EXPLORING DREAMSPACE THROUGH VIDEO ART WITH AT-RISK YOUTH

by

Jon Ehinger

A thesis
submitted in partial fulfillment
of the requirements for
the degree of Master of Professional Studies
(Art Therapy and Creativity Development)
School of Art and Design
Pratt Institute

May 2009

EXPLORING DREAMSPACE THROUGH VIDEO ART WITH AT-RISK YOUTH

by

Jonathan F. Ehinger

Received and approved by:

_____ Date _____

Thesis Advisor – Laurel Thompson, MPS, ADTR, ATR-BC, LCAT

_____ Date _____

Chairperson – Jean Davis, MPS, ATR-BC, LCAT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

"We are the music makers, We are the dreamers of dreams"

— Arthur O'Shaughnessy

Thanks Laurel Thompson, Arthur Robbins, Mari Pizanis, Francie Lyshak-Stelzer, Carol Riddick, Mike Fox, Bri Catarino, Mark Hodson, Katie Traynor, Maxine Hull, Melanie Samarasinghe, Melissa Diaz, Phoenix Perry, Stella, Jody, Joe, Cinda, Satyam, SLAP, ArtReach Foundation: Susan Anderson, Brien Swann, Ben, Beth, and Ava Ehinger.

List of Figures

Abstract

This thesis is an art-based research video demonstration of an alternate medium for art therapy. It postulates the value and validity of media arts as a therapeutic modality by way of adopting the major motion picture green screening technique for therapy with an at-risk youth population. Four male participants, raging from 16 to 19 years of age, completed videos in a group, using the green screen video process as a primary therapeutic tool. In a 3-week time period, the video experiential used green screening to explain personal dreams, wishes, and fantasies within a clinical studio environment. In this thesis, I have attempted to coin the term, *Dreamspace*®, as a representation of clients' interactions with the second layer of video green screen within the context of a perceived interactive experience with the unconscious Self, as defined by Jung (1979). The therapeutic video environment in this thesis research offers transformative healing powers to the client by way of allowing them to virtually relive internalized experiences or invent new ones. Individual participants used the green screen process to imagine themselves within a wrestling fantasy, revenge strategy, urban walkabout, and space drama. Participants using the invisible second layer green screen as a healing image may be understood to be contained within a Winnicottian (1971) play space that is transitional and phenomenological. This media arts therapy green screen work can serve as a lab for more video resources in public school settings, as well as a viable mental health medium in treatment facilities.

Exploring Dreamspace through Video Art with At-Risk Youth

The intent of this thesis study is to determine the value and validity of using video, as a primary art therapy tool, with an at-risk youth population. Since video and electronic arts are still relatively new mediums in the field of art therapy, there is much to learn about what benefits they offer clients in clinical studio environments. In my professional experience using video, prior to my art therapy training, I have found the video process enlightening for the clients who use it, from concept to final presentation. Since video uses light as its primary image base, it offers clients an illuminated experience for healing. Video is the most contemporary art medium to date. It is a true to life immortalization of body image and I find video to be the most accessible available medium that encapsulates the essence of our likeness and movability. In this way, video uniquely captures the human senses of sight, sound, and touch in a way that elicits a strong response from clients. In addition, clients who work within the video realm find themselves on equal footing with celebrities who have appeared on the same screens over the last 75 years since the development of the medium – including, for example, the televised figures of famed astronauts walking on the moon.

This study integrates the use of a second layer of video by way of a *green screen* compositing technique. *Green screening* encapsulates a valuable and untapped resource for therapy. The green screen has been used in many commercial feature films of the 20th century and continues to be implemented in films and videos. Its neon-green or electric

blue color (see Figure 01) acts as a unique base color to which the video camera and editing software is electronically sensitive. When working with a green screen, one must have contrast between the subject and the colored background so that the computer can isolate one from the other. The computer software selects the green background from the footage and replaces it with video or still imagery provided by the clients. The newly transformed background imagery can be manipulated in real-time or in postproduction editing.

Figure 1. Photograph of portable green (and blue) screen used in this research.

My first introduction to video and the concept of green screening was with the movie, *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory* (1971), starring Gene Wilder. The Wonka character was the ambitious mad-scientist type depicted as the first to have constructed a teleportation devise for moving chocolate bars into tangible television matter. In the movie, the invention of Wonkavision™ (see Figure 02) made it possible for objects (and people) to teleport from one end of a room to the other. The character, Mike Teevee,

volunteered himself in a teleportation demonstration, as it had always been his dream to be digitally transformed in order to enter into his favorite shows of the silver screen. Once fully transformed and resized into television data, Mike Teevee asked, "Am I coming in clear?" He was not afraid of his new transformation; in fact, Mike Teevee wished to be able to continue with his new identity as a TV star! I have consistently found that the youths with whom I work similarly and with equal enthusiasm desire to be teleported into the television screen. With the computer technology of today, this compositing capability is at our fingertips.

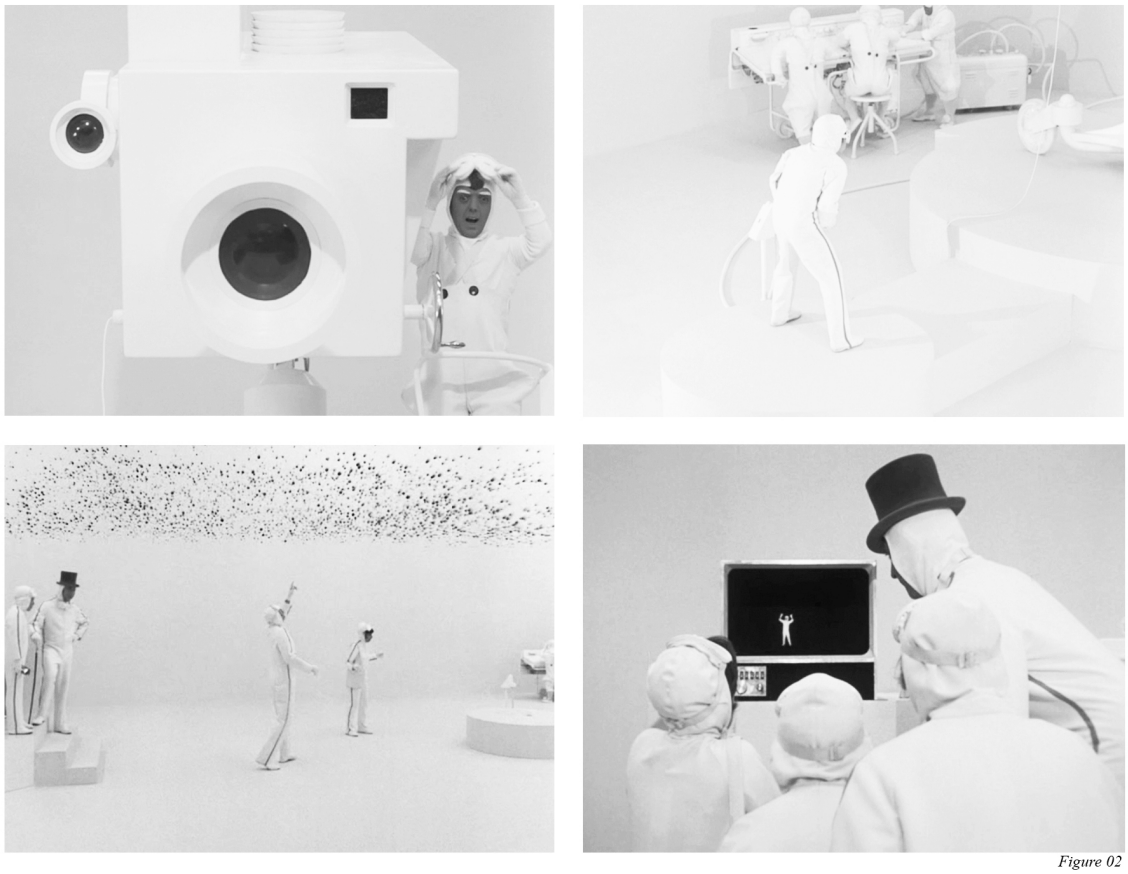


Figure 2. Screen captures from the movie, *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*.

The remake of the Willy Wonka film, *Charlie and the Chocolate Factory* (2005), demonstrates a relevant microcosm of what is available to the clients in this thesis project

today. It is my hope that, within this research experiment, clients will enter into a new world that resembles Winnicott's (1971) *play space*, to which I will refer, for the purposes of this study, as *Dreamspace*. I would like to define Dreamspace as a mentally informed physical experience, much like a daydream, which the video therapy process can elicit once clients are fully interacting within the virtual green screen environment. Study participants' imaginations and personal desires will be revealed and visibly portrayed in the video work, much as in Freudian (1952) *free association*. The clients' visualization of the green screen space as well as their performance within it will be analyzed. It is my hope that working in such a way will create an atmosphere in which clients can imagine new opportunities to immerge physically within a virtual world that can then be therapeutically negotiated with media arts professionals.

My experiences teaching and administering the video green screen compositing method have proven to be effective and have been very fulfilling for me. As the video specialist at the renowned Summit Camp for special needs children, aged 7-17, I offered the video green screening technique to the boys and girls with notable therapeutic effect. I would usually approach our video group sessions much like an art therapy open studio (Allen, 1995), without any suggested theme or set directive. I would simply show the campers' examples of the green screen used in feature films and give a brief explanation of how the process works. We would start with a discussion about their ideas by filming backgrounds for their videos. We would replay the video and use them as the backdrop with which to interact in anyway they pleased. Through green screening, the campers were able to see their most exciting fantasies become virtual reality on the computer screen. Some examples would defy such limits as gravity by depicting, for example,

walking up a tree, sleeping in the clouds, running on water, wrestling bumblebees, flying with butterflies, hopping from rooftop to rooftop, and grouping together inside a created spaceship flying into outer space. For these special needs children, this afforded the opportunity to surpass their real life limitations and explore their imaginations.

Building on this positive experience, I took green screening a step further and correlated it with my master's art therapy training and thesis research at Pratt Institute. I felt that working with adolescent youths in an inner city school environment would serve as the next evolutionary step in my therapeutic integration of the green screen process. The resulting research is video work in the form of demonstrating an alternative art therapy medium. The literature information in this review will also be addressed through an art-based exploration context. For example, the following writing process will involve imaginative interpretations of how psychoanalysts and theorists might adopt the use of green screening as a useful therapeutic modality in their work. The proposed value of green screening will be determined through these combined virtual scenarios from references both past and present. This research will constitute the latest technological progression of the video medium as a future possibility for art therapy.

Literature Review

Electronic Arts and Youth Culture

Electronic art and video have become commonplace in the lifestyles of today's youth. In their day-to-day routines, youths use Internet, mobile video communication, and home console gaming, as well as a multitude of commercial special effects syndications. Art therapists who are comfortable with the mechanics of such media can bridge these electronic worlds with the world of media arts therapy. Electronic arts and media can signify a range of things, including video, animation, computer illustration, and digital image manipulation.

Often, the younger the computer user is, the more comfortable he or she is with it, as a tool to channel his or her ideas. Youths progress in the area of electronic arts because of their innate ability to adapt and to learn languages. Rolfe and Gilbert (2006) constructed a study aimed at understanding the nature of adolescents' relationships with technology and exposing a few myths about their interests in it. Rolfe and Gilbert discovered that the majority of young people are not necessarily interested in the technologies themselves, but they are fond of the communication and entertainment uses the technologies offer. This study suggests that technology, for most young people, is generally used to facilitate enhanced self-perception, communication, and overall lifestyle.

According to Sullivan (1953), in the United States, early adolescence generally refers to the years when a child enters junior high school. Sullivan believed that the developing youth emerges into this stage through command of sexual adjustment and achievements in self-exploration. Late adolescence usually refers to the period of self-discovery when adolescents are determining their preferences in genital behavior during the high school age years of 15 through 18. According to Jung (as cited by Feist & Fiest, 2000), youth is, or should be, a period of increased activity, maturing sexuality, growing consciousness, and recognition that the problem-free era of childhood is gone forever. Blos (1979) suggested that adolescent delinquent behavior in young men and women acts as a primary warning sign of distress for today's at-risk youth. According to Blos, juvenile delinquency, abuse, stressors, and other socioeconomic factors may be the most relevant signs in determining how adolescent behavior may predict further challenges into adulthood.

In Erikson's (1968) theory of psychosocial development, adolescence embodies 6 of 8 life stages that occur before an individual reaches maturity. Erikson might adopt the video green screen as an exploration of these theorized stages in a therapy game show or sitcom format. Erikson would surely want to capture the energy of his adolescent audience and strategically gear his therapeutic sessions to encourage involvement. Moreover, his video green screen would not be a traditional one (as shown in Figure 1), but a high budget television studio auditorium setting in which Erikson, as host, would ask clients questions, while they relived life experiences. Erikson's psychosocial stages and adolescent identity theory involves personality characteristics, family antecedents, and developmental patterns of change over time, much like what occurs on a televised

syndication. A green screen of this magnitude might best be demonstrated through the animated television series, *Family Guy* (1999).

TV and Digital Communication

The most important factor in video and electronic arts has been its influence over the television generation at large. While McLuhan (1994) offered a positive assessment of the new media and television as a new adaptive language, many others have opposed television's influence on our culture. In art therapy, there is a school of thinking that advocates against using electronic media for use in regular practice. In fact, many art therapists feel that video has no place in art therapy and that television is, in part, the cause of a disgruntled young population. Those art therapists who stand for traditional values of art therapy might as well be in front of the green screen with a background image of the Berlin wall. However, the consensus from panelists Kramer, Gerity, Henley, and Williams (as cited by Malchiodi, 2000), in the 26th annual American Art Therapy Association conference, stated that the possibilities for applications of photography and videotape have expanded the vision of art therapy beyond the traditional methods of painting, drawing, and sculpture, and have set the stage for art therapists to continue to explore how computer and digital technologies can augment and enhance the creative process and self-expression.

Greenfield (1984) posed the many pros and cons regarding the relationships that young people have with developments among television, media, and new technologies. Greenfield discussed benefits, such as the educational achievements that have come through advancements in television, citing the influence of PBS since the 1970s, syndicating shows such as, *The Electric Company* and *Sesame Street*. These shows

attracted a large audience: at one point, the *Sesame Street* audience was estimated at about 11 million and the program was used in 35% of all elementary schools in the United States. Synchronized voice and movement, for example, as some of these shows utilized, served as a great teaching tool. Once television became an interactive living entity and an electronic environment, with the inclusion of computer fantasy games, youths were able to enter virtual worlds through their computer screens. Greenfield also explored early uses of video games, television, and computers, as the prerequisites required for today's green screen. In summation, Greenfield posited that television brings richness to the imagination. This point of view is directly related to the notion of using such media in working with an at-risk population within the current media-driven culture.

Media Arts Therapy

McNiff (as cited in Malchiodi, 2000) stated, "The medicines are in the pixels" (p. 93). Among art therapy theorists who have included video, electronic arts, and media arts therapy practice as welcome innovations within the field of art therapy, McNiff and Malchiodi were at the forefront in advocating for the use of technological advancements and changes. They felt that the world of computer generated art and media offered valuable opportunities as new therapeutic outlets. Both McNiff and Malchiodi alluded to the electronic arts as adding an entirely new dimension to art therapy, through its experimental nature. According to McNiff (1998), video and photography are among the many visual art media to be used in art therapy. McNiff stated that video aids in his observations of personal ideas, memories, themes, and inner-images, and that he anticipates a new world of art therapy research growing from the opportunities offered by digital media.

McNiff (as cited in Malchiodi, 2000) stated that the medicines are in the pixels for clients of clinicians who use digital media in their practices. Both McNiff and Malchiodi (2000), along with others, make a strong case for the potential of computer-based artwork in art therapy. Their extensive writings on the subject are suggestive of the potential for healing through the means of new media and electronic art as viable art materials. The use of electronic, computer, and digital modalities in health care has rapidly become a new field of study in psychology, psychiatry, medicine, social work, and counseling, and it is referred to in a variety of ways, such as: computer-mediated psychotherapy, cyber-therapy, web counseling, telehealth, telemedicine, e-therapy, telepsychiatry, and cyber-counseling.

Mosinski (2007) documented the process of creating individual video projects in therapy. Her group members included men and women living with HIV/AIDS, who filmed, directed, and technically supported each other through the video art therapy experience. Mosinski's individual and group video projects provided new opportunities for the therapist to observe clients and for them to observe themselves. They also served as an opportunity for group members to interact with this new media that is helping to aid in the healing process.

Mosinski (personal communication, December 12, 2008) let the clients take the reins in creating their video visions, stating, "Even those clients who didn't know what to do, used their not knowing, as a beginning." Clients documented their internal states of mood and awareness as a recorded image that could be referenced again in the future. Since video is still relatively new in the field of art therapy, Mosinski felt that learning the fundamentals of video production was in it and of itself an ego-building tool that was

stimulating and motivating for the clients. Mosinski's clients also expressed feelings of transformation through the video editing process. Mosinski (2007) claimed that one client felt as though she were no longer the same person (who could allow someone to abuse her) throughout the video process, as she was "strengthened by her discovery through screening, reshooting, editing, and processing feelings that surfaced at various stages of interacting with her story as opportunities for healing took place" (p. 6).

