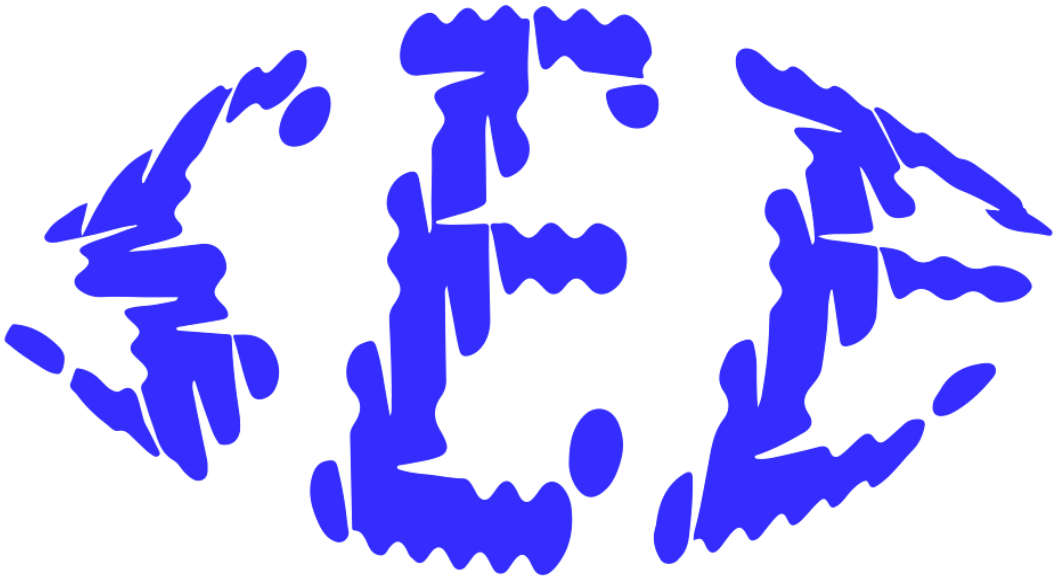


SEE AVERAGE

By Jasmine Everett

Submitted to the Graphic Design Board of Study

School of Art+Design in partial fufillment of the requirements

for the degree of Bachelor of Arts

Purchase College

State University of New York

May 2021

Sponsor Bill Deere

Second Reader Robin Lynch

Music has played a considerable role in my life. I grew up singing in the church choir alongside my mom and grandmother; there, I would be introduced to the complexities of music-making, including the technical and social aspects. As I started interacting with musicians of all kinds, I learned that everyone had the same, if not more, passion and excitement as I had for the craft. Regrettably, as I grew up, that fire slowly dwindled. So I started to put my creativity into other mediums, mainly digital. I have recently been described as a software person; I define it as someone who has an easier time navigating the ins and outs of different programs. Which I would think is an accurate assumption; I explored numerous digital avenues in High School, including digital collage, video editing, web design, and photography. Eventually, I found that design gave me the freedom to explore those various avenues.

In 2019 I began working at WPSR, Purchase College's student radio station. There I was exposed to a ton of different music and perspectives that I didn't know existed in the seemingly small Purchase College campus. Not only was I exposed to music my peers were listening to, but what music they were making as well. Around this same time, a friend of mine, Michael Acosta, reintroduced me to music production through Logic Pro X, Apple's music production software. I quickly realized that it operated similarly to other software I was familiar with and began working. I ended up spending a weekend playing around with the program and experimenting with different sounds and records, resulting in a seven-minute mix of some of my favorite songs. Composing the mix had reignited my excitement for music and sparked a passion within my friend group. We edited all our remixes together and debuted Vol. 1 under the See Average moniker, a play on the letter grade. I originally came up with the name; I wanted to have a name that stuck with you, something that would make viewers stop and

See Average, Vol 1

"We learned very quickly that a huge part of learning music production is understanding what the people around you are making and understanding what the people before you have made,"

