

WORKSHOP TITLE: Zoom Personas - Virtual Workshop for High Schools

SUBJECT/GRADE/TARGET GROUP: High School Students

Activity Overview:

In *The Natalie Bretttschneider Archive*, Carol Sawyer creates an artistic persona to highlight untold and underrepresented histories in the context of the Western Art History canon. In this two-hour workshop, participants will work to create their own artistic alter-egos, similar to Carol Sawyer's approach to Natalie Bretttschneider, but this time through a futurist lens. What time period would they be from? What kind of art will they make? Where will they live, and who will they know? While exploring the Natalie Bretttschneider Archive, students will learn about the motivations behind Sawyer's creation of an alter ego and the ways in which her fictional life connects to art history.

Students will research futurist art movements such as Afrofuturism, Chicanafuturism or Indigenous Futurism. Then, through a character design workshop, they will develop their own artist personas. Participants will bring their alter-egos to life using Zoom as a platform with possibilities for facial alteration and integrating their own video or image backdrops for the delivery of short 'artist talks' to smaller groups of their peers. In this format, they will perform their artist personas, present what their creative work is about, and explain their choice of images or video surrounding. Videos and images will be posted to @koffler.education as part of an ongoing 'archive' of participant work.

Key Terms: persona, alter-ego, futurism*

Persona: a character or role created and embodied by an artist, author or actor.

Alter-ego: an alternate personality.

Afrofuturism: a philosophy and cultural aesthetic that explores the future of the people of the African diaspora in conjunction with technology.

Chicanafuturism: inspired by Afrofuturism, and as the name suggests, explores the future of women of Chicana descent (or in other words, Mexican-American origin). It is understood as being part of the larger umbrella of Latinx futurisms.

Indigenous Futurism: similarly to Afrofuturism, Indigenous Futurism is a cultural movement which expresses Indigenous perspectives in the past, present and future through art, literature and comics from a science-fiction lens.

Overall Expectations:

To generate innovative ideas individually and collaboratively responding to the creative challenge of creating their own alter-ego in response to the exhibition and their own research, exploration, input and reflection.

To develop and present their ideas as media artworks via performances with developed video or image backdrops in Zoom.

To explore and experiment with new and emergent technologies, tools and techniques and use them to produce effective media artworks.

To identify and describe in reference to their own and others' artworks, the ways in which media artworks reflect artists' personal identities in reference to the exhibition, as well as, their peers' artworks.

To identify and describe connections between Carol Sawyer's contemporary works and life, and related historical artworks and artists, and the various artworks' functions in past and present societies.

Explore and interpret both historical and contemporary artworks during the virtual tour and through their own research.

To identify and reflect on qualities of their own artworks and the artworks of peers, and evaluate the effectiveness of these works through a post-performance critique.

Specific Expectations:

For this workshop, students are required to have access to a working computer, internet connection and a quiet space to attend the meetings, as well as, access to the latest version of Zoom. Alternatively, students who have an iPad Pro, or iPad 9.7 or newer, or iPhone 8 or newer will be able to access the latest version of Zoom.

In order to properly participate in this workshop, students must keep their cameras on and be present and available to work in breakout groups.

Teaching/Learning Strategies:

Step 1 – Direct Instruction: Virtual Exhibition Tour (40 minutes)

Students will be guided through the exhibition via a virtual tour delivered through an interactive PDF. During the tour they will learn about the artist Carol Sawyer and her persona, Natalie Brettschneider, as well as Sawyer's reasons for creating this alter-ego. They will also learn about the art historical context of this persona and the feminist reading of her work within the context of the "Western" art canon.

Step 2 – Indirect Instruction: Research on Futurism (20 minutes)

Participants research various examples of futurist art including Afrofuturism, Chicanafuturism and Indigenous futurisms, and artists working within these aesthetic and philosophical movements. In small breakout groups they will talk through their findings and analyze the elements that make their works futurist and how they can apply these elements to their own characters.

