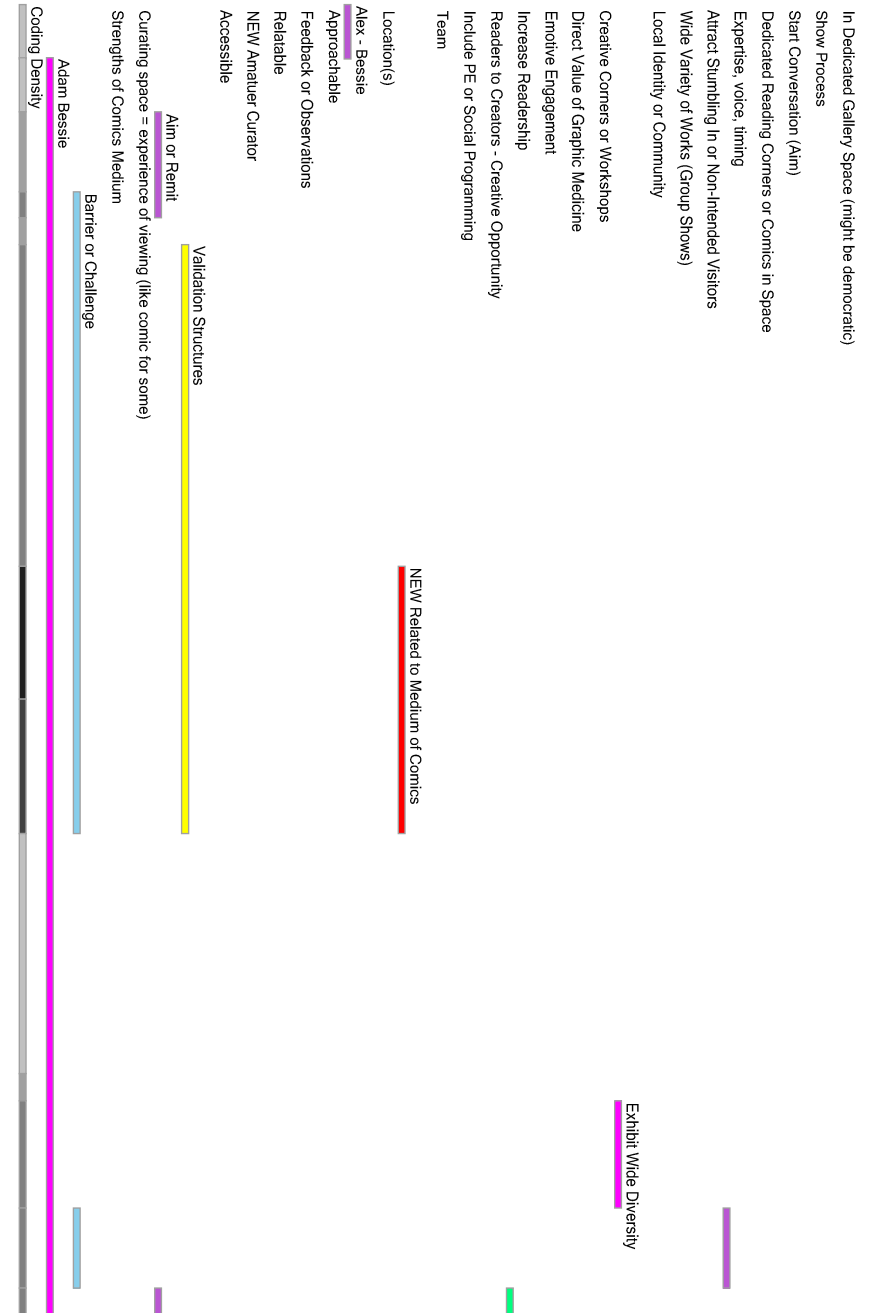


Speaker 1: wonderful. Sounds great. Well, I wondered just for the context of the interview then if you could please give an introduction to your project and exhibition.

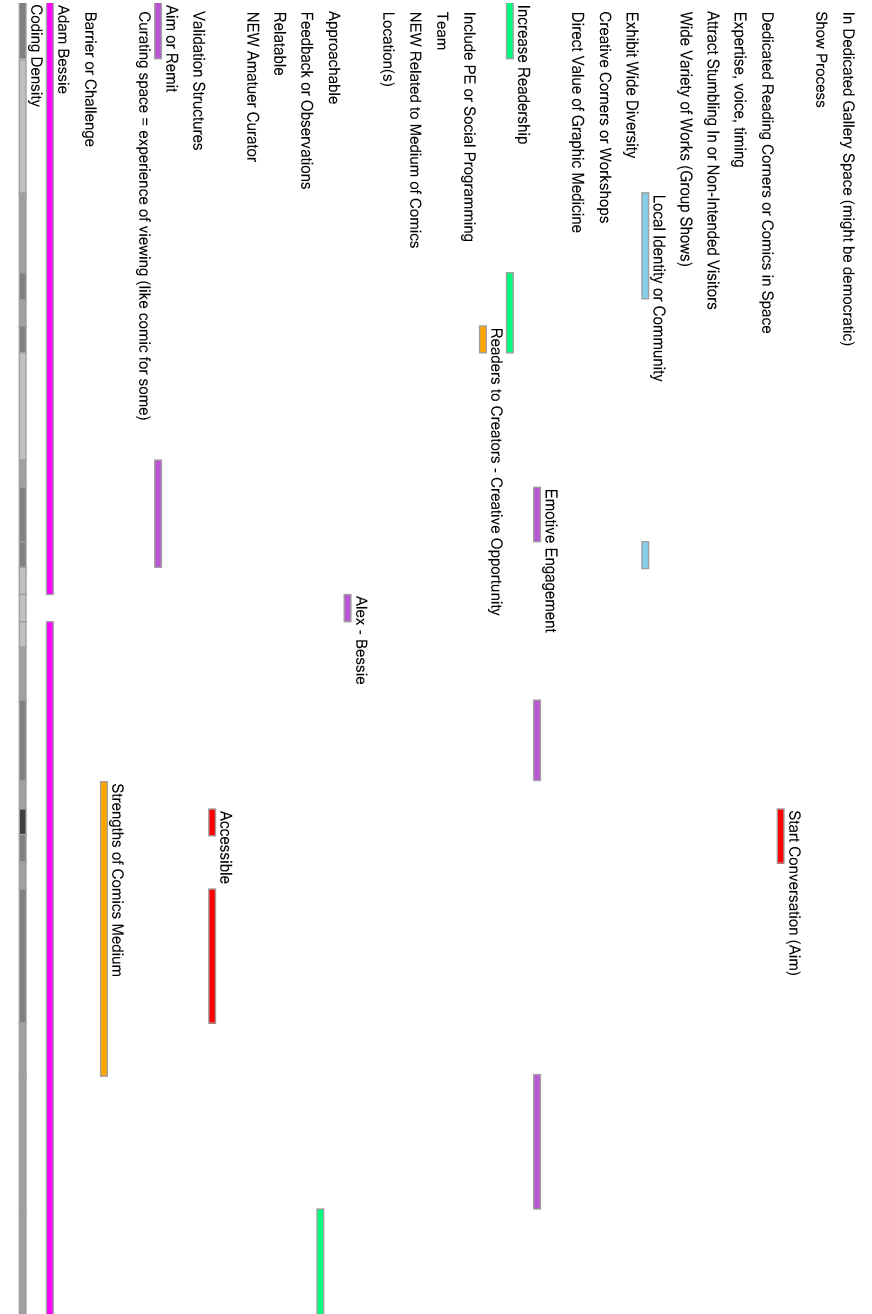
Speaker 2: Yeah, okay. So this this show and you have you have this I emailed you the official all information there which I think might be more quotable than me. The show was last year and it's called in real life a non fiction Comics art show and so the goal of the show as you can see bold in the middle of that statement is to introduce to our students and I'll tell you more about that in a second who our students are and our faculty that comics aren't just about you know peanuts or Calvin and Hobbes but can do real things like documentary. Now. I'm going to take a step further back and say this is the same argument. I've been making for well over a decade firstly to get Comics to be taught in my college back in 2009. In 2009 We had an experimental graphic novels literature class. And in order to get it. I'm in the California community College system and for any course to be taught at our College, which is that, you know, the first two years of college it would need to be able to be transferable to a UC or CSU. Otherwise students aren't going to take because they won't get units and the experimental course already had student even though it wasn't transferred with wanted to make it a permanent part of the of our curriculum. And again, this is a 2009 about you know, 10 years before this, so I had to make a case to all the curriculum committee along with my colleagues to say this is a real form of literature and make you know, use Scott mccloud's understanding Comics. I had a recent publication on using comics in the composition classroom, and it was an argument many of us were making at that time that it no longer has much needs to be made that Comics have a role in an English classroom. I got push back. Somebody gave me a document from UC Berkeley saying, you know, you can't have a course be transferable unless it is Rigorous in a certain way and it would that was an implicit critique that the course wouldn't be challenging and additionally when I was questioned by the committee, they said well don't you think you know students will just take the graphic literature class for an easy class, like maybe our second language students will just take it. There were all kinds of biases. Well, I had to really push back against those biases by talking about MAUS by talking about Joe Sacco and many the nonfiction work was part of my argument to say this has a real serious place that argument was fully made though. When I pointed out to them at UC Berkeley already had a graphic literature class. So we push it through in the graphic literature class is now existed since the 2009-10 and in that context over overtime, you know, I've published articles and other people are publishing more and more literature and I got to a point where I was very focused on non fiction Comics writing in particular graphic medicine. And this is where my experience comes in. So I didn't start participating my own comic still about 2011. I started by writing nonfiction comics focused on school reform and over the years. I ended up writing before I knew what it was graphic medicine. I had a piece in the Nib in 2006 with Dan Archer called pink ribbon and be living with an uncool cancer. And so I ended up creating in collaboration with artists a series of nonfiction comic works. And at the same time as I was doing this and working doing a Comics class having a contest for students every year along with the art department. So we were trying to build a comics program at our community college and as an aside our community college in the San Francisco Bay area is about 20,000 students there. It's very racially and economically diverse and we have in the area of very vibrant Comics art scene so through my work making my own comics and bringing people out I got to know quite a network of local Comics creators. All of them were working in nonfiction, which is sort of remarkable. So I said, how can I leverage my interest in making non fiction Comics as a practitioner and as a scholar along with these network of people that I've been able to meet on my journey and to help expose the community to say. Hey the same argument I was making 2009. Hey, How can we have you know help students engage more in this medium and have