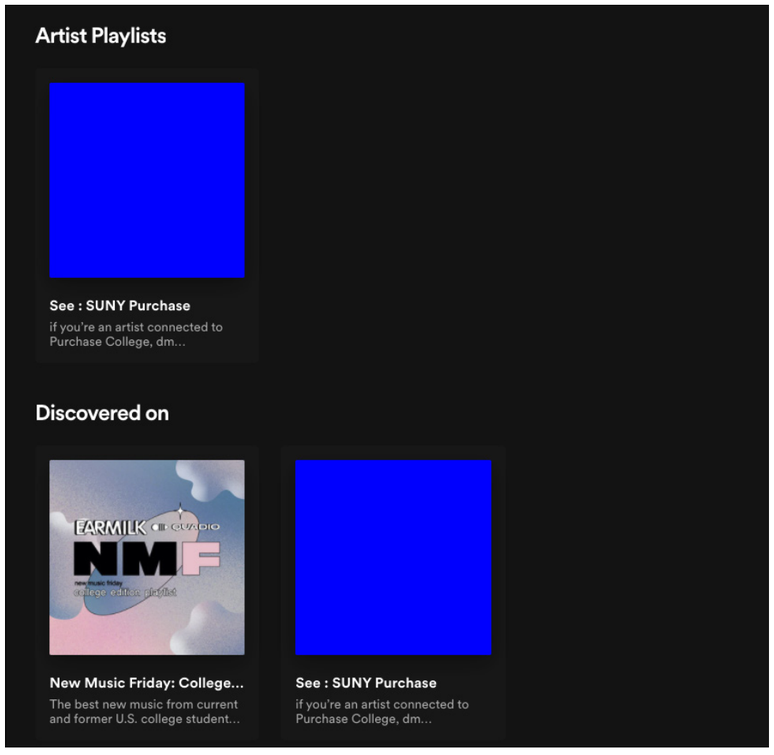
think. I liked the ability to swap C for See, and out of all the names we came up with, such as Poorchoice Collection, JAMM, and Bread and Butter, See Average seemed like an obvious winner.

We saw, and continue to see, the talent that Purchase College has. I felt as though there was a lack of collaboration with students outside of their respective major. This segregation was the starting point for See Average; since both Michael Acosta and I are not a part of the music conservatory, we wanted to bridge the gap. The early idea for See Average was to be that bridge for all the art majors. For example, if someone in the theatre department needed an illustrator for a show, we would make that collaborative connection. However, over time we ended up concentrating on the music conservatory. Our goal now was to create a centralized place for students to hear the music their peers were making. Fortunately, we already had some friends in the music conservatory, so we used them as a starting point. Through them, we were trying to understand what they need for exposure on the campus and elsewhere. We started to attend shows at Whitsons frequently along with various house shows around campus, slowly introducing ourselves and our vision.

When creating the logo for See Average early on, I wanted it to look more friendly as our original intention was to bring multiple majors together. The logo featured a signature yellow, either behind or included in the warped sans-serif 'SEE' mark. I would continue experimenting with the original design throughout the year, eventually creating brand guidelines in the form of a website and placing the mark in different mediums we could use in the future. We would also use this logo for our weekly radio show In the Studio. Because we didn't have access to the music studios on campus, the radio station allowed us to explore the more technical side of production.

Original See Average Logo
and Brand Guidelines

“One of the most complex parts about being a musician is exposure, getting your art to the masses. “If you don’t have the muscle of a major label behind you, or friends in high places at Spotify or another streaming platform, you’re showing up to a tank battle on a rusty bicycle... That’s where third-party playlists, many run by random Spotify users, start to become valuable.”[1]



