Transcript for "On Building Community, Shared Experiences, and Accessibility Through Collaborative History Making: An Interview with Candice Edrington & Victoria Gallagher." From *Doing Digital Visual Studies: One Image, Multiple Methodologies*.
https://www.ccdigitalpress.org/book/ddvs/chapters/edrington-gallagher.html

Laurie Gries:
All right, thank you too so much for being here. We're so happy that you are contributing to this collection, and I just want to thank you for your labor and your energy and your time. I would love for you two to begin by telling us a little bit about yourselves and … what kind of research you've been doing in relation to visual studies, and, of course, where you're teaching and, perhaps, if you would like what you're up to with your own research right now.

Candice Edrington:
Okay, well I am Candice Edrington, currently an assistant professor of journalism and mass communication at the University of South Carolina. I teach public relations and strategic communication research as it pertains to visual communication, so my research interests intersect kind of between strategic communication, social movements through a public relations lens. So specifically looking at messaging strategies--whether they be visual, whether they be textual, whether they be both--that social movements kind of generate or those that are generated on behalf of the social movement in an effort to bring in participants, sometimes unlikely participants, to those social movements. And so that's primarily what I've been focusing on in terms of research right now. I'm working on a project looking at activism and cultural projection, looking at the I am a Black Man Challenge that happened last summer after the murder of George Floyd, looking at how Instagram was used to both visually and textually culturally project, but also who those images and that language was culturally projected too and the overall sentiments of that challenge and that cultural projection. So that is where I am currently.

Laurie Gries:
Wonderful. Thank you.

Vicki Gallagher:
So, my name is Victoria Gallagher, and the pronouns appropriate for me are she, her, hers. I'm a professor of communication at NC State University, and I've served on the faculty at this university for 31 years. My areas of scholarly interest and expertise include rhetorical theory and criticism, urban communication, especially in relation to public spaces and public art, public memory and race, visual and material rhetoric, and digital humanities. The things that I am working on now, including the Virtual Martin Luther King Project, which is an ongoing large-scale, multi-faceted, digital project for the public, are--I am working on being the series editor for a new book series at the University of South Carolina Press called Movement Rhetoric, Rhetoric's Movements.

Laurie Gries:
Oh great.

Vicki Gallagher:
We will be publishing, we'll be publishing the first books in that series this coming spring, and I'm trying to, in that , bring together the critical intellectual traditions and methodologies that have to do with social movements from across the communication rhetoric discipline, the critical studies/critical cultural studies, and as Candice has indicated, into strategic communication and public relations, all of which have really started looking at and taking up this area of scholarship. I'm also working on further developing visual and material well-being as critical and creative frameworks for rhetorical practice. And finally, a project that I've worked on for a long time, the North Carolina Freedom Park Project we have just begun construction on. This park is the first one in the capital city of North Carolina to honor the African-American experience in relation to freedom, and we've begun construction on this 5.5 million dollar project. So that's where I'm at.

Laurie Gries:
Wonderful. I love all those projects. I wish we had enough time for me to ask you about every single one of them and their interrelatedness. But let me begin selfishly with just your resp--a little bit of your response to the actual collection at hand . I'm curious to know what you found useful and, you know, what are the elements going on in the book that you think are really worth continuing to explore and expanding upon.

Vicki Gallagher:
Candice, would you like me to go first or do you want to?

Candice Edrington:
You can go first.

Vicki Gallagher:
All right, so happily I've also had the opportunity to talk through and read this project with one of my current grad students, Cindy Rosenfeld, so some of the things I'm going to talk about are things that she also brought to the fore, and I'm delighted to share with you.

I thought it was interesting for me to do it, for her to do it, and, of course I know Candice is going to give you some great feedback as well. So, when trying to really think through methods, both Cindy and I agreed that taking a single artifact, act, experience, set of things, and showing how can it can be approached in different ways is super helpful. That's very useful, and I'm going to mention to you that Kelly Martin, who was one of my grad students quite a few years ago now, did something similar, and I want to show you, Laurie and Candice something that she put together that might be really useful for you and your students to think about in the future. Because Kelly, like some of my other student former students, Keon and others among them, did work in our College of Design in graphic design as well as in our program. And so the way in which we think about developing methods and theories, I find can sometimes really be aided by actually visualizing them, by graphically designing them, and that's one of the things I want to refer you to in a little bit.

But in any case, I really like that idea. I like taking this artifact and going at it from all these different perspectives because I think that does just a lovely job of helping us conceptualize digital visual studies and all of these very productive ways that people are going about it and that your students and you were working at. So, it opens up a way for us to think about, I think, related methods, and to also be discerning and careful about how do we distinguish between them, right? So that, I think, is a very valuable thing about this.

