

# Phone to Photoshop: Mobile workarounds in young people's visual self-presentation strategies

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## ABSTRACT

Differences in income and cultural capital create many major barriers for young people entering creative fields. An increasingly important barrier to entry to tertiary studies or employment in fields of art and design is the growing importance of digital self-presentation in online portfolios. This paper explores the way in which both digital self-presentation and the creation of online portfolios require specialized infrastructure and specific forms of cultural capital. Infrastructural barriers in particular may necessitate extensive resourcefulness and workarounds. We document the barriers and opportunities presented by digital networking for young South African Visual Arts students from two different schools as they learned to showcase their work in digital portfolios and develop self-presentation strategies associated with recognisably professional identities and bodies of work. This paper explores the mobile workarounds and visual strategies they adopt as they negotiate an unequal education system in two different parts of Cape Town. We argue that new mobile designs can and do play a pedagogical role for young people as they assume and challenge 'disciplined' identities in the visual arts.

## Author Keywords

interface design; mobile photography; education; resource constrained users; communication ecologies; mobile phone; e-portfolio

## ACM Classification Keywords

J.4 Social And Behavioral Sciences: Sociology

## INTRODUCTION

Increasingly, people represent their everyday selves through media captured on mobile phones and shared on social networks. Professional promotion in creative disciplines such as visual arts and design also relies on such platforms. As interfaces, content and infrastructure are becoming more broadly accessible, they are blurring the distinctions between professional practice and everyday creativity. At the same time, and particularly so in highly unequal countries such as South Africa, income differences and the forms of cultural knowledge often associated with these differences create barriers for young people entering creative fields. This paper explores the experiences of young Visual Arts students who need to learn to showcase

their work in digital portfolios and to develop self-presentation strategies associated with recognisably professional identities and oeuvres of work.

We present two different case studies of schools in Cape Town, South Africa. These case studies show how state initiatives such as Arts and Culture schools have broadened access to art and design education to a small degree, but that major inequities still divide even the relatively privileged young people who are able to attend schools which offer Visual Art. Access to ICT infrastructure and digital media production are key dimensions of inequality and shape the media and communication ecologies of aspirant visual designers.

Here, as in many other places, not all youth can access a high-speed, reliable digital network or software and hardware for digital media production. Construction and maintenance of web-based e-portfolios require extensive access to school and home infrastructure. Existing social inequalities are deepened by the designs of hardware and software which assume internet access and desktop computers. These mismatched digital media ecologies elicit complex workarounds.

## Portfolios of privilege in arts education

To a great extent, in South Africa, training in visual arts and subsequent participation and employment in the creative industries builds on and extends middle and upper class privilege. Bourdieu argued, in a very different context, that the cultural realm disguises class differences in a society – we celebrate the 'talent' of those successful in visual art, literature or music, while ignoring the leisure time, educational access and cultural capital which their success requires. Similarly, education certifies the abilities of the middle classes, while hiding the fact that their apparent 'distinction' both requires a history of privilege and guarantees future opportunities [2,3]. At the same time, even as the hegemony of Western middle class culture is heavily contested from a post-colonial perspective, educational institutions continue to grant access on the basis of portfolios of privilege. cultural activities and practices are profoundly shaped by these very differences.

Such participation depends, to use Bourdieu's terms, on forms of class 'distinction' and 'habitus' or access to the

class-based cultural resources which make the practices of the dominant culture possible

We attempt to understand such creative appropriations and negotiations to ensure that software better supports mobile-centric users whose access to privileged digital ecologies is expensive, intermittent, or occasional [4]. Web 2.0 and Maker Culture depend on class-based cultural resources that make their characteristic practices possible

## CONTEXT

Visual Art and Design education barely feature in the most under-resourced, low-income township schools in Cape Town today and young working class people who attended township schools remain under-represented in tertiary design education and industry [12,16,18].

At the same time, there is an opening up of opportunity, as, globally, researchers have shown how young people are able to leverage digital media and networks, later turning their online interests into careers [11]. But shifting participation in this way from social sharing to fan activities to professional involvement is not a trivial matter, particularly for young people without easy access to either digital infrastructure, or the requisite economic and class cultural capital [2]. Even in contexts where young people are not able to study Visual Arts as a subject they go to great lengths to develop their own visual voices and counter the limitations of their environment [20,21]. Case studies in this paper show that even when Visual Arts is available, such young people still confront significant obstacles to creative participation.