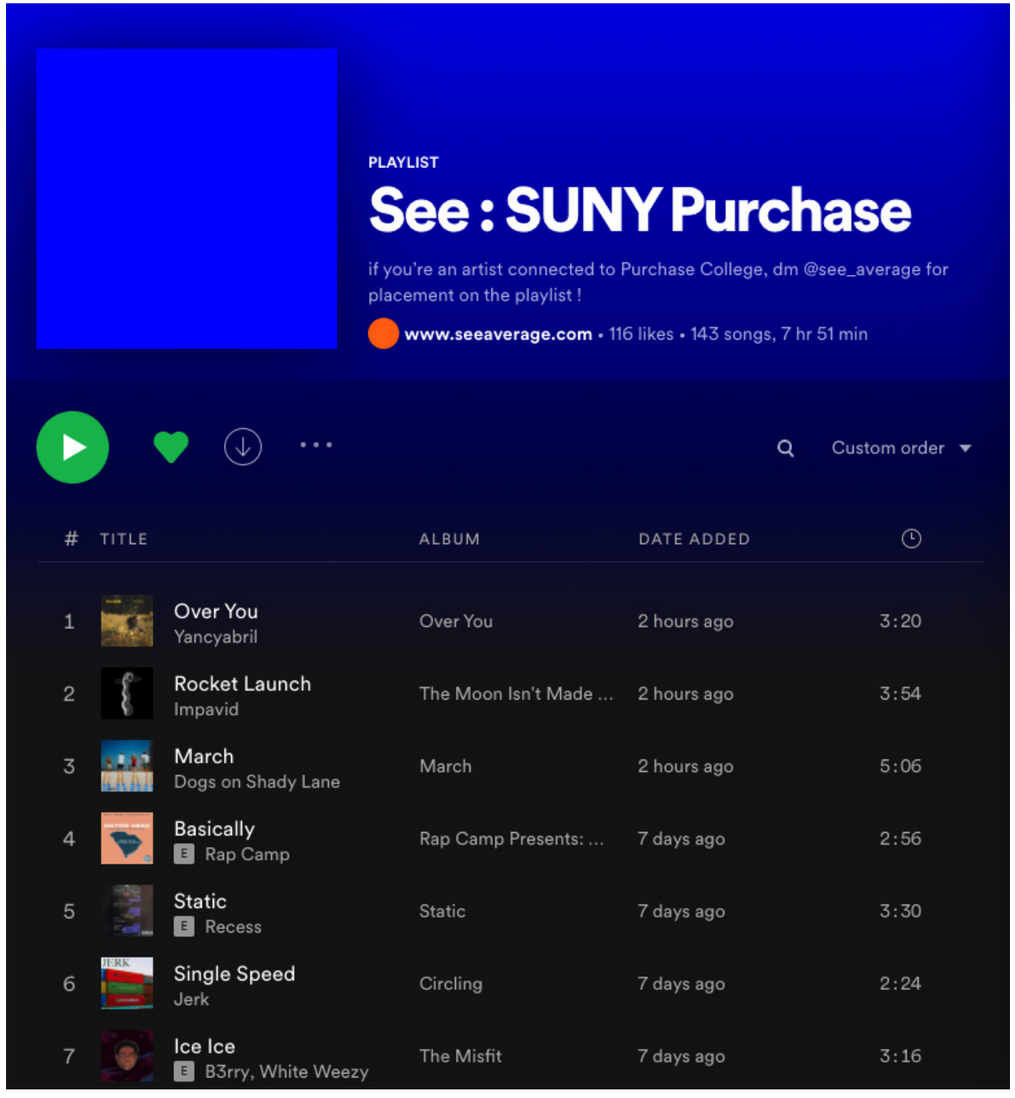
On the Spotify app, artists can show playlists that feature their songs straight to the artists’ homepage.

1 — Leight, Elias. “There’s So Much Music on Spotify, Artists Are Paying for You to (Hopefully) Find Them.” Rolling Stone, https://www.rollingstone.com/music/music-features/spotify-streams-third-party-playlisting-1033700/.

In the Studio allowed us to start experimenting with the idea of public playlists. As we continued to meet new musicians, Acosta began to keep a list of all the artists we would either meet or hear of. Over time, we found that the hurdle for most musicians is gaining a following. For them to maximize their exposure, they must distribute their music across several platforms to cater to various listeners. Part of that distribution includes playlist placements. My generation has a unique fondness for playlists, creating digital mixtapes to share with your friends, family, or lovers. Spotify has been the leading competitor when it comes to this market. According to David Pierce, writer for Wired, the average Spotify listener spends half their time streaming playlists, and I would assume this applies to other music streaming counterparts.

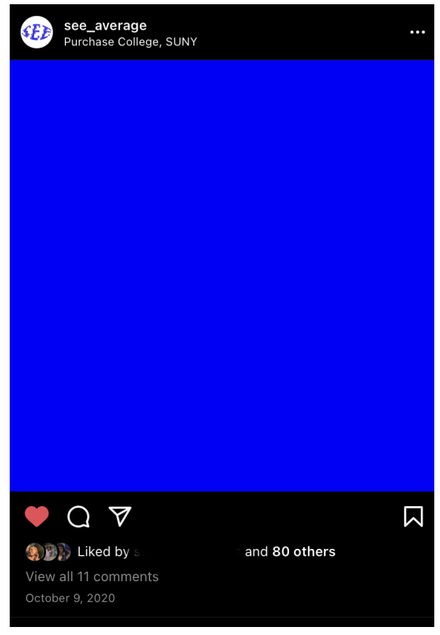
Spotify’s viral playlist Pollen is a perfect example of how impactful the right placement can be. Launching in 2018, the genreless playlist has launched the careers of several underground artists. “It’s just putting your music in front of listeners that would never have seen it otherwise.”[2] We did, however, come across a Studio Composition playlist curated by Rebecca Haviland, co-head of SUNY Purchase’s Studio Composition department. Unfortunately, we felt the playlist did not give an accurate representation of what was on campus, as people across all disciplines release music on campus. We decided the best way to give back to the music community was to give them a place to explore each other’s work. So, with Acosta’s extensive list of Purchase musicians, we got started on creating the See: SUNY Purchase playlist.

