

A SOCIAL

ATLAS

OF

WEST

PHILADELPHIA

AND THE LINEAR MILE



This Mixplace Studio publication explores the relationships between people, issues and places in West Philadelphia.

The project brings together Slought, People's Emergency Center, the University of Pennsylvania and Village Amp in collaboration, and features the work of youth from People's Emergency Center's Teen Technology Network program.

The atlas builds upon research undertaken from October-December 2015, and has been designed by Jonatan Eriksson of Finnish design agency Tsto.

Historical atlases such as Wm. G. Baist's "Atlas of West Philadelphia" (1886), sought to provide an awareness of place and to help Philadelphia residents locate themselves and their property in the city and the world. Yet, in the desire to map places and territories, social relations were abstracted and rendered invisible.

Our social atlas re-conceptualizes what an atlas can be and foregrounds the people of West Philadelphia and the issues that matter to us. Our project is informed by questions of representation, such as: Who is represented in society, and how? How can we challenge existing modes of representation? How does representation relate to questions of social justice and fairness? Through questions such as these, we are committed to visualizing and actualizing the human dimension around us.



Teams

Hasinah and Shanna

Isaiah & Michelle
Meridian & Dominique
Nyshai & Andre

People

Addicts
Immigrants
Entrepreneurs
Organizers
Elders
Artists
Educators
Youth
Victims

Issues

Community Development
Community Organizing
Community Sustainability
Local Economy
Local Knowledge
Public Architecture
Public Culture
Public Education
Public Health
Public Infrastructure
Public Recreation
Social Advocacy
Social Justice
Social Services

Places

Sidewalks
Streets
Vacant Lots
Public Spaces
Blocks
Homes
Stores
Buildings
Private Spaces
Institutions

Empty Barrels

Hasinah Abdul-Rahman and Shanna Henderson



“I’m interested in the Black Lives Matter movement and the conversation around police brutality, and I think a lot of these topics require us to focus on gun violence. In our project, we’ve been photographing in relation to gun violence, like memorials, police tape, and things that are usually related to crime scenes. If you were at a crime scene of someone who got shot, what are the things that you would see during and after the result of the crime scene?”

When it comes to gun violence, there aren’t a lot of things for you to go out and take pictures of. Even if you speak to someone who has experienced gun violence, it’s hard to capture that in a photo. Gun violence is something that is swept under the rug, so it’s not really apparent in society, and it’s hard to go out and photograph because of that. I think mainstream society needs to pay more attention to this issue because affects everyone in our community, whether everyone realizes it or not it’s our community. Hopefully we can use digital media to shed light on these issues, because it’s such a powerful tool.” - HA









