

DARE TO BE FIRST: A NEW APPROACH TO FEMINISM

An Undergraduate Research Scholars Thesis

by

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ABSTRACT

Dare to Be First: A New Approach to Feminism

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When was the last time you did something for the first time? The goal of the *Dare to Be First* campaign is to inspire girls and women to be trailblazers by seeing how historical female figures from the past rose above to defy all odds and did something, for the first time, as a woman. This thesis organized into two main parts; the first being a history lesson explaining why this topic is relevant today, including research into women's history both at Texas A&M and the United States, and the second being an analysis on how this campaign was executed from start to finish. This includes concept and design developments and a study of how to be successful when using social media marketing in today's world. The campaign is attempting to inspire women to be proud to be associated with the word "feminist" and is refreshing approach to a campaign that promotes the success of girls and women everywhere.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

I would like to thank my campaign partners, Alex Hueste and Eman Al-Zubeidi for their dedication to our cause and our friendship. I would like to thank every woman in my life that has inspired me to be the best version of myself I can be, especially my sister and my mom.

INTRODUCTION

Dare to Be First is a campaign designed to inspire girls and women to be trailblazers by highlighting historical female figures from the past and how they rose above to defy all odds and do something for the first time, as a woman. The first part of this thesis focuses on concept development for the campaign, including an analysis of the history of feminism in the United States and the identification of women in history who were considered to be “Firsts”. “Firsts” is a term used to signify women who were the first to achieve a particular accomplishment or goal that only men had previously. One major goal of the first part of the thesis is to inform people that feminism is a movement fueled by a desire for gender equality. The second part of this thesis focuses on how a campaign such as this one starts from a small idea and eventually becomes an entire movement, and how graphic design and social media can be used as the tools for success. The collection of different topics in this writing aims to explain the “how” and “why” a campaign of this nature is started.

The United States is currently in the 4th wave of feminism. The biggest difference between past waves and the current one is that it is fueled by today’s technology; social media, access to instant information, and communication across the world. *Dare to Be First* is an effort to “rebrand” feminism using these new forms of technology and communication. By looking at different women in recent American history, the goal is to inform both students and faculty on Texas A&M’s campus, as well as social media followers around the world, how the bravery of these women sparked chain reactions into today and left lasting impacts. In addition to concept and design development, this thesis includes an analysis on social media marketing platform and

how to use it to promote positive and inspirational messages that gain popularity and make a social impact.

Objectives and Goals

The objectives of this thesis are to explain why promoting feminism, as a way of social engagement through social media, is an important issue and how a campaign like this is executed from start to finish.

The goal of this campaign is to spark a new way of looking at feminism, one where technology is embraced along with worldwide communication and diversity among all women. The desired outcome is that girls and women will be inspired to achieve their dreams no matter what obstacles they may face and inspire others to do the same. The campaign itself seeks to inspire women to be proud to be associated with the word “feminist”. It is an effort to redefine feminism with a creative and powerful approach, and it will spark discussions about a new way of looking at feminism.

Methodology

The *Dare to Be First* campaign is consistent of many components, with two main “projects” and an assortment of additional supporting elements. The main way it is executed is through a social media campaign. The first deliverable is a typographic environmental art installation, where an art and educational exhibit was put on display in a high traffic location and conversations occurred with bystanders. The second deliverable is a 1.5-minute-long video featuring a variety of diverse girls in diverse fields. It is short, but contains an informative message. It is posted on Facebook, Instagram and YouTube accounts associated with *Dare to Be First*. Supporting campaign elements include social media posts, posters, and stickers.

CHAPTER I

THEN AND NOW

A Brief History of Feminism Movements in the United States

Feminism has fairly modern roots in the United States. Since colonial times, women were expected to be dependent on their husbands and stay at home to care for the family by performing domestic duties. This was due to a commonly held belief system called the Cult of Domesticity that became especially prevalent in the 19th century, and values from this system were carried well into the 20th century United States (MacKethan). The idea of women being independent used to be a very controversial topic and in some parts of the country it still is today. While there is no true beginning or end to the feminist movement for equality in the United States, a great starting point is looking at the first-wave feminism movement. In the late 19th and early 20th centuries, women in the United States were not awarded the same legal rights as men. Women were forbidden from owning property, signing legal documents, serving on juries, attending universities, or having legal custody of their children. Much of the activism at this time was centered on women's suffrage, also known as gaining the right to vote, which was granted to women in 1920 in the 19th Amendment of the United States Constitution. Leaders of this movement at the time, including Elizabeth Cady Stanton and Susan B. Anthony, would not have referred to themselves as "feminists"; rather, they would have called themselves "suffragists" (Bisignani).

