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From the Mind
of the Octavia
PROJECT

Summer 2020

OCTAVIA PROJECT



What is the OP?

The Octavia Project uses speculative fiction as a lens through which to envision new futures and greater possibilities for our world.

Our inspiration and namesake is Octavia E. Butler, who broke barriers in writing and science fiction to become an award-winning and internationally recognized author.

Our free Summer Institute brings together young women and non-binary youth, ages 14-18 from all over NYC, to build new worlds. We believe that their ideas and creations are vital to our future and we aim to provide them with the support and tools to get there.

For more info, follow us!
Twitter/Instagram: @octaviaprojnyc
octaviaproject.org



Introduction

The Octavia Project has been different this year, but it hasn't stopped being fun. Being online this year makes a difference in how we connect with each other, we have to be more intentional and creative about how we collaborate and build community. We also had to come up with ways to make sure that we can all understand each other virtually.

Although we would rather be in person, because we would enjoy interacting with each other in person, being at home has made it much more convenient to grab last minute supplies. We are also given more freedom to continue working on the projects we begin at the OP and we are able to return to shared information and resources in the Slack. While we all wish to be in person, being virtual has allowed us to meet and be taught by guest educators in different time zones and countries in the comfort of their homes.

Being online allowed us to learn how to use a lot of online games and tools like SketchUp for architectural design, and scribble.io. I don't enjoy being on the computer too much, but having a fun purpose is more helpful to stay on the computer to meet new people, and learn new things. Last year I was very shy and did not talk a lot, but this year I was surprised at how easily I am able to share my ideas in a group full of unknown people, and it's easy to just interact and connect with others. I enjoy the fact that we can always have conversations with other participants out of the OP schedule. Even though this summer was not the way we dreamed it to be, we still had fun.

- Amalineda Jean Francois (Fellow, Summer 2020)

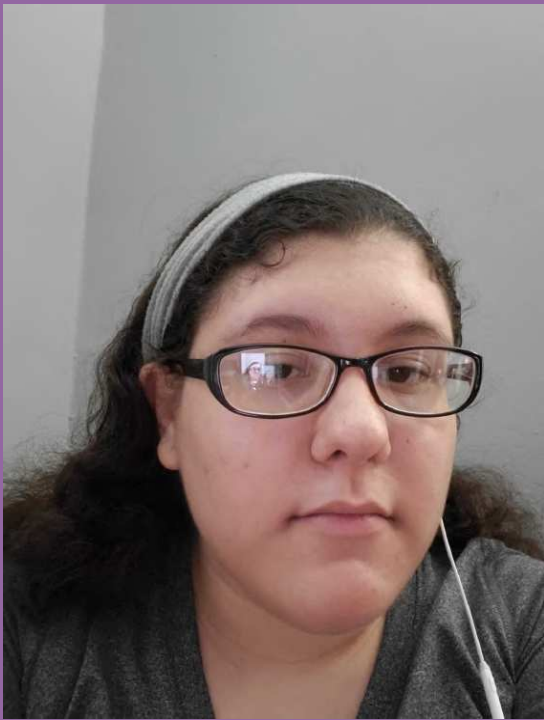
Camila Arroyave

Artist Statement

My piece is inspired by some original characters I made and what they would identify as.

This piece was also made during pride month for a online gallery. I wanted to show some more representation in the LGBTQ+ community since I don't really see a lot of representation of people who identify as Bisexual or Asexual.

I sadly even heard about my friend being spoken down to because she identified as that. Overall, I just wanted to show some friends being supported and valid no matter what they identify as.



Camila Arroyave



The Octavia Project
Camila Arroyave



Eden Bishop

Okay, for starters, the reason why I wanted to create a poem like this was to convey a message of victimhood and the effect bullying has on people. I have been through similar experiences like this myself and sometimes drown myself in all the negativity, that I lose sight of what's happening around me. Which is exactly what's going on with Frio here, although that's not his real name. His real name is Francis Altuga, a boy who always keeps himself miserable and in the darkness when he could be focusing on something else. When you're in a dark place it's hard to pull away from it, but you just have to remind yourself, life won't always be this way. Francis had created an alter ego, Frio, to help him cope with these feelings, but it's not always necessary to play the victim. Francis literally suffocates himself with these powerful emotions and is destroying himself from the inside when he keeps this mentality. He's a victim of abuse, yes, but that doesn't have to be his whole life. Which is something his friend, which was the unseen voice that calls out to him makes him recall. As for the ice imagery, the Frio persona has a very low body temperature causing his body to become ice cold and able to produce frost breath at his will. It was an old idea, from 2017.



