

Student code: 2218430

Mental health assignment

Module code: ADAD4019

Module: Ways of Perceiving: BA Fine Art & BA Photography in the Arts/ Documentary
Photography and Visual Activism

Introduction:

This assignment will provide an in-depth aspect about the different types of mental health issues which people can suffer with, which will be used in a hypothetical exhibition. The types of mental health issues which this exhibition will touch on will be (PTSD) Post-traumatic stress disorder, mental depression, bipolar disorder and anxiety disorders. Mental health has been transformed over the last seventy years and has been taken more seriously in recent years after people have realised how these mental issues can fully affect an individual's life (Venters, 2018). People are becoming more accepting and more supportive of people suffering with mental health now compared to people in the past (Venters, 2018). Mental health is more important now than ever before because it impacts every area of our lives (Bisma Anwar, 2021). The importance of good mental health ripples into everything we do, think or say. The artists which this exhibition touches upon are Vincent Van Gogh, Frida Kahlo, Edvard Munch and Paul Gauguin, these artists have all experienced some form of mental health issues and have expressed it into their work. The mental health theories this exhibition applies are behaviourism, biological, psychodynamic, cognitive and humanistic (Miller, 2019).

Context:

Mental Health today is a very important issue for many people around the world because the majority still suffer with mental health issues in silence without getting any help and support. Therefore, this theme is vitally important to shine a light on the various mental problems that can seriously affect people's lives and can cause more people to become suicidal if not offered help and guidance. Mental health is often not given enough attention, people often overlook the problems caused by it, and they cannot see the person visibly suffering from it. Awareness for mental health is vital for society's mental and physical health, so by educating more people on mental health can lead to a happier and healthier

population. Mental and physical health are equally important components of overall health. For example, depression can increase the risk of many types of physical health problems, particularly long-lasting conditions, such as heart disease, diabetes and strokes (CDC, 2021). Psychologically mental health is an important matter to our emotional and social well-being, it can affect our day-to-day behaviour such as how we think, feel and act (Mentalhealth.Gov 2022). One of the main types of mental health issues many people suffer with can be PTSD which is when someone relives a traumatic event through nightmares and flashbacks and may experience some feelings of isolation (NHS, 2022). People may also have problems with sleeping with this type of mental health disorder and experience insomnia (NHS, 2022). Another major mental health issue can be depression which is experienced by the vast majority of the world's population, it is characterized by persistent sadness and a lack of interest or pleasure in previous rewarding or enjoyable activities. It can also disrupt an individual's sleep and appetite to eat. The effects of depression can be long-lasting and can dramatically affect an individual's ability to function properly and live a rewarding life (World Health Organization, 2022).

Furthermore, another mental health issue this exhibition is based on is the mental condition bipolar, this type of disorder mainly affects your mood. Bipolar can cause large shifts in an individual affected mood from mania to depression, the key symptoms of bipolar disorder can include episodes of mania or extremely elevated moods and episodes of depression or low moods (Holland, 2023). These episodes can last days to even weeks or longer. The last mental health condition this exhibition is covering is anxiety disorders which are severe conditions stemming from excessive worrying. Individuals who suffer with bad feelings of anxiety that do not go away, can interfere with their daily activities such as their job performance and personal relationships (WebMD, 2023). This ongoing worrying and tension may be accompanied by physical symptoms, such as restlessness, feeling on edge constantly and easily fatigued (WebMD, 2023). From looking at all these mental health conditions it can clearly show the ways people are suffering from these disorders and that there needs to be more awareness of these health issues because if these types of mental health issues progress it can lead to a tough way of living and even loss of life from someone taking their own life from these conditions.

