

The I Love You Project® is a global interactive social art project which celebrates diversity and uses video, photography, and sound to create installations. A digital microscope camera is used to videotape participants saying "I Love You" in their native language. The voices are recorded separately, combined with original music and videotaped images to create a multi-media exhibition. Portraits of participants are also part of the exhibition creating a mosaic of human faces. The microscope camera creates unexpected portraits that play with skin tone, contrast, and light. The goal of the project is to explore cultures and bring people of different backgrounds together through art and love.

This project has been conducted in Spain and Germany. It is a collaborative effort between a photographer, sound artist, and video editor. It is a traveling exhibit and the intention is to reproduce it in many countries. We hope to create a cross cultural visual dialog by exhibiting the project conducted in one country at a location in a different country. The message is that the world is multi-cultural, and peace and love between people of diverse backgrounds cannot be achieved unless we start a one on one relationship with strangers.

New York-based photographer Debbie T. Davies uses a digital microscope camera – actually a child's toy – to record silent video of participants and shoots portraits. During the shoot she interviews the participants to understand their backgrounds, and what brought them to the country they currently live in.

Germany-based Sound artist Julius Schön records the participants' voices saying "I Love You" along with snippets of conversation and laughter, and composes a soundtrack that uses these voices and sounds combined with original music for the video. He also shoots some video and portraits using a different camera.

The experience of videotaping people is part of the project. Subjects have their own emotional experience saying these three words to a stranger, at times in the presence of other people at the shoot location. Neighbors who never met come into the shoot location as strangers and depart as friends.

We conducted the first The I Love You Project® in Barcelona, Spain in the neighborhood of Raval in March 2011. The exhibition was an immersive experience sharing the multi-cultural faces and voices of the people who live and work there. Participants represented eighteen different languages reflecting the diversity of Raval. This community experiences tension due to intolerance and crime, houses a large population of immigrants, and is predominantly working class. Through this project, we hoped to unite the members of the community, and show that change is accomplished through love. The result was a festive opening reception where many of the participants were reunited with each other, or met for the first time. We recorded 18 languages and 80 participants. New relationships were forged within the community. The exhibition helped become part of a catalyst for change within the community, as people began to connect and thus become a more united front.

In August 2012 we commenced The I Love You Project® in Germany. We shot subjects in Bockenheim (Frankfurt) and Giessen. This time we recorded 32 languages and 82 participants. The project continued in Berlin where there is a large immigrant community in Neukölln. During the annual 48-Hour- Neukölln festival in June 2013, over 120 participants were recorded. Videos from the projects have been exhibited in Spain, Germany, Italy, and Poland.

In subsequent conversations with participants, we learned that the impact of the project was more far reaching than anticipating. The effects of saying "I Love You" during the recording sessions, peripheral conversations regarding love, and changes in the participants' attitude and how they interact with others are a testament to the power of project. It created a domino-effect of love.