

# **BMORE THAN THE STORY**

A collaboration between high school students at  
Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts +  
University of Maryland graphic design students +  
Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American  
History and Culture in Baltimore



These students co-designed an exhibit addressing violence, police brutality, systematic racism, disenfranchisement, stereotypes, and racial bias. Only 32 miles separate their campuses, but the distance in life experiences between those living in the two different places can be significant. Knowing how to bridge such distances is crucial knowledge for designers.



Addressing such complex and sensitive topics such as racial disparities, policing, disenfranchisement, oppression, and self-agency can seem like navigating a minefield. To help with this we engaged Dr. Naliyah Kaya, an experienced facilitator of such dialogue, and Lamontre Randall, a Maryland grad and Baltimore activist. They worked with both groups separately prior to our meeting and helped lay the groundwork for the project.



Before diving into these issues that even adults strive to avoid, the students got to know one another. They visited each other's campuses and participated in activities aimed at emphasizing their commonalities and building a sense of community.



When asked to describe their reaction to the Uprising, responses were mixed. Shock. Chaos. Revenge. Proud. Shame. Why?! Disappointment. Struggle. Sad. Sheltered. Unsafe. Confused. Fear. Misrepresentation. Their descriptions reflect the spectrum of emotional reactions and awareness of Baltimore's struggles within the overall group and society at large.



The students then brainstormed about what messages they wanted to convey in the exhibit. From October through March they worked to pitch concepts, refine ideas, and edit what content to include. They designed and fabricated components to engage visitors about their viewpoints on these issues.



The exhibit opened in April 2016 at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture, one year after Freddie Gray's death.

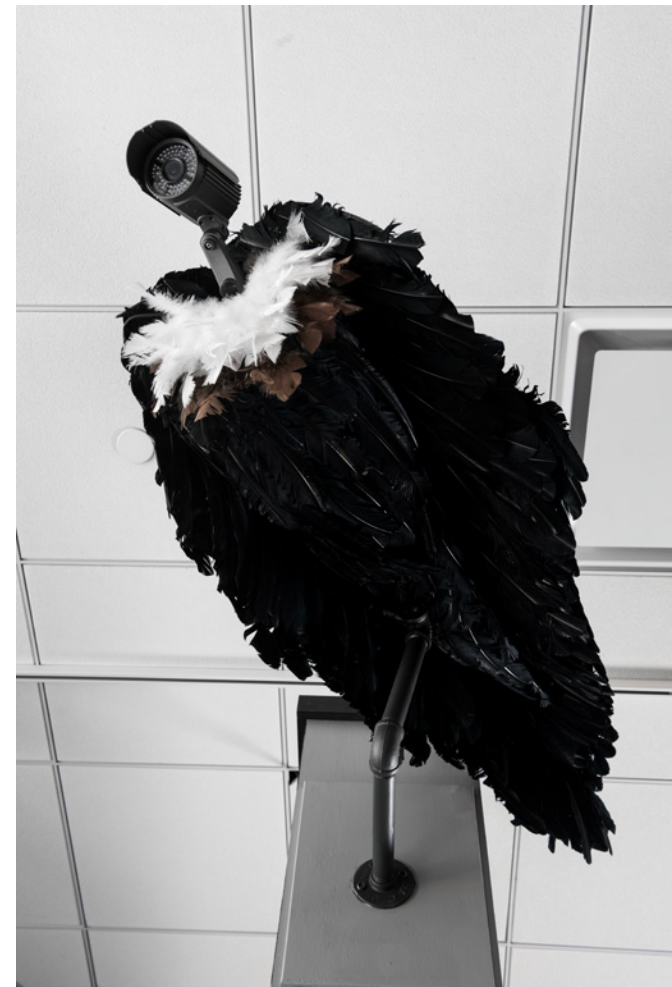


Mike Morgan Photography

The first component is a set of four vultures that have functioning security cameras for heads. A large-screen monitor installed in the space broadcasts the feed from the cameras. Exhibit visitors are surveilled as they explore the space, mimicking how the students feel they are under constant watch by police.







**Vultures: a carnivorous bird that scavenges the skies and land searching for dead or dying prey in which to feast upon. Vultures are often found lurking in densely populated areas where their food supply is abundant. In West Baltimore, the students of Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts see little difference between these winged predators and the City’s police helicopters—always watching, always searching for that next meal. These mechanical birds of prey, vibrating roof tops, seeking targets with their blinding spotlights, are permanent fixtures in the skies over West Baltimore neighborhoods. How would you feel to be on the menu?**



**Do you know of others?**

This is a space to add a complete list of names of others who died in police custody. The names can be in any language or form of writing. Please do not remove the names of people already listed, and please do not use the blue ink name template.