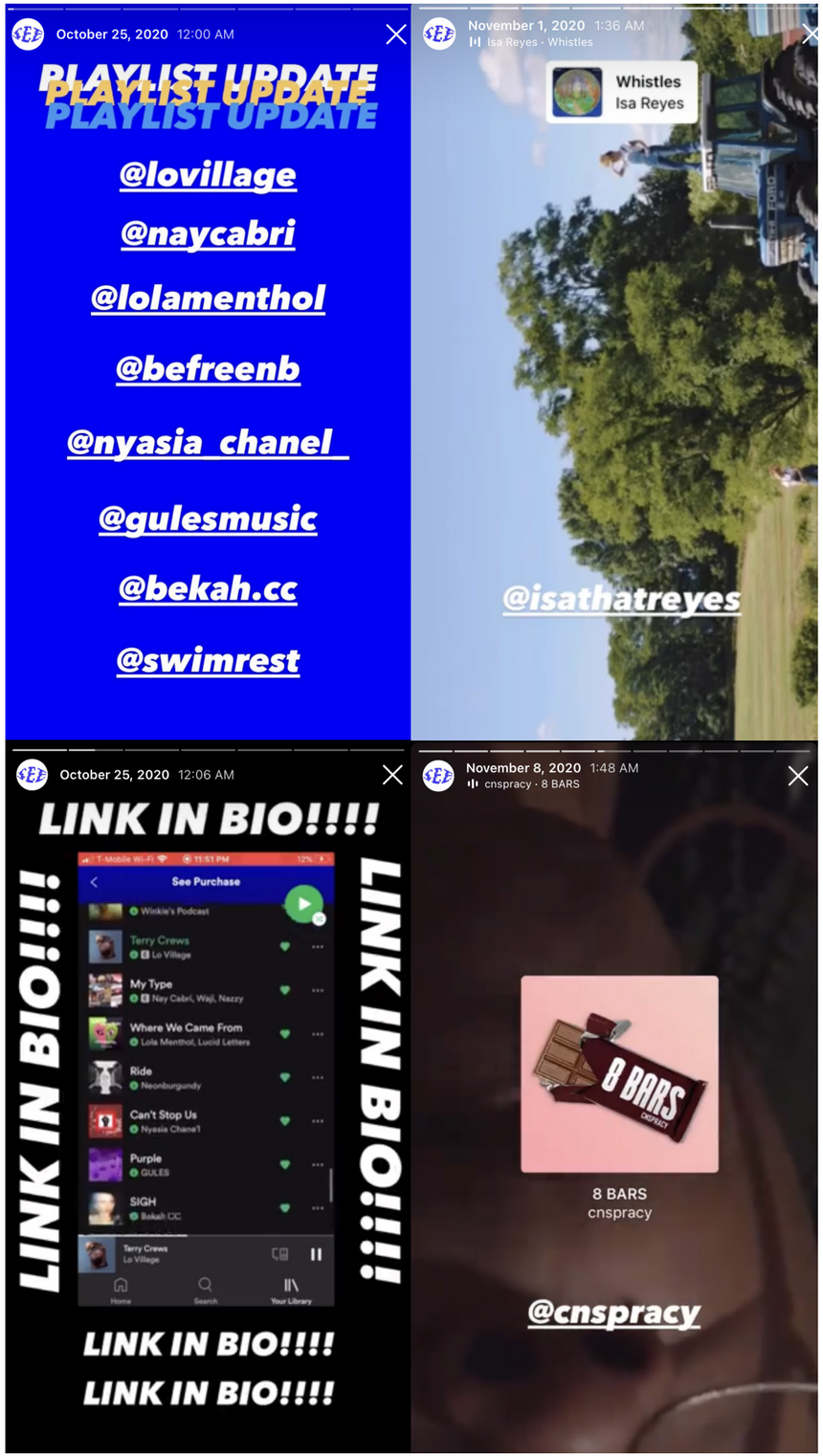
2 — Pierce, David. “The Secret Hit-Making Power of the Spotify Playlist.” Wired, https://www.wired.com/2017/05/secret-hit-making-power-spotify-playlist/.



As of May 2021, the See: SUNY Purchase playlist has over 100 follows on Spotify, and our Instagram is nearing 300 followers.

