Protopian *mises-en-scènes*:

The collaborative design of a queer femme augmented reality face filter

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Abstract

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The collaborative design of a queer femme augmented reality face filter

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Augmented reality face filters, found on social media platforms such as Instagram and Snapchat, have gained in popularity in recent years. While some are amusing and playful, like butterflies flying around you, the filter landscape is primarily populated by "beauty filters", a digital beautification of face features that reinforce heteronormative standards. While this research-creation project aims to challenge the current filter norms, it does so with a reparative approach: it focuses on the generative potential of face filters and offers a gender nonconformant alternative by creating a face filter through a participatory methodology. I led two workshops that I held with three queer femme friends of mine who were also invested in challenging the norms of face filters. The result, seen more as an experimental prototype than a final design, was shared with participants to get their feedback. A key aim was to create visions for a non-heteronormative augmented reality future. As such, protopian futurism, the prototyping of hopeful and radically inclusive futures, as developed by Monika Bielskyte, is a guiding concept along Eve Sedgwick's reparative reading. The workshops resulted in a collaborative experience of self-discovery and the development of new face filter themes.

Keywords: face filters, augmented reality, selfies, queer femininities, participatory design, protopian futurism, reparative reading, friendship, heteronormativity, research-creation

Acknowledgements

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Introduction

  beauty3000 by @johwska was the first face filter I tried that really moved me. It was early 2019, the world was already taken over by digital augmentation technology, which added a whole new dimension to the social media experience. This one was different to me. Prior filters included overlaying doglike face features, having butterflies fly around you, or wearing a flower crown. While the playfulness of these filters was appreciated, none had appealed to my aesthetics and experimentation of self-representation in the same way *beauty3000* did. While embodying the filter your skin would become plastic-like, reflecting moving lights of cyan and magenta hues; it was simple, yet effective in its immersion and self-transformation[1]. It was a virtual encounter of cultures, where cyborg meets cosmetic surgery meets rave culture; an embodied reflection on our current times.

  Face filters are one manifestation of Augmented Reality (AR). Digital humanities researcher Amanda Stirling Gould offers this definition of AR art: "by way of geolocation or programmed coding, the AR artist places visual and extravisual digital information into the sense-able sphere of the physical world, making it available to viewers via mobile computing devices like a smartphone" (2014, p. 25). AR made its way to general audiences with the accessibility of mobile devices, such as cellphones and tablets (Swarek, 2018).

  Creative studio and education platform Popul-ar (popul-ar, n.d.) categorize face filters as "social AR" by. Face filters are characterized by their presence on social media and in digital social interaction software, found in apps such as Instagram, Facebook, Messenger, Snapchat, FaceTime and Zoom. They "involve the use of facial recognition software that identifies a face in the camera and 'adds a real-time virtual layer on top' with 'real-time feedback on the screen that enables users to playfully interact with these filters and effects" (Schipper 2018, p. 5). They can take the form of fantastic characters such as aliens, elves and demons. Furthermore, the technology has the ability to distort images which changes the user's background and also include games that make the user interact with the digital content. Face filters are an extension of the selfie practice, the cultural phenomenon that appeared with the front-facing cameras of devices and consists of taking a photo of oneself with said mobile devices.

  In the Instagram vernacular, face filters are called "effects". They are accessible from the camera feature of the app, where the facial recognition software is located. At the bottom of the screen, the camera interface includes a sliding gallery of suggested and saved - favorite - effects to select from. As such, users can easily and quickly try various styles. They can solely observe their new forms on the screen, or capture a photo or video of it to save on their phone or share it with their networks, either public (their followers) or private (to their friends through personal messaging). This is done through the "stories" feature of the platform, namely a short (15 seconds) ephemeral (visible for 24 hours) post.

  There are a few ways to discover filters. A user of the platform can stumble upon filters through the people they follow: when someone shares a story while portraying a filter, its name and a link for trying it appears on the interface. This is the most prevalent way filters circulate on the platform. A lesser known feature is the effect gallery which includes a search bar and filtering options. A link to an effect can also be shared via the private messaging system of the app.

  While information on the exact number of filters currently available on Instagram is not readily accessible, I think it's fair to assume it is high, but also fluctuating. Previously, only "effect

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[1] Visual documentation of *beauty3000* can be found in the appendix.

creators", who were hired by the platform, were able to publish filters. Since August 2019, anyone with an Instagram account can upload filters to the app - another instance of the produsage culture (Bruns, 2008) - which suggests a great amount of them. The creators must frequently upgrade their filters to follow the rhythm of the operating software, new hardware affordances and platform updates; if the filters don't meet those upgrades, they will disappear from the app.

Filters must be created through Spark AR, a free proprietary software of Meta[2]. The production pipeline includes a publishing process: after exporting the file, the filter creator needs to upload it to the Spark AR Hub publishing platform. The filter has to conform to Spark AR's policies and Meta's community guidelines, and is reviewed for approbation before being available on the app. Notable policies include: no links or tags that would prompt the user to leave the app, content must not rank physical appearance, and no promotion of cosmetic surgery (Spark AR, n.d).

AR is a fairly new technology and the adoption of social AR prompts many interrogations on its impact. Social AR has received a lot of criticism. One of the current trends on Instagram is beauty filters. These filters track the user's face and change its attributes to correspond with current beauty standards: big almond shaped eyes, wrinkless-poreless skin, high cheekbones, plump lips and fine nose, creating the "Instagram face" (Tolentino, 2019) and arguably suggesting cosmetic surgery. Beauty filters are further criticized for their body dysmorphic impact (Haines, 2021), while cultural appropriation is being called out in others (Lee, 2020).

The beauty standards these filters are promoting are heteronormative. They present a desired normative femininity and render clear what features are unwanted (Lavrence & Cambre, 2020). Berlant and Warner indicate that heteronormativity signifies "the institutions, structures of understanding, and practical orientations that make heterosexuality seem not only coherent - that is, organized as a sexuality - but also privileged" (1998, p. 548). The pervasion of heterosexual ontology, embedded in all things, and not just sex, comes from its sense of rightness and normalcy, and is diffused in all dimensions and structures of social life (Berlant & Warner 1998, p. 554). Heteronormativity is hard to decipher because what it values is engrained so deeply in ways of being that they feel "hardwired into personhood" (Berlant & Warner 1998, p. 554). In the case of face filters, the newfound normative representations of femininity "tell us about who is welcome to participate and considered worthy of digital visibility" (Lavrence and Cambre 2020, p. 3). This urgently calls for the contribution of alternatives to the heteronormative filters found in the current social AR landscape.

While face filters on Instagram are important sites of cultural critique, how might they also be sites for collaborative play, joy and reflexivity? How might filters be used playfully to share a message, reflexively to embody a different version of yourself, or politically to make a statement? I became interested in this new technology for the tensions it provokes, as well as the empowerment that I could experience and witness. What might I learn about filters outside of the heteronormative discourse? These questions have led to many reflections on how to create with and use this new media form in a generative and attentive way.

Media maker and futurist researcher Monika Bielskyte advocates for a media landscape that presents inclusive and "protopian" futures. In her words: "The dominant historical narratives within both entertainment media and education have brought on a crisis of our collective futures imagination" (Bielskyte, 2021). Utopias envision highly idealistic futures that are unattainable; dystopian futures, on the other hand, are so far in the desolation of our world that they are beyond repair (Bielskyte, 2021). Both are distant virtualities and don't foster possibilities of engagement. "Protopia" opens up new possibilities to the binary of utopia-dystopia: stemming from futures

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[2] Meta is the parent company of social media platforms Instagram and Facebook.

closer to our present, protopian speculations "boldly address past and present injustice and exploitative frameworks… and strive to replace them with regenerative and equitable alternatives" (Bielskyte, 2021). Inspired by the concept of protopia and Bielskyte's work, I wanted to reflect on current popular uses of social filters to create a filter that would open up alternatives for how they could be used in the present, in order to create imaginaries of inclusive AR futures.

Along with protopia, the idea of reparative reading has been part of my research cosmology: in *Touching feeling: Affect, pedagogy, performativity* (2003), affect and queer theorist Eve Sedgwick suggests reparative readings to "clear intellectual and affective space for others - to grant permission" (Love, 2010, p. 235). A reparative reading attends to the multiplicity, the creativity, the love, the movement, the affective (Sedgwick, 2003; Love, 2010). Reparative practices, in contrast to "paranoid" ones that have often been linked to cultural studies (Love, 2010), notice, construct, find joy and enable. While protopia works for building media imaginaries for hopeful, embodied and inclusive futures, reparative readings bring to the front the creativity, joy and love that's found within what's in need of repair. I see the two concepts as working together hand in hand for inclusive future-making. As such, I was interested in shedding light on the generative potential of social AR through a reparative reading of face filters and in creating a filter that would explore and enable. How might I facilitate a creative environment that would permit me to learn about these concepts through creative praxis, to learn about AR and filters and non-normative female tropes at the same time? And who would I involve?

The covid-19 pandemic started as I was beginning the design of this research-creation. It became crucial for me to break the loneliness and loss of agency that comes from isolation, and to work with and for my friends. A friend is "somebody to talk to, to depend on and rely on for help, support and caring, and to have fun and enjoy doing things with" (Rawlings, 1992, p. 271; in Tillmann-Healy, 2003, p. 730); friendship as method means that this kinship should be the backbone of the research process. Not only was I going to collect "data" from friends but I was going to use the values of friendship to infuse my methodological approach. I gathered friends to collectively meditate, through the perspective of face filters, on a topic that was affecting them personally: I invited three queer femme friends to join me in reflecting on queer femininity and social AR, through the collective design of a filter.

Conversations on gender expression, gender performativity, femininity, masculinity and drag/burlesque are recurrent with many of my friends as we seek to make sense of our identities. Three friends in particular identify as queer nonbinary femmes/women and are expressing and exploring fluid forms of femininity. Femme is a "queer identity marked by a critical engagement with femininity" (Schwartz, 2020b, p. 1). *Femme-ininity* (Schwartz, 2020b; Scott, 2021) reflects on its objectification by the male gaze and by heteronormativity: it "transgresses expectations of women, but also expectations of femininity" (Dahl, 2011, p. 4). I felt that involving these three friends in a creative exercise with filters would expand our conversations and help us to further understand and theorize our positions.

Most of my friends are queer and I have previously been involved in initiatives that advocate for LGBTQ2S+ visibility and inclusion. Notably, in 2017 I cofounded Mesh Magazine, an anthology of essays, photographs and illustrations focusing on promoting queer and BIPOC Montreal artists, that explores topics around vulnerability and marginalization. It became important for me to use this master's project, the time and energy it would take from me, to support my community in a world that is not always designed for them.

I present femininely; I love femininity, the associated aesthetics and gestures. I am a cisgender straight white woman surrounded by and admiring queerness. As I am part and have only been part of heterosexual relationships in my life so far, and consequently haven't experienced

homophobia, femmephobia, and the challenges of presenting queer, I don't identify as a queer femme. That being said, I certainly feel interpellated and have affinities with femme-ininity, to engage critically and queerly with femininity. I also have queer desires of challenging gender norms, heteronormative structures and infrastructures, and individualist modes of living. I see this thesis as a personal assignment to queer my heterosexuality, challenge my heteronormativity and explore my own straightness/queerness. Having the opportunity to discuss femme-ininity and queerness with close friends meant so much to me. I am humble and grateful for their time, attention and education.

I have previously worked for a digital culture and justice organization, where I organized a weekend-long hackathon for the creation of digital art installations. Five teams composed of diverse people, from programmers and media artists to historians and high school professors. The teams were led by facilitators who put their minds and perspectives together to produce relevant and context-based artworks. I wanted to integrate my background in collective approaches and facilitation to interrogate the processes of how media are made:

My intention for *Protopian mises-en-scène* was to use a participatory approach to design a face filter with queer friends that would: 1) generate reflections on contemporary femme-ininity, particularly in the context of Instagram, 2) create a protopian filter that would situate queer femmes in the future of AR. The research question that guided my collaborative inquiry was: *what insights can we gain on face filters and queer femininities by designing a face filter through a participatory approach?*

During the summer of 2021, I hosted a series of three discussion-workshops with three queer friends of mine, Bianca, Sokha and Sunny[3], over the teleconferencing platform Zoom. For the first session I curated a conversation on queer femininity and gender expression. My friends discussed what femme and gender expression meant to them, how their queerness and femme-ininity were influenced by Instagram and social AR, and we discussed tactics used by fellow femmes to reclaim their existence and visibility on and offline. The second encounter was a brainstorming workshop for the creation of a face filter. I facilitated three creative activities that led to a design plan for a queer femme filter that would create AR imaginaries that include femme-ininity in futures. Following the design plan we had come up, I then worked on developing the face filter for the following two months. I used SparkAR, a proprietary software of Instagram, for creating various social AR productions such as face filters or 3D objects placed in physical environments. During our third and last conversation, I showed them the result and received their final impressions and reflections. I borrow from Bielskyte the term protopian futurism to describe my method of workshops, dialogue, and co-creation.

My research-creation master's thesis is written at a period where the use of social media and social filters is increasing (Lisitsa et al., 2020). Its relevance lies in questioning current uses of increasingly ubiquitous technology. Several researchers have focused on different articulations of social AR - notably on beauty filters and editing apps (Lavrence & Cambre, 2020; Marwick, 2015; Chae, 2017; Pescott, 2020) and analog-like and other image filters (Caoduro 2014, Van der Heijden 2015, Kohn 2017) - but not much attention has been given yet to figurative face filters (Schipper, 2018), and not with a queer femme angle. The research intervention I am making is contributing to the fields of face filters, participatory methodologies and queer femininities.

In the first chapter, I will situate my project within literature on selfies, selfie-editing and face filters, queer femininities, and augmented reality. I will also share media that have inspired

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[3] These are fictional names in order to keep my friends' anonymity as required by my ethics protocol. That being said, I have asked each of them to suggest a name they would like to wear in this text.

my creative process. In the second chapter, I will discuss my guiding concepts, Segdwick's reparative reading and Bielskyte's protopia. In chapter three, I will expand on my protopian futurism framework, my bricolage of methodologies employed for this project, as well as how they have shaped the workshops and filter creation. In the last chapter, I will reflect on the process and return to my research question.