## ICT ecologies in South Africa

This paper describes young people's self-presentation strategies in two South African schools, one public and one private. Private schools serve a tiny minority and charge much higher fees than government schools. The ICT facilities they offer function as marks of 'distinction', and they have also been the first South African schools to embrace the use of laptops and later tablets by students.

Only 2489 of the 24793 government schools in South Africa have computer centers [6]. All government schools in Cape Town had computer labs installed. Use of these labs is curtailed by the fact that recurrent costs must be raised from parents. Such costs include maintenance and replacement of equipment, monthly telecommunication and broadband charges and software licenses must be raised from parents, who in many cases struggle to pay even minimal school fees.

Access to computers and internet at home is also skewed. A survey published in 2012 found that there were 12,3 million internet users above the age of 15 in South Africa [14]. Many of these internet users relied heavily on mobile access, confirming findings which documented the rise of South Africa's largely "mobile-centric" internet users [7,13]. Only 18% of those surveyed owned a computer, of

which roughly 90% were connected to the Internet. Of the 84% who owned a mobile phone, 67% had Internet capabilities and of those, 71% used the phone to go online. Low income South African urban users are thus using their mobile phones as primary devices to gain access to the internet and via social media such as Facebook, MXit and Twitter, to engage, and participate online [5,9,17,24]. This picture of expanding participation does not adequately give us a sense of what media is *created* and *shared* – and when and how this is done. Studies concur that internet use is constrained by high cost of prepaid data and the limitations of feature and low end smartphones [22]. For example, in a study of teenagers who use libraries and cybercafés, few young people report participating actively in fan communities or other forms of networked learning [19]. This paper echoes these findings in relation to the constraints of school media ecologies.

## Art Education in South Africa

To a great extent, in South Africa, training in visual arts and subsequent participation and employment in the creative industries reflects social privilege. As few as 26% of secondary schools in the metropolis of Cape Town offer art- or design-related subjects at a Senior certificate level [8,12]. Consequently, young working class people who attended township schools without specialized teachers or the equipment needed for Visual Art remain under-represented in tertiary education and design industry alike [12,16,18].

Post-colonial critique and celebration of local heritage may be the public face of the South African design industry, but to a large degree Bourdieu's analysis of the role of 'cultural capital' and 'distinction' in reproducing class and populating cultural industries still holds explanatory power [2,3]. The privilege of participating in both cultural industries and visual arts education relies on access to infrastructure and cultural resources, which make the practices of the dominant culture possible. Contemporary social class and income hierarchies interact with and mostly reinforce colonial hierarchies of 'race' and 'culture'.

There is also an opening up of opportunity, as, globally, young people are able to leverage digital media and networks, turning their online interests into careers [11]. But shifting participation in this way from social sharing to professional involvement is not a trivial matter, particularly for young people without easy access to either digital infrastructure, or the requisite economic and class cultural capital [2].

Even in Cape Town where state schools were all provided with a computer lab, access to ICT infrastructure and digital media production remain one of the key dimensions of inequality shaping media and communication ecologies.

Art education and young people's development of visual creativity lies at a complex intersection of education,

technology and culture in contemporary South Africa. In South Africa educational distinction is related to middle class privilege in general and whiteness in particular, nor to hide the way in which the hierarchical position of 'legitimate' culture rests on colonial and class domination [2]. Postcolonial challenges to Western cultural hierarchy inform cultural critique [10], but local policies and their implementation do not support or nurture broadly African forms of cultural expression.

Apartheid education systematically neglected Visual Art in black schools. Visual Arts and Visual Design are seen as relative luxuries, requiring specialised staff and expensive infrastructure. Consequently, as few as 26% of secondary schools in the metropolis of Cape Town offer art- or design-related subjects at a Senior certificate level [8,12]. Historically, most township schools have not offered specialised arts- or design-related subjects, while wealthier schools offer the privilege of choosing from several visual arts disciplines. In poor schools, available IT resources are channeled to support 'basics' such as literacy and numeracy drills in primary schools, and labs are fully occupied by IT courses in senior school [15,23]. Both the infrastructure and curriculum for visual arts and digital design are thus luxuries or markers of educational 'distinction'. As a result, working-class students have little chance of being accepted to art and design courses, let alone entry-level jobs in Visual Culture disciplines. [1,12]

## METHOD

Our case studies are drawn from [Author 1's] long-term study exploring the use of digital media for young people studying visual art in two quite different high schools in Cape Town. In the first site, twelve volunteer Visual Arts students at a specialised co-ed state school (six males and six females) attended extra classes to develop digital skills and to construct electronic learning portfolios (e-portfolios). In the second site, seventeen male students enrolled at a private boys' school were required to create e-portfolios as a compulsory component of their Visual Arts syllabus.

