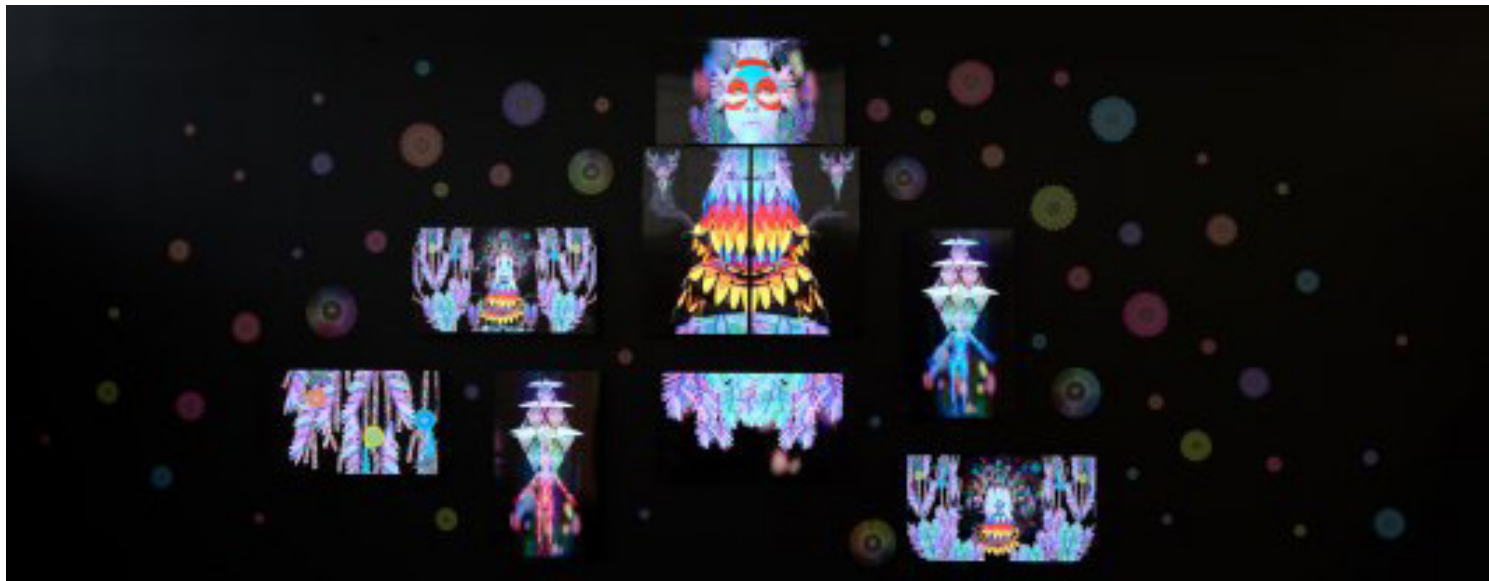


# BUFFALO AKG ART MUSEUM

## Lesson: Level Up: Create Your Character



Installation view of Saya Woolfalk's *Landscape of Anticipation 2.0*, 2021, in the special exhibition *Difference Machines: Technology and Identity in Contemporary Art* at Albright-Knox Northland (October 16, 2021–January 16, 2022). Photo: Brenda Bieger for Buffalo AKG Art Museum

**Artists:** Saya Woolfalk

**Artwork:** *Landscape of Anticipation 2.0* (2021)

**Period/Movement:** Video Art

**Grade Level:** K–8

**Enduring Understandings:**

Works of art and design embody and influence the needs, desires, beliefs, traditions, and values of people within a culture? (11.1)

**Essential Questions:**

How do works of art and design help us understand the lives of people of different times, places and cultures?

How do art and design enhance people's lives and influence culture?

### LESSON

**Conceptual Basis:**

Inspired by the artist Saya Woolfalk and her fictional race of Empathics, students will create their own characters designed to help the world. Their character will star in a short animation created with the recoding feature on a videoconferencing application. This approach to artmaking will have students using technology to share their hopeful works of art.