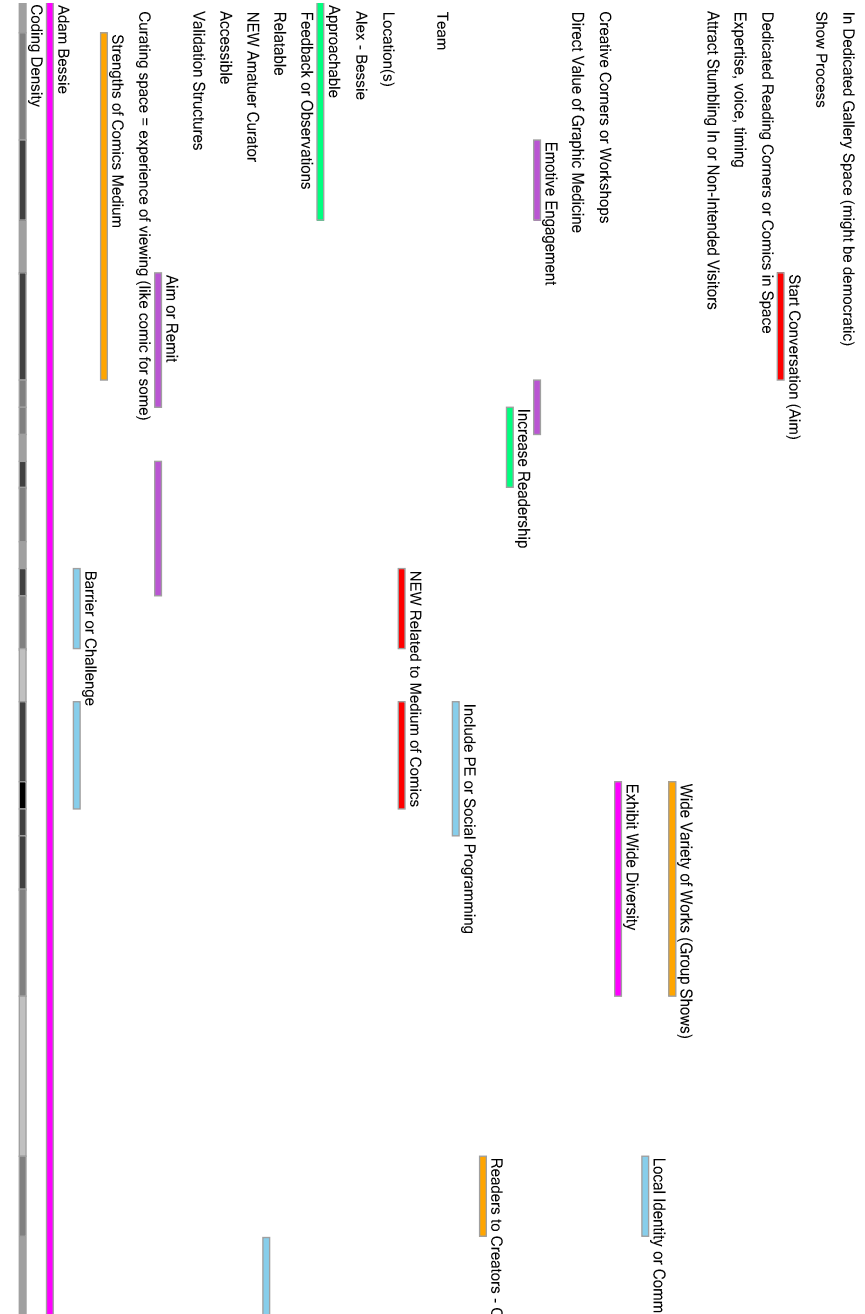
access to things that they otherwise wouldn't read or maybe even be interested in it might get turned off by and so, you know, I was fortunate that I met so many artists and that's part of what the impetus was that I had connections with people like Thi Bui whose book the best we could do. It was on its way to becoming a best-seller. I knew I'd connected with Nick Sousanis who'd written unflattering it which is a very strong work that doesn't really hit on graphic medicine but provides the theoretical Foundation that could be used for that and then in terms of graphic medicine itself, like I had my own work that I'd produce that can go into the show. And so there was just that a Nexus of things and I said, you know we can put something together that could be a top by show that would have our students feel like they were close to this art form and that they could be interested in going to our library and reading it. We have a great collection in our Library our librarian is.. really a gorgeous graphic literature. And so he said we can connect students to have want them to read it more to take our course, but also that they can make it themselves. We said this is an opportunity to level up and leverage the work we've been doing for the last decade to make, you know, bring Comics to our community and also to bring Comics to other professors in different fields where they could realize. Oh I can use a comic in a biology class or in other fields that you wouldn't think of as being connected so that the that's a very long answer to number one. But basically my answer is it to emerge from my own interest in creating graphic nonfiction and graphic medicine and from my interest in this medium that I saw being able to really engage readers personally and emotionally into issues that otherwise might ignore and especially having people that are local made that connection all the stronger. And I think that leads us into why did we want to curate it? So I think I answered some of that.