Eden Bishop

Frio/Francis

Every time he feels like this, he turns to Frio
He sees snowflakes drift in the air in a cloudy blue sky
The cold resentment leads to him clutching at his heart
And rushing to the bathroom so the vomit lands into
the commode
Glittering frost lingers in the air as he relives his past
pain and traumas
It had never been enough for them, they just had keep
going and break him down
The boy leans over to cough out another gust of ice
cold air
It was too much, he was turning cold from the inside
out
He checks his reflection in the mirror and is met with
strikingly blue eyes and hazelnut skin
But his brown hair turned an optic white

Read Eden's full poem [here](#).



Oninye-Che Burge

Artist Statement

Sometimes, even for a writer, writing can be hard. Sometimes i can't get the words on paper when i want to express myself. In this case, I didn't finish the project I wanted to present, so I drew a cover image. My story is about a group of idols getting trapped in a resort and using teamwork to reason their way out. Since I already had these characters I decided to use them for the assignment. The story is somewhat of a thriller mystery and is heavily inspired by a video game I like. I hope my art can convey the idea of persistence and hope within my characters.

Oninye-Che Burge



The Octavia Project
Oninye-Che Burge



Naomi Cordero

The Hidden Lands

Althea rode the trains to the Thunderdome. Looking out of the window, she could see the instantaneous change in scenery as she entered the facility. One moment it had been grassy and sunny and the next it was dark and snow covered up the windows. Her thoughts raced as they did everytime she went to training, trying to calm herself she began to take slow breaths.



Read more
of Naomi's
work [here](#).

The Octavia Project

Naomi Cordero





Sofia Coulibaly

Artist Statement

My name is Sofia Coulibaly, and the work that I decided to showcase was the "Escape From Sangwoo's Basement Simulator." This piece is an interactive Twine game where you have to find a way to solve the dilemma that you're in and return to normal life. It was based on the manhwa, "Killing Stalking," written by Koogi.

View Sofia's full artist statement [here](#).

View Sofia's work [here](#).



Amalineda Jean Francois

This story is based on a girl named starcha who loves to write but she needed to feel her story to be heard but for so she had to go on a journey.

View Amalineda's work [here.](#)





The Octavia Project Brhea Goodman



Cheyann Hepburn

Artist Statement

The title of my work is Pahlmumra. I used an animal crossing island name generator to get it. As someone who has made around 3 different twines (this being the third), I really wanted to step out of my comfort zone. Well, jump out of it. I made the commitment to try more character and setting development, rather than trying to make something really shocking or really funny.

View Cheyann's full statement [here.](#)
View Cheyann's work [here.](#)



The Octavia Project
Cheyann Hepburn

Ashia Islam



The following is a short story by Ashia entitled "The Prison Book."

Content Warning – for mentions of prison, death, some violence, and harsh language

Read Ashia's full story [here](#)

Ashia Islam



As I walked with my wrists guarded by the handcuffs towards my room, the sunlight hit me in the eye from the small window that has been opened since yesterday. For the first time in six months, I have heeded light. Meanwhile, the two men walking behind me loudly conversed with the policemen who tied me to these darn cuffs.

“Bring some toasts for breakfast tomorrow, will you?” said one of the men behind me.

“Of course anything you want, sir”.

“Don’t worry about Tom, he won’t stop you, just put it on my table if I am still asleep”

“Sure” replied the policemen.

The men talking to policemen went into his room at the corner of the first-floor hall, while I and the policemen made our way to the basement where I reside. As we approached cell 003, the policemen reached to his pocket getting out the keys for the handcuffs, I noticed the keyring of the American flag hanging oddly over his fingers.

