



Curriculum Guide & Recommended Readings

Sondra
Perry

ICA
MIAMI



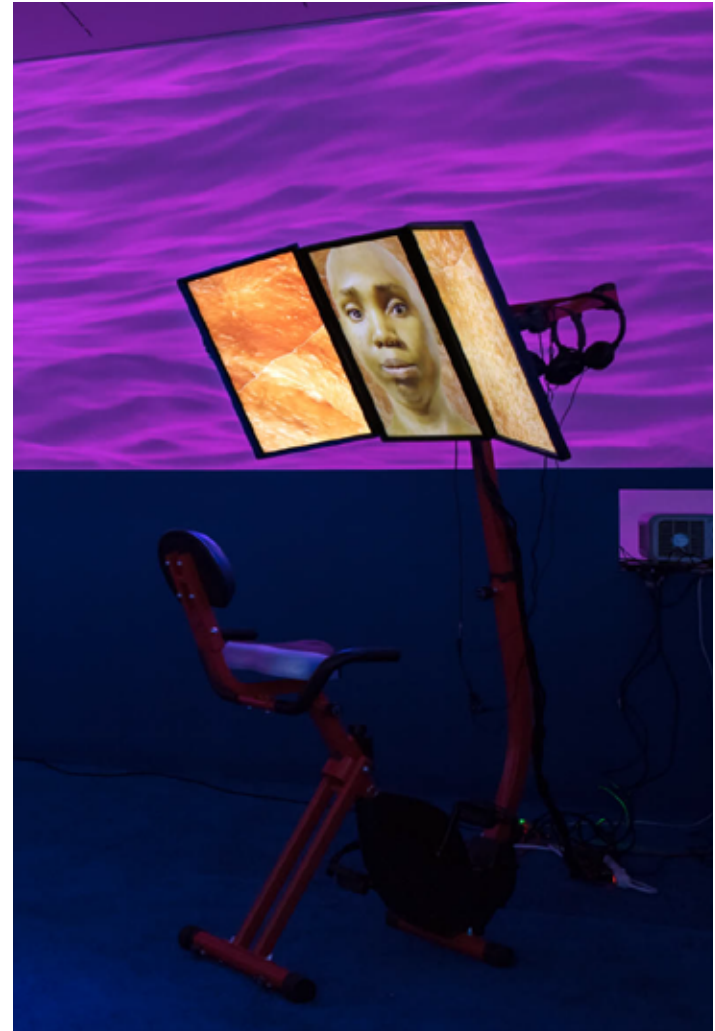
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INTRODUCTION

Through this course, educators will learn how to contextualize and better understand the different working elements of Sondra Perry's work. Paired with images of her work, the definitions below serve as a guide for analyzing the conceptual framework of Perry's multimedia installations.

By viewing the work, students will gain insight into contemporary art being made by Black artists and how artists like Sondra Perry explore their identity in their work.



ABOUT THE ARTIST

Sondra Perry (b. 1986, Perth Amboy, New Jersey) is an interdisciplinary artist who works with video, computer-based media and performance to explore the digital abstraction of identity. Her videos and performances foreground the tools of digital production as a way to critically reflect on new technologies of representation and to remobilize their potential. Her work revolves around blackness and black American history and ways in which technology shapes identity, often with her own personal history as a point of departure.





LEARNING OBJECTIVES

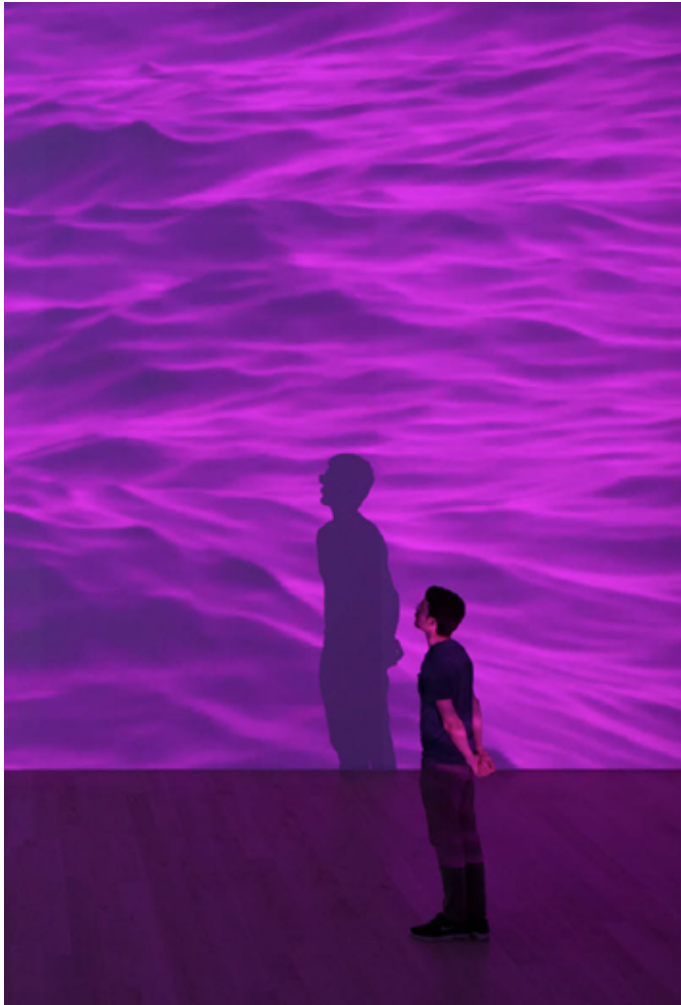


- ／ Students will explore how Sonda Perry uses technology as metaphor and as a tool to reflect on black American history.
- ／ Students will gain insight into how contemporary artists navigate the personal and the conceptual in their work.