Chapter 1: Literature and media review

In this first chapter, I will expand on works that have informed my research and helped me contextualize what queer femme filters might become. I first discuss the practice of selfie making and selfie editing. I then discuss the selfie as a form of self-expression and self-representation, the norms around its production, and the process of editing and filtering. I move to the presence and particularities of queer femme-ininities online. To close this section, I address Augmented reality (AR) art and activism and share media that have inspired and influenced my own creation.

Selfie and selfie editing

Defining selfie

> A woman snapping a picture of herself, by herself. Maybe she is sitting at an outdoor cafe, her phone held out in front of her like a gilded hand mirror, a looking glass linked to an Instagram account. Maybe she tilts her head one way and then another, smiling and smirking, pushing her hair around, defiantly staring into the lens, then coyly looking away. She takes one shot, then five, then 25. She flips through these images, appraising them, an editrix putting together the September issue of her face; she weighs each against the others, plays around with filters and lighting, and makes a final choice. She pushes send and it's done. Her selfie is off to have adventures without her, to meet the gazes of strangers she will never know. She feels excited, maybe a little nervous. She has declared, in just a few clicks, that she deserves, in that moment, to be seen. The whole process takes less than five minutes. (Symes, 2015, para. 1)

This excerpt by Rachel Symes communicates the many dimensions of a selfie, from the collapsing distance between capturer and subject, the associated gestures, the image editing, the circulation, the affects, and the immediacy. While most mainstream channels depict selfies as narcissistic and egocentric, causing accidents and mental illnesses, or are attributed to the death of our culture (Senft & Baym, 2015), scholars from the cultural and social sciences tend to research them under different lights and propose alternative positions (Eckel et al., 2018). A selfie is a digital image and a practice that has emerged with the arrival of smartphones to mass consumers. The arrival of the front-facing camera of smartphones is crucial in the rise of the phenomenon (Eckel et al., 2018; Hess, 2015; Senft & Baym, 2015, Rettberg, 2014). With the birth of web 2.0 visual social media[4] and fast broadband connection (Rettberg, 2014), selfies were in hindsight seemingly poised to explode in our lives. While self-portraits have long been part of visual cultures, selfies are distinct in the novel possibilities afforded by smartphones: the subject can see their own reflection and record it at the same time (Wakerfiel 2014, in Rettberg 2014). Another important

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[4] Rettberg (2014) talks of the "visual turn" in social media. Social media existed before web 2.0, but it was primarily textual.

thing to consider is the effortlessness and the inexpensive cost of taking, deleting, editing, and sharing selfies which makes the practice widely accessible (Rettberg, 2014). They are associated most often with portraying the quotidian and with immediacy (Hess, 2015; Senft & Baym, 2015).

In 2015, a special feature of the *International Journal of Communication* addresses the, at the time, novel media form that is the selfie. Theresa M. Senft and Nancy K. Baym open the section by giving a general portrait of selfies, as well as suggesting different avenues for making sense of them. They define the selfie as 1) photographic *object*, and 2) a *practice* (2015, p. 1589, emphasis mine). The photographic *object* presents the messages and feelings the selfie maker wishes to share. The selfie is also a *practice*, gestural and social, a way of communicating (2015, p. 1589). Moreover, selfies are defined by different human and nonhuman relationships: between the subject and their audience, between the users of a social media platform, between the image and filtering/editing software.[5] Senft and Baym's dual definition of selfies is found in a wide range of selfie literature. In the context of my research, it has helped me recognize the multiple roles and uses of selfies.

In her book *Seeing ourselves through technology: How we use selfies, blogs and wearable devices to see and shape ourselves* Jill Walker Rettberg (2014) understands selfies as self-representations. Rettberg's book notably gives a historical perspective of documenting and representing the self through literary or visual means, like journaling and self-portraits, and how the technologies employed to do so affected the process. Like the other self-documentation practices, the selfie is a practice of reflection on how we see and think of ourselves. Rettberg makes the point that creating and sharing selfies to our social media platform is a social communication and act of self-expression, for example when you engage with your network. But, she argues, it is also the reading of *texts* created by your same network, where, more from the perspective of an audience, analysis, judgement, and reflection takes place (p. 13).

Rettberg's contribution has informed the primary angle with which I tackle the selfie within this project, namely as a form of self-expression and self-representation, which involve self-reflection and self-creation. Rettberg refers to Annette Markham by saying that through selfie-making we "write ourselves into being" (Markham 2013, in Rettberg 2014, p. 13); a selfie is "a self enacting itself" (Senft & Baym, 2015, p. 1595). In the *Selfie Assemblage*, Hess (2015) considers selfies as staged performances. Authors have also described the selfie creation in terms of mise-en-scène (Hess, 2015; Eckel et al., 2018), where the selfie creator composes the image in thoughtful ways and applies aesthetic, symbolic, and physical reflexivity. Along with Hess describing in his text that the editing and manipulation of a selfie is a work of scenic arrangement, I see this perspective of mise-en-scène as particularly fertile for face filters.

As forms of communication, selfies are subject to normative expectations and pressures. To address this, we find here again Senft and Baym (2015), Rettberg (2014), and Hess (2015). Each platform has a selfie vernacular and community guidelines, and affords certain forms of self-representation; we can think of selfie trends such as the "duck face" or the mimicry of celebrity

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[5] In the same special section of the *IJC*, Aaron Hess employs the concept of assemblage to make sense of the selfie. In the "Selfie Assemblage", Hess (2015) sees the selfie as interlocked by human and nonhuman elements, the self, the device, the space and the network. The assemblage reveals the different relationships at play; the device and the networks it is a part of, the physical elements the image documents, as well as the relationship between the user and each of the other elements (p. 1631). Hess qualifies selfies as "attempts to represent the self as embodied in particular space" (p. 1630).

poses[6], the suggested use of the platform by the platform[7], or the 140 characters of a Twitter post (Rettberg, 2014). Rettberg also attributes the success of users on social media platforms to their demonstration of neoliberal values - the promotion of entrepreneurship and market logics in one's various dimensions of life (p. 24). Along with Marwick (2015), she suggests that deficiency in these values lead to an erasure from the platform algorithm and a disinterest from the followers[8]. Hess (2015) expands on the paradox of authenticity: as the self finds itself needing to reach equilibrium between inauthenticity, for example the revelation of the use of an editing software or lying about the location of the selfie, and too much authenticity, like a embarrassing product appearing in a bathroom selfie; the self has to be perfect yet authentic (p. 1634). Senft and Baym develop on the moral panic (2015, p. 592) over nonnormative selfies. They use as examples of gender regulation through the policing of breastfeeding selfies and when men selfies are deemed acceptable, indicating that social media strive for ideal representations.

As such, the normative and expected selfie would represent an authentic self, where amendment to it results in literal failure (Hess, 2015), that publicizes neoliberal subjectivities, and conforms to conventional social norms. These texts have contributed to my understanding of the highly policed norms around the selfie - what's to repair - which encompass ageism, ableism, and gender norms and heteronormativity. I expand on this more amply in the queer femmes online literature section.

That being said, selfies can also be empowered replies to the lack of representation or misrepresentation in mainstream media culture. Rettberg (2015) asks what power relations are shifted, contested or revealed when nonconformant self-representations make their way in the public sphere (p. 3). The dissolution of the author-subject can respond to experiences and feelings of misrepresentation: "taking selfies can be a way of avoiding cultural and technological filters that you don't like or that don't represent you in a way that feels real to you" (p. 30). For Senft and Baym (2015), they bring attention to the fact that historically Western art and media have proven themselves to hoard control over the representation of subjects. While empowerment in selfie production is not the main angle of this project, and that it is a debated topic of study that would require more research, the discussions from Rettberg, and Senft and Baym have brought to light possibilities around disrupting the current selfie landscape.

The circulation of the selfie and its conversational capacity is for a lot of scholars a crucial aspect. While I recognize this, within this research I consider that not sharing doesn't subtract the quality of selfie to a self-portrait taken with the front-facing camera of a smartphone. I consider the symbolic practice, and the sheer anticipation (Eckel & al., 2018, p. 6) and potentiality of sharing, of circulation, to be enough to grant the selfie status. My participants did not circulate filtered selfies through their networks but the gestures, the self-reflections and the potentiality of circulation were present. I also think that in our accustomed exposure to ubiquitous selfies (ours and others), we have the capacity to read our own selfies as texts, our smartphones as sort of looking glasses, as Syme puts it in the introductory quote. In my section on queer femmes online, I will add to this with a queer perspective.

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[6] Alice Marwick expands on this in "Instafame: Luxury selfies in the attention economy" (2015), in a discussion on microcelebrities on Instagram, the reproduction of celebrity culture, and the hierarchy of fame in the attention economy.

[7] Stefanie Duguay discusses this in a platform analysis of Instagram and its LGBTQ+ conversational capacity in "Lesbian, gay, bisexual, trans, and queer visibility through selfies: Comparing platform mediators across Ruby Rose's Instagram and Vine presence" (2016).

[8] Ayu Saraswati dedicates a whole book to this with "Pain Generation: Social Media, Feminist Activism, and the Neoliberal Selfie" (2021).

Selfie editing and face filters

The production of selfies can entails digital edition and manipulations: the enhancement of the color grading through LUTs[9] to give off a particular visual feeling, to the retouching of the skin and face features with an app like Facetune, to the visual layering of ornaments with face filters. With the advance of smartphone technologies and software, this new dimension of selfies is now prevalent. The texts below develop on social effects of selfie editing and filters, and the norms around it.

Going back to Rettberg (2015), she suggests the lure of filters is attributed to their abilities to aestheticize, anesthetize, and defamiliarize our self-perceptions. First, the aestheticization, or beautification, of the everyday - characteristic of the selfie subjects - with filters can influence through what perspective we see our life. Second, and influenced by Susan Sontag, Rettberg indicates that this same aesthetic enterprise can also participate in the anesthetization of our understanding of the world. Finally, filters bring a strangeness, a distance between ourselves and the photographic object, a new way of seeing ourselves through what she calls a "machine vision", which defamiliarizes ourselves. The three suggested abilities of filters have informed my understanding of social AR.

For their part, Lavrence and Cambre (2020) attend to selfie editing and filtering from a perspective of heteronormative beauty in *'Do I Look Like My Selfie?': Filters and the Digital-Forensic Gaze*. In their text, they present their concept of the "digital-forensic gaze", which they explain as an intense and analytical practice of online looking at content on social media and particularly Instagram in the case of their study. According to their participants' testimonies, beauty filters are not only common but they are expected in selfie production. What's at play then is a surveillance and dissection of selfies to decipher what's the artifice and what's the authenticity (5). Lavrence and Cambre's state that now with beauty filters, successful social media users have to present normatively good looking, but still need to look natural - not *fake[10]* - while everyone assumes that filters are employed: "The digital forensic-gaze assumes the presence of artifice and yet somehow *feels* the image *as if* it were real, which creates affective ruptures or psychic pressure points" (p. 5, author's emphasis). Their study also shows that, following a heteronormative sociality, face filters are understood as digital makeup and therefore men feel prohibited from using them (p. 9). Accompanying Hess, Senft and Baym, and Rettberg in their discussion of gender norms around selfie, Lavrence and Cambre investigate the surveillance of heteronormative beauty standards through beauty filters populating Instagram and the digital-forensic gaze. As such, this text informed my sense of what might need repairing. My research-creation project is an effort to provide alternatives to this heteronormative landscape.

While Lavrence and Cambre discuss beauty filters, to this day few researches attend to the type of playful and theatrical face filters that my project investigates. Charlotte Leclercq stresses the importance of inquiring "effects" and "lenses" in a 2016 blog post entitled *Do you "LensIt"? A call for research on modified selfies*. This article is five years old, but literature on the topic remains sparse and the post continues to be cited (Lavrence & Cambre, 2020; Schipper, 2018; Goetz, 2021). Meike Schipper's masters thesis (2018) addresses figurative face filters on Instagram and normative self-representation. His hypothesis was that, following Rettberg (2014), the defamiliarization effect of filters would encourage creativity and nonconformity as the "strangeness [would] make it seem pointless to subject yourself to other conventions of self-

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[9] LUT, standing for Lookup Table, is the term specific to the color grading of digital images for internet dissemination.

[10] Which reminds me of Hess's (2015) paradox of authenticity.

presentation" (p. 11). While his research doesn't necessarily negate it, he concludes that the "(dis)empowerment paradox" (Barnard 2016, in Schipper 2018) applies to the use of figurative face filters; the exploration of self-representation and sharing of filtered selfies can be liberating on an individual level, but, simultaneously, stereotypical gender conformant presentations are still reinforced because most filters signal heteronormative gender conforming features. I find Schipper's work interesting for my research and I reference his conclusion by designing a gender nonconformant filter with gender nonconformant people. In the following section, I expand on queer femme subjectivities online, vulnerability, and femme selfies.

(Queer) (femininities) (online)

The term "femme" has emerged out of the working class lesbian bar culture of the 1940s and 1950s as a queer feminine identity and a sexuality often paired with the "butch" (Nestle, 1992). Femme is associated with a gender expression that presents feminine aesthetics, notably those that are signifiers of normative femininity, while resisting heteronormative expectations (Schwartz, 2020a, p. 1). To do so, femmes notably play with and intertwine masculinity and femininity (Schwartz, 2020a, p. 1). Joan Nestle wrote in her introduction to *The persistent desire: A femme-butch reader* (1992), an iconic anthology on the butch-femme history that has, along with other authors and activists, paved the way for femme emancipation: "if the butch deconstructs gender, the femme constructs gender. She puts together her own special ingredients for what it is to be a 'woman', and identity with which she can live and love" (p. 16). Today, the term femme extends beyond womanhood, and pertains to broader sexualities and gender identities (Blair & Hoskin, 2015). This contemporary opening towards a plurality of queer femininities should not mean an erasure of the past. In the words of Hoskin: "This is not to situate femme lesbians in the past but rather to understand femme lesbians as the theoretical jumping point from which contemporary femme identities have proliferated" (2021, p. 7).

In *What do glitter, pointe shoes, & plastic drumsticks have in common? Using femme theory to consider the reclamation of disciplinary beauty/body practices*, Jocelyne Bartram Scott (2021) discusses her femme experience with femme-ininity and normative femininity. She argues that the gap between the two is actually slippery; femme-ininity is not always a radical break from normative femininity (p. 47). It is a constantly negotiated enjoyment of feminine embodiment, where nonconformity lives along internalized oppressions. Scott indicates that femme-ininity is liminal, it is "not a stable gendered practice reliant upon queerness for legitimation but as a non-fixed gendered practice on its own terms" (p. 36). For Scott, acknowledging and accepting the messiness of femme-ininity has led her to better enjoy her gender expression. Scott's article enlightens the difference between the theories and practices of femme. Immersing myself in literature on queer femininity prepared me for the complexities of the conversations we would have during the workshop.

