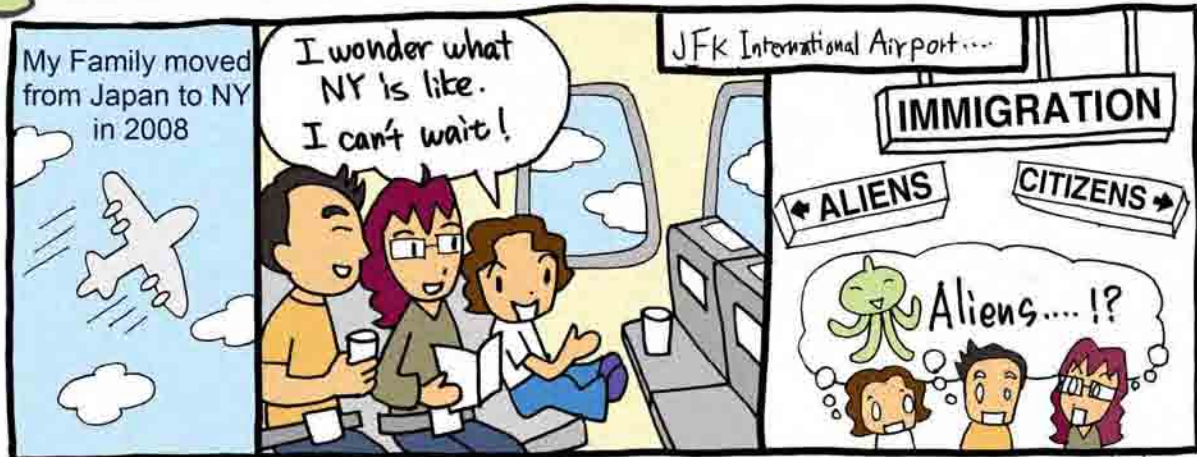


Participatory Public Art Project  
**Aliens in New York**  
The Annual Report 2015 Rica Takashima



# THE STORY SO FAR...



That thought led Rica to hold the "Aliens in New York" art project. The project got fiscal sponsorship in March 2013. However, Rica Takashima, the project artist couldn't utilize the benefits to the maximum. She was struggling in the United States as an immigrant artist, while working on her projects and trying to understand the unfamiliar system. This is a touching Manga comic documentary of Rica and people around her, with love, tears and laughs...



Late December of 2014...

Oh, I passed the first stage examination for the FLOW\* art show. So I should give a presentation to the panelists in February...



If I get this, I may be selected to show my sculptures in 2016....

February 2015  
Congratulations!  
Your artwork MUST be shown this year. We know it will be overwhelming, but please do so, thank you.



What!

I am glad to be chosen, but will I be able to handle these coming events, carrying the art project and FLOW sculptures?  
I already finished the LOI\*, budget, and the timeline of the project. I think I can manage this...

\* LOI, Letter of Inquiry

I created 8'x10' sized wood sculptures for the FLOW art show. The result was favorable. My pieces were named in various papers as the best public art in NYC 2015 summer. I participated in guided tours six times, including an opening party.



\* FLOW art show is an annual summer art exhibition along the shoreline at Randall's Island Park in NYC, presented by The Randall's Island Park Alliance, the Bronx Museum of the Arts and Made Event. 5 artists from the AIM (Artists in Market Place) program are selected to show their public art every year.

However, I had so much trouble creating the sculptures, I took twice the time I estimated. I couldn't do any fundraising from March to May.

The Opportunity Grant was the only one I got this year.

If I were in Japan, there would be many people I could ask for help with admin and paper work when I got jammed.

I even bought a membership to the Foundation Center, but I couldn't find suitable founders,

I think I don't know how best to search in English. Despite my three years of experience, I ended up running a deficit in 2015, too ....

Here most of my friends are immigrants and have families. They don't have time.



Don't feel blue. You accomplished Alien in NY project this year. Show me that.



Okay.  
I will...

I had planned to show five Peekaboo-kuns that I created at an LGBT familiar event last year, at Queens & Comics\*... I got the details of the conference by email in the middle of February...



What?

There's a \$20 admission fee for attendees.

They never mentioned that before...

Because Aliens in NY is public art, meant for everyone to enjoy...



It's better if the events don't require fees...

I decided not to participate in the conference with an Aliens in NY art project. The organizer of the conference was my friend, so I participated in the conference as a panelist instead. \*



Meanwhile, for the art show at the Bronx Museum...



but this time it will be a three-month long museum exhibit.

I've only held short-term exhibitions thus far,

What new possibilities does that offer?

- \* Queens & Comics was the LGBT comic themed conference on May 7th & 8th at CUNY Graduate Center.
- \* LGBT Comics for Young Readers panel, and This is What I Look Like: Creating Queer Characters of Color panel.

In the past exhibitions so far...



Screws  
and  
bolts.



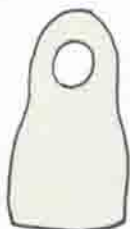
Small kids  
can't reach  
the hole to  
poke their  
faces  
through.

There was a  
Wheelchair-  
Peekaboo, but  
wheelchair users  
themselves were  
not able to try  
Peekaboo-kuns.