I also think the tone is just so open in spirit, and I am a very strong proponent about being invitational, and I would say that that's what comes across in this collection. And I think that's a really important stance and tone for a project like this. I think your effort to come up with and demonstrate digital, and sometimes even more computational methods that don't require all of the access to resources of an r1 university research engine, is super important. Like, for instance, the chapter to speak to how you can use Pinterest for your research stood out particularly for me and for Cindy as well, and we liked that because it also showed how to build a public-facing communication channel, which I'm a big advocate of, and I really appreciated that, so that it becomes a part of the digital platform and how one archives their work. And I love the idea of taking these kinds of platforms that are accessible, useful, and usable and utilizing them in this work. Many of the other platforms that are covered, including open source platforms and, of course, Google are also more likely to be accessible and usable, and I think that…--oops--making the methods readily extremely accessible are important.

Does my sound weird? No, okay. For some reason, I was getting a weird feedback here.

The critical making chapter that required access to a 3D printer--you know, that may not be accessible to everyone, but it was just so interesting as they were trying to work through the questions of disability and interestingly, you know, we've had to really think creatively about this question with Virtual Martin Luther King when we've worked with deaf audiences because the project is sound centric. And so, you know, we can talk more about that, but that's sort of my first overall comments on what I just appreciated, what Cindy appreciated, what we thought as we were reading this together and talking about it.

Laurie Gries:
Thank you so much. Yes, I'm very excited to learn about what Kelly has done with the visualizing methods and methodologies. So curious. Candice, would you like to share?

Candice Edrington:
Yeah, so kind of similar sentiments as Dr Gallagher had, which is interesting. So I made a couple of notes here. First, I think that the fact that this is digital is genius. We are talking about digital visual studies, and so I appreciated that because it does open up more accessibility. And I also found interesting the chapter on Pinterest and selfishly looking at that for my own research. It gave me some ideas…. I had never looked at Pinterest as a place for archiving or a place of collaboration … for images, right? So just looking at the evolution of, you know, the Hope kind of picture, image, as it progressed with the same sex marriage. So, I thought that that was very

interesting and something that I'm actually going to take up in my own research and looking at social movements and images and collaboration. So, I appreciated that.

I also...loved talking about critical making and how that opened up a space for people's own experiences with kind of this artifact to come through. So, I thought that was very interesting. I wanted to dive into the chapter about virtual reality and augmented reality, but I don't have Google Android, so I couldn't use the thing. So, I will try to get on that app and look at that, but I thought that was very interesting in talking about counter public as well. So, I really like that. I also appreciate the note that you pointed out that this does lack, in some ways, diversity not only of you know color but also experiences, right? But the different methods that are pointed out here I think are invitational for people who haven't thought of doing digital visual studies. It gives them for us, shall I say, other ways to do it or to go about practicing digital visual studies. So, I think that this this was great. This is very insightful and informative to me, and I'm going to dive back into other chapters to get more ideas. And also, the chapter that you all did on the tracking of from Hope to Nope and then looking at commodity activism, I thought that that was very interesting. So, taking some things from here from your book that are really going to be helpful to me as I begin to think about my own research interests and how to kind of intersect those with digital visual studies.

Laurie Gries:
Great. Thank you. It's so, it's so nice to hear that the project is proving, will hopefully prove useful to people. So let's talk about how we can do this work better because I, you know, I'm so appreciative of the work that-- the collaborative work you have done both in terms of the study of photography and the Black Lives Matter movement and also, of course, on that tremendous Virtual MLK project, which is--I just can't tell you how many people I've turned on to that project....I also had the opportunity to talk to Keon Pettiway, who did a lot to help us think about, you know, what a black-- like how we might integrate digital visual studies with black digital humanities and so and just coming from his counter design perspective. So that was really rich, but in terms of your own experiences with both of those projects, help us understand what you think...are the most important kind of not only methodological tenets that we need to be thinking about as we move forward with DVS, but also what are the most-- you know, how can we do this work better in terms of accessibility? I'm really interested in, you know, the multi-sensory experiences that you're trying to or you are opening up to visitors to the MLK website and i'm just—or, what are we calling it? Uh, not calling it a museum? What are you calling it? Archive, no?

Vicki Gallagher:
Are you thinking about what do we talk about when we talk about the vmlk project writ large?

Laurie Gries:
Yeah, what had what do you consider it to be?