The term "feminist" gained popularity at the beginning of the second-wave of feminism. This movement began in the 1960's and was fueled by the desire of women to gain social equality. At this time, a woman in the United States was expected to marry in her early 20's, start

a family quickly, and devote her life to homemaking even if she had a college education (“The 1960s-70’s American Feminist Movement”). If a woman had a job at this time, it was most likely as a teacher, nurse, or secretary. Betty Friedan’s book, *The Feminine Mystique*, is largely credited with being the spark that started the second-wave of feminism. Friedan’s book was highly controversial at the time of its publication because her book challenged the notion that housewives were content with staying home and solely being the caretakers of their family. In reality, many of these women felt trapped and unfulfilled in their lives because they had to put their dreams on hold. Friedan and a Yale professor named Pauli Murray went on to help found an organization called the National Organization for Women, who released the *1966 Statement of Purpose* that says “We, men and women, who hereby constitute ourselves as the National Organization for Women, believe that the time has come for a new movement toward true equality for all women in America, and toward fully equal partnership of the sexes, as part of the world-wide revolution of human rights now taking place within and beyond our national borders” (“1966 Statement of Purpose”). The second-wave of feminism focused mostly on workplace and salary equality, and societal and cultural change, and it was because of woman like Betty Friedan and Pauli Murray that women in the United States finally began to feel like they had a voice.

The third-wave of feminism started in the 1990s (Evans). The idea behind this wave was expanding the parameters of feminism in order to include women of all race, class and sexual orientations. Third-wave feminism began because women at the time saw the need to adapt to the times by expanding previous ideologies as new issues arose. Leaders of the third-wave sought to break away from the stereotypical definition of a “feminist” at this time, which was wrongfully stereotyped as a woman who hates men, does not shave her legs or armpits, and does not

celebrate her own femininity. The idea was to change the face of feminism to let people know that being a feminist was not a specific identity or a specific way of living. In addition to being more inclusive, third-wave feminism focused on bringing issues to light. One of the main starters of this movement is Rebecca Walker, who first said the term “Third Wave” in 1992. She released an article in a magazine titled *Becoming the Third Wave* in defense of a woman who had publicly claimed to be sexually harassed by a Supreme Court nominee at the time, Clarence Thomas. The goal of her article was to explain that, despite being accused of sexual harassment, Clarence Thomas had still successfully secured the Supreme Court nomination and that we should question why our society allowed that to happen. Walker’s article included statements saying that the dismissal of this woman’s experience should cause other women to feel anger, and that women need to prioritize their freedom to control their bodies and lives. She concluded by stating, “I am not a post-feminism feminist. I am the Third Wave” (Walker). Walker and many other feminists at the time began to come to a clearer realization that the fight for gender equality was far from over. The third-wave of feminism is a great example of the idea that there will always be the need for adaptation and progress as our society goes through generational and cultural change, and its specific emphasis on diversity and bringing women’s issues into the light signifies the beginning of modern feminist movements in the United States.

A Brief History of Women at Texas A&M University

Texas A&M University was established in 1876 as a military institution. It was not until April 27, 1963, that Texas A&M opened the doors for women to enroll on a “limited basis.”² According to an article released by Texas A&M in celebration of the 50th year anniversary of the attendance of women, the “intent was for women to be allowed to enroll at Texas A&M if their desired fields of study were not available anywhere else in the state. However, women soon

started enrolling in ever-increasing numbers, and no institutional attempt was made to limit the areas in which they could study” (Stephenson). In 1969, the university allowed women to enroll in unrestricted numbers. Since the admission of female students at Texas A&M 50 years ago, there have been numerous changes on how university ran its administration and practiced inclusiveness. Examples of this are the campus making an effort to incorporate women into faculty, athletics, Corps of Cadets, and student body life in general. According to the Texas A&M Student Demographics from Fall 2017, the campus is currently made up of 47.27% women (Texas A&M University). There are many successes as a university that can be greatly attributed to all of the women who have attended or worked there. In the last 50 years, there have been numerous accomplishments achieved by women at Texas A&M, ranging anywhere from the first female Dean of Engineering, the first female collegiate All-American athlete, the first woman leader of the Corps of Cadets, and the first female student body president.

