. Submit a visual/written creation for the Virtual Quilt
2. Volunteer their graphic design skills to help us design the quilt,
3. Donate to Semillas to help us pay our artists and web designers
4. Join our work and partner with us as a small business/local organization

To demonstrate interest, we directed folks to a google submission form where they could find more information on submission guidelines, as well as additional details on the different methods of support.

Finally, we really wanted to connect with Chattanoogaans that were doing similar work, and who were just as passionate about the arts, social justice, and building community. So, we connected with arts organizations, local artists, schools, teachers, and principals in order to try and work together to make this project a reality.