### *Creating e-portfolios for visual arts students*

Over four years of action research in these sites [Author 1] observed students designing e-portfolios showcasing their visual art. These e-portfolios featured personal profiles, their own original artworks, including digitized drawings and paintings, a range of visual designs, photographs, as well as visual material that had inspired them. They used free membership of online portfolio service, Carbonmade ([www.carbonmade.com](http://www.carbonmade.com)).

Although one site was a private school and the other a state school, students at both of these sites enjoyed considerably better resources than the vast majority of South African students do, given their access to computers and the availability of Visual Arts as a subject.

The state school was situated in one of the areas demarcated 'coloured' under apartheid's Group Areas Act. Only a

minority of students lived in the immediate neighbourhood. Most students were from working class families who struggled to afford the R1200 (\$110) monthly school fees and transport costs from poorer areas, such as; Delft, Guguletu, Hanover Park, Khayelitsha, Langa, Maitland and Mitchells Plain. An Arts and Culture Focus school, this state school had an excellent Art teacher and a working computer lab. Nonetheless problems with Internet access led to a two-year delay before the e-portfolio project could be introduced.

Only Computer Science students had regular use of the general computing labs, and consequently only a few students were proficient at using computers [12]. The e-portfolio lessons were presented during Visual Arts class times, and continued during lunch times. The creation of e-portfolios was not compulsory because... [explain why] Nonetheless twelve students volunteered create e-portfolios with [Author 1] using a loaned scanner and cameras.

In addition to lesson observations and questionnaires, seven students were interviewed about their use of e-portfolios.

The second site is an exclusive independent secondary school for boys, where a class of seventeen students created portfolios between 2010 and 2012. On the one hand, the elite private school attracted students from affluent homes, and was one of the most exclusive (and expensive) institutions of its kind in the country, charging fees of R6000 (\$552) per month.

The private school students all had laptops and Wi-Fi was accessible from almost anywhere on the school grounds. Scanning equipment and digital cameras were readily available. The e-portfolios were compulsory and used to help students self-curate works for their end-of year exhibitions. In addition to classroom observations and questionnaires, seven students were interviewed.

## GOVERNMENT SCHOOL WORKAROUNDS

While they shared the broadly mobile habitus of most South Africans, the young people attending the government school had relatively easy access to computers and the internet. Only a quarter of the students had internet access at home, but eleven could 'always or often' access computers outside school, and they had extra-mural access to the computer lab at the school. According to questionnaire feedback, most learners could easily do e-portfolio digitization work outside class; ten learners 'always or often' had access to cameras, five 'always or often' to scanners. Cellphones were ubiquitous, and eleven of the twelve learners provided personal mobile phone numbers as their preferred daytime contact number.

These students also benefited considerably from the dedicated guidance of their Visual Arts teacher. The e-portfolio project was voluntary, and most of the volunteers aspired to study and work in careers involving creative production. Many believed their e-portfolios could help

them to gain access to tertiary studies. In Masibulele's case, he volunteered to do the e-portfolio curriculum as, 'I immediately saw that this is something that I could use in my near future for Tertiary studies.' He believed his e-portfolio work '...enhances my experience in the Art industry.' [32]

Of the twelve students who attended in the voluntary e-portfolio lessons, their 'About' pages showed the strong influence of mobile genres on their self-presentation, with a third of the group choosing to use mobile phone 'selfies' as their profile image.

[Would be nice to show this, but you can't show their faces. Can you trace the selfies as drawings]

Overall, this group had a strong foundation in drawing and painting, but only one learner was able to attend an extra-mural society dedicated to Visual Culture. They extended the range of genres emphasized at school by including works such as Manga cartoons, Graffiti, and Textile prints

There were many practical problems that were overcome when providing e-portfolio lessons at both sites. Varied combinations of capital were also manifest in the types of workarounds learners made at either site, as described below.