Vicki Gallagher:
So, it is a combination of at least six different aspects, and so we talk about it as the V MLK project, and then we talk about its instantiations as exhibitions.

Laurie Gries:
Okay.

Vicki Gallagher:
So that we have the full online exhibition through the website, and it can be utilized in many different ways. And then we actually also do in-person exhibitions in spaces that are technology equipped and those can be everything from the Smithsonian, which we did in 2017, to taking it to some place like Rochester Institute of Technology, which we did in 2019, to doing every fall and spring, we do exhibitions for our Public Speaking Comm 110 students--over a thousand students a year go through it--to like big public exhibitions like we did in February 2020 where we had over 500 people come through an exhibition on the 60th anniversary of the speech. So, we think about it as the VMLK project, and then we think about it as instantiations or exhibitions.

But what Keon brought to us, and what I think has been super productive for the project, is really thinking about it as a kit of parts, so we have these six different parts that we can then put together and utilize in these physical spaces or through the use of the website. And so, when we do public speaking, we use primarily four of the six kit of parts, you know. When we do like a big exhibition like the 60th anniversary, we use all six. So…that helps us to develop it and to continue to develop different aspects of it. So, I don't know. I am going on. Did…that answer your question?

Laurie Gries:
It did. Well…and what's interesting to me about it--and this is piggy backing off something Candice said about the critical making chapter--is the affordances of experience, right? And I think, you know, not even from, say you know, an accessibility perspective but just thinking about how we can use digital visual studies in different ways to generate embodied experiences that open up different ways of knowing and thinking and realizing. And I'm wondering if you could speak into …that--that notion and that importance of experience with some of our projects.

Vicki Gallagher:
Yeah, to me that's the crux. That's always been the crux, the heart of the matter for VMLK. From the very start, what I wanted to do was to utilize sound---to make this a sound centric project that's supported by all these visual capabilities. And as Candice knows from being engaged with the project for a long time, there are a lot of things that work against having sound be the center. So even the way the technology spaces are organized at most institutions, they privilege sight over sound. And to try to get the sound to be the most important thing and have them, the visual, and the embodied piece all come together…around the sound is something that's really interesting. We're just putting our new, you know, we're taking all of

our assets and putting them in a new visualization lab on campus that has a 7.1 surround, so it should be great for sound. And yet we're struggling to get the sound and the visual to work together both in terms of hardware and software in the space in the way that will lead to this kind of experience that is transformative. We've collected data for now, you know, seven years that demonstrates that people, when they go through the project, they have a transformative experience, right, which was my whole goal to begin with. How can we take that concept of *kairos*, use technologies to set up the conditions under which we have long theorized it takes place, and see whether it takes place and, in fact, it does. I'm going on. Candice, what do you want to say?

Candice Edrington:
No, I think you covered it. I think just from working with that project, you're right people have expressed transformative experiences. And I think it hits them at different parts of the project, since it is multi-sensory. So for some people, it is the sound initially walking in and different kind of sound levels you engage with in that room. Also for some people, it is kind of the virtual reality, right, so actually being able to be there without having been there. So, I think…the different levels of experiences that are afforded to people is a great way to continue this work. And I think you touch on it in the book through different ways that we can engage in this, right? So there is critical making and 3d printing. There is virtual reality and augmented reality. There is, even looking at Pinterest and pinning, right, connecting the past to the present, right, and going back and being able to look through those archives when you're in the future to see and to make that connection. So I think just the affordances of different experiences is the answer that I want to say now.

Vicki Gallagher:
No, that's great, Candice,…and I was also going to say one of the things that we have really started to theorize, Laurie, coming out of the project is the way in which in this project, sound, and then all of the other multi-sensory supports for the experience, make it be that, that you have, it has locative, generative, and comparative functions, right, so that people are located in these really remarkable ways. They, therefore, develop a kind of comparative sensibility, and they feel that they have to do something to respond, right, so it locates them. It has them doing this comparative work, and it seems to call forth response, right? And those are kind of interesting things that we've been able to, over and over again, reproduce through these experiences. And interestingly enough, when we had to go fully online last year for all of our Comm 110 students, their data--the data we collected, which we collected the year before when they all went to the in-person collective exhibitions--was as strong or stronger when we did the whole thing via the website and had them experience different parts of the website in a particular way within their, with their, classroom and instructors, but it was asynchronous and all digital.

Laurie Gries:
Right. How—I mean there's so many thoughts going through my brain-- part of what i'm thinking about is how do you ever go back to, just like, good old print based traditional articles after doing this kind of research? Like Candice, I'm curious about how working on that project

has influenced you as a scholar, both in terms of, perhaps, the kind of research you want to engage in and produce but also…just what you feel like your felt responsibilities are and in relation to your own desires, right, to do scholarship and, especially, to do public scholarship?