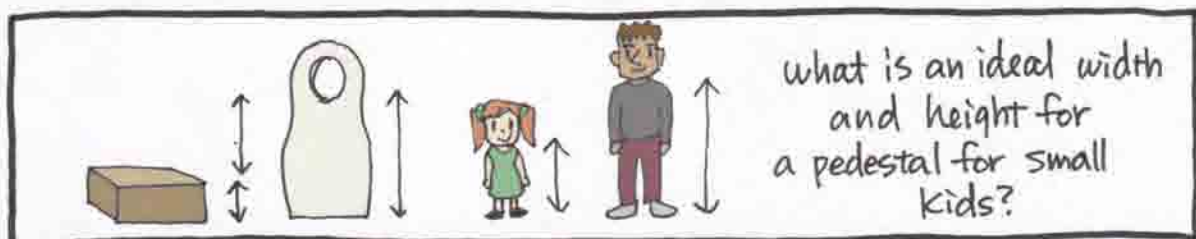
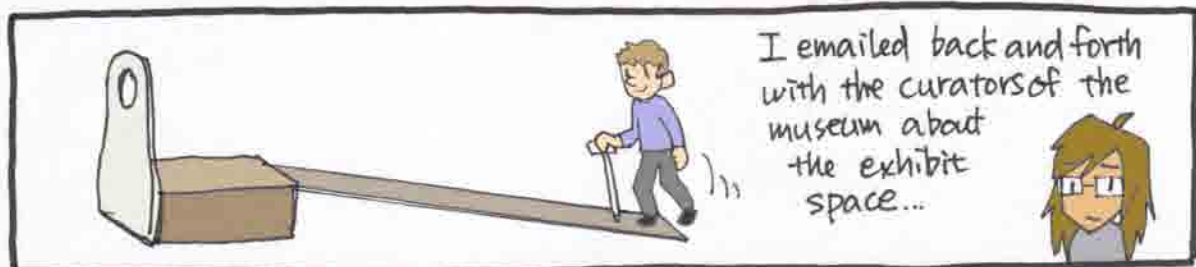
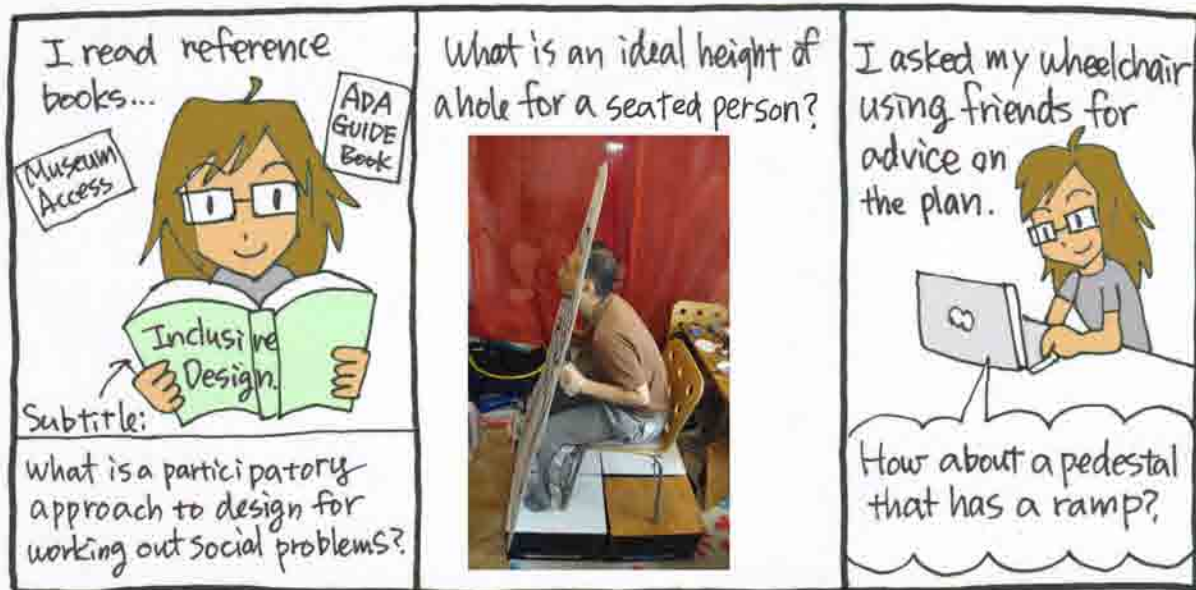
The pedestal:  
It supports  
Peekaboo-kun,  
so it won't fall  
over, and can  
be used as  
a step.

water bottle  
weights  
inside.



How can we make the Peekaboo-kuns  
lighter weight, and make  
the pedestals easy to attach and  
detach?







I hope these plans work for many people to take part in and enjoy the art project in safety.



Wait, the NYFA's Opportunity Grant supported projects like Matting & framing of photographs for an exhibition in the past. I can try this grant for making these pedestals!

I visited the wood workshop of a furniture artisan.

This is a professional workshop and this equipment is all for special wood-working.



We talked about materials, structure, and budget of the pedestal, and submitted the grant proposal.





**Yay!**

I got the  
full grant!  
Thank you  
very much!



The grant funds were used to create  
four beautiful custom order pedestals.