Health care facilities and schools have increasingly adopted computer technology for students with special needs, because it takes less physical effort to create imagery using the computer. Using a computer as an alternative to traditional mediums can alleviate arm pain when compared to the painting/sculpting process. Art therapy is oftentimes limited to traditional resources and media, because new technologies can be difficult to maintain as software continues to advance. When I met Cathy Malchiodi along with a variety of art therapists from the 39th annual AATA convention in Cleveland, Ohio, I found a mixed bag of interest in the idea of integrating electronic arts into the practice of art therapy. Many of these art therapists would entertain the notion of using electronic arts in their work, but felt overwhelmed with setting up the required computer networks and software. They told me they felt underqualified and unskilled in these areas. Clinicians I met at that conference said, with the exception of a few, that email correspondences and web blogs constituted the extent of their use of computers.

Feldman (as cited in Malchiodi, 2000) integrated the use of computers into school settings and discovered the value of electronic arts as a secure space from her users of the Kid Pix™ program in sessions. Feldman observed that, "For children who have learning disabilities, cognitive impairments or just enjoy working with computers, the computer

offers another modality for self-expression, with a degree of reflective distance that can enhance the safety for some children" (p. 107). McNiff (as cited in Malchiodi, 2000) stated that because of large amounts of time spent with computers, from office work to his virtual studio, his familiarity with the machine was the most significant reason why he quickly adopted the process of digital painting. He further noted, "In sum, the image-making properties of digital art can enhance many of the things we currently do within art therapy while introducing new elements into practice" (p. 97).

In 1993, Hartwich and Brandecker (as cited in Malchiodi, 2000) set out to explore a computer-painting program within a creative arts therapies program at their clinic. As a result of their study, they discovered there were many benefits that therapists and clients could gain from working with a computer in clinical sessions. They specified three in particular: (a) a client's inhibitions tend to decrease with the use of computer generated shapes, colors, and virtual tools; (b) computer-based images can be saved in various stages of development; and (c) storing of information serves as a container for recalling data and clients' artwork. Hartwich and Brandecker concluded that, in a sense, the experience of working with this medium creates a relationship between the person and the computer.

Canter (as cited in Malchiodi, 2000) used Apple Macintosh computer-based art therapy in her work with emotionally disturbed children and adolescents, using the computer as a storytelling device that allowed them to illustrate and animate their emotions and fantasies. Canter's digital work with her young clients was an effective therapeutic milieu, because these teens had difficulties expressing themselves with other

media. Canter's electronic component was also helpful in reframing clients' impulsivity, as it became an asset with regard to moving images around the computer screen.

Austin (2006) worked with at-risk youths, using 3D Studio Max™ software to create sophisticated computer generated environments. Both Austin and McNiff recognize new potential when working with clients and new media. According to McNiff (1999), the computer, with its intelligence, memory, and interactive powers, takes the threefold relationship between client, therapist, and image into a new dimension. Austin's current program, The Animation Project (TAP), successfully uses electronic arts as the primary means for treatment. Austin has further demonstrated that the computer can be used as an ego-strengthening therapeutic tool, noting, "For an adolescent struggling with the developmental task of mastering their often overwhelming affective states, what better thing to turn to when you feel potential loss of control than a machine that is controllable?" (p. 49). Here, Austin seemed to make reference to the computer as if it were an intelligent third party in the media therapy dialogue.

Movements Made Digital

Jung (1974) regarded dreams as things that can be painted, modeled, sometimes danced and recorded in fantasy series as action or as conversation with inner figures. Theater, when integrated with video and sound from outside electronic sources, presents an entirely new component to the stage. Dixon (2007) discussed the artistic contributions that digital performances have brought to the stage insofar as they are relative to the origin of green screen technology. According to Dixon, there are many contributions made by experimental filmmakers, performers, musicians, and artists. The most relevant multimedia pioneers of the 20th century include Sterlarc, Robert Lepage, Merce

Cunningham, and Laurie Anderson. Dixon considered the virtual space that these artists manipulated as spawned from extratemporal illusions derived from a hybrid technological approach. He also analyzed computer-based digital performance practices including those that incorporate virtual reality, in online drama communities, noting how such practices alter how people experience their own bodies, space, and time. He assumed a connection between the digital component and the virtual that is analogous with how digital technology connects people with physical reality, positing that digital artists who use video technology examine the interaction between the physical and the virtual.

Dixon (2007) identified a new embodied existence that is redefined best in cyberspace. Digital artist, Sermon's, *Telematic Dreaming* (1992) is an example of this, in which a simulated body of a dancer is coupled with a real performer on an illuminated video projection installation. The two body images (the real and the virtual) are layered together using the chroma-key blue screen techniques, similar to the green screens that are currently used to create a simulated artistic effect. The conjunction of live performance and digital imagery can produce a hybrid of experiences akin to the work of Artaud – something that is neither theatre nor film, but partakes of the evanescent reality of dreams. According to Dixon, "Artaud became the first person to coin the term 'virtual reality' by linking the chimeric nature of both theater and alchemical symbols" (p. 337). This idea may have been spawned from Freudian unconscious psychoanalysis, based on the theory of the id, ego, and superego.

It would be pertinent to reconsider the relationship of movement and video art with the psychoanalytic work of Freud (1952), particularly his theories concerning

dreams. Freud stated that dreams carry great weight during the daytime and are composed of disconnected violent contradictions that, by disregarding knowledge, admit impossibilities without the least objection. Freud felt that dreams acted as highly incomplete and fragmentary versions of dream-thoughts. A hypothetically created video green screen studio created by Freud might begin by using video in accordance with his psychoanalytic process. He would likely not feature himself in front of the green screen, but would focus on his client's vantage point. Perhaps the green screen would be mounted on the ceiling above the couch of his reclined clients, with Freud's presence felt from afar in a shadowy distance.

Freud (1955) suggested that the nature of clients' wishes is rooted in making adjustments to the demands of reality through dreams. With this in mind, Freud might adopt the green screen to project the repressed dreamlike imagery from his client's unconsciousness. Freud might even use the Google image search engine to offer his clients a real-time free-association-slideshow that could be generated through the Internet. As clients described their dreams in detail using words, specific object image associations would follow, while Freud witnessed and processed the material to offer meaning. Freud's main contribution to these projections would be to act as a narrator of projected stories from the client's unconscious mind.

For Jung (1979), the green screen could be adapted to the active imaginations of those who cannot fulfill a wish in reality, by trying to realize it in a fantasy. How might Jung interact with the proposed green screen on Freud's office ceiling? Perhaps the lights would be dim, as Jung, a willing participant of Freud's suggestion, took part in this video process. Perhaps Jung would desperately find himself wanting to stand up in defiance on

Freud's couch. Jung would find himself needing, with growing intensity, to interact with the dreamlike images on Freud's ceiling green screen. The deeper Jung found himself in this process, the closer he would be to leaving his body and entering the green screen. This is where his Dreamspace process would begin.

Once in the Dreamspace, Jung might engage in timeless states of meditation, inviting interaction with mythological creatures and beings, such as atoms, starfish, serpents, and various gods. Jung (1974) proposed that dreams combine perceptions of thoughts and feelings that have not registered consciously and result in the fusion of subliminal elements. In his Dreamspace, Jung might further explore religious and mythological iconography on the essence of life and death, a vast dessert plain landscape journey.

Video Artists' Moving Psychology

Falconer (2001) stated that, "As the early conceptualist John Baldessari said in the 1970s, there would be a day when artists would pick up the video camera like they picked up a pencil. Bill Viola did just that" (p. 40). One of the most important figures in the world of contemporary video art is Bill Viola. Viola's early video work from the 1970s inspired many in the early 1990s who were integrating newer technologies. Viola's video-vignettes have often been considered in a manner that can be understood as analogous to spiritual and therapeutic depictions of personal self-discovery. In a lecture in San Francisco, I asked Viola about his video process and intimacy. Viola (personal communication, November 15, 2000) confessed that his video work since the death of his parents has been a self-soothing effort of mourning. In *The Passions* (2003), Viola (as cited in Walsh, 2003) said of his origins as a video artist:

> All the threads of the medium were present when I came into video in 1970: cinematic montage, image manipulation, intervention into the actual hardware like in Nam June Paik's work, and the idea of performance in that of Bruce Nauman and Vito Acconci. (p. 27)

Other video pioneers and influential video artists include Tony Oursler and Matthew Barney. Video artists of the late 70s and 80s are perhaps best known for their use of video that challenged viewers in much the same way that John Cage challenged his listeners beyond the scope of commercial use. In the same vein, Tony Oursler continues to create eerily personal digital installation sculptures in galleries and over public spaces. Oursler's work seems to be similar in scope to the alterative, sometimes therapeutically driven, use of green screens in three-dimensional forms. Freudian psychoanalytic thinking might best describe Oursler's (2008) work, particularly the *Blob* video construction (see Figure 03), as a display of internal fragmentation and displacement.

Figure 03

Figure 04

Figures 3 and 4. Photograph of Tony Oursler's *Blob* ® 2008 Galerie Forsblom; Photograph of Matthew Barney ® Peggy Guggenheim Collection.

Barney's (1994-2004) *Cremaster Cycle* (see Figure 04) must be recognized for the considerable contribution to fine art filmmaking with his profound, dreamlike journeys. Dream material, according to Freud (1952), lacks none of the characteristics that are familiar from conscious thinking, as Barney so eloquently identifies in his work. Barney's work might best represent an eerie alter ego in that his use of video serves as public self-disclosure through the personal portrayal of a questionable, inhuman sexuality. The overall animalistic nature offered by this filmmaker is akin to having a client's lifetime of free associations put on tape. Freud felt that in the course of dream transformation, logical links that have held psychological material together are lost. This is similar to the transformative process that occurs in the making video art. Barney's goat-man personas in these cinematic journeys have touched on new psychological possibilities for video art therapy that contain the high aesthetic standards of feature filmmaking. Additionally, Barney is living in a time in which the green screening technique is highly integrated and available to him. I can only assume that he has considered the benefits of green screening and rejected them with good reason. Barney, according to his theatrical sensibilities and aesthetic preferences, would most likely use the neon-green background merely for its colorful aesthetic impact, rather than as a tool to manipulate material.

Barney's prowess lies in the realm of true-fantasy documentation that relates to the work of filmmaker, Stanley Kubrick. Kubrick's, *The Shining* (1980) offered horror images that changed how audiences experienced psychological thrillers. Ultimately, Kubrick and Barney changed the way an audience perceives and questions media within its unconscious. Cocks, Diedrick, and Perusek (2006) recognized Kubrick as a filmmaker

who used psychology in popular culture as a form of cinematic reality testing. Perhaps because of Kubrick's background in photojournalism and his interest in Freudian psychoanalysis, his movie making held a standard of visual aesthetics that were incomparable, both in process and final product, even as compared with many directors of today. Kubrick's *A Clockwork Orange* (1971) and *Eyes Wide Shut* (1999) captured his audience by offering surrealistic and timeless psychological content that touched on universal fears, wishes, and fantasies. Kubrick did not use the green screen technology available to him, since he likely preferred to integrate more realistic vantages for a truer visual experience. If the slightest inconsistency created by the green screen effect were detectable by the audience, it might trigger the viewer to disbelieve his films' original intent as true-to-life fantasies.

Filmmakers who are credited for using pre-green screen special effects include Georges Méliès *A trip to the moon* (1902) as well as various Dadaist cinematographers, Salvador Dalí and Man Ray. Video cameras provide interesting examples of reflective qualities that assume the existence of a double in the human psyche. For example, one who is constantly watching one's thinking, bringing unconscious negotiations into consciousness in a virtual manner, might constantly be asking this assumed other double, "What would we do if we were in that situation?" Dixon (2007) stated that while one appears to look at ones own reflection in video, it is not a natural one, but a virtual copy. In Viola's (1977-79), *The Reflecting Pool*, the video is composed of two images in a split-screen technique that presents the viewer with a visual metaphor of two kinds of time – one still and the other continuous. Dixon described Artaud's view of virtual reality and theatre as a dreamlike reality in which archetypal body doubles can be seen as visual

doppelgängers. Viola used the video process to pioneer the use of mirror images as a form of self-reflection by using the earliest known version of green screening, known as camera blocking.

Virtual Space and Computer Reality

Moser (1996) presented a variety of different views by digital artists, depicting the developing stages of video art, as we know it today. She referenced many electronic artists' works, identifying different technological perspectives, including social and cultural approaches to virtual environments. This is an early examination of artist's uses of cyberspace as a narrative form within the new technological landscape. Moser demonstrated the uses of electronic arts through these contemporary artists that have influenced the way people experience the moving image. Rapid eye movement (R.E.M.) could be the actual speed of eyelid movement that result from simple signals of mental Morse code. In film, there are a series of 24 images available per second as frame-rates that might be analogous to the interior mechanics of human thoughts. *Virtual reality* (VR) is a multi-medium narrative where visual information and body meet (see Figure 05). Whenever I think of virtual reality, my mind races to those people using digital goggles, simulating their movements in a computer laboratory.

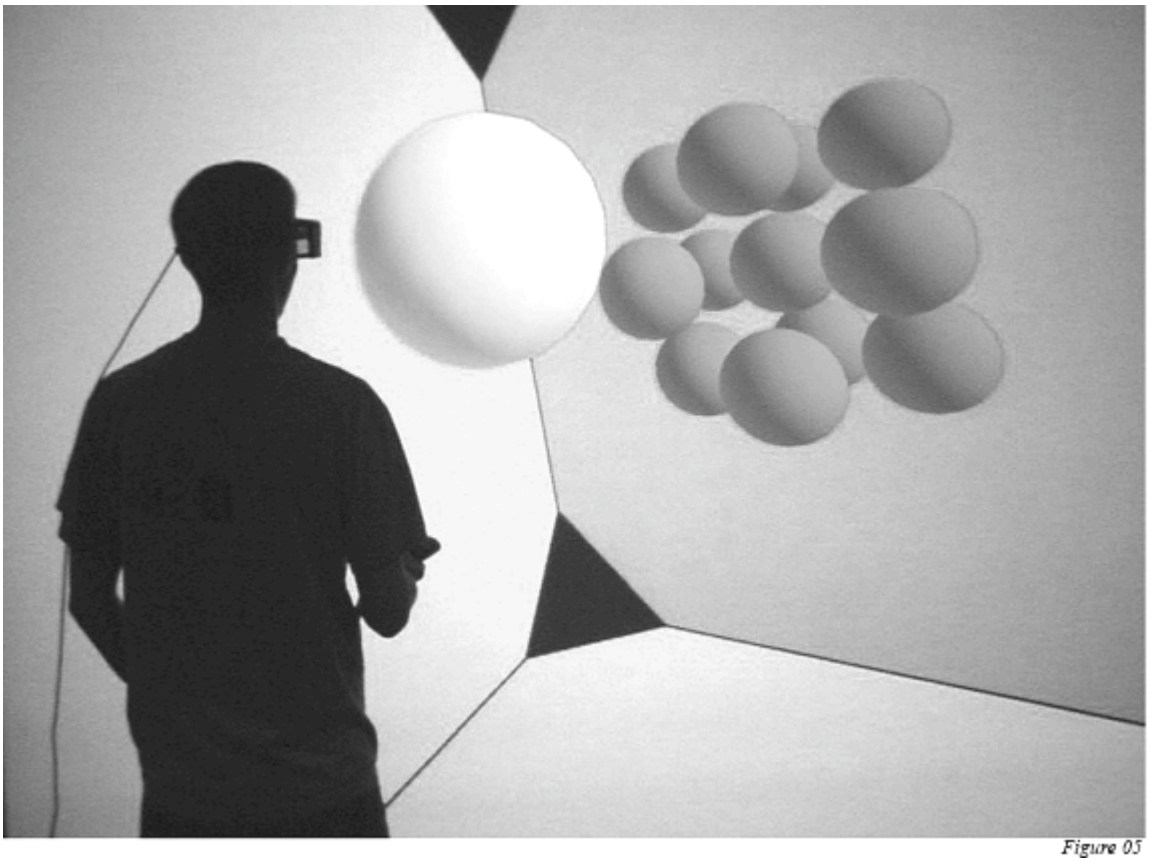


Figure 5. Screen capture of 2005 Virtual Reality SIUE computer science image.

As electronic arts transform us into virtual realities, they bridge science and art together in an interesting way. Moravec (as cited in Moser, 1996) credits Hayles' (1996) *Embodied Virtuality* essay for coining the term *technoscience* as a definitive means of describing dreams and out-of-body experiences. The combination of using dreams and technology promotes the ability to better control the transformation of emotions within the digital art space. It is considered somewhere between science and religion, in that it is postulated that human consciousness is potentially downloadable via computer. Moravec reasoned that once human consciousness is safely ensconced inside a computer, it is effectively immortal. Dyson (as cited in Moser, 1996) discussed VR as an embodiment of space, reality, community, and authentic experience. The features that differentiate VR

from other media are those in which one can enter the screen, become immersed in, and interact with three-dimensional images or virtual objects. Dyson was referring here to the Heideggerian sense of technological presence as another way of being-in-the-world.

