



# BAD TRACK RECORD

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SAN JOSE STATE UNIVERSITY  
BFA GRAPHIC DESIGN | 2020







**BAD**

**TRACK**

**METAPHOR OF TRANSLATION | BFA THESIS**

**RECORD**

“RAP IS SOMETHING YOU DO,  
HIP HOP IS SOMETHING YOU LIVE”

—KRS—ONE “HIP HOP VS. RAP”

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

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<b>Big Thank You</b>	Ron Catacutan My Family

### To my family,

Thank you for being my biggest support since day one. I would not have been able to foster such a deep passion for art and design if it weren't for your love and support from the beginning. I am so grateful for all the care and love you all have shown me as I've worked towards my degree. Your patience and provisions for me as I worked late nights and early mornings never went unnoticed. I love you all and I hope I've made you very proud. All praise to the most high!

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OBJECTIFICATION?  
HATEFUL?  
DETRIMENTAL?  
NEGATIVE?  
GREEDY?  
CRIMINALITY?  
SHOOTINGS?  
ANGER?  
GANGS?

DRUG ABUSE?  
DANGEROUS?  
PROFANITY?  
VIOLENCE?  
REBELLIOUS?  
UNETHICAL?  
OFFENSIVE?

## **HIP HOP?**

As someone who did not grow up around the culture of hip hop or even listening to hip hop, the only concept I had of hip hop was from public radio, from TV, and from some friends here and there who listened to it. I was never informed about the culture or the history behind hip hop. I also grew up in a pretty conservative setting where my consumption of music was monitored. Because of this, I drew my own conclusions from my surroundings: I thought that hip hop was immoral. It was degrading and obscene. So filthy that I wouldn't ever dare say I listened to a hip hop song. How could artists encourage all this violence, obscenity, misogyny, and rebellion? Hip hop couldn't be a good form of art if it held such derogatory words and images. Anyone who listened to it or promoted it was promoting things that I knew were wrong. This is all that I knew about hip hop. I just didn't know anything else. Fast forward to today, I thought I knew what I needed to know about hip hop. It was unethical and degrading. That's all I needed to know.

*“You can't listen to all that language and filth without it affecting you,”*

*—C. Delores tucker*

---

*“It was unethical and degrading. That's all I needed to know.”*

## **I HAD A PROBLEM**

Truthfully, at the beginning of searching for a thesis topic, I wanted to prove the detrimental effects hip hop had on society. I am a lover of music and I would say that I'm a very expressive person in my own music, but somehow hip hop did not cut it for me. I couldn't get past the violence, misogyny, drug use, or obscenity. So, with the knowledge I had and the opportunity of this thesis, I wanted to prove that hip hop was not ethical and was harmful to society. I really thought I was going to shift mindsets for the better.

However, almost overnight, I had somewhat of a revelation. In speaking with hip hop enthusiasts, DJ's, and anthropologists, I could no longer prove my initial argument. Instead, I was presented with a new perspective; one where the history and culture behind hip hop play a big role in our understanding of racism and classism. This new perspective showed me so much about the humanity behind the music and its origins. Instead of wanting to be right, I went to wanting to do the right thing. Hip hop to me was now a story no longer just shouts of rebellion.

This new perspective changed everything for me and with this thesis opportunity, I hoped to express the importance of the humanity and culture behind hip hop.

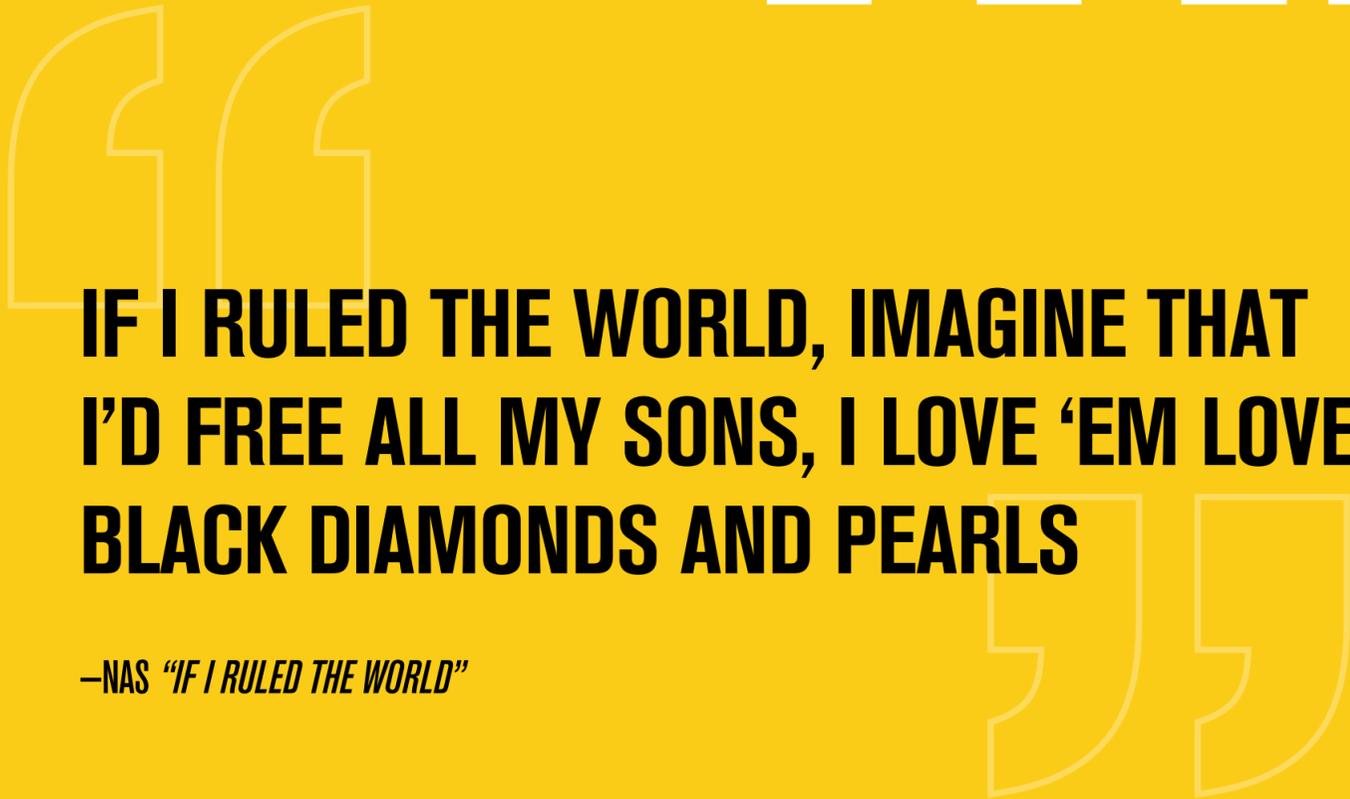
I am not a hip hop enthusiast. I am not an expert. I am not someone who will claim a place in hip hop culture. However, I am a lover of storytelling. I am a learner. I am an investigator, and I hope to also be a communicator to people like me who have not yet seen the impact and importance of hip hop.

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*“I am a learner. I am an investigator, and I hope to also be a communicator.”*



# THE PRO PO SAL



**IF I RULED THE WORLD, IMAGINE THAT  
I'D FREE ALL MY SONS, I LOVE 'EM LOVE 'EM BABY  
BLACK DIAMONDS AND PEARLS**

*-NAS "IF I RULED THE WORLD"*

## STATEMENT

Contrary to popular preconceptions, hip hop is not just vulgarity and violence mixed with a beat. Hip hop can carry meaningful culture that tells unseen stories.

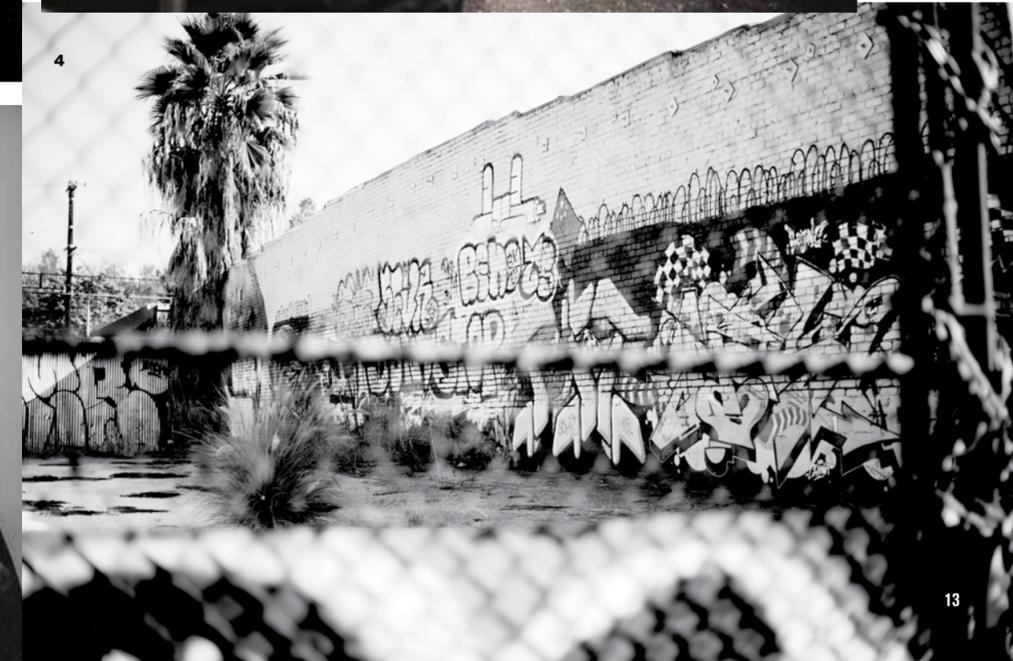
## ABSTRACT

As a globally publicized form of music, hip hop is one of the most misunderstood and stereotyped genres of music there is today. In modern times, hip hop is both loved and hated, remembered and forgotten, accepted and rejected; stolen and given. The truth of hip hop can easily be lost in lyrics about sex, drug abuse, violence, gangs, and profanity, but to understand hip hop as a whole, one must ask these questions: Who was hip hop for? Why did it exist? What did it mean at the time of its birth and what does that mean for the world today?

Something that many often forget is that hip hop is an expression and form of art. There are methods as well skills that are practiced and perfected. **Four elements encapsulate hip hop's essence: deejaying, rapping, break dancing, and graffiti.** These four elements are the foundations of the art of Hip Hop.

1. Hip hop artist standing before a crowd.
2. Hip hop dancer performing a dance in the subway.
3. African american artist.
4. Representation of graffiti art.

## IMAGES



The truthful fight behind Hip Hop's revolution is something that America often chooses to ignore and forget: Slavery, racism, racial inequality, white supremacy, police brutality, and more. For those who see hip hop as "unethical" or something that needs to be censored, it is an important step of respect to recall the truth of history and acknowledge the story of African American minorities in the states. Only then, can one begin to understand hip hop as not only a genre, but a culture.

To illustrate the steps towards understanding the humanity in hip hop, this project will emphasize three findings: The birth setting of Hip Hop, the uprising and revolution of hip hop, and lastly, the anthem of hope that is declared.

*"The original fight behind the revolution of hip hop is something that America often chooses to ignore and forget..."*

# IN THE BEGINNING

“Well, a lot of people within government and big business are nervous of hip hop and hip hop artists, because they speak their minds. They talk about what they see and what they feel and what they know. They reflect what’s around them.”

—Afrika Bambaataa

## RESEARCH QUESTIONS

- What environment was hip hop born in?
- Why did it exist in the first place?
- What does that mean for the world today?
- What could it teach us in today’s culture?

## GOALS

The goal is to emphasize deep history behind how hip hop came to be (dating back to the earliest days of slavery), why hip hop exists, the significance of hip hop and how we (as “outsiders to hip hop”) should respect and learn from it (as a form of human respect and learning history).

This project is meant to be inviting and educational; Not to be condescending or superior, but to extend a different point of view and give an opportunity to reflect. It is an invitation for viewers to see look deeper into their preconceptions.

## IMMERSION

In an effort to immerse myself into the world of hip hop, I talked to some hip hop enthusiasts and experts. They suggested several artists, movies, documentaries, and songs to watch and listen to. This brought a lot of context to my understanding of Hip Hop and its culture and history.

### Artists

- Grandmaster Flash
- Wu-Tang Clan
- Public Enemy
- DJ Kool Herc
- Run—D.M.C
- 50 Cent
- Tupac
- Nas

### Songs

- I can—Nas
- Life’s a bitch—Nas
- Hip Hop—Dead Prez
- Many Men—50 Cent
- It’s like that—Run DMC
- Keep Ya Head up—Tupac
- C.R.E.A.M.—Wutang Clan
- Juicy—The Notorious B.I.G.
- Triple Beam Dreams—Rick Ross

### Shows & Documentaries

- *Looking For The Perfect Beat (1994)*
- *Something To Die For (1997)*
- *Soul Deep: The Story of Black Popular Music (2005)*
- *Hip Hop: Beyond Beats and Rhymes (2006)*
- *Racism: A History (2007)*
- *Hip Hop Evolution (2016)*

RE

SEARCH

“

MENTALLY SEX-CRAZED, DYSFUNCTIONAL,  
THEY DESCRIBE US THEY LIARS,  
AT THE END OF THE DAY, WE'RE FUCKIN' SURVIVORS

”

—RICK ROSS (FT. NAS) “TRIPLE BEAM DREAMS”

# LEARNING

## RESEARCH OUTLINE

### 1 Setting the Scene for Hip Hop

- How America's slave days heavily impacted Hip Hop's culture and meaning.
- Brief history of social injustice in the US.
- Environmental effects that shaped Hip Hop.