Each side of the pedestal has a different wood  
color. I was inspired by the artwork of Ziedah  
Diata, one of my artist friends. In her artwork,  
various types of trees represent various skin  
colors; I made a wish that all sorts of people  
would like to participate in this art project.



\* Thanks again my donors and contributors!! : The Rothman Fund,  
Anonymous, M.M, Megan Sultzman, Mariko Takegawa, Coltin-san,  
Max Resto, Alaina Poppici, Breanak Vazquez, Mejia Hansel,  
and Erin Subramanian!

The theme this time was Gender and Outfit.

There are many genders like a rainbow, but this time I picked four types for the project: male, female, dual gender, and non-gender. Four Bronx residents helped me by serving as models for each gender.



**Mx. Poppiti**

I live in Pelham Bay section of The Bronx, because it is a melting pot of cultures. My father is Italian, his great grand parents came from Naples and my mother is Puerto Rican and she came from Ponce. They met because my father owned a record store and they started a music producing business together. Though my dad no longer has the business, my family is well known in my neighborhood.

I like to do the happy dance when I eat dessert LOL and they're very cute c:



**Mx. Grant**

I live in Castle Hill, The Bronx. My grandparents came from South Carolina to NYC and eventually settled down in the Bronx. They had several children, including my mother! I was born in Fordham Hill. Eventually my mother and I moved in with my grandmother in Castle Hill. My family is here. My friends are all over NYC. The Bronx is beautiful. That's why I live here.

When I eat something delicious, I do the happy dance!



Each is  
approximately 75 x 35 in  
Acrylic on foam board

**Mx. Liriano**

I'm on Valentine Ave, The Bronx. That's close to the Grand Concourse.

My parents met and married in the Bronx. Although we moved to Manhattan when the family got bigger. But we've always had many friends/family in the Bronx. I chose to move back because I like my area. Never problems or crime by my neighborhood. I'm mixed with DR/PR and Bronx.

Getting out of work early on a Friday. Yeah "happy dance"  
Paid the bills and have extra money to party. Yeah "happy dance"

**Mx. Velez**

I live in the Norwood area of The Bronx. I was born in St. Francis Hospital in the Bronx. That place was torn down long ago, but I'm still here. My mother and father met in a party in the Bronx as teenagers and had me 2 years later. My childhood was spent living two blocks away from the Bronx Zoo, where we woke up to lion roars, peacock calls, and the strong smell of elephant poo.

I do happy dance by myself when I am making art.



I drew four Kimono outfits on paper, and put them on the Peekaboo-kuns like dress-up paper dolls.

### Kabuki Cloth:

This gorgeous Kimono is for Agemaki, a young woman in Japanese traditional Kabuki theater, where all roles are played by male actors. This cloth is for female in male.



### Yagasuri:

Arrow pattern is an orthodox design for Kimono. It became very popular among young female students in the early 1900s in Japan.



I printed explanatory papers about each kimono, and set them up beside the exhibit.



People can take one if they are interested in it.

### Hakama and Kimono:

Hakama is a kind of pantskirt. Red Kimono and gray Hakama are very popular in Coming-of-Age ceremonies for males.



### Mizufusen:

Water balloon pattern is for kid's Kimono. It has no gendered connotations.



# Bronx Calling July 9–September 20

## The Third AIM Biennial

The Bronx Museum  
of the Arts



There are works that viewers are encouraged to touch, citing a series of mannequin figures made by pop artist Rika Takashima, designed for viewers to put their faces into. —Dana Varinsky, TimeOut NY magazine.



Now, it is possible for small kids, adults, seniors and wheelchair users to use the sculptures easily and safely without any assistance from the museum's staff.





I explained the relation between gender and Kimono design to visitors.

At the opening party, July 16th, I held a performance that involved marching around the museum holding four Peekaboo-kuns.



Kimonos are made differently for men and women, and the shapes and print patterns have particular meanings. Americans, however, don't have special knowledge of Kimonos, and can choose them without judging. I believe the attendants were able to enjoy the peculiarity of kimono culture. They were all laughing when they saw the character's naked body, when the clothes were moved.



July 15 '18 Eva  
Performance



July 16 '18 Eva  
Performance

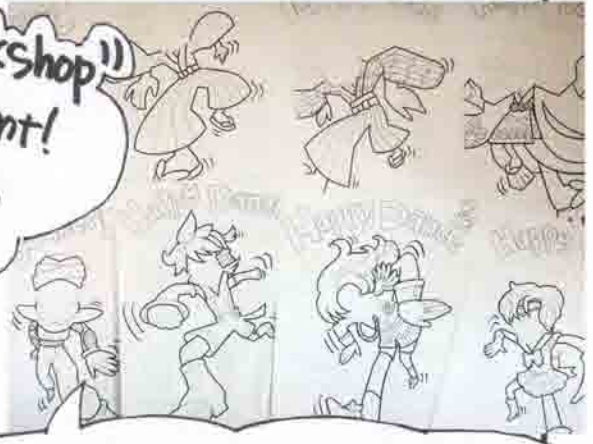
# Boogie On The Boulevard: Family Affair

August 19th  
12-4pm

Grand Concourse  
from 161st to  
167th Street

"Happy Dance Peekaboo Art Workshop!"  
Color Your Happy Dance Moment!

