

○ On the Bus:

An art project intended to spark interest in those around you

I'm doing research in artificial intelligence so I'd like to do something like that. I don't know whether it's robots or just trying to get computers to use natural language or stuff like that...I want to try to get robots to act more intelligently, to do things more like humans. So instead of like sitting at a computer and typing away at it you can just talk to your computer maybe or something like that. **-Matthew**

I wouldn't mind meeting a few more people. Not just the people that I know. That's probably about it...I'm usually going to school, working, going to school, working and I don't have that time and now that I'm just not going to work until after spring break I can be more social. **-Shanese**

I was born in North Africa [Algeria] and I went to Paris for school. After 10 years of absence I went back last year...I couldn't recognize them [my family], they changed. They got older too. They got a little bit more white hair and stuff. They sent me pictures just before I go. It was very shocking. They become so old. They still look young but older than I remember them. **-Sahraoui**

I love sports...I'd like to go to the game tomorrow night but it interferes with my medication so I don't think I'll be able to go. I have to take my medicine at eight o'clock and it might make me sleepy at the ball game. **-Lenore**

I was thinking about Parkland but at the moment I have to worry about bills and stuff so I'm kind of taking my time on that one right now. But at a later date I will be going back to school. I want to play football. I want to go back for that also. But otherwise, just to sharpen up my skills, my high school skills. School skills period. I also lived in Peoria, Illinois. I played for Central High School in Peoria, Illinois. Played one year in Bowen but the team wasn't really too enthusiastic about playing football. They more wanted to fight instead of play football so I really didn't stay with that football team long. **-Clifton**

I should go back to Africa and try to help over there. At this point my parents are there [Congo]. I grew up in the eastern part of the country where one of the volcanoes erupted and we had everything destroyed. The airport is destroyed, everything is destroyed. To get to that area now you have to go through Rwanda...It's very hard to get there and people are suffering now over there. I talked to my parents lately and they don't have anywhere to live, to stay. Their house was destroyed. Our house was destroyed by the lava. They don't have clean water, they don't have food. The Red Cross is trying to help them – giving some food. If I had already graduated I should have gone there and try to see how I could help. –Sisko

I'm taking some prerequisites for an internet masters in computer science program that I didn't have as an undergrad before...I used to farm until about 4 years ago and then I took some computer programming classes at Parkland and got a job as a programmer so now I'm trying to learn some of the things that I really should know in the first place...We didn't own the farm but between us we farmed there for 60 years. –Larry K.

What I really want to get into is some redeveloping of some undeveloped communities in Chicago. Maybe start off with the one that I was raised in. I really want to go into urban development and real estate...I want to get a community center going at the community I'm from. It's called Roselawn. It's like one of Chicago's, I'm not going to say bad neighborhoods as far as crime or anything, but it's not one of the best-looking neighborhoods. That's just basically what I want to do. –Quentin

○ The Project

From February to April of 2002, I began an interview-based art project about the bus system in Champaign-Urbana. I rode five bus lines (yellow, red, blue, orange, and green) from beginning to end and back again. Trying to maintain a diverse group, I approached people with two questions: "What are you looking forward to?" and "What are you not looking forward to?". With these two questions as a starting point, conversations developed, each one as unique as the people I met.

This project is about increasing awareness of and appreciation for people we encounter in our daily lives. Have you ever wondered what the person sitting next to you on the bus is thinking about? Is she on her way home to check the day's lotto numbers? Are he and his wife trying to decide what to name their baby?

Because having a specific purpose makes it easier to ask personal questions of strangers, this project gave me the excuse to approach people and ask them what was on their minds. The recorded conversations resulting from this process are the basis of the project installations on the buses and in the bus station. Audio recordings of the interviews are installed in the transit building and quotes from these conversations can be found on area buses. As people encounter these remnants of my experiences on the bus, I hope that their interest in their own fellow passengers is heightened.