### 2 Hip Hop's Revolution and Growth

- The human need to create and connect no matter what circumstance.
- Hip hop—what became the platform for the unheard to find a voice.
- Hip hop's evolution and globalization.

### 3 Why it Matters

- Hip hop is a way to learn history.
- Learning about hip hop is to respect human dignity and livelihood.
- How hip hop fights racism, classism, stereotypes, and sparks change.

## MAIN READINGS

*An American Tragedy: The legacy of slavery lingers in our cities' ghettos*  
By Louny

*Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth, and Social Policy in America*  
By Conley

*How racial and regional inequality affect economic opportunity*  
By Shambaugh, Nunn, and Anderson

*Hip-hop revolution*  
By Ogbar

*Hip-Hop Nation*  
By Farley

## ARTIFACT OBSERVATION

### The 4 golden elements

Collecting and observing "artifacts" from something's origin is important in learning and observing. As a visual and tactile learner, I like to look and touch things when observing. To help me better understand the culture and artistry of hip hop, I went to the thrift store for some vinyl records and also reached out to some friends for some cassette tapes. Understanding the complexity of a vinyl record helped me understand the artistry and skill behind Deejaying which is a big part of hip hop music.

A big part of immersing myself into hip hop was learning about the 4 elements of hip hop: deejaying, rapping, graffiti, and break dancing. These elements are the key tools for hip hop artists.

*"The type of mixing that was out then was blending from one record to the next or waiting for the record to go off and wait for the jock to put the needle back on."*

—Grandmaster Flash



# 1 SETTING THE SCENE FOR HIP HOP

## Hip Hop's culture and history is heavily impacted by America's slave days.

Understanding the meaning and depth of Hip Hop and its culture can only begin with the factual history of slavery in America. Hip Hop cannot be separated from America's long, tragic history of slavery and racism.

To briefly look back on some historical context, Slavery existed pretty much at the beginning of America's establishment. African slaves were imported to the Americas in masses during the Transatlantic slave trade starting in the early 17th century. Slave trade was widely accepted throughout the globe, but in 1825, the United States had become the leading user of slave labor; The U.S. owned 1.75 million slaves at the time, which was 36% of all slave populations in the new world.<sup>1</sup> During this time, Africans were treated severely inhumane. This was only the beginning of dehumanization of black individuals in America.

There is no question that severe brutality and inhumanity weighed heavily on the lives of African Americans during the era of slavery all around the world. These traumatic times would change history forever; Unfortunately these years of brutality are not acknowledged often enough to recognize that we still need change, even today.

<sup>1</sup> Austen, Ralph A. "Without Consent or Contract: The Rise and Fall of American Slavery." By Robert William Fogel. New York: W.W. Norton & Company, 1989. 539 Pp. Business History Review 64, no. 4 (1990): 774–76.

*"We want to be paid, in a central bank the average worker farmer wage for all those years we gave it free. Plus we want damages, for all the killings and the fraud, the lynchings, the missing justice, the lies and frame-ups, the unwarranted jailings, the tar and featherings, the character and race assassinations.*

—Amiri Baraka "Why is We Americans?"

Although events and reformations such as the emancipation proclamation, civil rights movements, and abolishment of slavery changed the narrative of human rights and justice, the aftermath and byproduct of brutality and bloodshed would exist for decades and centuries to come.

## Brief history of social injustice in the US.

"The self-limiting patterns of behavior among poor blacks 'which some commentators are so quick to trot out' are a product, not of some alien cultural imposition upon a pristine Euro-American canvas, but, rather, of social, economic, and political practices deeply rooted in American history."<sup>2</sup> American systems and economies often create a lose-lose situation for African Americans and minority groups. These systems create a spiral effect of poverty, injustice and disparity.

From the roots of slavery birthed horrific ideologies and practices like severe racism, segregation, white supremacy, and police brutality.

<sup>2</sup> Loury, Glenn C. "An American Tragedy: The Legacy of Slavery Lingers in Our Cities' Ghettos." Brookings (blog), November 30, 2001.

## Too Much Reading?

The focus points are on page \_\_\_\_!

"The United States of America, 'a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal,' began as a slave society. What can rightly be called the "original sin" slavery has left an indelible imprint on our nation's soul. A terrible price had to be paid, in a tragic, calamitous civil war, before this new democracy could be rid of that most undemocratic institution. But for black Americans the end of slavery was just the beginning of our quest for democratic equality; another century would pass before the nation came fully to embrace that goal. Even now millions of Americans recognizably of African descent languish in societal backwaters."<sup>1</sup>

Poverty for African Americans following the abolition of slavery was also a very problematic issue. "In 1865, at the time of the Emancipation Proclamation, African Americans owned 0.5 percent of the total worth of the United States. This statistic is not surprising; most black Americans had been slaves up to that point. However, by 1990, a full 135 years after abolition of slavery, black Americans owned only a meager 1 percent of total wealth. In other words, almost no progress had been made in terms of property ownership. African Americans may have won "title" to their own bodies and their labor, but they have gained ownership over little else."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Loury, Glenn C. "An American Tragedy: The Legacy of Slavery Lingers in Our Cities' Ghettos." Brookings (blog), November 30, 2001.

<sup>3</sup> Emerson, M. O. "Being Black, Living in the Red: Race, Wealth, and Social Policy in America." By Dalton Conley. University of California Press, 1999. 209 Pp." Social Forces 78, no. 4 (June 1, 2000): 1579–80.

## Environmental effects that shaped Hip Hop.

Fast forward to the mid 1950's, one would think that circumstances and social qualities would have improved. The aftermaths of slavery is still extremely apparent in societies.

African American folks were segregated both economically and racially into ghettos as we know it today and in past decades. Ghetto dwellers were especially prone to be stereotyped, stigmatized and isolated. With this isolation and limited access to communal networks and assistance, the black ghetto dwellers experienced severe despair and helplessness. "Their purported criminality, sexual profligacy, and intellectual inadequacy are the frequent objects of public derision. In a word, they suffer a pariah status. It should not require enormous powers of perception to see how this degradation relates to the shameful history of black-white race relations in this country."<sup>3</sup>

As Hardy, Logan, and Parman explain, there are a range of policies or practices that continue to disadvantage black individuals and communities throughout the U.S., impacting areas including:

- **Public education**, which has often been underfunded in African-American majority schools, limiting skill acquisition and upward mobility for black Americans.

<sup>3</sup> Loury, Glenn C. "An American Tragedy: The Legacy of Slavery Lingers in Our Cities' Ghettos." Brookings (blog), November 30, 2001. <https://www.brookings.edu/articles/an-american-tragedy-the-legacy-of-slavery-lingers-in-our-cities-ghettos/>.

- **Employment discrimination**, which makes it more difficult for black families to escape from poverty or build their community.
- **The social safety net system**, where there is an increased likelihood of sanctioning and spending is less generous for black communities and minorities in general.
- **The criminal justice system**, where poor outcomes for black Americans include higher bail and greater likelihood of monetary sanctions, among other penalties.<sup>4</sup>

A study in 2010 revealed that "the black population tends to be more concentrated in the central counties of large metropolitan areas relative to the white population. By contrast, the white population tends to live in smaller metropolitan areas and in rural counties. This concentration of the African-American population is not accidental. As Hardy, Logan, and Parman detail, influences ranging from discrimination and intimidation, to lender behavior, to white flight from cities, to public policies like redlining or highway construction all combined to keep the African-American population more concentrated in particular communities."<sup>5</sup> How concerning is it to know that our government and systems purposely place people of minority groups in boxes where they can neither escape nor live a normal life?

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, Jay Shambaugh, Ryan Nunn, and Stacy A. "How Racial and Regional Inequality Affect Economic Opportunity." Brookings (blog), February 15, 2019.

<sup>5</sup> Anderson, Jay Shambaugh, Ryan Nunn, and Stacy A. "How Racial and Regional Inequality Affect Economic Opportunity." Brookings (blog), February 15, 2019.

## 2 HIP HOP'S REVOLUTION AND GROWTH

### The human desire to always create and connect.

Regardless of race, origin, background, or social status, humans will always find ways to create and connect with one another; whether that's through the form of art, music, words, or action. For those that experienced the birth of hip hop or know the history, understand that even with the misfortune of racial inequality induced poverty, humans are still able to create beautifully impactful things.

Hip Hop was also a bridge for African Americans, who were in the margins, to relate and connect with each other. Hip Hop brought many people together and gave people a new way to live and experience culture. Hip Hop inspired many in areas of poverty.

### The revolution of Hip Hop

"The poet Rainer Maria Rilke wrote that 'a work of art is good if it has sprung from necessity.' Rap is the music of necessity, of finding poetry in the colloquial, beauty in anger, and lyricism even in violence."<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Farley Christopher John "Hip-Hop Nation" Time February 6, 1999 <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,993400.html>

In addition to the desire to create and connect, hip hop became a platform for the marginalized to be heard. From song/rap lyrics, to graffiti art, to break dancing, to clothing style, people found a new voice to speak with, and the world around them began to notice. This new form of art, allowed for people to finally speak and be heard. This became a tool or maybe even a weapon against injustices and inequalities.

### A brewing era of revolution and uprising.

As hip hop became more widespread, it became more and more of a platform for a revolution. The interesting thing about this was that the public, outside of the ghetto, were starting to listen. Because of Hip Hop's nature, the music began to shift power structures and previous ideologies. "The art not only resist the overarching themes of racial status quo while simultaneously offering alternative perspectives. Fundamentally, hip hop is a varied, complex art form with plenty of room for expression along various ideological lines."<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Ogban Jeffrey Ogbonna Green Hip-Hop Revolution: The Culture and Politics of Rap Lawrence: University Press of Kansas 2007

*"Hip-hop was Black music. It's becoming harder to tell these days. Is this music defined by the culture that inspires it or the white palms that purchase the CD's and signs the checks?"*

—Source (March 2001)

## 3 WHY IT MATTERS

### Hip hop is a way to learn history.

Because hip hop was born out of such disparity and poverty, there is much to learn from it. The artists behind some of these "obscene", "vulgar", "disgraceful" songs have possibly lived through some of the most brutal experiences. As mentioned before, hip hop holds the stories of many individuals that might have never been told without this genre.

### Respecting human dignity and livelihood.

The constant debate over whether or not hip hop should be censored or controlled is often a heated topic. For those that have lived through the birth of hip hop, understand that censoring the artistry of hip hop is, in a way, censoring the authenticity and "realness" of the story.

"The underlying message is this: the violence and misogyny and lustful materialism that characterize some rap songs are as deeply American as the hokey music that rappers appropriate. The fact is, this country was in love with outlaws and crime and violence long before hip-hop—think of Jesse James, and Bonnie and Clyde—and then think of the movie Bonnie and Clyde, as well as Scarface and the Godfather saga. In the movie You've Got Mail, Tom Hanks even refers to the Godfather trilogy as the perfect guide to life, the I-Ching for guys. Rappers seem to agree."<sup>1</sup>

So this isn't really a question about the censorship of hip hop. This is a problem of racial equality and respect. It is more about understanding and respecting human dignity than it is about "censoring bad things". It

<sup>1</sup> Farley Christopher John "Hip-Hop Nation" Time February 6, 1999 <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,993400.html>

*"The fact is, this country was in love with outlaws and crime and violence long before hip-hop"*

—Christopher John Farley (TIME 1999)

becomes more and more apparent that racism and stereotypes towards minorities is more at play than "detrimental lyrics" ever could be. The saturation of violence and sexualization did not originate from hip hop. America had already been hooked on it for centuries.

In conclusion, despite the blame placed on rap for the prominence of violence in American society, hip-hop music is a symptom of cultural violence, not the cause. Though it is a "by product" of disorder, it is a beautiful form of art. In order to understand hip-hop, it is necessary to look at it as the product of a set of historical, political, and economic environments and to study the role it has served as voice for those subjugated by systematic political and economic oppression. If the issue of violence in Hip Hop is to be effectively addressed, the root of the problem—disparity in resources and opportunities for urban minorities—must be aggressively dealt with.<sup>2</sup>

### Hip Hop serves as a tool to shift mindsets in fighting racism, classism, stereotypes.

For people like me, who didn't grow up in the culture of hip hop and was not familiar with its background or history, it is important for us to reflect and contemplate the impacts that hip hop has had on our society.

Corporate America's infatuation with rap has increased as the genre's political content has withered. Ice Cube's early songs attacked white racism; Ice-T sang about a Cop Killer; Public Enemy challenged listeners to "fight the power." But many newer acts such as DMX and Master

P are focused almost entirely on pathologies within the black community. They rap about shooting other blacks but almost never about challenging governmental authority or encouraging social activism. "The stuff today is not revolutionary," says Bob Law, vice president of programming at WWRL, a black talk-radio station in New York City. "It's just, 'Give me a piece of the action.'"<sup>3</sup>

Hip Hop in its original intent is an invitation for people to step into the history of African Americans and what they've endured and fought for, for hundreds of years. It is an invitation to understand to listen; to self reflect and to make a change.