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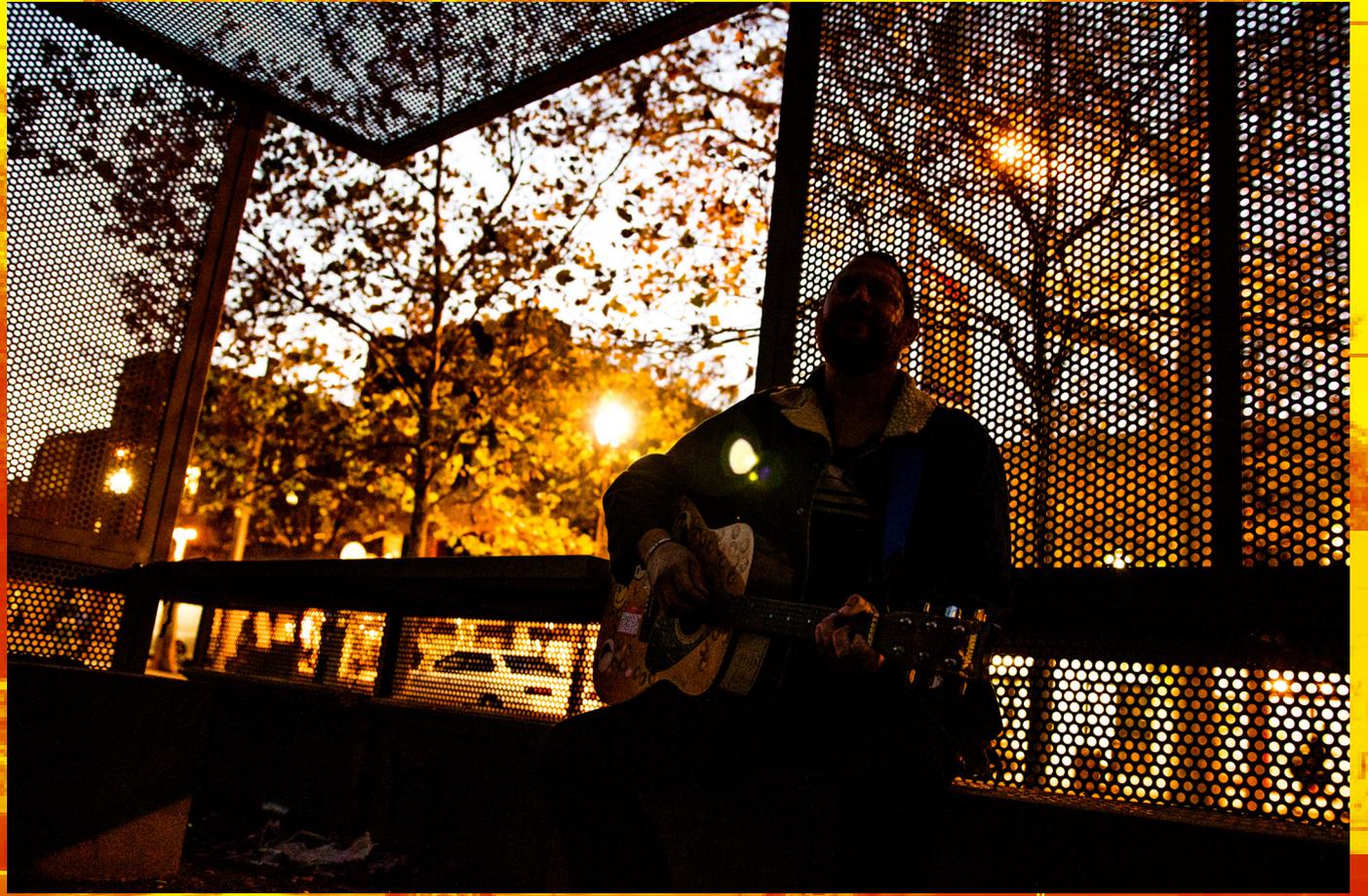
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Music on the Margins
Isaiah Hawkins
and Michelle Byrnes



“Our project focused on musicians in West Philly. The issue we were really focusing on was the conversation between the musician and the audience, and how both the musician gains influence from the audience and the audience takes away a message from the musician. What we were trying to demonstrate was how important it was for the artist to project messages that can help the community grow and bring to the surface issues that we would otherwise not see.

I didn't really know too much about music or West Philly, so it was really awesome to get to learn and meet some of these artists. So taking away from the project, my hopes and aspirations would be getting to understand that mainstream music isn't the only kind of music, and that artists that are off the radio are also extremely talented and extremely wonderful people but don't always have the medium and resources to really be heard. So for the people I worked with, I want to see them go further with their musical talents, I want to give them some kind of visibility through photography and film.” - MB