Turtkle (as cited in Moser, 1996) presented another perspective, using VR as a psychotherapeutic tool. Turkle suggested that the embodiment of the virtual presence plays into the electronically generated environment. This VR environment may be interpreted to include video green screening as a container for those who enter virtual Dreamspace interactions. Turtkle also differentiated the social structures of self and body as operating differently within virtual psychological spaces. Moreover, she showed how the use of virtual space is an adjunct to therapy across domains, beyond the virtual worlds and into the biological.

Perceived Time in Moving Media

Swiss philosopher and developmental theorist, Jean Piaget (1969) was prompted to write a series of questions originally posed by Albert Einstein in a written dialogue. Piaget attempted to understand how the outlook from a child's-eye perspective was different from an adult's understanding of time and space. As video is a time-based art form that is subjective, the mind's-eye plays a broad range of subjective space and time negotiations. Piaget proposed that, to the child, there is a subjective concept of time that is separate from the sphere of physical time and the construction of psychological time. Piaget's theories of the inner world of a youth's playtime might be represented as a green screen mind-eye that exposes opposing developmental viewpoints.

According to Piaget (1969), space and time are the two essential, logical aspects of the apparent world and the process of fitting its parts into a meaningful whole

composed of relationships lies among metric concepts of numbers and numerical operations. Piaget's team determined that children judge time and age egocentrically in terms of their memories. Piaget might adopt the green screen concept into virtual reality headgear for a first-person perspective of time. He might then juxtapose these images from inside the green screen helmet to interchangeably connect childlike views with simulated adult vantages and vice versa. Similarly, Einstein might reconstruct his green screen studio for the purposes of a virtual mathematical chalkboard. Jung (1974) stated that we no longer discover conscious symbolic connections between numbers in our dreams; rather we perceive the unconscious roots of number symbolism. Perhaps Einstein would fully embrace the opportunity to engage the green screen process as if it were a scientific think-tank, based in technology available to us in the year 2054 (see Figure 06), as depicted in the movie, *Minority Report* (2002), starring Tom Cruise.

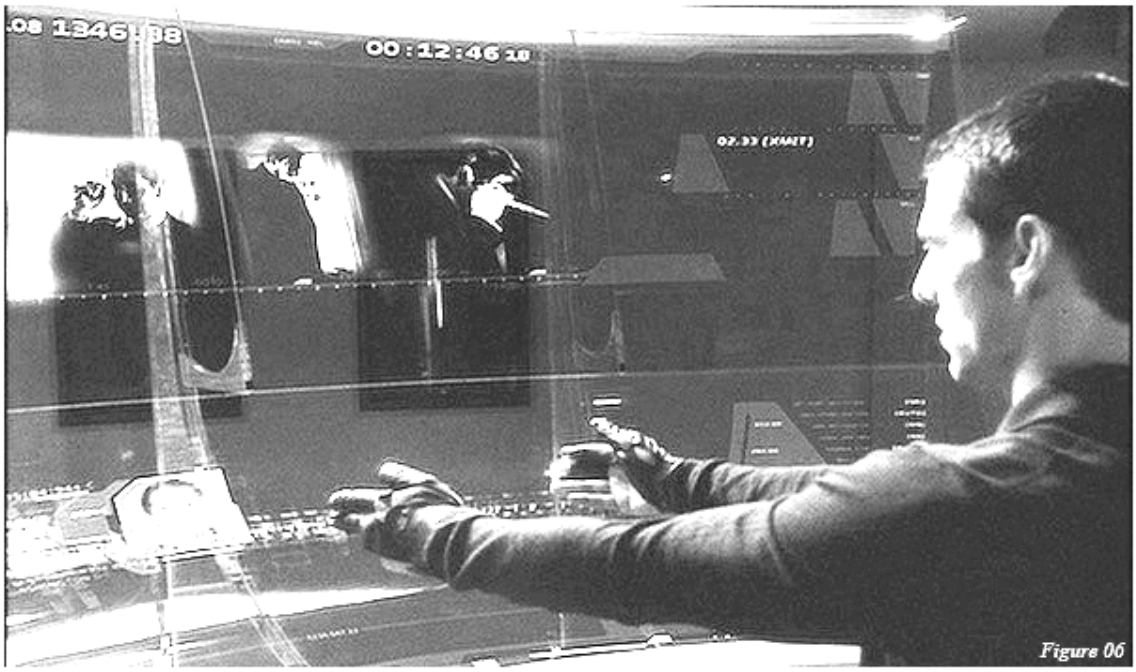


Figure 6. Screen capture of 2002 *Minority Report* ® 20th Century Fox.

Winnicott's (1971) psychoanalytic theory has made an important impact on the creative arts play-world that transcends time as *transitional space*. Winnicott believed that in the creative process, the body becomes responsive to an illusory experience of the external world. He demonstrated through vignettes that there are parts of human life in which inner and external reality both contribute to intermediate states of being between realities. Winnicott would easily embrace the video green screen technology of today, offering his clients a parade of relational exchanging of ideas. In contrast to Freud's postulated use of the green screen, Winnicott would surely appear in his client's videos as a conductor or guide. He might invite clients into a hallway of mirrors, simulating newly envisioned selves. Winnicott might also take form as an upside-down swaying circus acrobat who reaches out to catch clients from virtual high ropes, representing mental risk taking. All of these Winnicottian devices might allow clients, not only to better see an image of themselves in present time, but also to analyze it therapeutically (Landy, 1986).

Entering the Dreamspace

For the purposes of this thesis, Dreamspace is defined as a perceived, dreamlike experience within the therapeutic video environment that is internalized by the clients. Dreamspace may be understood as being akin to the experience of *runner's high*, or of a gamer who is in *the zone* during focused activity. An important aspect of Dreamscape is that one is fully present without regard to past, future, or perceived consequence. Robbins (1998) devoted his career in art therapy and psychoanalysis to connecting people though the power of therapeutic presence. According to Robbins, a therapist, although not necessarily a dancer, artist, or musician, is sensitive to movement, vision, and sound, and can play with his or her patient within this multilevel orientation (p. 19). Mindful

adventures can be found in a client's comfortable position with a multiplicity of levels of presence that are essentially spatial. Clients in Dreamspace are sandwiched between what is real and what is possible through conceptual video means. Dreamspace offers clients new perspective and a platform from which to launch their dreams into a virtual reality.

Feist and Feist (2000) described dreamlike images, in Jungian terms, as an orchestration of images, visions, and pictures in fantasy; dreams are our unconscious and spontaneous attempts to know the unknowable, to comprehend a reality that can only be expressed symbolically (p. 118). Jung (1961) felt that unconscious existence is both real and a conscious world of illusion, like a dream, which seems a reality as long as we are in it. Dreamspace can become apparent to individuals who work with video via the virtual and invisible second layer of the green screen. Clients maneuver images through the use of a computer while interactively engaged with the green screen. Clients must assume a high level of imagination so that the final product of these illusions will transpire in an agreeable mind-image harmony.

The reason I am not simply calling Dreamspace, *video space*, is because I am speculating that the process of envisioning Dreamspace encompasses inner feelings and insights. The client sees there are many interactive opportunities with this medium, such as stills and moving background vantages, to encounter modes of expression. My vision for Dreamspace is of a therapeutic, safe space, in which clients and therapists can coexist electronically. Clients can experiment, using their own bodies along with digital matter, in a cyber-psychological landscape to achieve Dreamspace. Through this therapeutic process of video imaging documentation, we may witness and attempt to understand whatever situation, conscious or unconscious, that transpires in the sessions.

Moser (1996) discussed the process of Japanese artist, Toshio Iwai, who, since the 1980s, has been creating Japanese television programming that has been considered another evolution of the moving image. Iwai has invested his life in the history of moving image technologies from different time periods and traditions. Iwai (as cited in Moser, 1996) has described his art as a kind of response to his own dream-thoughts, such as, "Wouldn't it be wonderful if a painting or an object in front of you begins to move?" (p. 251). Iwai, through his digital interests, perhaps best personifies the idealized desire to personally enter into the Dreamspace. This mode of looking at the world with dream-like potential is becoming more and more available. Imax theaters, for example, are popular audience attractions, because of their 360º illusion quality that surpasses the tunnel vision of traditional movie theaters. Any virtual environment, as an instrument of art, can be analyzed by means of three referential axes: (a) the relation of cyberspace to the external world, be it the *natural*, the urban, or the realm of fantasy and dream; (b) the internal links and relationships within cyberspace; and (c) the symbolic relations within any virtual environment (Moser, 1996, p. 203). Moser's commentary on the works created in the studio workspace describes humans' interests in cyber-landscapes. I intend to offer my at-risk clients similar virtual opportunities in the green screening process and to provide guidance though their personal Dreamspaces.

The Adolescent At-risk Population

Writer and editor, Camilleri (2007), captured the spirit of working in the creative arts therapies with at-risk youths of today, presenting 14 essays that explore the struggles urban youth endure and new therapeutic interventions used with this population. One essayist, Dayton (as cited by Camilleri, 2007), theorized that defiant urges to act out are

inborn with these youths. Additionally, Camilleri reviewed many ways of identifying an at-risk child, noting their increasing numbers in our cities. The U.S. Census Bureau (as cited by Camilleri, 2007) examined risk factors in school-age children in the United States and found that the most common familial risk factor for such youths is belonging to a single or foster parent.

For the purposes of this paper, I will identify my research population as a population of youths in danger of negative future events (McWhirter, as cited in Camilleri, 2007). The outcomes of such events can include depression, education failure, addiction, unemployment, poverty, or death, and are a result of a complex and often correlated set of risk factors (Camilleri, 2007, p. 17). Additionally, there are many stressors that are the largest factors in identifying those living at risk. According to Camilleri, at-risk youths tend to live within a low socio-economic status, in impoverished neighborhoods, and are likely to be members of a minority ethnic group. At-risk youth stressors can include an uninvolved family, ineffective school environment, teenage pregnancy, abuse, incarceration, and eviction.

The essays that Camilleri (2007) cites carry a common thread of neglect or segregation, be it racial or financial, in regard to these inner city youths. Their possibility of leading normal, healthy lives is lowered, according to the National Center for Children in Poverty (as cited in Camilleri, 2007). Households in poverty can be chaotic and unpredictable. In 1998, Paschall and Hubbard (as cited in Camilleri, 2007) showed a direct relationship between poverty and increased family stress and conflict in a sample of African-American adolescent males (p. 23). In this study, children's circumstances may be a result of poor parenting, psychological distress, malnutrition, and exposure to

violence, stemming from marital conflict, lack of education, and poor support systems. Further, inner city children grow up witnessing and being victims of acts of violence, such as theft, assault, murder, rape, or abuse. These are commonplace and directly affect their behavior. Warning signs are often posted around public settings to offer a sense of protection in dangerous environments (see Figure 07).

Figure 7. Photograph of inner city school site video surveillance sign by the author.

The Research Method

Research Gap

The following areas have been explored and challenged throughout the literature review: electronic arts and youth culture; TV and digital communication; media arts therapy; movements made digital; video artists' moving psychology; virtual space and computer reality; perceived time in moving media; entering the Dreamspace; and the adolescent at-risk population. The purpose of the literature review was to acknowledge video art therapy as a viable alternative medium in a clinical setting and to highlight how it serves the therapeutic community at large. Nevertheless, currently available video research has not covered unconscious territory, as I am exploring with the use of the video green screen. This research attempts to address this gap in the context of working with youths in the media arts studio as a clinical setting.

The literature suggests that populations most commonly using the electronic arts are those in the adolescent age groups. Increasingly, teens and children are getting their information and entertainment from television and computer sources. Art therapy practices described in the literature have begun to expose electronic arts in a new light, as an alternative modality offered to clients. Computer-generated vantages offer an objective self-image that can be explored by clients who use video arts in their therapy. Dreamspace can be understood as introducing new terminology with which to better understand the space that can be relived by clients who create a video and interact with

the green screen virtual world. The at-risk youth population is the ideal clientele for this research, as this population's age range, energy levels, and mental capacities best correlate with users of new media technologies.

What has led me to this work most is the noticeable need for video and computer arts in clinical settings. Clients who spend the majority of their time working on computers, cell phones, and games could reasonably benefit from electronic media in art therapy as well. The complications that still remain are those rooted in the lack of many therapists' willingness or inability to embrace video as a fully holistic art medium, as compared with more traditional art tools. Most art therapy practitioners in the field working with clients for many years lack this new school of scholarly and technical knowledge. However, it is understandably a challenge to find the additional time needed for training in the electronic arts. I believe that, within a decade, there will sprout a new breed of art therapists who thoroughly integrate current technologies into their art therapy practice. It is my hope that this thesis research will act as a bridge between traditional art therapy and new media arts therapy that incorporates the video green screen.

Research Question

How does video art serve as a viable therapeutic modality for at-risk youth exploring the Dreamspace?

Research Methodology

McNiff (1998) advocated for art-based research using a variety of mediums, including electronic arts and new media. In art-based research, the data is the art. McNiff believed that by giving our full attention to artwork made in research, the necessary information becomes available to us. McNiff gave an inspiring presentation, "Leadership

and Making a Creative Space for Students," at the American Art Therapy Association 39th annual conference, in 2008. He described how offering safe, creative spaces for a client is an important aspect of working with client resistance. McNiff identified his philosophy of reviving difficult spaces through the healing potential of arts-based processes. McNiff stated, "You can't plan the outcome in the beginning of the work [and] the nature of our client's reality is their space" (personal communication, November 20, 2008). McNiff has been aware of the repercussions of rigidly following a structure in his therapeutic work. In this research, the art-based methodology was administered in order to allow things to organically happen within the video space created.

McNiff's (1998) vision for art-based research evoked a new methodology that would best serve the purposes of my study: "In keeping with the nature of creative experience, art-based research may sometimes encourage immersion in the uncertainties of experience, 'finding' a personally fulfilling path of inquiry, and the emergence of understanding through an often-unpredictable process of exploration" (p. 15). In art-based research, McNiff placed an emphasis on the phenomenological message of the artwork itself, believing that artwork has a wealth of information to offer. Art-based research requires open-ended interplay amongst different areas of knowledge, with the researcher returning, again and again, to the images and the process of expression as the foundations of inquiry (McNiff, 1998, p. 47). The art object or expression speaks for itself as a phenomenological process.

Research Design

In this design, the participants underwent a 3-week exploration of the video arts medium under therapist supervision within an art-based analytic context. The research

site was a New York City district special education high school, which was one of the 32 schools around New York that cater to general, special education, and at-risk youths. This school specializes in students with learning disabilities, history of emotional disturbances, mental retardation, and autism. The students have emotional and behavioral issues that require an alternate assessment for an IEP diploma. Most of the students are African American males who are not living with their real parents; some are foster care children living in group homes and others have been incarcerated.

Participant selection. The participants for this research were selected based on proximity to the above-mentioned school, interest in electronic arts, and exposure to video arts. Ages ranged from 15 to 19. Participants were chosen through a screening process developed by the media arts teacher, involving students who expressed interest in and possessed a proven track record of good behavior in video class. Ultimately, those selected participants had already been working with the school's video art department in good standing and the researcher made the final decision. Another aspect to the participant selection was an interest in the green screening technique and in the nature of the study.

Selection criteria. As stated, the media arts teacher referred each participant, based on behavior during class time and overall interest in the research. This video project did not aim to exclude student clients with undiagnosed disabilities or mental illnesses. A history of good behavior was a factor in the selection process in order to promote a safe working environment throughout the research. The onsite media arts therapist selected the participants under these particular conditions. Other considerations, aside from socio-economic difficulties, that would become evident after the therapeutic

video process had begun were to be documented. Participants were offered the regular support systems offered by the school, such as counseling, in combination with technical video instruction offered by the researcher.

Data Collection

The therapeutic component of this study can be understood in the following ways: in group settings, clients operate the video camera personally, which becomes a confidence-building component; and camera operators film another subject, allowing for an empathetic connection with the subject being filmed, particularly knowing that they will be in that position as well. With individuals, the client and the therapist work in tandem throughout the process. The key component to this work is of subjects interacting with the virtual world (with the green wall behind them). Like the blank piece of paper supplied by the traditional art therapist, the space with the green backdrop is now open to exploration. It is a place that is not ordinarily available to clients, because of its imagined capacity for motion through the video medium. In this virtual area, clients can repair old wounds, imagine themselves in places they have never been, accomplishing things they have never previously thought possible, all the while expanding their inner-outer world view.

A video camera can be used in multiple ways to document clients in the midst of the traditional art therapy process. What I am proposing is taking the video aspect to another level, as a primary tool in art therapy. In order to achieve this, I gathered the following materials to set the stage for this art-based methodology. The art-based approach offered immediate opportunities for analysis, as the art was being created in the adjacent video studio. The participants were observed with regard to how they integrated

their ideas of the green screen studio space with the available tools, including the green screen. The studio consisted of a video camera, one normal sized consulting space without any furniture, one wall dedicated to the color keyed green background, and a computer to compile the recorded digital media.

The current recommended computer hardware was Apple Macintosh® MacBook Pro, G5, or iMac computers. PCs also worked with limited software support. Macintosh computers came stocked with the program, iMovie, as well as Garage Band, a music software program, and iDVD, a video-authoring program. Additional software requirements were Final Cut Pro and/or Adobe AfterEffects, Adobe Photoshop for all image retouching, and Snapz®, Snagit®, or Jing® online programs for all moving image screen capture software packages (see Figure 8, iMac computers and Sony digital video camera).