Since Spotify is more of a listening app than a social one, we turned to Instagram as our primary platform. Unfortunately, it can be difficult gaining a following; with Instagram users aimlessly scrolling or tapping away through stories, one has to be sure they stand out from the crowd. When thinking about ways to spread the word around, I recalled user @fuckjerry's Instagram campaign for the controversial Fyre Festival. Influencers would post a single orange square to promote the festival, with only the Fyre Festivals Instagram tagged in the photo. Suddenly, seeing this orange square all over people's Instagram feed sparked curiosity among users, bringing them past that extra step of engagement. We wanted to accomplish the same thing, having a signature color to quickly grab the users' attention and establish who we are. Hence, our striking Purchase blue.



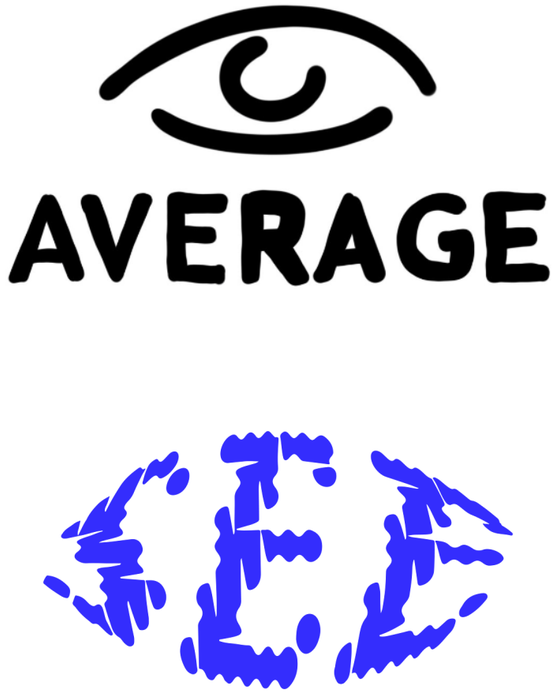


'See: SUNY Purchase' Playlist Updates via Instagram Stories

We launched the See: SUNY PURCHASE playlist officially on October 9, 2020. With over 75 artists from our 'artist pool', our goal was to update the playlist every week. However, instead of flooding our home feed with weekly posts that, more often than not, get lost in the sea of other eager Instagrammers, we opted to post the updates on Instagram Stories. Instagram stories allow for us to feature the music directly onto the post along with tagging the artist. Our layout consisted of an introductory post, followed by the featured songs that would include either photos or videos of the artists. The update concludes with a picture of the playlist or a link to our original Instagram post. This format was successful, along with posting consistently, we were able to gain a decent following on the @see_average Instagram and Spotify. In addition to posting on Instagram, we took the opportunity to post the playlist onto the SUNY Purchase Open Forum and post flyers around campus the featured a list of artists and QR code to our Spotify. As we entered 2021, we still wanted to get more involved in the community, a project beyond the playlist. So we decided our goal now was to start collaborating with local artists by creatively assisting in their projects. Beginning in February, Michael Acosta and I began to film and photograph music videos and studio visits. Our final goal for the year was to compile the footage onto a dedicated site that would host the playlists and all things See Average.

With this new goal, I started to think about See Average's redesign. I wanted to stray away from the more friendly look we were previously sporting. I began by researching different music collectives, as they tend to deal with various music styles and manage to keep them cohesive. Using resources such as

Logo Iterations



Wayback Machine, I began to take a deep dive into multiple collectives and their design over the years. Finding inspiration in HipHop collectives such as BROCKHAMPTON and A$AP Mob. I wanted to encompass the underground spirit of Purchase College while simultaneously keeping it palatable to the eyes and, in turn, avoid the risk of aging poorly. I went with an eye-shaped design in my earlier sketches as another play on 'See.' Unfortunately, I don't consider myself a fantastic illustrator, so I opted to stick with typography. I chose Emigre Foundry's Narly typeface for its retro look and slowly manipulated the typeface that then evolved to become the eye-shaped letterform, sampling our signature blue. When creating the website, I knew I wanted to push myself and stray away from templated sites like Wix, Squarespace, or Cargo as I wished for full versatility and customization. After researching countless website builders, I settled on Webflow. Webflow seemed to be the middle ground between coding and design; by using RAW HTML elements, Webflow allows for a responsive and intuitive experience.

I started to create an experience when creating the site—beginning with the landing page. While recording studio sessions in February, we began to lean more into the early 2000s look; since we were using an older camcorder for most of our recording, we noticed it added digital artifacts that made the footage unique. So to carry over the theme, I decided to extrude and animate the logo as a slight nod to the Y2k aesthetic to carry over this uniqueness creating this faux-futuristic feeling. The animated logo and other animated assets on the site were made in Adobe After Effects. Moving forward through the site, the homepage features a welcome video featuring Purchase College musicians. Sadly, I wasn't able to add sound to the video due to Webflow's restrictions. However,

I provided subtitles and uploaded the video onto our Instagram. Finally, the main menu offers three links; one link brings you to the artists' page that features spotlights for student collectives, albums, etc. Another link goes to our playlist page, which holds both our Spotify and Apple Music playlists. Along with an application for musicians who want to be placed on the playlist. The third and final link leads to an about page featuring our mission statement.