You know, I think, I think part of the struggle I had when I was, you know, on the tenure track \ as an assistant was that I didn't feel like, maybe, I could do some of the digital projects that I wanted to do because of the constraints of, you know, measurement and criteria and standards that I think have everything to do with, just you know, white supremacist male patriarchy being handed down through the academy, right. But and so, I feel like I'm at a place now where I can not only do more digital experimentation, but also work towards making my scholarship public. But I think I feel safe, I don't know, I feel secure doing that kind of work now whereas I didn't quite feel that, honestly, being on the tenure track. So, I'm just wondering where you're all at with this and how working on this project has impacted what you want to do with your scholarship.

Candice Edrington:
So, I think before even getting involved with VMLK, even before going back to get a PhD, I was always interested in public engagement as it pertained to social movements and then, you know, being a former public relations practitioner, knowing how involved and how vital public engagement is to the practice, so I definitely wanted to kind of marry the two practices and scholarship. But I think because of the advancements in technology and the affordances that technology gives us--not only as researchers but as, I don't want to say consumers, but participators of things--we are in an era of participatory culture. So…I think that opens up kind of a pathway for me to continue to explore the digital, especially in terms of public engagement. And so working on this project with Dr. Gallagher, and some of my other research, just kind of heightened my interest in exploring public engagement in the digital further because I find that it's very important. And so there is a fear, right, of being on the tenure track and the precident of scholarship that has come before in my area, but I think there's also a lane that has opened up, and a lane that I am trying to carve for myself, so to speak, in looking at public engagement and participatory culture and what that means not only for public relations but for strategic communication and digital rhetoric, digital visual studies, and so forth. So I'm definitely influenced a lot, definitely have given me more ideas of things that I can do with this type of research. So…

Laurie Gries:
Well, I'm so glad that you feel like a lane has been opened because I know, for me, now I feel like that that's one of the responsibilities I have, and, I so appreciate the work, Vicki, you've been doing to help carve out that space or that lane, which I love that metaphor, for, you know, for emerging scholars and young scholars, and I don't mean that in a condescending way at all because I think that's where the brilliant action happens to do just really innovative kind of, you know, cutting edge work that is that….I mean I'm really a believer in that if we keep using the same kind of methods, if we keep distributing knowledge in the same kinds of ways, we're really limiting opportunities for knowledge production and reception. So, Vicki, I just appreciate all the work that you've done to, you know, open up the lane so that scholars like Candice and

all of us can keep experimenting, which is really, you know, something I wanted to iterate in the afterward that….You know, I'm sure going into the VMLK project, there was a lot of fear. I mean there had to be a lot of fear;…there's a lot of risk-taking, right, that that project demanded, and there could have been, and I'm sure there were, quite a bit of---there was probably a lot of failure, right? But, yeah, which I'd love to hear about because I'm really interested in failure right? It's something that we…want to avoid because, in part, because there's all kinds of reasons why it's easier to take the safer, you know, kind of route that, actually, we have some evidence that will probably get us to where we need to go. But I worry about all the missed opportunities that, you know, or I worry about all the opportunities we miss by not taking those risks and encouraging experimentation, encourage[ing] people to take that open lane and just go with it and see where it happens and to--and to realize that there's a lot of value, you know, in that experimentation, that risk-taking.

Vicki Gallagher:
Yeah, I…so what…There's so many things, right. So one thing I would say is going back to what this means for Candice, you know, and what it means for anybody who worked on the project as they were a graduate student. You know, one of the things that to me was very important from the start and has informed the entire project is: How can everybody who touches the project be advantaged by it. How can it help actually put them in a better place having been involved in the project than before, right? And, and, how do we build a community that does that?...And there are times when it's been really frustrating because, you know, for people working on the project who were going into new tenure track positions and trying to make sure they had something they could get credit for, that would count towards their tenure and promotion, you know, took some time to develop. So now on our web page, you can cite all the different pages, so that people can cite it as its own object, you know, that we have put documentation and published documentation, so that it has people's names on it, and they can cite it. And, you know, we've tried to do all kinds of things that would make very visible-- we have this fabulous interactive timeline now on the project website that shows everybody who's ever touched the project's involvement, what they did, when they started, how they've moved, and it's fabulous. You just see this huge community of people that are part of this, right.