I changed the event title to  
be family friendly, but the theme  
was the same.



I made eight kinds of original  
color sheets for kids, inspired by Japanese  
Anime. The Bronx Museum staff asked  
NYPD and ConEdison for volunteers to  
help with the WS. Thanks a lot!!



Participants  
enjoyed drawing their  
faces in the mirror,  
and coloring sheets  
while dancing!



## Another WS for Adults....

## Make an Art Certificate with Peekaboo-kuns!

1 Participants chose one character from 4 Peekaboo-kuns based on outfit, read the card attached to the back, and became the character.



2 Staff takes a picture with an instant film camera.



3 The participants and the staff make certificates on the site: putting the picture, a note of the kimono, embossed seal, and participants' signature.

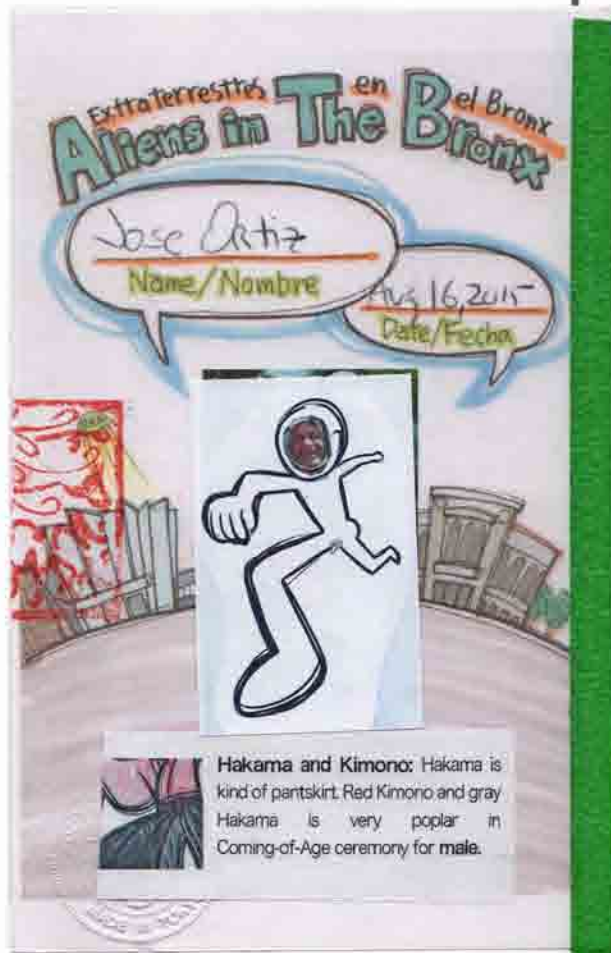
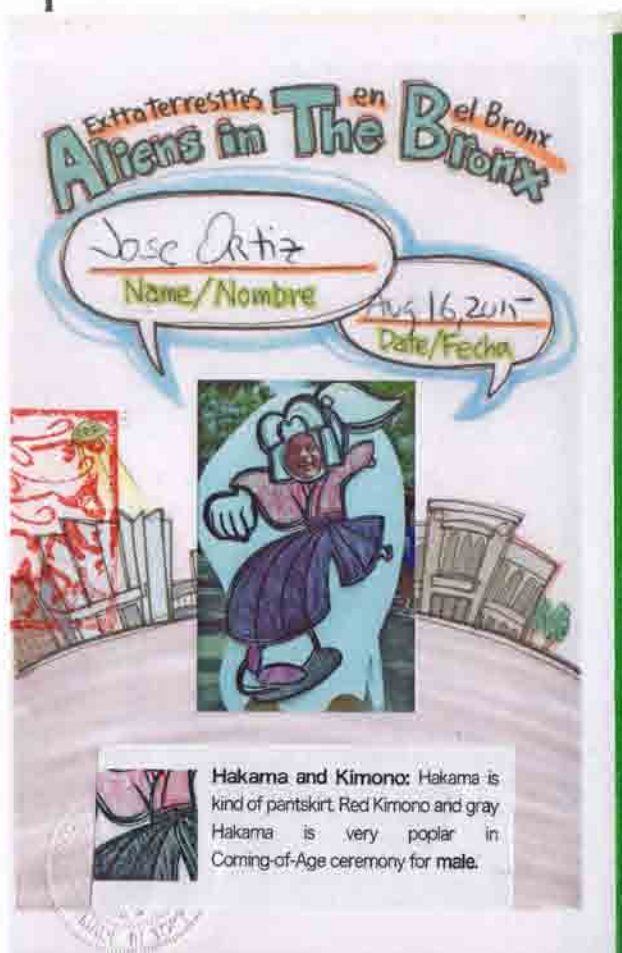