#### WORKAROUNDS

This group had some prior experience of computers and email, but their irregular use patterns meant that they easily forgot passwords. Their ability to change passwords was limited by the fact that their access was distributed across multiple email accounts, and to open their email they needed devices such as cellphones and laptops which belonged to other people, and which they could not access during class.

##### Bandwidth

None of the students were satisfied with the bandwidth available in the school lab, where internet was slow and unreliable. As a result, they had to upload one image at a time, try different computers, and experiment with uploading at various times of the day. Slow uploads appear to be more error-prone, giving rise to duplicate uploads, images and a relatively large number of images uploaded in the incorrect (portrait/landscape) orientation or posted to the incorrect folder. The students were reluctant to delete imagery uploaded, even if it was incorrect as each file took so long to upload in class. They felt having 'incorrect' imagery was preferable to 'wasting time' uploading corrected versions.

Despite being shown how to reduce file size and advised to work with small files, several learners used the large, default settings of their high-res mobile phone cameras. These generated 2MB sized images, which took too long to upload from the lab.

After failing to upload more than two images in one lesson, Herschelle decided to use his mobile phone to upload images. Two others attempted this mobile strategy, but were unable to do so, owing to the relatively high resolution images, and possibly their limited airtime.

Given these complications of low bandwidth on both the lab and mobile phones, the three students who had Internet access at home were at a major advantage. They were able to upload all their images at home, and were thus able to focus their time in class on improving the design of their e-portfolios, thus gaining self-presentational advantages.

##### Incompatible ecologies

Almost all the young people were familiar with using simple folder structures from using Bluetooth to transfer files on their mobile phones, but they struggled to manage folders and locate files on a desktop computer or to use email attachments. Here the numeric default filenames created by cameras and scanners proved particularly unhelpful.

Getting images onto and off phones was particularly difficult. Students struggled to connect phones to the lab's desktop computers because the computers neither detected the phones, nor suggested the necessary drivers be installed. Tazneem tried several methods of transferring files, eventually resorting to sharing the image via Facebook, then downloading it to a lab PC and finally uploading it to Carbonmade [20].

We now turn to the story of Masibulele, a highly motivated and creative student from the state school as a case study of a student who overcame barriers of infrastructure and cultural exclusion through his e-portfolio.

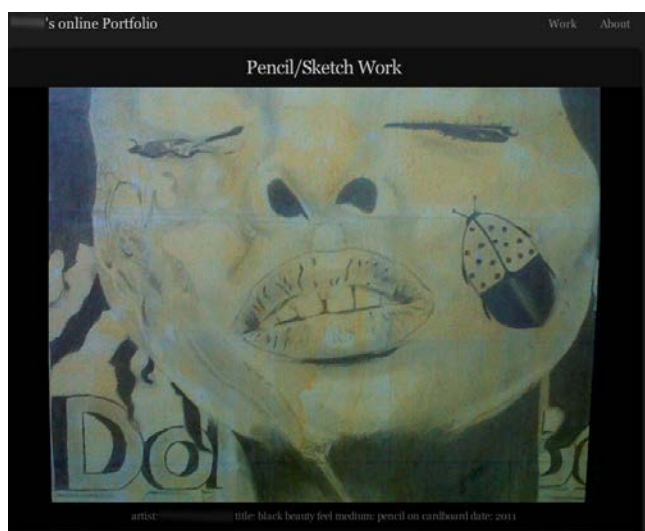
##### Masibulele

Masibulele loved drawing, was a top student and enjoyed a close relationship with the Visual Art teacher. His parents were not involved in his intense passion for art, nor had they seen his online portfolio. 'I wouldn't speak about it to them.' Instead, he shared pictures of his creative work with his peers via Facebook and looked forward to the day when he would have enough of a digital oeuvre to set up his own Facebook page. On Facebook he had not applied any privacy settings. Here, as on Carbonmade he prioritized being findable via search and email. For this reason he refused school-based limitations such as restrictions on providing email addresses and other cautionary measures to protect online 'safety'. He knew the power of these tools were that they allowed him to make new connections and remain open to sharing and connecting with others. Unfortunately his main form of internet access outside of limited school lab hours was via his mobile phone. This was costly and often ran out before he had the cash to replenish it.

He used his e-portfolio to present an online identity that reveals the breadth of his engagement with visual culture,

rather than limiting him to an online presence as a Visual Arts student. He used the space to show his versatility and how his capabilities went beyond the school curriculum which focused on painting and drawing.