 So, and then the same thing to my community partners who I care about tremendously--that White Rock Baptist Church, their deacons, their pastor, the people who were alive when the speech occurred, all of the people who participated--making sure that they are honored by this, that it is accomplishing for them as a congregation, as individuals, something that is valuable and valued. You know, those are the kinds of things that have really mattered to me in this. And, you know, I think Cindy was talking with me about this, and, you know, Candice, you and I have talked about it. It's kind of the staying with the trouble, right? You stay with the engagement, and when we did our NEH workshop--Candice was there for this in 2019--I literally sat up in the front of a room full of people and said to the people from White Rock: What have we done well and what have we not done well? You know, what have you found productive in this? How have we been a good thing in your lives and what haven't we done? You know, the remarkable thing for me across this project has been that even though it's so experimental, it's involved so many people. For the most part, it went from…I mean people just wanted to be

involved, and every person brought a strength that made the project better and stronger and the failures have not been in that regard, if you see what I mean. The failures have been often…Like, for the church, their one thing was we want more of it; we want you at our church more; we want it in our neighborhood more; we want it to be more active; we would like you to use this in an even more activist way to help change the agenda about race, right, which, you know, we then said: Okay, we're going to do this 60th anniversary thing. We want it to be fully around your church, Durham, you coming here, us coming to Durham. We're going to try and reach out to all these other people. We're getting a digital extension grant. We're going to try and push it out to, you know, other schools and colleges and K-12, right. We're going to get it all over the world because that's what you told us we should do. Again, I am going on. Candice, you talk.

Candice Edrington:
You covered it.

Laurie Gries:
Well, I can't tell you how much, like if I had to isolate one of the responsibilities that so many respondents have talked about during these interviews that helps, I think, DVS scholars moving forward is this responsibility to give back to the communities that we're working with on these DVS projects, so I'm really happy you spoke into that. I mean, what else do you think is… Like, if, you know, if….When you're thinking about how we can do digital visual studies scholarship better, what are your number one or two recommendations that you think are just absolutely important if we're imagining graduate students and other scholars wanting to do this kind of work?

Vicki Gallagher:
Candice, do you have something that you want to start with there because I have a few things, but I really want to hear from you.

Candice Edrington:
The only thing that I could think of in reading through the--you know, what I did read through, and I mean you pointed out, right, the lack of diversity who's doing the work, right, but also who has access to the work. So, I think when we begin to think about putting forth this work for community for engagement, who has access to it, right, and how's it going to benefit them. So I think that would be the only thing I would think in moving forward and that's a question I don't have the answer for. I think that's a question that we should strive to have an answer for. I don't have the answer for it yet. I just think that's the starting point in continuing this work-- is who has access to it and how can they get access to it?

Vicki Gallagher:
Yeah, I love that Candice, and so to me I was thinking along very similar lines, and one of the things that's interesting to me is who is the audience for this, you know, and how do you extend or expand your thinking about the audience for this? So you're already doing a lot here, Laurie, by bringing in, you know, visual studies and digital visual studies and digital humanities.

And, you know, you're already speaking, I think, it feels like and justifiably, to a larger community, right? You're expanding this out; you're trying to include lots of work that are being done just in the different areas of rhetoric and writing and the digital and that's a big job. But what I tend to find when I'm brought in to be an advisor to people about like doing big projects for the public is that the audience could actually be expanded and also focused more broadly. So do you want to impact industry? Do you want to impact neighborhoods? Do you want to impact, you know, a political civic life? Do you want to have a way of helping people who are engaged in social movement work, for instance?

Something I'm interested in, to be able to take this up and do it or do you want to help people to think about how do we have equipment for living. You know, I'm gonna go Burke on you. How do we have equipment for living in a digital age? And so to me, that's one of the things I wanted to encourage you on because I think there's productive moves that are kind of gestured to in a number of the chapters. But, you know, I wanted to say give us the productive move like: yes, this is opening up an insight; this is opening up a way to think about how to do these studies, but what does that then give us in terms of equipment for living? And I love that you talked a little bit about Kim Gallon in there. But, you know again, Keon, when he started talking to me about this, and we started really thinking about how this could be a way for us to make sure that the VMLK was a technology of recovery, and that meant it had to invite black scholars and black people doing a technology of recovery about a black community even though as the white woman, of course, you know I'm the one who's gonna get most of the credit, which kind of sucked. I mean it was hard. I was trying to make Keon a full co-PI--actually wanted him to be a PI on a grant--but you can't do that if the grant is coming from the NEH, and it's too small, and you can't do a share between two universities, right? You know, so sometimes the how to get the money becomes an issue, right? And how do we get credit and, you know, all of those things come into play. And, I think, you know, that matters. That that all matters. I just think that it was important to me to try to do everything I could to make sure that I was doing a technology of recovery in the way that she writes about and intends.