“Tell your partner he better not ask for food later in the day,” said the policemen.

“He is not my partner”. I said bluntly.

“Yes, he is”.

Afra Mahmud

Artist Statement

I was inspired by the zines and comics we made, so I created a series of zines illustrating a poem called “A Good Day” by Kait Rokowski. It is a poem about measuring your happiness and success by your own standards, not by society’s. It really resonated with me, especially because I’m still trying to figure out what is important to me in life.

Personally, I don’t really want much more than a simple life with a few books, friends, and a little bit of happiness. And I think this poem shows that beautifully.

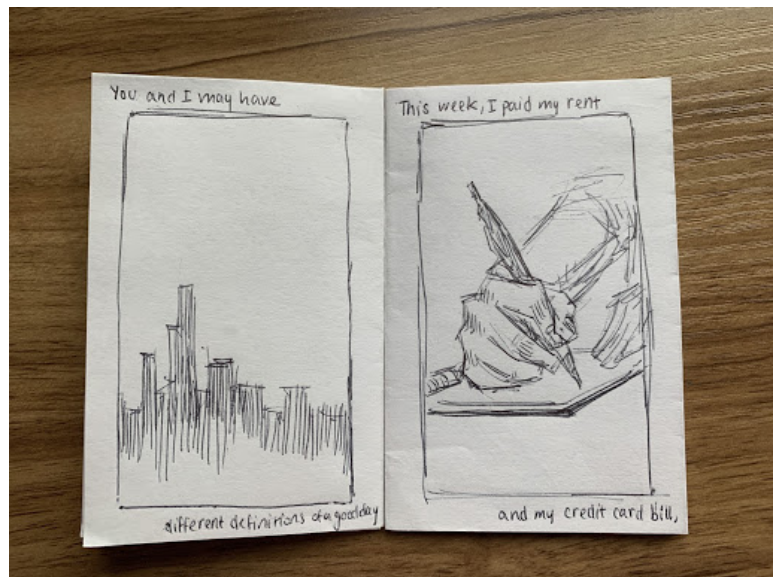
View Afra's work [here](#).