<sup>3</sup> Farley Christopher John "Hip-Hop Nation" Time February 6, 1999 <http://content.time.com/time/magazine/article/0,9171,993400.html>

<sup>2</sup> "THE SOCIAL SIGNIFICANCE OF RAP & HIP-HOP CULTURE" Accessed April 19, 2020 [https://web.stanford.edu/class/e997c/poverty\\_pnejudice/mediarace/socialsignificance.htm](https://web.stanford.edu/class/e997c/poverty_pnejudice/mediarace/socialsignificance.htm)

REVO  
LUTION

# FOCUS POINTS

Here are some key focus points from the research

## ORIGINS OF OPPRESSION

Hip hop was born out of terrible circumstances of racism, classism, and economic despair.

## THE UPRISING

Built on the foundational elements of rapping, deejaying, break dancing and graffiti, Hip hop became the main platform in which their voices were heard. They were able to rise up.

## PROCLAMATIONS OF HOPE

Hip hop has now become a global phenomenon. It has also brought triumph and victory to those who began at the very bottom of the chain.

## 4 ELEMENTS OF HIP HOP

Hip Hop is built with the 4 elements which is deejaying, rapping, graffiti, and break dancing.

### Initial Thoughts

Hip hop has been argued over and debated about for decades. What use would it be to echo the same words that lead to tension and complacency? To argue a topic such as this one, one would need a new perspective and new way to approach it. Since hip hop is already an audio form of art, I thought that a **physical and visual** way to approach it would encourage new reflections and perspectives.

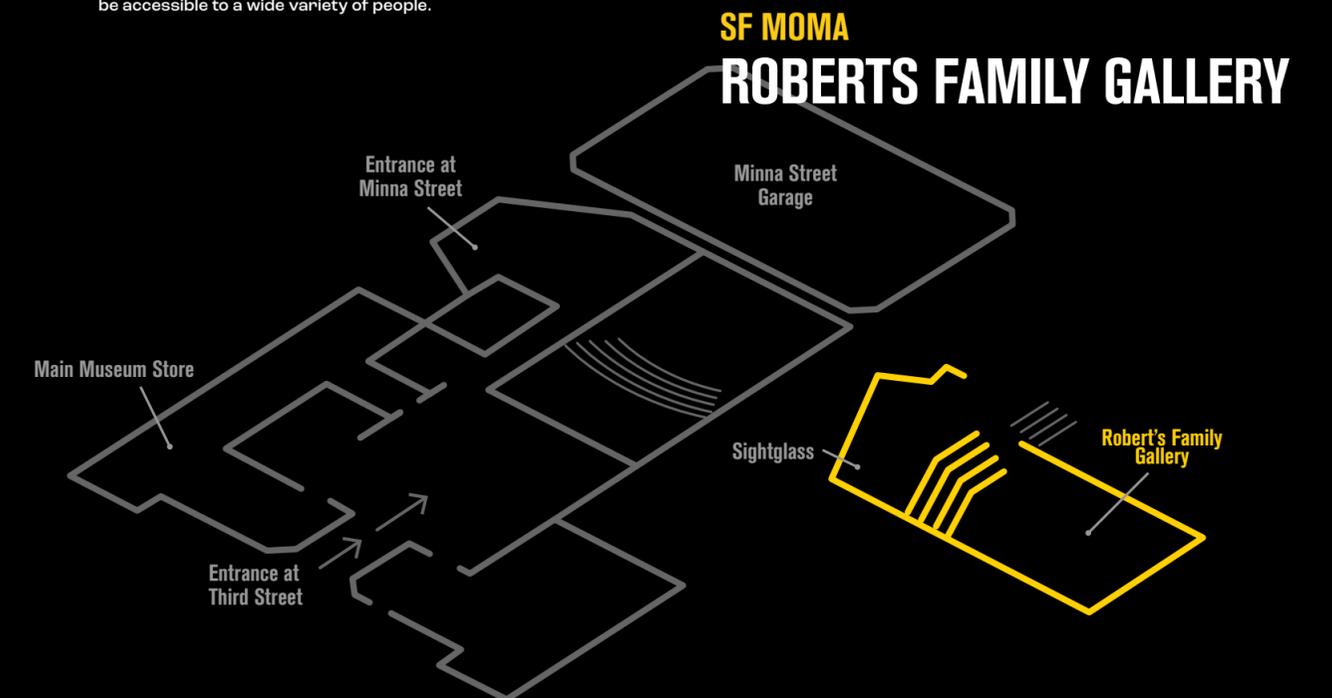
### Keywords

- Revolutionary
- Bold
- Unapologetic
- Lively
- Strong
- Vivid
- Rich
- Striking

# LOCATION

As a nonprofit organization, **SFMOMA** holds an internationally recognized collection of modern and contemporary art, and was the first museum on the West Coast devoted solely to 20th-century art. The museum's current collection includes over 33,000 works of painting, sculpture, photography, architecture, design, and media arts. SF MoMA is one of the largest in the United States overall, and one of the largest in the world for modern and contemporary art.

The SFMoMA is the perfect location because of the crowd that it draws. When thinking about my space, I wanted to make sure a diverse crowd of people could access it and experience it. I specifically chose the **Robert's Family Gallery** because of its accessibility. The gallery space is open and free to the public unlike the rest of the museum. This allows for the space to be accessible to a wide variety of people.

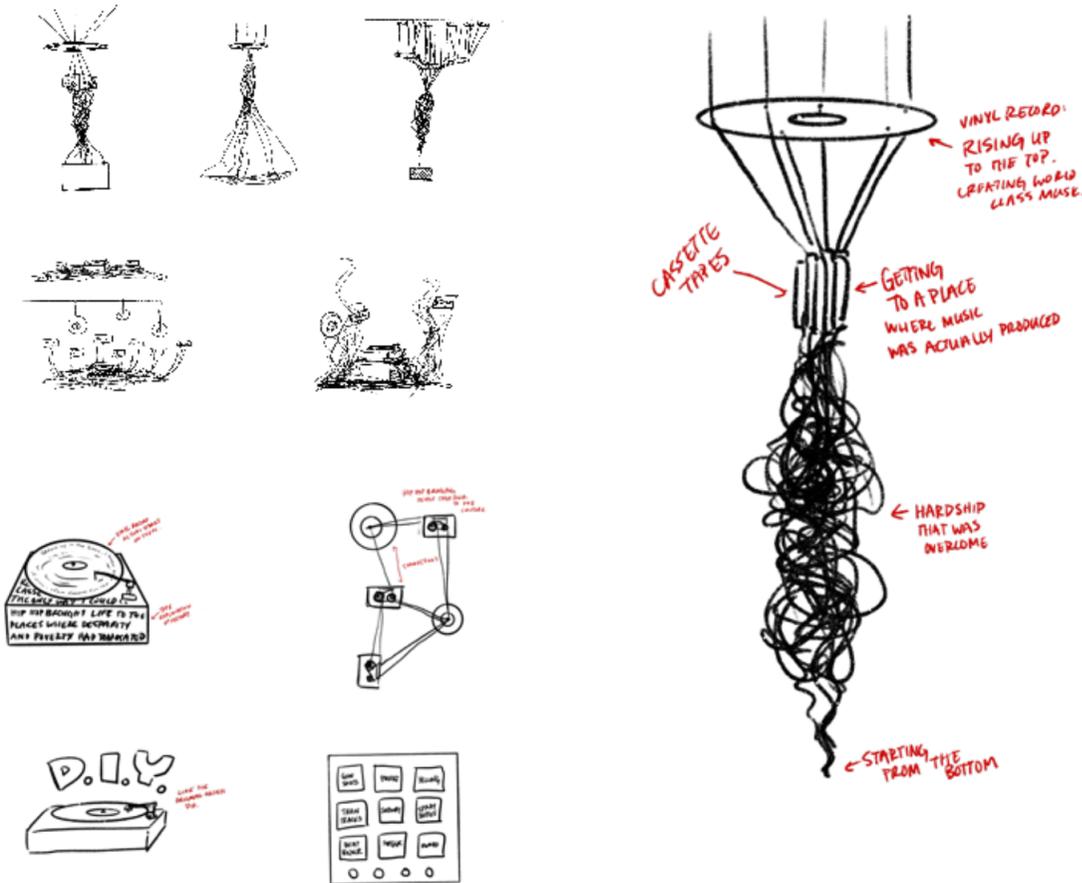


“  
BE, BE-FORE WE CAME TO THIS COUNTRY  
WE WERE KINGS AND QUEENS,  
NEVER PORCH MONKEYS

—NAS “I CAN”

IDEA  
TION

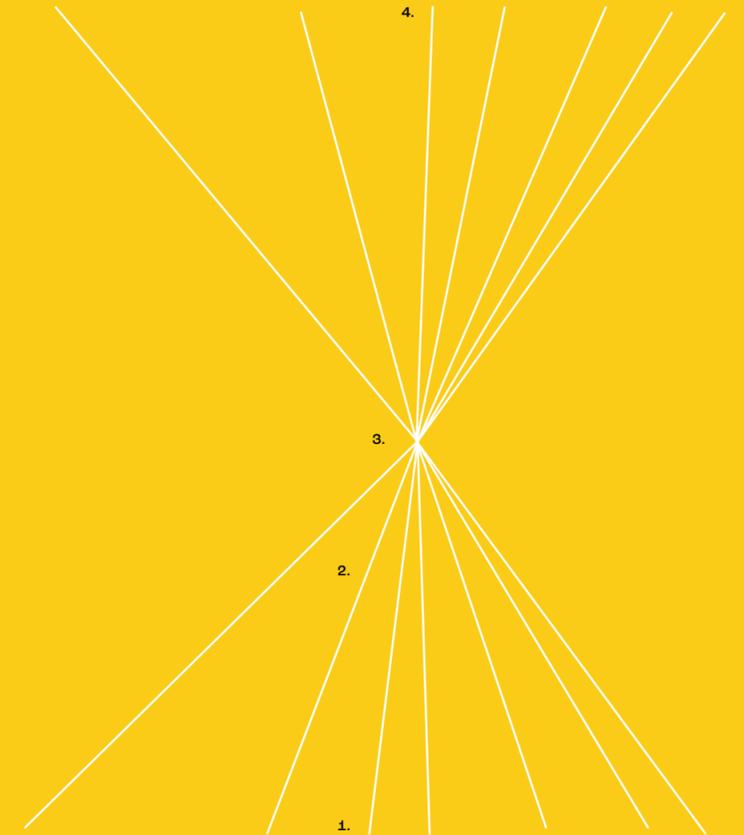
## INITIAL SKETCHES



## VISUAL DIAGRAM

To visualize the research and observations, I came up with this simple abstract diagram. Lines indicate individuals, artists, and styles that represent hip hop and culture.

1. Hip Hop building up from **the depths** of racism, social injustice, and economic despair.
2. Hip Hop becomes a platform that many minorities use as a voice to **speak up and rise**.
3. **Tension** will always play a role in the rise of hip hop. Even today, Hip Hop is controversial and a heavily debated topic.
4. Despite facing criticism, misuse, and censoring, Hip Hop becomes one of the world's most popular genres of music. Hip Hop **becomes global**.



