Pierre Bowins

Artist Statement

As a practicing Black American graphic designer, I have always felt uncomfortable, as if I never fit in. While attending design conferences, I observed the absence of design professionals that looked like me. My lack of belonging created an urgency to research Black American designers who contributed to the profession. After initial research, I hypothesized this was attributed to the omission of Black American designers canonized in design history.

My journey put me on the path of searching for the Black American diaspora missing from the history of Graphic Design. I want my work to open a dialogue for designers, especially Black American designers. My goal is to share the knowledge and respect I have gained from uncovering these inspiring designers. I want to challenge the existing notion and amend the current Design History canon. My research has fulfilled my sense of belonging. I hope it will do the same for other designers of color.

It is my hope this exhibition will provide my audience with a sense of enlightenment regarding the plethora of Black American designers who have contributed to the field of graphic design, yet have been omitted from Design History. I want my audience to question, “Why hasn’t my educational experience included the contributions of influential Black American designers and their work?” In conclusion, I want to instill the desire for every student to question their professors, for professors to question their curriculums, and for us all to question history as it has been written.