



Ekene Ijeoma, Founder of Poetic Justice Group at MIT Media Lab, Launches “Voice Portrait” of New York City

NYC Residents Invited to Add Their Voices to
Ongoing, Remotely Accessible Public Art Project
Exploring Issues of Identity, Representation, and Assimilation

CAMBRIDGE, MA—June 17, 2020—Artist **Ekene Ijeoma** and his group **Poetic Justice at MIT Media Lab** today announce the launch of the New York City edition of ***A Counting***, a remotely accessible, participatory public art project reflecting on the linguistic and ethnic diversity of the United States by capturing “voice portraits” of major U.S. cities. Conceived as an ongoing series, the generative sound and video work features voices counting to 100 in their native languages, with a different voice speaking each number in a different language and with the number 1 spoken in an indigenous language, as available. Building off Ijeoma’s practice illuminating issues of social justice through works of art and marking the first project from Poetic Justice group, *A Counting* addresses the undercounting of non-White and non-English speaking people by the U.S. census.

Starting today, the NYC edition can be accessed by visiting www.a-counting.us or by dialing 917-905-6647. New Yorkers wishing to add their voice to the project can call the hotline where they are prompted to record themselves counting in their native language and invited to share more about where their language is spoken and how its numerical system works. Additionally, individuals from around the world are invited to contribute to the project by helping with the transcriptions of the recordings by texting TRANSCRIBE to the same number or visiting a-counting.us/transcribe.

The New York City edition of *A Counting* expands upon an early version of the project presented as an installation at the Museum of the City of New York in fall 2019. Following today’s launch of the reimagined remotely accessible work, the series will continue to expand over the course of 2020 to include new editions for other major cities across the country through partnerships with museums and cultural institutions, inviting the participation of the broadest possible spectrum of communities within the U.S.

“Against the backdrop of the 2020 US census, a global pandemic, and a nationwide uprising against racism, *A Counting* seeks to recognize the linguistic and ethnic diversity of this country,” said Ekene Ijeoma. “New York City is one of the most diverse yet segregated cities and, at a time of increasing division, *A Counting* meditates on how to heal those divides and speculates on what a unified city could sound like.”

Further details about additional U.S. cities and project partners will be announced in the coming weeks. If you are interested in exploring an institutional partnership to bring *A Counting* to your city, please reach out to hello@a-counting.us. For more information, please visit <https://www.a-counting.us/>.

About Ekene Ijeoma and Poetic Justice group

Ekene Ijeoma is a conceptual artist whose practice encourages new ways of seeing and understanding social issues. Leveraging computational design and conceptual art strategies, Ijeoma translates research and data studies into multimedia and multisensory works of art. Recent exhibitions and commissions of Ijeoma's work include *Heartfelt* at The Kennedy Center (2019), *Who We Are* at the Museum of the City of New York (2019), *Landed* at Neuberger Museum of Art (2016), *New Americas* at Annenberg Space for Photography (2016), *Design and Violence* at the Museum of Modern Art (2015), *Design of the Year* at Design Museum London (2015), and the Istanbul Design Biennial (2015).

In 2019, Ijeoma was appointed as an Assistant Professor in the Media Lab at MIT and founded Poetic Justice, a group of critical thinkers and makers who are exploring new forms of justice through art. *A Counting* marks the first major public art project by the group.

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