DESIGN PROMPT 2
SYNTHETIC MEDIA FOR THE CIVIC GOOD

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The following is a fictional scenario

The Ford Foundation just launched an emerging competition, which is part of a new phase of their "Creative Futures" initiative. The competition aims to advance innovative thinking surrounding the civic possibilities of synthetic media. Working in a 3-person group, craft a "design pitch" consisting of at least 12 slides. The pitch should speak to an original, pro-social work of synthetic media geared towards a civic purpose. Each group will then present their respective project to the class along with professors from the department (performing the role of Ford Foundation grant officers).

Each group should start from the perspective of problems and challenges they see around them, either locally or perhaps a shared concern in the world. Reflect on how a work of synthetic media might address a pressing issue that exists at the heart of public life. One of the benefits of working in a small group is to realize the collective intelligence of creating collaboratively. Our group configuration will also model the kind of socio-professional interactions you will encounter crewing on films, working in labs, writing articles, or conducting field research.

FORD FOUNDATION

"Creative Futures," Ford Foundation, https://www.fordfoundation.org/campaigns/creative-futures/

STEP 1

Consider the sphere of influence, how might synthetic media: Serve as a form of satire, critique, political protest, or savvy deconstruction of the deepfake threat?
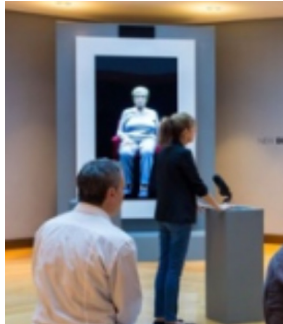

Bill Posters and Daniel Howe
Big Dada (2018)

Interpretively recreate or reimagine historical phenomena for a pedagogical purpose?

Dimensions in Testimony
(USC,Shoah Foundation 2018)

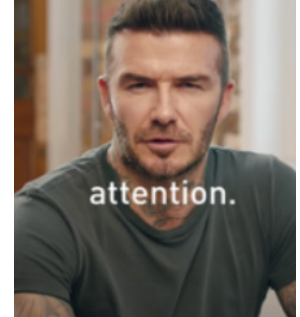### Explore identity transformation as an empowering, liberatory, or strategic act?
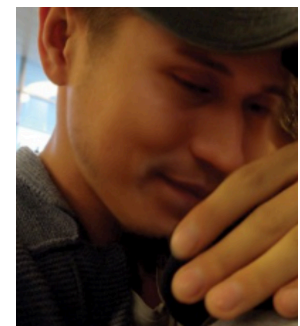
Welcome to Chechnya (David France, 2020)

STEP 1

Make public and private utilities more safe, equitable, and accessible?

David Beckham, Malaria Must Die, So Millions Can Live

STEP 2
Consider the need and purpose

• Why create this work of synthetic media at this time?

• Is the project benefiting a particular individual, neighborhood, or region?

• Will your project contribute to a larger movement in civic media or will it chart a new path for AI-enabled technology.

STEP 3
Conceptual sketch

• Describe the project and summarize its core aims and intentions.

• What are its phases of construction.

• Use still- and moving images, sound clips, and written text to elaborate. hy create this work of synthetic media at this time?

STEP 4
Venue

• Where will your project live and how might people encounter it?

• Would it be installed in a museum, displayed in an official government institution (city hall, post office, etc.), curated as part of an online exhibition, or available as part of standalone website? Consider the viewer's experience.

STEP 5
Hands-on component

- What tool/s might be most useful? For example, RunwayML

- Demonstrate their relevance or special value to this project.

- Tools that you have already encountered this semester (or are familiar with from elsewhere) are definitely welcome!

STEP 6
The Presentation

While each group will be presenting to their peers and professors, encourage the broader stakes of the project as well as how to convey it's urgency, application, and prospective impact. Don't simply describe your design, craft a narrative about its origin, the context of its uptake, and how you envision its social resonance. The faculty will then vote on the winner of the competition.