With *Radical vulnerability: selfies as a Femme-inine mode of resistance* (2020b), Andi Schwartz offers a reparative reading of femme selfies. Vulnerability is at the center of this article as Schwartz sees selfies as a practice sustained by it; a vulnerability that is mobilised by femmes. Her understanding of vulnerability is characterized by openness (corporeal, psychological, and to the other), and indicates that "femme" has been considered similarly (p. 2). Femmephobia - described as "prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism against someone who is perceived to identify, embody, or express femininity" (Hoskin, 2017, in Schwartz 2020b, p. 2) - is another example of the inferiority or marginalization of femininity in both mainstream culture and queer feminist culture (p. 2). Schwartz states that femmephobia is central to why femmes use selfies as a

mode of femme-inine resistance (p. 11); as means to re-write narratives around femme and an opportunity for self-representation. Concretely, femme selfies provide a representation of femme identity, its aesthetics and practices, through corporeal openness and they open doors for community support and building through psychological and social openness. Additionally, femme openness through selfies holds potential for making political claims. Schwartz's contribution has been significant in my understanding of the need to provide alternatives to femmephobia through femme self-representation selfies and related practices such as face filters.

The question of empowerment in regards to selfies is a debated one. While authors are debating whether selfies are empowering or not, Son Vivienne proposes we look beyond the dichotomy and examine the perspective of privilege. In '*I will not hate myself because you cannot accept me': Problematizing empowerment and gender-diverse selfies* (2017), Vivienne reminds us that sharing self-representations of non-conformant gender expressions can come with risks in our heteronormative social media environment. They indicate that for gender queers, just participating in society is a form of disruption, what they name "everyday activism" (Vivienne & Burgess 2012, in Vivienne, 2017); acceptance and even safety are part of the deliberations when choosing to present yourself. As such, sharing self-representations through selfies should be seen as a privilege. Vivienne mentions that selfies are not necessarily meant for public consumption and cater to different objectives, for example personal archiving of medical transition (2017, p. 136), and to different sites of dissemination. Vivienne's point of queer selfies being affirmative but also bearing privilege was useful for the articulation of my comprehension of selfies, especially in regards to not circulating them in the hostile public sphere.

AR art and AR activism

The remainder of this chapter is dedicated to articles that discuss avenues for questioning with and creating AR, as well as a few face filters and AR art pieces that have influenced me throughout my project. All have informed my research, through explicit or implicit articulations, around the self-reflexive and relational potential of AR.

Amanda Gould asks how AR art matters as a cultural form of expression in *Invisible visualities: Augmented reality art and the contemporary media ecology* (2014). She develops on the "AR ecology", what she finds is a defining aspect of AR, where artifact, device, and user come in an ecological interaction to manifest the immaterial AR piece; "neither the body nor the media disappear, but instead, they reappear as vectors for the expression and experience of art as both must be present in order to access AR art's invisible visualities" (p. 26). The AR ecology then is instantiated through performative orchestrations (p. 26). To answer her question, Gould sides with Foucault and Benjamin in that perception and aesthetic sensibilities are always contemporaneous, and that as such AR art offers a new way of seeing characterized by the invisible visualities birthing from the AR ecology.

New media artist Carla Gannis discusses a long term creative project of hers, *The Selfie Drawings* in *The Augmented Selfie* (2017)[11]. In the course of 2015, Gannis took a weekly selfie and layered it with a digital drawing. The intention was to resist and slow down the frantic selfie process in order to leave room for a deeper reflection on the self-representation of a "me" and to experiment with building an "out of the ordinary narrative from a photo taken in a very quotidian space" (p. 322). The following year, Gannis worked on video expressions of some selfies and produced a printed book of her 52 digital drawing selfies. She subsequently worked on adding to

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[11] Visual documentation of the mentioned artworks can be found in the appendix.

her selfies with AR throughout the course of another year. She describes that moving to AR was part of a continuum of media augmentation, from digital 2D, to moving image, to physical 2d, to digital 3D, all affording in their own medium-specificities particular self-reflections.

Predictably, marketing companies see augmented reality as a new form of consumer engagement with brands and products. David Sargent deplores this and proposes instead to use AR to subvert advertising campaigns. In *Repurposing Augmented Reality Browsers for Acts of Creative Subversion* (2017), he considers AR subversions as part of a continuum of "acts of détournement", a practice from the 1950s-1960s (Sargent, 2017) that aims to "reveal the spectacle of everyday life through the creation of 'expressions that de-familiarize the spectators so that they must take on a distanced critical reflection'" (Markussen, 2012, in Sargent, 2017, p. 1). He gives as example the work of Swarek, who is a member of the Manifest.AR collective[12], who produced AR media to layer over certain the logos of mega companies such as oil and gas British Petroleum (BP). As such, the AR intervention is accessible anywhere and anytime when one layers their smartphone over any emplacement of the company's logo. Sargent promotes AR as a practical means for acts of détournement for its relative low-cost use and technical accessibility.

Tamiko Thiel is also a member of the Manifest.AR collective and is an important figure of augmented reality art whose work "explore the intersection of space, place and cultural memory" (Thiel, n.d.). Thiel is a digital media artist who started in the 1990s with online virtual world works and she has investigated AR extensively since 2010. Her works question spaces, accessibility and institutional power; she tackles climate change and the politics of the immateriality of data. Like with *Water Lily Invasion*, *Garden of the Anthropocene*, and *RewildAR*, a lot of her AR pieces are speculative expressions of a future where nature has overthrown human structures. Creating imaginaries of a world where different forms of life are thriving is creating protopia.

Many inspiring digital media artists have created face filters for the platform Instagram. @johwska, Johanna Jaskowska, who's Instagram bio used to be "there is no filter without you", is one of the main pioneers of face filters: "on Instagram people want to story-tell themselves and stand-out, *beauty3000* is transparent enough to help the user to do so – the story isn't about the filter, it is about the user using it" (Weismann, 2019). Her earlier work represents for me a first encounter with filters that were aesthetically close to me and that would let me embody characters and worlds that were fascinating. With the filter *beauty3000*, Jaskowska reacts to the beauty norms, the filters and cosmetic ones too, and amplifies the norms by giving the user a plastic skin (Kühne, 2020). More technically, she plays a lot with lights and animations of lights which I thought was giving great dimension and vitality to the filters, like in *beauty3000*. On light functions in 3D modelling and filters she indicates that what she finds fascinating about it is that "it's like having a photo studio in your pocket… it was all about playing with lights by highlighting the face, like in photography. By experimenting with the tool, the process and the storytelling took different directions." (Weismann, 2019). I have included in the filter created for this research lightworks inspired by Jaskowska.

My final inspiration is queer digital media artist @huntrezz, Huntress Janos, self-defined as an "antiCorpoReal AfroTransHuman" (Janos, n.d.b). Janos's filters are a dense collage of colourful and animated layers. In her works, she experiments with various digital media and

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[12] The Manifest.AR collective seeks to explore political and artistic applications of AR. Members of the collective have notably riffed off on the relationship between message and location by, amongst other interventions, inserting illicit AR art pieces in the MOMA in 2010 (Geroimenko, 2014, vii). Following the action at the MOMA, the collective wrote a manifesto, notably praising the new technology "with AR the Virtual augments and enhances the Real, setting the Material World in a dialogue with Space and Time" (Geroimenko, 2014, viii).

investigates the present moment, diversity, joy and innovation (Janos, n.d.a). Her creations are inspiring for their costume-like quality that invites a performance from the user and for her queerly driven experimentations. Moreover, she also sees filters as means for self-representation and identity work, which has been influential in seeing the emancipatory potential of face filters: she captions on a December 2019 Instagram post where she portrays her own *tinsel polycarbonate* filter: "loving how my filters make me feel! I'm having so much fun making them and seeing people use them :) I often don't identify with my physical appearance- but these I get to choose to show myself in new ways! More to come 💫" (Janos, 2019).

Chapter 2: Theoretical framework

> Hope, often fracturing, even a traumatic thing to experience, is among the energies by which the reparatively positioned reader tries to organize the fragments and part-objects she encounters or creates. Because the reader has room to realize that the future may be different from the present, it is also possible for her to entertain such profoundly painful, profoundly relieving, ethically crucial possibilities as that the past, in turn, could have happened differently from the way it actually did. (Sedgwick 2003, p. 146)

Two theoretical works have been paramount in framing the structure of my research, creation, and reflection. Together, they have offered me a perspective grounded in hope and potential. The first one is the notion of *reparative reading* by affect and queer theorist Eve K. Sedgwick, which has informed my interpretation of social media, selfies and filters, as well as a general approach to my subject and my relationship with my participants. The second one is *protopia*, as elaborated by media maker and future researcher Monika Bielskyte, and articulated more amply with colleagues in the *Protopia Futures [Framework]* (Bielskyte, 2021). Protopia is foundational in the creation part of this project and in my goals.

Reparative reading/making

Sedgwick writes in the mid 1990s on how the contemporary cultural and queer theories' investment has been greatly fueled by paranoia. Sedgwick makes the case for opting for more reparative approaches to subjects of analysis. Her reflections on the subject appeared in a few publications during the 1990s[13] and became renowned in her 2003 *Touching Feeling*, in the chapter "Paranoid Reading and Reparative Reading, or, You're So Paranoid, You Probably Think This Essay Is About You". A paranoid position, an "hermeneutics of suspicion"[14], would be one that seeks to find the oppressive structural conditions and anticipate the enemy and the negative affects[15]. Its focus is on analysing and exposing the issues at the heart of a subject. While she spends most of her words critiquing the paranoid position[16] and questioning its productivity - what does knowledge do? As performative, what are its effects? (p. 124) - she makes the point that both

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[13] In 1996 as a short introduction in a special issue of *Studies in the Novel* under the title 'Queerer than Fiction' and in a longer format in 1997 as the special issue was turned into a book.

[14] From Paul Ricoeur.

[15] Sedgwick defines the paranoid approach in five aspects: anticipation, reflexivity and mimeticism, the work towards what she calls "strong theory", a theory of negative affect, and a faith in exposure (Sedgwick, 2003).

[16] Sedgwick borrows "position" from the language of Melanie Klein, where a "position" is a "posture that the ego takes up with respect to its objects" (Sedgwick 2003, 128) and has a flexible and open relational stance.

paranoid and reparative readings have their validity and that their relation is one of symbiosis: "paranoia knows some things well and others poorly" (p. 30). The paranoid can indeed inform the reparative but what she deplores is the hegemony of paranoia in cultural studies (Wiegman, 2014), its quasi equation with criticality in itself, and its aversion to other forms of interpretation.

What Sedgwick proposes instead is an approach that seeks to understand what the subject of study needs and knows (Wiegman 2014, p. 7), that prioritizes justice and adopts a relationship of nurture, care and love. It pays attention to alternatives and different types of affects. For Heather Love (2010), the beauty and power of Sedgwick is that she grants permission for experimentation and pleasure, that her insights are enabling. On queer readings, that until then have largely been paranoid according to Sedgwick, even from her own account, she says: "it will leave us in a vastly better position to do justice to a wealth of characteristic, culturally central practices, many of which can well be called reparative, that emerge from queer experience but become invisible or illegible under a paranoid optic" (p. 147). The works of Schwartz on femme selfies, as discussed in the literature review, and of Dahl and Volcano with the photography book "Femmes of power: Exploding Queer Femininities" (2008) are of reparative nature and have inspired me. They both bring their lenses to the generative, collaborative and beautiful aspects of queer femme culture.

In the context of my project, a paranoid position helped me identify what was to repair in the first place. Some works in my literature review have informed me on some of the problematics of the selfie culture, selfie editing and of the current face filter landscape. The paranoid position also guided me in building the workshop with my participants, both in the questions and activities that I led. I facilitated a paranoid conversation with my participants in order to have them define for themselves the negative affects, underlying issues of our subject and what we need to repair. Through a reparative position, my aim was to create and offer a generative creative experimental reparative action.

Within the context of the global pandemic, one that leaves many of us lonely and dwelling on our lack of agency, it became meaningful for my project to connect people, to be creative and to research tools that can enable such connectivity. The only appropriate response to the pandemic's inequalities and fears seemed to be love. A love for people's labour and effort to exist amidst a violent world, for their creative reappropriation and subversion of dominant culture, and for the constant pushing for non-normative ways of being. I decided to hold a reparative position on face filters in order to shed light on its potential. Sedgwick puts beautifully into words the drive for reparative creative practices: "its fear, a realistic one, is that the culture surrounding it is inadequate or inimical to its nurture; it wants to assemble and confer plenitude on an object that will then have resources to offer to an inchoate self" (p. 149)[17].

Protopia

Protopia is a concept-perspective-framework-modus-operandi developed by Monika Bielskyte. Bielskyte is a science-fiction researcher and creator who looks for the future in non-western cultures. Through her travels and encounters she developed this idea of protopia as a compass for world-building - or world-growing, a term used by the authors of the *Protopia Futures* (sort of) manifesto (2021). A principal objective of protopian futurism is to challenge the current imaginaries on what the future will be as promoted by dominant media, such as the redundant dystopic, end-of-the-world, AI robot takeover, alien invasion films. While proposed as cautionary,

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[17] Please indulge me with all the quotes; I tried to resist the urge to share all the beautiful and poignant passages from Sedgwick's reparative reading chapter.

most of these stories feature a western perspective and are variations of what certain peoples have historically actually lived or currently live, such as colonialism, genocide, and climate migration. Moreover, the volume of these stories we are confronted with invokes a feeling of despair, of a crisis beyond reparation and of impossible agency. Meanwhile, utopias often tend to be so far ahead in time that it is hard to identify with them. These media of polarized visions have led to a crisis of our collective futures imagination (Bielskyte, 2021).

Protopia, instead, aims to "foster radically hopeful and inclusive future ways of seeing and being in this world" (Bielskyte 2021, "Preface: the 'WE' of Protopia Futures" section), it's about collectively creating YES visions of a future. The framework has been inspired by black feminism, and indigenous, queer and disability activism. Many of the principles behind this practice influence my research - such as plurality, community, presence, and creativity and subcultures. These concepts are translated in my project as celebration of gender diversity, as a co-creative methodology, as selfies and augmented reality as embodied practices, and as the creative experimental prototyping of a queer filter culture in expansion.

