

BLACK TO OUR ROOTS

Exploring The Contemporary Youth Pan-African Movement



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PAN AFRICAN AND AFRICAN DIASPORA MOVEMENTS

BTOR BLACK TO OUR ROOTS

Pan African organization first started in 2002. Youth are recruited for an educational and cultural enrichment 3-week journey to Ghana, West Africa.

The Youth are recruited-from all walks of life, public and private schools, community centers, and places of worship. They must be of African decent and between the ages of 13-18. They have 5 chapters across the United States and the Virgin Islands. The Baltimore chapter just took off in October 2009.

The passion of BTOR is to prepare youth for leadership in their communities and lives as they are taught about their African identity and relationships abroad. They undergo pre-training for their journey where they learn the values of cultural education, sustainable agriculture and entrepreneurship.

PAN AFRICANISM

Pan-Africanisms major academic goals are reexamination of African history from an African perspective as opposed to a pro-European perspective and a return to traditional African concepts about culture, society, and values. Pan-Africanism gave rise to the civil rights movement in the US and to independence and anti-imperialist movements in Africa.

SUBJECT

Black To Our Roots Educational program
Baltimore City Chapter youth ages 13-18

AUDIENCE

Baltimore City Youth and abroad ages 13-18

PURPOSE

Using design skills to streamline a process to facilitate the funding process for the newly formed BTOR Baltimore City chapter and to explore the role of contemporary Pan-African ideas in the lives of youth.

VOICE

Anti-Trend, Pro Change, Anti-Angst, Pro Africa

Is a pilgrimage at a young age effective? What impact will it have?
Will it be long lasting? Is it just a trend?



African American culture. When I grow up I want to be an artist, that captures the struggle of black people all over the world. Imagine a little black boy standing on the corner with one shoe on, and crying. He's crying because his father is in jail and his mother is strung out on drugs. He wonders around thinking about who he is and where he comes from, and why nobody wants him. Its important to me as an artist to capture an image like that because its something that I can relate to and its something I see everyday.

Portion of Chanel Eaton, 15, recruitment essay.

I yearn for a popular expression of Pan-Africanism and a matching consciousness such that the concept does not appear surreal, abstract and out of touch with reality and the populace, particularly the youth who are the inheritors of its future.