Laurie Gries:
Yeah. I mean, I think that's the biggest, I think that's the biggest challenge for me as a scholar that I'm really trying to grapple with is: How do I move from the gesture to the, to the, enactment that lives up to my ethical commitments.

Vicki Ghallagher:
Right.

Laurie Gries:
You know, and that's, I think, you know, it's really useful, and I'm glad that you're pressing on that because I do feel that that, that ontological weight, right?

Vicki Gallagher:
And sometimes, you know, like for us, my audio director is the director, the audio director, at Red Storm Studios, which is a gaming studio here in the triangle. Right so, I met him on a plane.

You know, like sometimes, you meet these people and, Laurie, you do this work that's so incredible. You meet these artists. You meet these people and bringing them into your fold in some way is super important. You know, bringing in the people who do this work and having them be part of the projects and encouraging people who do this digital visual studies work to do that whenever they can. You know, I think about Caitlin Bruce who went out, and she became a member of this graffiti street art community in Chicago and had those people come to NCA, and we were all on a panel together, right. You know that, that's what inspired me, you know, seeing young scholars like Caitlyn doing that made me go like: Yep, I'm, we're going, right, like we're doing this.

Laurie Gries:
Absolutely, absolutely. I think, I mean that's really helpful for me to think about. Even with this current project I'm working on called The Swastika Counter Project, which I've spent four years collecting this data and coding this data, and now I'm trying to work on: okay, how are we going to create this reliable, you know, public website, public-facing website, that makes the data, you know, accessible for others? And I keep going to academics, right, to say who will help me? Who will help me? But I don't have any funding, so then I'm like: Okay, no one wants to help me. But then, you know, I haven't even--I should be reaching out to people who are in the industry with experience to see if anybody wants to work on the project. In part because, I mean, I'm just listening to Candice. I love that you have worked in the public relations industry because you have so much knowledge to bring to the table than people like me who have done very little work—meaning, you know, meaning (I was a ski bum or something), but, you know -- meaningful work outside the economy that contributes to the knowledge and just the ways that I even imagine projects. So I love that idea as we move forward with some of these DVS projects to actually work not only with, tightly with, communities from the ground up but also other people in industries who can enrich our projects.

Um…what--we don't have that much time left—what, I like, what projects would you love to see done because…if you're like me, I'm imagining you have all these ideas. Like, oh, this could be done, and this could be done, this could be---that you don't have time to do them all. So what ideas could you share about DVS projects that maybe some of our, you know, readers and listeners and viewers could imagine, perhaps, taking up that you think are just really important right now in terms of what's going on locally, nationally, globally? What would you love to see done?

Vicki Gallagher:
While Candice is thinking, can I just show you what I was going to show you?

Laurie Gries:
Of course.

Vicki Gallagher:
All right, awesome. Is that okay, Candice?

Candice Edrington:
Yeah, that's fine.

Vicki Gallagher:
All right, so this is the--this is what I wanted to show you. She did this schema for methodologies and contexts, and it did get published in this yearbook. But she actually worked with graphic design folks to do this, and it's really interesting because she was really struggling with a question--this is before, you know, I mean this is a while ago now--but she was struggling with how do you really do work in the visual and take into account all of these different approaches and understand what they do and what they bring and how you might, as a neo-fight person, come in. One of the things I would love to see is--and, you know, I've worked hard at NC State, but I'd love to see this taken up more broadly--is the connection between design and rhetoric strengthened. And so projects that do this--that try to give us, like your project, what you're doing here is trying to really set up a way of thinking about how we might do these projects in ways where we can talk outside of where we're currently at and invite other people in. So, I'm just really interested in going forward with projects that bring in design especially as we do this critical making stuff. I worry a little bit because we are defining critical thinking and critical making in very narrow terms, and I worry a little bit that we are not honoring and taking into consideration this incredible work that goes on in Colleges of Design like ours and, in particular, in graphic design, and we aren't partnering with them in a productive way, and that leads to us not having a good sense of how to assess what…the outcome of critical making. And I want it to be assessed ethically, and I want it to be assessed in terms of quality, beauty, rigor. Not all of the making that's happening, that's being called critical making, is worth anything, you know, but how do we decide that without being oppressive? Without enacting old versions of what is good, better, and best? That we, that we don't simply move into a realm where everybody's making-- it isn't that lovely? Well, no actually, Candice is going to make something that's better than me. So like, let's get hers out there, right?