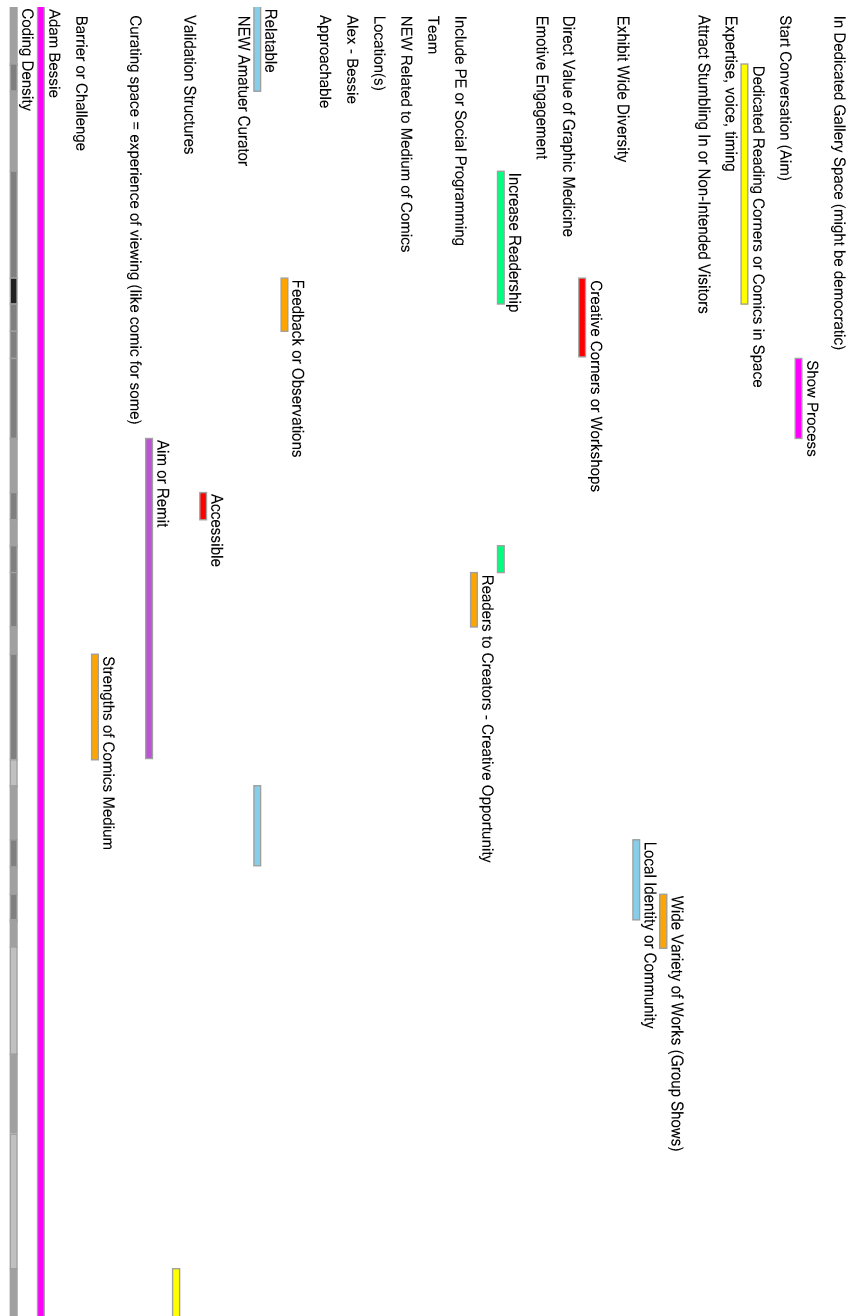
Speaker 1: Yeah,

Speaker 2: but I would say I mean, you know, I'm very... to take a step back, you know, obviously probably maybe the people you've talked to their curating just love Comics. So for me, you know Comics played an instrumental role in my own early literacy like many people and in my development as a Teacher and professor of English I rediscovered comics in the form of MAUS and then understanding comics and it opened up a whole new world for me as an English professor and thinking about how to how to engage my students and you know, I became as many folks that got on the comics train, you know proselytizing the value than Comics could have in in issues like equity and access. helping students. Participate in conversations that otherwise they felt excluded from and additionally there's ample research and it's sort of common sense that we live in a visual culture. And so I said, you know, our students need to learn art do have visual literacy. But Comics provide a foundation to more formally studying and understand how visual literacy operates they can better navigate. In a visual world where you know, they're getting hit with all kinds of design choices and visual choices that are metaphoric and are consuming it but not able to necessarily have the tools to reflect upon how those tools are being used to develop their opinions. I saw comics and sitting at this Nexus between visual media and literature literacy and the best works really capture all of that at once and so this curation, you know was just sort of for me the next step in that maturation that I had accumulated I had this driving passion. I knew I'd used comics for years of my classes and seen firsthand the ways in which students who had not read or been interested in Reading became intensely engaged and I saw the non fiction Comics as a particular form that it can engage people, especially when Thinking about atrocities or things people don't want to look at, you know, like MAUS engages people in wanting to read about the Holocaust whereas otherwise that might be something that feels like I can't approach this I want to ignore him and similarly in terms of graphic medicine, you know, my work is primarily focused on cancer, which nobody wants to think about. No way. Nobody wants to think about atrocities and so graphic medicine has a way of like the Piece that I brought into



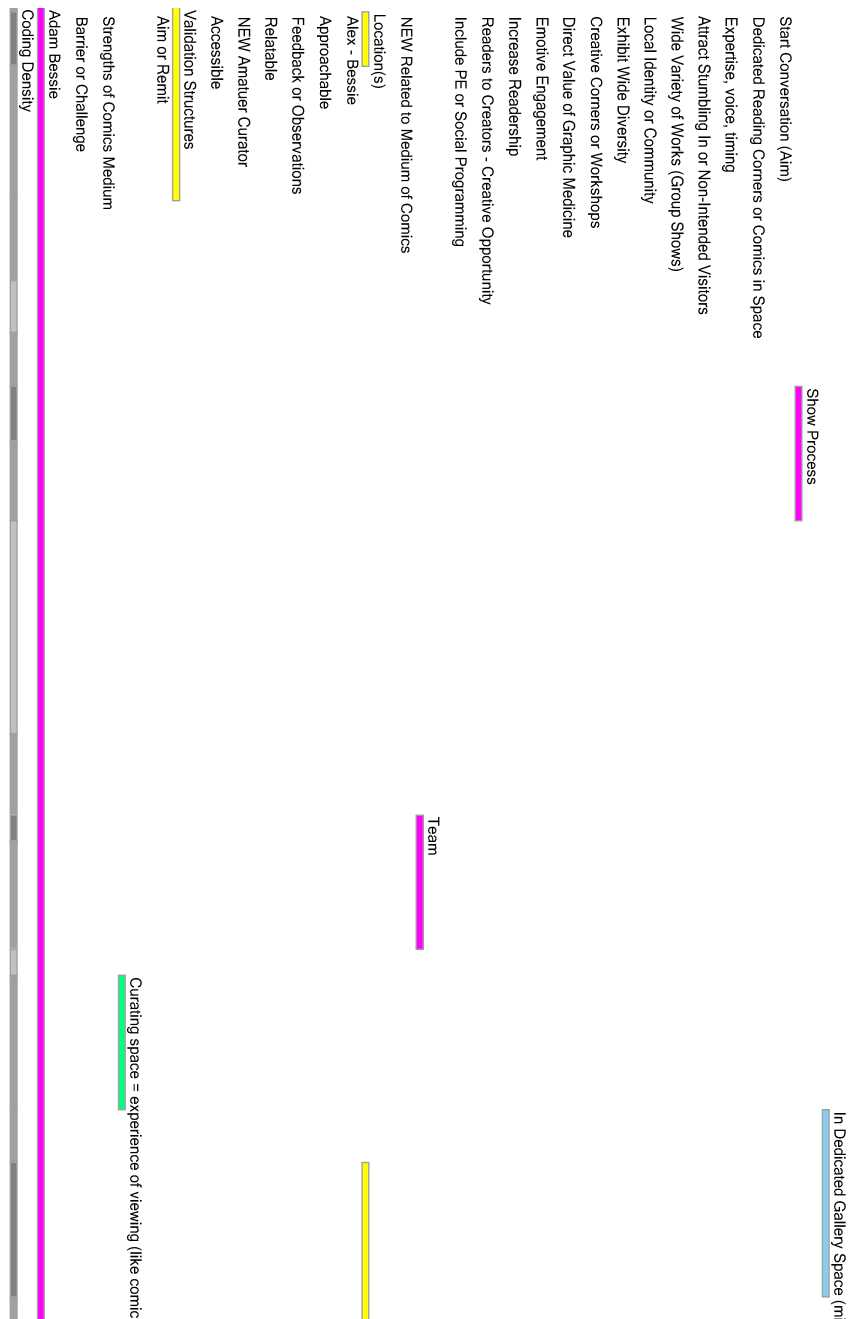
the show as one that was one page was in the Sunday Boston Globe and it was called notification. You've got cancer and it's a very colorful piece so if you look at it from afar, like what is this? And the artist Josh neufeld is brilliant in really knows how to design things. I really visually compelling fashion in so thus, you know, the student can see this and be like, what is this colorful thing and suddenly they're looking at Thinking without their knowing at about breast cancer, which is something otherwise, they saw something on brain cancer. They would shut off. So Comics have this way can have this way in the right context of getting past people's emotional and intellectual defensives. and that's what gravitated to me to writing about the serious issues in comics form because that if I write purely text-based essays I'll probably only have readers That are in the cancer and medical community. But if I can make a comic I can push into for example, the Boston Globe is not a medical or academic space at all. It's a purely public space. I'm able to get this conversation into a public space. I don't think I would have been able to do that with pure text - with the comics at this particular point in time have a way to evading people's stigmas and defense mechanisms. So that was my passion to write it when I had an opportunity to put it in a gallery . I said well students would not only be open to these medical issues and other issues. They might be closed off to but it might make them think about, you know, reading reading more in this medium or reading more about these issues in a text-based form. So that leads to the aim of the exhibit. so first and foremost it was to introduce the our community to non fiction Comics as a thing that exists within that there's graphic medicine obviously, which is a particular form of Storytelling or genre perhaps but many people even though graphic novels now are widely considered in Academia to be taken seriously, although there's Push back on that amongst the common person is still especially with the ascendance of Marvel and other these major franchises that Comics are primarily a fantasy space. It's so the number one [one second. Let me just pause my phone. Hold on. All right. Talk to you later. Sorry about that. Just my wife] Yeah, so part of it was to provide a Counterpoint. Not that the Marvel stuff is bad but to leverage off of it to provide a Counterpoint to what's happening. And if you see the opening discussion, I provided talk about Steven Universe and Marvel and you know kind of trying to leverage that interest and say hey, here's Comics, you know the same medium but in reality within that we try To have the broadest cross section we can find locally. So in among I mean again, we had a wealth of people a number of whom were New York Times best sellers on the lesson. We are very lucky. So we tried to represent different genres and different different demographics. So that anyone coming in could find some pieces that might stick to them. So, you know, so for example in terms of graphic medicine, we had my piece we had another one by know Nome Cain who was a author for the nib and she did a thing. a work called my life with the pre-existing condition. And that's about having type 1 diabetes. I believe and the best we could do elements of it are definitely graphic medicine. It's a refugee story of coming. She was a boat person. the crux of It as a story is It is about the trauma that she her parents endured and about even pregnancy, so there's elements of graphic medicine in there and her work is a best-seller and then other works were like Andy Warner's a brief history of everyday objects, which didn't really, you know, just histories of things like the ballpoint pen and I think the excerpt we had was about, you know, the the invention of like the plot paper bag or something and then there was another one that was about the dead-ball era like baseball history by Jason Novak and we had another piece that was an anonymous piece from one of our students who was an undocumented immigrant. It was about her the stress. She experiences feeling like she's going to be you know, taking away any time we had another work by Khalil bidib about drone Warfare. So we just tried to you know, capture the widest variety just to really a showcase here are all of the things you could you know that are done in this to make the point like this can do anything and then students might not be interested in