Afra Mahmud



The Octavia Project Afra Mahmud



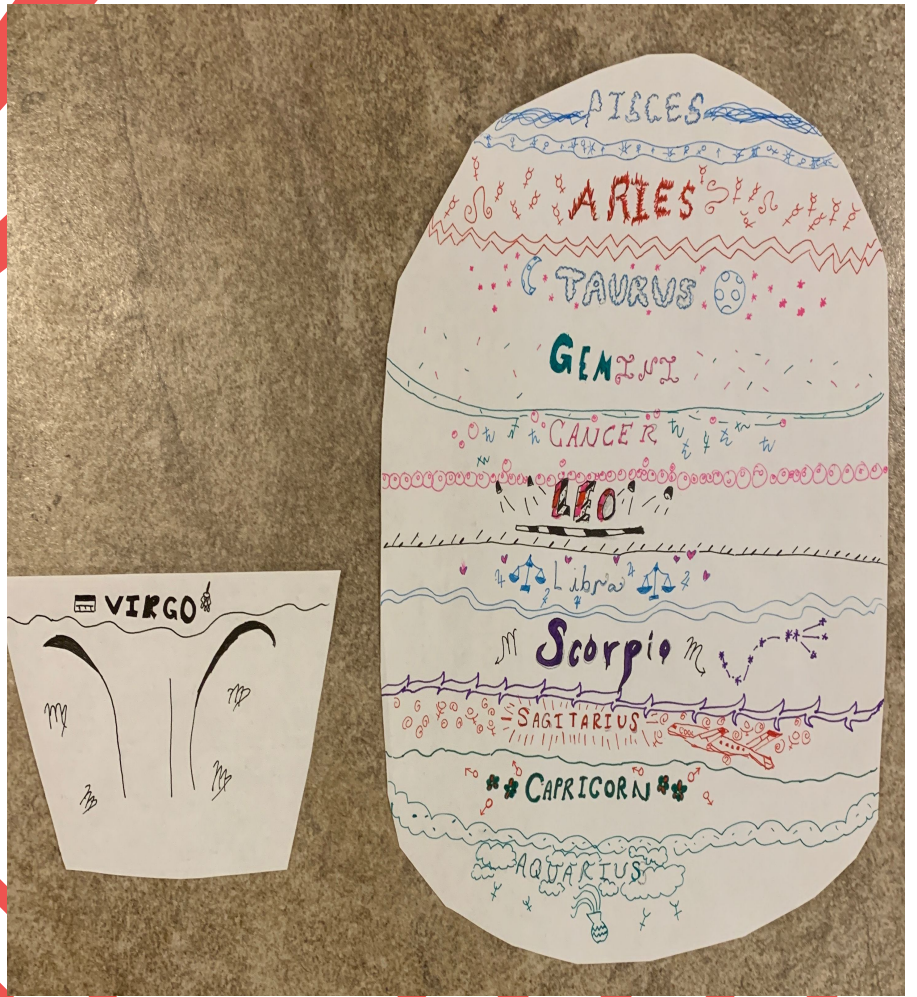


Kailee Ortiz

The following are
an assortment of
visual pieces
presented by Kailee
Ortiz. Enjoy!



Kailee Ortiz



The Octavia Project
Kailee Ortiz

Roshani Shrestha



I was always captivated by the horror genre. Twists and turns, drops and lurches. They all fascinated me. From reading urban legends and horror books in my childhood to mustering up the courage to watch some horror movies and trying to convince my mom not to change the channel, I have always loved the concept of telling stories in this way. Throughout my life, I have always searched for horror games to play, especially those with complex storytelling and use of many different elements to make the experience as vivid and captivating as possible. My experiences with the horror genre, whether it was not being able to sleep at night or admiring the creation of plot twists that were so unexpected, helped shape my ideas for this Twine story called A Night at the Lab. Writing horror stories is hard. It's hard to write something that'll make someone want to jump out of their skin, aching for something more comfortable like a comedy show, or reaching for their favorite stuffed animal as a friend to ease their crazed thoughts. Therefore, I really tried my best to make it as unexpected and frightening as possible, especially the endings. I tried to be as descriptive as possible and really pushed myself beyond my former creative limits. I wanted to create an uneasy, desperate feeling that would seep from the reader's screen to their own minds. The story is written from a second-person point of view to make the reader feel more connected to the story. It starts off with the reader at a university lab late at night dissecting a frog. The reader is attempting to find the cause of death, as he/she/they recall finding a bunch of dead frogs near the local pond. The reader soon realizes that there is an intruder, and the goal of the game reveals itself: to come out of the laboratory building alive. I really enjoyed the process of writing the story as well as tinkering with the code for the game's stylistic elements. Through these elements, I really hoped to make the experience vivid enough for the reader.

You can play Roshani's
twine [here](#).



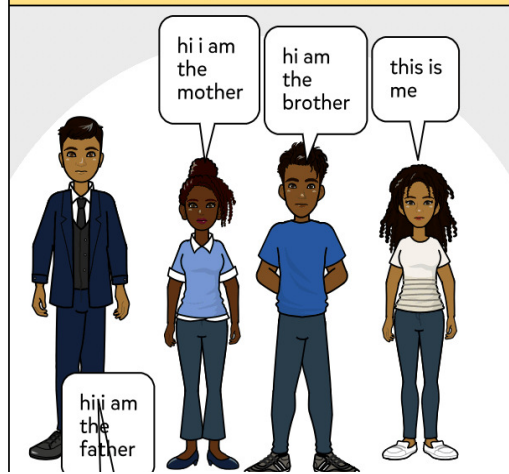
Kris Slowley

Kris would like to present a spooky Twine game for people to play and enjoy. In this game, you make the choices for one brave soul playing truth or dare. To play Kris' Twine, follow the link [here](#).