Sadly, I feel that the site did not meet its full potential, as I could not execute the goals we envisioned for See Average. Our original plan for the site was to host an intimate behind-the-scenes look into students' musical careers through the form of multiple video series'. Unfortunately, I was made aware that my co-founder was accused of assault among other unfavorable behavior in the midst of finishing my project. Because of this, several artists and collectives we were collaborating with did not feel comfortable being associated with See Average. As a result, I had to rework the site's function to act as more of an archive of SUNY Purchase's music scene.

It is disheartening to have to step away from the project, as I feel that it had the potential to live on past graduation. I am, however, proud of the work we did accomplish. Through this experience, I was able to use my design knowledge to maneuver through different mediums like videography, photography, and music production, and in turn, bring students together through art and shine a light on the pure talent that comes from SUNY Purchase.

See Average is a playlist initiative that aims to promote underground student musicians in an easy, accessible way for students, artists, and non-artists alike. The *See: SUNY Purchase* playlist debuted on October 9, 2020 which included over 75 individual Purchase artists, including producers and musicians, alumni, and current students.

Our aim is to keep the playlist alive in the coming years, so that See Average can become a resource for perspective and current students, alumni, or anyone that wants to listen. Functioning as an archive and celebrating student work that could easily be lost with time.

AVAILABLE ON SPOTIFY AND APPLE MUSIC

Published by: www.seeaverage.xyz [2021]

Playlist Liaison: Rachel Terrazas

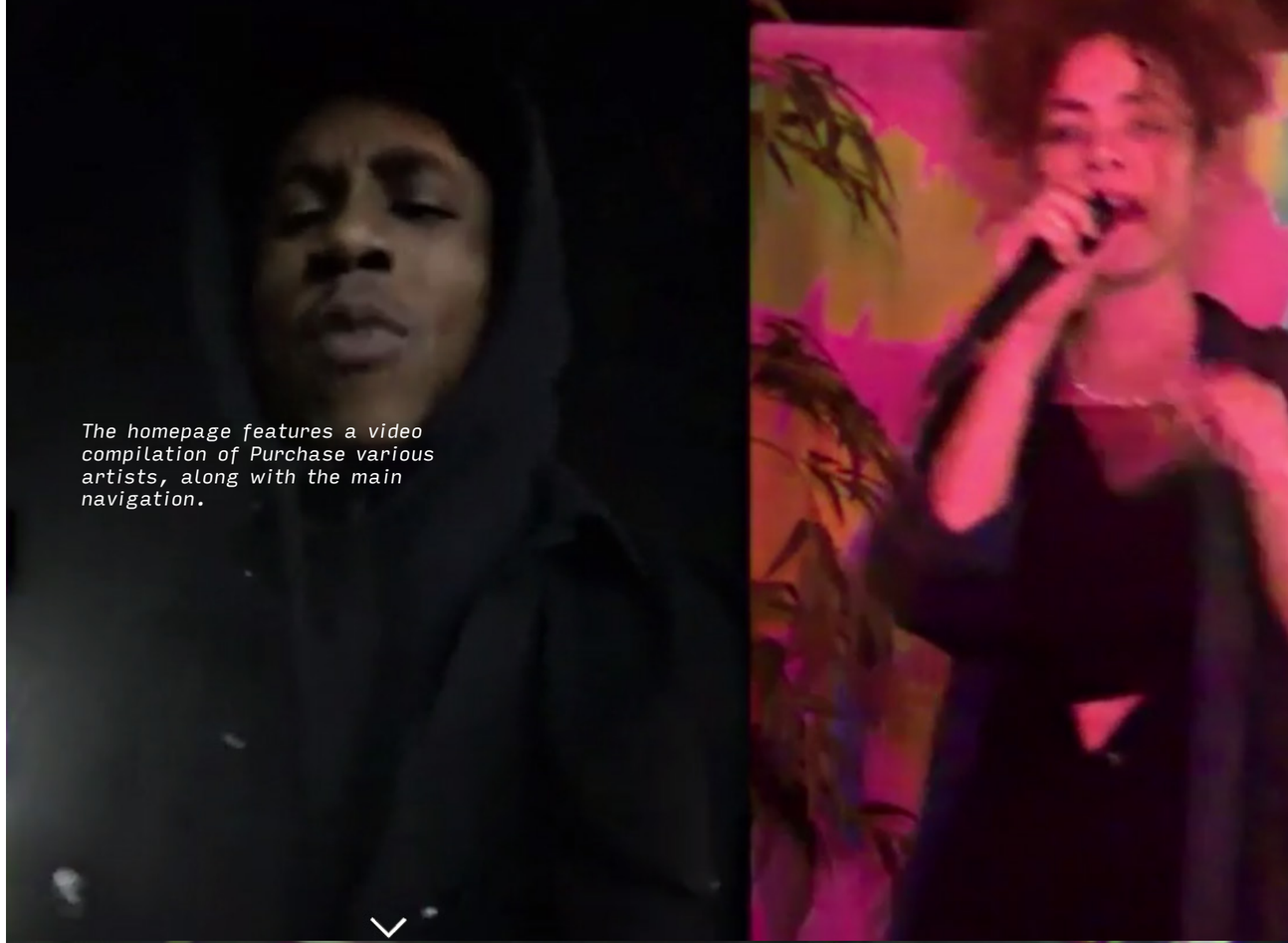
Co-Founded by: Micheal Acosta and Jasmine Everett

