



Figure 1. Future Self-portrait by Johannes Pekonen, 2024.

"A biomechanical device designed to prevent the amplification of minor thoughts into distressing worries. It eliminates excessive overthinking and creates a protective mental barrier for its user. The user will be transported into a bubble where everything feels natural."

– Student Johannes Pekonen about his future self-portrait (see Figure 1.)

plant was sculpted roughly with newspaper and tape. Participants were photographed in the studio with the add-on as the cyborg version of themselves in front of a green screen (see Figure 2). In the second phase of the workshop, the portraits were retouched with Adobe Express including AI tools, to more realistic outcomes and the background was

generated with words describing visions of the future (see Figure 3). The positive and hopeful views on the future were encouraged over dystopias. AI-enhanced photomanipulation made it possible to turn the paper-sculptured transplants into actual ones in the pictures. In the end, the AI tools and the future portraits were presented and discussed with the whole

Future Portraits Workshop

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Photography and photomanipulation workshop for art education students, to explore the Artificial Intelligence tools as part of creating media art.

The Future Portraits workshop was part of the art education master students' media art and media education course in the spring of 2024. It was conducted in collaboration with Umeå University Sustainable Portraits Workshops. The aim was to connect this form of portrait photography and future

visions, connect hands-on creation, and studio photography with cameras, and explore new AI tools of photo manipulation.

The assignment started with a question of what kind of add-ons or enhancements one could need in the future. The tool or trans-

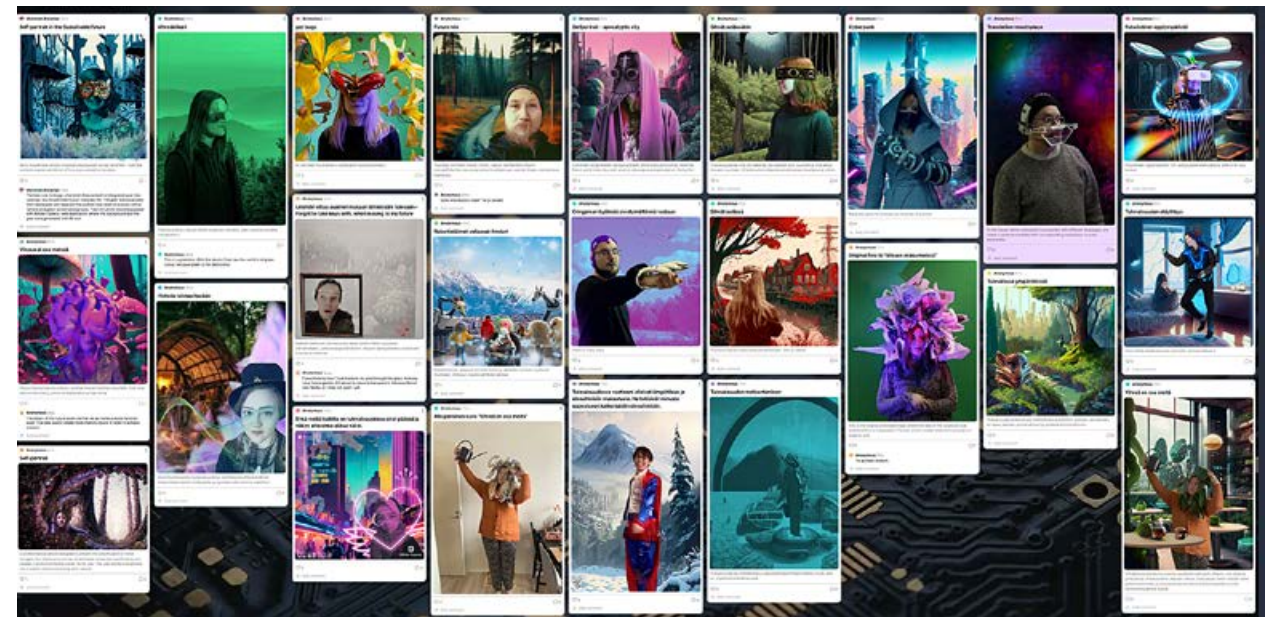


Figure 2. 1. All the portraits in Padlet, Screenshot by Annamari Manninen, 2024.

group. Adobe Express was selected as it doesn't require giving your image to the use of AI in general. Still, other AI applications were also used to generate the background images, since the amount of generated images is limited in the Adobe application.

The sustainable portraits from Umeå University students were also explored and analysed and the activity was done knowing that the future portraits were shared with them in return. The online audience made it more critical for students to look at their work, but the playful approach got everyone engaged in the activity and following it through. The final Future portraits were shared on the Padlet platform.

The material approach by improvising and ideation with making paper parts with quick forming, compressing and building with newspaper and tape made it easy and playful to approach the topic. The portrait as a classical

form in fine arts still has still its strengths as a solid form for an art activity and was here advanced from portraits of persons at the moment to imaginative portraits, as it was also used by students of Umeå University. By sharing the different portraits, the students in both universities got to see examples of the use of portraits as an art form to address different topics. With the threats and conflicts that we face today, art can take on the role of envisioning hopeful and brighter images of a sustainable future. The activity took two teaching sessions and is possible to apply to pupils or students in different school settings. The kind of transplant or tool that each student planned also mirrored their personality and brought up the discussion of the challenges, skills and needs of this time and profession that could be done with humour or more openly with the choice of the student. It helped that this was a group in their fifth year of studies, so they were familiar with one another.



Figures 2–3. Future self-portraits by Bea-Sofia Limnell, 2024.

INFO

Aim of the workshop was to challenge the dystopic visualizations of the future with playful cyborg-like portraits and AI-generated places by taking art, imagination and play to explore new media tools and give a space for images of brighter and sustainable futures.

Participants of the workshop were Master-level art education students (21) from the University of Lapland. The workshop was arranged in spring 2024, with lessons of two times three hours.

Special dimension of the workshop was the Online collaboration with the Umeå University Sustainable Portraits Workshop.

The Future Portrait task also gave an introduction to the AI tools in image generation and manipulation and connecting self-produced ideas and images with AI-generated ones. The tools and uses of AI in the visual arts in an ongoing and quickly changing field at this moment in history that also has to be critically explored and observed in art education. ●

“A sustainable future also has to be imagined and visualised. Many of the portraits thus showed the coexistence of nature and inhabited environments.”

– Annamari Manninen, teacher of the workshop