Figure 8. Photographs of iMac station and Sony digital video camera by the author.

The required digital video cameras were consumer or professional grade. A professional tripod and lighting equipment was highly recommended. A 10’ x 12’

(minimum size) fluorescent key-color green fabric or green painted wall was needed for any video studio desiring alpha/key effects. Additionally, accessible pens, markers, paper, modeling clay (or Playdoh® as a substitute), and premade Xerox storyboards that were as simple as 6 squares on a page, all aided in video project production.

Session 1: Group introductions and storyboarding. Group introductions and storyboarding establishes clients' level of experience with the electronic arts and video. In this session, questions may be asked, such as, "Have you ever owned and operated a video camera?" and "Have you edited you own movie before?" In my experience, most Americans have had firsthand access to video cameras and digital still cameras (that often also have video functioning). Most clients are usually comfortable with technological norms and terminology. The primary focus of this session is getting to know the clients and their needs, and establishing a trusting relationship among members, as well as between members and the clinician.

In this session, the researcher will suggest the topic of how clients perceive their dreams, asking what dreams are and how they can be integrated into a personal video. For clients who are not aware of their nightly dreams, the researcher will ask them to think of their daydreams, personal fantasies, and/or wishes. Getting the clients talking about these kinds of ideas out loud will encourage more group coherency later, when working in the video production process.

A storyboard will be offered to the participants as a visual guide of their dream-thoughts. The clients and therapist can use the storyboarding process like an art therapy directive in pictorial storytelling. The idea behind storyboarding is to formulate a plan of attack on the project at hand through these beginning art stages. Reminding the client to

dream should inspire development in an open-ended fashion throughout this green screen process. Green screen examples may also be shown to the client at this time. It is important to describe how the clients' body images will be separate from the green screen background and vice versa. Clients will need to have this concept understood completely before moving forward.

Session 2: Generating ideas and group relations. This session establishes which clients are ready to begin filming their videos from the completed storyboards. Those who are ready to move on can prepare by gathering alternative source materials for each background scene. It is easy for a client to search the Internet for such images, much like a client may look through a magazine in a traditional art therapy session. I feel that backgrounds, which can be found with Google image searches, need to be established first in the green screen process in order to engage the client in their virtual surroundings.

Figure 9. Photograph of research participant performing a Google images search.

For those with specific ideas for originally shot backgrounds, such as outdoor footage, this session may not be the best time to start. I would consider developing a specific plan for all client outdoor video filming and doing them all at the same time. This will keep the group unified through the process. I also recommend always using a tripod for such filming, as it will stabilize the imagery during the compositing process. Although handheld footage can also serve as an interesting technique, it often looks unintentional and unprofessional.

For those clients using still backgrounds, such as scans and/or images found on the Internet, they would begin by referencing their storyboards to reflect these backgrounds. Clients might begin by thinking in terms of how they will engage these backgrounds once they are put behind their own body image. The process becomes obvious once the footage is available to the client on the computer screen. This technique can be done in real-time, like a television news anchorperson doing the weather, or in postproduction, offering the client more technical impulse control over body image.

The green screen post-production studio process can be described in five steps:

1. Video your client in front of a flat, green colored background–it is suggested to use neon green, as it is a color not likely to be found in nature. You can do a live keying out of the background or key out the green in postproduction.
2. In postproduction, bring your green screen video footage into the software program of choice by importing it into the timeline, select the video, and drop the video filter effect-chroma keyer on top of the footage.
3. Magic wand the midtones of the background you want to make transparent by adjusting the color saturation/luminance parameters as desired.

4. Once your video background is isolated, as desired, it leaves your subject remaining in the foreground V1 layer (see Figure 10).
5. Drop your ideal background onto layer V2 and, instantly, you have your video with two layers that are now seemingly sandwiched together (without the green), which is completely editable.

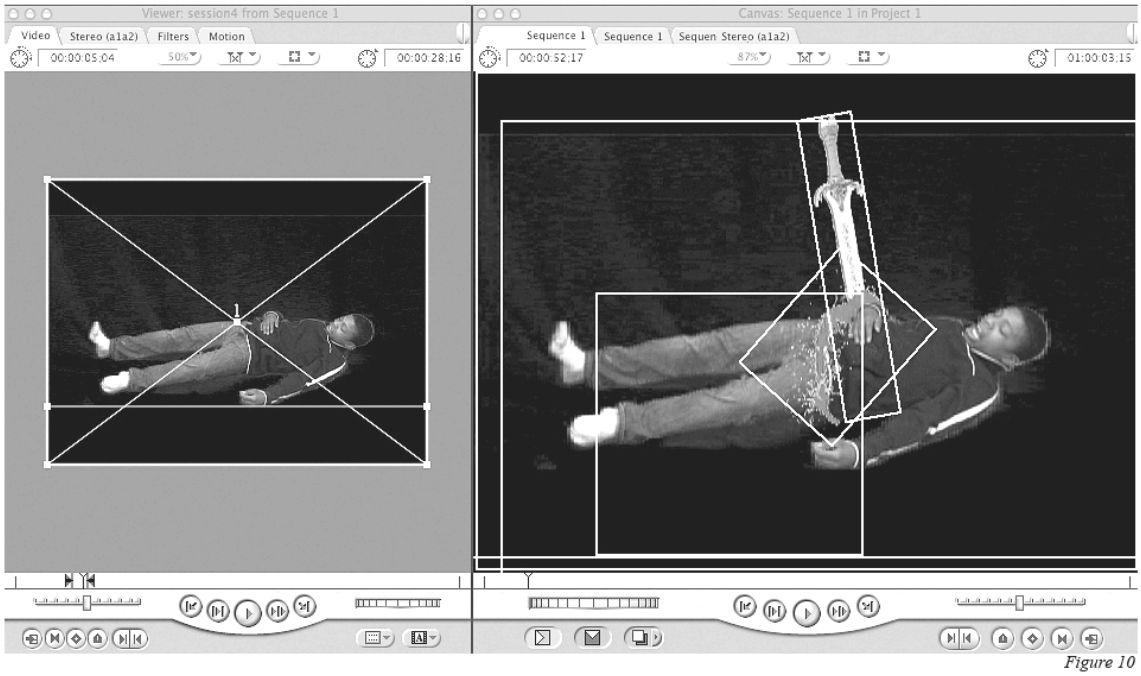


Figure 10

Figure 10. Screen capture of Bentley in postproduction green screen editing process.

Session 3: Green screen videography. As more ambitious and courageous clients first interact with the green screen, they begin to film mini-performances, based on their storyboards. Again, I suggest that the clients do all the videography, so they feel connected with their group members and the footage created in this session. There may be clients who prefer that the therapist video them, as it can be a very intimate situation for some. All of the clients should actively participate. Those who trail behind usually learn by watching the others and catch up in session 4 (see Figure 11).

Figure 11. Photograph of collaboration with participant group members by the author.

Session 4: Green screen continued. Videography is continued in this session, as additional green screen filming may be administered. However, all the final filming must be completed by the end of this session to leave sessions 5 and 6 open for the editing process and discussion.

Session 5: Video editing and review, session overview. Clients who wish to add sound or music to their videos would do so in these final sessions. Those who feel they have completed their videos as-is may want to spend some time helping others with their process. The group may want to get involved in this review process, as time allows. At this point, the therapist must be encouraging clients to complete their works in order to make the most use of the final session as a presentation day.

Session 6: Final presentation and termination process. Final videos may be shown on this final day, individually or in-group, as compressed movies on the computer screens or as an authored DVD presentation. It will be important to engage discussion

under a variety of themes found within the videos created. I also will be asking a series of questions regarding personal opinions of the study, as a form of termination. I intend to be available for the group to discuss these questions publicly and for the client in private consultation. I will discuss how the videos touched upon personal issues, as well as client observations of any noticeable changes in their lives throughout the process.

Data Analysis

The videos were viewed in session 6 and were made available to the participants in a final DVD copy. The environments created from this research project offered information about each client's response to the medium, as well as to the emotional content offered within the group. The process of each individual within the group, leading up to the final art videos, was noted and documented on an individual basis.

Ethics

Art therapy ethical codes operate under a strict confidentiality policy. Video and electronic arts is no different. Video art using the green screen does lend itself to using the client's image, much like in phototherapy, where the self-portrait is often imperative in representing the client. I have made slight alterations to the traditionally approved IRB consent forms to allow for more representation and likenesses of the client's image. Each client has been represented by a pseudonym that protects his or her true identity in this thesis.

In the green screen work I have done in the past, clients have shown themselves completely in interaction with their chosen backgrounds. In this way, my research lends itself more to dance/movement therapy. In this study, my clients' images followed a full body dramatization of the process, as they interacted with the green screen.

In the informed consent for this thesis, there is considerable attention given to the need for clients to show their likenesses for the work to be complete. However, clients could choose to work with the green screen without using their bodies at all. Video arts, by nature of the media used, lend themselves to self-disclosure. The boundaries and comfort zones of each client was observed and respected through this art therapy process in the tradition of creative arts therapy ethics policies. All hardware and software was used under legal educational contracted sources, following artistic license of the client. Appropriation of all other images is permissible without intent to resell under United States educational and noncommercial broadcasting laws.

Limits, Bias, and Assumptions

My background in the electronic arts has exceeded 10 years in the commercial world. In that time, I have worked on advertising campaigns for some of the largest companies across the United States, from Burbank, CA, with Walt Disney Studios, to CNN Headline News in Atlanta, GA. Oftentimes, these companies would call on me for quick results on deadlines in video and graphics, both individually and working within production teams. My professional background in the electronic arts has given me the confidence to tackle and accomplish any task at hand. My intention is to treat my teen population and their emotional needs like I would any corporate client. The scope of what these at-risk youths have to say to be seen and heard within a therapeutic context is analogous to any advertisement that a company needs to produce. I bring my professional background to these special needs clients with an open mind and an open heart. My experience and enthusiasm is not meant to intimidate clients, but rather to open the floodgates of computer generated exploration within the therapeutic environment. My

technical abilities will remain at bay until they are needed, as per participant inquiry. Each participant can dream, fantasize, and wish within my technical ability and I hope to also learn from each participant in a progressive collaboration.

My assumption is that, with my direction in this video project, these youths will gain greater insight, and that this study will prove to be a positive experience for them. Additionally, I feel that most everyone likes to be on video, in some capacity. It is fun for us to look at ourselves and observe how others see us as well. Video is the ideal medium with which to navigate how we move in the world. This bias of mine comes from my work with the special needs children of Summit Camp. In this experience, I found that those children who were shy in real-life situations found themselves fascinated with their own images on the television monitors whenever they were filmed. Looking at ourselves as video images is like looking into a moving mirror that is hard to resist, even when we do not find our likeness though this medium desirable.

A limit in this research was that there were no female participants and only undiagnosed at-risk youths. Future studies may include all populations, from child life to geriatric populations. Another limit was that there were only African American participants. Further studies would benefit from participants being from diverse cultures, family structures, and class structures.

Findings and Observations

"Shoot people with cameras . . . not guns."

Ad campaign for Focus Youth Photography Project in Oakland, CA

Things officially got started for me when I signed in at the inner city school site directory. My backpack set off the metal detection machine, because of its contents of electronic devices, including my personal video camera (as backup), digital still camera, and audio recorder. My identification was taken and I was asked about the purpose of my visit. The principal was called downstairs to give me the proper clearance to pass through the gate, guarded by on-duty security staff members.

The school's video studio was quite large, with a 12' x 10' green screen already set up upon a small stage, similar to an anchorperson newsroom. The staging area was mobile, with detachable, mounting walls, which I noted were possible to transport or adjust, if needed. There were two computer stations with Internet access at the other end of the room and a large 6-chair desk in between. The media arts teacher welcomed me as we began to discuss remaining details about this research project.

Session 1: Group Introductions and Storyboarding

The participants individually entered the room in 5-minute intervals, giving me just enough time to introduce myself individually and briefly describe the project more intimately. They had already been given the IRB consent forms, prior to their arrival, with their guardians' signatures, as required for participation. First to arrive was Ali, a

young mixed Puerto Rican and African American male, 16 years of age, who announced his ideas immediately to me. Ali described a fantasy of being in the ring with his favorite wresting stars from television. Ali was the first to complete his visual storyboard, so I set him up on the computer to collect images from the Internet that reflected his ideal wrestling environment (see Figure 12). With my direction, he began searching Yahoo® for anything containing professional wrestling rings and various wrestling figures for his green screen backgrounds.

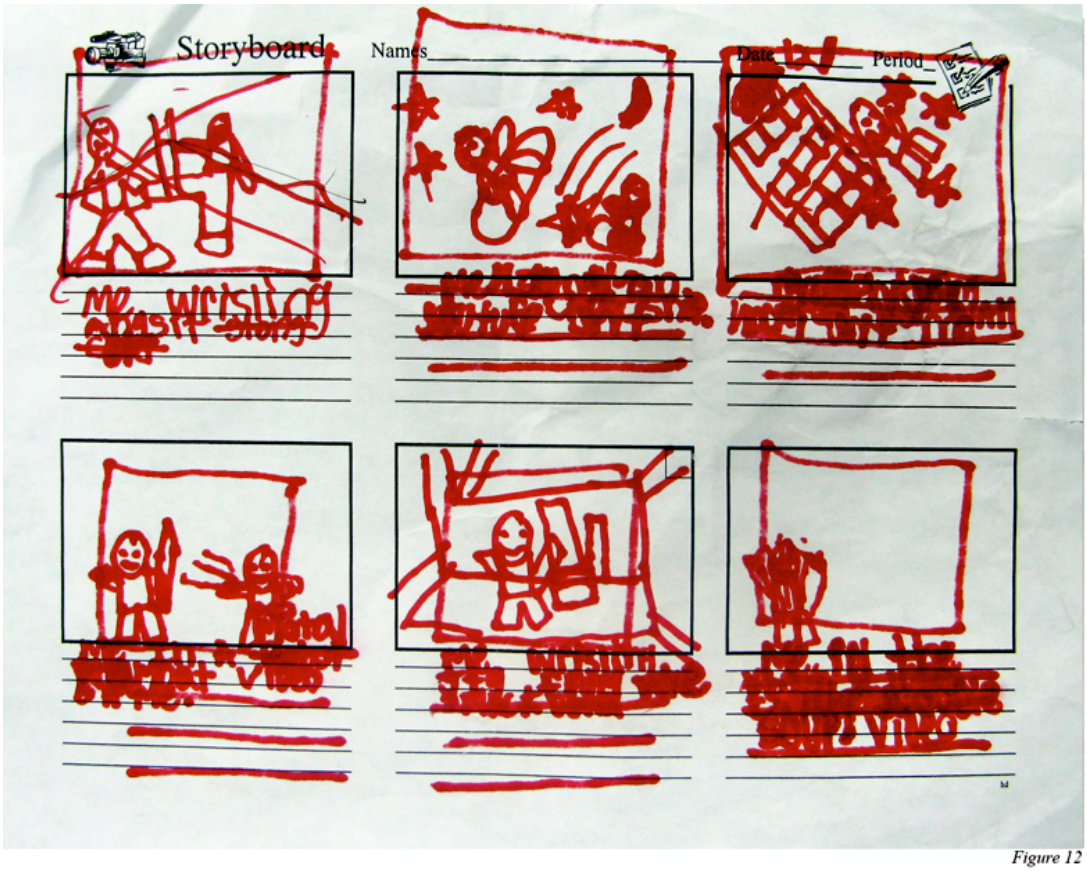


Figure 12

Figure 12. Scan of Ali storyboard image made in red colored marker on paper.

The next participant to enter the room was Bentley, a self-proclaimed mixed Jamaican and Native American male, 15 years old, who had had no experience with green screening. After our introductions, the media teacher and I had to describe the

concept of the green screen to Bentley. While considering how Bentley's storyboard reflected his dream for the green screen, he stated, "I want a masked man behind me in my video." We discussed the idea of getting the masks from Internet sources versus getting real men and masks. Bentley announced, "real masks would be too expensive, if I get 'em off the Web, I can save my money!" Bentley was easily distracted while the other participants were drawing out their storyboards. Bentley did manage to get a rough concept down in the session (see Figure 13). He called it a "stick figure universe" that included him getting cut in half by a sword, while riding away in a wheelchair after these masked men.

