



Old McDonald's Farm: A Parodic Imagination of the Future of Local Food

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Ekphrasis

- *Old McDonald's Farm* is a parodic imagining of a dystopic, yet eerily possible future that confronts the audience with the embarrassing humor of greenwashing in the food industry while simultaneously evoking reflection on the food swamps, local foods, the fast-food industry, and health through the medium of an interactive public art piece.

Motivation

- McDonald's has been in the process of striving toward the image of a sustainable and ethical company through various marketing campaigns that are absent of any meaningful material changes to their business model. For instance, In 2018, McDonald's transitioned to paper straws in the UK. Less than a year later, the company put out a statement admitting that the paper straws were not feasibly recyclable because of their reinforced design. By incorporating similar ironic greenwashing tactics into the installation, we hope to show the plausibility of *Old McDonald's Farm* considering the current trajectory.
- **The intent is to provide an example greenwashing that is so radical that that the audience can't help but to be confronted with its absurdity.**

Driving Questions

Through parody and art, *Old McDonald's Farm* hopes to bring about three fundamental questions for the audience:

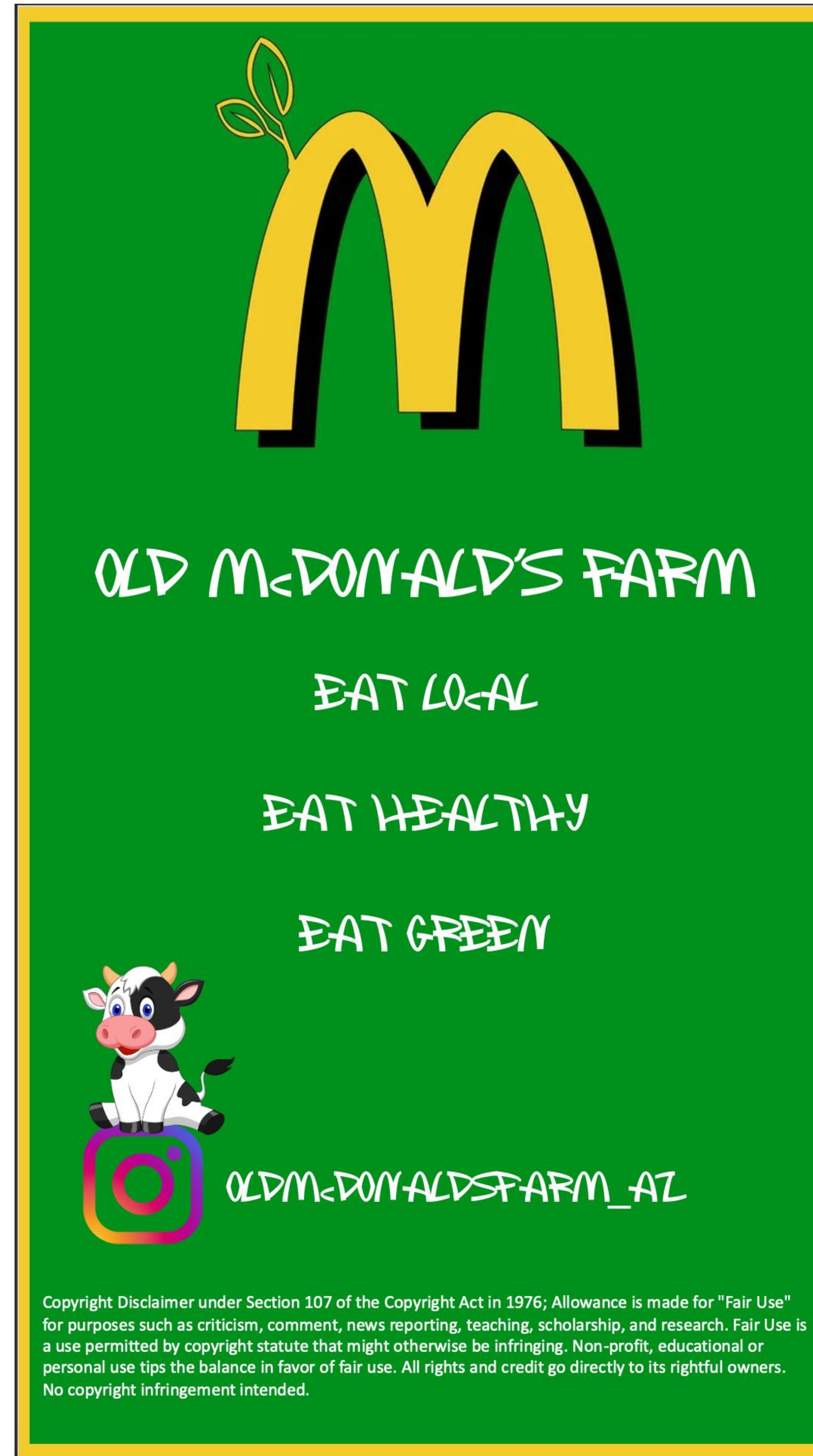
- 1) **Is this a future of local food that is possible?**
- 2) **Is this the future of local food that I want? And**
- 3) **How do I go about creating the future that I want?**