Part of the significance of Visual Art to Masibulele was his interest in asserting his own blackness. Masibulele believed that this was not accommodated by the school curriculum in Visual Art. He stated that he did not 'really get' the opportunity to express, 'my culture, where my background is from'. He filled this gap in the formal curriculum by drawing in his spare time. These drawings explored black identity, as in his pencil sketch 'Black Beauty Feel' in Figure 1.

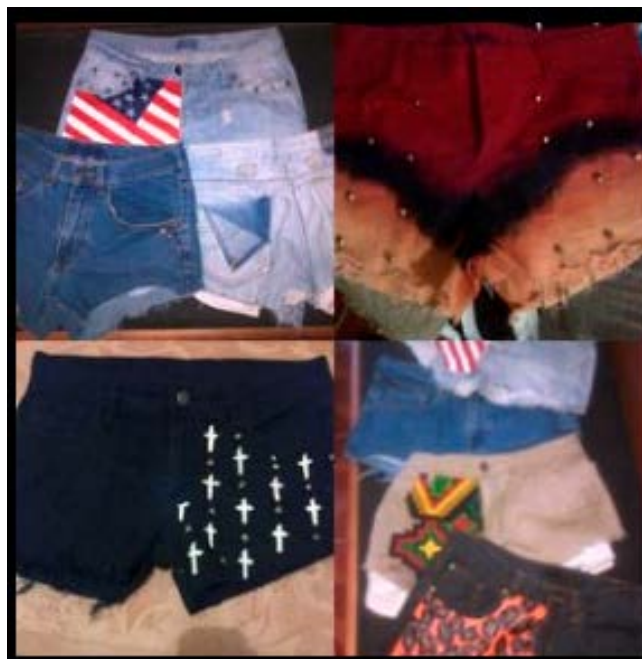


**Figure 1: Portfolio item by Masibulele: "Black Beauty Feel", 2011, pencil on cardboard**

Blackness was thus linked to an out-of-school sense of himself. Masibulele's awareness of cultural exclusion is further apparent from the fact that he felt the school curriculum precluded creating works in mixed media, which he associated with traditional crafts and local South African cultural identities.

Initially, Masibulele created an e-portfolio, which did not reflect these excluded dimensions of his identity. For example, an important part of his out-of-school sense of himself was his extra-mural involvement in fashion design and a small clothing business of which he was 'Founder/producer/CEO'. His initial e-Portfolio did not include any examples of his designs, despite the fact that he created the design for the school sweater and had developed his own clothing line, which he named 'SoiL' (an acronym of 'Style Over Intimate Levels'™). He had exceptional entrepreneurial flair. He sold t-shirts, sweatshirts, sweat pants and 'booty' shorts (for women only) and was planning to save sufficient money for a textile printer.

Masibulele's SoiL folder was only added to his portfolio after an interview for this study encouraged him to feature this extra-mural work. Once he had decided to include his clothing designs, however, he documented them extensively. His ePortfolio annotations adopts the register and address of a proud entrepreneur marketing his wares: "[SoiL] is a Clothing Line for both male and females and in the mere future for Kids too. Established last year but recognised and *made more aware* this year February."



**Figure 2: Portfolio item by Masibulele "These are different designs for Booty Shorts of local streetbrand, SoiL I am the prous founder/producer/CEO of SoiL. Est 2013'**

### PRIVATE SCHOOL WORKAROUNDS

By comparison to their peers at the government schools, Visual Arts at the private school testified to the students' additional sources of cultural capital. Few aspired to careers in the arts, but their extensive access to consumer electronics for visual creativity and their immersion in arts-related activities were all markers of class distinction.

By the final year of the project and their final year at school, six of the seven students interviewed said that their work on their e-portfolios was primarily motivated by a desire to gain better grades for the e-portfolio assessment. Just under half of the students were involved in extra-mural societies related to Visual Culture, Eight integrated modes of Visual Culture such as photo-editing and videography which were not part of the formal Visual Arts curriculum. Despite the advanced infrastructure at school, over a quarter

of the class reported that they preferred home infrastructure to school wifi, effectively 'flipping the class'.

Given the facilities available to them, it is not surprising that infrastructure did not stop them from creating e-portfolios. A large majority, or thirteen learners were able to upload at least 20 artworks.