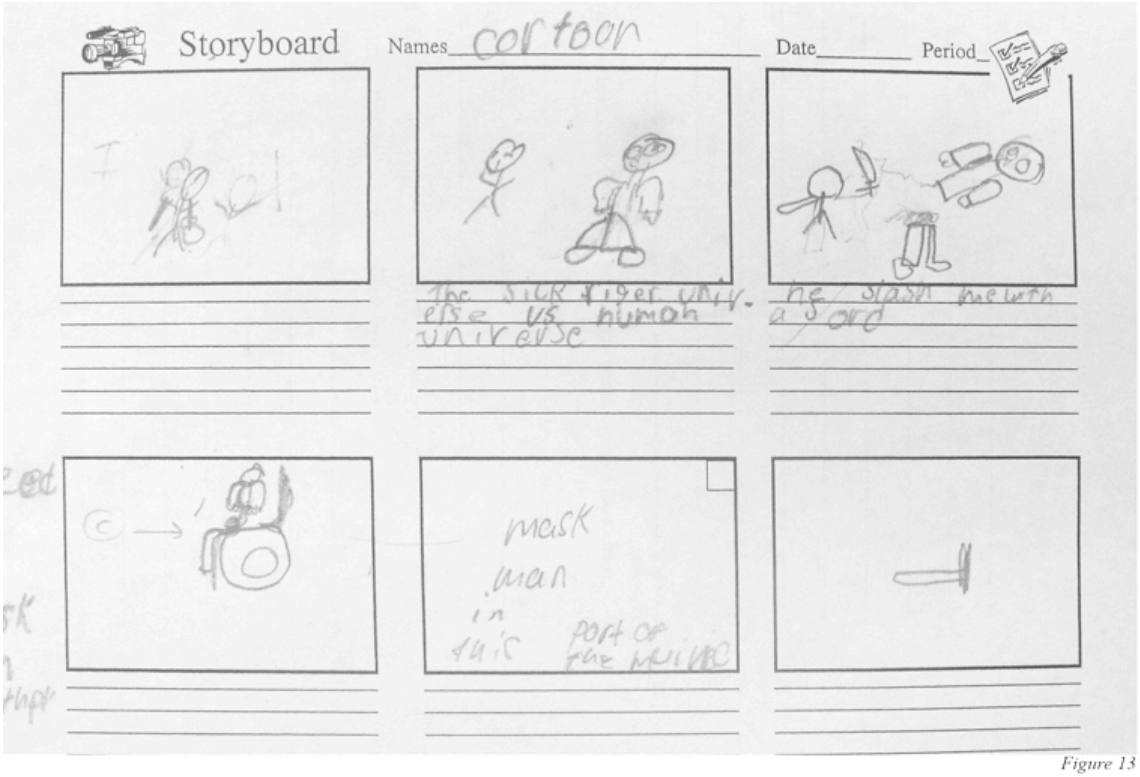


Figure 13. Scan of Bentley storyboard *Stick figure universe* made in pencil on paper.

The third participant to enter the room was Cameo, a heavy set Puerto Rican male who was 19 years old. Cameo had experience making videos and he frequently filmed

and edited in his free time. His storyboard cells were filled with intricate drawings of his brother and his friends, taken from the viewfinder of his digital photo camera (see Figure 14). They were all of break dancing moves he wanted to download to the computer. He said that after editing them into a slideshow, he would be done. I asked him how exactly he would be implementing the green screen in his video. He seemed confused by the question and then stated that that would be the introduction to his full video. I reminded him to consider how he might dream in break dancing and that caused him to begin to think differently. Cameo and I discussed that we could adapt the green screen to meet his needs by moving it on the ground instead of against the wall, if needed. He smiled and took four more storyboard pages with him to work out his ideas at home.

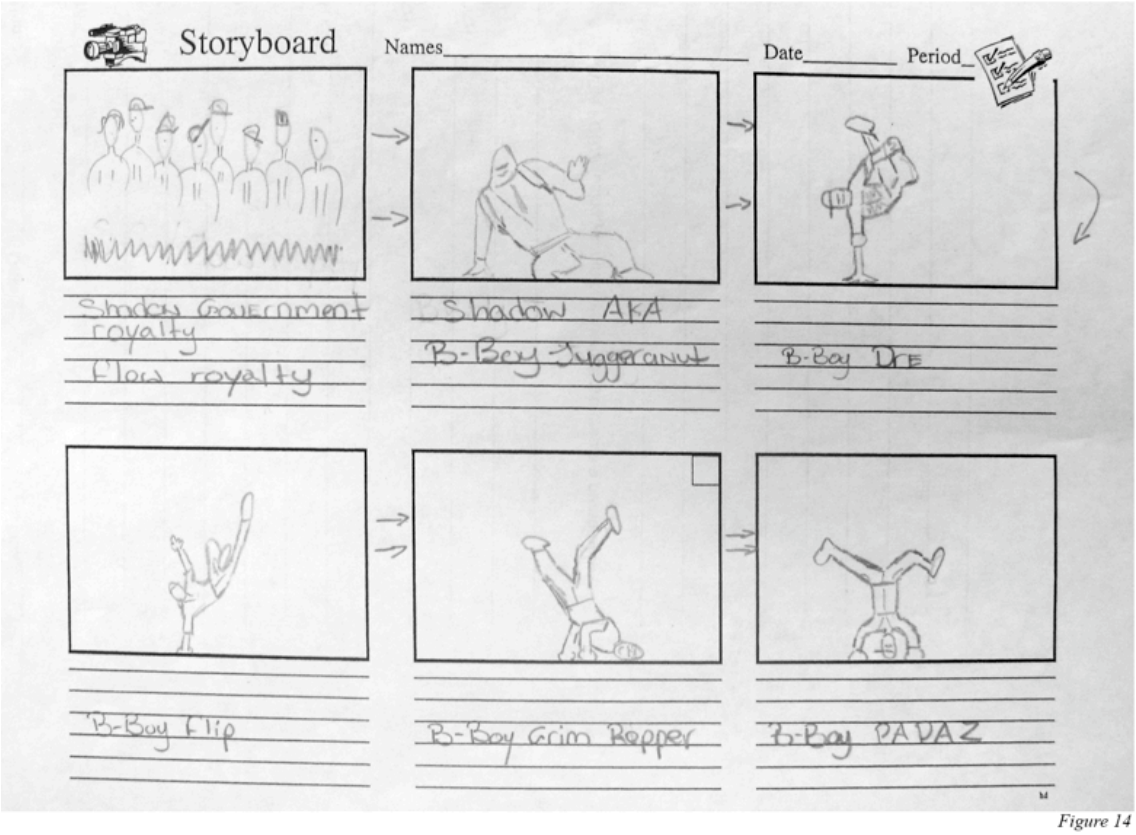


Figure 14. Scan of Cameo *Break dancing* storyboard made in pencil on paper.

Following Cameo was the only female participant, Deb, a 15-year-old African American girl who stated, "I wanna be featured in the video, *Crank Dat Soulja Boy*." I explained the limitations of green screening, but told Deb that we could simulate this request if that was her dream. She told me she could not and did not want to draw, so the storyboard would be out of the question. After more discussion with Deb, I sat her next to Ali on the computer and asked her to begin collecting images of Soulja Boy from the Web for her video. I also downloaded the free trial software Snapz Pro™ to offer her the ability to video capture anything from the Web. Ali and Deb worked in this digital image collection mode throughout this session period.

The final participant, Ernesto, did not attend our first group session. I was told he was very interested in this research project, but that he had been going through some personal problems at home that prevented him from attending the group. His teacher assured me that he would be available for session 2 and that he wanted to do something involving green screen claymation (animating clay figurines through a stop-action video process).

The members felt very separate and distracted overall. I felt it would be very difficult to contain them as a unified group. Looking over the storyboard of Ali, the significant amount of developmental delay was obvious, as identified in Figure 12. His descriptions of his wrestlers were a garbled mess and I questioned his ability to shoot or edit video. Additionally, Ali had difficulty spelling the word, *wrestling*, when asked to search for images online.

Session 2: Generating Ideas and Group Relations

Ali and Bentley were in attendance, along with Ernesto, a 16-year-old African American who made his first appearance in this session. I updated Ernesto on what he had missed, explaining the video dream concept and confidentiality in this project. Since Ali had all of his background images captured digitally, we were able to begin filming his green screen video dramatizations (see Figure 15). Ali wanted to be featured fighting with professional wrestlers from the WWF Royal Rumble. He was eager to engage the camera and green screen images. Ali took off his shoes and began warming up for his performance with full body stretches. His demeanor was very calm until getting on the stage, where he began laughing nervously through his virtual wrestling moves. I filmed Ali since the other participants were busy working. Ali and I did three takes, virtually ringside by way of green screen, before a security administrator came into the studio and told Ali to pack his things, declaring, “He’s leaving immediately!” The administrator could not say what the reason was, only that he was sent to escort him to the front office, where his grandmother would be taking him home.

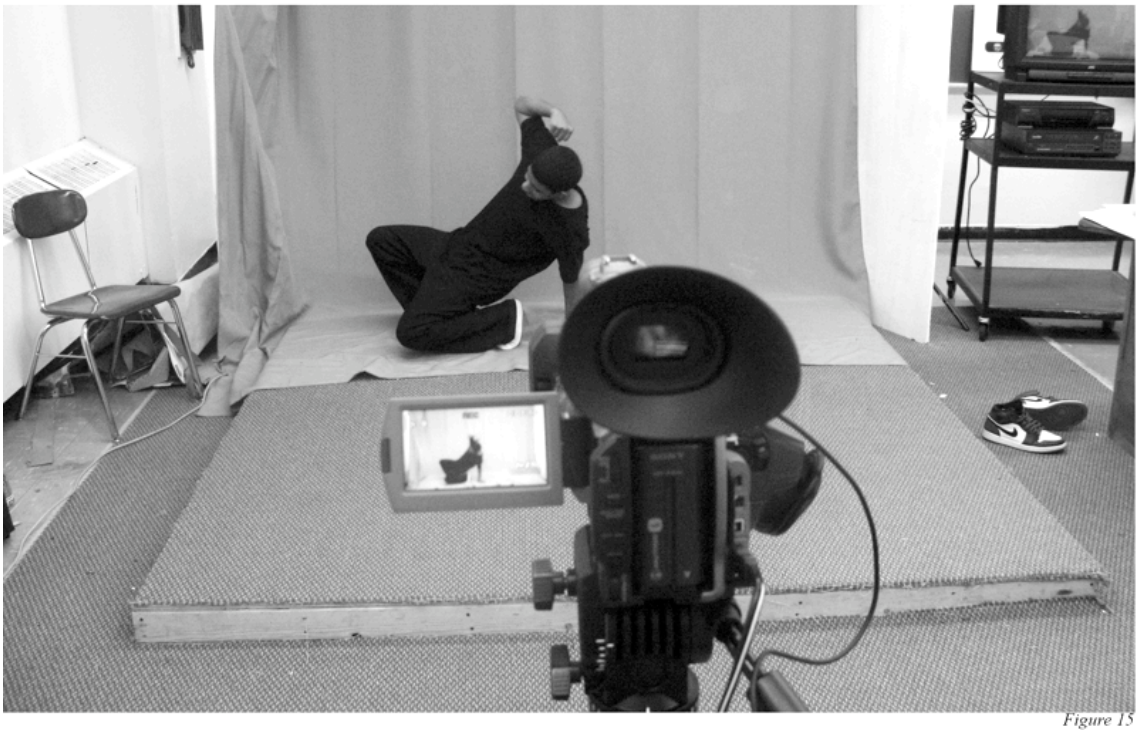


Figure 15. Photograph of Ali performing in front of the green screen by the author.

Meanwhile, Ernesto was working hard on sculpting clay figurines for his green screen video. He did not wish to be filmed traditionally and consistently wanted to make a clay music video. Ernesto did not want to make a storyboard, but said he would consider it after his figurines were finished (see Figure 16). Ernesto worked diligently until an unauthorized student nongroup member came into the room and tried to take some of Ernesto's modeling clay. I overheard this student making comments to Ernesto, such as, "That looks stupid," and "I could do better." I intervened by asking this student to put the clay back and leave the room, as we were working on a special project. As this incident had presumably been a blow to his self-esteem, Ernesto asked if he could draw something instead of using clay (as Bentley was doing). It was apparent to me and to the onsite media arts teacher that Ernesto needed some support, as he seemed to have been

affected by the other student's crude comment. We both offered him encouragement for a few minutes and that seemed to motivate Ernesto to continue with his original project.

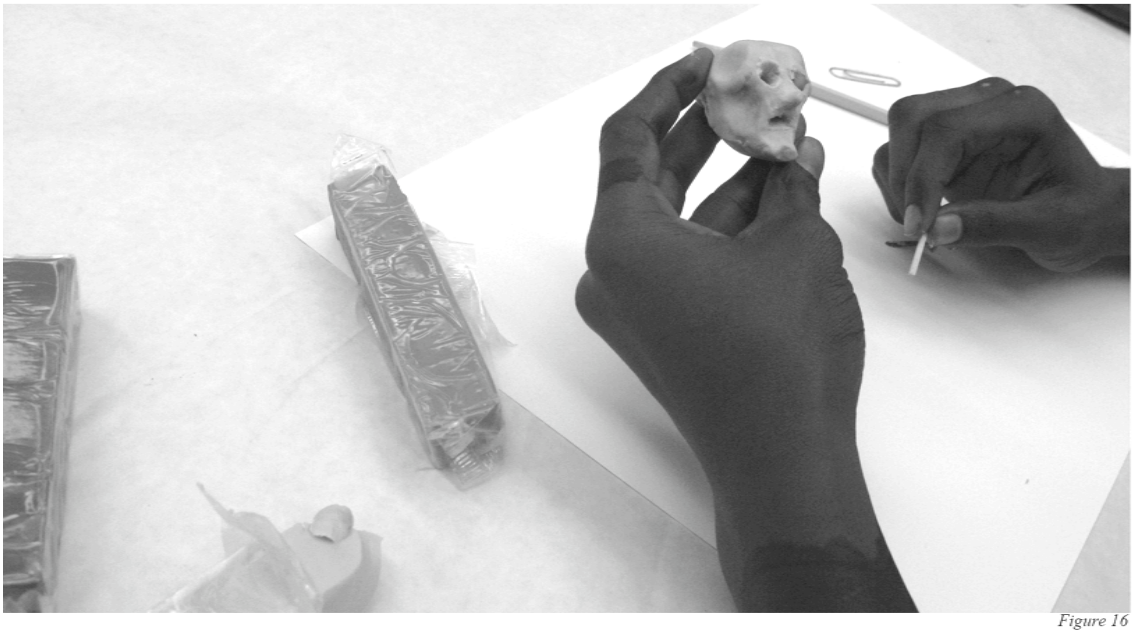


Figure 16. Photograph of Ernesto making his a skull character in clay by the author.

Bentley worked with his ideas on his storyboard. He expressed that he wanted the image of himself "in front of New York city skyline during the day." He made sure I remembered that most times skylines are depicted in a night sky. Bentley made an elaborate 18" x 24" marker drawing for his background (see Figure 17) that included a clock tower (resembling a single skyline building) with blue rain droplets in the background. Bentley asked me if I could make him look wet, since it was raining in his background drawing. I said I would try.

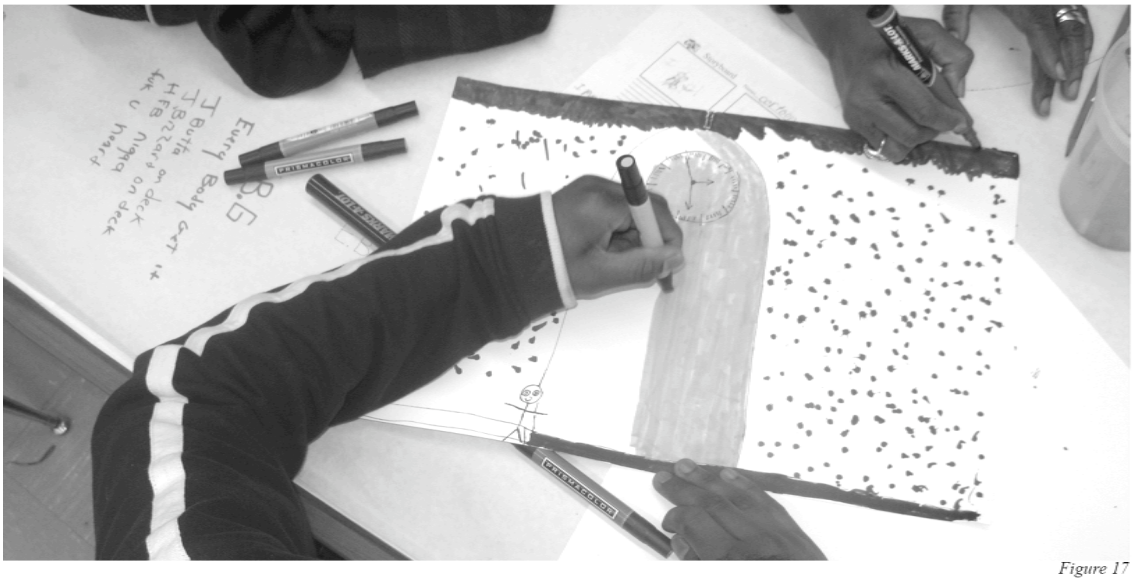


Figure 17

Figure 17. Photograph of Bentley's background image in maker on poster board.

I was concerned that I had pushed Cameo too hard in the previous session and that that might have been the cause for his absence in session 2. It occurred to me then that either he might not be a good break-dancer or that his weight could have been a stumbling block for him, which I had not considered. Perhaps that was why he always preferred to film his brother and his friends, feeling safer behind the camera. It was not clear why Deb did not show up for this session.