the Drone Warfare one, but they might be interested in Nick Sousanis's Unflattening. They might not be interested in mine, you know work on cancer, but they might be interested in this baseball thing. It's they can see. Oh, there's so many options here. And additionally we I brought it a bunch of my collection we brought in stuff from the libraries on one table. was like tons of different nonfiction work like we had moms cancer in there by Brian fees, which is a canonical text. We had stitches by forgetting his name. We had like a lot of my collection in my office? The library was all theirs in local Zine. So that students made like a library students could sit there and read things at the same time. So the wealth was the point. It was students would come into the space and they could just look around at the different Comics or to revolve different sizes. They could sit down and read some of the comics and some students read through entire works just sitting there. We actually had a space where students could post it note their reaction to Pieces. We had a space Also on how to make your own Zine, you know it so there's a corner where you could ;earn hwo to do that we had also like a film strip. That's not the right word. But it projector that was showing different author talks about process. So Nick Sousanis had a speech of him talking about how he put together Unflattening Les May Orga. Another non fiction Comics artist was talking about her process. And so when students would enter into this space, we just hoped they would be able to just see all the variety that was there and then professors enter that space to they to oh, wow. There's there's a real literature here that exists. thats accessible And so that was that was the goal is that students would go there and faculty and want to follow, you know have reactions want to maybe read more about these issues go to the library take the comics class try to participate in telling their stories and submit their work to our Comics contest which happens every year. So try to pull them into our existing program to get them to read these books and to be interested. So basically, to as the work you're doing Elevate the profile of this and also to represent, you know, you know really it comics does a great job as a marginal art, you know, representing voices of people that are outside, you know, white heteronormative standards. We had, you know refugees they're undocumented folks people with disabilities myself with cancer, you know. Experience like in a hot Requiem for a hot comb by Professor manse, you know a black professor talking about her experience that we tried to also have it represent our community that people don't - so students come in and see. Oh, I'm you know, I'm represented in these literature's and they could see themselves. So it was to affirm their existence as well for that Community. We were lucky and in the Bay Area have those people and so the intended audience again for me was primarily students. The community at large so students and faculty in terms of next. How many works are represented. I try to I tried to count that up. It was maybe 11 or 12 words, but you know each had a number of panels and so there was a lot of work spent on you know, you know, do we show a part of this like when it's a book for example *Vera Waracks* was on drone Warfare. Well, what scenes do we pick to put in the show and we With the artists on that with thi bjuishe had a really powerful ending that was already framed. So we had that original ending up all framed. with Sousanis's Unflattening. Have you read that work as well if they have? he and I knew each other, i mean this is not relevant to your work, but i knew him before the book came out. I saw his pamphlet and I was like this is so good. So I knew hisbook all along And it was a matter of picking what would be what would look best at a poster size and present the work and so, you know, we had about 11 pieces in different forms, maybe 12 and we really tried, you know to firstly really not just pick the works and the number of works. But what part do we show the work in total? Most of them it was excerpts You know, as I said with Varacks with the best we could do with unflattening a lot of those just part of a larger piece that would give the person a taste and also something that would just look good on the wall by itself. So aesthetically something that would as an art object be appealing and how do we choose the

works? I think I mentioned that the primary criteria was that they had to live and sort of the San Francisco Bay Area they were perhaps a Sacramento we One we had one artist from Sacramento, but be around there and really we were very intentional about trying again different perspectives in terms of class race and opinion, you know that we was really important for us to really again, like I said try to represent our student population and exposed them to diverse work as possible which is why graphic medicine played a role, but not the dominant role. Although I can see doing a future show just with at this point graphic medicine in terms of your question, you know, the originals are copies most most were copies. And thankfully we had a like a really nice printer that could print at a really high resolution High resolution poster size pieces and so for Nick Sousanis's Unflattening we have the image of the Buddha. I don't know if you know that page it would cut up and it's a Buddha and it looked beautiful at this poster size. And with with the history of everyday objects Andy Warner, you know, we're able to pick one of the entries that really blowing it up was beautiful. Some of the other works in terms of original works the work by Jason. Novak the early history of baseball. We're like original drawings that he did with pen with with my work. It was the original Boston Globe published piece, but also along-side it we had some of the process work that we've done blown up, so I tried it. this with some of the exhibits but we didn't have all the material but to show Here's the final product with line here where some of the previous sketches and surrounding material. So mostly it was copies and some were Originals the author brought in and you asked about materiality. I think I think the important thing was to have the work there for me and you know terms of Comics. That's an interesting thing to think about materiality. So many of the comics are worked on digitally. And so I wonder and many of them such as Nomi Cain's my life with a pre-existing condition were meant to be read online. So that's that's an interesting question for me. I'd like, you know, I liked for example that a Professor manses work on hot comb as like some real nice prints that she really made that felt like real original ones. I like Jason Novak's original artwork was there I like that the original like the piece of that the Sunday paper that my comic was published in was there I thought that was important. I don't think that that was important for every piece you know, but I think for students to see that be around it was important and we did have like a table full of the graphic work. So that students could touch it touch the work so that was important in terms. Deciding on specifics sizes in print Styles part of that was left up to the artist and what they thought looked good and the artist sovereignty was really important that how did they want their work presented? you know, I think that that that was key how how you know what, you know, we had piece parts of their work that we wanted to see in sizes, but it was ultimately up to them and what they thought would look good and I'd say we had a wide variety of sizes and print Styles which was very nice, you know from smaller works you had to kind of really look at just like Nick Sousanis's work from across the room. Would it be you would hit you and you want to go Look at it. So I think that was part of the appeal to create, you know, thinking of the space almost as a comic strip itself. gallery space and thinking about how do we arrange this in a way that compositionally draws the eye to different places and my collaborator is much better than that and I'll talk about them in a minute and you ask it didn't travel anywhere. Thank God it was enough work to do one. The room look like the room and I was thinking about how to describe it. It's in the it's kind of the back of our college, which is interesting sort of right by the parking lot where the art school the art students are and it's easy not to find which is interesting in its the space itself when you get it has no windows, but it but it is you know, you know, it's an interesting space. It's like a donut I guess you might say you come in and there's a there's you know immediately you have a wall you can have the you can introduce people to and that we had our mission statement there along with andy Warner's work and then moving around the sides the work





