

ELO 2020 Application

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Submission Category: Festival Exhibition and Performances

Submission Type: Performance

Project Title: *Phone Down Magic On* (an augmented reality performance/reading)

Artist Statement: *Phone Down Magic On* is designed as a chapter book for children, grades 3-5, and each chapter begins with augmented reality content. The story follows three young friends who text each other before bed. By holding a phone above the physical chapter book, readers see the characters' texting session as if it were happening on their own phones... and when a parent says to put the phone down, the texting stops and the "magic" begins. The screen interface dissolves into a dream scene, and clues to a mystery are presented in floating text presented within animated sequences supported by sound design. These clues are then used in the upcoming chapters to help a group of young friends solve unexpected, age-appropriate mysteries (such as missing pets, die-dyed sports uniforms and the anonymous #LoveYourAwesomeSelf graffiti that keeps popping up around school).

This project aims to promote literacy, diversity and inclusion, and healthy self-esteem in young readers. Literacy is promoted through simple sentences enhanced by key vocabulary words: Each animation sequence includes key terms, which are then integrated into the chapters that follow, ideally helping young readers to develop vocabulary and reading fluency. The main characters are diverse in terms of cultural identity, family structure (including a two-mom LGBTQ family, a multigenerational family and a single-parent family) and gender identity (including one nonbinary protagonist). The importance of supporting one's community and developing self-esteem in one's self is a through-line that runs throughout the entire project. Spoiler Alert: Towards the end of the book, one of the characters is diagnosed with Dyslexia, a realization that gives new meaning to the floating letter animations before each chapter. The protagonists work together to discover what this means, and difference is embraced as a source of strength.

Keywords: Children's literature, augmented reality

Technical specifications: This project is best presented as a reading/performance. Book pages will be presented as individual physical cards, and chapter headings trigger augmented content when viewed through an iPad (and the app Artivive). This presentation requires WiFi and a projector and screen with sound/speakers. The artist will provide the iPad, project cards, iPad-HDMI adapter, and a backup video (as a backup only in case of WiFi failure). *This can be modified as needed; I'd be happy to discuss any changes.* The ideal time is 10-12 minutes, which would include two augmented reality animations and excerpts from the chapter that unfolds between them.

Thank you for your time and consideration!