Session 3: Green Screen Videography

I got to the site an hour early. I asked one of the security guards if she would unlock the restroom for me to use. There was the smell of freshly smoked cigarettes on our walk to the restroom. The guard told me that had I just missed all the action and that a fight had broken out earlier. Her last words before letting me into the restroom were, "this place is Jurassic Park, you're good if you get out alive." I think this phrase says a lot about the at-risk population from someone whose job it is to monitor these kids' behavior. It also set something of a tone for this day's session with my group.

Cameo came into the room 30 minutes early and wanted to begin filming during his lunch break. I asked if it would be all right with the media teacher and she agreed to it. Cameo had his storyboard completed and filming him without the others around offered us some individual time working together. He knew a lot about operating video cameras and about the salaries of videographers and editors. We started filming at his request. He wanted to depart from his original storyboard idea and he filmed himself in front of the green screen, for which he would pick out a graffiti wall as a virtual background. He then got up and took the media teacher's tea thermos literally out of her hand. He wanted to use it as a prop spray paint can. He asked me to film him tagging the green screen with the thermos and said, "I want you to make spray paint coming out of this thermos for my video." I said I would try to help him simulate that look. He then remounted the tripod on the table for a taller view and proceeded to film himself in a headstand break dancing move (see Figure 18). Cameo left the room and did not show up during the regular class time with the others until the last 5 minutes.

Figure 18. Photograph detail of Cameo's first green screen performance.

Ali and I checked out his footage with the green screen shot from the previous week. Ali helped download his final footage and began picking out his music for his video. He smiled and got very excited seeing the two layers come to life in the green screen editing process. Ali requested to do one more shoot so he could have "a proper intro with rapper Lil' Wayne and WWF outro," as he called it. He selected an image of a professional wrestler online and we kept it on the monitor behind us. He then acted out his video introduction and conclusions. Ali's demeanor changed from a youth fan to a virtual equal with his favorite stars while in front of the green screen (see Figure 19). He became empowered by this intro and outro video process. Ali engaged his Dreamspace with arms crossed in poses enacting these scenes that served as his own personal signatures to his Royal Rumble video creation.

Figure 19

Figure 19. Screen captures of Ali's final composite "Intro & Outro" scenes.

Bentley had difficulty keeping his attention focused, but was able to get this part of the project completed. However, Bentley had been working hard on gathering his video's assets, including jpegs of a wheelchair and a masked man, just as he had drawn in his storyboard. I rewarded him with the next opportunity to film in front of the green screen. Bentley was excited to finally have his chance. His biggest concern seemed to be

whether or not to keep his beanie hat on or off. He sat on a normal school chair draped with the green cloth that would simulate a virtual wheelchair. Bentley sat in his virtual wheelchair (see Figure 20) and pretended to push it along, beginning to make a conversation with his stick figure character, until two uninvited school teens entered the room. These were students not involved in the project and I had no idea how they had gotten into the video studio. Not only did these students interrupt Bentley's deeper engagement in Dreamspace, but they also compromised the safety for other group members. Bentley walked to another area of the room to avoid further heckling. I firmly told these students that they were not allowed in this group and needed to leave. Subsequently, the media teacher also intervened, since the teacher's aid was nowhere to be found. Things dissipated once the media instructor got in between the boys, combined with my protective presence. Bentley was totally shaken up because of this experience. He sat by himself, uneasy and scared, as a guard came over to him and comforted him.

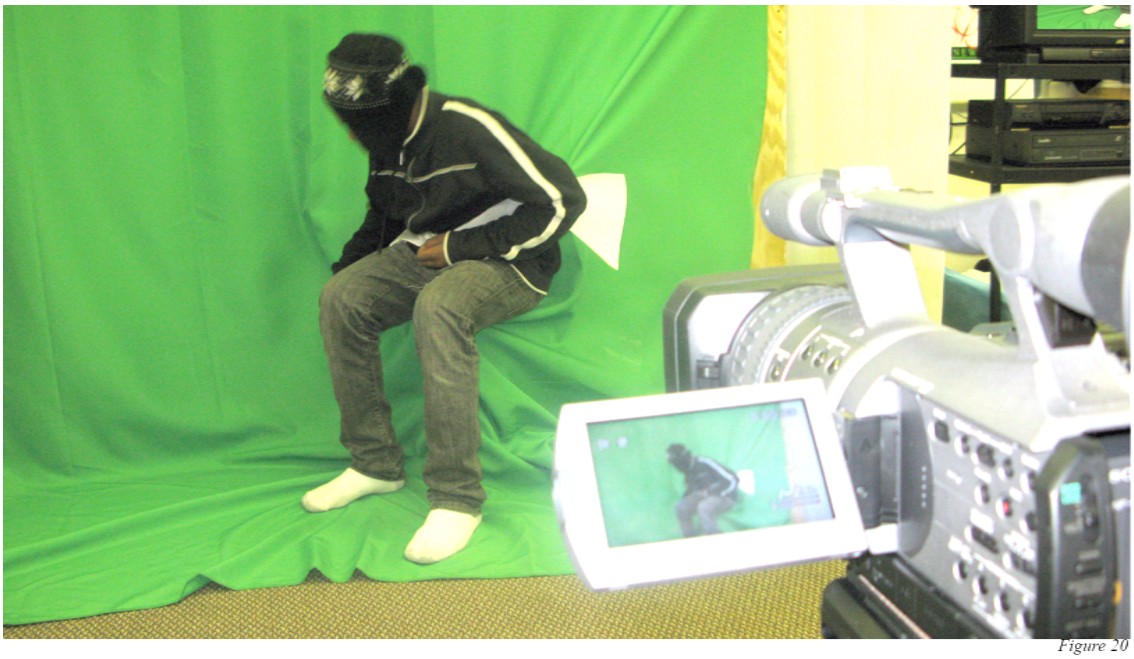


Figure 20. Photograph of Bentley's green screen performance in virtual wheelchair.

Ernesto told me he would be ready to finish his stop-action animation the following session. He showed me his clay characters. I noticed that one was missing; a red blockhead character that I remembered he had made the previous week. He said, "Oh that guy, he's gone. I beat him up." I asked if he still had what was left of the character to show me. Ernesto picked up a red blob-ball next to a new character. He had almost finished his storyboard with these characters and showed me what he had in mind. Ernesto continued to tell me that he wanted to leave the remaining storyboard squares blank "to see what happens" during the process of his video (see Figure 21). I told him that he had a great start and that his idea to leave things open was called improvisation. I told him we would get him his own camera to shoot his claymation video next session.

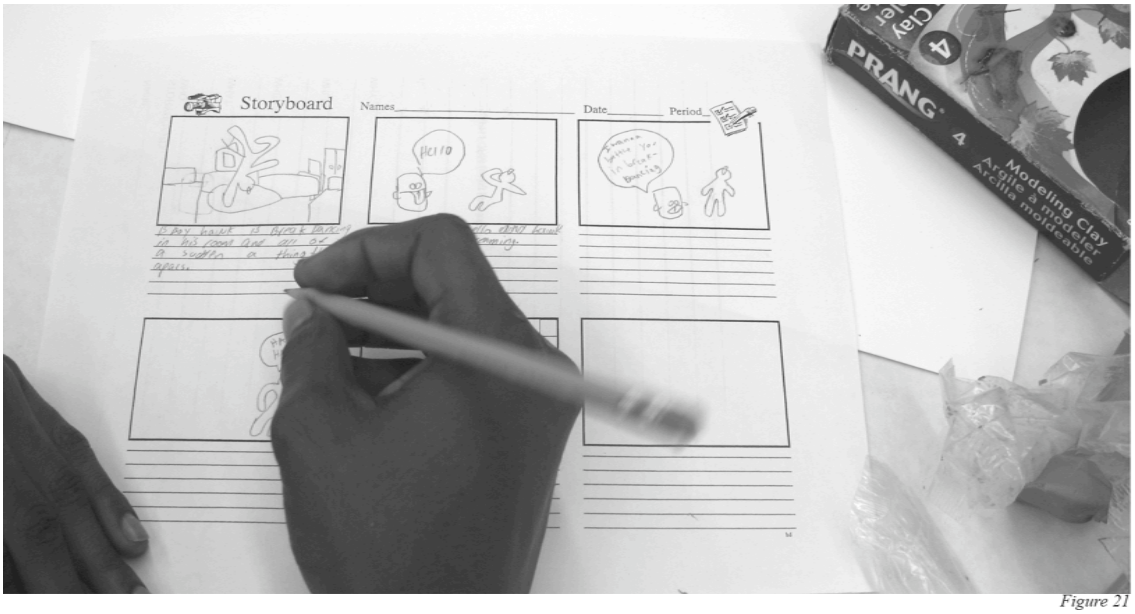


Figure 21

Figure 21. Photograph of Ernesto working on his *Intergalactic Planetary* storyboard.

Cameo reentered the room, escorted by a school security guard. He had gotten caught roaming around the halls between classes. Bentley asked Cameo if he would help him with his video. Cameo agreed, but only for a minute, because there was a new girl in school that he wanted to check out as soon as the group let out. We set up the shot in

which Bentley was again sitting in his virtual wheelchair; only this time with his friend Cameo escorting his green screen video journey. Bentley reentered the Dreamspace where he had left it, from the earlier interruption of his process. Bentley found the courage to continue with the assistance of another group member at his side. While I filmed this scene, the thought occurred to me that Bentley felt weaker than most when in the outside world (as represented in his hand drawn background image). He requested that Cameo keep his sweatshirt pulled over his head like a grim-reaper. I was curious about the clock tower image having such a phallic shape and about why he wanted to be at its doorstep. I also wondered about this small stick figure that was standing near the door of this tower.

It was a really full day. I was informed that Deb had dropped out of the school and would not be continuing with the research project. Additionally, there was a student fight that had broken out, in which one of my participants had been involved. Thankfully no one was hurt. I realized that if I were to work with this population in the future, it would be like living in a world of chaos, 7 hours a day, 5 days a week.

Session 4: Green Screen Continued

Cameo brought in a variety of props for his video shoot, including an Adidas jump suit, music, and a sibling. We had a new member of the group, whom I will call Lil' Cameo, who had his consent form filled out by his mother, in person. At first, I mistook Lil' Cameo's mother for a student because she looked so young. She had heard good things about this project from her eldest son Cameo and she signed the release forms again to allow her younger son to join in the video. These two brothers worked together and tested a variety of unusual video angles as unique vantages for their video. The most

interesting perspective was a bird's eye view through which Cameo wanted to be filmed, as if they were break dancing on the clouds. I was very impressed with the coordination they had both physically expressed, with equal coordination in camera skills (see Figure 22). What evolved in our green screen work was a re-creation of an urban landscape which Cameo and Lil' Cameo explored virtually. They admired graffiti walls that they downloaded from their cameras and from the Internet and danced their way in and out of them in a fanciful lucid dream.

Figure 22

Figure 22. Photograph of the Cameo brothers filming green screen scenes for *Break*.

Ali worked diligently, looking for a song for his background audio. I could see that it was frustrating for him trying to find the song online for free, in the right MP3 format needed for editing purposes. Lil' Cameo suggested that he use one of the following sites to download his song: Limewire, Jamglue, or Bearshare.

We watched Bentley's footage with the illustrated background he had created and he told me he needed to make the intro in which he gets stabbed by a sword. I asked him

if he wanted to draw the sword or take an image from the Internet, and he pointed to the computer. I noticed him struggling after launching Google. We sat together for a minute or two until he whispered to me, "How do you spell *sword*?" Then we moved on to doing his voiceover by recording dialog while watching a QuickTime of his video.

Ernesto looked a little depressed at the beginning of the session. I remember asking him if there was anything he wanted to talk about before we started and he only stated, "I'm good." I got Ernesto and Bentley (who volunteered to be the cameraman) set-up at the claymation editing station to begin shooting Ernesto's video (see Figure 23). Since this claymation process is tedious, I suggested two per station. Stop-action animation involves filming a few seconds of footage as you move the objects incrementally. Bentley told me he could do this kind of filming after one short demonstration, stating, "This is just like a video game." Ernesto said he trusted Bentley to help him film his video, so I left them both to work.

Figure 23. Photograph of Bentley and Ernesto working on stop-action animation.

Sibling participants Cameo and Lil' Cameo were already videoing their next series of break dancing movie on their own, as I assisted Ernesto and Bentley. I noticed Cameo had the camera tripod mounted on top of the main desk with him operating it 4 feet above the rest of us. It seemed dangerous, but they assured me they had everything under control. I joined them to ensure their safety in this process and we all worked together filming the shots they wanted in a little over 10 minutes time. Near the end of that time, Ernesto walked up onto the stage area with a big smile, saying that his video was done, and he asked if he could join in on this video. Cameo openly pulled Ernesto into the break dancing circle and Ernesto began to dance in front of the green screen. All three participants began to take turns break dancing while I filmed. For their final shot, they all joined together and posed as "B-boys" for the camera. The green screen offered these boys a place to perform as a group in front of the camera. The green screen transformed the cardboard below the boys into a cosmic street scene, with them floating above several jpeg images, from brick walls to neon eyeballs.

By the end of this session, all of the participants were working together and enjoying their parts in the video. There was a strong sense of group cohesion among the members and everyone seemed to feel a sense of pride in their work, both in front of and behind the camera. I also noticed that we did not have any typical interruptions from stray students as in sessions past. This day was indeed magical, and without the effort put in by the participants, these videos might not have been completed within the last two remaining sessions to come.

I experienced my first strong feeling of transference/countertransference from an interaction with Ernesto. I was digitizing the video footage into the computers at the site,

which is a timely process of importing the participant's video from the cameras into the computers. I remember announcing to the group, "Please do not to touch the computers for the next 10 minutes," and a few minutes later, Ernesto was working on one of the computers. He claimed that he heard my request and thought the videos were done importing. When I noticed that the footage had not, in fact, finished importing, I told Ernesto that he should have asked me before using the computer. The problem was that, because Ernesto had not listened to me, I now needed to re-import the camera footage and we were almost out of session time. I found myself flooded with emotions from my personal childhood, when my father would yell at me for doing something wrong. I felt Ernesto become shy and cower in his seat after I had expressed my disapproval and frustration. It was not until after the session that I realized the possible repercussions for Ernesto, as he had a history of neglect. My effort to repair things with Ernesto was to let him know that I had made an error in judgment, and I asked if he would be interested in helping me re-digitize this footage. He agreed to help me and seemed to really enjoy this part of the video process. I used this scenario with Ernesto as a reminder for all the participants that every step of this work needed to be considered on a therapeutic basis.

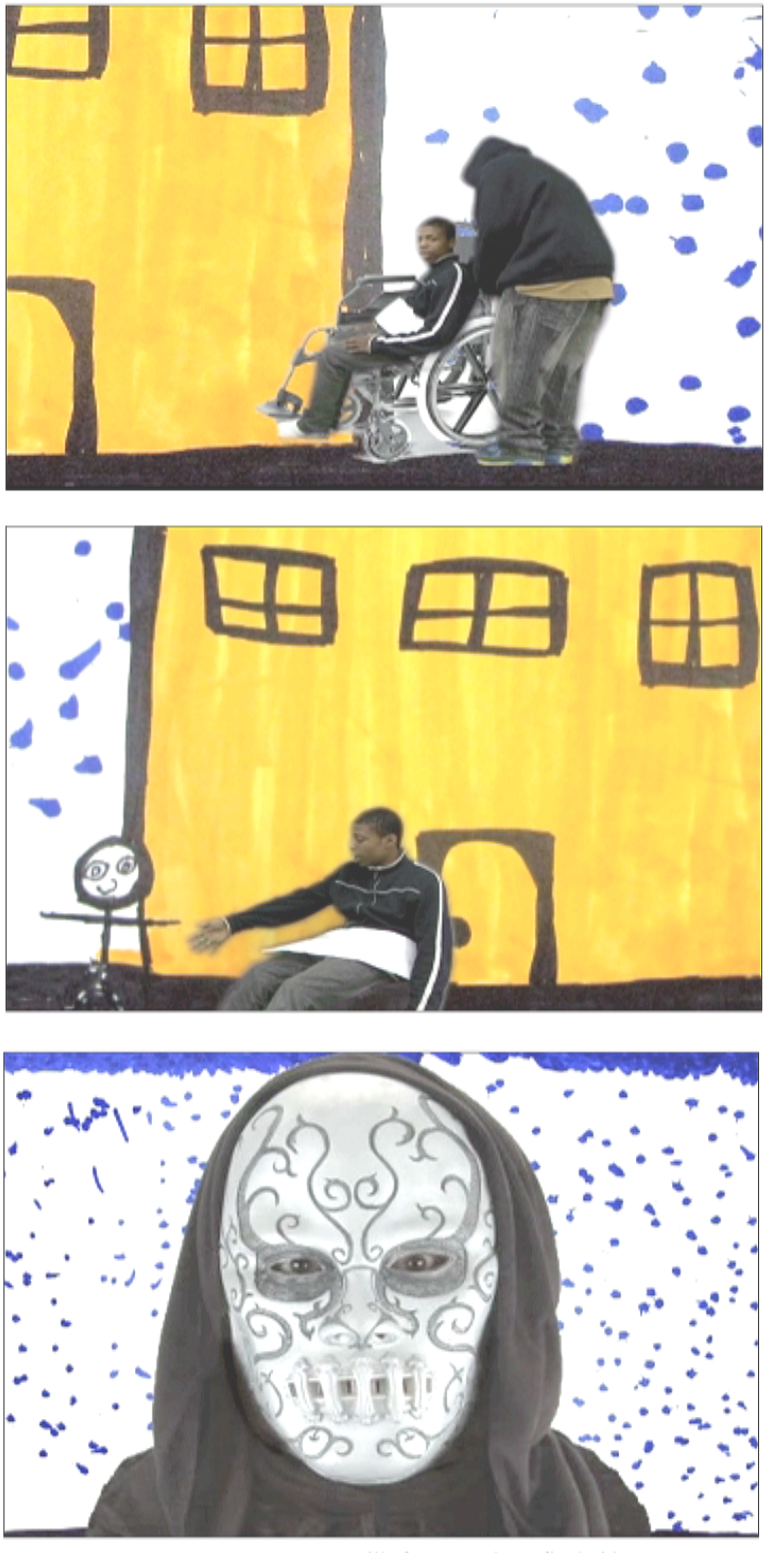
Personally, I felt that this day was incredible in every way. The group members had all been engaged with the project, worked hard, and had been very productive. The studio had been transformed into a living, dream-like video world through the participants' alternative uses of the green screen.