*"Keep in mind when brothas start flexing the verbal skillz, it always reflects what's going on politically, socially, and economically."*

—Musician Davey D

**INTER**

**ATIONS**

“

I DON'T SEE ONLY GOD CAN JUDGE ME,  
'CAUSE I SEE THINGS CLEAR  
QUICK THESE CRACKERS WILL GIVE  
MY BLACK ASS A HUNDRED YEARS

”

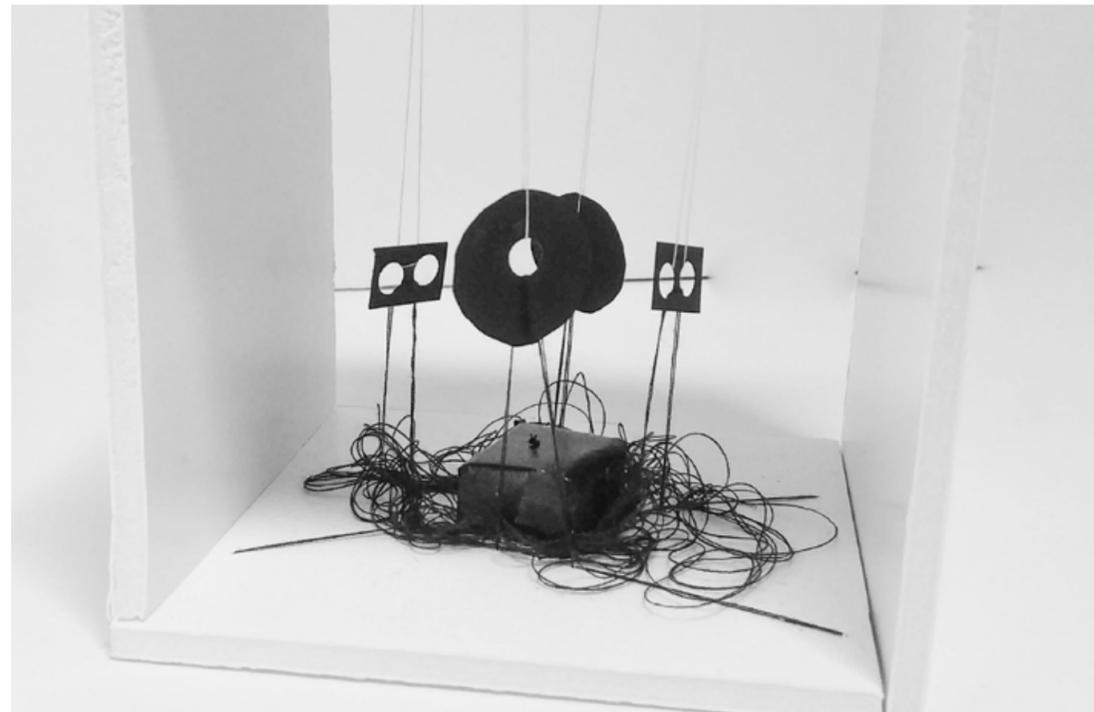
—50 CENT “*MANY MEN*”

# PROTO TYPES

## TESTING & PROTOTYPES

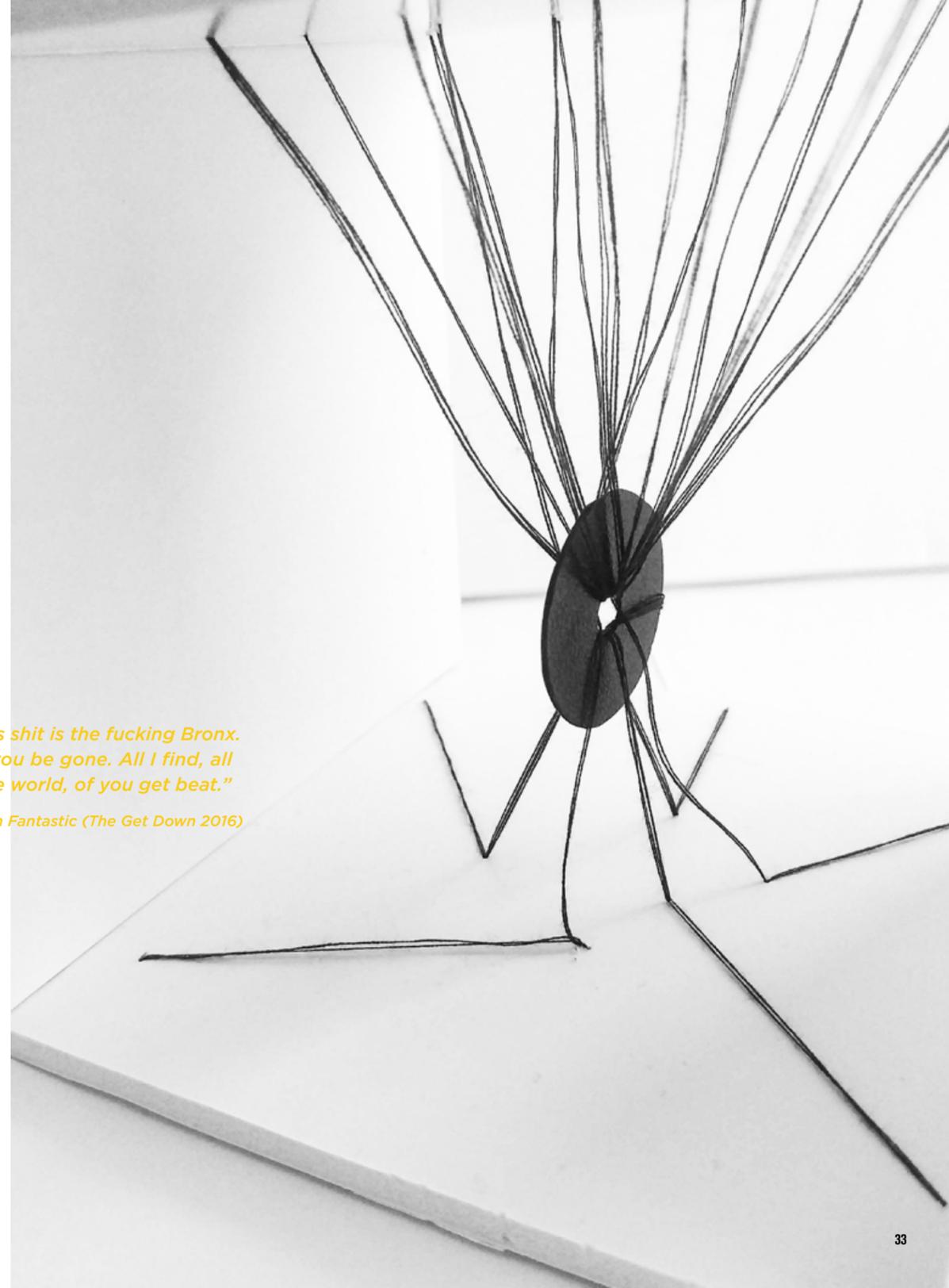
These prototypes were built off of some of the sketches in the ideation phase. The initial prototypes were made primarily out of foam board, thread and cardstock. These were built in correspondence with two of the sketches in the ideation phase.

The purpose of this stage of the project is to test the form and understandability of the concept. Building these forms helped me decide what to do or not do. Most of these forms came out to be either too abstract or too literal. They were missing several elements and layers.



*"This ain't Disneyland, this shit is the fucking Bronx.  
Either you be strong, or you be gone. All I find, all  
I keep. Either you beat the world, or you get beat."*

*—Shaolin Fantastic (The Get Down 2016)*





## MATERIAL TESTING

This first execution was a test of material, visual rendering and mechanics of how the installation would work. Modeling was done in Fusion 360. Since this was mostly a mock-up trial, I didn't anticipate for this shape to be the exact form that I wanted in the end. The space and walls don't seem completely right and with the space I've chosen, the Roberts Family Room in the SF MoMA, this boxed up room will not be appropriate.

### MATERIALS USED



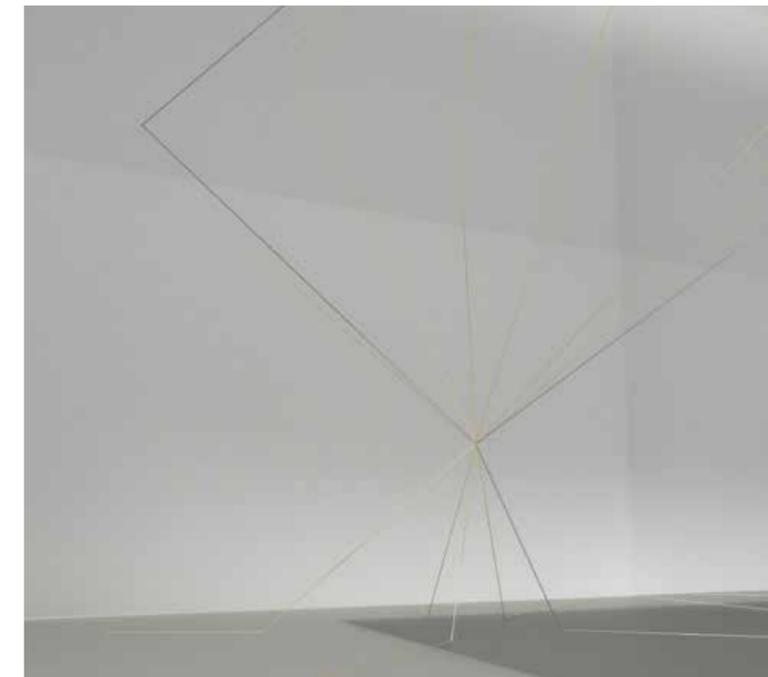
A metallic polished gold was used to reflect the coveted possessions of **jewelry and riches** in the world of hip hop. Wealth is often flaunted both in hip hop music and culture.



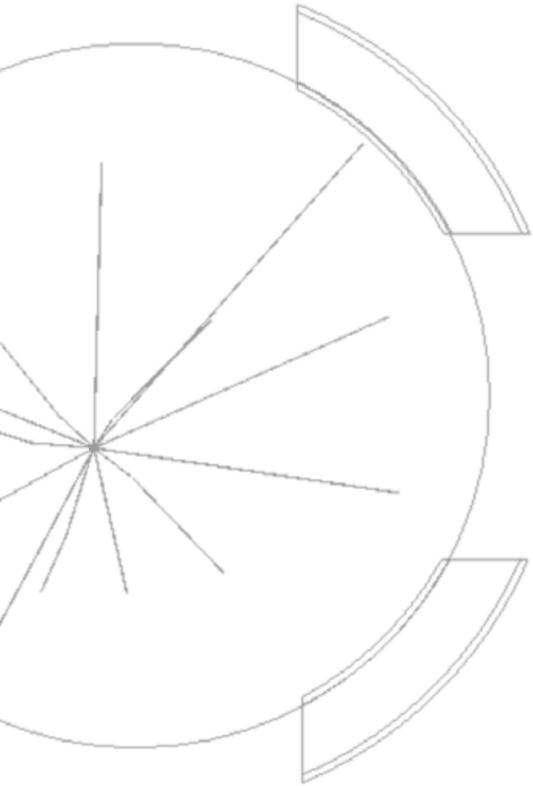
Mirrors are utilized as a metaphorical element to encourage **self reflection**. Visitors are prompted to look into the mirror to evaluate their own thoughts, actions, and ideas.



Glass is used more practically as a space holder for the installation. Its transparent quality allows for the space to be **contained, yet not trapped**.



# MATERIALS



## ITERATION 2

### General Idea

This improved render mostly addressed the space surrounding the wires. After visiting the Robert's Family Gallery, I found that the ceiling and space was a lot higher and wider than anticipated. I thought that to install something that reached from the floor to the ceiling of the gallery may have been too much large in scale. In addition, people would then feel discouraged to engage with it closer; The typography installed on the ceiling and walls would be almost invisible. So I wanted to create a more contained space; Instead of a box, I wanted to create a shape that visitors can easily walk through.

### Issues & Challenges

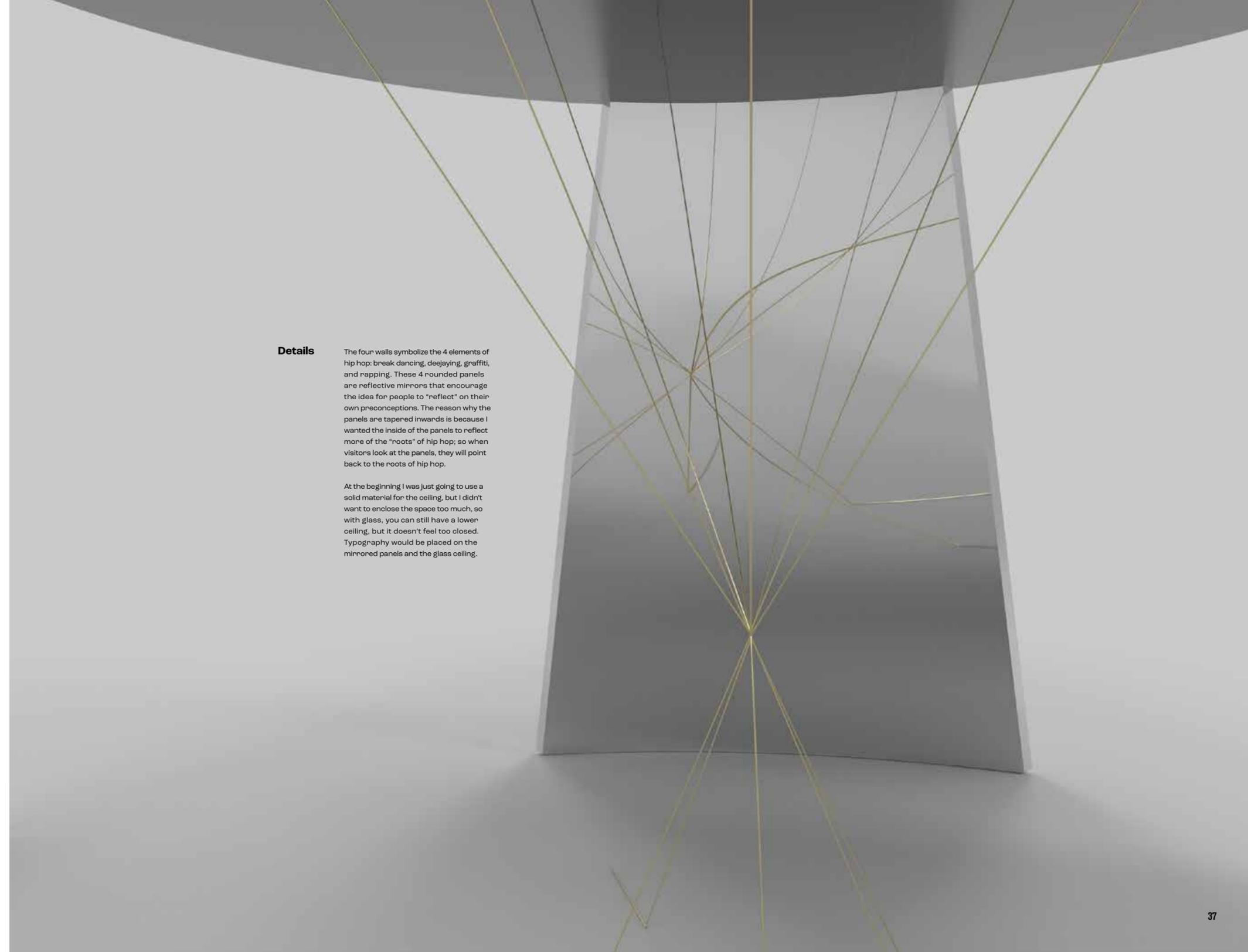
Issues with this rendering (as seen in the image to the right) is that when the mirrors reflect, the reflection is very warped. When typography is added, it would be hardly unreadable. This is an issue as my hope was that people would engage with the text at a very close level.