Current Feminism Movements and Portrayals in the Media

In today’s society, media dictates a huge role in how people receive their information daily. People can log onto the Internet and access anything they may desire in seconds. But because the Internet is a free canvas for anyone to express his or her opinions, media can provide powerful and persuasive arguments that can either spark positive or negative responses in people who view it. A problem with today’s media is that the story or article with the most shock value often ends up becoming the most popular, and often times they are so shocking because they are based off a controversial or tragic event. Constant exposure to this kind of information can leave detrimental effects on the way people go about their everyday lives and their overall perception of the world. Current portrayal of feminism in the media is no exception to this rule. While the true meaning of feminism calls for equality of all genders, feminists in the media are often

portrayed as “crazy”, “unruly”, and “man haters” (Weiss). This misconception can skew perceptions and keep society from moving forward. This is an example of how the “misunderstood meaning of feminism has created a divide for a movement that is fighting for unity” (Garvin).

The United States is currently in the 4th wave of feminism. Jennifer Baumgardner released a book in 2011 that defined the 4th wave as having started in 2008 and as different than past waves because of the use of newer forms of technology. Social media has gained tremendous popularity in the last decade and other forms of technology have shown us how fast and easy information can be spread today across the world. The 4th wave of feminism combines political, psychological, and spiritual factors all into one (Baumgardner) and is fueled by the digital age making communication and the spread of information easier than ever before. Today’s feminists include both men and women from all types of diverse backgrounds and are focused on issues women have always suffered with and bringing them into the light by exposing issues and starting discussions about them. Examples of this include the *Me Too* movement, which was started by Tarana Burke in 2006 but did not gain tremendous popularity until 2017. *Me Too* is an extremely powerful movement created to break the silence on sexual violence and harassment that many women have and will experience in their lifetimes. These issues have always existed but women are finally able to come together using social media and other forms of communication to expose perpetrators. Another example of what today’s feminists are putting their efforts into is the Women’s March. The Women’s March began in response to the 2016 Presidential Election, with the main march located in Washington, D.C. In addition to the main march, hundreds of other Women’s Marches were organized across the United States and even some in other countries. It is a national protest created to “send a bold message... to the world

that women's rights are human rights" (Tatum). The march was a response to the Presidential Inauguration of Donald Trump, whom participants in the march believe to be against women due to his public disapproval of some women's health issues and accusations of being a predator against women (Stevens). With the second round of Women's Marches occurring this past January, the Women's March has become an annual worldwide protest in defense of keeping women's bodies and sexuality out of political policies.

One of the main problems with the current wave is that social media can warp perceptions leading to people having stereotypical ideas about feminists, making it hard for perceptions in society to move forward and become more positive. Many people believe that there is a certain type of person who is a feminist. Additionally, many still do not entertain the idea that a man can be a feminist too. Being able to provide "education and clarification of what beliefs fall under 'feminism' are vital in creating equality and positive change in society" (Garvin).

An approach that may spark fresh ideas into society is looking at women in history as a direct reference. Studying famous women in history and analyzing their stories can explain much of why things are the way they are today. Their individual cases can often times display acts of courage and unprecedented strength. The most impactful historical women figures all had one thing in common; they were the first to do something amazing in their fields and set chain reactions for generations that came after them.

CHAPTER II

CAMPAIGN CONCEPT AND DESIGN DEVELOPMENT

Comparable Campaigns

The concept of a campaign designed to empower girls and women is not new. Many campaigns exist that fight for all rights of girls and women around the world. But because feminism is such a broad topic that encompasses many dimensions, there are hundreds of different campaigns focusing on areas that need support. For example, the *Girl Rising* campaign focuses on providing girls around the world rights to an education. Campaigns like these are inspired by stories such as the one of Malala Yousafzai, who was shot just for attending school in northwest Pakistan where the local Taliban had banned girls from being able to go to school (Tohid). The United Nations has a campaign called *UNiTE to End Violence Against Women* dedicated to raising awareness about violence against women and girls around the world. There are hundreds of campaigns all with different focuses but they all aim for the same thing; equality, rights, and peace for girls and women across the world.