Beyond the textual objectives of proptopian futurism, the practice also encompasses a methodology and process. Protopia is about prototyping futures in collaboration, about centering marginalized folks and about always learning and iterating. Creating protopias is creating "spaces of active imagining, resourcing in the present and moving towards collaborative visions of liberation" (Bielskyte 2021, "Proactive prototyping of hopeful futures" section). The Protopia Futures group also produces media in collaboration with other thinkers and artists.

As part of the same impulse towards Sedgwick's reparation, I respond to the protopia call to "dream more expansive, hopeful futures, for their very purpose is to help us act" (Bielskyte 2021, "The scope of our future is the scope of our dreams" section). Concretely, my project subscribes to protopia in its creation and promotion of gender nonconformant media and offering reparative readings of augmented reality and face filters, contributing to enable inclusive imaginaries of futures. I also engaged with protopian future values in the building of my methodology, which I discuss in the following chapter.

Chapter 3: Methodologies and process

In this chapter, I first discuss the methodologies I have employed for this research project. While I have weaved together several methods to address the particularities of my subject, my project as a whole follows a research-creation framework. Subsequently, I describe my research process, expanding on the building of the workshops, and on how the workshops themselves and the creation of the filter went.

Research-creation

Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuk tell us that research-creation is a "conglomerate of approaches and activities that incorporate creative processes and involve the production of artistic works in the context of academic programs" (2012, p. 13). It is a particular type of investigation that is experimental and pays great attention to the processual nature of productions (Barrett & Bolt 2014; Chapman & Sawchuk 2012; Loveless 2019) - of media, knowledge, projects. The objective is to create a mode of enquiry pertaining to the research subject. As such, research-creation is privileged for investigations on media, the arts, or other creative-material practices; the knowledge that it produces could not have been obtained with a traditional methodology that doesn't engage in a creative practice (Chapman & Sawchuk 2012; Barrett & Bolt 2014). Estelle Barrett and

Barabara Bolt write about it as a form of material thinking, where the research presents, through various formats, a recording of the process "as a means of creative new relations of knowledge subsequent to production" (2014, p. 5).

Another key aspect of research-creation is that it permits to acknowledge the situated and personally motivated nature of knowledge (Barrett & Bolt 2014, p. 2) as the researcher reflects on the process, including their own implication in it, and not only to the data or the result.

Nathalie Loveless sees its potential in "the insertion of voices and practices into academic everyday that work to trouble disciplinary relays of knowledge/power, allowing for more creative, sensually attuned modes of inhabiting the university as a vibrant location of pedagogical *mattering*" (2019, p. 3; author's emphasis).

My project falls into the "creation-as-research" type, one of the four research-creation categories established by Chapman and Sawchuk (2012). As in the case of my research project, creation-as-research entails the "elaboration of projects where creation is required in order for research to emerge" (Chapman and Sawchuk 2012, p. 19). The research lens is more focused on what happens and what comes out of the process than the output itself; it brings attention to the different relationships at play in the creative production, between the media and technology used, the participants, and the encounters, and considers those reflections as knowledge (Chapman and Sawchuk 2012, p. 19).

Research-creation is appropriate for my project as I invoke material thinking by tackling questions of new media communications, selfies and augmented reality face filters, creative production processes, and participatory approaches. My findings come from the doing and from the senses (Barrett & Bolt, 2014, p. 1); the process of creating the things I am investigating offers me a unique position to reflect and produce knowledge on them.

Protopian futurism: participatory design, design justice, friendship, emergent strategy

As mentioned in the theoretical perspective, protopia also entails applying its core values in the methodology and process of media making. In the context of my project, these values are reflected in the collaborative creation of a face filter that celebrates queer femininity and nurture media imaginaries for an inclusive future (plurality, community, presence, creativity and subcultures). I have created a mixed methodology, taking bits and parts from various thinkers that seemed the most pertinent to reflect the uniqueness of the subject I am investigating and that resonate with my personal intentions with this project. I assembled this bricolage of methodologies under the umbrella of protopian futurism as they respond to similar principles found in the protopia framework. Moreover, the "strangeness" of investigating through a mixing of approaches reflects the queerness of the subject itself: it "makes it possible to show how queer subjectivities are formed out of an eclectic array of (sub)cultural references and reworking of popular cultural representations" (Dahl 2011, p. 7).

The first pillar of my methodology is Participatory Design (PD) and design principles developed by the Design Justice Network. PD is a design methodology that fosters "mutual learning between multiple participants in collective 'reflection-in-action'" (Simonsen & Robertson 2013, p. 2). Mutual learning implies that the participants of the design process aim to challenge the associated roles of designers and users by playing in both capacities (Simonsen & Robertson 2013, p. 2). While perhaps easier on paper than in practice, PD strives to include the users in substantial ways and reflects on what genuine participation entails (Costanza-Chock 2020; Simonsen & Robertson 2013). It challenges the universalist preconceptions of users that often reproduce the intersectional inequalities of society (Costanza-Chock, 2020). Through this genuine inclusion and

connection, the actual usages of the product are revealed, which can be distinct from the intentions of distant designers, as people are creative with how they make use of media and technologies (Simonsen & Robertson, 2013). In a similar fashion as research-creation, PD not only researches and designs products but also focuses on the *how* of designing them. In other words, the design process, which can include workshops, scenarios, mock-ups, etc., is tailored with and for the group of end users (Simonsen & Robertson, 2013).

Within the PD approach is a serious consideration of and accountability towards the ethics of design, as design is about creating contexts and futures for people (Simonsen & Robertson 2013; Design Justice Network 2018; Costanza-Chock 2020). The Design Justice Network (DJN) is a collective of various design practitioners that gathers to reflect on design, its ethics and how to create justice within the field, that came up with the design justice approach: "design justice rethinks design processes, centers the people who are normally marginalized by design, and uses collaborative, creative practices that address the deepest challenges our communities face" (Design Justice Network, 2018). Where design justice takes a new turn from the PD tradition is in its larger understanding of the scope of design and in its inclusion of the whole community implicated. The DJN has come up with guidelines for designing more consciously, by factoring in the different relationships and power dynamics at play.

While the filter my participants and I have created is a creative experiment, employing a participatory design approach was germane to my research as I wanted to research and create a digital product that would be experienced by users, as opposed to a creation that would be solely seen. Moreover, I was curious about using a methodology closer to the tech and commerce worlds than, let's say, the arts, since face filters are generally designed by and for these industries - or at least the heteronormative beauty filters that I aimed to challenge.

The second pillar of my methodology is friendship. Greatly influenced by the context of the covid-19 pandemic, the social isolation many of us had to live, the anxiety and the feeling of hopelessness, I wanted my research to help people connect and to offer some form of support. I wanted to include close friends in my project, have it serve a purpose larger than for my own academic and professional benefits, and create a direct impact. Lisa M. Tillman-Healy (2003) writes about friendship as methodology in an article describing the research process of her PhD. Her dissertation was about friendship, namely her straight partner's relationship with his gay soccer playmates, and was conducted through friendship. While other more traditional forms of data gathering can be used, like interviews, friendship as method is conducted through attributes of friendship such as conversations, involvement, compassion, vulnerability (p. 734). Therefore, Tillman-Healy tells us it necessitates an "ethic of friendship", "a level of investment in participants' lives that puts fieldwork relationships on par with the project" (p. 735), where the researcher is sensitive to the power dynamics at play and takes care of the relationships in and out of the research. Friendship can offer a generous qualitative methodology since there is an authentic engagement and trust between the researcher and the participants which leads to a depth in the testimonies (Tillmann-Healy, 2003). Discussing personal topics such as queer femininity requires trust and intimacy, which makes friendship a ripe mode of exploration for my project. Moreover, the research can be insightful and beneficial for the participants as they undergo an out-of-the-ordinary process that can be deeply reflexive (Tillman-Healy, 2003).

The final pillar of my methodology comes from adrienne maree brown's *Emergent Strategy: Shaping changes, changing worlds* (2017). In this book, brown presents her viewpoint for practicing activism and social justice successfully and holistically which stems from the biological concept of emergence, namely "the way complex systems and patterns arise out of a multiplicity of relatively simple interactions" (p. 7). With that idea in mind, brown sees the

potential for radical change in the small but authentic and profound gestures and connections: "critical connections over critical mass" (p. 7) she stresses. In the last chapter of her book, brown shares tools for workshop facilitation. I borrowed a few of them for the creation and facilitation of my workshops. They were all coming from the general principle "trust the People" (p. 135). I will discuss them more amply in the following section.

The process

Reflecting the core ideas of my methodologies and theoretical perspective, the creative process of the creation of the face filter was reparative, hopeful, intimate, reflective and generative of futurist visions. I will discuss in these next pages the building of the workshops, how the workshops went and what creative design direction came out for me to produce the filter, the production part with the software SparkAR, and finally the presentation of the prototype with feedback from my participants in the final workshop.

<u>The participants</u>

As mentioned earlier, it became deeply important that my master's thesis support my intimate communities. I decided to work on a subject that was already impacting my group of friends, in connection with face filters on Instagram. I decided to hold a discussion-workshop with three queer friends of mine that express femininity in varying ways. Investigating friends means that there is already an emotional affiliation, a trust, a deeper perspective of the self and of each other's self (Tillman-Healy, 2003).

Conversations on gender expression, gender performativity, femininity, and drag/burlesque, have been recurrent with friends as we seek to make sense of our identities. Guided by brown's principle of "inviting the right people" (2017, p. 137), I focused on inviting people that were impacted by the topics I wanted to tackle. I thought about asking friends with various gender self-identification, which would have included men friends who express femininity in certain contexts or reflect on their masculinity, but I thought that inviting more masculine friends would disperse the scope of the subject. I also considered including transgender friends, but I decided not to because I believe transgender folks have particular gender subjectivities and politics that I didn't think I could fully portray within the scope of this project.

I settled on inviting cisgender friends that identify as queer femmes/women and that are expressing and exploring fluid forms of femininity[18]. With their respective subjectivities and experimentations with femme-ininity, I thought they were the "right people" to dive into my topic of queer femininity in and out of Instagram and face filters. We are all in our early 30s and currently living in Montréal. I don't see this "sample" of gender fluid people as representative of the queer community and I don't aim to; the sample solely represents three queer feminine people, in the context of this workshop, in this moment in time, with whom I have a particular relationship. For my friend's privacy I have given them alternative names in this paper.

I first contacted Bianca (they) who is one of my oldest friends. They identify as a nonbinary queer. We met in sixth grade and have since shared many moments of our lives and evolved together. Like me, they are a white person. In the Winter of 2021, we had a long Zoom-call, discussing my research-creation, augmented reality, the workshop idea, and evidently queer femininity. This initial discussion with them helped me to form the research project. Bianca shared

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[18] Please note that Bianca's self-identification has evolved since the beginning of this project. They now identify as nonbinary and therefore are not cisgender.

how they thought it was a great opportunity for the other participating friends to discuss these issues together, that gender expression was accepted and recognized by close friends but not discussed so much. They also warn me to be careful because this topic is very personal and it could lead to people giving a lot and having high expectations of their participation and the final result.

Sokha (she/they) is also a long-time friend of mine. They identify as a genderfluid queer woman. We met in our early twenties through common friends and became close during Occupy Montreal in the Fall of 2011. At that time, Sokha had opened my eyes, mind and heart to novel ways of relating and connecting to others. They are a Québéboise-Cambodian second generation immigrant. I contacted Sokha second for my research project. They were also right away interested in participating in such a discussion and creative opportunity. They also mentioned that it was rare to have a formal setting to hold such conversations.

Sunny (she/they) is a more recent friend of mine. They identify as a queer femme and are a filmmaker and performer. Sunny is very vocal about LGBTQ2+ issues and injustices, in and out of social media. They also have performed as a drag king and have started developing a burlesque practice, exploring the performance of femininity. Their dedication to their work has always been very inspirational to me. I thought it would be interesting to have them on board since they have researched and articulated in great length expressing and performing gender in words, images and acts. Sunny is Bulgarian and immigrated to Québec about 10 years ago.

Building the workshop

Informed by adrienne maree brown's guidelines, I have reflected on the possibility of having a "living agenda". brown suggests having an "adaptable agenda for the participants to shape the meeting" (2017, p. 137). I knew my workshop was going to be somewhat short in length, lasting a few hours only, and that a lot had to be covered. I wanted the discussions to go in certain directions to obtain the information I needed to create my filter and to frame what I needed for the purpose of this master's thesis. I think it would have been unrealistic in that context to leave the agenda completely open. That being said, I still wanted to have some flexibility in order to offer my friends the opportunity to respond to each other and to let particular topics emerge through the conversation and resonances they might have.

I decided to create the workshop in two parts: a first part to discuss queer femininity, its implication on social media and in relation to face filters, and a second that would focus on the conceptualization of the face filter. The discussion of the first part would serve to share understandings on the terms we use and on what were the particularities and challenges of queer femininity, as well as leave space for personal testimonies. I had prepared questions and prompts to spark conversations, but I wanted my friends to respond to each other, to emphasize or nuance what someone would have said, and to bring up aspects I wouldn't have necessarily thought about. The second part would focus on the ideation for the design of the filter. This one would be more creative and applied. It would be a series of activities that would lead to a creative direction of what the filter was going to look like and be about.

I reached out to another friend to help me out with the workshop planning. He didn't know much about my research or about face filters, and he helped me see where I was caught up in my jargon and my own understanding of my creation. He brought a new perspective to my work. We had a discussion on what I wanted from each section to help me narrow what was important for me to obtain for my research. As a journalist who has interviewed many people, he gave me tips for the first section on how to lead a directed discussion. For the brainstorming and conceptualisation part, he helped me simplify the creative activities and we agreed on organising them in order from

the most abstract to the most concrete. These choices would help my participants understand what they had to do and to have fun, and help me to facilitate their ideas on what the filter should be.

Part one of the workshop, on queer femininity and face filters, was divided in three sections. The first section was meant to define the terms we were going to use, to have common visions of what we meant by queer femininities. The second section was focused on Instagram and face filters. I wanted to discuss the differences between expressing and consuming on Instagram, in relation to gender expression and queer femininity, and their uses of face filters and of Instagram in general. The third section was about addressing more formerly issues or challenges of queer femininity and what tactics have been used by fellow queer femmes for reparation.