So….one of my big contributions I want to make from VMLK is to help us find a way to collect and make accessible projects like this after their lifespan, right, and get libraries to figure out a way to collect them, to get publishers to figure out a way to publish them, or make them available via platforms that are like our libraries. You know our libraries collect all this stuff. You would not believe the conversations I'm having trying to get special collections to collect my project. I mean to help think these things through because I want to do it so that if Candice or you or anybody else makes it, you have a path, right?

Laurie Gries:
Absolutely, so I really appreciate that. I mean I have the vision--you know, I originally wanted to build--you know, I've done, I have so much data on this single image that, I think, has played an important role not only in U.S. history but in global history, and you know my original vision for the Obama Hope archive was to use something like a Omeka.com or…, you know, to create a really rich archive that curated all of the different images, but I ran into so many copyright issues, right, that I struggled with and then I couldn't actually get the library support that I wanted to from my own university library, so all of a sudden, I'm like okay, well how can I at

least make the data accessible? But that's--but you're absolutely right. Like that's not enough right? So I really appreciate all of those ideas, and i wonder too how the field of rhetoric can contribute to that, right, like what can we be doing better as a field to open up opportunities to publish not only digital public, you know, digital scholarship but also to help create, you know, opportunities for archiving and for preservation.

Vicki Gallagher:
It is interesting. There is this Humanities Commons. I'll just tell you this. Are you aware of this? The problem is, for like a project like ours, they have just a small amount. I mean, you know, we could barely get our stuff. We have so much. So that this the amount of space that they would have. Where we would put this is not nearly enough, so we have a multi-layered four-part kind of idea of how we might archive this in really productive ways. And put it into a maintenance phase is where we're trying to do with the project coming out of this latest grant. And I'll definitely let you know what we've come up with because we've been working with people who are out there looking at the best solutions for us. We've had a sustainability sprint. We've done all this stuff, and I think, ultimately, we're gonna, I'm gonna, have two significant external hard drives. I'm gonna have, you know, actual hard copy stuff. I'm gonna have, you know, the website. We're gonna save it in Conifer. We're gonna have it loaded in Google Drive. We're going to put it in, you know--we're going to have this multi-layered way of storing all of this, and then I'm going to try and see if I can get the library to collect it in special collections.

Laurie Gries:
Well hopefully, they will. It's such a tremendous project

Vicki Gallagher:
So we'll see.

Laurie Gries:
Yeah. Candice, what projects would you like to see done? I mean especially coming from a strategic communication perspective but also someone who's really committed to studying social movements and documenting social movements.

Candice Edrington:
So the first thing that came to mind--this is not really something that I do but I would like to see done--, when we talk about accessibility, and we also talk about bringing in my community or bringing in people to kind of help us with this work, is the gamification of knowledge. And I don't know how we would do that, but making the knowledge not only accessible to different people but the knowledge accessible to different experience levels, so to speak. So that we do this work, and it is practical work, right, so that activists can use it, our practitioners can use it, right, but presenting it in a way that it's digestible, it's relevant and it's understandable. And so I don't know what that would look like, right, but I do think doing it in a way that can be used practically so not in the typical academic research findings methodology type of way but--and I use gamification because I think it would make the knowledge fun, so to speak, make it fun but make it useful. So, I don't know what that project would look like, but I think that that would be

a great way to bring in community members but also to output or export stuff that can be useful going forward for the people that we do intend to be our audience, right? That we hope would be an audience for these type of projects. So, I don't know….

Laurie Gries:
You're making me think of the tremendous work of We the Protesters. Have you ever seen their website? They're a thread, I guess I would say, a thread of the Black Lives Matter movement, but what they've been working on for a really long time is documenting, basically, the murders of Black Americans and other minoritized people. And what they've done tremendously well is create different kinds of data visualizations that can be easily downloaded for local community members, and they've also created the data so that you can look at it at different scales. So…if you need national data, you can download national data, but if you need data that's particular to your state or your city, they use, I think mainly Tableau for this, but you can you can create the data on Tableau for your local communities and then you can download it and then you can use that data to go to the local police forces or city councils or whoever to actually try to create change on the ground. I've been studying their strategies because I'm really interested--with this Swastika Counter Project and just other projects—about…Like how do we, how do we produce, you know, public facing scholarship that is actually useful on the ground and accessible on the ground and understandable on the ground? And I love, I love…the work they did because they were not on---they actually got themselves in--these are young, I mean these are a bunch of just young act smart activists--their work got themselves into the White House right, but they were also able to help people locally on the ground and the work that they did in conjunction with a lot of people working on murder map projects have been really really influential in trying to create change within the criminal justice or with the justice system for more police accountability. So that project just came to mind and thinking about what you're calling for because it's, I think, it's absolutely a model for how we can move forward in ways that actually have—are--accessible for, you know, people beyond--especially our scholars--but actually accessible in ways that they can do something with it, right, to create change in their local lives.