was position sort of circularly around the sides and in the center. There was another side of the wall. So on one side you could come in and sort of see this this beautiful drawing by Andy Warner and the Manifesto then you can kind of walk around and see and then you could look on the other side of the center and see work projected. And so at this nice this circular flow that allows people to move around but no windows or anything just white all white and again sort of hidden in the back of the college, which they're the changing thankfully the whole College. Hopefully, the art gallery will be more Central you Ask Next about the challenges now. I'm going to be very subjective because this is the first time I've ever curated really anything. so I did not know what I was getting into. At all, I knew that I was really excited and passionate about it. And I thought it was what an amazing opportunity and I than I could you know connect with all these artists whose work is I admired that we could put something together was huge and we had the idea for a while and by we I mean my co-curator Arthur King so his when you see his emails, it literally says King Arthur He runs the gallery and he's an art professor at the college. He runs every Arthur King runs every art shows literally every month. There's a new show in the gallery coming through and so is an expert on putting together shows he's done many of them and so he was really the nuts and bolts man where he put the art up physically I trusted his discretion of where things should go compositionally I didn't you know I was Sort of like you you know how to set up a gallery space you've done this for years. And so so I really didn't try to step on his toes at all on that route. I was in there with him observing it it looked quite hard but I wasn't actually involved in that other than I look at it and give my impression about things at me. Maybe had a couple notes here and there and reposition things but mainly he did that. So on my end the main challenge was I'm I knew pretty much all the people in the show through my being in the Bay Area Comics Community. So, you know, not necessarily my friends and people I've been in conferences with or Senate seen as in zine fests or had had come out to the college. So my main job was to act like a producer where I you know would gather the list of here all the people we want to have in the show. What are the contacts Of those people, you know for me tracking down emailing those people and then you know, which is it which with this many artists is was quite a quite a large job. So that process started, you know, I would say eight eight months before the show lifted off of just you know us saying we want to do this. Let's gather a list and me to say here are all the people that live in the area that I think are good and that I think would make a great show that would fit the requirements and we got a lot of people but not we got mostly everybody. We're looking for getting you know, there's there was a lot more people we could have chosen that these are people that got back to us and we got their contact information. And then from there was you know, in order to get this work in you have to sign contracts and waivers and things of that nature. So then it was, you know, having my Excel spreadsheet figuring out all the timelines of everything got done just on time and that everyone knew what was happening and when it was happening and it was like this act of I have no idea how much work it would be to organize this many artists who are all traveling and doing different things and getting everyone to get all the paperwork and have that all done and then it was, you know, just kind of I hadn't thought about this just the transcend. This is something as a curator that probably would be common sense to you, but just getting the files to me. What's the file size? How do we transmit that and then finding times to pick up if its original art to pick it up and then signing off on how much this is this insured for it? So it was like a, you know, a three-ring circus for me and just the back end of production and getting all that worked out getting it to us, you know in time so that it could then ultimately be set up and then additionally we were trying to arrange to have You know some of the artists come and speak and so and I was you know, we have an opening event and I was able to speak there and you know, I compelled my entire American literature class become so that



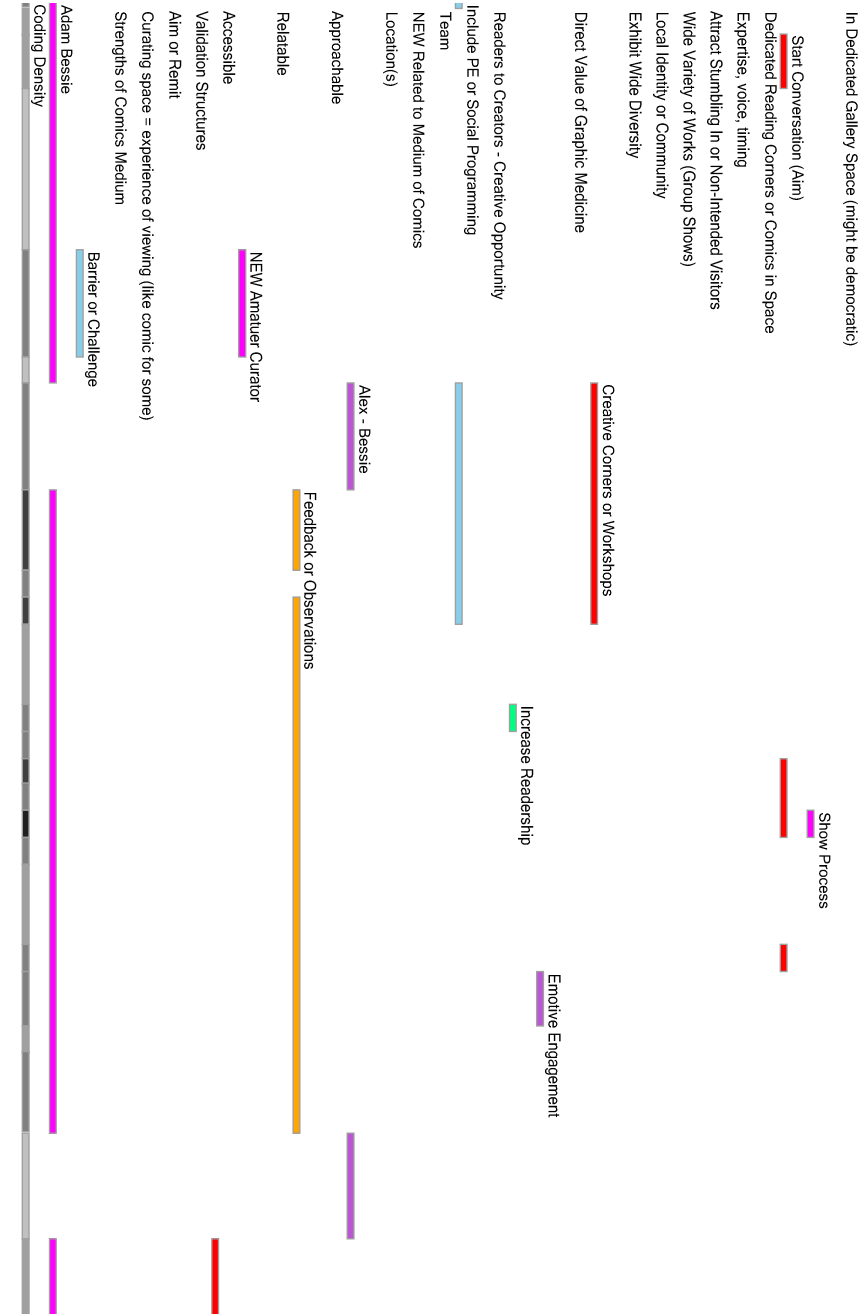
it was full so said this is what we're doing. This is part of American literature comics. You know, and then we had two other local artists come out just talked with the students who could ask questions and it was a matter of trying to arrange who we can get out how we could get them out and that was part of I think number 9 It's so I would say that the biggest challenge to me was that never having done this? I don't know that I knew what I was getting myself into had I known I probably still would have done it. But I would have had like a system in place to more, you know, like a procedure that to really gather the talent and move it forward and Arthur was really, you know, again as my co collab- as like like I was sort of the content expert and Arthur was the Gallery expert . He was able to you know, really give me the road map of this is the date things need to happen, but I think I had underestimated. It because of my passion the amount of of work for you know, making sure everyone everyone gets their stuff in on time and we get all the files and all the little tiny details that especially accumulate at the last minute. And so yeah, I think I think anyways, yeah, you have further questions for does that does that cover it? I think The follow-up. Is there anything?