As for part two, I prepared three creative activities to generate ideas for the creation of the filter. The activities were ordered from the most abstract to the most concrete. The first activity was the collective creation of two-word clouds around queer femininity: one on some of its attributes and another one on its symbols. For the second activity, I gave them as prompts a series of elements that are often included in the creation of filters or 3D models, such as colors, textures, materials, transparency, reflection, light, message, animation, and environment. They had seven minutes to draw what came to mind when relating these elements with queer femininity. For the last activity, I presented multiple examples of face filters and asked that they collectively comment on what they were seeing in relation to what we had discussed previously. To conclude these three exercises, I recalled elements that had come the most in our reflections to put them down into an actual vision of what the filter would be like.

We used the teleconferencing software Zoom for the workshop. A foremost reason we didn't hold the workshop in person was because the ethics board of Concordia hadn't yet permitted in-person research. That being said, the convenience and habit of using the software for over a year of the pandemic made us comfortable to meet that way. Employing Zoom was also useful for my part as the researcher: I could record the sessions to be able to go back to them if needed. Additionally, I could share my screen for showing visual support like the examples of face filters I presented to them. I also wanted to make use of Miro, a collective workspace, white-board like, online application, to take notes and follow up where the conversation was going. I was able to take notes as my friends were talking, while at the same time giving them the liberty to add their own.

The workshops

I was quite nervous before the workshop. I was very conscious of the preciousness of the time my friends were giving me. I was wondering if they were solely participating out of friendship, which was making me uncomfortable and very nervous about how the workshop was going to go. I felt it had to be perfect, extraordinary, profound. Informed by Tillmann-Healy (2003), I was aware of the power dynamic of the context: even if we were friends, as the researcher I had power over where the workshop was going to head and that they might feel pressured to disclose personal information. I see these sensibilities as the ethic of friendship that Tillman-Healy (2003) discusses. I was caring for their well-being in a different way than I would have with more anonymous participants. It was important to me that they felt comfortable sharing only what they wanted and that they did not feel pressured over their performance in the workshop. My research is meant to be creative and generative but the topics discussed are nevertheless very personal and can make people feel vulnerable. At the beginning of the first encounter, I stressed that they were participating in the workshop within their own boundaries and opened the door to the fact that they

might have different types of presence and "performance". I imagined that for a Thursday night after the work day, most of them would feel tired!

I opened the workshop by explaining to them why I focused my research on the topic of queer femininities and AR. I figured if they had a better idea of what the goal of my research was they would have a better idea of my research vision, and that it would make them more comfortable and informed to ask questions and feel involved in the process. I thought that the more they knew, the more we could be on the same level and they could bring up perspectives. Since each has their "individual participation articulation", their own points of reference and experiences, it was important to build a common tongue (browns 2017, p. 137).

I shared the agenda and we moved to another *tour de table* to express personal intentions, which is another borrowed facilitation suggestion from brown's (2017). They indicated that they were pleased to have such an opportunity to discuss their femininities. Furthermore, they indicated that gender expression is a complex and profound topic and that they were looking forward to articulating and merging their thoughts through a creative outlet; "I don't know if it will bring clarity or confusion, but I'm looking forward to it", said Sokha humorously. Moreover, even if they don't use Instagram in the same ways, and social media doesn't take the same place in their lives, they all mentioned that they were thinking about the younger generations - the "baby queers" as they lovingly used. They stressed how Instagram is such a big part of queerness for younger generations and were seeing the importance of research like mine.

Part one

We then began the discussion on queer femininity and face filters. We held the discussion in French, as it is the language we commonly speak together. It was meant to last about an hour, followed by a dinner break, and finally part two that was the applied and creative brainstorm. It ended up lasting most of the three hours that was allocated to the full workshop. At mid-point during the discussion we took a moment to collectively decide how we wanted the second part of the workshop to go. We were really immersed in the conversation and as it progressed more aspects were defined. Everyone was sharing very intimate thoughts and impressions and we felt it wasn't right to cut them short to move to the next part. My friends were responding to each other on points that were coming out, resonating with each other and opening on their own reflections in light of what the others were saying. We decided to have that time slot solely for part one and to reschedule part two. It made more sense to all of us to continue with the personal discussions, have time for ourselves, and have a more creative and concrete brainstorming at a different time. Our friendship as methodology came through here as we were following our own friendship pace (Tillman-Healy, 2003).

I had my questions and prompts for them and other threads emerged. The fact that we all knew each other made the conversations intimate to a degree that perhaps strangers wouldn't have. They were also really comfortable with each other and were taking leads in responding to what others were saying, and even bringing up follow up questions. All had a profound interest in what each one was saying and were listening deeply.

Miro turned out to be a great tool to use. As I had planned, I was taking notes as they were talking. None of my friends added something to the board but it was great to visualize where the conversation was going. Having a shared visual idea of what was being said and what was coming out of the discussion was really interesting[19]. It helped us to stay focused.

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[19] You can find in the appendix the Miro boards that have been created during the workshops. As mentioned, we held our conversations in French, therefore our notes are also primarily in French.

Part two

Part two, the collective brainstorm, took place the following night and lasted about an hour and half. To start off, I shared 11 themes that I had identified from our previous conversation in order to bridge the first workshop and this one. It was a way to recap the core of what came up the night before and to keep it in mind for the brainstorm.

We then engaged in the three creative activities I had prepared. I think they truly enjoyed participating in those activities and having the opportunity to think through their reflection in different forms. Two of the participants had similar aesthetic and conceptual ideas on the filter, while the other had her own vision. The first had more abstract ideas, while the other had in mind more conventional symbols of femininity. My personal aesthetics fall closer to what the two participants had in mind; I wondered how I would reconcile them with what the third participant brought up as it's important that they too see themselves in the filter.

Despite these differences, we came up to a consensus for me to start creating the filter. Our brainstorm notes, as taken with Miro, can also be found in the appendix. The main creative vision was that 1) the filter should avoid fixity. Fluidity and temporality were big elements that came out of our reflections on the expression of their femininity, as discussed in part one. It was crucial that the filter represents that aspect, that it would morph constantly to echo queer gender expression. Following that idea, if there were to be a soundscape, it should also be changing and impacting the atmosphere. 2) An important idea was that there could be a juxtaposition of gendered codes to question their gendered assignments. 3) Colours would also be various and not complementary. We were discussing using a palette of sombre colors and bright colours, intentionally making them not match according to color theory. 4) Another suggestion that Bianca brought up is that the filter shouldn't necessarily be conventionally beautiful throughout its metamorphosis; they reminded us that "queer femininity is often perceived as disgusting" since it differs from normative femininity. As such, the filter should challenge that by showing and celebrating the "disgusting". 5) They all agreed that the filter shouldn't deform the face to fit western beauty standards as lots of filters do. 6) Other notions to explore in the making of the filters are layers and transparency to portray the tension between presenting oneself and being perceived, which was another major revelation from the first part of the workshop, that there is a sort of game between presentation and perception. 7) It was brought up that femmeness was magical, making a witchy thematic a possible avenue. 8) Finally, symbols such as tears, flames, knives, glitter and body hair, and textures and materials such as water, fire, metals, pearl and grease, and the states of dripping and melting were mentioned.

Face filter making

The creation of a face filter is done with the use of computer-generated imagery (CGI) software, such as the game engines Unity and Unreal, augmented reality (AR) specific software like ARkit and Vuforia, or web-based AR platforms like 8th Wall. Instagram and Snapchat, the social media platforms where face filters are employed the most, each have their own proprietary software: SparkAR for the foremost and LensStudio for the latter. My research on the different technical options presented SparkAR as the best option for this project. Since my project was focusing on the platform Instagram, it made sense to use SparkAR to create my friends and my face filter. Because SparkAR is a widely used program for social media AR creation, I knew I would find online tutorials, pedagogical resources from the company and a big online community (the Spark AR Community Facebook group counts over 100k members). SparkAR is also the most accessible software compared to much more complex ones like Unity.

While I had no previous experience in AR media development, I have some skills and knowledge of 3D modelling and immersive media as I had followed introductory courses in the past for the software Blender and Unity. To begin my practice, I followed several video basic tutorials found on YouTube or on the SparkAR curriculum educational platform to practice the skills they were sharing. I played around with creating glitter skin, having masks around the head, and different makeups[20].

I encountered technical and conceptual challenges. First, we had sophisticated ideas, notably the fluidity aspect as we wanted the filter to morph independently, that were somewhat technically hard to put into practice as I am a novice at designing augmented reality media. Second, I also kept in mind that two of my friends had a closer vision of the filter but that I wanted to make sure that the three of them feel represented in our creation. While this sensibility made it a bit harder to follow a creative path, I think I succeeded in including a bit of everyone's visions.

The face filter and final workshop-discussion

If the filter were to be done in a longer term participatory design project this would be a first iteration that would be followed by a series of future encounters with my participants. For the purpose and scope of this master's research I prototyped a single design and collected their feedback on it. Figures 1, 2 and 3 demonstrate the face filter that I presented to my friends at the last workshop. The captures show the filter from three different angles.
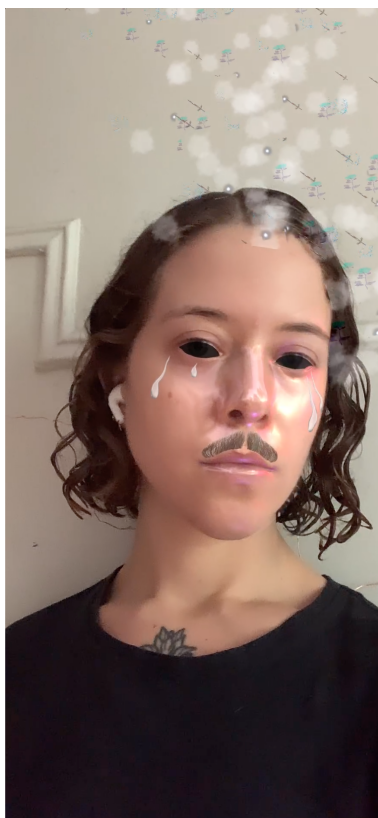
Figure 1 Capture from the left angle of the face filter layered on myself

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[20] Examples of these creative experimentations can be found in the appendix.
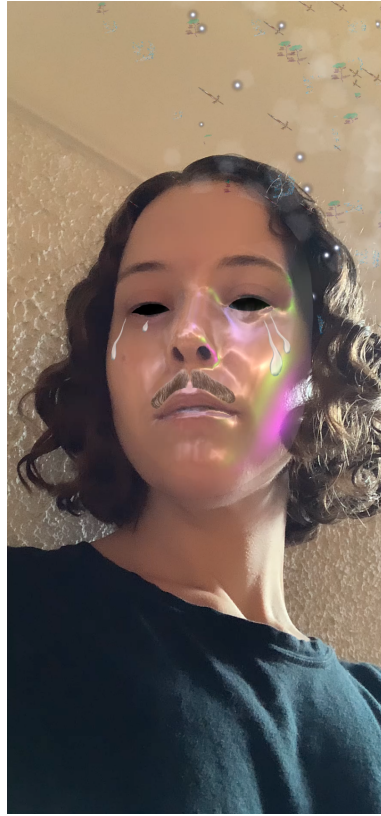
Figure 2 Capture from the right angle
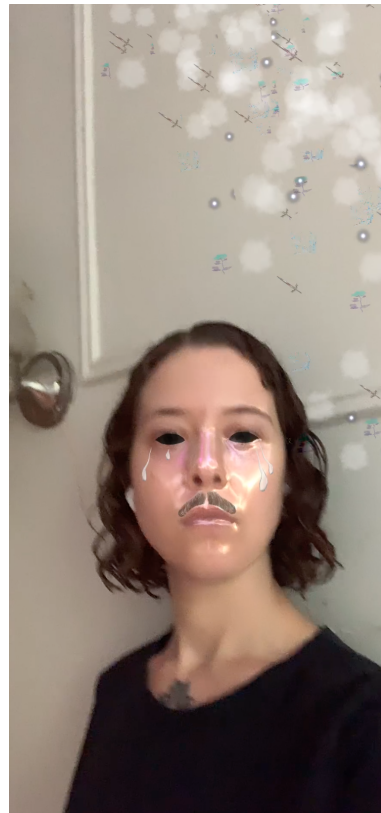
Figure 3 Front angle capture

Following my ethics protocol approved by Concordia's ethics committee, all the images are of myself in order to keep my participants' anonymity. As a means to communicate my process, I am sharing these captures as well as the Miro boards of our various notes throughout the workshops. The filter can also be tried on with this url: tinyurl.com/2nyve632[21] [22].

While I managed to include a lot of elements of our design vision, not all are found in the filter prototype. To represent the metamorphosis characteristic of queer femininity, I inserted in the scene of rotating colored lights that reflect on the face; the variations in movement and colors create an alive and fluid effect. For the juxtaposition of gendered codes, I combined "soft" and "hard" symbols we had identified, namely roses, daggers, (femme) tears and a moustache. Some of them are layered on the user's face and others are floating around, emitted from the user, to create dynamism. For the materials and textures, I gave a pearl-like quality to a section of the face, while keeping a low opacity to let the skin show under. Finally, to evoke a witchy "vibe", I made the eyes fully black.

When creating an AR piece in SparkAR, you can send a test link, like the one above, for people to try ahead of publishing. One needs an Instagram account as the link opens up the camera feature of the platform and activates the filter. I sent the link to my friends a couple days ahead of the workshop for them to try on their own time. That being said, Bianca couldn't access the filter as their smartphone didn't have the tech specificities required to read AR[23]. Fortunately, they could use their partner's smartphone and were able to test it beforehand. The technological requirements of AR is an accessibility issue; an intersection of correct device, software version and the piece specificities must be met to succeed. Filter creators have to regularly update their filters to meet the new phone standards and when they don't the filters are lost for the users.

The filter we created remains a prototype and hasn't been published on Instagram. As such, it hasn't circulated on the app. Only the ones with the url test link could access it. Also, it hasn't undergone the publishing process mentioned in the introduction.

We started the final workshop with general feedback from everyone on the filter. While everyone agreed that the moustache was too bold, my friends liked the result and felt it was harmonious despite the eclectic elements we had come up with. They indicated that they could see our common vision as well as my own personal aesthetic as a designer. Each also gave more narrow suggestions: the black of the eyes was a bit intense, perhaps another colour would fit better; the symbol particles were a bit hard to discern; the pearl material was coming out really well.