Choosing the Right Approach to a Controversial Topic

The difference between other campaigns and *Dare to Be First* is that this campaign chooses not to focus on the heavier and political issues. Rather, *Dare to Be First* takes an empowering and light-hearted approach by highlighting women in history and their past accomplishments and demonstrating how their accomplishments have had a lasting effect on women today. The campaign is designed to inspire girls and women to be unafraid to embrace their true selves and have the freedom to practice any interest they have. This approach was selected because the fight for women's rights is multidimensional and many people have

opposing opinions on different women's rights topics. The goal was to take an approach that the majority of people could agree upon, which is using stories from history to show that trailblazing women will inspire and empower later generations to do the same.

Choosing the Right Aesthetic from a Graphic Design Point of View

The right aesthetic for this campaign was chosen by figuring out who the target audience was and how the aesthetic of the campaign will be used to target this specific group. It was important to consider the targeted audience for the campaign – girls, women, and leaders of movements that align with *Dare to Be First's* beliefs. The color palette (Figure 1.) was chosen because of its use of bright colors such as yellow, orange and pink represent a bright future and femininity. The navy was chosen as a reminder of seriousness and validity. The fonts chosen on the official logo (Figure 2.) follow the same meanings as the colors. The script font chosen for “first” was designed to represent free spirited-ness and freedom and the thin, simplistic and clean font on the “DARE TO BE” font represents a clean, stable, firm, and modern approach.



Figure 1. *Dare to Be First* Color Palette.



Figure 2. Official *Dare to Be First* logo.

CHAPTER III

ENVIRONMENTAL INSTALLATION

Concept, Material Research, and Installation Location Development

The inspiration for the environmental graphic originated from Lee Taekeyom, a professor at Appalachian State University. Lee partnered with the professors of the Visualization Vertical Studio course, Sherman Finch and Anatol Bologan, to have students in their class complete projects inspired by his idea of creating a live, 3D typography piece designed for display in public areas around Texas A&M University's campus. Each group in the class had the option to create a piece with any theme, aesthetic, and purpose, as long as it met the criteria of being large scale, displayed in a public setting and used typography to convey its message. At this point in time, *Dare to Be First* had already developed a concept based on highlighting the accomplishments of women in history. Since the environmental installation would be unique to A&M's campus, the idea arose to put a timeline of Aggie women's history on one side of the installation and a powerful typographic image on the other, combining an art piece with an educational one. Thus, the idea for the *Dare to Be First* environmental installation was born.

Building the Installation

Building the installation was a lengthy process and required three people and four nights of labor to complete. The building process for the installation took place over several days between October 30th – November 3rd, 2017. The base for the installation was a 10 paneled-canvas room divider purchased online that was just under 7 feet tall and about 14 feet wide. Each panel of the installation was carefully printed onto semi-matte paper and cut with an X-ACTO knife to fit the panels. Then, spray adhesive glue was carefully applied to the panels and paper

and cemented into place with the help of three sets of hands. This process was continued for all 20 panels (front and back of 10 panels) and left to dry for about 3 days.

Installing the Installation

On November 7th, 2017, the *Dare to Be First* Environmental Installation was installed in the 12th Man hallway (Figure 3A & 3B) on the first floor of the Memorial Student Center on Texas A&M University's campus. It remained there until the evening of November 8th, 2017.

While the installation was up, my campaign partners, Alex Hueste and Eman Al-Zubeidi, and I stood by the exhibit to answer questions and have discussions with people who were interested. The location of this exhibit was in an extremely high traffic area on Texas A&M's campus which led to a great deal of interest and many visitors stopping by.

Additionally, the *Dare to Be First* Environmental Installation was also on display during the Texas A&M Department of Visualization's semi-annual show in the Langford Architecture Building C on December 7th, 2017, as well as a documentary video that chronicled the entire journey from start to finish which is included as a separate attachment.



Figure 3A. Front side of installation at a left angle.



Figure 3B. Front side of installation at a right angle.