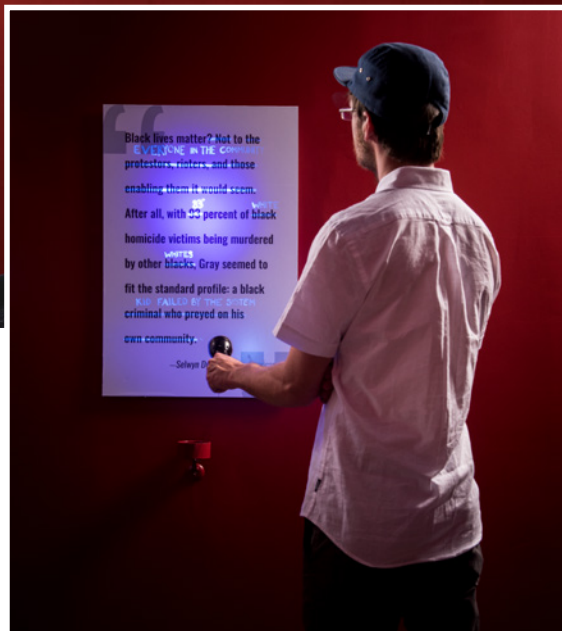
The students created a 25-foot timeline, which runs from 1960s to present day, listing the names of approximately 1,350 people of color who have died while in police custody. Historical, political, and economic events, noted in the circles, provide context for the timespan. There is no one source nor organization that has been collecting these names, so students accessed more than 30 databases, website and other documents to compile the list. In addition, visitors are invited to write names of others on a provided plexi round and hang it under the corresponding decade. The participatory aspect helps to create a more historically accurate document.

**"To you, it's called searching,  
but to us it's called violating."**  
— KALEYA BARNES, 9th grader at Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts

### Through their eyes

The overriding narrative of many media outlets that covered the Baltimore Uprising was positive and full of scorn. The terminology they used and that of the guests chosen to describe protesters and residents distorted the perceptions of others, especially the unfairness, by using derogatory and inaccurate language, the media perpetuated stereotypes that are at the very root of racism and classism in America. The following quotes were taken from various news reports during the Uprising. At first-glance, they seem harmless and universally accepted. However, through the eyes of students from Augusta Fells Savage Institute of Visual Arts a difference of opinion is clear. Use the flashlights to reveal their perspectives on these otherwise one-sided quotes.

These flashlights project UV rays, which can be harmful. Do not hold directly on to Baltimore's faces or show them into other eyes. Use the lighting to share your thoughts and photos. #BaltimoreThroughTheirEyes @visualarts



Black lives matter? Not to the  
~~EVERYONE IN THIS COUNTRY~~  
 protesters, rioters, and those  
 enabling them it would seem.  
 After all, with 99 percent of black  
 homicide victims being murdered  
 by other blacks, Gray seemed to  
 fit the standard profile: a black  
~~MAN~~ ~~PAULLO BY THE CROWN~~  
 criminal who preyed on his  
 own community.  
 —Salyer D.



We have highly motivated bad  
 guys in Baltimore.  
 —Lt. Derek Johnson, Police Spokesman

Too many people have spent  
 generations building up this city  
 for it to be destroyed by thugs  
 who in a very senseless way are  
 trying to tear down what so many  
 have fought for.  
 —Daphne Rawlings Blake, Mayor of Baltimore

I think [Black Lives Matter] are  
 a hate group, they hate police  
 officers ... they want them dead.  
 —Bill O'Reilly on Black Lives Matter

Posters show one-sided quotes from a Baltimore Police Spokesman, the Baltimore Mayor, and media personalities about the youth and the Uprising. Augusta Fells students countered those responses with their own, written in clear day-glow paint. Visitors shine a provided blacklight flashlights on the posters to view how the high school students refute these sentiments.




Controlling the assumptions people make can be nearly impossible. The media has presented numerous inaccurate portrayals of Baltimore’s protesters and residents. The chalk wall component challenges visitors to see others’ points of view with the prompt “I am \_\_\_\_\_, I am not \_\_\_\_\_”. Visitors write how they are stereotyped and how they wish to be viewed instead. In addition, a video of the Augusta Fells students answering these prompts plays in the space.

The exhibit received wide media coverage and attention. In the photo above, a collaborating student is interviewed by the South Africa Broadcast journalists. The recognition helped bolster the students’ feelings of pride about the exhibit and satisfaction that others were hearing about and interested in the stories they were telling in the exhibit.


# Cost of Helicopters

According to the American Civil Liberties Union, police helicopters typically cost \$500,000 to \$3 million apiece, require two or three officers on board, and burn through thousands of dollars of fuel each day they fly.

In 2010 the Baltimore Police Department bought four helicopters for a reported cost of nearly \$10 million.




Full Tuition for **560** Students for 4 Years




Maryland State Resident Cost at Baltimore Community College Per Semester: \$4,462

**18,518** Student's Lunches Every Day for a Full School Year




\$3 Each, Minimum of 180 Days of School

**7** New Community Centers




Built with Union Labor: \$1,391,800 each

**1** New Elementary School with \$2,607,000 leftover




Built with Union Labor: \$7,393,000

**15,384** iPhones




\$650 Retail Value per phone

**189** Teacher Salaries for a Full Year



Average Teacher Salary in Baltimore City: \$52,861 per year

**617** people




in Baltimore City for a Full Year \$1,350 per month

What difference could \$10 million invested in the people of West Baltimore have made?