Speaker 1: Yeah, I do - I foudn that really interesting on several points that might seem like I bounce around for a little bit. But, I was wondering you mentioned, that there was post it notes that people could put their opinions and either informally or formally was there any feedback that you remember specifically?

Speaker 2: yeah, you know. that is one lapse that I wish we'd taken a picture all the feedback like. So I really bummed that I didn't, you, see a lot of it, you know were like cartoon pictures or visual reactions. We had the it's on the material I sent you but we had Bay Area we try to encourage the students to get involved in that like various catcher's project think that's a name of it where they would post their own observations of people on campus. and put them up. I would say that anecdotely though that students were - I stood around and watched people, you know were again, I wish had recorded more of this. But if I know what I was going to be the subject of research I would've, but it felt like a great success and of course, I'm biased but I could see see students really sitting and looking and reading the works and really staying there in front of works and looking at them walking around sitting and opening up the books on the table and students in my class. Now, of course, I can help them there interested in you know in wanting to talk to unsolicited some of the authors and ask them questions about their work and asking me questions about the process. And you could see students were sitting around and really looking at things and weren't just looking at like something I know I do sometimes in museums looking kind of doing like crop dusting or drive by but again,I didn't observe that, I don't think I have anything really solid for you that would that would help in giving a real data-driven answer. Other than that, it was extremely exciting to be there and that the students were buzzing. It was loud. They were like pouring out of the Space and really we're looking and trying to read each of the works and wanted to it seemed really present and engaged with what they were saying. But again, that's my subjective biased opinion to justify all the hours that I put in emailing calling and talking and so forth, but it felt like it achieved what we what we set out to do which was to elevate the interest in understanding. This graphic novels broadly graphic nonfiction and graphic medicine more specifically.

Speaker 1: Great at one moment. You met when mentioning like the students and things that non fiction Comics if I can say that broadly can do you talked about equity and access and I wondered if you could talk more on those comments on those Concepts and how they relate to these works?

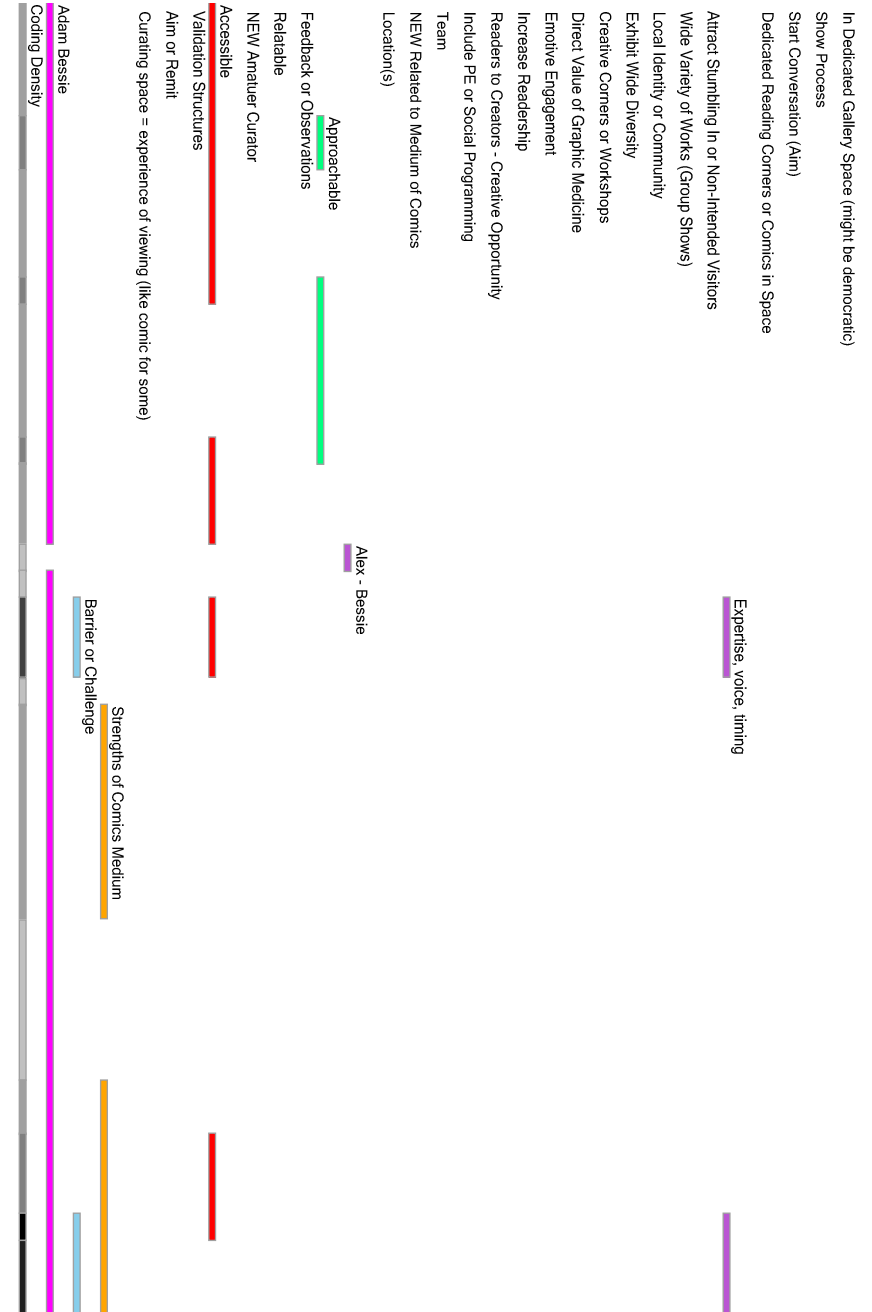
Speaker 2: Thats a really good question. Let me let me start on access since that's the the I think the most dominant argument made it in favor of and I'm not dominant. I don't mean best argument. I simply mean that when you hear the most in that comics rendered complex issues



accessible. right and or entertaining those are the two common arguments that it's like a gateway drug to reading about something you otherwise wouldn't be interested in. I mentioned that earlier related to people might want to shy away from stigmatized issues or issues that make them uncomfortable like cancer or or diabetes or you know, America's foreign policy. They might, you know be nervous about those things. Aesthetic Beauty renders it more accessible also the way the comic is composed *can* make it more accessible. Although that depends upon the design choices simply because something's a comic doesn't mean it's necessarily more accessible. You know, it depends on how its put together. So I mean access in terms of on the consumer end, you know a comic can give a more a. Wider variety of readers interest or access into the work, you know, because it takes down the barriers of oh, this is a pretty thing or an interesting thing. I'll get pulled into it. And so it is as I said before it gets around some barriers that may be text might throw in the way, you know, it might catch a person off guard and we've seen that you know that you catch it like an arresting image and it pulls you into reading, you know newspapers know this you have Have a compelling image to get somebody to read the article. right in the same way a comic you know an arresting image. The person will then get drawn in. You know, the quality of the work will determine if they stay with it, but I also mean access from the producer side. So when you think about having a novel published and having it read where a memoir published and read it has to go through. The Gatekeepers a lot of Gatekeepers in terms of you know, the publishing industry, right?