CHAPTER IV

DARE TO BE FIRST PROMOTION VIDEO

Concept and Design Development, Storyboarding, and Campaign Role Recognition

Inspiration for the *Dare to Be First* promotion video came from a few different sources. Many large campaigns release short promotion videos as part of a marketing strategy to get the message across in an entertaining way in hopes of generating popularity and excitement. Examples of videos similar to these are ones promoting concerts or containing sports highlights. This approach was chosen because it was the easiest way to portray our message in the shortest amount of time, and it was designed to get people excited about the campaign. It was also a good way to demonstrate our design and film development abilities that my campaign partners and I have learned as Visualization students at Texas A&M.

After much concept development and brainstorming, the plan for the video would be to highlight four modern women embracing their unique abilities and compare them with women in history who paved the way for them to be able to practice these talents today. Each spokeswoman was paired with a famous woman in history. That way, it was easy to see the direct comparison between women “Firsts” from history and how they have directly impacted the lives of the four spokeswomen for *Dare to Be First*.

Eman Al-Zubeidi wrote out a storyboard for the video that was organized as highlighting one spokeswoman and then her pair in history displayed right afterwards (Figure 4). The cycle would continue until all four women and their pairs were displayed.

The design goals were to use the color palette, graphic elements, and illustrations to create a bold and vivid message that would create a level of contrast designed both to gain visual

interest. The contrast can also be described as a metaphor for the contrast between each woman from then to now (Figure 5). Alex Hueste is responsible for the design and creation majority of the graphical elements.

My contribution to our three-person campaign team was doing much of the research on materials for both the environmental graphic and design research for the promotion video, production of supplemental design materials such as social media posts and stickers.

Additionally, I organized many of the meetings with people who helped contribute to our campaign, anyone from volunteers for the video and the Texas A&M Division of Student Affairs University Center & Special Events Services office.

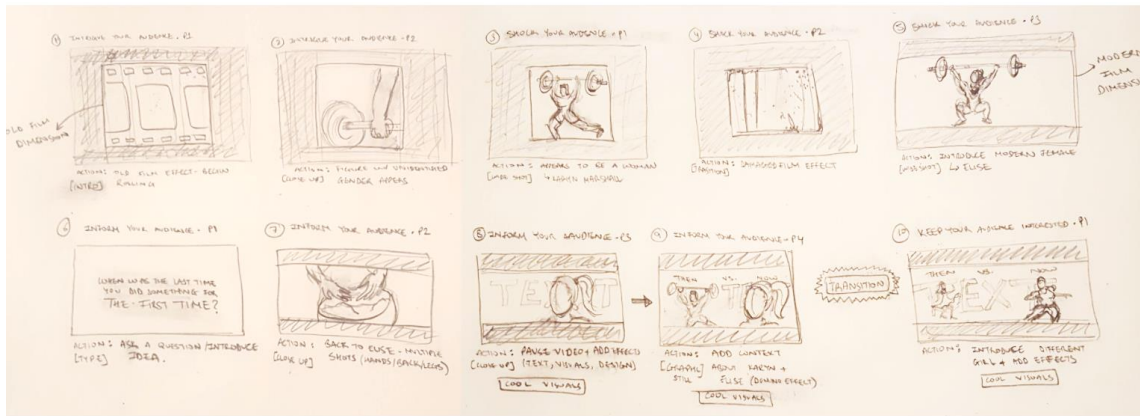


Figure 4. Storyboard for the *DTBF* promotion video. (Credit to Eman Al-Zubeidi)



Figure 5. Final design elements for one scene of the *DTBF* promotion video. (Credit to Alex Hueste)

