



Video Portrait Project
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Twelfth Grade
High Tech High Media Arts

Students created a digital video portrait of themselves using one of their personal poems written in English class. The task was to find and show visual representations on the screen that are symbolically linked to the language of their poems, and themselves. By incorporating a multitude of creative elements; lighting, costume, make up, choreography, gesture, text, voice, set design and narrative - the video portrait was a complete synthesis of media that will give the audience an experience of how the students envision/ perceive themselves through a written poem.

The medium was HD video but the form blurs time-based cinematography with the frozen moment of still photography. The video portrait is meant to be layered in meaning, where every aspect of its composition tells a story. Students infused references found in painting, sculpture, film, television, dance, and contemporary culture if it spoke to their poem. The final result on the HD monitor resembled a photograph, but on closer inspection revealed more to the eye as the audience saw it come alive.

Teacher Reflection

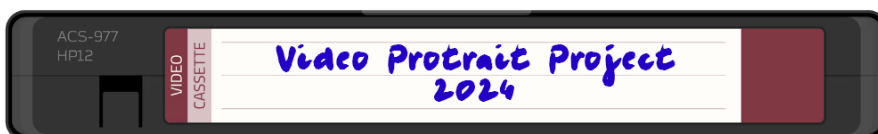
The adaptation of a poem into a moving video worked extremely well as a feasible creative constraint for the students. A poem is imbedded with figurative language and metaphor that allows students interpret these into visual elements for the screen. Every element that a student can manipulate to be shown on screen becomes poetically charged : symbolic. Finding this interpretation within their written work helps them understand the deeper truths that can be conveyed with a picture, especially one in motion. The students allowed themselves to be vulnerable with their video portraits, especially being placed center stage of the work. In the next iteration of the project I would expand on how these video portraits are presented to the public. Larger screens, via a monitor or projection would allow the audience to immerse in these video poems even further. I would orchestrate a video installation with multiple portraits playing at once or in different compositions. The audience element would be explored more and enhance the exhibition experience.

—Victor De La Fuente

Student reflection

This project was a wonderful opportunity to utilize the practice of filmmaking to examine my written words and to fully let my inner self express the conflicting feelings of grief and hope. My poem reflects the intense moments of metamorphosis that have shaped who I am while also bringing me to the conclusion of my adolescence, something that I have felt is worthy of a grieving stage. For my video portrait, this brought another balancing challenge between representing the end of what I have known and the beginning of something entirely new.

—Sonia E.



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