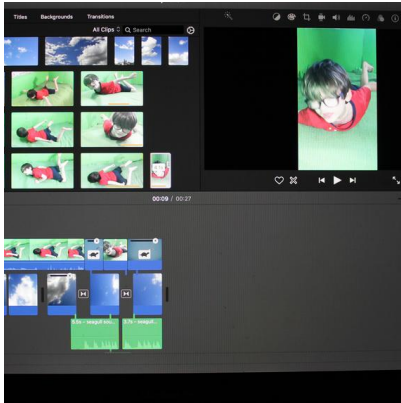# Artful Isolation Activities
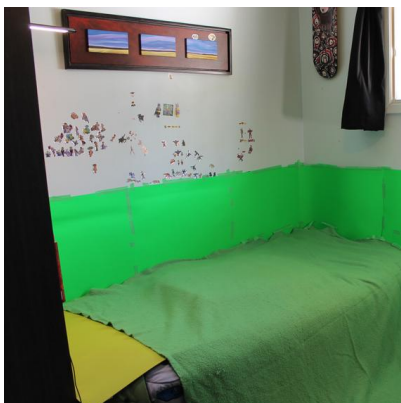
Week Sixteen: Green Screen Video

Place yourself in a wild adventure with Green Screen magic.

What is Green Screen Video? A green screen is a coloured background sometimes used when shooting video. After foreground video footage has been shot in front of a green screen, the screen can be made transparent through video editing and replaced with another video or static image. This process can also be called Chroma Key, "chroma" referring to colour and "keying" referring to the process of removing the coloured background with editing software such as iMovie.*

Why Use Green Screen Video Layering? Our Northern Artistic Director and her family have enjoyed creative pursuits during their time together at home, but she noted that sometimes her son's unfettered imagination envisioned projects that went beyond the physical possibilities of the family's usual creative activities. In her own words: "Xavier wanted to make a video of himself falling from the sky. I was eager to support his vision, so researched the magic of green screens to incorporate the technology into our creative repertoire. We went to the park to take a video of the sky for the background by spinning in circles with the phone pointed at the sky. We proceeded to cover his bedroom walls with bright green bristle board and green blankets for the foreground video so that Xavier could lay on his bed to act out falling. We edited our footage with iMovie to bring the two videos into one unified creation."

Suitable For: Ages 6+ (note that younger children will need help with filming and editing).
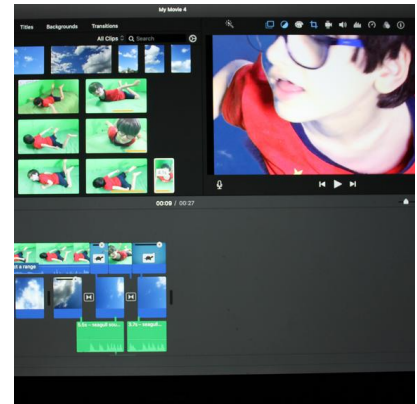
* Adapted from https://www.premiumbeat.com/blog/chroma-key-green-screen-guide/

What You'll Need: Green coloured bristle board or fabric, light sources such lamps, a phone or camera for filming, and a computer or app for editing.

Getting Ready:
- Watch some videos showing the process of filming with a green screen, such as those found <u>here</u>, <u>here</u> and <u>here</u>. And check out this <u>great tutorial</u> detailing the process of editing a green screen video in iMovie! You can find Xavier's green screen video <u>here</u>. He also created a video combining his new skills in green screen video with <u>stop motion animation</u> in a video found <u>here</u>.
- Consider the story you want to tell. Create a <u>storyboard</u> that outlines the scenes and what types of shots you'll need.
- Gather the materials for your green screen shots, such as green bristle board or fabric. Note that light absorbing surfaces such as cotton and matte paper work better than reflective or glossy surfaces. Chroma key green paint is also available at local hardware stores if you are setting up a serious "green room."
- Download software such as iMovie or Adobe After Effect. Note that free demo versions of both are readily available.

Activity:
- Take the photos or videos that will serve as your background setting (ie. that will replace the green screen in your final video).
- Set up your "green screen." Tape the bristle board up with green tape and cover surfaces with green fabric. Be sure to use clips to keep fabric tight as shadows can be difficult to edit out! If possible, set up two or three points of lighting to eliminate shadows on the green screen.
- You may also want to shoot outdoors. Outdoor lighting works well for even lighting, but changes over time are not good for video, so you'll have to be quick!
- You're almost ready to shoot your video! Here are some tips:
  - Don't let your subject wear green or they will blend into the background.
  - Avoid reflective surfaces, such as glasses. Bring the subject forward from the screen, 5 feet if possible, so that there's not too much green reflection on the subject.
  - Make sure your shot doesn't go beyond the green screen background (ie. keep all hands and heads inside your green screen).
- Now you're ready to shoot your video. Have fun playing with the way your subject is positioned and unique camera angles to capture multiple takes from different perspectives.
- It's time to edit! Be sure to get familiar with the program you're using by watching a tutorial like the one linked above.

Reflection:
- What is the impetus of your film? A vicarious thrill of adventure or a virtual experience of travel when actual movement is limited? Green screens can serve as a refreshing escape.
- What mood are you trying to achieve? How did you choose or create a setting to attain this? Consider how you might affect the impact of future projects by experimenting with lighting, sound, clip inserts, expressions, and gestures.
- Share your videos with us via Facebook or Instagram, tagging **@skcommonweal** and using the hashtags **#cwgreenscreen** and **#cwneighbours**.