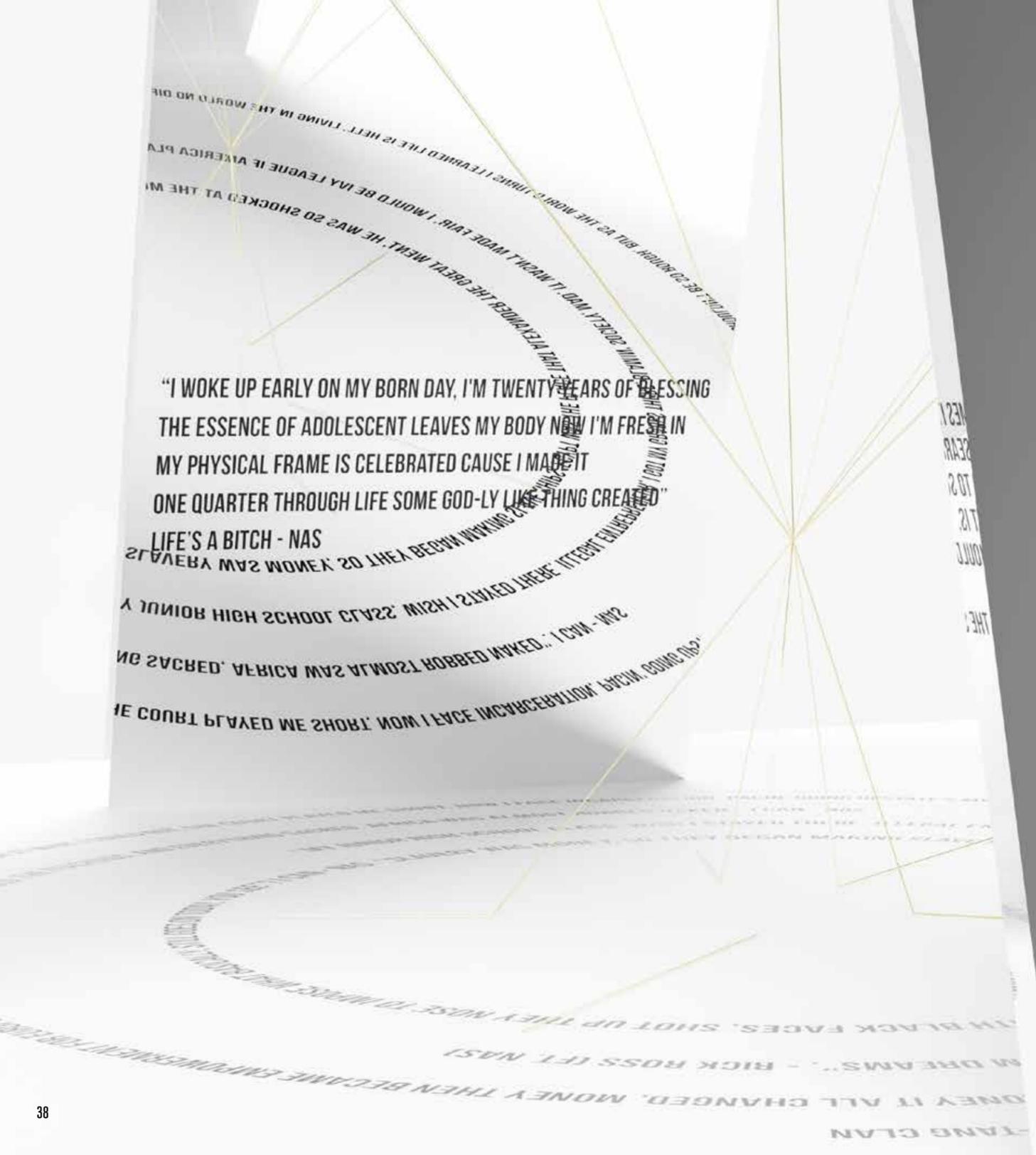


### Details

The four walls symbolize the 4 elements of hip hop: break dancing, deejaying, graffiti, and rapping. These 4 rounded panels are reflective mirrors that encourage the idea for people to "reflect" on their own preconceptions. The reason why the panels are tapered inwards is because I wanted the inside of the panels to reflect more of the "roots" of hip hop; so when visitors look at the panels, they will point back to the roots of hip hop.

At the beginning I was just going to use a solid material for the ceiling, but I didn't want to enclose the space too much, so with glass, you can still have a lower ceiling, but it doesn't feel too closed. Typography would be placed on the mirrored panels and the glass ceiling.





# TRACK RECORD

Hip hop, being a controversial form of art has been criticized for decades. What is often ignored is that hip hop's history and culture is deeply rooted in african american culture, and its responses to racism, slavery, and poverty. "Track Record" is an installation that is built to ask questions, challenge preconceptions and to encourage self reflection. Hip hop is not "just unreasonable profanity mixed with a beat, it is far more. Hip hop tells parts of history that has been forgotten and ignored.

## ITERATION 2

### General Idea

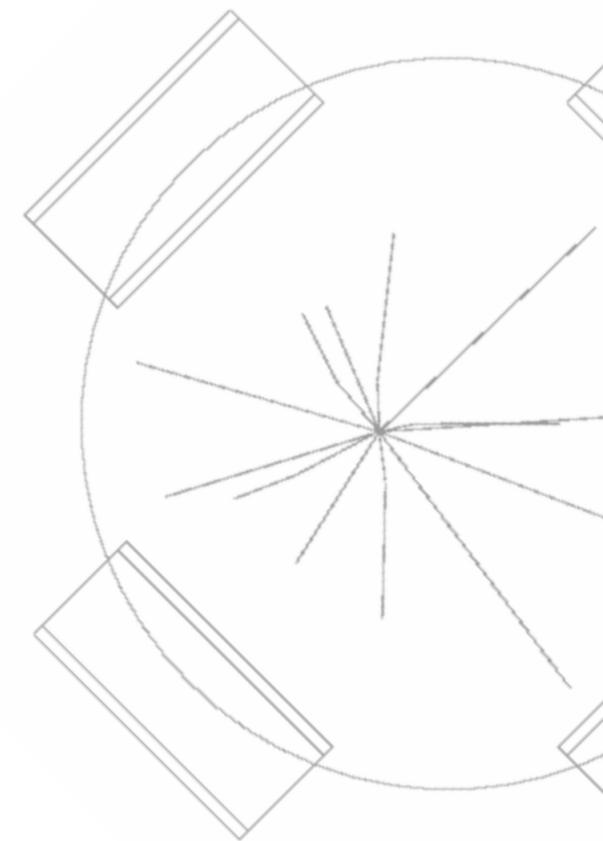
This second iteration has the same general idea. With the adjustment of making the side panels flat, the text was more readable and the reflections were more clear. There were still issues with the multiple reflections, so there needed to be some adjustments there. At this point, I am not happy with the typography just yet. I am looking for type that somehow reflects the character and attitude of hip hop, but is also readable.

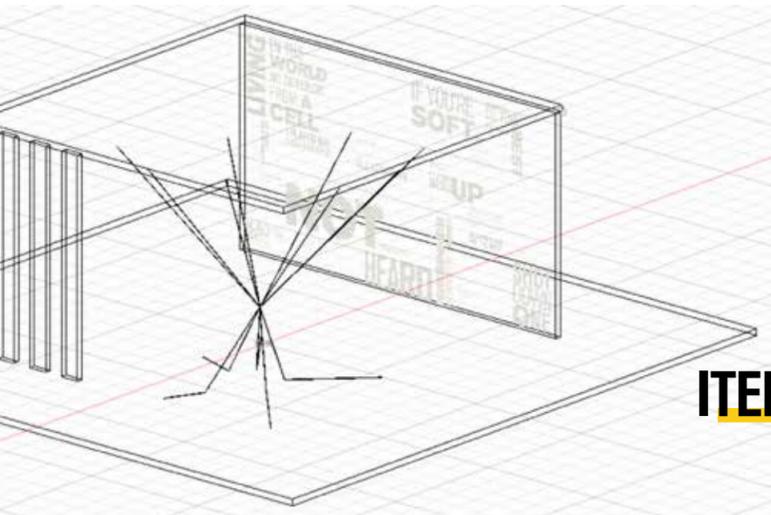
Typography used in this model:

- BEBAS NEUE
- Moderno FB Comp

### Issues and Challenges

Issues with this iteration is that the form is not visually pleasing yet. The concepts are there and the idea is somewhat compelling, but the visual presentation of the information and research is not enough and not complete. The information is too shallow and the experience is not interesting enough.





## ITERATION 3

### General Idea

This third iteration has the same general concept but with a different visual and typographical form. With a more square form, lyrics are placed on the panel for easy viewing. The four pillars represent the four elements of hip hop: deejaying, rapping, graffiti, and break dancing. Here, instead of putting chunks of information, I only used snippets of songs

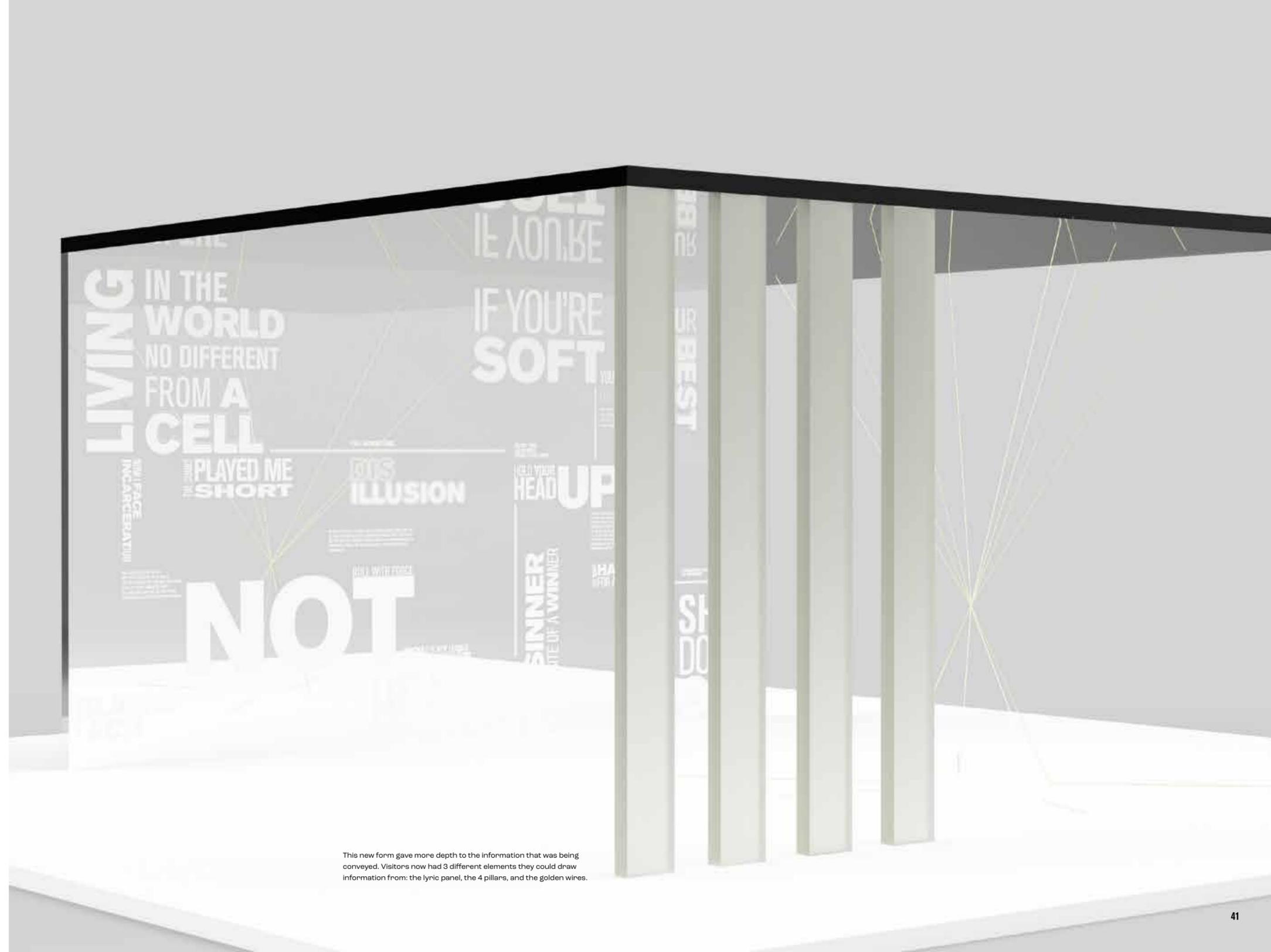
Typography used in this model:

- AKZIDENZ-GROTESK BQ CONDENSED
- **AKZIDENZ-GROTESK BQ SUPER REGULAR**



### Issues & Challenges

Issues with this iteration is that the back side of the panel is empty. What would visitors see there? How would they engage with a blank wall? Colors are also very dull. The typography is not bold enough for the purpose that I need. At this point, I try to create a better lyric composition for the panel as well as think about the physical form/material and if I can spice it up more.



