

HONORS 177:
BIOTECHNOLOGY & ART

THE HUMAN TESTING CHAMBER:
Effects of Animal Testing Exposed

Name: Kelsey-Jean Kernstine
Major: Communication

ABSTRACT

It is through the design and public display of a human size cage that shows the effects of animal testing that the user will physically and emotionally feel the impact of what it is like to be an animal during research testing. The goal of this design is to educate its participant about the ethics of animal testing. The participant will be exposed to the devastating results that research can have on animals when attempting to study cosmetic goods, new products, and new medical practices. Many people are ignorant to the effects of animal testing.

CONCEPT / TOPIC

Specifically, I am very interested in using art to educate the public about the ethics of animals testing and the horrible effects it can have on animals. The term “animal ethics” refers to whether it is just to perform research on animals. The Human Society of the United States (HSUS) claims that animal “testing calls into question the ethics and humaneness of deliberately poisoning animals (sometimes to death)” for the sake of new products and procedures⁵. However, Americans for Medical Progress (AMP) are in favor of animal testing for the advancement of biomedical research³. This project is designed to show the horrible effects of animal testing and allow its participants to decide for themselves what is right and wrong on the subject of animal ethics.

CONTEXT & PRECEDENTS



Seen above is an ad by Jung V
Matt Advertising Agency focusing
on raising animal testing
awareness.

Since its beginning in 1980, “People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) has worked to end animal testing and experimentation and has brought together members of the scientific, judicial, legislative, and public communities to stop abusive practices in labs.”⁴ In fact, PETA is responsible for ending military research in laboratories, stopping General Motor from using animals for their crash tests, stopping National Air Administration’s Bion experiment from using monkeys implanted with electrodes to be launched up into space, and many more.

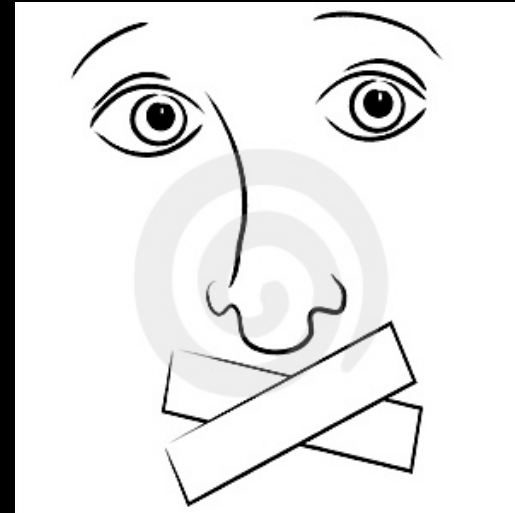
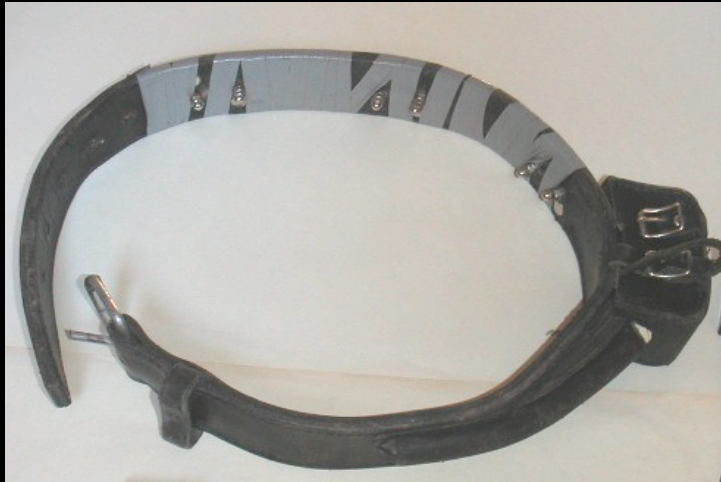
Many artists have confronted the issue of animal testing with the use of paintings, collages, and cartoons. Some of which have been posted on billboards. To raise awareness and allow the public to become artists, PETA has put together a “design a tote bag contest” for animals rights Stay Vocal⁴.

PROJECT PROPOSAL



A human-size rat cage or "Rat Test" chamber will be designed, which will consist of a digital rat wheel inside. The cage will be human-size, however, it will have a very tight and cramped space, like many laboratory cages for animals. Once a participant has entered the test chamber, they are not able to leave until they have completed their assigned routine on the wheel, which will be randomized intervals (10, 20, or 30 minutes) chosen by the digital wheel. The participant will be notified of the precautions before entering the chamber.

Project Proposal (cont.)



Also, attached around the participants waste will be a human size shocker that will shock the participant when they do not travel around the wheel at the required base speed, which is directly correlated to how animals are abused and controlled during testing. The shocker will be operated by the wheel, digitally. Also, each participant's mouths will be taped shut before entering the chamber, directly correlated to animals in animal testing, "that [scientists] do not know that the animals suffer from...pain because animals cannot talk."¹ Again, attempting to show the reality of animal testing.

Project Proposal (cont.)

THE SLIDE SHOW: (please click below)

While the participant runs around the human-size rat wheel, a slide show will be displayed in front of them. The slide show will be run by the wheel operator. As the wheel moves, the slide show will move from picture to picture. The slide show consists of very descriptive pictures and facts of the effects that animal testing has on animals. The slide show will re-run as many times as it takes for the participant to complete their allotted time interval. Please see the slide show above.

CONCLUSION

Animal ethics and testing is difficult for many people to understand during their daily activities of buying animal products, cosmetics, and use of medical substances and procedures. This project is designed to educate the participant about the reality of animal testing and the devastating results it can have on animals. The project directly places its users in the “animal’s shoes” to the abuse and their inability to communicate pain during animal testing. The user, like animals, become a helpless being in a researchers chamber. The chamber itself brings much knowledge to its participants, but the slide show brings even more knowledge to the user by showing the devastating facts and graphic photos of what happens to animals during animal testing.

In evaluation of such a project, it would be beneficial because it would educate the participants on animal testing. However, the project could be problematic in that it could pose many health problems for some of its participants with the use of the shocker, the tape, and the exercise around the rat wheel. The design could pose liability problems.

If made with more safety, a project like this could be used as an “educational ride” and be placed in public locations, like amusement parks. Ultimately, creating more public awareness of animal testing. Other projects like this could be designed with the use of virtual technology to allow the participant to really feel and understand what it is like to be involved in animal testing.

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