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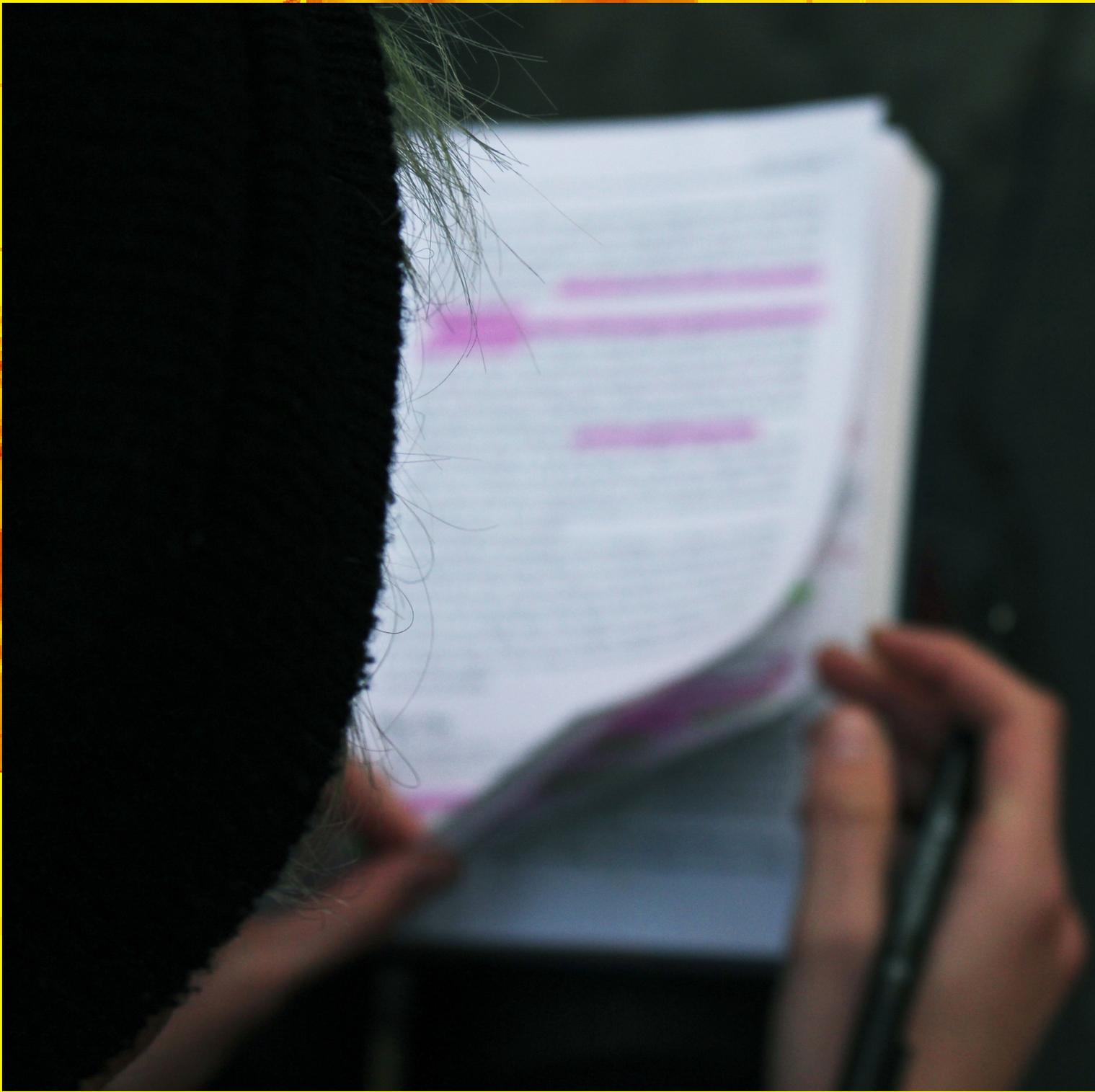
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Bookstrap Junk
Meridian Lowe
and Dominique Easley



“I focused on addicts who are in recovery and make art, and their journey through recovery, and how that has influenced how they make art and how they create. A lot of the issues that came up were how addiction dampens the recovery process. There’s this push and pull between it dampening the creative process and feeling like it enhances it. A lot of where the issue lies is in a lack of resources for recovery, and a lot of the silence that surrounds that.

It’s really hard for you to recognize that you have a problem and then deal with it, and then also continue on in your creative process, because it’s not something that’s talked about a lot. A lot of what’s talked about is what you see in the media -- artists who are creatively using drugs and this romanticized vision of the junky artist -- but that’s not reality. The reality is that drugs play a really intense role... and this really hits home for me.” - ML









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Queer Out-Bringing
Nyshai Benson
and Andre Simmons



“The social issue that I focused on for the project was gay and lesbian out-bringing, the way people address us and the way people see us not being like them, so to speak.

I think people in general, just everywhere, should focus on this issue but also its relationship to topics like homelessness. I think that is becoming really, really big in Philly. A lot of people don't understand that homelessness doesn't mean that you sleep outside, but that you go couch jumping, and that can be considered homelessness as well. I don't think a lot of people understand that.

We need to provide knowledge about what queer out-bringing feels like, and own that and focus on that.” - NB