–Salma Maoulidi, Activist

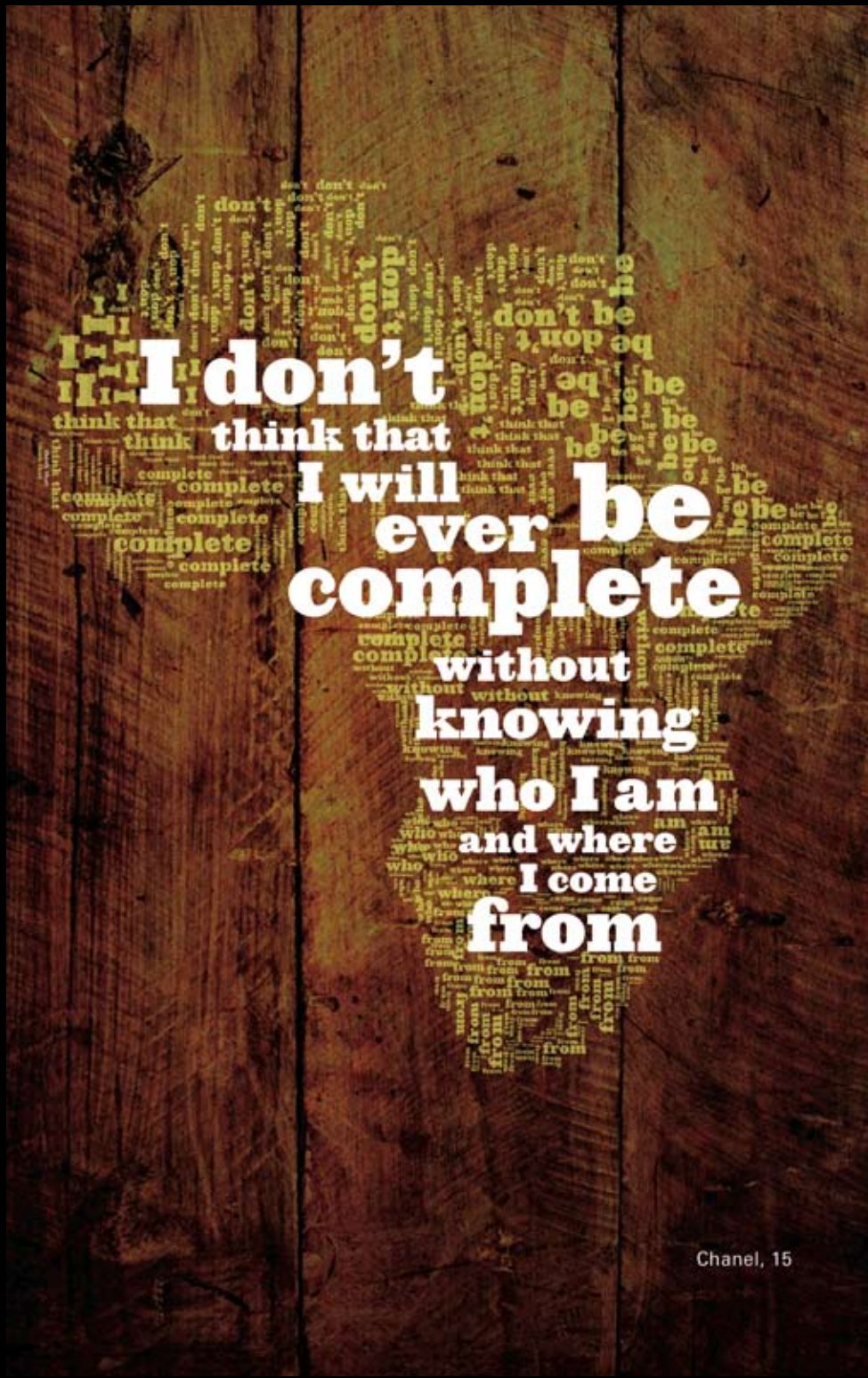
DESIGN

How will design play a role? How will I visually communicate the journey of a 15 year old that is about to embark on a heavy life changing experience? The key will be to assist them to incorporate effective design into their fund-raising ideas and to realize how significant their visual language is essential to impact their community. The youth are the inheritors of this movements future but often the ideals are abstract and they tend to be out of touch with reality.

Visual Graphics and exhibition ideas:

Installation of the shape of Africa created from physical and found objects collected from the Black To Our Roots youth & community. Objects will be African and Baltimore City themed. They can consist of African handmade jewelry, fabric, pieces of musical instruments, photographs, speakers, records, etc. This can be located on the wall or I might try to suspend it from the ceiling or from the wall. A visual timeline will also be apart of the exhibition showcasing how the Back to Africa movement came to pass and how it is influencing contemporary ideals.

Why do you want to go to Africa?



Chanel, 15

Experimental typographic poster dissecting a line from a Chanel's recruitment/sponsor letter.



Anti Trend, Pro Change

Portrait of Chanel exploring contemporary cultural themes related to Pan-Africanism and the African Diaspora



Anti Angst, Pro Africa

Portrait of Jahril, 15, exploring contemporary cultural themes related to Pan-Africanism and the African Diaspora. He will be returning to Ghana for a 3rd trip.

NEXT

- Continue to document BTOR youth workshops—its better to have more resources than not enough
- Continue to interview the kids during their preparation for the trip
- Design, Design, Design and design some more (continue to dive into their thought process, a contemporary youth movement exists and design will help facilitate their needs
- FOCUS! Thesis is supposed to be about rich, thought provoking content. Design is fun but has to make sense.
- Continue collecting items for exhibition/installation (Baltimore city artifacts, etc.)