This general feedback led to a broader discussion on queer face filters, their potential and what implications they could have in queer femininity. I had questions for my friends around our filter - what was its goal, its audience, its dissemination - which brought thoughts on filters in general. They discussed different implications of face filters on the personal and the public realms. I also asked them about the participatory design process that we underwent and about their experience. Additionally, I had a final creative activity, where my friends had to respond to what came to mind in relation to certain themes of the filter I had highlighted (augmentation, layers, selfie, futurism, relationality, indexicality, avatars, in/visibility, memory, iconoclasm), but we didn't have to time to get to it. Once again, I followed the pace of friendship as our discussion had already lasted for an hour and half and my friends were quite tired.

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[21] Opening the link from a device (smartphone or tablet), and having an Instagram account and the application downloaded on a device is required in order to try it.

[22] Note that filters need to be updated regularly in order to follow the platform and operating software developments and affordances; this url link works as of February 2022 but may be obsolete at a later time.

[23] In other words, their phone was too "old".

Chapter 4: Findings

The current Instagram face filter landscape is mainly populated by "beautifying" effects that reproduce heteronormative ideals of femininity. With this project, I wanted to bring a reparative outlook to augmented reality face filters and investigate their emancipatory potential for queer femininities. Through the work of Bielskyte and comrades, I realized how much the visual media we create impacts imagination, which in turn grows the futures we inhabit, and intended to participate in the protopia enterprise.

After completing the workshop and creation, I return to my original research question: *what insights can we gain on face filters and queer femininities by designing a face filter through a participatory approach?* To answer this question, I have led a participatory design series of three workshops with three queer femme friends of mine. The first two workshops were a space to discuss our main topics and ideate a design plan for a queer femme face filter. I then created a filter following our vision over the course of two months. The third and final workshop was a space to gather feedback and impressions on both the result and the participatory creative process. In this chapter, I will discuss what I have learned throughout this process. Reflecting and creating in collectivity has provided me insights that I wouldn't have gotten solely from readings or analyzing media. I group below my findings around reflections on face filters, on my methodology and on queer femininities.

Face filters and mises-en-scène

Filters are performative media and permit people to play with its immersive elements. An important takeaway from this experience was how much my friends enjoyed and found meaning in the theatrical potential of filters; they were like tools of *mises-en-scène*, "the arrangement of actors and scenery on a stage for a theatrical production" (Merriam-Webster, n.d.). They can transform the face, the environment, and the voice; they layer figurative elements, colors, lights and effects; they are highly immersive and create "whole little universes", as Sunny had said during the last discussion. For them, there is a strong euphoria in representing yourself totally differently and in another world; "it's like costuming", they had indicated. This reminds me of Rettberg's (2014) claim that the strangeness of filters permits us to temporarily defamiliarize our lives.

At work in the production of a filtered selfie is a performance of the self: creativity and self-reflexivity is needed to stage it. Augmented reality asks to think relationally, not just visually or symbolically; it invokes thinking about the relation between the subject and its layered digital elements. Gould (2014) says that AR is a "new (art)form of seeing" (p. 30); I would add that face filters are a new art(form) of seeing yourself. The experimental mises-en-scène of the self that is required with filters has the potential to generate self-reflection and creativity.

While sharing on social media one's own distinct self-representation through a filter can be a celebratory experience[24], the distinction was made during the workshops that sharing the filtered image of oneself was not necessarily the end goal; it was mostly about the intimate experience of embodying the filter. Trying out filters that you like, like the one we had created, is pleasurable and empowering. It is a ritualistic moment you spend with yourself and it can induce the euphoria of presenting differently. As my friends shared throughout the last workshop, they mainly use filters for playful experimentations of the self; only a few self-captures would make it to a public feed on Instagram.

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[24] I am thinking notably of @huntrezz's statement from my media review, where she shares that she often identifies more with her filter representations than her physical appearance.

This self-representational performance invites interrogations around gender. A queer filter or a filter that offers alternatives to gender norms, like the one we have created, entices the user to reflect on their own gender expression. The theatrical filtered self-representation can become a gender performance. For instance, Sunny proclaimed it to be like 'quick drag, quick theater!'

My friends felt the euphoria of having a face filter representing aspects of their queer femininity, as opposed to the countless heteronormative filters, but another dimension in embodying filters is apparent in the fluidity found in changing drastically and instantaneously one's presentation. Sokha reported "I feel like I can be understood quickly, and that's gender and self affirming". The interchangeability, immediacy and instantaneity of filters afford the ability to represent well a fluid self-expression and a particular mood. Private and easily usable, filters that are queer are inviting for trying out different gender expressions and can generate self-reflexivity. For Bianca, queer filters could open towards broader self questions on gender modifications.

While the circulation of filtered selfies or of the filter itself didn't take place in the case of my research, my friends considered what the dissemination of a queer filtered self could mean for them. In the public realm, queer femme filters have the potential to counter heteronormative beauty standards commonly portrayed. The heteronormative filters had in fact previously discouraged Sunny from using filters altogether. Populating filters like ours on Instagram might encourage fellow queer self-expression and self-representation on the platform. Moreover, like many of the authors that I discussed in the literature review have indicated, nonnormative (filtered) self-representations challenge the power dynamics at play on social media (Rettberg, 2014), participate in re-writing a gender's negative narratives (Schwartz, 2021), and simply take up virtual space that is not generally conceited (Syme, 2015).

Besides, using filters can help reconcile wanting to put yourself out there, responding to the desire to be seen, while not wanting to reveal too much of yourself. For example, Sokha described they were rarely comfortable with sharing selfies. One reason for them being that it freezes in time a certain gender expression. Using a filter, on the other hand, makes the act and the object more playful and performative.

Circling back to my definition of selfies, filtered self-representations don't need to be circulated to be considered meaningful for the creator. As my friends have indicated, their relationship with filters is actually very intimate. Shared or not, filters foster mises-en-scène of the self. This defamiliarization and staging of the self can generate profound reflections on one's own representation. The intimate moments between the filter and you can be joyful, cathartic, affirming and insightful. Judith Butler discusses in "Gender Trouble" (1993) that "gender performance will enact and reveal the performativity of gender itself" (p. 139). While some filters are dramatic and others are subtle, they can be gender performances. Their playful and sometimes campy characteristics can lead to interrogating gender discourse and norms.

Protopian futurism

While I was greatly inspired and invigorated by the work of the Design Justice Network (DJN) for this project, I came to the realization that not all of the principles could be followed because of the academic nature of the project. This research-creation is done in the context of my master's thesis and therefore faced certain limits of how much participation I could integrate. My project followed a PD approach but couldn't fulfill all aspects of the DJN guidelines, mainly the ones around the long term implications of the design in the community and its social sustainability. A design justice practitioner would have been engaged in the community for a longer period of time, would support the community in maintaining the design by sharing technical knowledge and

tools, would be accountable to its design, and would perhaps not even have created anything new in the first place if it wasn't truly a need for the community. As I defined most of my research, the project didn't come from the community itself. My involvement with my participants was considerably short in time, lasting only in the context of my research. I also haven't provided any technical knowledge, such as software basics, for my participants to take the filters into their own hands for future uses. These are all important considerations for future projects, perhaps for a longer research project such as a PhD or a community-initiated intervention.

My friends indicated that the process made them feel heard and truly a part of the creative process. The context made them feel comfortable to reflect and think together, and express themselves. Seeing the result of our collective enterprise was gratifying. On a personal level, and this can also be attributed to the trusted intimacy coming from our friendship, our encounters have helped Bianca affirm themselves in their gender expression. During the last workshop, they shared that the distinction between being femme intentionally and being perceived as femme, a main point that came out during the first workshop, was very revealing. They were attributing a lot of their femme-ininity on how people were *perceiving* them, but in fact they feel more like they have a fluid gender expression that is beyond the masculine-feminine binary. Moreover, all three of my participants indicated that just being invited into the discussion was affirming. For Sokha, being invited made them feel like they had something of value to bring to the conversation and it was affirming that they were perceived as having a fluid and queer gender expression. Needless to say, the fact that we were all good friends has greatly participated in everyone feeling comfortable and open. But more than letting me access personal and profound data, the process has made each of my participants reflect on themselves and feel more empowered, almost like a mini group therapy. I don't think conducting individual interviews or analyzing their respective usage of filters would have led to such personal outcomes.

Another key aspect of the participatory design approach is that the user's experiential input reveals the actual uses of a product; what people *really* do with it. In our case, designing collectively the filter, from reflecting on the main theme to brainstorming its design and testing the prototype, has revealed that the filter was not about creating a self-representation to be shared on social media but was a personal experience. Not having the "end users" along through most of the design steps, could have for example led to falling onto the "in theory" of scenarios, user profile cards, or other non-participatory design methodologies, which could have led to assumptions on why and how people use the filter.

Finally, I have realized that friendship was always going to be part of my research process. The trust and intimacy I have with the close friends that supported me along the way was key to the success of the project. That being said, I understand that working with friends doesn't always go as smoothly. As discussed by Tillmann-Healy (2003), tensions can arise, for example, from having conflicting values as a researcher versus as a friend.

I first discussed my project idea with Bianca and got their input which definitely informed my research design, both from a theoretical point of view and a friendship point of view. We reflected on who could be other pertinent participants; if we should invite transgender and men friends or focus on cisgender queer femmes, concluding on the latter. Our conversation helped me greatly to think about what themes were important and what to be sensitive to when it came to the relational aspect of working with friends. For example, friends might have high expectations on the final result because they are intimately invested. Further along in the conceptualisation of the project, I shared what I had with Sokha and they also gave me valuable insights. They validated topics and decisions discussed with Bianca and shared how this could be therapeutic for the participating friends. Later on, my journalist friend helped me with the planning of the workshop

itself. I also discussed my process with various friends, from the MA cohort, from other programs and outside of academia. Many key decisions were made with the help of friends. In other words, as my friends' input is important to me in various situations, friendships would have all along informed my research; they are not just part of my 'data collection' but of the whole process. Using friendship as method has allowed me to turn a new lens on the research process and reflect on how friendships are supporting research.

Queer femininities

Part of my research question asks what we could learn about queer femininity through the collaborative design process of a filter. The presentation of the filter during the last workshop, the feedback, impressions, and last reflections, speak more to the potential and possible significance of queer filters than on queer femininity itself. I attribute this gap from the last workshop to a lack of prioritization of questions focused on that topic on my part, a mismanagement of time and a general fatigue from my friends that led us to shorten the discussion.

That being said, the first and second workshops, where we discussed queer femininity/femmes and ideated a vision for the design of our filter, brought many insights on queer femininity. We established eleven key themes of femme-ininity which prompted our design vision. These were established after the first workshop with the discussion questions and have been revisited and deepened during the creative activities for the brainstorm of the filter. While the emergence of these themes belongs to the particular group of friends that reflected on queer femininity during my series of activities, some of these themes are recurrent in femme literatures and texts:

ELEVEN THEMES OF
QUEER FEMININITIES

TEMPORALITY

Gender is not fixed in time - either in a society's definition nor on an individual level - it is always in the making. It can be challenging for people who want and need to rethink gender identity in a society that asks us to document and define ourselves across multiple platforms (for example through photography, personal biographical statements, institutional identity requirements, et cetera.

EMPOWERMENT

When feeling and presenting femme, one needs to brace themselves to face the misogyny, femmephobia and homophobia that is ever present in our society. As such, expressing femme-ininity can often take place when one feels empowered and defiant.

PERCEPTION VS PRESENTATION

There is a distinction between representing a certain iconography of femininity and intentionally presenting as and identifying with femme. A more fluid queer identity falling outside of femme can also portray feminine aspects while not identifying as femme. The tension lies in the expectations others can have of femininity, between presentation and perception of the other.

SAFETY

Presenting femme can sometimes offer a refuge in a homophobic environment, when the femininity isn't interpreted as queer and appeals to cis-heteronormativity. It can also offer a break from the looks, comments and other daily microaggressions.

DESIRE

Femme-ninity can often emerge when there is an aim to express sensuality and desire.

CREATIVITY

Gender expression is continually developed and experimented with. It is an important form of creativity.

HUMOUR

Humour is an important tactic used to respond to the homophobic and queerphobic instances and structures in our society.

FLUIDITY

Femininity and gender expressions are emergent and relational. Femmes are always in the making. Femme-ininity is a movement towards, a search, a quest, a pulse. It is never fixed.

EXISTENCE

For femmes, the visibility and celebration of gender nonconformant expressions are key factors in their success and emancipation.

RECODIFICATION

Recodification of masculine symbols as feminine is an important goal and practice of queer femininity.

INTERSECTIONALITY

Queer femmes, in their research and reflections on queer femininity, pay attention to the different intersecting levels of oppressions.

Figure 4 Eleven themes of queer femininities

These eleven aspects and themes of my friends' femme-ininity have not only served for the design of the filter, they have helped my friends define and feel confident about their gender expression. Dahl reminds us that "a shared engagement with queer femininities works as a point of entry to opening up questions about the materiality and performativity of the feminine, not as a

final destination or bounded entity" (2011, p. 19); queer femmes are always in the making, redefining and remodeling themselves and their femme-ininity. The reflections around the eleven themes that came up during the workshops are open and on-going. They can serve as prompts for imagining gender differently.

Chapter 4: Conclusion

Face filters are a new type of media and form of communication; while most filters found on popular social media platforms are reproducing normative discourses, a lot permit exploration with other representations and meanings, making augmented reality a rich and exciting new field of research and artistic exploration. I have been fascinated with augmented reality and particularly face filters since they became accessible on mass consumer apps; how transformative AR media can be, from totally shifting the perspective of a public place by augmenting the space with an historical piece to generating personal discoveries when embodying a face filter.

This project is a research-creation about world-building; this world-building couldn't have happened without the network of friendship. We have created a filter to rethink femininity and face filters together. I am interested in new media forms and co-creative encounters; working with a participatory approach, alongside friends, has revealed itself to be not only theoretically insightful but also personally nourishing.

I want to take a few words to recognize the afrofuturism roots of my project and thank the labor of its current and past creators and thinkers. Mark Dery, who coined the term, describes it as speculative fiction that treats african-american themes and concerns of technoculture, and appropriates images of technology and futures (1994, p.180). Importantly, afrofuturist works bring to the table the proclamation of a rich and vital future for a those whose past was robbed. In *Emergent Strategy* (2017), brown uses Octavia Butler's literary contributions, particularly *Parable of the sower* (1994), and describes it as a major inspiration for the work she does. Bielskyte and collaborators also mention having been influenced by Butler, as well as adrienne maree brown. Finally, Huntrezz Janos' work, including the filter I presented, is infused by afrofuturist aesthetics and aims. The revolutionary work of afrofuturism has opened imaginations towards different futures and influenced many schools of thought; a future sensitive and hope-oriented project such as mine owes a debt to the labor of the afrofuturist creators that have paved the way.

