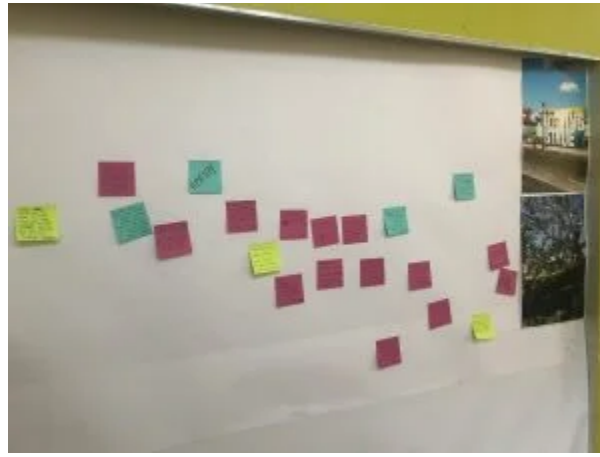




TISHMAN CENTER · MARCH 2, 2018

Speak-EZ: A Comforting Space to Reflect on the Uncomfortable Realities of Climate Injustice



By Molly Craft Johnson

In the weeks and months that the Tishman Center has been planning to [disrupt The New School's curriculum](#) in order to foster university-wide reflection and action on climate injustice, I developed many expectations for what would happen this week and what we might achieve as a community. I did not anticipate at any point that I would cry. Yet I found myself this morning sitting on a beanbag in a little nook at the back of the second floor in the Parsons East building, listening to recorded interviews with people who have been impacted by the

destruction wrought by hurricanes fueled by climate change...with tears rolling down my cheeks. In the first recording, Luis Berrios-Negron reflects on what he felt and experienced watching from afar (Europe) as Hurricane Maria hit Puerto Rico where his family lives. He says his reaction was "a painful, slow process," contending with the fearfulness and nerve-wracking tension of losing communication with his family on the ground. He points out that Puerto Rico hasn't only been tormented by this natural disaster, but that the island was already hurting because of a figurative hurricane created by the financial global market, which is now making it even more difficult to recover from the physical damage left in the wake of Maria. It is not easy to listen to Luis talk about his experience and the experience of his family, but it is important to hear what he has to say. Luckily, there is a safe and comforting space on campus to do exactly this. [Jean Gardner](#), Associate Professor of Social-Ecological History & Design at [Parsons School of Constructed Environments](#) has worked with her students Gisbel Videla and Will Eatough to create [Speak- EZ: Climate Disaster – Climate Injustice, Hear The Voices of EXPERIENCE](#). The cozy space in the back corner at 25 East 13th Street includes soft carpet and

two large cushions to sit on while visitors use the headphones provided to listen to recorded interviews and reflect on the causes, effects, and experiences of climate disasters. Post-it notes are scattered on the countertops in the space, inviting visitors to record their thoughts and share them by sticking a note on the wall before leaving. Speak-EZ opened on Monday, February 26th at the start of our curriculum disruption, and it will stay open at Parsons through March 16th. Another iteration, featuring even more interviews will be launched during [Earth Week](#) in April. I highly recommend stopping by to listen, learn and reflect.

More about Speak-EZ: We are bombarded with shocking images of extreme weather and its devastating impacts. All life as well as what we build to protect ourselves is being uprooted, shattered. The already vulnerable are hit hardest. And we are being called on to respond to this new world. How answer the call when we have cut ourselves off from fully 'taking in' this collective challenge? How imagine everything torn away from us by the very Elements we insulated ourselves from fierce winds, torrential waters, mudslides, earthquakes, and raging, consuming fires. Come experience on your own terms without crowds or observers the voices of those who

have lived Climate Disaster and Injustice. Hear voices emerging from lived experiences to lead amidst Climate Disaster and Injustice. Come to a place where you can Speak-
EZ.Voices Hurricanes Irma & Maria: Luis Berrios-Negron, Puerto Rico
 Hurricane Sandy: Wendy Brawer, Lower East Side, New York City

Installation Developers:

Jean Gardner, Associate Professor, Social-Ecological History & Design, SCE, Parsons

William Eatough, 4th year Dual Degree graduate student, Masters of Architecture & Lighting, SCE, Parsons
 Gisbel Videla, 4th year Dual Degree graduate student, Masters of Architecture & Lighting, SCE, Parsons.

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