Session 5: Video Editing and Review

Participants succeeded in producing their final products (see Figures 24-27).

Stills from Ali's final video – *Figure 24*

Figure 24. Final screen grabs from Ali's *Royal Rumble* green screen wrestling video.



Stills from Bentley's final video – *Figure 25*

Figure 25. Final screen grabs from Bentley's *Stick figure Universe* green screen video.

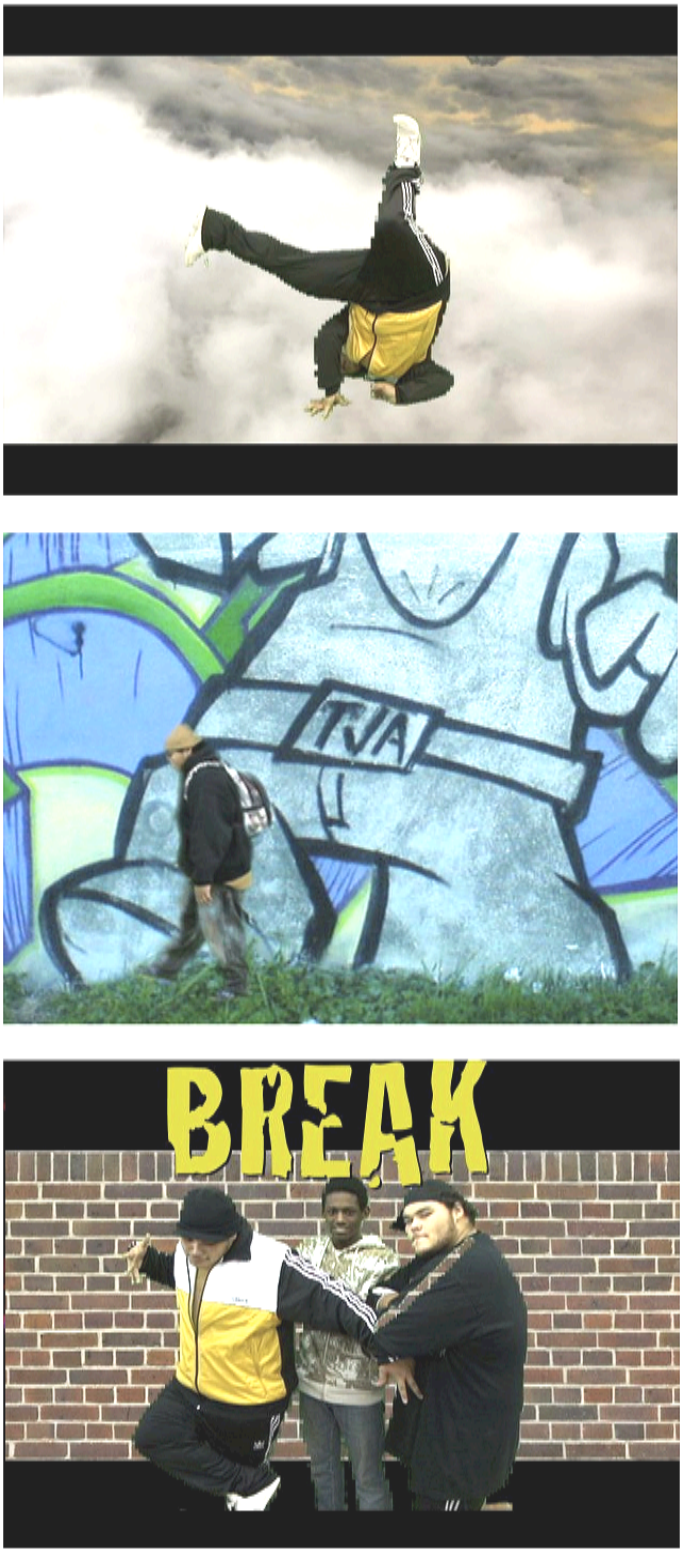
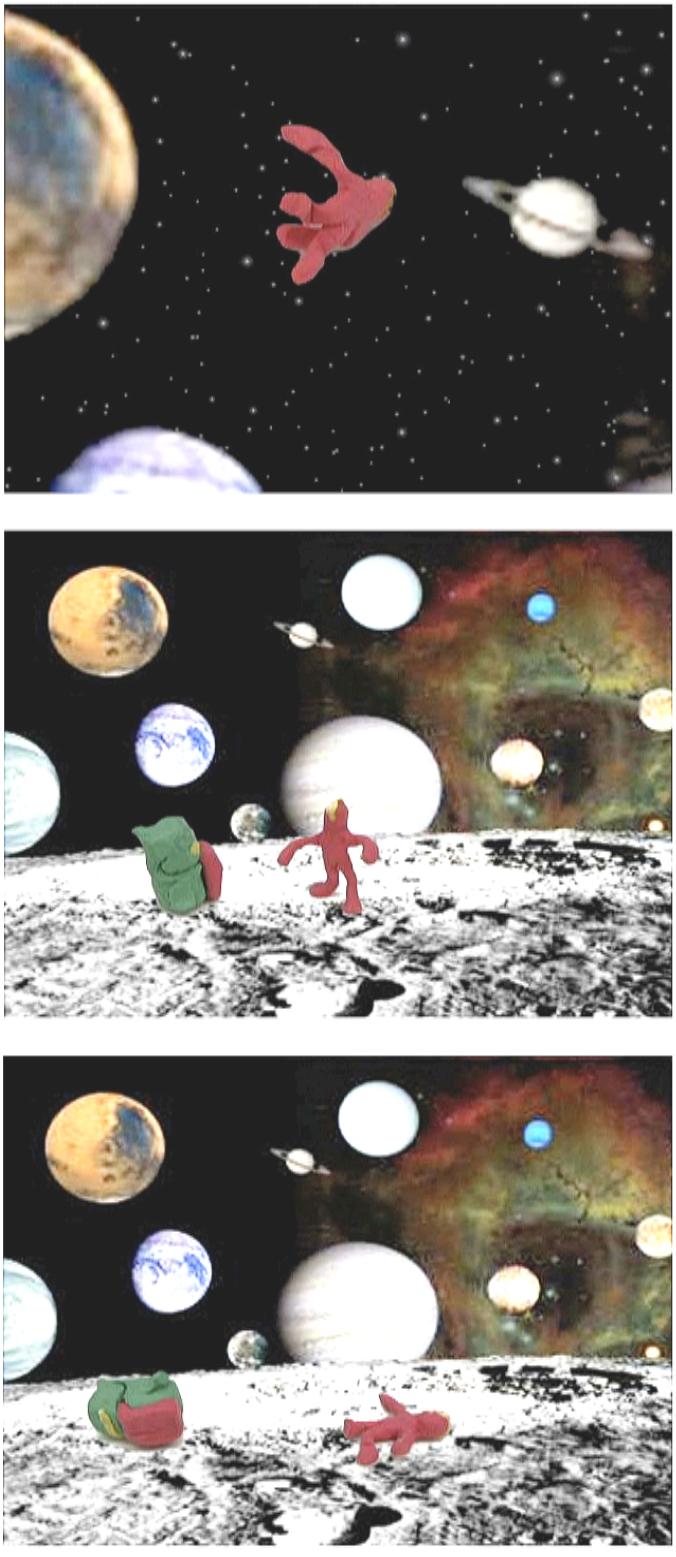


Figure 26. Final screen grabs from Cameo's break dancing green screen video, *Break*.



Stills from Ernesto's final video – *Figure 27*

Figure 27. Finals screen grabs from Ernesto's green screen video using claymation.

Ali added an audio track of audience cheers that Cameo helped make from stock sounds in iMovie and Garage Band®. Ali then combined these cheers with an upbeat R&B song for his final video edit. The Royal Rumble video would have taken on a harder edge had he used no music or simple announcer commentary, as I had expected him to use. With the addition of the song, his project turned into a strange wrestling music video. The beat was catchy and synchronized with his movements in front of the green screen, which seemed to be more dance driven after the editing process versus when he was on the green screen stage being filmed. Even though he is shown fighting wrestlers in the ring (see Figure 24), I do not feel that he is acting out real violence of any kind. From my perspective, Ali seemed, by way of Dreamspace, to be simply interacting with the images from his fantasy of being in a safe space, free from any real harm, within a television show he so admired. His transformation of the virtual wrestling ring allowed him to administer his control over these otherwise dominating male figures. Ali was able to kick and pull his own weight through the green screen process. At the end of his video, the lyrics from the song he had chosen were, "He stuck his fingers to the world," which I found interesting, as he seemed to have acted out that gesture in his video.

Bentley, with his sword and wheelchair show, caught the eye of the media instructor, while Bentley made his final edits. The media arts teacher approached me in private after the group session ended and said, "I am worried that Bentley's video may be some kind of unconscious premonition predicting something from his life." She reminded me that Bentley's life was so unstable at the moment. I told her that I had worked closely with Bentley throughout his project's process and that I had not thought of his work as morbid or as some kind of death wish. I understood that there was a dangerous aspect to

Bentley's video starting with him having been stabbed and with his seeking revenge against someone who had hurt him deeply. In Bentley's project, he is then shown being carted in a wheelchair to confront this stick figure character that was responsible for his injury (see Figure 25). Bentley remains ambivalent about killing the stick figure (according to the voiceover message) or about explaining in greater detail what he had done. The mysterious masked character then appears and a splash of blood closes the scene. Despite the menacing imagery, I expressed to the media teacher that I found Bentley's video to be a triumph and a very bold act of telling his story without censoring himself.

Cameo worked with a filming process than was opposite from those employed by the other participants. Usually, green screen users create their background environments first, as they then have something with which to interact by way of the green screen. Cameo wanted to film himself and his brother first and then find his backgrounds, which might be analogous to how he operates in the world. One interpretation of this process might be that he forces his environments to work for him. Another interpretation of Cameo's alternative approach might be that he simply enjoys being different. Many graffiti artists have a similar relationship with their outlook of the world in how they consider personal space and territory, changing the face of environments with spray paint. As Cameo finished his video entitled, *Break* (see Figure 26), he included the scenes with his brother and Ernesto (in the closing scene) and called this his best work to date. His choice of music brought the video to a new level and mood. Cameo chose an instrumental hip-hop song that conveyed an audio atmosphere of what it might be like to be a B-Boy dancing in the streets. There were some sections of the video that could easily have been

taken as a dream sequence, such as the handstands and head-spins over a cityscape and the more surreal background images with which he interacted. The group all appreciated the fact that Cameo's final edits left intact the closing scene with Lil' Cameo and Ernesto (who, at first, did not have any immediate likeness of himself in his video).

Ernesto expressed interest in a Beastie Boys song called, *Intergalactic Planetary*, which contained an outer-space-type sound he desired. The lyrics are notable, beginning with, "Don't you tell me to smile," as I found this participant to be one of the most depressed group members. His ball of clay appeared to be a planet coming into orbit. In the video, this ball-like shape drifts into visibility, as it morphs and opens into human form. Then, a stocky green character with a large tongue approaches the human form, almost licking him. They appear as if they are fighting in this last scene, but, according to Ernesto, they are really performing dance moves (see Figure 27). There was an added effect that Ernesto wanted to include, which was suggestive of a clock's second hand passing time, as it wipes the screen away. Bentley seemed to take pride in his filming, as he watched Ernesto editing his final claymation video.

Session 6: Final Presentation

Only 2 of the 4 participants showed up for the final session. We continued with the process of reviewing our work from the previous five sessions together. I asked Ali and Bentley how they felt about not having the other 2 participants for the final day. One said, "They were busy with stuff," and the other added, "That's just how it is." We proceeded to have a talk that formed naturally around the circle table. The 2 participants began discussing what they remembered of their final edits in session 5 and seemed pleased and eager to see them all together on a final DVD format. I invite the readers of

this thesis to begin watching the attached DVD at this time in order to appreciate the full interactive experience that Ali and Bentley experienced in this session.

Bentley began to discuss that he liked how his video came out and that he only wished it had been longer. I asked him what would he have done with more time in his video and he said, “I would have tried to beat up that stick figure.” I asked him to describe this stick figure to me in greater detail and he said it was from a dream, “just like the masked man.” Then I asked him if he could describe this dream and he said his video had accomplished that. I then asked him if the worlds of dreams and of real life had come together in his video, and he said that they had. Bentley seemed very pleased with his work when we presented it again for the group. He described several other video ideas until we played Ali’s final video.

Ali was very excited when his wresting video came on. He bounced in his seat and reenacted some of the punches and moves from the green screen filming day. We all cheered for him when it was over and he took a bow. I mentioned that his choice of music had really given his video an upbeat and happy feel to it. I asked him if that was fair of me to say and he replied, “Yeah, it was supposed to be me jumping around and having a good time on the television screen.” I asked him if it was a dream or a fantasy of his to be inside this WWF ring, and he said, “Yeah it was something I’ve always wanted to do but couldn’t.” I felt the need to confirm his intentions behind the possible violent acts surrounding his video theme of wrestling. I asked Ali if he wanted to hurt any of those wrestlers in the video, and he said, “No, everybody knows that kind of wrestling on TV is fake and I just wanted to play like I was wrestling with them.” Then I asked him

what he knew about fake things and real things, and he said, “You can do anything you want in this world (pointing to the green screen) and make it become real.”

I asked the 2 participants if they knew why Cameo and Ernesto had not shown up. They said that they did not know what had happened to Cameo, but that he might have had to go to work at his part time job. Bentley said he heard that Ernesto had to be in court today, but he was not sure why. The media arts supervisor confirmed that he did in fact have a court date today. I then asked about our missing female. Ali said, “Yeah, it would have been great if she’d stayed with the group,” adding that he would have liked to have seen what she would have come up with in her video. Bentley said, “Her video would have made this DVD even better!” Bentley then picked up his copy of the final video group DVD disk and kissed it in front of everybody. He said, “This video is gonna get me a scholarship!” and he concluded by saying he couldn’t wait to show it again. We all got together for a final photograph with this group’s participants, as passage of our final termination process. We said our goodbyes with high-fives.

Discoveries

We may never know if use of the green screen fully constitutes unconscious depth of thought, relived experience, or fully represented dreams. However, the work done in this project has led me to believe that video might just be one of the best tools available for art therapy. In this regard, I feel the project was a total success as a pilot study for more in-depth video research. As for the participants of this project, I feel that they rose above the stigma of having been labeled as at-risk. To the best of their abilities, they showed up, worked hard, and fully engaged the green screen space in their own unique ways. My confidence helped them to succeed in understanding the technical subject matter and in establishing therapeutic boundaries. My intentions were openly presented to these students, who responded to green screening as a new therapeutic modality.

All the clients found themselves in a safe and uninhibited space that effectively contributed to the therapeutic process. Ali lived out a well-known dream of spending a few moments inside the ring with some of his favorite wrestlers from TV. Bentley relived experiences of a mysterious ego-injury that demanded a courageous act of revenge and ultimately revealed his own masked mortality. Cameo lived out his fantasy to be a notorious B-Boy, along with his brother, Lil' Cameo, who shared in this dream. Finally, Ernesto, who initially did not want to see himself within the Dreamspace, found himself appearing in the Cameo brothers' video, in which the break dancing trio posed in front of a transitory virtual urban environment. Ernesto portrayed himself in his own claymation

model likeness, featuring planets and stars in stop-motion, with signs of struggle. Deb, who would have been our fifth and only female participant, did introduce her video concept of being inside a rap video. Unfortunately, Deb had moved to another school after the first session.

I feel that all the participants gained a greater sense of confidence during the process of this research project. These participants shared the opportunity to be vulnerable in each other's presence, which allowed them to feel more successful in their individual videos. It was the general overlapping of the participants' interests and the resultant group cohesion that kept the project going strong all the way through to its end. From session 2 until the final session, the participants worked as a unit, confronting the various challenges along the way, such as selecting their own music and defining personal editing techniques. They supported each other's visions and respected each other's dreams. The level of respect seemed to be mutual amongst all participants. Together, we were able to break down many male stereotypes in a process that involved sensitive depictions of our inner natures. I believe that my being a male aided in this process, offering the participants a feeling of camaraderie. Jung's (1989) aspects of the masculine theory suggests that male figures as role models encourage progress and confidence in an all-male therapeutic setting.