The majority reported that it was not difficult to complete work for their e-portfolios outside class. Almost all had easy ('always or often') access to computers, mobile phones and cameras, and over half had access to scanners. Photography and photo-editing software were highly accessible and mentioned by many in their profiles (only a couple of students at the government school had referred to this), while two documented their activities as bodyboarders using footage from their own individual waterproof action cameras.

#### *i. Slow and unreliable broadband.*

Despite its well-appointed facilities, the private school was still negatively affected by disruptions to broadband. These included challenges outside the school's control, such as; power failure, copper cable theft, or local and international broadband cable failures. Problems inside the school included Internet traffic not being shaped to prioritize pedagogical usage. The day scholars, who lived with their parents were not restricted by these occasional failures, as they had alternative points of access at home.

Passwords were a problem, just as they were at the government school. The students' distributed ecology across devices was less of a problem given the laptops used at the private school. Instead security features and spam filters were the major stumbling block, blocking password reminders sent to school email addresses. Ironically, the frustrations caused by these features often resulted in students resorting to (less secure) cloud-based services.

Four of the seven learners interviewed at the private school all preferred to use the Internet at home, where was faster and more reliable and chose to use class time for tasks other than uploading imagery.

The limits on Carbonmade's freemium package chafed the private school students, who were accustomed to more capacious storage, both on their laptops and in cloud-based archives. Rather than paying to upgrade (which required both credit cards and foreign currency) Kyle, Hui and Gary chose to feature links to supplementary photographic and video portfolios, which they created with other services (including Flickr, Wix, Vimeo and/or Youtube). The teacher needed to request the IT department to whitelist Flickr, previously blocked by the school's 'nanny' software.

Specialised peripherals such as scanners were not easily accessible from the students' laptops, and the teacher made his own laptop available for scanning, a strategy he also

used to give them access to image editing software. Here again, some individuals were able to gain an advantage by using their own copies of Adobe Photoshop in class, while two resorted to Microsoft Paint to crop and resize their pictures.

Despite (or because of) the accessibility and importance of photography in their 'about me' narratives, the private school students were instructed to use self-portraits in other media, such as drawing and painting. Most of the group complied with this instruction (a few included more conventional photographic portraits or group portraits). None used the mobile phone selfies popular in the government school.

This avoidance of photography and particularly mobile phone photography was both a mark of distinction, a class-based preference for the exclusivity of fine arts, and a marker of the strong disciplinary foundation which the teacher wished to emphasize. This subtly shifted their identities to a professional, disciplined identity, the focus on the work rather than the person.

They were already exploring creating online presence as Three had already created portfolios on other sites, or linked to their online photography, videography portfolios, and in one case, to his blog.

[Need link here and need to talk about George and digital creativity]

#### **George**

An exemplary student, George enjoyed drawing and sketched every day. Both his parents worked in Advertising and his own identity was closely linked to being a Visual Arts student. His 'About Me' page mentions local and overseas gallery visits, and he describes himself as a 'big fan of abstract, modern and conceptual art' (EG1, about page, 2012). He supplemented these interests with online activities, pursuing his interest in art by participating on Facebook and Twitter, art network deviantART, and keeping up with art websites and specialist blogs.

At school, George was a leader in the Accelerated Art program, and a member of the Digital Design society. He won the Visual Arts subject prize in his final year at school. Over the course of the project he grew to appreciate his e-portfolio as a reflection of his abilities and as a source of high grades he needed to maintain in order to keep the place he had been offered studying Medicine at a local university.

George's e-portfolio design was simple and elegant, with a simple white background intended not to distract attention from the artworks themselves. He differed from Masibulele and most of his classmates in that he had aimed to emulate a 'clean type of gallery look'. As a result, he chose to use the metaphor of a clean, white gallery in carbonmade to simulate the experience of gallery viewing and foreground his Fine Art creative works.

His captions for his portfolio items, (even those created out of school) were formal, revealing none of the persuasive register or marketing address which Masibulele had adopted. As Figure 3 reveals, his language is the understated address of a gallery presenting salient details about objects of distinction to an audience of discerning potential buyers,.