For my friends, a significant quality of face filters is the theatrical possibilities they offer. They are world altering through their costume, makeup and decor digital overlay; the face filter is a medium for mises-en-scène of the self. The creative performance of self can lead to identity discoveries and production. Face filters are mises-en-scène technologies that are fertile for self-reflexivity, including reflexivity on one's gender expression. As they are part of mass user platforms, there is potential for large scale reflection on gender and gender expression.

Borrowing from Bielskyte's vocabulary, I employed what I called protopian futurism, a methodological framework that I put together taking roots in participatory design, friendship and emergence, which has brought revealing insights. One of them is the actual use of face filters by my friends: my friends rarely use filters for sharing selfies on their social media channels, instead their principal practice is intimate. Since my participants were involved in many parts of the filter-making, from the user profile, to the conceptualisation and the prototype feedback, I was able to obtain real usages, needs and meanings from the "end users".

Regarding queer femininities, while the filter itself wasn't as insightful in this area, eleven themes have emerged from the first two workshops. These represent important dimensions of my friends' femme-inine subjectivities; they are part of what makes these subjectivities at times

difficult and at other times beautiful (and sometimes both), and are key factors in leading a queer femme life, physical and digital. They have served for the design of the filter and supported identity reflexivity.

The work of play and imagination that we did, as hopeful and enabling as it aimed to be, does not fall outside of our contemporary cultural milieu. The aesthetics of the filter, witchy and slightly cyborgian, have their own loaded history and impact. While these acts of creating still remain meaningful and important, we must remember that they are limited by a perspective that can have emancipatory potential to some but not all.

Moreover, my work here does not escape the constraints of the system, in this case Instagram. In *Pain Generation*, Saraswati (2021) examines the social media activism of rupi kaur, Margaret Cho, and Mia Matsumiya. Their work, incredible and radical, nevertheless complies to the neoliberal self(ie) gaze (2021), demonstrating the limits of using these platforms for social justice work. Schipper comes to a similar paradoxical conclusion regarding filters: while being possibly liberating on an individual level for various reasons, filters "simultaneously reinforce the cultural conventions of gender display and self-portrayal" (2018, p. 2). Saraswati proposes a practice of "vigilant eco-love" to still "dare imagine in the midst of dooming failure" (2021, p. 137) beyond the neoliberal mode. Vigilant eco-love moves away from the individual selfie practice to a collective, connected and supportive one. It asks to be vigilant about our social media practices; to encompass and love the ecosystems they are part of.

While the accompanying documentation of my research-creation is composed of the Miro note boards, examples of my filter experimentations, and video/photos of the prototype, in order to share my research with a larger audience I plan to disseminate the project by creating a digital zine of the creative and research process. I saw visual designer Max Mollison do something similar, documenting his creation of an augmented reality piece commissioned from a museum (Mollison, 2021), and thought it was an interesting way to reflect further on the process and to make it more accessible.

This research-creation project contributes knowledge to the novel field of augmented reality, and more particularly face filters. While photo-editing and beauty filters have been examined considerably, figurative filters haven't been given the same research attention so far. My project has demonstrated the important self-reflexive dimension of face filters, which can impact considerations of one's gender expression, as well as one's understanding of femininity and masculinity. In that, I believe, lies a queer potential of filter which can lead to emancipatory processes around queer femininities. My project also contributes to reflections on participatory methodologies.

I believe a contribution the filter that we created would make, if added to the pool of heteronormative filters found on Instagram, is that it remind its users that alternatives exist, for themselves and in others. Face filters as mise-en-scène technology open up imaginative space for the otherwise (Saraswati, 2021). Much more than the witchy-cyborg vision that we propose itself, I think the filter can grant permission to be something else.

I was curious about face filters since they are most often looked down, perceived as silly and frivolous, just like selfies are. Both selfies and face filters are associated with the feminine, in content and practice. I valued this femininity by considering it as worthy of examination and experimentation. Questioning this space with a queer femme angle allowed me to see this feminine outside of normative jugements. Like other queer femme practices and arts, femme face filters reclaim femininity outside of heteronormativity. Berlant and Warner tell us that queer cultures are

projects of world-making and that doing so requires the development of kinds of intimacy that bear no necessary relation to domestic space, to kinship, to the couple form, to property, or to the nation. These intimacies *do* bear a necessary relation to a counterpublic - an indefinitely accessible world conscious of its subordinate relation. (1998, p. 558, author's emphasis).

I find the queer counterpublics that Berlant and Warner illuminate in "Sex in Public" (1998) have affinities with the protopian perspective: the world-building projects of radically inclusive and hopeful futures to embody. This is what we have strived to achieve with this research-creation project. To me, queer counterpublics are creators of protopias. My reparative perspective has let me see the possibilities of face filters; I believe reparative practices are needed for protopian futurism.

Appendix

Visual documentation of mentioned artworks (in order of appearance)

Beauty3000 face filter by @johwska
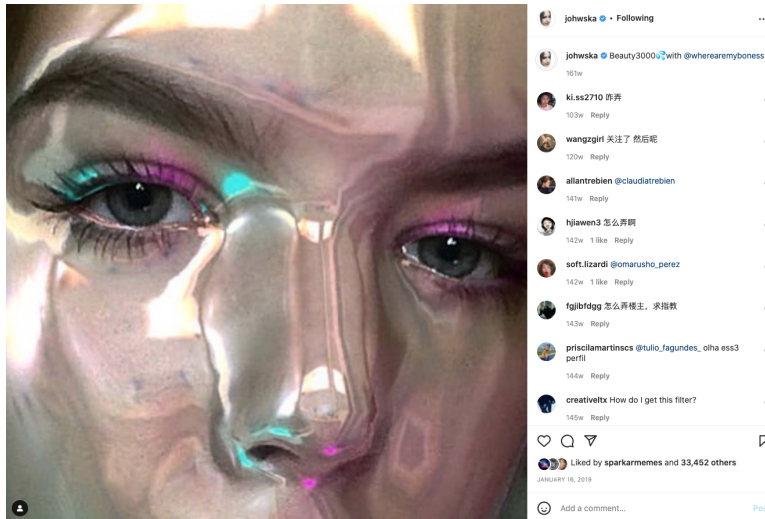
Jaskowska, J. [@johwska]. (2019, January 16). Beauty3000💦 with @wherearemybones [Instagram photo]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/Bssb51HBuEd/.

The Selfie Drawings Augmented Reality Artist Book by Carla Gannis.
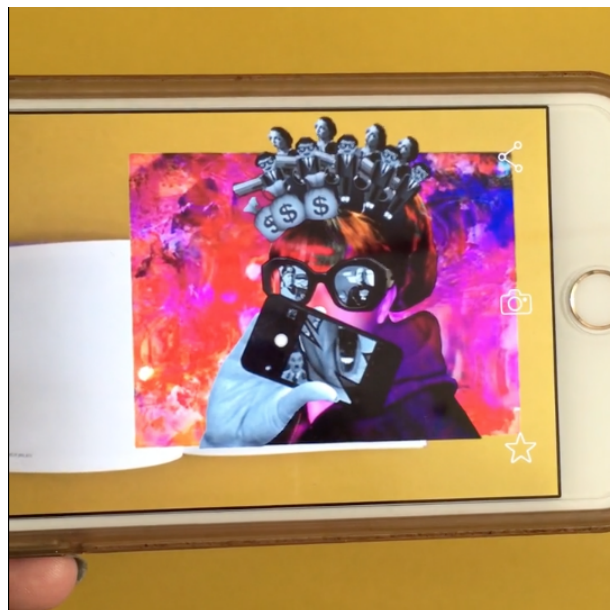
Gannis, C. [Carla Gannis]. (2016, August 31). *The Selfie Drawings Augmented Reality Artist Book*. [video]. Vimeo. https://vimeo.com/180949912.

Water Lily Invasion by Tamiko Thiel

Thiel, T. (2013). *Water Lily Invasion*. [augmented reality installation]. Tamiko Thiel Online Portfolio. https://tamikothiel.com/AR/waterlily.html.

Garden of the Anthropocene by Tamiko Thiel

Thiel, T. (2016). *Garden of the Anthropocene*. [augmented reality installation in public space]. Tamiko Thiel Online Portfolio. https://tamikothiel.com/gota/index.html.

ReWildAR by Tamiko Thiel

Thiel, T. (2021). *ReWildAR*. [augmented reality installation]. Tamiko Thiel Online Portfolio. https://tamikothiel.com/rewildar-website/index.html.

Tinsel Polycarbonate filter by @huntrezz
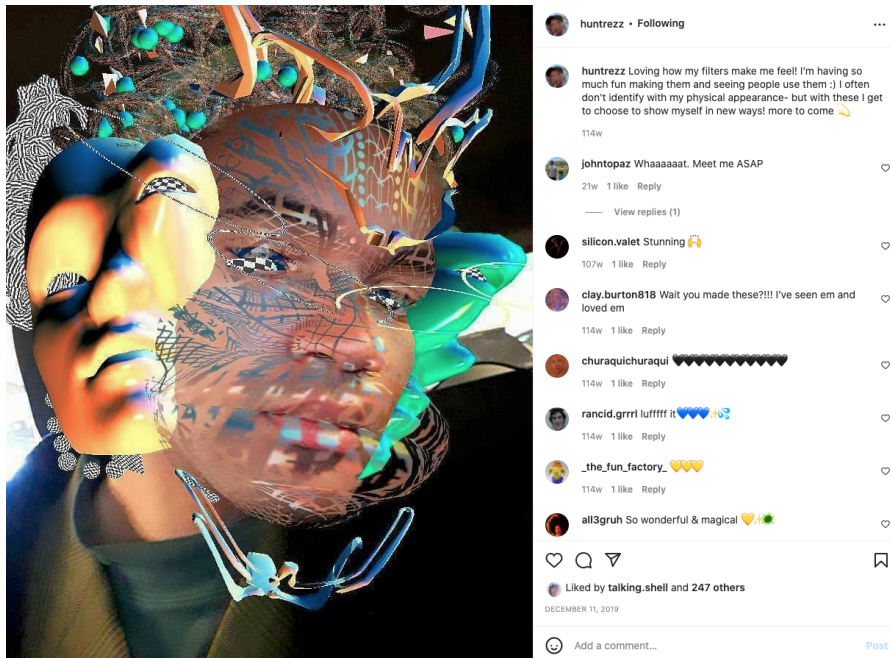
Janos, H. [@huntrezz]. (2019, December 11). loving how my filters make me feel! I'm having so much fun making them and seeing people use them :) I often don't identify with my physical appearance- but these I get to choose to show myself in new ways! More to come 🦎 [Instagram photo]. Retrieved from https://www.instagram.com/p/B59Eq31l72T/.

Miro note boards (in French)

WORKSHOP 1 (July 8, 2021)

instagram pas nécesairment partie de nos vies si pas en ville

bébé queers <3

struggle avec instagram

réflections binarité masculin-féminin

what is instagram though?

INTENTIONS

millenial vs bb queers (gen z)

c'est quoi la féminité queer?

expression du genre est valse entre les codes

c'est quoi le genre?

clarté ou confusion???

genre autour de la perception des autres

articuler ce qu'il y a dans nos têtes aide à clarifier pour nous-même

c'est cool de se réunir et d'aborder ses sujets avec d'autres

toujours voulu être femme

tension avec ce qui a été imposé

essayer de courir après une féminité, jpense..

femme in the making

est-ce que la féminité est un sentiment confortable que tu recherches ou c'est soi?

femme c'est quand je veux être désiré.e, par une certaine énergie... être désiré.e d'une autre manière

l'image d'une "femme" rend confu.e

recherche de créativité, recherche de sexyness

désir sexuel, sensualité, vouloir être désiré.e par une certaine énergie

plutôt perçu femme que recherché

attraction à des objects, à une aesthetic femme

nouvel outfit crop top, jupe longue, fleurs rouge, femme.

évènement lesbien et queer. sentie bien, à l'aise d'être dans un environnement comme ça.