# Under Surveillance

In late 2005, Martin O'Malley announced the first phase of the Baltimore CitiWatch Program with the opening of the state-of-the-art Atrium Control Center. The program was established with Department of Homeland Security funds totaling several million dollars.


The CitiWatch Atrium Center has access to all project video feeds from the cameras located throughout five high-crime neighborhoods and the central business district as well as video feeds from the housing project cameras. The program staff pro-actively monitor the cameras with the goal to prevent violent crime and to direct police officers to the scene while providing maximum intelligence at the scene.






**These cameras are:**

-  Low-light Capable
-  Pan-Tilt-Zoom Capable
-  All-weather Capable


**Film is viewed at:**

-  at 15 Frames Per Second

**These cameras film:**

-  in Full color
-  at 30 Frames Per Second
-  24 Hours a Day

**And the city has an archive of:**

-  30 Days of Recording

**Number of Cameras**

2005 **<200** Today **→ 696**

**Violent Crime Rate**

Baltimore **793**

Ferguson **270**

United States **203**

A crime rate is calculated by dividing the number of reported crimes by the total population—the result is multiplied by 100,000.

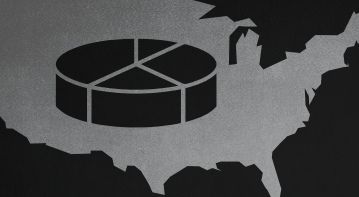
**Results of the Camera Implementation**

Data was collected between January 2003 and April 2008. Each selected area had approximately 30 or more cameras. Seven crime categories were investigated: all crime, violent crime, inside larceny, outside larceny, motor vehicle theft, burglary, and robbery. Inside larceny was defined as crimes occurring inside businesses, whereas outside larceny was defined as thefts occurring in open spaces.

<b>-10%</b> incidents a month	<b>-8%</b> incidents a month	<b>-1%</b> incidents a month	<b>-12%</b> incidents a month
<b>-25%</b> of total crime in four months	<b>-20%</b> of total crime in four months	<b>-2%</b> of total crime in four months	<b>-25%</b> of total crime in four months
<b>Downtown</b>	<b>Greenmount</b>	<b>North Avenue</b>	<b>Tri-District</b>

# Comparing Baltimore

Compare the demographic breakdowns between Ferguson, Missouri (Michael Brown) Cleveland, Ohio (Tamir Rice) and Baltimore, Maryland (Freddie Gray), locations where police brutality has been highlighted in the media in the past few years.



**Race Breakdowns**

Legend: Black (Dark Blue), White (Light Blue), Other (Grey)

City	Black	White	Other
Baltimore, Maryland	63.6%	29.7%	6.7%
Cleveland, Ohio	53.3%	37.3%	9.4%
Ferguson, Missouri	63.6%	30.8%	5.6%
Sandtown, Baltimore	96.9%	1.2%	1.9%
Roland Park, Baltimore	7.6%	79.5%	12.9%

Roland Park is the wealthiest neighborhood in Baltimore while Sandtown, the place where Freddie Gray's home is located, is one of the poorest.

**Population**

Per 100,000

Baltimore, Maryland: **662,104**

Cleveland, Ohio: **390,113**

Ferguson, Missouri: **21,111**

**Poverty Rates**

In the 48 contiguous states, the poverty line is \$22,350 for a family of four, \$18,530 for a family of three, \$14,710 for a family of two and \$10,890 for one person.

City	Poverty Rate
Baltimore, Maryland	22.9%
Cleveland, Ohio	26.3%
Ferguson, Missouri	11.6%
United States	15.4%

**Unemployment Rates**

City	Unemployment Rate
Baltimore, Maryland	11.1%
Cleveland, Ohio	5.2%
Ferguson, Missouri	6.9%
United States	8.4%

**Crime Rates**

Per 100,000

City	Crime Rate
Baltimore, Maryland	709
Cleveland, Ohio	794
Ferguson, Missouri	433
United States	244

A set of three information design posters were included in the space to provide contextualizing data to elucidate and validate the students' viewpoints.



Freddie Gray, the unarmed Black man who died at the hands of police in Baltimore in April 2015, captured the attention of the nation. Not because another black life was lost, but rather due to the visceral response from the citizens of West Baltimore: protests erupted, buildings burned, and people were arrested. The overriding narrative of many media outlets that covered the Baltimore Uprising was pejorative and full of scorn. This exhibit gave these students an opportunity to reclaim their narrative and share their perspectives of the events that unfolded and how their daily lives are shaped by forces beyond their control.



As part of the exhibit opening, the Augusta Fells students took the stage to use theater, spoken word poetry, positive rap, dance, and song to show societal inequities and possible solutions for a better tomorrow.

After the performance, visitors and project participants spoke of the challenges facing their lives and concerns in their community. The students talked about the different ways they could enact change in their community and how, through this project, they felt they had made a positive impact.





This project—both the creative process of making and the final end product—had a direct impact on how these students view the potential of their creativity, how they have a stronger sense of agency about what they can do with their artistic talents including addressing social issues, and how they became empowered to use art for social justice causes.