On a final personal note, I was proud to have had this opportunity to work with these students at this time in my life. I feel that we transformed the studio into something a little more intimate than its previous use at this school setting. I knew I must have been doing something right when several of the participants asked when I was coming back, and seemed sad when I explained that I would not be returning. I told them I was going

back to my school to share the work we had created together. I sincerely thank you for reading my thesis and for your interest in the research included in it. I am convinced that Dreamspace will become an important part of the art therapy dialogue in the years to come.

The at-risk youth population has a reputation for not following through on life's commitments. The members of this research were informed of the participation requests asked of them for this video project, which included a commitment to attend all six sessions. The attendance policy was not upheld for various reasons, as stated in the findings section of this paper. Based on the research, I feel that consistency is the central-most problem with at-risk youths today. In this way, I feel that the participants of this study reflected the stereotypes surrounding the spotty attendance track record of at-risk youths. There were a variety of contributing factors for this that may not seem reasonable from the perspective of someone who has not worked with at-risk youths. Nevertheless, it is important to understand that the average at-risk youth may endure a multitude of unmet circumstances or unrecognized mental health needs. Camilleri (2007) noted that, due to the lack of trained professionals and attentive parents, many mental health problems go undiagnosed with at-risk youths. Misdiagnosis is another concern Camilleri identified. For example, at-risk youths are often wrongly labeled as having special education needs, which often causes mental health needs that hinder learning to go unrecognized. Ali exemplifies an example of possible misdiagnosis. I first recognized Ali's potential learning disabilities in his garbled storyboard writing that displayed challenges in basic communication and spelling.

Another aspect of this research that interested me was the knowledge offered by participants within the video realm. It was as if all of the years participants spent their free time playing video games had been relevant cross-training for this work. To exaggerate this thought would suggest that at-risk youths are extremely self-motivated when they choose to be. One might ponder the possibility that merely inspiring creative interest in at-risk youths could have the effect of influencing active attendance and greater motivation. Those youths selected for my research had a preexisiting interest in video, but I wonder what the research would have offered for those without any exposure to video? Would any have completed a video or showed up at all? In order to truly make a longstanding difference in the lives of at-risk youths, one must provide an auxiliary ego for those who are most challenged and begin a new relationship strategy for them, rewarding those who most frequently show up. The importance of attendance can be understood as a metaphor for the importance of participating in the roles that inform our lives.

A question that may be asked of this research is: What is the actual therapeutic value that green screening offers, as compared with traditional therapies? Clients' personal dreams, wishes, and fantasies, as fused within this video process, holds validity just as any form might be considered to have therapeutic potential. Subsequent studies using the green screening technique might be offered to a variety of populations, from child life to geriatric populations. Regardless of the population, art therapists must not lose sight of the infinite potential nature of the creative process. If clients want to use their personal iPhone to make art, even though the therapist is not familiar with this tool, the phone must be considered a viable medium for expression. Green screening is just

another illusion technique that is available to art therapists. It may just be the next generation of downloadable software plug-ins offered to Macintosh iPhone users. All of the work done in this research may one day be at the palm a client's hands. In other words, art therapists need to be prepared to meet clients at a place where they are comfortable, even if that place is not necessarily familiar to the therapist. I am curious about all of the forth-coming scholarly contributions regarding these concepts, integrating new media into art therapy.

Working unconventionally often is the best means for holding a youth's attention. Since this thesis work has concluded, I find myself reminded of the unforeseen and simply *under*examined therapeutic benefits of outside-the-box thinking. I believe green screening in video practice today, in the context of art therapy, is a perfectly unconventional and promising art therapy medium. Furthermore, I feel that the more unconventional the therapy is from the clinical norm, the better. Green screening, like other art therapy mediums, must offer the opportunity for healing. In my first year internship with at-risk youths, I ran a just-for-fun, lunchtime improvisational comedy group, with my supervisor's approval. It proved to be a nice release for many of the lesser social group members who enjoyed the icebreakers and movement games we played in that hour. It also served as an unconventional form of therapy, offering a great deal of unsuspecting disclosure opportunities from those who were engaged and who felt safe enough to play.

Within this vein of unconventional thinking, my choice of research methodology applied art-based research as a parallel process to the experience of participants. Through the art-based modality, I was able to capture the energy of participants by seeing their

work as it paralleled their inner personas. The green screen acted as a virtual space that personified the internal projections of each of the participants. Dreamspace, as I witnessed and documented it through the green screen process, represented a uniform yearning from deep within these at-risk youths. As in the example from *Willy Wonka & the chocolate factory*, in which Mike Teevee volunteered his own body to pioneer the teleportation process, so too did the youths in this study eagerly invite change into their lives. These youths did not know me any more than Mike Teevee knew Mr. Wonka when we started; yet, what ensued was a transformative experience integrating video green screening with art therapy. These participants expressed genuine interest in the medium, gained trust within the group forum, and disclosed personal fantasies and dreams created within a clinical studio environment.

References

Allen, P. B. (1995). *Art is a way of knowing*. Boston: Shambhala.

Austin, B. (2006). *Computer animation: New therapeutic methodologies promoting adolescent development*. Unpublished master's thesis, School of Visual Arts, New York.

Barney, M. (Producer/Writer/Director). (1994-2004). *Cremaster cycle* [Motion picture]. (Available from the Guggenheim Museum Collection, 575 Broadway, New York, NY 10012)

Blos, P. (1979). *The adolescent passage.* New York: International Universities Press.

Camilleri, V. A. (2007). *Healing the inner city child: Creative arts therapies with at-risk youth.* London: Jessica Kingsley.

Cocks, G., Diedrick, J., & Perusek, G. (2006). *Depth of field: Stanley Kubrick, film and the uses of history*. Madison, WI: The University of Wisconsin Press.

Dixon, S. (2007). *Digital performance: A history of new media in theater, dance, performance art, and installation*. Cambridge: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Erikson, E. H. (1968). *Identity: Youth and crisis*. New York: Norton.

Falconer, M. (2001). Immersion therapy. *Art Review, 53*, 40-43.

Feist, J., & Feist, G. (2000). *Theories of personality*. New York: McGraw-Hill.

Freud, S. (1955). *The interpretation of dreams* (J. Strachey, Ed. & Trans.). Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing. (Original work published in 1900)

Freud, S. (1952). *On dreams* (J. Strachey, Trans.). New York: W. W. Norton & Company. (Original work published in 1901)

Greenfield, P. M. (1984). *Mind and media: The effects of television, video games, and computers.* Cambridge, MA: Harvard Universities Press.

Grey, B., & Zanuck, R. D. (Producers), August, J., & Dahl, R. (Writers), & Burton, T. (Director). (2005). *Charlie and the chocolate factory* [Motion picture]. United States: Warner Bros.

Jung, C. G. (1961). *Memories, dreams, reflections* (A. Jaffe, Ed.) (R. Winston & C. Winston, Trans.). New York: Vintage Books.

Jung, C. G. (1974). *Dreams* (G. Adler, Ed.) (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (1979). *Word and image* (A. Jaffe, Ed.) (K. Winston, Trans.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Jung, C. G. (1989). *Aspects of the masculine* (J. Beebe, Ed.) (R. F. C. Hull, Trans.). Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.

Kramer, E., Gerity, L., Henley, D., & Williams, K. (1995). *Art and art therapy and the seductive environment.* Panel presented at the meeting of the American Art Therapy Association, San Diego, CA.

Kubrick, S. (Producer/Writer/Director). (1971). *A clockwork orange* [Motion picture]. United States: Warner Bros.

Kubrick, S. (Producer/Writer/Director) (1980). *The shining* [Motion picture]. United States: Warner Bros.

Kubrick, S. (Producer/Writer/Director) (1999). *Eyes wide shut* [Motion picture]. United States: Warner Bros.

Landy, R. (1986). *Drama therapy: Concepts, theory and practice*. Springfield, IL: Charles C. Thomas.

MacFarlane, S., & Zuckerman, D. (Developers). *Family guy* [Animation]. United States: 20th Century Fox Television / Adult Swim.

Malchiodi, C. (2000). *Art therapy and computer technology: A virtual studio of possibilities*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

McNiff, S. (1998). *Art-based research.* London: Jessica Kingsley.

McNiff, S. (1999). The virtual art therapy studio. *Art therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 16*(4) 197-200.

McLuhan, M. (1994). *Understanding media: The extensions of man.* Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Méliès, G. (Producer/Director). (1902). *A trip to the moon (Le voyage dans la lune)* [Motion picture]. (Available from The Museum of Modern Art collection, 11 West 53 Street New York, NY 10019)

Molen, G. R., Curtis, B., Parkes, W. F., & Bont, J. (Producers), & Frank, S. & Spielberg, S. (Writer/Director). (2002). *Minority report* [Motion picture]. United States: 20th Century Fox.

Moser, M. A. (1996). *Immersed in technology: Art and virtual environments*. Cambridge, MA: Massachusetts Institute of Technology.

Oursler, T. (Producer/Director). (2008). *Blob* [Video sculpture]. (Available from Galerie Forsblom Collection, Pohjoisesplanadi 27 C, FIN-00100 Helsinki)

Piaget, J. (1969). *The child's concept of time.* New York: Basic Books.

Robbins, A. (1978). *Therapeutic presence: Bridging expression and form*. London: Jessica Kingsley.

Rolfe, J., & Gilbert, M. (2006). Youth, new media, technology and communication. *Young consumers: Insight and ideas for responsible marketers*, *7*(3) 15-21.

Sermon, P. (Producer/Director). (1992). *Telematic dreaming.* [Video performance]. (Viewable on www.youtube.com telematic dreaming V2)

Sullivan, H. S. (1953). *The interpersonal theory of psychiatry.* New York: W. W. Norton.

Thompson, H. S. (1971). *Fear and loathing in Las Vegas: A savage journey to the heart of the American dream.* New York: Random House / Second Vintage Books.

Viola, B. (Producer/Director) (1977-79). *The reflecting pool* [Motion picture]. (Available from Electronic Arts Intermix, 535 West 22nd Street, 5th floor New York, NY 10011)

Walsh, J. (2003). *Bill Viola: The passions*. Los Angeles: Getty Publications.

Weinberg, D. (1985). The potential of rehabilitative computer art therapy for the quadriplegic, cerebral vascular accident and brain trauma patients. *Art Therapy: Journal of the American Art Therapy Association, 2*, 66-72.

Winnicott, D. W. (1971). *Playing and reality*. New York: Routledge/Tavistock Publications.

Witt, P. J., & Thomas, T. (Producers), & Weir, P. (Director). (1989). *Dead poets society* [Motion picture]. United States: Touchstone Pictures.

Wolper, D. L., & Margulies, S. (Producers), Dahl, R. (Writer), & Stuart, M. (Director) (1971). *Willy Wonka & the chocolate factory* [Motion picture]. United States: Paramount/Warner Bros.

Appendix A

LETTER OF INTENT

My name is Jon Ehinger and I am in the process of receiving my master's degree from Pratt Institute in May 2009. My specialty is in the electronic arts and video infused with creative arts therapy. I have been in contact with the media arts teacher regarding the use of the school's studio for my graduate research site. Please look over my ideas listed here for your consideration and approval.

MY PROJECT'S NEEDS:

Access to work on-site with 1 video class under the supervision of a creative arts therapist for 6 consecutive sessions. I would like to work with 4-6 students helping them create videos individually within a group using your green screen studio. Green screen is my specialty (please note my attached resume with my experience) and video with your students is an important component for my thesis work in order to graduate from Pratt Institute.

WHAT I AM OFFERING:

I am offering your students new skills sets and training in digital videography, lighting techniques, sound design, and color-keying composite technologies. We will be working with the Final Cut Pro software loaded on your school's computers. My services will be offered to your students at no cost, as I will be receiving college credit for the completion of each student's process that I will be documenting.

WHY YOUR SCHOOL?

My research is specific to the at-risk youth population in an urban setting. In my future work I will be focusing on developing solutions and new approaches such as using video as a means to connect with teens. My thesis project will serve as a building block for electronic arts for teachers and students in inner city schools. Also, your site has the essential equipment needed for filming and editing with the provided green screen studio backdrop.

My research question will be focused on today's adolescents' use of video and their relationship with the medium when compared to more traditional art forms such as writing, drawing/painting, and sculpture. I will be documenting your student's progress each step of the way including their thoughts and reasoning for their ideas and reporting all of my findings with complete confidentiality.

For example, your school will only be identified as 'a new york city school' as well as each student's identification with pseudonym participant names. The real names of each student and school will remain completely anonymous throughout my research project. This information will be stated clearly on the agreement forms provided by my school that will require your signature and those of the participants' legal guardians.

Upon your approval, I will begin working with your students in creating a video that will be approximately 1-2 minutes in length. They all will receive a DVD of their work to keep and show as they please. My participation as the director will primarily be offering advice in what is possible from a technical standpoint for the students. I will also be working in tandem with the on-site art therapist / teacher offering encouragement to ensure the students complete this project.

If you have any additional questions or concerns please feel free to contact me at jehinger@pratt.edu or my school's thesis supervisor at Pratt Institute, Laurel Thompson lthompso@pratt.edu or Vladimir Briller, Ed.D, Chair, IRB vbriller@pratt.edu. Pratt Institute Main Building, 200 Willoughby Avenue, Brooklyn, NY 11205

Thank you in advance for your support,

Jonathan Ehinger

Appendix B

CONSENT FORM

Consent Form for Participation in Research Study

This study is in partial completion for a Master's Degree in Creative Arts Therapy at Pratt Institute. My focus is in working with youths using electronic arts and green screen video technology. Participants will be asked to create a short video within a group. This study will take place during regular school hours with a teacher in attendance at all times. Discussions will be held during/after the video arts activity to allow each participant time to process their work. A final DVD of all the completed videos will be offered to each participant at the end of the study. Participants can withdraw from the group at any time without any consequence, but it is encouraged that a commitment be made for full attendance with this signature. All names will remain anonymous; participant identification and school affiliations will not be used. If during the process sensitive material comes up for the participant, he or she will be advised to speak with his or her teacher or school counselor.

I, _____, agree to be a part of this study and give consent for the following to be used for assessment, professional presentation, and educational publishing purposes including the writing of a masters thesis. All photographs, video, and audio of artwork including full likenesses of participants expressed through this video study may be used as well as transcribed audio recording of conversations may be released and administered by the research study holder for education purposes only.

_____ _____

Participant's Name (Please Print) (Date)

_____

Participant's Signature

_____ _____

Guardian's Name (if participant is under 18) (Date)

_____

Guardian's Signature (if participant is under 18)

_____ _____

Creative Arts Therapy / Video Arts Specialist (Date)

If you have any questions or concerns please contact Jon Ehinger at jehinger@pratt.edu, Vladimir Briller, Ed.D, Chair, IRB vbriller@pratt.edu, or thesis supervisor Laurel Thompson, 200 Willoughby Avenue, Brooklyn, New York 11205 lthompso@pratt.edu.

Appendix C

LETTER TO GUARDIAN

Dear Parent or Legal Guardian,

My name is Jon Ehinger and I am in the completion process of my master's degree from Pratt Institute in creative arts therapy. My specialty is in electronic arts and teaching with past professional experience working with Summit Camp and 3rd Ward teaching electronic arts, Creative Arts Therapy with Flowers With Care youth outreach as well as professional video and graphics for Turner Broadcasting's CNN and Cartoon Network corporate companies. I have selected your child as an ideal candidate for my research work based on class time availability and your child's overall creativity and passion for the video arts.

Your participatation will result in an edited DVD featuring their work along with their classmates in this project over the six weeks we work together. Your child will also receive new skills sets in the process of my study and new training in digital video arts, specifically hands-on experience with green screen technology. My services will be offered at no cost, as I will be receiving college credit for the completion of each student's process that I will be documenting. Please look over the contracts I have supplied here carefully for your consideration and approval. I will require your signature in full compliance in order for your child to be able to participate.

Upon your approval and signature, I will begin working with your child in creating a video that will be approximately 1-2 minutes in length. My participation as the project director and technical supervisor will be offering my professional advice to

oversee what is possible within the allowed class time for the students. I will also be working in tandem with the students offering encouragement to ensure the students complete this project. Your support in their consistent attendance would also be a large help in our effort.

The following forms MUST be signed and returned to the school signed and dated by the deadline provided in order for your child to participate in this video project.

Thank you in advance for your support,

Jonathan Ehinger

Appendix D

LETTER OF SUPPORT

Dear site IRB,

Jon Ehinger is a graduate student in his final year at Pratt's Art Therapy program. His specialty is in working in the Electronic Arts, applying it to young, troubled populations. We have been in communication during orientation at this school, and he is familiar with the direction of our Media Arts Program.

His thesis project complements the production work we are doing, and his technical skills are exposing students to an aspect we are working to expand. His work is also aligned with the Blueprint Standards for the Arts in Media Technology.

He has met a few students, and has been able to engage, encourage, and support their expression, while also teaching them new technical skills. I support this project.

Thank you,

Media Arts Therapist