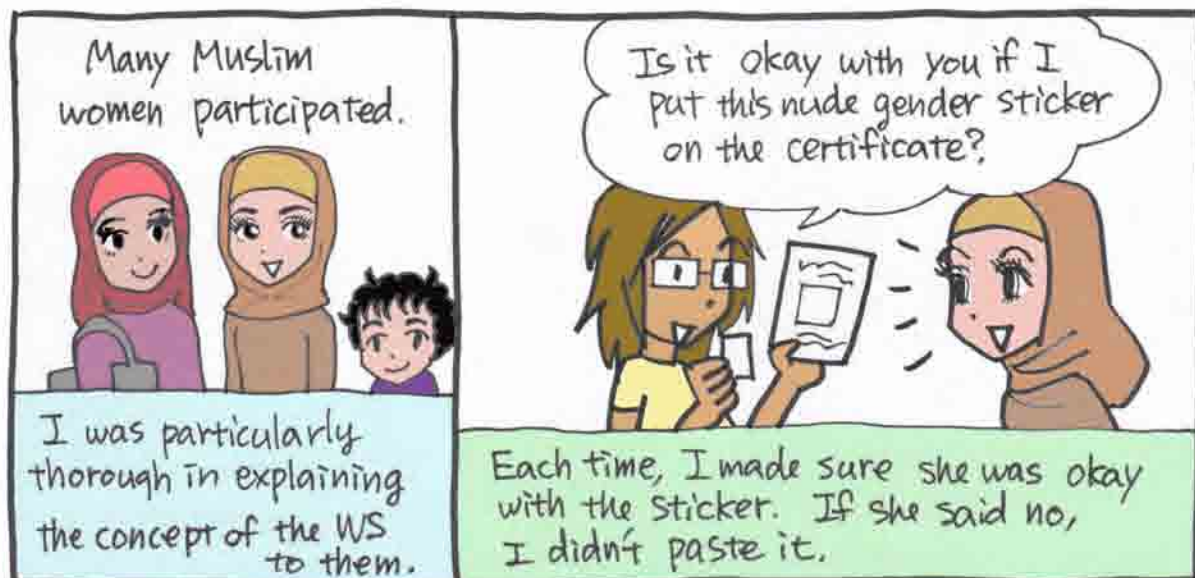
4 By flipping the outfit, the participants see the gender they became.





The art certificate was made of two sheets; a piece of paper and a clear cover. A nude sticker was put on the clear cover. When the two pieces were put together, the participants could see their faces on a nude version of the Peekaboo-kun they chose, so the certificate offered both a clothed and nude version for them to enjoy.





For the last two years, I did all the event prep myself, so I was really glad that intern volunteers helped me with prep this year. Thanks so much for your help, Alaina, Hansel, and Breana!

### Participants:

Coloring: 83

Peekaboo-ing: 800

Art Certificate: 36



Meanwhile...

The kimono outfit was great but was somewhat ordinary. Since the exhibition is running for such a long time, why don't I change the outfits for the Peekaboo-kuns?



Sketching  
Sketching



I made Robot outfits for four genders. I got the idea from Japanese Robot anime and toys.

Max Restro, who I got to know at SNS, helped me with the second installation, thanks!



This is **Humanoid EMA**, this is an actual **female** robot sold by SEGA Toy.

This **Unit-01** suit is from **Neon Genesis Evangelion**. This robot suit is for a 14 year-old **boy** who is the main character of the series.

This **Superbia GN-X** suit is from **Gundam00V**. In the story, evolved human beings are all non-genders. There is no gender in the world, thus the robot suit has **no gender**.

This **Nadlee** suit is from **Gundam004**. Bunch of cords looks like long hair. They are there to connect to additional arming. **Nadlee** exists as an impartial arbitrator and it is **dual-gender**. It battles only for the traitor.

# Workshop at Bronx Museum

September  
9th & 20th



This is fun!  
I like that you  
feature the stories  
of the Bronx  
residents.  
~ Toby W. ~



Very interesting  
hands on interactive  
art work. I enjoy reading  
Manga comics: so  
it was cool to be  
a part of one in  
a way!!  
~Kourtney~





From July 9-September 20, there were 24,046 visitors and 139 participants in the three workshops. Wow! I am glad my long-term exhibition had so many visitors!!



Love it! And love that the interactive art is accessible beautiful.

~ Dina M ~



Congrats! It seems the Aliens in New York project has made progress in 2015. What will you do for 2016?



Well, I haven't decided yet. My next proposal, about refugee immigrants in NY, was rejected by Queens Museum International and I have no idea now.

I've worked on the art project for three years, and now my thought is....

To spread the mission of Aliens in NY to more people, there is no need for me to draw Peekaboo-kuns at all.



**Mission:**

"Aliens in NY" is a short-term interactive installation using a group of Peekaboo-kun sculptures. It promotes mutual understanding among people who belong to different ethnicities, religions and other social standings.

Rather, the project needs other artists' works.

I actually tried to collaborate with other artists in 2014, though it didn't work out for some reason.

I wanted to do that!

Sorry..

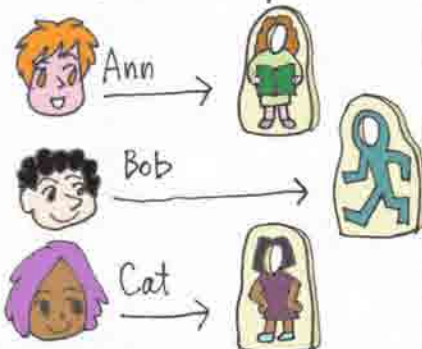


That's okay...