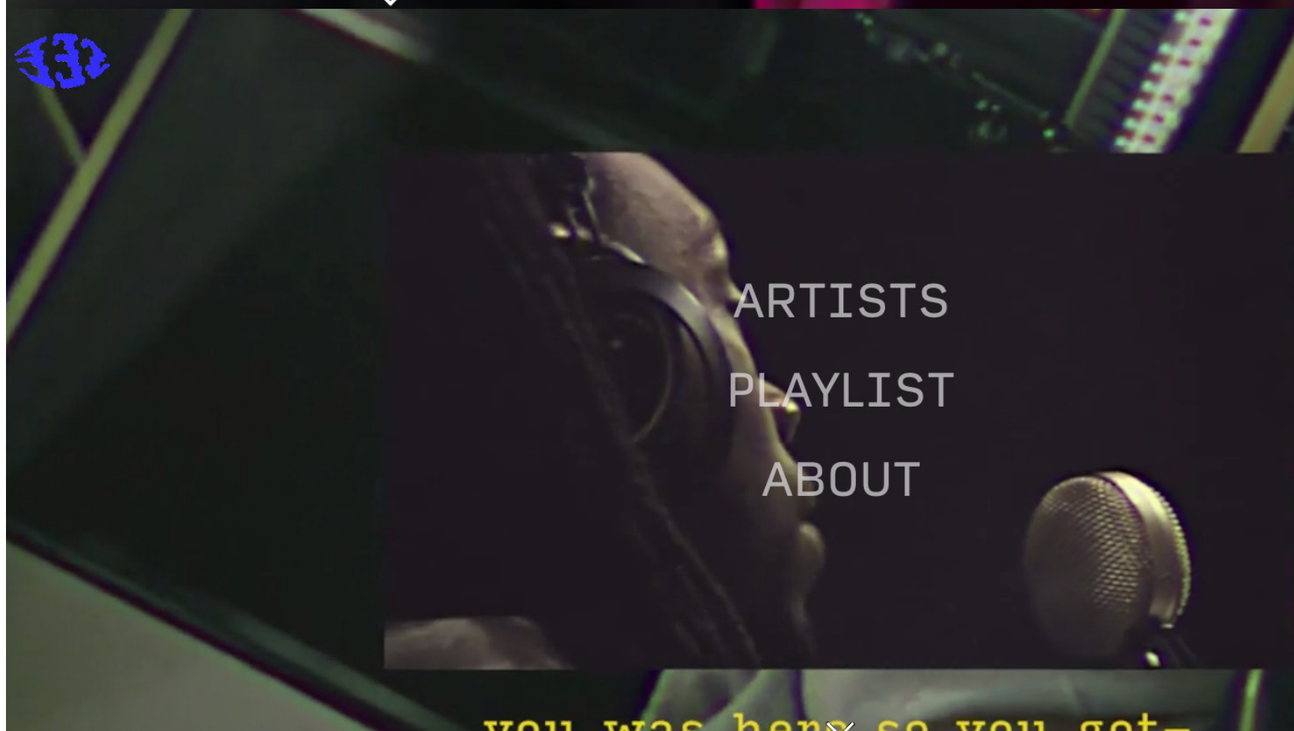
See Average Mission Statement
taken from our 'About' page

⚠️ WARNING: FLASHING IMAGES ⚠️

The Landing page features our rotating ‘SEE’ logo.