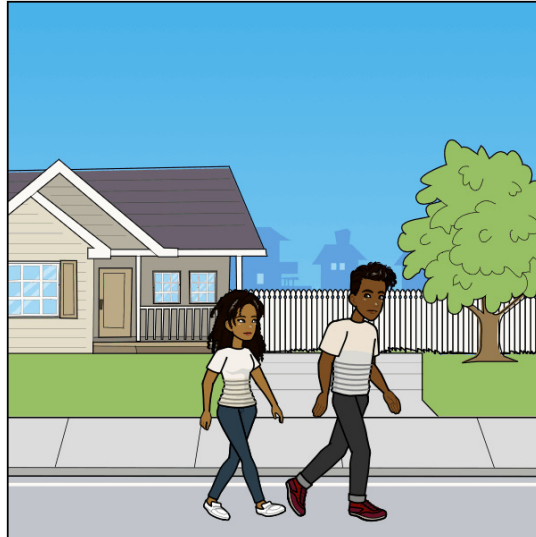
My art is about changes I have noticed about my surroundings since we entered quarantine. I chose pixton to explain the before and during quarantine because I think it is more interesting and creative to explain it by using characters.

Oury S

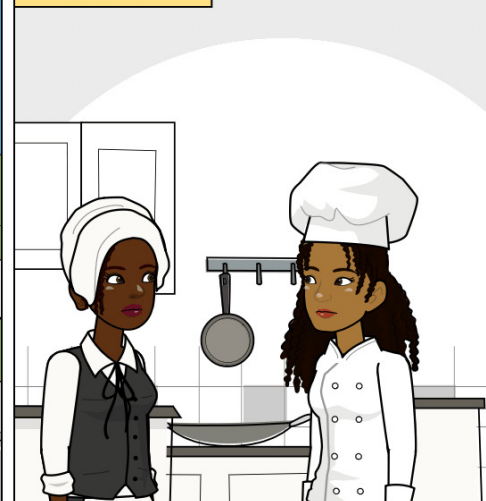
Hi this is my family my mom,dad and my brother

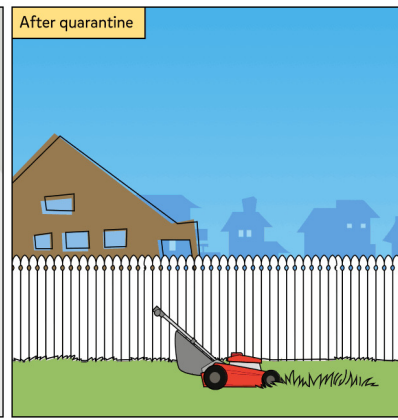
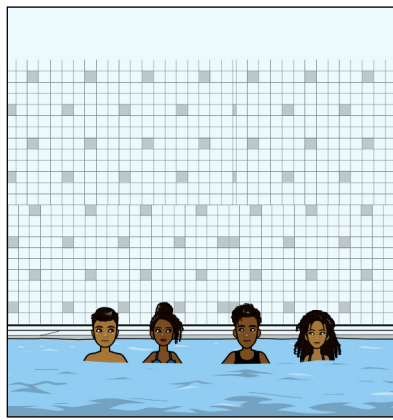
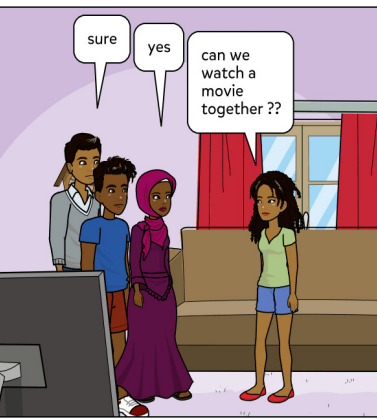


before quarantine



During quarantine





Mary Wong

My name is Mary Wong and this piece of art is a drawing of Octavia E. Butler that I made in Photoshop. During the Octavia Project this summer, I learned a lot about Octavia Butler and her work. She was a science fiction writer who didn't give up on her dreams even though people told her it was impossible.



The Octavia Project
Mary Wong

Jenny Zheng

This is a collage of the things that stood out to me after I finished unpacking after my move from Manhattan to Flushing, Queens. I wanted point out these things to my future self so that I can retain bits of memory of this experience.