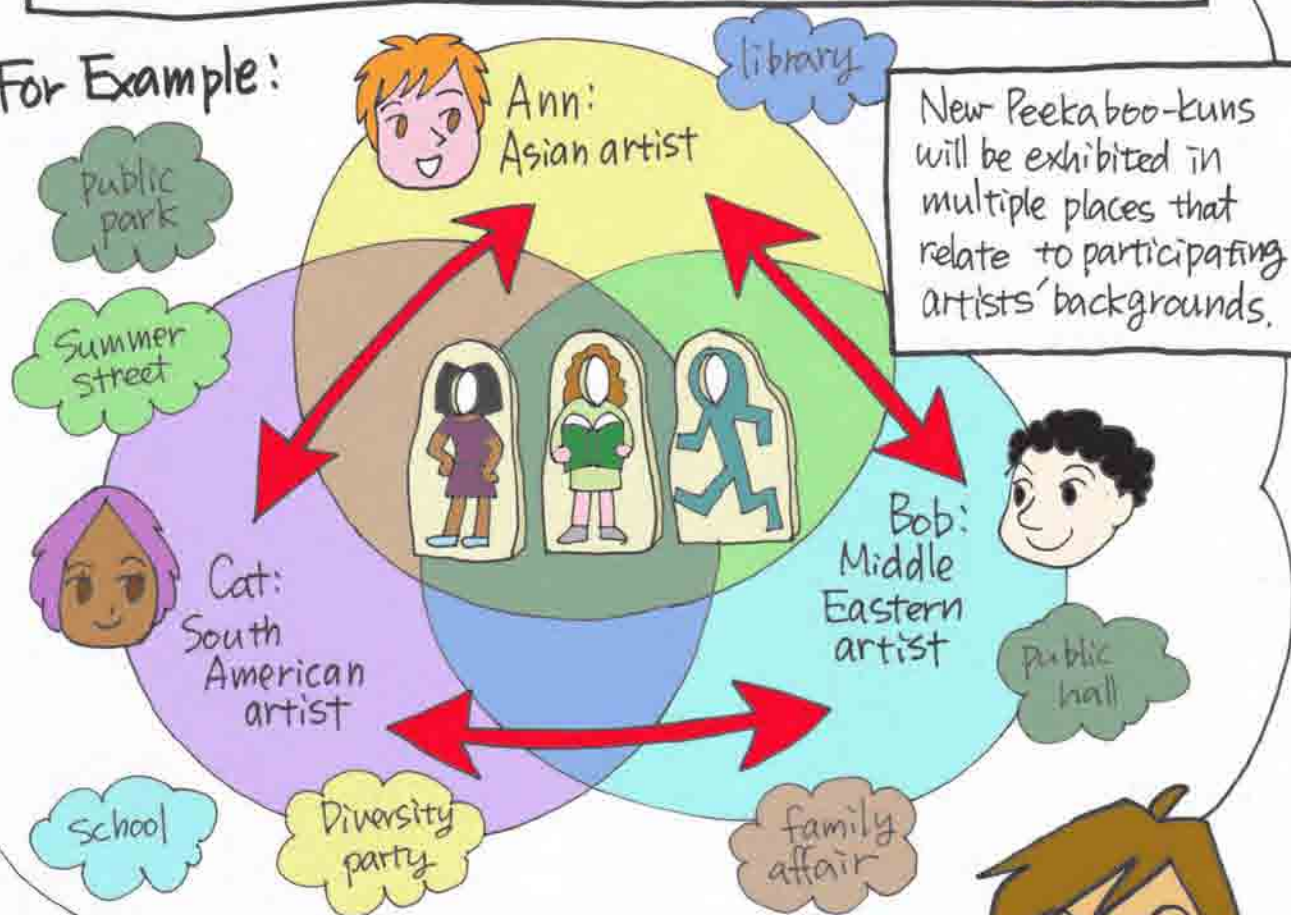


I'll bring in several "alien" artists (or artists who have stories/experiences of/for/with "alien") who agree to the mission of the project, and ask them to make new Peekaboo-kuns. Each artist will make a Peekaboo-kun from their own unique story.

For Example:

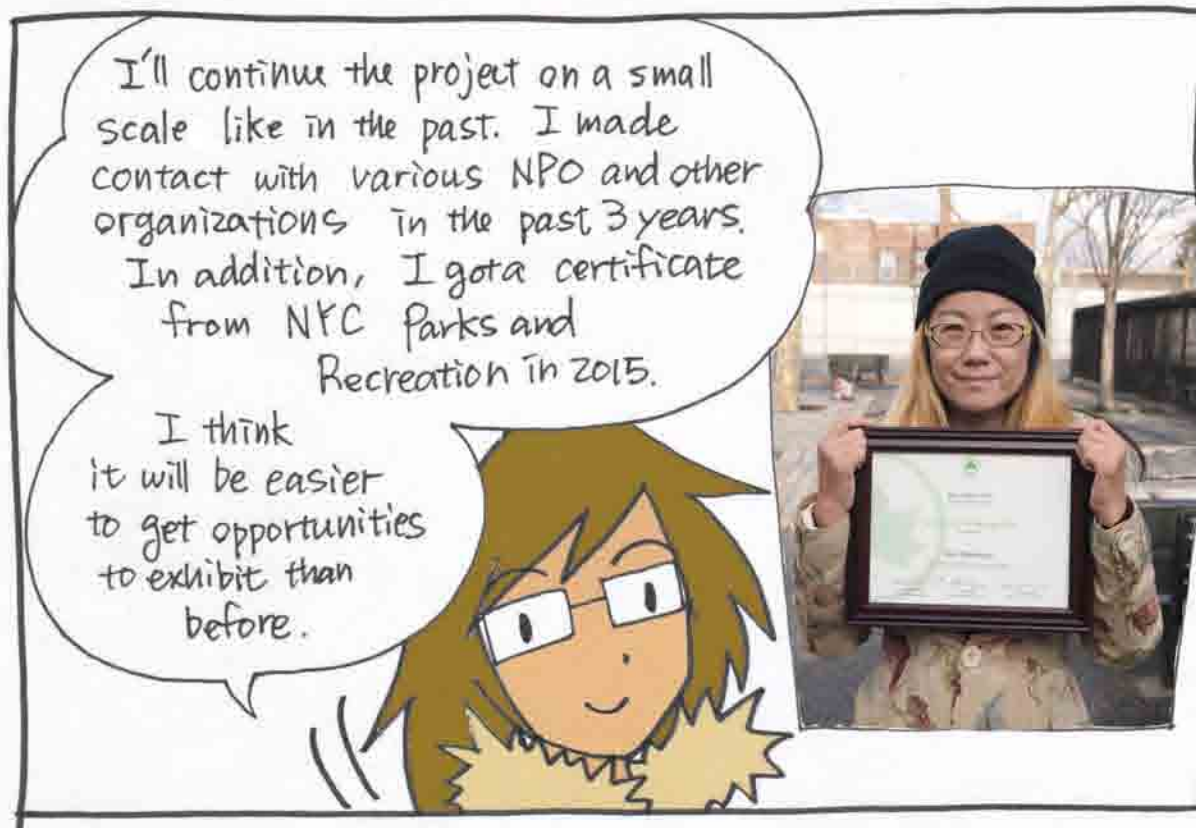
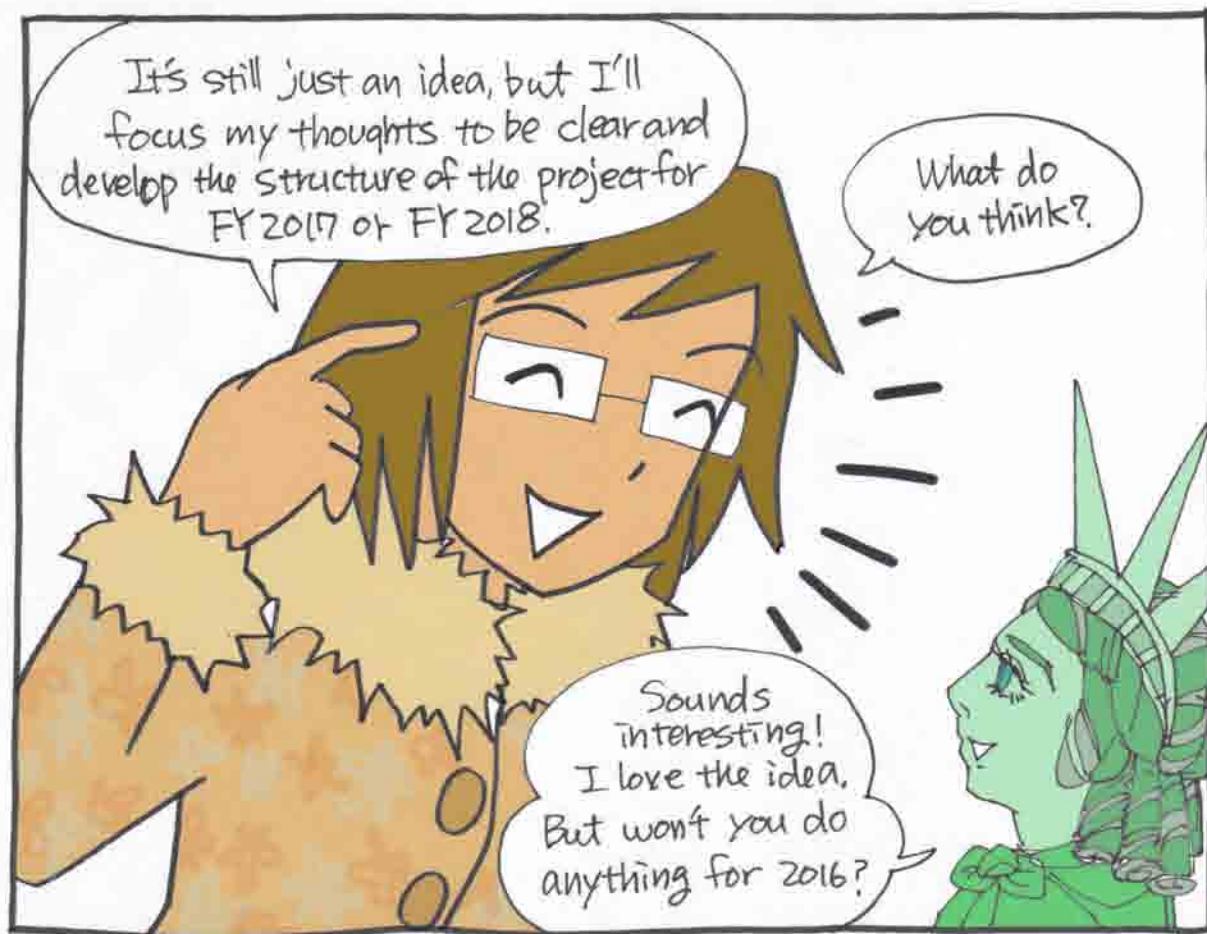