Speaker 1: Yeah

Speaker 2: if you want to make a film there Is a huge number of Gatekeepers there and as a result, **you know from a media criticism standpoint, you know, you limit the access of who can participate in conversations and whose voices are published and whose voices are heard**, right? And so in particular we're talking about issues of not just like representation in media like oh there's a black character in this but is there a black Creator? right and I think comics you know our unique space where because of the low cost and with the internet and with Zine culture, you can disseminate it really breaks in a lot of the barriers that are access barriers that limit some marginalized voices and let allow them to get a bigger audience than they than you know, they would otherwise so I think a really good case in point for this would be Professor Manse's Requiem for a hot comb. She's an African-American queer professor and she self published this work and it's a really powerful piece that if she had to go through more traditional Pathways, there might be other barriers that she doesn't experience self-publishing working through the zine culture. Similarly. Les May Orga's work. Also came up through the bay area's zine culture and was then picked up by a publisher. Yeah and picked up by a publisher. You have my life with a pre-existing condition on the nib. So the Nib, you know as an outlet, you know is able to pay artists and really try to intentionally collect artists from diverse backgrounds, and you know my Work as well, you know in a different way. There's definitely not much representation by any representation, really that I read it by brain cancer survivors been very little representation by cancer survivors. There's a lot about these populations and not much by them. Comics to me provides a more potentially space especially again with Zine culture and with Internet spaces like the nib and other online spaces that are hungry for Content. You wouldn't see in the mainstream. It provides a more accessible space for creators to come in and once they're in the zine culture. They can maybe work their way into developing a following and then developing having more or not traditional routes of success. Whereas, you know, if you want to get a movie of your story made I mean you Have to get funders and backers. You want to get it a novel or a memoir published. You've got to have that agent. You've got to have all these things that are that are difficult and I think and we in this exhibit really tried to intentionally pick from Works a





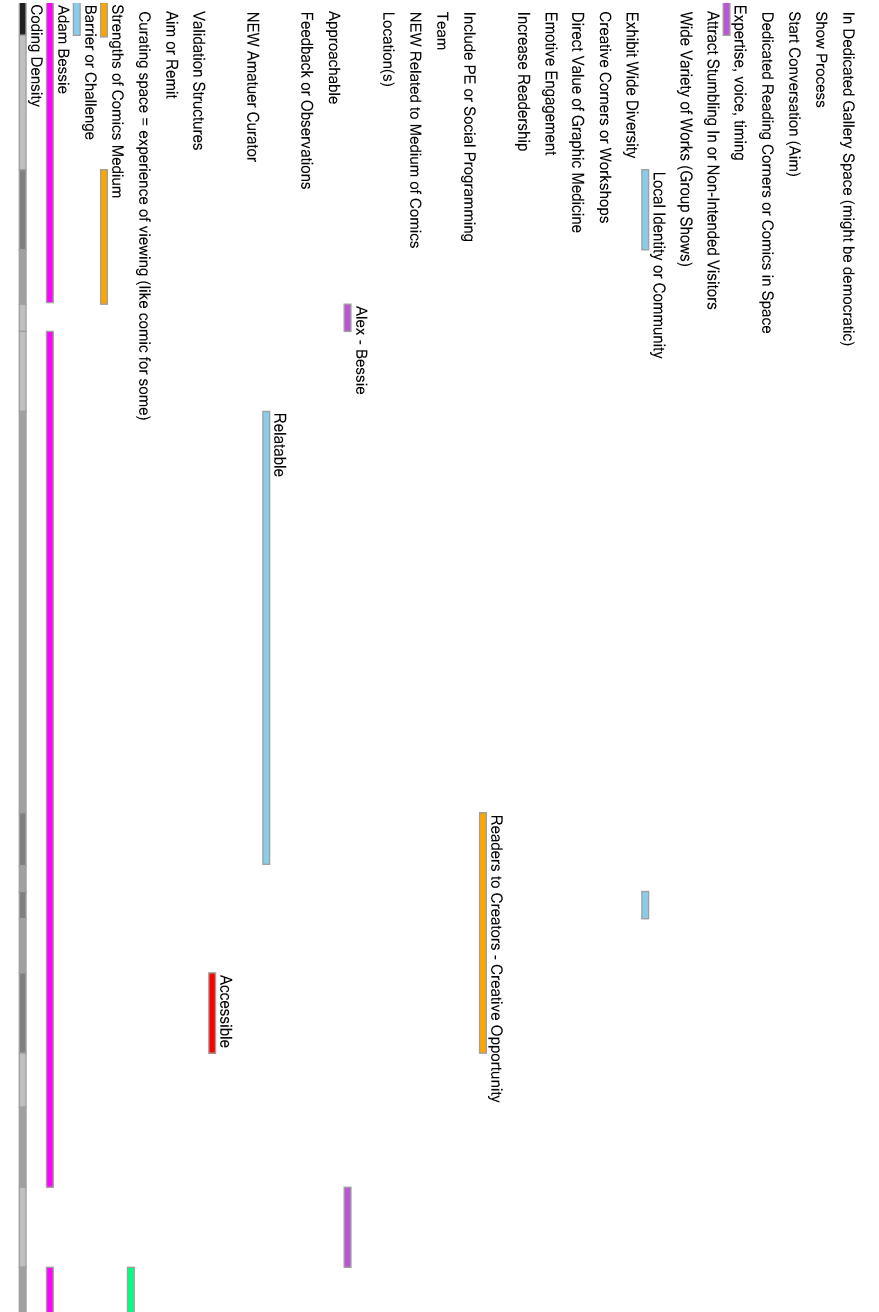
variety of works by creators that came up through different routes as well. So Thi Bui's the best we could do is publish by a major publisher. Unflattening is published by a major publisher. a brief history of everyday object is too but you know, for example like a brief history of everyday objects that started as a Zine and came from the zine culture. I know that the best we could do originally or parts of it were originally, you know zines were smaller things. I know that know Nomi Cain in her work on the nib was a lot of that that was originally coming out of being at zine fests as with Liz May Orga. So a lot of this the comics culture is Of ground-up community that provides access and opportunities and ways that you know in Comic Cons as well and these kind of events provide opportunities for publication that you know, I think gather more diverse creator that end up writing stories. You just don't get to see in that way if that makes sense.

Speaker 1: Mmm,

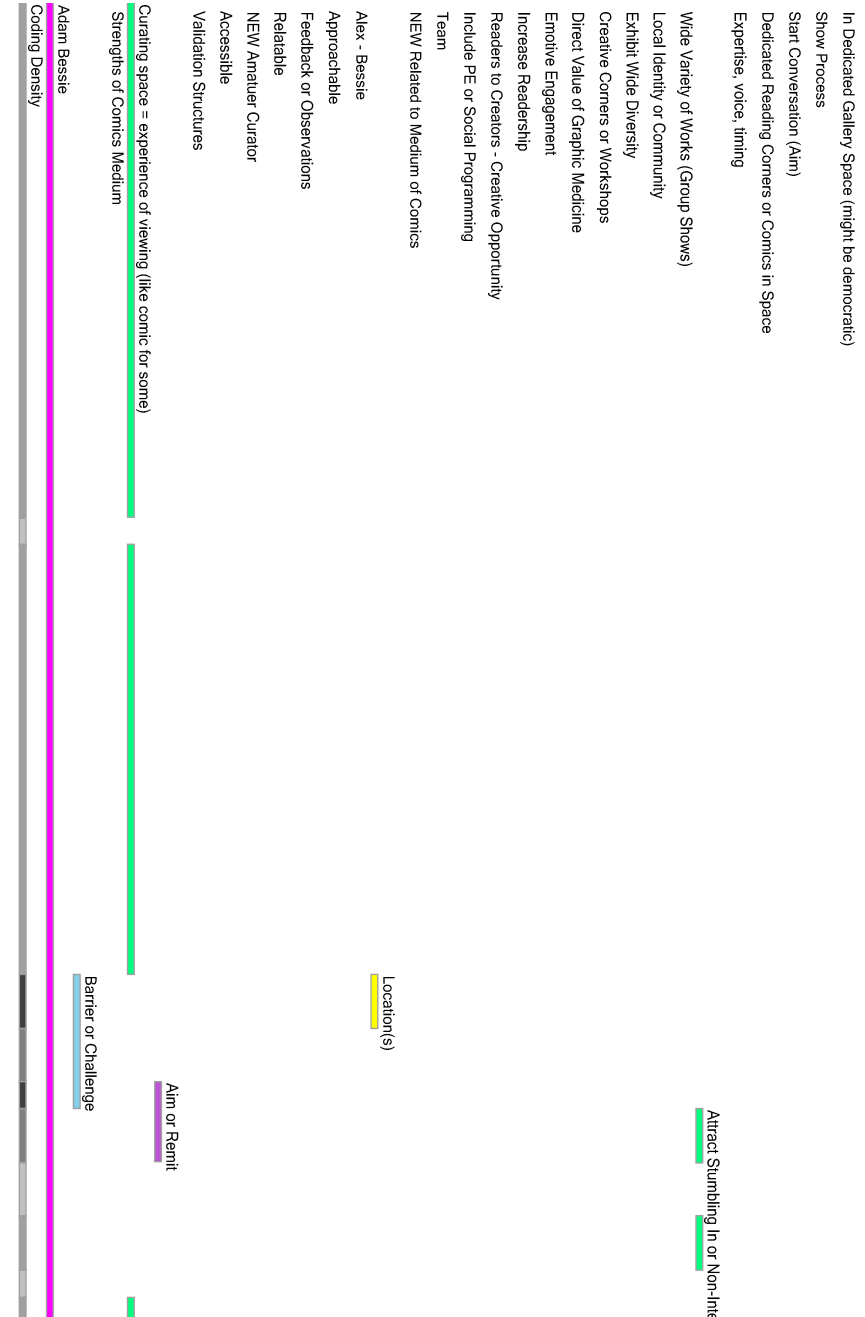
Speaker 2: and I again as part of my work and curating I was very intentional in trying to really pick voices that they might not experience and that of any other kind of media, which is the point of a college education as well write that you're getting a liberal arts education that you would be exposed to a variety of points of view that would help you Orient yourself and see more of the world and in terms of equity that was the second part of your question. That term gets thrown around quite a lot and to de-Buzz-ify it I mean the goal was really to I say represent different authors and stories and that's like an extension of my own classroom pedagogies and whenever teaching a course, I'm attempting to provide a multicultural curriculum. And so my main goal here in terms of equity was to attempt to provide. You know a multicultural experience one that doesn't accurately reflect what's happening in comics and accurately affects our community. And so when students would come into this space that they would see a real variety of subjects characters represented by different kinds of people and we made sure that for each author there was like a little author profile with a little picture of them or either that they drew representing themselves. or a real photo so that the the students could really connect, you know with more more with the creators and see see it's sort of the the again in terms of having access to a wider variety of creators. They did they made in they experienced in the maybe they're typical media consumption. So that's kind of what equity and also I think I think what equity means to Me too is the students that would come through this would feel like these are local people and they made Comics maybe I can tell my story to obviously is an English teacher. I teach creative writing Comics one end game is they the more students see's created by, you know more they can see that it's by somebody that's you know in their Community. They're writing their creating. Maybe I can do this to me that that's really one of the end games. Is that some student leaves. Is there and she's oh, you know, I my story about my life is worth other people would be interested in it. And so that's the endgame as that. It not only give gives access but gives Equitable access and give students ideas and tools to maybe they could make and tell their own stories from wherever they're coming from. And again, that's highfalutin rhetoric. you know but that that animates. I mean, I think you really which that worked or not. Is another matter entirely, you know, I mean that's for you to assess as has the academic and for studies to look at but as far as I'm concerned the intent, **you know really was was to create a space that you know that Empower students to seek out more of this literature on their own and to create hopefully some of their own literature.**