Finding the Right Candidates and Women “Firsts” from History

My campaign partners, Alex Hueste, Eman Al-Zubeidi, and I thought of all of the diverse and accomplished women we knew in our lives. We decided on four uniquely talented women; a biomedical engineering PhD candidate, a hip-hop dancer, a violinist, and a power lifter. These four women were interviewed and filmed performing their talents. The four women “Firsts” from history that were chosen to compare them with were Marie Curie, Perla Primus, Emmanuelle Boisvert, and Karyn Marshall. Marie Curie was the first woman to earn a Nobel Peace Prize in 1903 for her work in chemistry, and she was compared with the PhD candidate. This pair represented the scenes in the video, “Dare to Be Strong”. Perla Primus was the first African American modern dancer to gain popularity in 1943 for her talents, and she was compared with the hip-hop dancer. This pair represented “Dare to Be Bold”. Emmanuelle Boisvert was the first female concertmaster of a major symphony orchestra in the United States in 1988, and she was compared with the violinist. This pair represented “Dare to Be Heard”. Lastly, Karyn Marshall was the first woman to lift over 300 lbs. in 1987 and she was compared with the power lifter. This pair represented “Dare to be Strong”. We felt that it was important to make the connection between the women from history and the women in today’s world, because without the “Firsts”, all four of the spokeswomen may not have had the opportunity to be embracing their unique talents today.

Filming and Editing

Each woman was filmed demonstrating their talents and being interviewed (Figure 6A, 6B, 6C, & 6D). The scenes for the video were filmed using a Canon EOS-5D Mark II. In a few of the scenes, dramatic lighting was set up to create a focal point. The other two scenes were filmed in the natural environment of where the women practiced their talents. Alex Hueste and I

assisted, but Eman Al-Zubeidi is responsible for the majority of the filming and editing of the video. It was edited using Adobe After Effects. The video is included as a separate attachment but also may be accessed on YouTube using this link [here](#).

Post-Production Recognition

The *Dare to Be First* promotion video was featured as the opening video in the Texas A&M Department of Visualization's semi-annual show on December 7th, 2017.



Figure 6A, 6B, 6C, & 6D. Scenes from *DTBF* promotion video footage.

CHAPTER V

SOCIAL MEDIA MARKETING

Studies on the Most Effective Way to Advertise in Today's World

For a long time in the history of the modern United States, information reached mass audiences in only a few different ways; radio, daily newspapers, and television. It was released one big source and then the information would spread via word of mouth from people to people later on. In today's world, it is completely different. Nearly 77% of Americans own a smart phone, and nearly 92% of Americans between the ages of 18-29 have a smart phone (Smith). People now have the opportunity to access any type of information at any time they'd like from the palm of their hands. Information and trends come and go quicker than ever. That is why it is important for campaigns and businesses to adapt to this new type of market.

My campaign partners and I are graphic designers. This field is a major element of marketing so it was important to learn how to better effectively use our designs. I did research on social media marketing and identified a few of the strategies we wanted to use. We ended up using quite a few different strategies to promote both the @beafirst.campaign Instagram page and the *Dare to Be First* Facebook page. The first strategy used was the attempt to grow social signals. This strategy was important because the “more people in the social media community share, like, recommend and talk about your business the more the search engine finds your website relevant”, and resulted in a better following, which led to a larger amount of people receiving our message. The second strategy was using image centric content for social media marketing. This strategy means posting interesting and trendy content and is a result of social media users that are “engaged in sharing images and liking them” and is known as a “good

opportunity to grow social signals” (Bowden). This was done by our use of graphic design to create aesthetic and eye-catching posts (Figure 7). The third and most important strategy was the use of creative content that our followers could interact with. An example of a post we did that allowed us to engage with our followers was the “#DareToShare” challenge where we asked our followers to comment about a time they had displayed strength and what they “dared” to be. We even took it a step further by engaging with classmates in real life and having them fill out physical #DareToShare cards (Figure 8A & 8B).

Advertising Environmental Installation and Promotional Video

The environmental installation was advertised on the *Dare to Be First* Instagram account, @beafirst.campaign, in a series of three countdown posts in the days leading up to the date the exhibit was installed. (Figure 9A, 9B, & 9C). These posts were part of a marketing strategy designed to generate interest and gain a following so that the campaign at the time of the actual event would have a following already. The environmental installation was also advertised by sending direct messages to organizations on Texas A&M’s campus.

The promotional video was advertised in a similar fashion with a set of countdown posts featured each one of the girls in the 4 days leading up to the video release (Figure 10A, 10B, 10C, & 10D) and promoted by word of mouth and engagement with followers.