<3 30 year old married lesbian wearing a red dress <3

besoin d'être accepté, qui ne serait pt pas comblé par le manque d'acceptation vis-a-vis l'homosexualité.

est-ce que c'est moi? est-ce que ça part d'un manque?

validation familiale. mère complimente plus lors d'expression féminine, et commentaires négatifs lorsque moins féminine. plus à l'aise avec la famille lorsque présentation femme.

body hair est considérer comme masculin mais pour moi c'est fémnini, sensuel. au départ c'étiat juste une convenience

tu cours après quelque chose mais plus tu y penses plus c'est flou c'est quoi cette chose? ...

problème avec le languague de genre, de "femme". femme est pas la même chose femme quand on pense à nos mères

être femme c'est de me sentir sexy et de remplir les trucs du stéréotype féminin, relié au regard masculin. attentes genrées envers les femmes.

powerful.

revendiquer statut de femme par sa persécution, combatif

être safe dans ce qui est "normal"

DÉFINITIONS

ça part d'autre chose que l'expression du genre à la base, avant de l'assumer et de l'apprivoisé comme choix aesthetique

femme est powerful, bold, être visible et persécuté.e. combatif, mais d'une manière

du mal à mettre une étiquette, d'une journée à l'autre c'est ultra fluide

femme presenting vs femme perceived

et c'est pas non plus que j'arrive à me voir dans une des catégories

les journées où je me sens prête et combative à être vu.e je me sens femme. les journées plus introspective sont moins femme. évidemment plus complexe

relié à la cis-hétéro-normativité. = valeur si on est intéressant.e pour les hommes

quand on va sortir de la binarité. je ne suis pas homme ni femme.

ligne est fine entre identité fluide et expression

womxn, terme qui encompassait ce qui est à l'extérieur de mainstream fémininité. féminité ouverte. conscient.e que ça participe à l'invisibilé trans

femme n'implique pas que tu es une femme ou un homme. plus relié à l'expression de genre qu'au genre comme tel.

ballroom, catégories de butch et femme

influencé par la culture populaire femme

confuse quand je dois identifier mon genre. beaucoup influencé par comment les gens me voient. influencé par mon positionnement dans la société

moment où je me sens bien de revendiquer femme c'est dans des milieux traditionnels non-masculin. vouloir revendiquer fémininité dans les milieu mécanique. ou dans le dancehall. culture où la binarité n'existe pas. mais trop femme dans les milieux queers, pas assez gender fluide. j'ai l'air straight.

quand il n'y a pas de choix j'adore ma féminité à 100%, être célébré là-dedans.

miro

WORKSHOP 1 (July 8, 2021)

INSTAGRAM

une grosse partie qui est créative. moments où je suis créative c'est des moments où je suis femme perceived.

profile est plus femme perceived mais frustration autour de ça. désir d'être masculin aussi.

self conscious de me montrer moi-même, partager des photos qui seraient perçues femme, ça peut représenter certains moments mais en même temps je suis plus fluide, et ça ça va rester dans le temps

être vu.e d'une certaine façon et après se présenté différent en personne.

consommation vs expression: intrinsèque avec mon expression de genre, comment je vais performer femme.

instagram m'aide à accepter différentes connotations de symboles féminins

suit des gens qui m'inspirent et qui valident mon expression du genre. queer femme, homme femme. m'éloigne des comptes qui me font sentir que je ne suis pas assez normative

unfollow si je ne me sens pas bien.

pour aimer mes courbes, ça tombe souvent dans la féminité

partage d'une photo plus non-binaire mais pas envie non plus que ça reste figé dans le temps

labour, travail. travail émotionnel et travail de produire du contenu

est-ce que femmeness est plus relié à vouloir être exposé/vu? donc insta plus perçu comme féminin

makeup vu comme de l'art, provient pas d'un désir d'être plus femme

danse = feeler plus femme. exprimer ma sensualité et sexualité. pcq j'attire plus l'énergie "masculine".

c'est comme si je suis neutre tout le temps. l'expression de genre est émergente dans la relation avec l'autre.

lorsque c'est ouvertement une performance du genre, drag, burlesque, etc. plus libre. performance

partager ce qui est personnel sur IG.

commentaire de la famille a freiner mon partage sur IG

y'a quelque chose qui m'arrête. il y a tellement de contenu déjà.

le commentaire de la famille a "réussi"

personnes qui ont du contenu de qualité - je ne me sens pas à la hauteur. contenu riche et important, mais beaucoup de travail.

le contenu qui partage juste l'existence et qui est visible est important, est meaningful

se sent femme dans la performance, danser, dragqueen, etc.

insta = sait pas qui te voit. donc c'est moi qui pose un regard sur ma page, sur mon expression de genre. les interactions sur insta, commentaires, dms, vont soutenir. mais sinon c'est plus moi.

lors du drag de la masculinité que j'ai assert ma féminité

personnages de l'ouvrier et du casa nova, masculin

chest bind, se faire appeler 'daddy'

passer au travers la peur de comment mon corps ou genre est perçue

IG est une recherche de connections et recherche de communautés

peur de ne pas être assez féminine

RÉPARATIONS

filtre test - which gay? my nonbinary name

juste l'existence et la visibilité est huge

pratique commune d'essayer mais sans partager les résultats

beauty filters, mais avec le temps je me suis tanné.e

@shedoeshim: masc presenting, mais qui défend le fait que c'est une femme. défend que masculinité et féminité n'ont pas de genre en fait.

revendique que

la tranche montagne: grosse qui utilise l'humour

@alokvmenon

rituel, queerness, revendiquer sa féminité

filtres de @charbataille, mais n'existe plus. très coloré, genre makeup mais des formes, insectes, etc., blattant

doit être créatif et original

intersec tionalité

@lesbianspeedating; l'humour aussi pour parler de trucs lourds et politiques

queen_esie: pe@rsonne femme qui a beaucoup de poil et que le revendique. poil est féminin aussi. pas habitué à voir ce genre de pilosité.

une féminité en jouant avec les autres aspects plus fortement pour intégrer des trucs qui sont normalement masculin mais les revendiquer féminin

expression combative

très stylé, personnes qui curatent leur photo.

fashion, posing, modelling. empowering

créatif, stylisme

filtre peut te représenter plus que irl

filtre 'masculin', ouverture à diverse expressions de genre

l'humour et l'art

miro

WORKSHOP 2 (July 9, 2021)

bold
fierce
combatif

dramatique

créatif

awareness

visible
invisible

performance

robe rouge

série *pose*

charge
taking charge
charge émotionnelle
se charger

bold eyeliner
feline eyeliner

sparkles
shine
glitters

ATTRIBUTS/ADJECTIFS

assumé.e

rouge à lèvre

boa rose

femme fatale

SYMBOLES/MÉTAPHORES

flame
emoji flame

remarquer
feeler toute

présence

relationnel

6e sens

fighter

armure

sensibilité

magie

mante religieuse

scorpio vibe

perception

care

en opposition

sensual but
deadly

soft but tough
ex. apposition de
armure avec larmes

empathique

---

translucide,
see-through,
silhouette
mais qu'on
voit à travers

son spatial,
space,
alien, sci-fi

noir,
vert-gris
pastel

soft,
glittery,
shiny

gold, metal,
argent, cuivre,
élément
naturel

brume,
mystique

sons qui fittent pas avec ce
qu'on voit, ex. bruit d'eau
quand c'est du feu,
sons qui contrastent

genre bruit de guns sur
fleurs (pour illustrer l'idée)

femme
shark

rose, mauve,
opal, pierre de
lune,
translucide,
perlé, nacré

couleurs vives mais
un peu sombres,
pas
primaire/secondaire
s; couleur vive mais
mélangé avec la 3e
couleur

gems, pas
juste diamond
et shining,
mais
opalescence

voix d'alex
voss
OITNB

voix basse,
approfondie,
deepened

que le filtre lui-
même soit fluide,
change
constamment en
des trucs
vraiment opposés

flame dans les
yeux et
piercings; peau
opal perlé,
mermaid

toune de
billy
holliday, ou
bikini kill

SESSION DESSIN

beat
mystique,
fatima al
quadiri

pas de mot,
mais
tender et
care

eau

transparence:
30%-40%

shiny, soft,
greasy,
piquant

soft moustache
molle, tout en
restant avec du
makeup
sharp/bold

pas de
déformation, pas
de féminisation
de trait, pas
d'idéalisation de
trait féminin

third eye?
symboles qui
gravitent
autour du
visage

chevelure

métal qui fond,
lave

de quoi qui brûle
mais qui est
calme

filtre qui change, qui
démontre la fluidité,
qui suivrait les
angles du visage, un
côté est quelque
chose et l'autre est
autre chose

---

perlé tout
de suite
appealant
et beau.

perlé, sur
l'environnement
ou sur la peau

femmeness souvent perçu
comme disgusting, mais
qui ne l'est pas en fait

inclure élément pas
cisfemme mais qui peuvent
être femme

pas de
modification
du visage dans
les standards
de beauté

métal?
armure?

peut-être quelque
chose de pas
nécessairement
au début

greasy

layer transparent
qui venait
changer les trait
du visage un peu,
serpent

pas 2 filtres,
peut-être
interactif avec
mouvements tête,
haut bas, gauche
droite

filtre qui change,
représentation qui n'est
pas figée

représentation qui change
malgré toi, la perception de
l'autre n'est pas un choix

pas
clairement un
personnage,
plus abstrait

flame
feu

SKETCH FILTRE

pas d'un état à
l'autre, fluide
dans la
transformation
et les codes

moustache
molle... en
combinaison avec
rouge à lèvre rose
pétant ou vert?

couleurs
vibrantes
flash et
gris-coloré

witchy,
mystique

ambiance,
changeante,
fluide

mood de
coulant,
watery à feu,
bold, fierce

poils qui
flottent vers
la
moustache?

stickers
sur le
visage

larmes,
flames,
couteaux,
baguette
magique

larmes

WORKSHOP 3 (Sept. 23, 2021)

FEEDBACK - TOUR DE TABLE

moustache plus fournie que ce que l'on avait dit. vraie moustache

vibe yeux tous noirs, creepy, larmes, élégants

est-ce que le noir clashait beaucoup avec le reste, peut-être gris?

je te reconnais là-dedans. éléments qu'on a parlé mais du gabi aussi

esthétique vraiment nice. harmonieux, les teintes, les gris, les petits reflect colorés

aimait beaucoup filtre de visage et particules, c'est cool les filtres quand il y a les deux

reconnu les éléments qu'on avait parlé, même si pas d'attente concrète

bcp de choses on a dites auraient été hétéroclites et pognées, mais le résultat est plus harmonieux que clustered.

doux quand même, plus doux que agressif

le masque sans être un masque étant transparent

moustache plus fournie qu'on avait dit

<3 textures

moustache molle aurait quelque chose de plus revendiqué femme que full moustache. au niveau du thème de femme, moustache full plus masc mais pourquoi pas femme aussi?

a beaucoup jouer avec le filtre pour le comprendre, voir d'ou venait les particules

texture du masque, texture des larmes, dessin

yeux noirs surprenant, plus créature mythique

yeux noirs contrastes avec la douceur du perlé, et des lumières roses

s'attendait à de la musique, peut-être rajouter ça

particules pas facile à voir l'iconographie. size des icones aurait pu être plus grandes, ou plus opaque.

particules pas facile à voir l'iconographie

PARTICIPATORY DESIGN

si c'était hors cadre de MA, je ne participerait pas à quelque chose qui ne serait pas participatif.

je ne connaissais pas le design participatif, ça m'a paru très fluide et naturel. juste comme si on se parlait entre nous.

les étapes cadraient bien

oui j'ai l'impression d'avoir fait partie du processus, je me suis sentie écouté

avoir ce contexte pour parler de ces sujets, ça mis à l'aise de réfléchir et de m'exprimer là-dessus

je pense que je ne suis plus aware de qu'est-ce que ça pourrait être d'autre

y'a des gens qui font des focus groups?!

ça m'a fait du bien de parler de ça entre nous

de voir le résultat c'est gratifiant

gabi = exécutif et médiatrice

juste d'être invité.e à discuter sur ce sujet-là, outre les réflexions, était affirming d'être invité.e. ça m'a fait sentir vu comme une personne qui pouvait apporter quelque chose à ce sujet-là, qui a une identité de genre fluide.

les ateliers m'ont permis de plus m'affirmer dans mon expression de genre. je me suis rendu compte que je suis plus femme perceived que femme perceive. ça m'a beaucoup aidé dans mon affirmation de genre plus que je pensais.

miro

WORKSHOP 3 (Sept. 23, 2021)

FEEDBACK FILTERS

affirming pour certaines personnes, dans l'exploration de la féminité queer.

queer est un fuck you à l'hétéronormativité qui peut être représenté par des filtres de beauté

en général ça sert à quoi les filtres - meaning pour différentes personnes

expression de créativité, notre expression et présence sur les réseaux sociaux est gros maintenant. exploration

juste essayer le filtre pour du entertainment, s'évader, se réafirmer

faire du drag, expression performative

gender bending affirmation, rajoute à l'univers playful, revendiquer, contraste avec les filtres de beauté régulier. apsect fantastique qui raconte une histoire. c'est quasiment un univers spécifique. créé un narratif alternatif.

plus il y a des filtres différents mieux c'est

télécharger snapchat pour essayer filtre pixar

il y a des filtres qui sont des mises en scène, comme un gif qui exprime un mood ou impression rapidement. filtre exprime un mood, une vibe aussi.

juste essayer le filtre ça m'a créé du plaisir, j'aimais ce que je voyais. je me sentais bien dans ce filtre-là, parce que ça ce n'était pas un filtre qui est censer correspondre à standards de beauté. message derrière malaisant.

selfie augmentée?

effet d'immersion vu que tu te vois dans une photo entrain d'incarner autre chose que ce que tu regardes dans le miroir. aspect augmentée. quelque chose qui permet de se percevoir instantanément dans quelque chose d'autre.

ça m'a procurer du plaisir

nouveau mode de communication qui te met en scène qui peut te représenter rapidement

quick drag, quick theater

filtres peuvent transmettre un mood rapidement, mood particulier. si tu envois ça à quelqu'un la personne peut te comprendre rapidement.

gender affirming

ce filtre-là modifie d'une manière plus affirming, pour n'importe quel type de personne.

dans partager une photo de toi, recherche de validation ou de passer un message

euphorie de se représenter autre chose, d'être dans un autre monde. comme se costumer. moins de mérite car ce n'est pas moi qui l'a créer mais tout de même

attachement avec les filtres de charline, de savoir que je pouvais y retourner. vraiment triste de savoir qu'il n'existe plus sur la plateforme.

attachement aux filtres queers par des personnes queers. ça ne permet de faire quelque chose de chatartique, sans avoir chirurgie ou hormone.

comme des avatars, différents moods

quelque chose de la peur, est-ce que ce sera momentané, que je ne pourrai plus avoir

même chose avec les couleurs de makeup qui sont discontinuté

ritualistique, tu as créé un moment avec toi-même à travers le filtre. attachement au filtre

filtres de beauté m'ont démotivé aux filtres.

les filtres doivent être updatés, ne sont pas compatible avec tous les téléphones. trends et capitalisme.

faut-tu que je fasse tout moi-même pour pas que ça me soit enlevé?

genre de dépendance qui s'installe

sentiment viscéral de se sentir empowered, et ça t'es enlevé. c'est fou de penser que des compagnies ont les pouvoirs de nous créer ces euphories-là et de nous les enlever

quand j'ai des envies de poster des selfies de moi, je suis rarement à l'aise de le faire, mais quand je le fais avec des filtres qui font une mise en scène, avec des éléments bold, ou qui déforment mon visage, ludique, mise en scène.

ça s'est une bonne alternative pour me partager, pour combler ce besoin d'être out there

moi mais pas moi, mais qui transfert un mood, le mood du moment.

quand c'est un filtre qui me change beaucoup ou mon environnement, c'est comme si ça me donnait une raison de poster ma face mais sans que ça soit vraiment ma face.

côté fun et créatif que j'ai partager à d'autres gens. c'est comme si je me cachais dernier tout en me sentant affirmed.

miro

Face filter experimentation images (July and August, 2021)

Face filter test-link

The filter can also be tried on with this url: tinyurl.com/2nyve632. Opening the link from a device (smartphone or tablet), and having an Instagram account and the application downloaded on a device is required in order to try it. Note that filters need to be updated regularly in order to follow the platform and operating software developments and affordances; this url link works as of February 2022 but may be obsolete at a later time.

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