Introductory Script

- "Hello! Ziggy and I are both farmers representing *Old McDonald's Farm* which is a new pilot program partnered with McDonalds. *Old McDonald's Farm* embodies McDonald's admirable commitment to bringing fresh, nutritious, and sustainable food to the local market. Every weekend, Ziggy and I drive from our farm in Las Vegas down to Tempe in our hybrid Prius with our produce to sell at local farmers markets. Here are some of our menu items that we have right now. My personal favorite is the Oat milk McFlurry. As you can see, our prices are significantly lower than our competitors in the local food market and it is our dearest hope to push them out so that you can have the most convenient and affordable food. We're here today to share our mission with students like yourself, receive feedback and reactions, and answer any questions that you may have because we really hope to expand nationwide. We would also like to get your ideas for new products that you would like to see!"

Props Created

- Menu, Instagram page, Banner (as seen below), Happy Meal Box

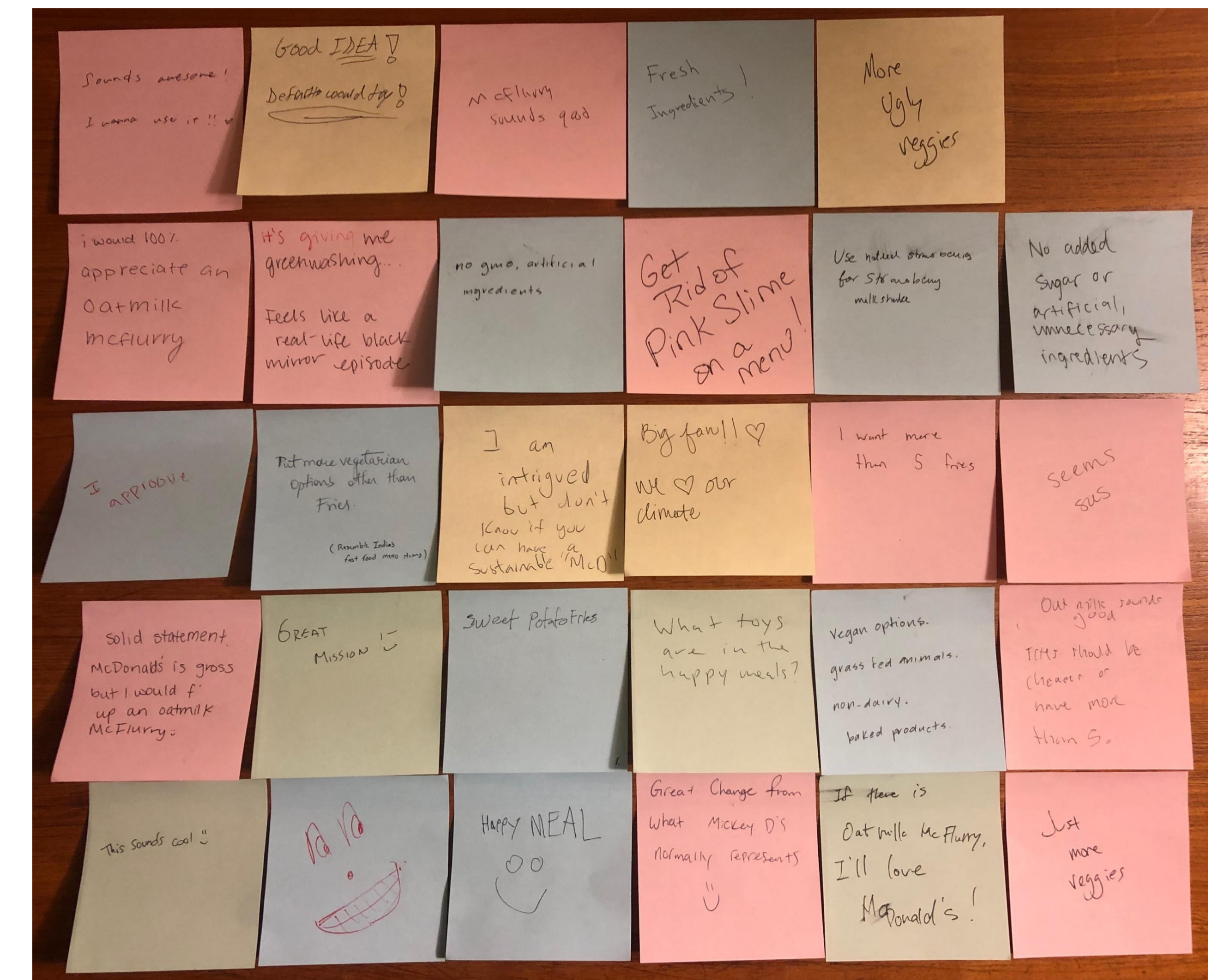


Menu Items

- McFree-Range Chicken
- Oat milk McFlurry
- Grass fed McDouble
- McApple Fries
- Diet Fries (5 Fries)
- Mini Mac
- Natural Pink Slime McNuggets (No artificial colors)