Vicki Gallagher:
So here's another idea I had, Laurie, and Cindy and I actually talked about this and hearing you talk about this with Candice just brought it to the floor again. I wonder if you would want to do an edited collection, and this actually could be a book, but it could also be much more interactive than that. It could be something very different like what you're working on here, but it could almost be interviews. But basically, there's a book called *Critical Questions* that was released a long time ago. Nothstine, Blair, and Copeland were the authors, and what they did was--they asked rhetorical critics-- this is coming out of rhetoric communication tradition--to talk about their process of writing an article that they published and of talking about what it's like to do criticism. And people would talk through where they were at, what they did. Some people talked about the editorial experience. They talked about how their ideas changed, how their choice of method or what their questions changed. They worked through this whole thing and then you would read the actual paper, you know, the publication. And so, you'd read this whole thing of them talking about that process, of how they worked through it, and then you'd

read that published article, and I kind of felt like that would be awesome to do with this kind of work. Like you could have your interviews with people, and then people could actually look at the work, and they could, I don't know. What are, what are your thoughts?

Laurie Gries:
I love it and especially because, I mean, I can't imagine the amount of labor and networking and fund raising and everything that it took to put even the Virtual MLK project together. I mean that's--I think, it's paralyzing for those of us who are wanting to do this kind of work because many of us are so used to working individually and then all of a sudden we have these visions for these projects--and I'm experiencing this right now where I can't, there's no way I can bring to fruition all that I want to--but I don't even know how to go about, like, managing a, you know, a digital visual, professionally designed project. It's just not something we're trained to do, right? So I think this kind of collection that would actually interview both academics but also activists--that would be brilliant. I love that idea. I'm not sure, I'm not sure…

Vicki Gallagher:
You've got your hands full, but it's just something to think about. I'll keep thinking about it too. Maybe we can figure out a way to put it together.

Laurie Gries:
Okay, that would be fun. Well thank you too so much. Is there any last thing you would like to add to the conversation that we haven't gotten to? We have just a couple minutes.

Candice Edrington:
I would say if there's any way to access the chapter on augmented reality without Google Play, I would love that because I'm very interested in that.

Laurie Gries:
Okay.

Vicki Gallagher:
Well, I just don't think I got to give you enough of the compliments I wanted to give you, and I thought the two key moves you made in terms of making the data set available and trying to preserve digital visual history--this is what got me off and talking about all of this issue of archiving projects and stuff. But doing that in the way that you're doing that in this collection is, just, I want to affirm that and compliment you on that because, awesome.

Laurie Gries:
Oh well thank you….I have to give all the contributing authors credit because really I just, you know, came up with this idea of coming at the image from different ways, and then I just reached out, and I said what are you going to do, what would you do? So really, they were very inventive, and so I have to give them credit. So, I'm sure, they're sure going to appreciate you saying that, Vicki.

Vicki Gallagher:
Yeah absolutely, and I think, you know, everybody always says to me like *oh are you going to do this for lots of other speeches*? I'm like no, no, no. No, that's not the goal. The goal is to figure out how you do this, share that path with everybody else, and then keep making it possible for people to do these kinds of projects themselves and to make sure there are good ways to do it
Laurie Gries:
Right. Right. Well,…I think, you know, the funding issue, I think--I would love to figure out how we didn't have to go, you know, to the national organizations. Like how can our own disciplinary organizations start generating more funding so that we can, you know, so scholars can take the lead, you know, and create some really dynamic projects once they kinds of opportunities have been opened up.

Vicki Gallagher:
Right, yeah, I mean I think to me and this is true of social movement and activism and all of these kinds of questions, it's astonishing how when you invite people in to help you think about an issue and you invite lots of people who come from different backgrounds and skill sets and ask them to engage with it, you are able to do things in a way that are confounding for a lot of people unless there's money. So I will just say that this project started out with very, very small pots of money and that enabled us to build the kind of thing we needed to in order to be able to get bigger money, and I just think that's more the way the world works for the majority of the world. And it's a good thing to do and you create community along the way.

Laurie Gries:
Right. Well thank you too so much. I so appreciate you being here, and you've offered so much for everyone to think about, including myself, and I just can't thank you enough.