#### Extra-Mural Art Work



"Sitting Down" August 2011 Oil Paints on Board Completed as part of a Painting Course 480mm x 440mm

**Figure 3: "Sitting Down" August 2011 Oil Paints on Board Completed as part of a Painting Course 480mm x 480mm**

Apart from his instrumental approach maximizing his grades, George was also motivated by interactions with the online audience that Masibulele courted. George had a strong sense of an appreciative audience and received feedback from his parents, classmates on Carbonmade,. George planned to maintain his portfolio after school to continue sharing his drawings with a broad audience because he also enjoyed the positive attention from people who had commented on the other sites where he uploaded his work. *'It is one of the main reasons I put things online - so I can see how people around the world feel about it.'*

Thus digital portfolios allow an important aspect of self-presentation, which is in fact self-construction – being treated as a talented artist online, was yet another way in which George confirmed his disciplinary and creative identity.

#### CONCLUSION

Given these two case studies of successful and motivated young Visual Arts students it is worth remembering that the overall background to this study is one of exclusion and that many young South Africans do not have the opportunity to study Visual Arts at all. In creative fields, education at most schools reproduces domination, effectively excluding young working class students from developing the skills and portfolios of work required to access creative careers. At government schools, digital aspects of visual arts are not

well established and serve to mark the distinction available to children of the elite attending schools like the private school documented in the study.

Our case studies, though both exceptional individuals, nonetheless suggest the growing importance of a digital habitus, or general orientation towards an online audience developed through everyday practices requiring the easy availability of material and digital infrastructures such as networks, bandwidth, computer hardware and software.

Creative production with digital media involves the use of varied hardware and software as users digitize, edit, share and organize digital content. Our case study of the private school shows the complex layering of infrastructure and cultural and social capital involved as young people in the elite class train to gain access to creative and other middle class professions, and the considerable advantages provided by their home backgrounds.

The state school suggests the challenges at work when these technologies are appropriated by working-class students in under-resourced school and home environments in the global South. In such contexts the affordances of devices and default values in software developed for well-resourced Northern environments can become distinct constraints.

George's 'model' e-portfolio reflects his privileged access to the world of art, its discourse and practices. The identity he constructed accommodates the markers of his ethnicity and rewards his cultural capital while being seamlessly accessible to both his everyday and digital networks, who provide him with multiple audiences who can reinforce his access to the discipline.

Masibulele's e-portfolio reveals a great deal about the permissible identities associated with visual arts at school in South Africa. On the one hand, Masibulele's Facebook network suggests the emergence of a grassroots exhibition space, and his command of marketing discourse suggests the desire to influence this network as an entrepreneur. On the other hand, Masibulele's association between visual art and Western identity suggests the possibility of self-censorship as young black artists such as Masibulele present their portfolios for evaluation. This may limit their prospects as much as their constrained access to infrastructure for publication and to knowledge about the unwritten rules of engaging with art audiences once they are online.

#### Pedagogical recommendations

We argue that the relative accessibility of mobile phones in the state school ecology suggests that a recentering of current curricula and software designs around mobile phone use and genres would make them a key site for visual creative education for young people in South Africa today.

This paper has shown how learners making self-representations in such settings must work around the limits

of phones as currently designed. We argue for the pedagogical component of mobile interfaces and affordances. An approach drawing on Bourdieu would use mobile designs to counter domination by expanding access to key disciplines such as painting and drawing and creating apps for pixel-based creativity i.e. by extending bourgeois culture to all. Freire, on the other hand, would seek an alternative approach which valued and cultivated existing creative practices in a pedagogy starting out from young working class people's lived experience (Burawoy, 2012:104). Infused by this ethos, a Visual Arts curriculum would need to spiral out from the vernacular photographic genres already accessible to young people, using them to reflect on local surroundings, and address internalised oppression as well as to construct fantasy selves.

The conceptualisation of digital literacy and possibly some of the requirements for portfolio submission need to be re-centered around mobile practices. School curricula provide few opportunities for mobile-centric internet and web users to legitimise their existing knowledge or to develop their critical understanding of the technologies they are using. Given that more people use phones than computers, the problem is not so much a deficit in computer skills, but the inaccessibility of systems and applications which exclude mobile users by default or by design.

Mobile technology plays a crucial role in opening access to certain aspects of visual creativity, notably photography and sharing of photographs and other images. At the same time, current mobile technology bars access in other ways, in particular through the tricky interface with PC-based ecologies and peripheral devices, the high cost of mobile data and through apps which offer limited support for key visual arts disciplines of drawing, and painting but also of key digital arts disciplines of graphic design and coding.

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[anonymized].

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