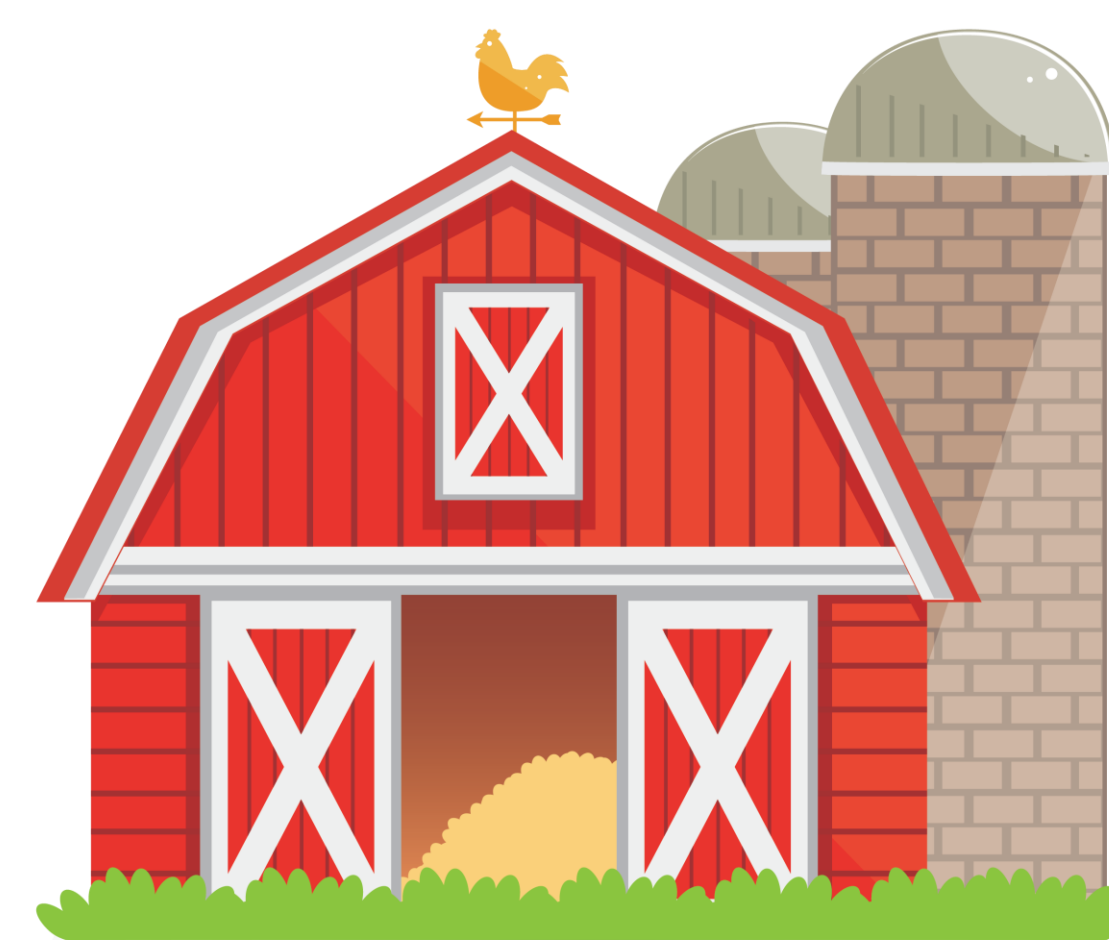
Results

- A surprising number of students who interacted with the art installation gave no signs of understanding that it was parody.
- Among those who didn't recognize the parody they either:
 - Emphatically supported the idea.
 - Were hesitant about some of the items, but nonetheless supportive.
- For those who realized the parody, most played along by utilizing similar rhetorical moves verbally and/or in their post-it note responses
- There were several other students who passed by with quizzical looks. This 'participation' is also significant and relevant



Conclusion & Next Steps

- People display a concern for the environment and their health yet seem to largely lack the critical thinking skills necessary to evaluate the validity of marketing even at its most extreme.
- We intend on continuing our performance at local farmer's markets and other public venues.
 - We will continue to iteratively refine the performance to be adaptive to the plurality of responses we encounter.



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