## ACTIVITY

1. Have your students think of positive things to spread throughout the world (in addition to empathy) and create a list. Some ideas can be love, peace, food, clean water, hugs, etc.
2. Ask students to pick one of the things from the list and sketch out objects that remind them of that feeling, item, action, etc.
3. Give each student a piece of cardstock to draw their character. Feel free to use our template. Thinking about Woolfalk's Empathics, students should include parts of either a plant or an animal as part of their character.
4. Next, show the students the below animation of a character that makes dirty water clean:  
  
Give students more paper, tissue, etc. to begin cutting shapes and objects that will be included in their video. Once they have their shapes colored and cut, they should plan out their movements for their animation with at least 5-10 frames to make their short video.
5. To create the short animation, students should lay down their paper with their character under the document camera. We suggest putting down tape as registration marks, so the character does not move between takes.
6. Open a new meeting in Zoom and once the student is ready, they should record the first shot for a short amount of time (around 3-5 seconds) and then stop the recording.
7. Next, the student should add/move their shapes to their next position. Once ready, they should hit record again, let it run for 3-5 seconds again, and then stop the recording. Students should repeat these steps until they have finished their short animation. (We recommend 30-60 seconds, depending on time available and age level.)
8. Once they are done, close the Zoom meeting so that the recording is processed. Make sure to designate where these recordings are stored prior to the class. If possible, set up a "film screening" so the students can watch each animation.

Begin by showing the following video:

Take a minute to look at the artwork and take in everything that you see.

What is the first thing you notice? Why do you think that caught your eye? Take in all the details the artist is sharing with you: the colors, the objects, and the characters. How would you describe the figures you see?

Imagine yourself inside this work of art. How would you move around? Would you want to talk to the people depicted? What would you say?

Share about Woolfalk's process of creating the Empathics. The Empathics are imaginary alien beings that were transformed by fusing their cells with cells of animals and plants. The Empathics believe that the world would be a better place if more people were able to develop empathy for each other. It is their job to help guide this process.

For older students, share Woolfalk's TED talk:

Woolfalk uses technology to create her storyworld. How does technology change the way we see ourselves? Does it change the way we think about others? What role should it have in our communities, especially in our schools?

# ADDITIONAL ART ACTIVITY BY SEATTLE ART MUSEUM

## Vocabulary:

**empathy:** Understanding how someone else is feeling because you have been in a similar situation or felt that way before. If you have ever felt sad or excited because your friend was sad or excited about something, you have felt empathy!

**identity:** The way we define who or what we are. It can include things that make us unique, like our DNA, and things that we share with other groups of people, like where we grew up. Many artists think about their race, ethnicity, gender, and dis/abilities when thinking about their own identities.

**technology:** Uses science to invent things that are supposed to make our lives better, like medicines, bridges, or the internet.

## Materials:

- Paper, pencil, eraser, markers
- Cardstock (template optional)
- If adding collage elements: aluminum foil, tissue paper, magazines, etc.
- Document camera
- A device that can connect to the document camera and has access to Zoom (or some type of app that allows for quick recording)

## New York State Standards:

Grade	Code	Standard
K	VA:Cn11.1.K	Identify a variety of forms of art and design.
1	VA:Cn11.1.1	Sort and categorize art objects according to form and function.
2	VA:Cn11.1.2	Compare and contrast differently designed objects that have a similar function.
3	VA:Cn11.1.3	Recognize visual characteristics commonly found in works of art and design from a particular culture.
4	VA:Cn11.1.4	Connect visual characteristics of works of art and design to beliefs and traditions within a culture.
5	VA:Cn11.1.5	Explore how works of art and design contribute to the quality of life within a culture.
6	VA:Cn11.1.6	Analyze how works of art and design correlate with the needs, desires, beliefs, and traditions of a culture.
7	VA:Cn11.1.7	Investigate different ways that art and design can establish, reflect, and reinforce group identity.
8	VA:Cn11.1.8	Through observation, infer information about the time, place, and culture in which a work of art or design was created.