Nora Zhu

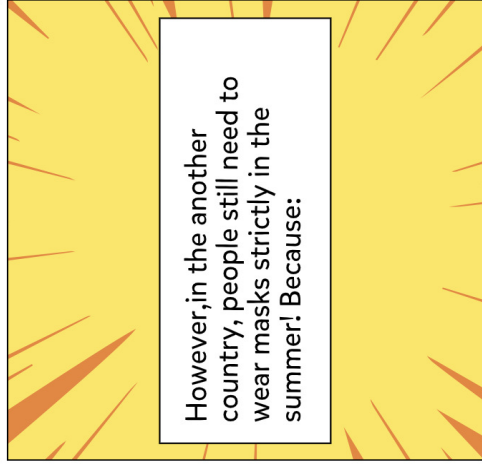
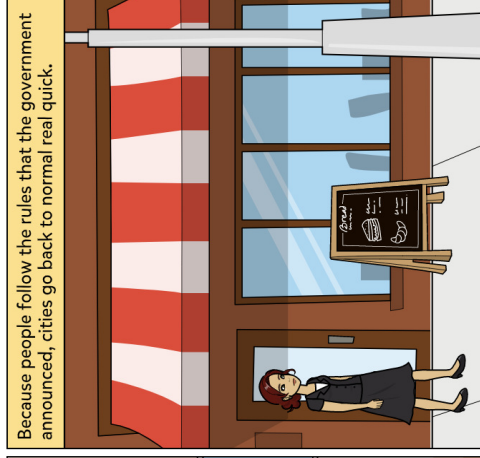
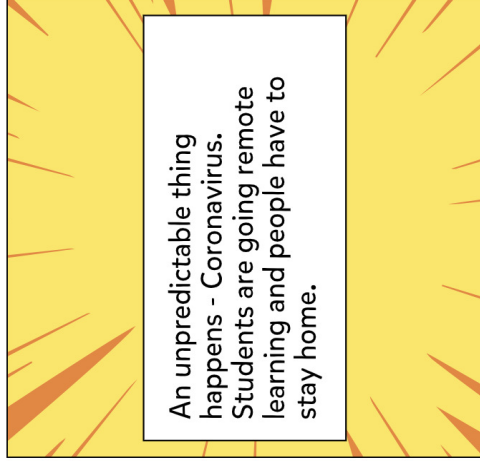


2020 is the most tough year that the whole world ever experienced; we have no idea what is going on but we know we need to be self-protective in this special time. I hope we can go through it together, and contribute as much as we can to the world such as wearing masks when going out and practicing social distancing.

The Octavia Project

Nora Zhu

Nora Zhu





Nia Clyde

(Former participant and this year's Teaching Artist Writing Mentor!)

This is a sneak peak of a story I've been working on! It's about two brothers from Brooklyn who are vampire hunters. They are aided by a werewolf named Sin, who is discovering who she truly is in this Twine. We also get a glimpse of the character's pasts that pushed them to be who they are today.

Hope you enjoy!

To play Nia's twine, follow the link [here](#).





With Acknowledgement to...

Summer 2020 Participants

Camila Arroyave
Eden Bishop
Oninye-Che Burge
Naomi Cordero
Sofia Coulibaly
Sarah Dahbali
Nancevia Darby
Ashia Islam
Afra Mahmud
Kailee Ortiz
Image P.
Kyrach Peart

Kiara Romain
Roshani Shrestha
Kris Slowley
Michi Sosa
Oury S.
Mary Wong
Jenny Zheng
Nora Zhu
Amalineda Jean Francois (Fellow)
Brhea Goodman (Fellow)
Cheyann Hepburn (Fellow) (Zine design)



” So be it, see to it!”

- OEB

With Acknowledgement to...

Staff

Nia Clyde - Teaching Artist Writing Mentor (Cover illustration)

ray ferreira - Curriculum Consultant

Aarushi Agni - Lead Teacher

Natyna Bean - Lead Teacher

Bria Strothers - Program Coordinator

Meghan McNamara - Executive Director

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our BFF donors, and all of our supporters who
helped make this year's program possible!