KEY DISCUSSION

1. What references to modern day technology do you see in Sondra Perry's work?
2. What mood do the colors in her installation seek to create?
3. The title of Sondra Perry's exhibition at ICA was "Typhoon coming on." What elements of the exhibition allude to the title?

CONTEXT OF WORK



As a member of Gen Y, memes and the internet are not foreign to Sondra Perry. Technology becomes the means of dissecting a number of layered and intersecting aspects of black identity, and in “Sondra Perry: Typhoon coming on”, Perry is drawing on classical painting (J. M.W. Turner’s painting of the ship *Zong*), efficiency culture, digital avatars and locating the seemingly unseen connections that shape her life as a black woman. The viewer is presented with clips of riot police raiding a home, ads for mass surveillance technology, waves of brown flesh, and chroma key blue.



KEY CONCEPTS

// CHROMA KEY BLUE SCREENS

it is the alternative color used for green screens - it is also known as "chroma blue." Blue and green are furthest away from human skin tones, making them the most logical to use as background. "Chroma Key Blue is the obverse of the color of being... No human skin exists in an adjacent shade, and so it can be used as the negative space onto which context for anybody can be manufactured and projected" - Sondra Perry

// INSTALLATION ART

a relatively new genre of contemporary art which involves the configuration or "installation" of objects in a space, such as a room or warehouse. The resulting arrangement of material and space comprises the "artwork" Because an installation usually allows the viewer to enter and move around the configured space and/or interact with some of its elements, it offers the viewer a very different experience from (say) a traditional painting or sculpture which is normally seen from a single reference point. Furthermore, an installation may engage several of the viewer's senses including touch, sound and smell, as well as vision.

// SURVEILLANCE

Close observation, especially of a suspected spy or criminal.

"Surveys indicate, however, that most American citizens value their privacy and would be concerned if the government was monitoring their communications. Despite the public's recent rise in recognition, pervasive government surveillance in America is not a new phenomenon. Government monitoring and suppression of Black speech and conduct has been an essential feature of American society far before the public at large realized the potential dangers of widespread surveillance. Although privacy is a national value, it has been an elusive concept for Black people in America.

The foundation for today's expansive state surveillance system was built upon the lessons learned from America's history of monitoring Black people in America."

KEY CONCEPTS

// OPEN SOURCE SOFTWARE

“Open source software is software with source code that anyone can inspect, modify, and enhance.

‘Source code’ is the part of software that most computer users don't ever see; it's the code computer programmers can manipulate to change how a piece of software—a "program" or "application"—works. Programmers who have access to a computer program's source code can improve that program by adding features to it or fixing parts that don't always work correctly

By design, open source software licenses promote collaboration and sharing because they permit other people to make modifications to source code and incorporate those changes into their own projects. They encourage computer programmers to access, view, and modify open source software whenever they like, as long as they let others do the same when they share their work.”

// CAPITALISM

“An economic system in which a country’s trade, industry, and profits are controlled by private companies, instead of by the people whose time and labor powers those companies. The United States and many other nations around the world are capitalist countries, but capitalism is not the only economic system available.”

RECOMMENDED READINGS

These readings are supplemental and not on Sondra Perry's work, but rather inform on the context of Perry's work.

\ POETRY

[Zong! by M. Nourbese Phillips](#)

"In November, 1781, the captain of the slave ship Zong ordered that some 150 Africans be murdered by drowning so that the ship's owners could collect insurance monies. Relying entirely on the words of the legal decision *Gregson v. Gilbert*-the only extant public document related to the massacre of these African slaves-Zong! tells the story that cannot be told yet must be told. Equal parts song, moan, shout, oath, ululation, curse, and chant, Zong! excavates the legal text. Memory, history, and law collide and metamorphose into the poetics of the fragment. Through the innovative use of fugal and counterpointed repetition, Zong! becomes an anti-narrative lament that stretches the boundaries of the poetic form, haunting the spaces of forgetting and mourning the forgotten." Sondra Perry's *Typhoon* coming on references the Zong massacre, and like much of Perry's work Zong! makes use of redacted material.

/ FICTION

[Long Division by Kiese Laymon](#)

\ NONFICTION

[They Can't Kill Us Until They Kill Us by Hanif Abdurraqib](#)

"In an age of confusion, fear, and loss, Hanif Abdurraqib's is a voice that matters. Whether he's attending a Bruce Springsteen concert the day after visiting Michael Brown's grave, or discussing public displays of affection at a Carly Rae Jepsen show, he writes with a poignancy and magnetism that resonates profoundly..."

/ RECOMMENDED VIEWING

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Qunkb4piXGw>

SOURCES

<https://www.premiumbeat.com/blog/blue-screen-vs-green-screen/>

- <https://www.frieze.com/article/sondra-perry-typhoon-coming>

- <https://news.artnet.com/exhibitions/sondra-perry-at-serpentine-1288877>

- <https://www.dukeupress.edu/dark-matters>

- <http://www.visual-arts-cork.com/installation-art.htm>

- <https://www.acslaw.org/expertforum/mass-surveillance-and-black-legal-history/>

- <https://opensource.com/resources/what-open-source>

- <https://www.teenvogue.com/story/what-capitalism-is>