Speaker 1: Looking through because there's one more question. I found my little note you mentioned that the gallery space as a Comics page to and then you also talked about this kind of circular flow and I wondered if you could kind of expand on that idea?

Speaker 2: Well, that's a great question. So I think that what I what I like first, let me talk about Ikea for a minute. Ikea Is the antithesis of what I wanted? Yes, there you go. Ikea is is



the antithesis of what I wanted the event to be, you know, yes, there's a beginning when they walk in and see a thing but my Hope was that they could choose their Journey around the room now many of the comics, you know, in terms of orientation in the west, you know, we read right to left and so technically I suppose you could start on the right and move around and most Comics would you know like Thi Bui's story we laid out really right to left. But then Mark Partners story. He's one of my collaborators another work, but he had an individual work about his time in Mongolia. It was kind of like up and down and so we tried to make things up a little bit but generally yeah, it would have been a page that It on the left and the right circularly around to the right but you know students didn't really do that. Which is great they just kind of would go wherever whatever Drew their eye and in reality, you know, I don't know if I was thinking about this consciously or if I'm just making it up now in retrospect, but I was thinking to some degree about Chris where's book? Building stories where he you know, tried to reconceptualize the idea of a comic since we tend to think of it as sequential art, you know this thing Follows this thing follows this thing in an that, I don't know if you know that word. Yeah. It's so you know, it's like you figure out how to put the story together. You're right, essentially. I mean it's so I my sense was this you know this Thing is a text and I don't think the student needed to read everything in here, but they would come in in one of the panels might - what panels in that room, but draw their eye or they might be pushed into it because there's too many people somewhere else, but it's engaging enough. They look at that and we really tried to juxtapose things in terms of, you know Arthur had a great eye in terms of color and in terms of size so that You know people would be drawn to different parts of the room and they could they could you know, basically create their own sequence to the stories. They were they were reading And so again, like most of them we didn't try to mess with people and like move right to left left to right really was, you know, getting the comic starts here. Here's the author's thing. It goes to the left or it goes up and down or something. But in reality I liked the circular orientation such that students could just be sort of drawn around and some students with just look at one or two things and just sit down and start looking at the comic. So I like that unlike Ikea the students were not coerced into any particular kind of viewing experience and to me. That's you know, what Comics were Comics are about its students people making their own meaning from that work. **So I mean again at the Time, I don't know that I thought consciously about creating the space like a comic book, but in retrospect it really did feel like we're creating that this space is a text. And how do we create it so that we get them to experience these things in as deeply as possible and to leave with their own unique experience where they are interested in. Discovering more and then it leaves them with passion and questions and then hopefully the structure of that space increased and we work with what we have.** I mean, we're a community college, you know, the hardest thing the thing that bothered me most was that it was positioned in a place that was outside of the normal flow of the college which you know, I would have preferred obviously than the art that was do it. To get literally situated in a in a central place where it becomes a major part of the commons, but this is a 1950s structure. We're talking about it, you know where everything's at quadrants. **And so but for me that was the hardest part is that I really wanted students to stumble upon this space and be like, what is this? And get pulled in** and we tried to do that with some pictures outside that led from the cafeteria, but you it's like a that part buildings almost like M c Escher stairs going up and down and sideways. It's very funny. And so I did the only thing space-wise is if I were to have my dream every doing this is the art gallery is in a space where the average student could stumble into and could look around and leave the commons like what was that about but I yeah, but under it, but I think overall. Yeah, I think the space we because of Arthur's, you know, extensive experience. I think he had a good vision for how to make **Sure, that**



students really, you know could see the difference between the works in terms of size and it would be drawn to the just like as an eye is drawn to different parts of the page due to visual composition and panel size. I think that principle is at play to and how the different size of the images in different placements would draw your eye to different places.

That's at least my hope. It was achieved

Speaker 1: cool. That's really interesting. And really wonderful and I think the section that I put your interview in is going to be called Building stories and curation is Ikea.

Speaker 2: Yes, call it that.

Speaker 1: but I think that's really cool. And I think for now because I am conscious of time is all the questions I have for you and a lot for me to go and think about so thank you so much, but I was wondering if there was any last things that my questions didn't get at that you would like to share.

Speaker 2: So just to remind me that point of your project broadly is to present a case in order to pathway in order to expand where graphic this public spaces and ways in which thinking of graphic medicine can be used is that correct?

Speaker 1: Yeah.

Speaker 2: I think you're right. I think you've covered everything but I would say that. one thing that I've been thinking about quite a lot in this and maybe this relates to what I just said is in order to get to this gallery show that I put on this, you know, I mentioned as a joke that I brought my class right and not as a joke that the situation of the art building is out of the way and to me that's an interesting metaphor for when you're thinking about graphic medicine in particular where You know people don't want they want to unsee especially younger people do not want to see or want to ignore the dark side of it of life, you know, which is represented by diseased bodies or disabled bodies. I hate those terms but, you know, and what what I think about is the the ways in which how ow, **how do we bring graphic medicine into a truly public space where it's not quarantined and a gallery** and so that's something as somebody that lives with invisible illness where you would have no way of knowing about it. You know, I'd had have anything going on with me in my own research and writing is about a lot of the invisible illnesses people live with how do you and this is less of a It's more of a question but something I would be interested in your research and reading **is how to bring graphic medicine more in front of people that maybe don't want to seek it out. Because so much of our culture** attempts to quarantine those kind of bodies into privilege the abled body. And to give it the spotlight again. I felt like the show was great and a lot of people did come out that they had to make an effort to get out there and I wonder the ways in which we can think about bringing graphic medicine into spaces where people aren't expecting it. It makes them think about that. So I don't know that's something I just thought as to as I was talking to your thinking about where this took place in the semiotic simply of the space it was in so whether be curious if you're doing anything on that, you know, if you're thinking about public truly public spaces, you know,