This new form gave more depth to the information that was being conveyed. Visitors now had 3 different elements they could draw information from: the lyric panel, the 4 pillars, and the golden wires.

# SOLUTIONS

“

**“GOD IS SMILIN’ ON YOU BUT  
HE’S FROWNIN’ TOO  
BECAUSE ONLY GOD KNOWS  
WHAT YOU’LL GO THROUGH”**

– GRANDMASTER FLASH *“THE MESSAGE”*

”

*“Hip Hop reflects the truth, and the problem is that Hip Hop exposes a lot of the negative truth that society tries to conceal. It’s a platform where we could offer information but it’s also an escape.”*

—Busta Rhymes

## THE FINAL SOLUTION

As stated in my research findings, I created categories that better help people understand hip hop and its essence. With these three categories, visitors can learn and think about the music in a different way. These categories are introduced on the introduction panel and on the app.

### Origins of Oppression

Hip hop was born out of the systematic oppression and repercussions of slavery, racism, violence, white supremacy, police brutality, racial inequality and so much more. These hip hop songs illustrate the frustration with the cultural and systematic issues at the time. Much of it seems aggressive and profane, but the lyrics convey the genuine struggle many African Americans faced every day.

### A Brewing Revolution

Hip hop had rough beginnings and harsh push back, but it became a platform for which African American artists found their voices. Since they had been silenced for so long, hip hop became a powerful way to finally speak and be heard. Many artists began speaking against inequality, systematic issues, and these hip hop songs illustrate the beginning of an uprising and revolution for peace, equality, change, and freedom.

### Proclamations of hope

Although hip hop still faced a lot of criticism and push back, it brought many people together. In present times, hip hop has become a global phenomenon and it is publicized everywhere. In a sense, it has brought many hip hop pioneers to fame and fortune, but in another sense, it has brought more respect and human dignity to those who began the revolution. These songs illustrate the cry of triumph and victory that is found in hip hop and the journey to success.

RED

BLUE

YELLOW

## THE FINAL EXECUTION

Although the first several iterations and prototypes included only one element of installation and execution, the final solution includes 3 elements to present visitors with the fullest experience and immersion possible. After much contemplation and speaking with mentors, I landed here.

### INSTALLATION—PHYSICAL & VISUAL

Being the first element of this project, the installation serves as a physical and visual representation of the three categories that I found in hip hop. The form emphasizes the elements of hip hop as well as the rise and reign of hip hop through time.

### HEADPHONES & MUSIC—AUDIO

Music was the second element that was added into the project that I was actually reluctant to include; The reason being this: Hip hop is already music. Why would I try to make an argument with something that already exists and already stirs up controversy and unclear opinions? However, in the end, it wasn't until I myself experienced listening and reading lyrics at the same time that I found this element very powerful.

### TRACK APP—AUGMENTED REALITY

The TRACK app was the last element that was added in. In addition to the existent installation, the TRACK app gives visitors a deeper perspective of hip hop. It also is the place where visitors can listen to music and learn more about the lyrics. This creates more engagement.

## INSTALLATION MATERIALS



### Black Vinyl Type

The black vinyl type is meant to signify the weight and seriousness that the lyrics hold. Hip hop music is **bold, heavy, and sometimes even harsh**, but it needs to be seen and read.



### Polished Gold

A metallic polished gold was used to reflect the coveted possessions of **jewelry and riches** in the world of hip hop. Wealth was often flaunted both in hip hop music and culture.



### Clear Glass

Glass is used more practically as a space holder for the installation. Its transparent quality allows for the gallery space to be more **contained, but not feel trapped**.



### Reflective Mirror

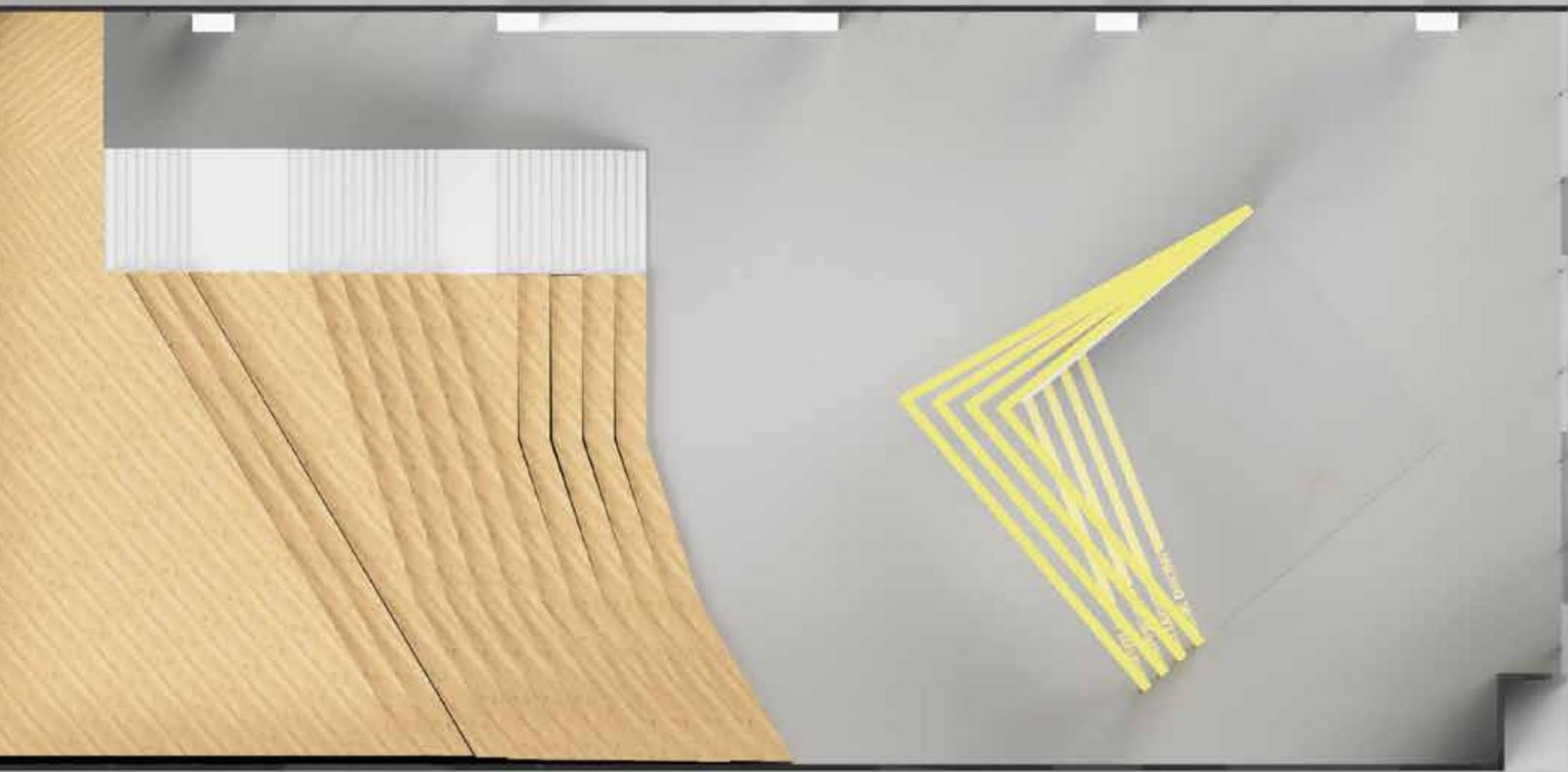
Mirrors are utilized as a metaphorical element to encourage **self reflection**. Visitors are prompted to look into the mirror to evaluate their own thoughts, actions, and ideas.



### White Leather

The white leather is meant to be a **contrast** to the dark heavy type of the panel. A breath of fresh air.

# FLOOR PLANS



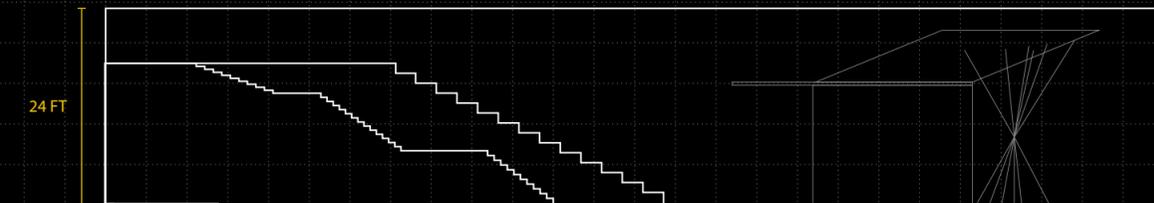
*"Artistic form is congruent with the dynamic forms of our direct sensuous, mental, and emotional life; works of art are projections of "felt life", as Henry James called it, into spatial, temporal, and poetic structures."*

—Susanne Katherina Langer

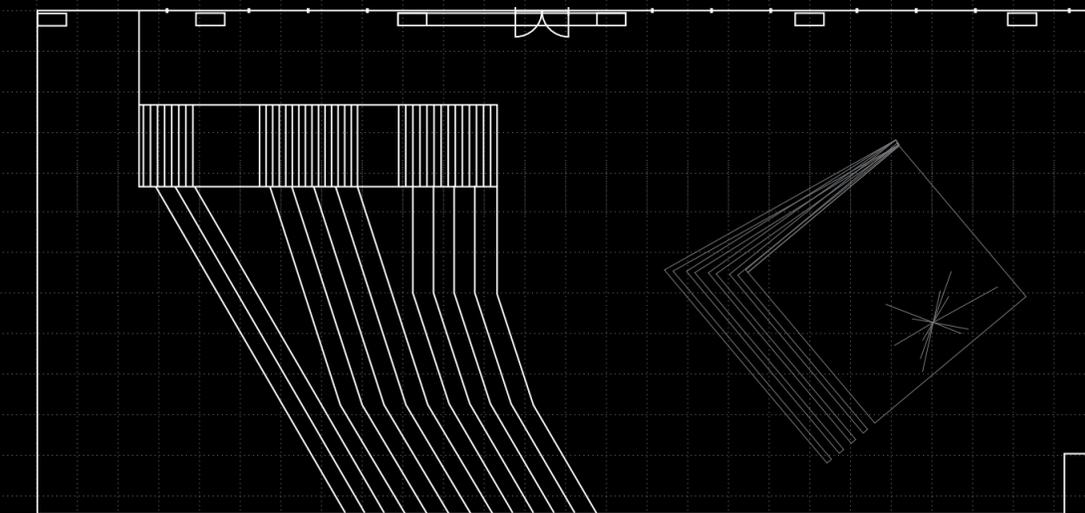
## SF MUSEUM OF MODERN ART ROBERTS FAMILY GALLERY

Disclaimer: These measurements were based off approximate estimations. Exact measurements were not accessible.