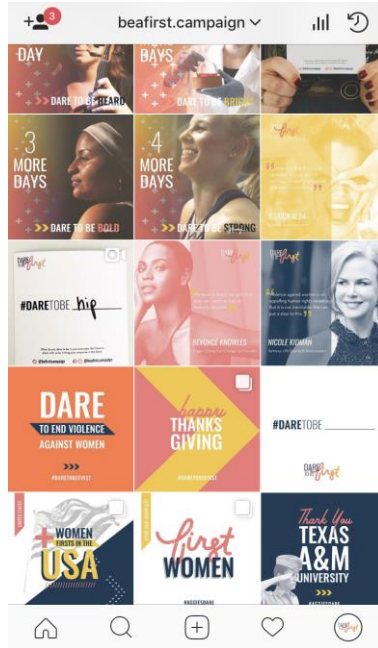


Figure 7. Instagram screenshot showing aesthetic of the page. (@beafirst.campaign)

#DARETOBE _____



[View Insights](#)

[Promote](#)



Liked by ezubeidi, hueste_we.have.a.problem and 17 others
 beafirst.campaign What do you dare to be in your everyday life? Are you kind? Brilliant? Fast? Dare to share with us for a chance to be featured in next week's post. Comment below what you dare to be! // #DaretoShare #DareToBeFirst



[View Insights](#)

[Promote](#)



Liked by hueste_we.have.a.problem, mzubeidi and 15 others
 beafirst.campaign #daretobePOSITIVE // "I keep a positive mindset when I have a lot going on, especially during finals week!" // #daretoshare #daretobefirst

Figure 8A & 8B. Posts from the #DareToShare challenge. (@beafirst.campaign)



Figure 9A, 9B, & 9C. Social media posts counting the days before the installation was revealed.

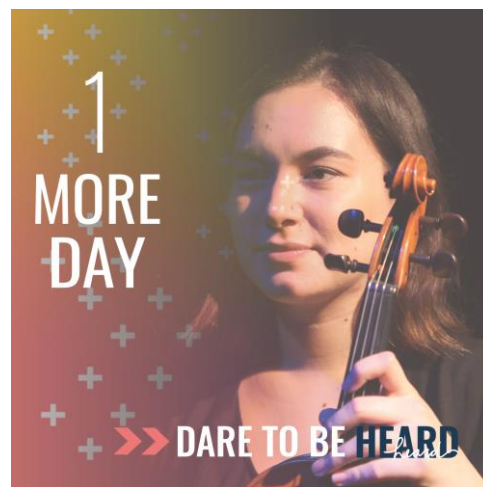


Figure 10A, 10B, 10C & 10D. Social media posts counting the days before video release.

CHAPTER VI

PERSONAL REFLECTION

My experience working on the *Dare to Be First* campaign taught me a lot of things. I increased my knowledge on graphic design, marketing, importance of relationships, keeping myself accountable, and sticking to deadlines. I learned how a cohesive group effort can do so much more for the success of a project than just one person. I learned that if I am lucky enough to have the voice and platform that I do, I should use it to spread as much information and positivity as I possibly can. I also discovered that if I am truly passionate about something I am working on, there is no end to my capabilities, and it is important that wherever I end up in the future is truly a place that I want to be.

I changed majors into the Visualization program as a junior at Texas A&M. I had come from engineering and part of the reason why I wanted to transfer was because I did not feel as if my work was making the type of impact that I hoped it would, on both myself and others. In my first year at A&M, I felt unfulfilled and stressed because I knew I did not belong as an engineer. Switching into a major that allowed a lot of room for creative and self-motivated projects was the best decision I have ever made. There are no limits in this major; your success is determined by how hard you are willing to work and how creative you push yourself to be. I feel so lucky that the Visualization department exists and employs professors and other faculty that support projects fueled by passion and their students' genuine interests. Because of Visualization, I am able to combine my ambitions and personal feelings into my schoolwork using art and design as my medium, and my internal motivation has switched from doing things to impress other people to now doing things for my own self.