Step 3 – Interactive Instruction : Character Development Workshop (30 minutes)

During this part of the workshop, students will get a chance to invent their own futurist alter-ego or persona. We will run through the different capabilities of Zoom from facial filters to backdrop possibilities (with created or appropriated images or video). Students will get a chance to determine what their alter ego would look like, as well as their environment, envisioning what kind of work they would produce and their role in the greater arts scene in the future.

Step 4 – Experiential Instruction: Alter-ego Performances (30 minutes)

In this last step, students will perform their alter-egos in different breakout groups in the form of short artist “vlogs” that we will record and share (with parental/school consent) on our Instagram account @koffler.digital. This experience will enable high school students to envision themselves in the future, think outside of the limited historical record, practice presentation skills, learn new technologies, and consider the diverse audiences that will view their vlog when conceiving of their persona.

Extensions:

Students may further investigate the themes in the exhibition and workshop through narrative science-fiction writing, media analysis (eg. watching Black Panther and other futurist films), analyzing their own family photographic archive, taking and collecting photographs, and learning about and engaging with various histories.

Accommodations/Special Needs:

The chat function on Zoom can be used to communicate various steps, if oral communication is a learning barrier.

This workshop can also take place outside of the virtual realm. Students can create their own alter egos through the use of costume and makeup, and situate their personas in different environments by utilizing analog means as opposed to digital video.

Learning Materials:

For this workshop, students will need access to a working computer, internet connection and a quiet space to attend the meetings, as well as, access to the latest version of Zoom. Alternatively,

students who have an iPad Pro, or iPad 9.7 or newer, or iPhone 8 or newer will be able to access the latest version of Zoom on their mobile devices.

[Click here to download](#) an interactive PDF that guides viewers through the exhibition.

Resources:

Afrofuturism: [Vox VICE](#), [Refinery29](#), [TEDx Royal Central](#)

Indigenous Futurism: [TEDx Oklahoma City](#)

Artists who engage futurism in their work:

Lisa Jackson: [Biidaaben](#)

Stephanie Comilang: [Sobey Award Interview](#)

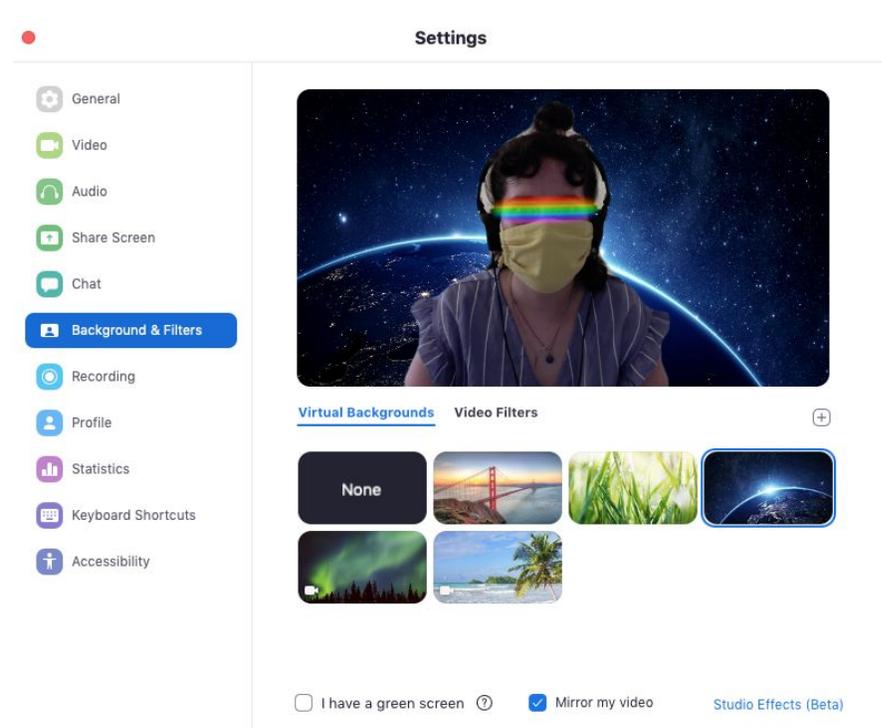
Black Quantum Futurism: [Community Futurisms](#)