Side elevation View

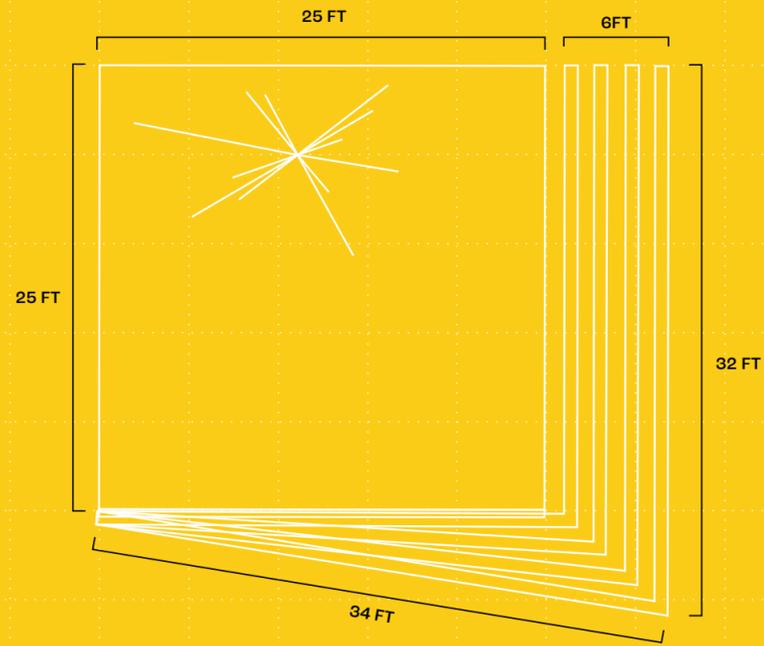


Top Floor Plan

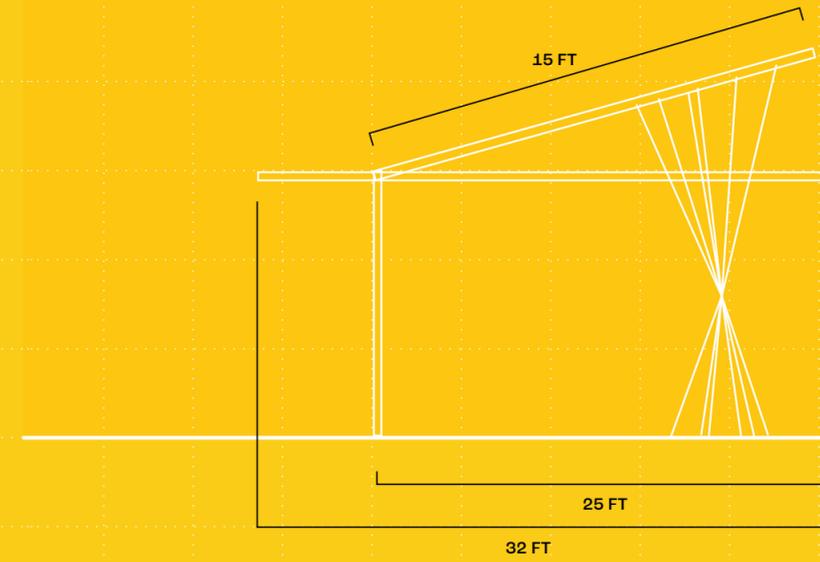


# DETAILED MEASUREMENTS

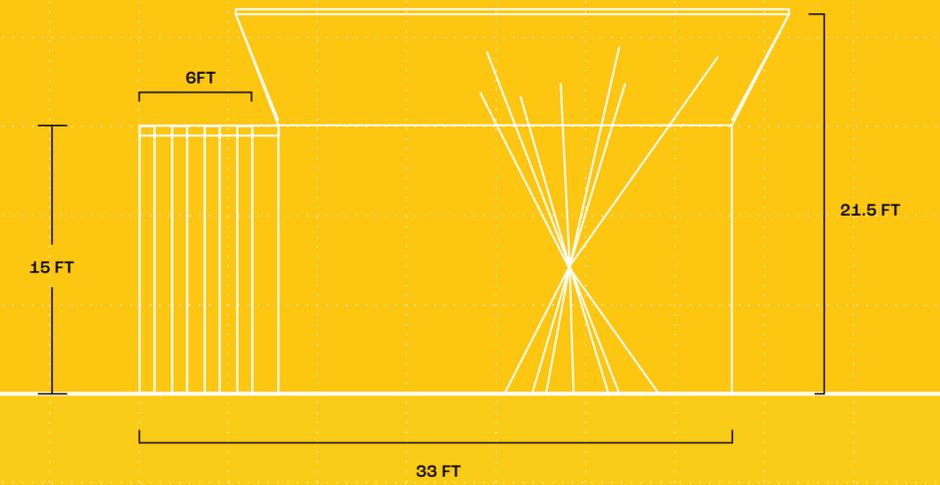
TOP VIEW



SIDE VIEW



FRONT VIEW



# VISITOR JOURNEY



## INTRO PANEL

Facing the stair case and the doors of the Roberts Family Gallery at SF MoMA, is the intro panel to the installation. This panel gives visitors an overview of the installation, what it is for, why it matters, and how to fully experience it. Headphones are provided to visitors for a full experience of both audio and visuals. The intro panel also encourages visitors to scan a QR code and download the TRACK app to further experience the installation at an AR level. Before walking to the other side of the panel, visitors are briefed with 3 categories of music that can be found in hip hop with corresponding colors.

## TRANSITION

After reading and engaging with the intro panel, following the overhead golden pillars, visitors can then walk around to the other side of the panel where they can experience the audio and visuals. With Bluetooth capabilities, users can listen to the experience with easy access and range.

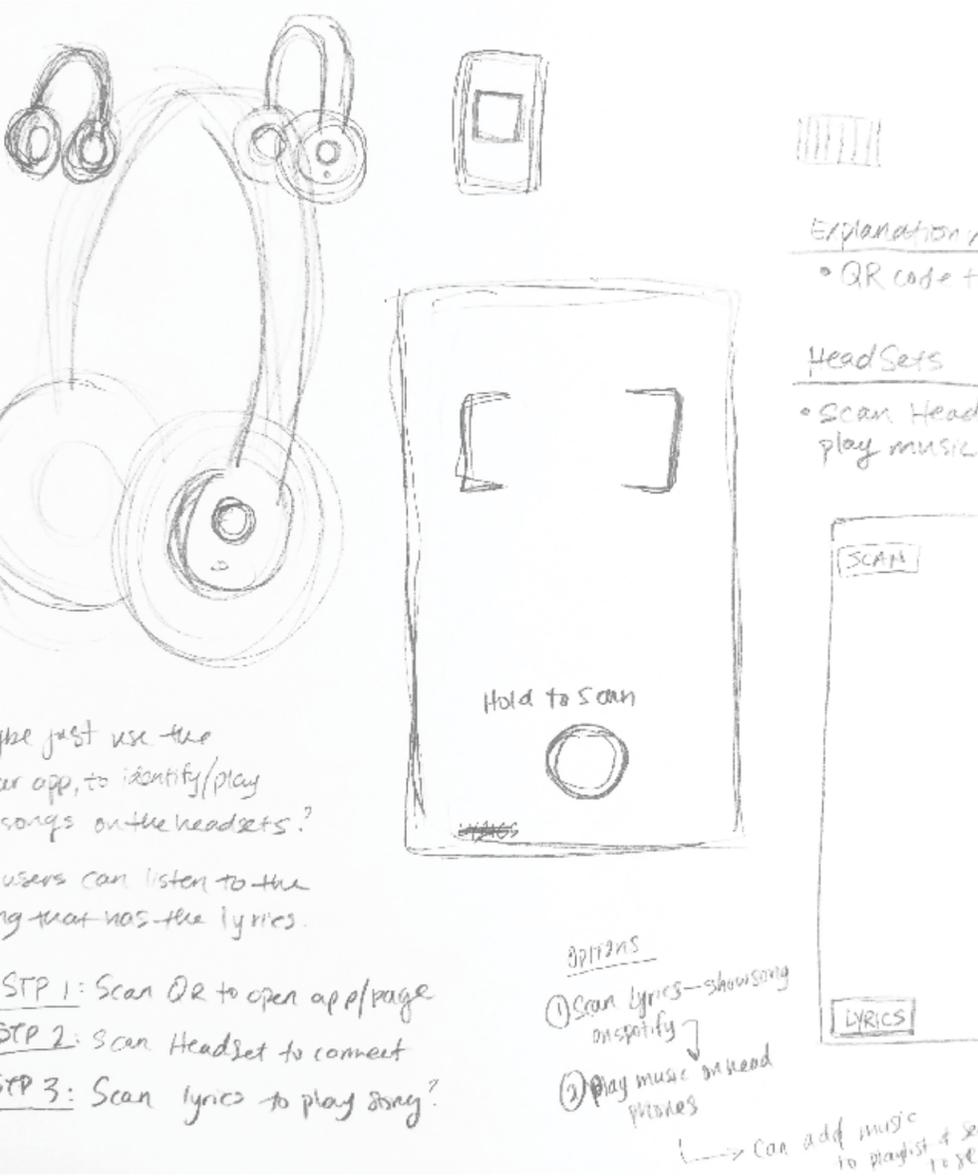
## LYRIC PANEL

The lyric panel features some key lyrics from a small selection of hip hop songs. The 3 categories that were introduced in the intro panel can be found in these hip hop lyrics and songs. Using the TRACK app, visitors can see the lyrics in their categories. By tapping and using the app, users can listen to the songs that are displayed on the panel.

## GOLD PILLARS & WIRE FORMS

The 4 gold pillars and wire forms both foster a flow of space, but also represent important information. Although subtle and abstract, these two forms support the information and purpose of the installation. They also double as a photo op.

# TRACK APP



## WHY MUSIC AND AN APP?

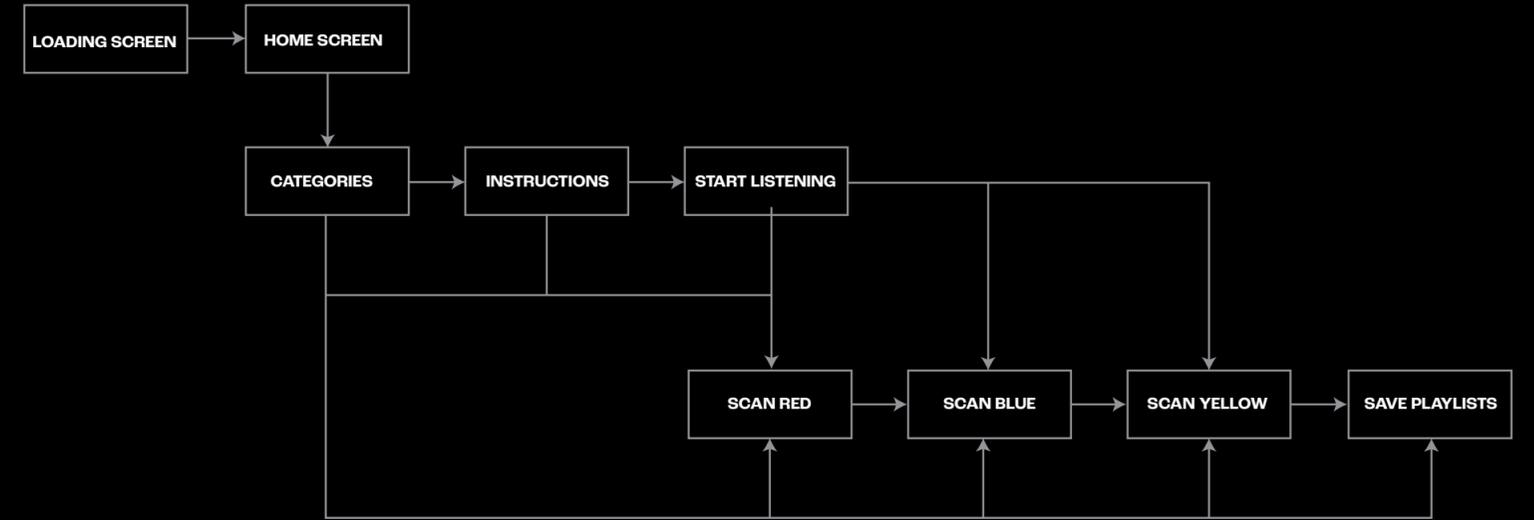
The app was one of the last things I added into the experience of this thesis. At one point, I did not want to have music integrated into my installation the reason being this: Hip hop is already and audio form of art. Why repeat what's been done? How would it offer something new to cynical audiences?

It was also suggested to me that if I want people to really take in the three categories that I found in Hip Hop, then having something to highlight those specific lyrics in those categories would be essential to the user experience. With this feedback, I created a hypothetical AR experience app. This app would give visitors a interactive perspective and view of the installation. It would also serve as the element that would play music.

## FEATURES

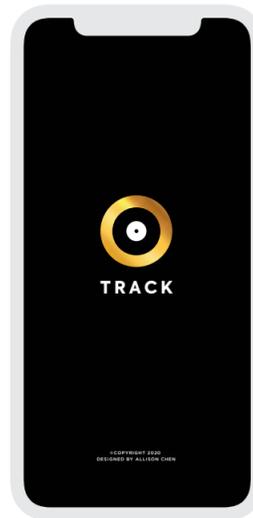
- Learn about categories
- Interactive AR Lyric Scanning
- Audio Music Experience
- Save Music

## APP FLOWCHART

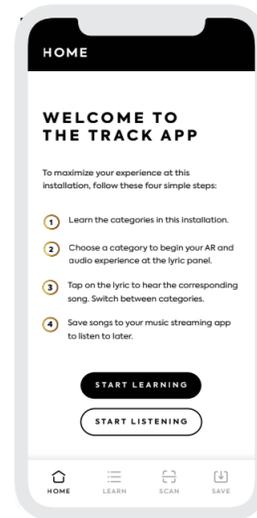


# GOLDEN THREAD

## LOADING

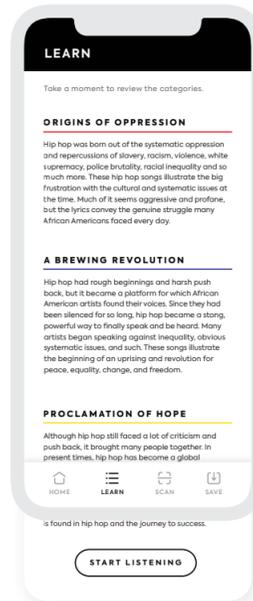


## HOME & INTRO



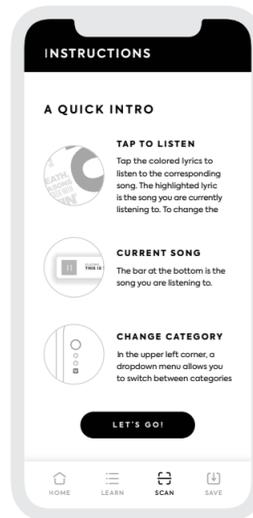
Upon opening the app, users are given 4 simple guides to begin as they experience the app and AR. From here, they can either read the categories again or start listening right away.