My two campaign partners, Alex Hueste and Eman Al-Zubeidi, are some of the most inspiring people I have met at A&M. They showed me much generosity and guidance during our time working on the *Dare to Be First* campaign. Alex, Eman, and I are all the same age but because I switched into the major late, they were much more advanced in the Visualization program than I was; this was their “senior” studio while it was only my “sophomore” studio. Because of their combined experience, I respected them both very much and tried to learn as much as I could from them. Not only are they both extremely talented designers, they are also extremely beautiful, kind, and motivated people, and were just as passionate as I was about doing a project promoting female empowerment. In fact, the initial idea for the concept originated from Eman herself, who in the past has also done other campaigns focused on social issues, which I think is extremely noteworthy. I believe our success on the project had everything to do with the fact that we all respected each other’s ideas and worked together as a team. We all defined our roles from the beginning and never missed deadlines or made any promises that we didn’t keep. From my experience at A&M, I’ve discovered that a lot of college students dislike group projects because they don’t want to work with people who don’t do anything to contribute towards the project but still end up getting the same grade in the end. Our group did not have these types of problems because we all established our responsibilities from the start and each one of us contributed as much as we possibly could. Working on the *Dare to Be First* campaign taught me that a successful group effort involves communication, honesty, and responsibility.

This project was also impactful on me because it allowed me the chance to see how marketing and graphic design have a very interdependent relationship and how one cannot be truly successful without the other. You can have a great marketing campaign, but without the proper aesthetic and design elements it will not perform as well. Likewise, you can produce

wonderful art and designs, but without marketing, the success is limited. I have always been interested in the marketing industry and having the chance to work on the innerworkings of a campaign, from start to finish, gave me a lot of perspective and has influenced my decision on higher education and/or career paths for the future.

I was especially impacted because prior to working on the *Dare to Be First* project, my views on feminism were not solid. I categorized myself as a believer in women's rights and equality but not as a "crazy" feminist. After working on this campaign, I realize that I was wrong to say I am not a feminist. I firmly believe that any supporter of women's rights and equality should be okay with saying they are a feminist and believe in continually encouraging girls and women everywhere to never let predetermined notions and policies to get in the way of what they want to achieve.

Lastly, I am thankful for all of the support my campaign partners and I received on this project from fellow students, professors, and faculty at Texas A&M University, a school that in the past has been known for leaning more towards conservative outlooks. My experience at A&M, both through this project and also in general, has shown me acceptance of every student there into the Aggie Family, no matter who they are or what they believe in. Every person affiliated with A&M that we spoke to, whether we were trying to get permission to install our exhibit or interviewing faculty, were all supportive and encouraging of our work. We only received positive feedback during the environmental installation and the premiere of the promotional video. It was a little bit nerve-racking in the beginning stages of the project because we didn't know if the topic would be seen as too controversial and/or face backlash, but instead it showed me just how much love, support, and acceptance there is in the Aggie family.

CONCLUSION

The *Dare to Be First* campaign is an effort to confront old issues with a new approach. Feminism and women's rights in the United States remain controversial topics due to many conflicting opinions in society. The fight for equality is extremely complicated and "operates in occupational, educational, judicial, economic and social – including romantic – sphere[s]" (Zawisza). There is no one right or wrong opinion and there is no exact start or end to the fight. While there will always be issues and disagreements in the discussion of feminism, *Dare to Be First* offers a refreshing and easily agreeable approach. By using examples of women from the past and displaying how their hard work paved the way for women today, it is clear to see how their resilience has left a lasting and positive impact for future generations. *Dare to Be First* follows a feminine and trendy aesthetic that incorporates a series of contrasts between history and the present and between seriousness and freedom in the design. Its use of bright, bold colors and fun scripts was created to attract a wide range of female audiences, from young to old. The campaign is an example of a modern and trendy marketing approach and aligns with the values of successful social media marketing platform strategies in 2018.

The Future

The *Dare to Be First* promotion video was featured as the opening video in the Texas A&M Department of Visualization's semi-annual show on December 7th, 2017. In Spring 2018, there were plans in place to showcase the *Dare to Be First* campaign at SXSW in Austin, TX, but the plans were not finalized. As of April 8th, 2018, the campaign Facebook page and Instagram page have reached over 2,000 unique impressions. The *Dare to Be First* promotional video was submitted to the Visualization department's annual "Viz-a-GoGo" show for a

screening at the Palace Theater on May 5th, 2018. Ideas for future posts for the campaign include finding more women “Firsts” in history and highlighting their unique talents and posting messages of support on notable days for women, such as International Women’s Day, Mother’s Day, or on birthdays of notable women in history, and continually addressing new issues in the fight for gender equality as they approach.

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APPENDIX

The *Dare to Be First* Environmental Installation documentation video is included as a supplemental file.

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