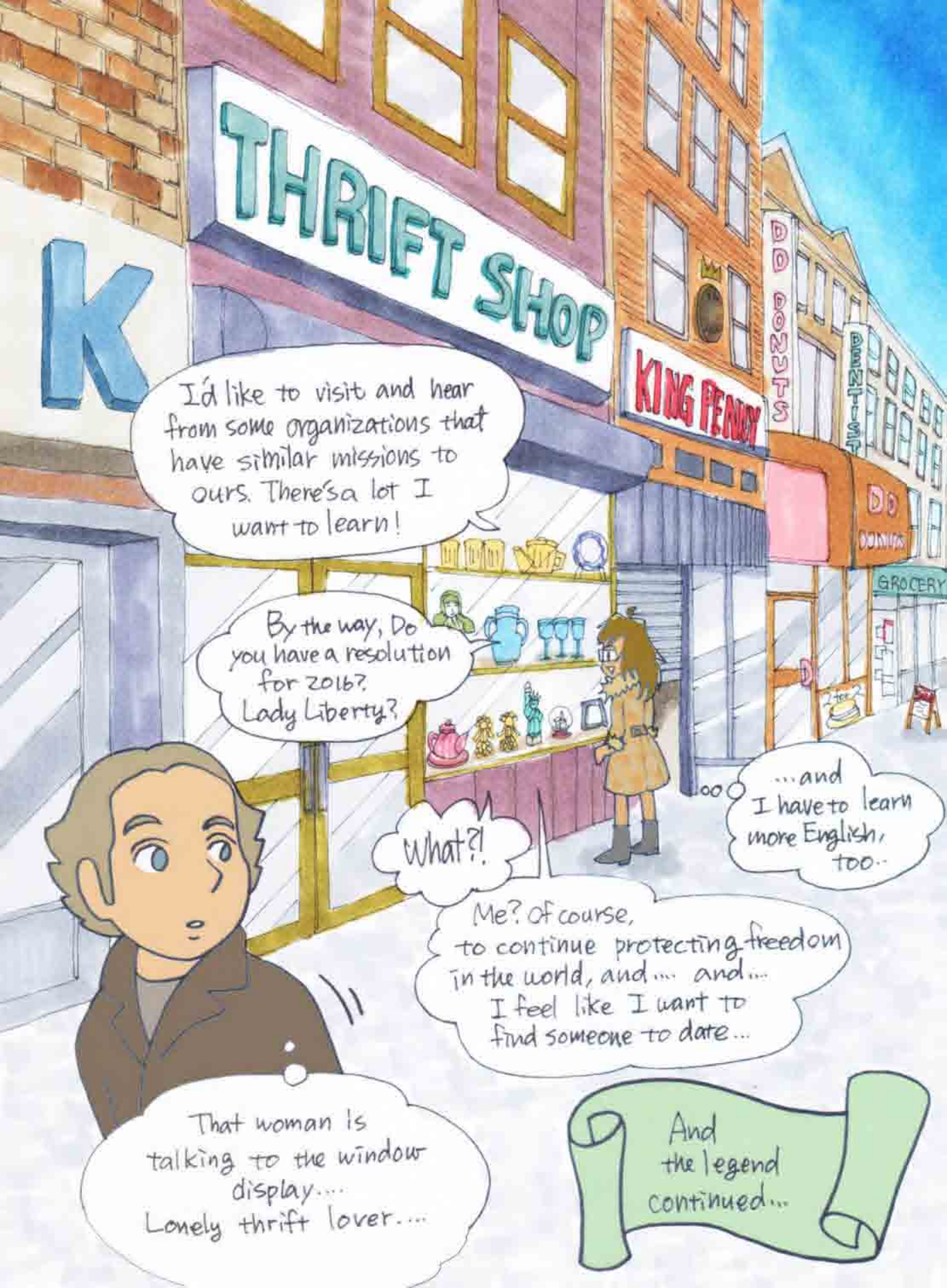
For Example:



New Peekaboo-kuns will be exhibited in multiple places that relate to participating artists' backgrounds.

Now that I think about it, I should develop a project to help build bridges between organizations that relate to the guest artists, and continue the exhibition of this public participatory project with a reasonable budget.





I'd like to visit and hear from some organizations that have similar missions to ours. There's a lot I want to learn!

By the way, Do you have a resolution for 2016?  
Lady Liberty?

What?!

...and  
I have to learn  
more English,  
too..

Me? Of course,  
to continue protecting freedom  
in the world, and ... and ...  
I feel like I want to  
find someone to date...

That woman is  
talking to the window  
display...  
Lonely thrift lover...

And  
the legend  
continued...