## CATEGORIES



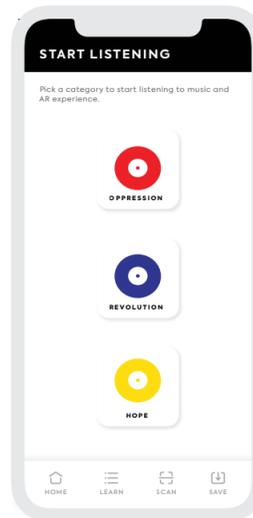
The categories list is the same as the one on the intro panel in the installation. This page gives users another opportunity to go back and read if needed.

## INSTRUCTIONS



These Instructions give users a general idea of the functions of the scan page. This page only appears the first time users go through after opening the app.

## START LISTENING



After learning the general use of the scan function, users can then pick a category to start their experience.

## AR LYRIC SCAN



Whatever category users pick, the scan will only show that category in color. The app will automatically pick a song to begin playing on the panel. Users can tap other lyrics to choose different songs in that category.

## SWITCH CATEGORY



If users want to switch to different categories, the drop down menu at the top left corner allows users to do that. They can simply pick a different color.

## BLUE CATEGORY



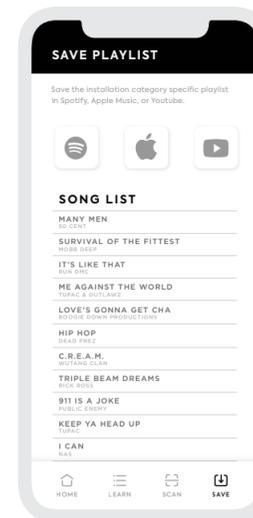
Once users pick a different color in the dropdown, different lyrics are highlighted whatever lyric that is on screen will begin playing.

## YELLOW CATEGORY



Once users pick a different color in the dropdown, different lyrics are highlighted whatever lyric that is on screen will begin playing.

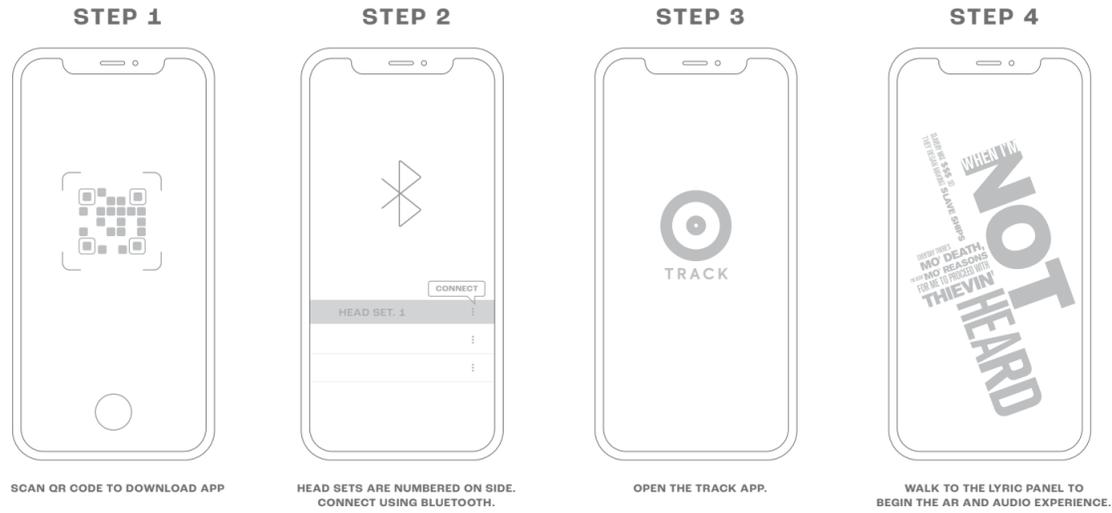
## SAVE PLAYLISTS



As a "takeaway" from the installation, users can save the category playlists in their streaming services. The streaming app opens with the selected playlist.

# USER DIAGRAM

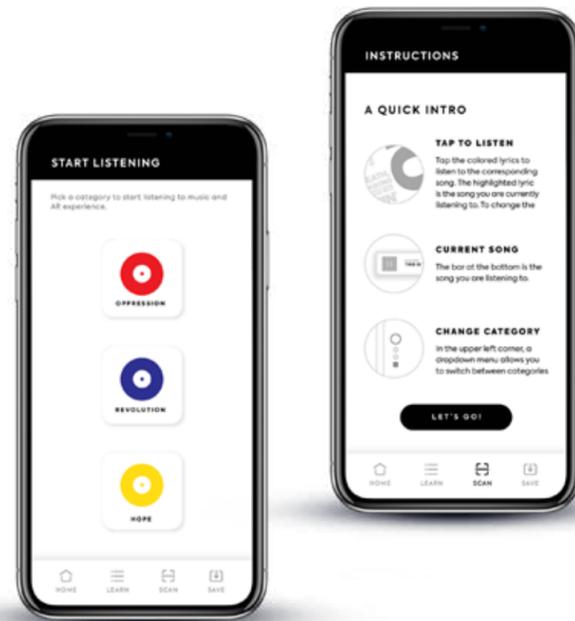
Upon approaching the intro panel, visitors are provided with a description and brief of the entire installation and purpose, but they are also provided with a user experience diagram. The diagram helps users understand how to experience the installation at full capacity with the headsets and app. It guides visitors through finding the app, connecting their headphones, and then opening and using the app.



# APP EXPERIENCE

## THE LYRIC PANEL

The purpose of the app is to provide an extended perspective for visitors to experience. Although the categories for learning are emphasized on the intro panel of the installation, the app gives visitors a better understanding of what the hip hop songs really talk about in their lyrics. By tapping on the different colors and lyrics, users can easily listen to each of the songs on the lyric panel. Listening to and interacting with lyrics is a powerful tool.







WHEN MY MOTHER WAS \$55 US  
 THEY BEGAN MANNING  
 SLAVE SHIPS  
 READ MORE, LEARN MORE, CHANGE THE WORLD  
 LIVING IN THE WORLD  
 NO DIFFERENT FROM  
 UP  
 HEAD  
 HOLD YOUR  
 A CELL  
 DISILLUSION  
 PEOPLE BORN TO DIE  
 HAPPENS FOR A REASON  
 THE COURT PLAYED ME SHORT  
 IF YOU SORT OF LOST  
 THE COURT PAID, NOT OF THE WORLD TRADE  
 ALWAYS DO YOUR BEST  
 FACE INCARCERATION  
 NOT HATE ME, NOT IN MONEY I SEE, NOT IN CLOTHES I SEE  
 DON'T SEE MY MOTHER STRUGGLING, TO DO SOMETHING, YOU'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING  
 FOR THE NIGGAS  
 ON THE DOING LIFE BEHIND BARS  
 PROSECUTOR AND PROSECUTOR, THEY DON'T WANT TO LISTEN  
 DO NOT BE A FOOL WHO'S PRE JUDICE  
 THE DEAL, BY JESUS CHRIST

# TRACK RECORD



### INSTRUCTIONS:

To experience the installation at full capacity, please scan the QR code to download the Track app. The app will guide you through the instructions of connecting the headset and the audio experience. Using the color code on the wall, you can experience the different types of songs that speak to each of these three stages of hip hop. When finished, please return headsets to the stations.



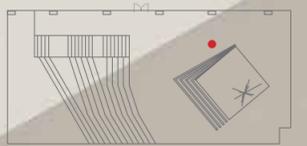
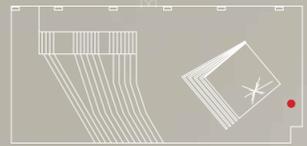
### ORIGINS OF OPPRESSION

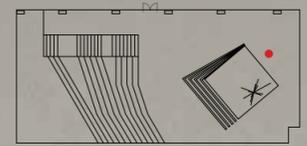
The hip-hop was born out of the systematic oppression and repercussions of slavery, racism, violence, and war among police brutality, racial inequality and so much more. These hip-hop songs reflect the frustration with the cultural and systematic issues of the time. It's a form of protest and self-expression, but the lyrics convey the genuine struggle many African Americans lived every day.



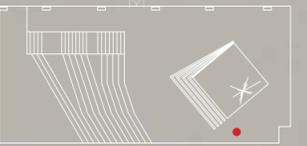
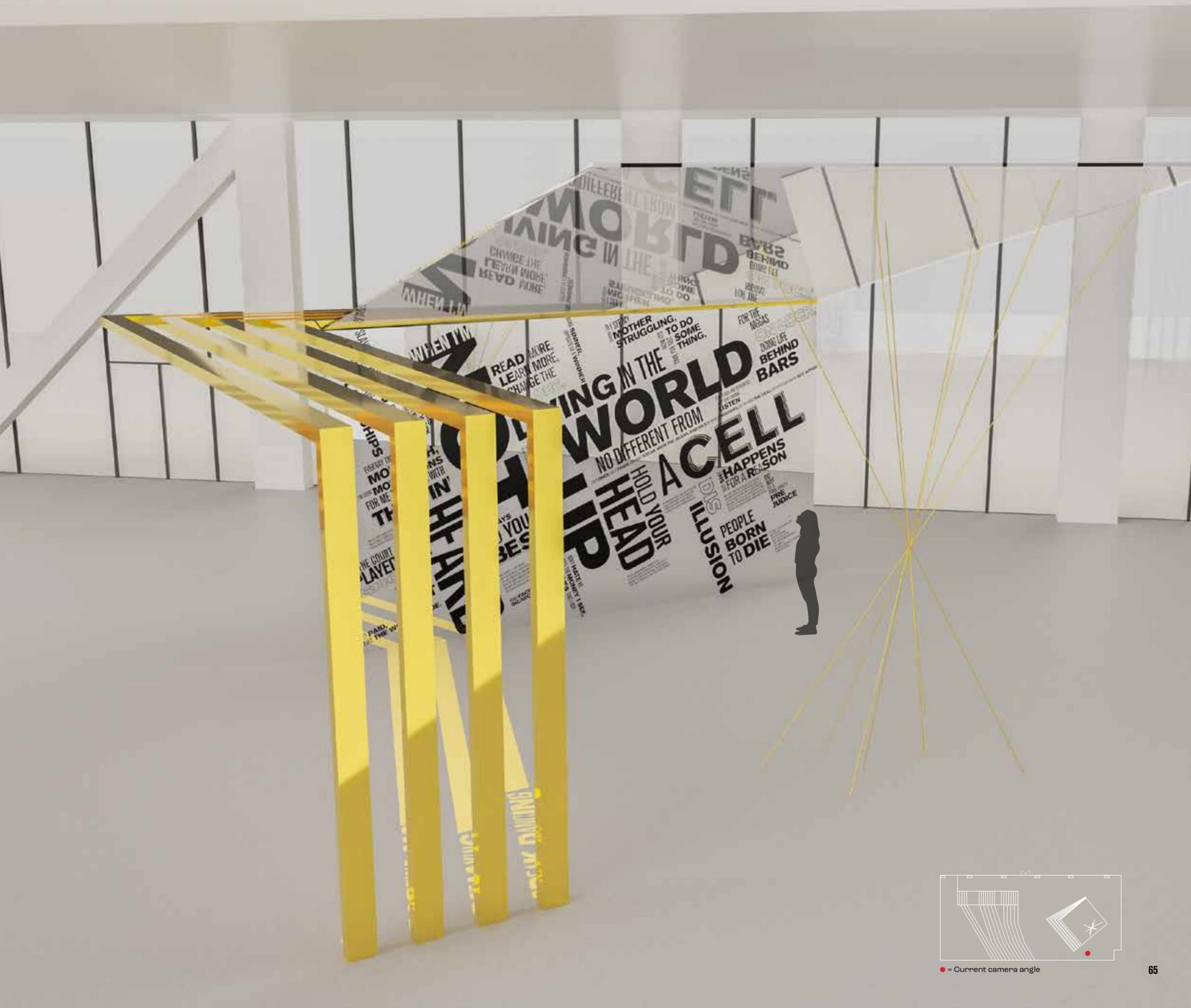
### A BREWING REVOLUTION

The hip-hop was born out of the systematic oppression and repercussions of slavery, racism, violence, and war among police brutality, racial inequality and so much more. These hip-hop songs reflect the frustration with the cultural and systematic issues of the time. It's a form of protest and self-expression, but the lyrics convey the genuine struggle many African Americans lived every day.





● = Current camera angle



● = Current camera angle





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*Thank you for embarking on this journey with me. I hope you've been inspired emotionally, mentally, and spiritually. I hope this thesis sparks conversation, change, and growth in our societies.*

—Allison F. Chen