The homepage features a video compilation of Purchase various artists, along with the main navigation.





HOOD THE SHOGUN

Hood the Shogun is a rapper/ producer from the Bronx. His eloquent verses and unique phrasing quickly engages the listener. Drawing influence from Old School Hip Hop. His latest project: HOPE THIS WALK CLEARS MY HEAD, brings us through Shogun's psyche, each track describing different obstacles he's faced in the past year and a half.

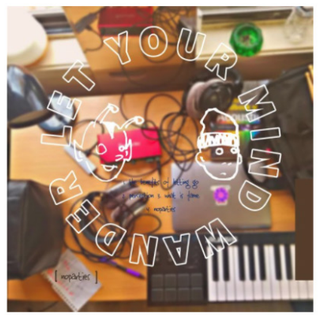
Check out I HOPE THIS WALK CLEARS MY HEAD *Below!*

Hovering over individual collective pictures, reveals information regarding the group.

'Jam Jar Studio' is a woman owned recording studio based in Westchester, NY. Check out their newest release 'Ghost' by Julia Knot

The 'Artists' page showcases select artists and collectives with information on current or upcoming projects.

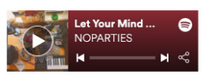
COLLECTIVES

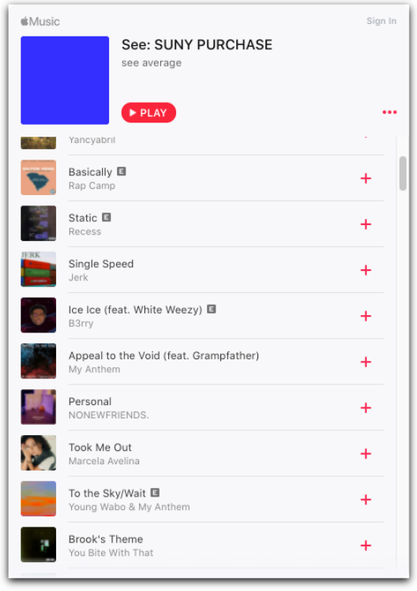


LET YOUR MIND WANDER

NOPARITES is a studio composition major at SUNY Purchase. Their debut EP *Let Your Mind Wander* is filled with sonically diverse electronic tracks that immediately draw in the listener, taking them on an ethereal experience. With nods to music legends like Micheal Jackson and KAYTRANADA sprinkled throughout the project, *'LYMW'* has become a fantastic jumping off point for NOPARTIES.

Check out *Let Your Mind Wander* Below!!





WANT PLACEMENT ON THE PLAYLIST?

You can DM us on Instagram @see_average; or enter your information below

Fields marked with an asterisk (*) are required.

NAME*

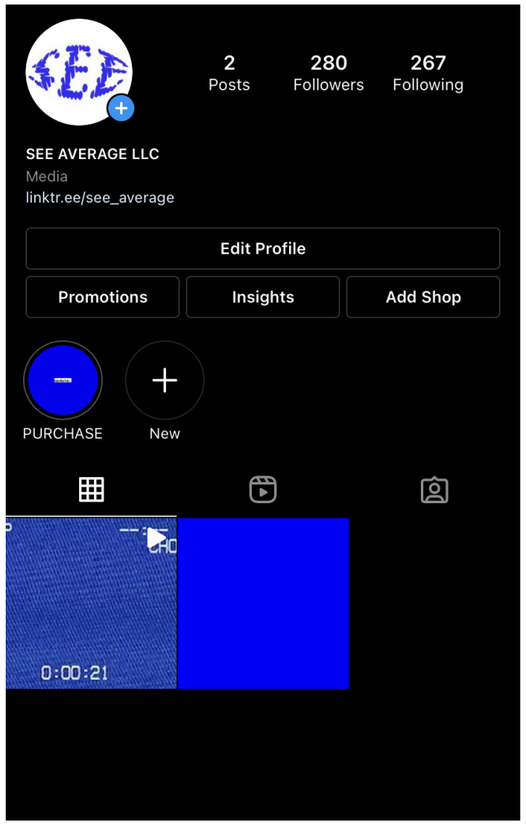
SOCIAL MEDIA HANDELS*

EMAIL*

MESSAGE (PLEASE INCLUDE SONG/ALBUM LINKS)

Submit

The ‘See Average’ Instagram features our original post and the artist compilation featured on the homepage.



The ‘Playlist’ page holds links to both our Spotify and Apple Music playlists.