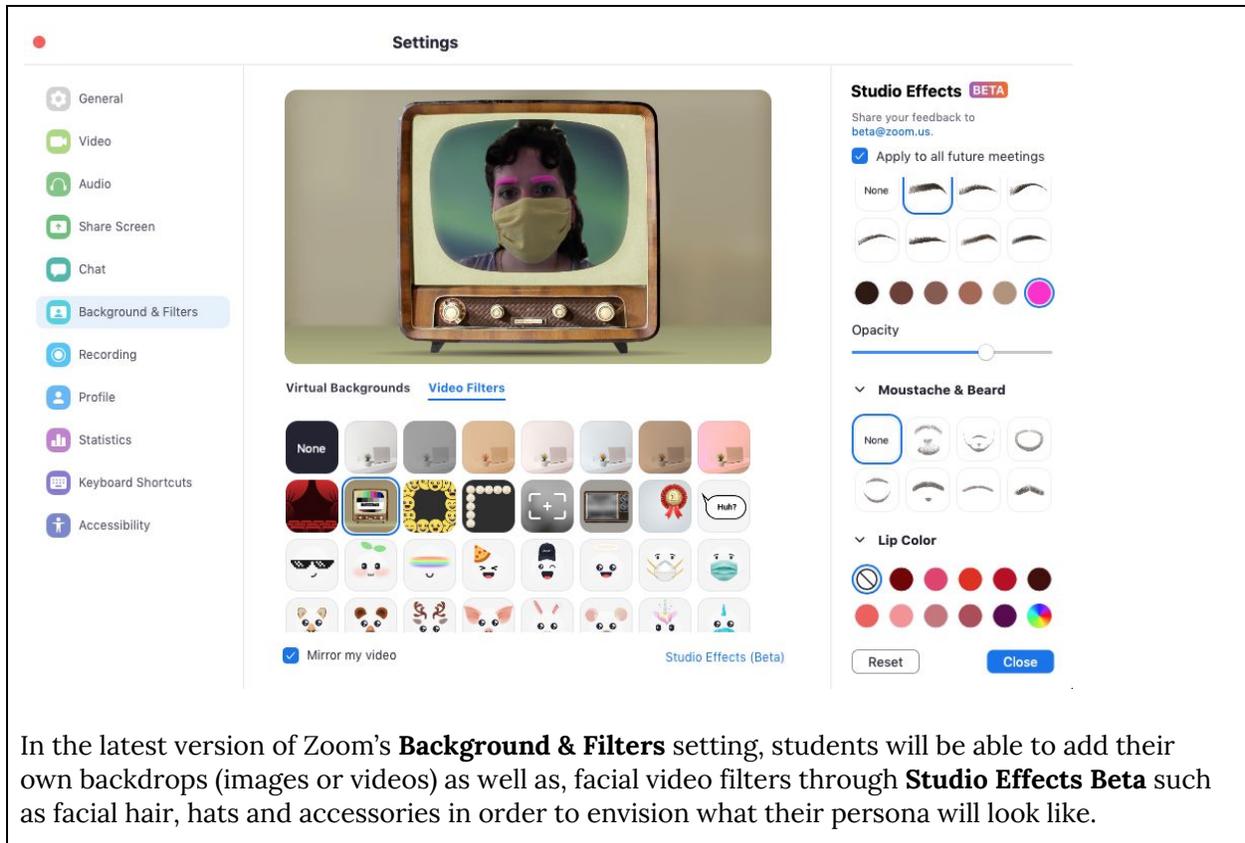
Olalekan Jeyifous: [Shanty-Mega Structures](#)

Teaching Notes:

Below are additional notes and images that may be helpful for the delivery of the workshop.

Examples of Zoom Properties:





In the latest version of Zoom's **Background & Filters** setting, students will be able to add their own backdrops (images or videos) as well as, facial video filters through **Studio Effects Beta** such as facial hair, hats and accessories in order to envision what their persona will look like.