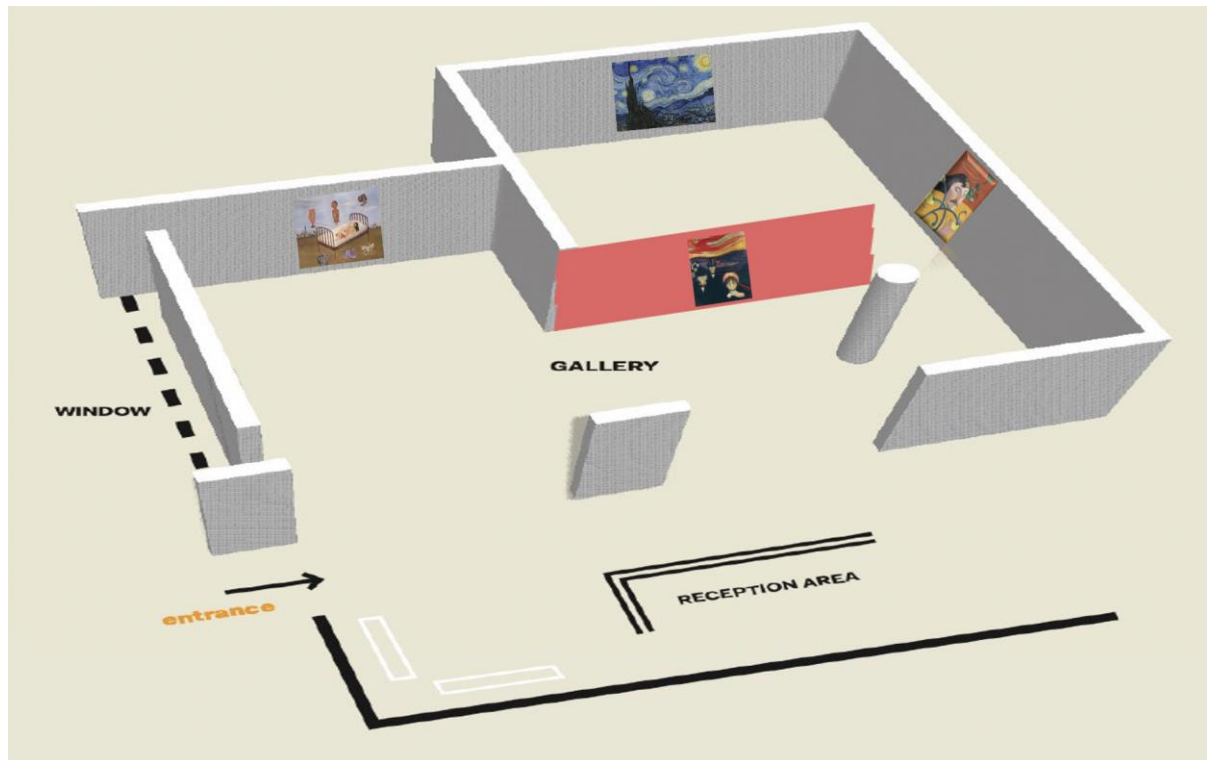
One of the artist Vincent Van Gogh has been diagnosed by today's medical professional experts to may have suffered with bad depression, anxiety, epilepsy and most likely developed bipolar. A close friend to Van Gogh, Paul Gauguin also experienced severe depression, he was very suicidal and ended his life by drowning himself in arsenic. Gauguin additionally suffered with anxiety and hallucinations due to distraughtly history of life. In addition, Frida Kahlo a Mexican painter known for her brilliant, talented and coloured self-portraits. According to researchers she suffered with a post traumatic disorder, a bipolar disorder and had developed a peculiar disruptive and intense personality (Graf, 2021). In a relation, Edvard Munch has been diagnosed with depression, anxiety and bipolar disorder along with other illnesses. He refused treatment and advice most times as it was a process of his way of making art by creating artwork relating his illnesses and emotions.

Artists and artworks:

One of the selected pieces of artwork which I have chosen to display in this hypothetical exhibition is Vincent Van Gogh's most famous artwork the 'Starry Night' which personifies Gogh's psychiatric symptoms whilst he was held at the mental hospital in Saint Remy de Provence. Gogh's epilepsy was treated with digitalis that contributed his love of a wide range of bright colours, a side effect from digitalis is that Gogh saw the world through a yellow tinted lens. Additionally, this shows the use of the yellow in the starry night appears to be related to his father which he communicated through his intense state emotionally and mentally. Gogh's skill of the swirly heavy brushstrokes exaggerated and was expressive, his brushstrokes visualized his own experience and his personal feelings on the starry night he painted. Vincent Van Gogh today is widely recognized for expressionism, surrealism and more art movements of the twentieth century. Vincent Van Gogh's impressionist masterpiece of the starry night was painted not long before his death by suicide in 1890.

Furthermore, the next piece of artwork on display would Paul Gauguin's art piece 'self-portrait with Halo and Snake' in 1889 was to identify symbolism in the art movement and in his self-expressionism. A few years before his suicide Paul painted the self-portrait nearby Golgotha where he struggles with financial problems which left him without food or medication that was essential. There are signs of depression throughout his self-portraiture from the colouring of acrylic, uncomfortable posture and tones. Paul Gauguin's style of work includes post impressionism, modern art, symbolism, primitivism and synthetism which all have a part in every work of Pauls. Another selected artist which this exhibition will display is Frida Kahlo who was diagnosed with minor depression and attempted suicide through her lifetime. Frida Kahlo's paints herself in the art piece 'Henry Ford hospital' made in 1932, Frida painted a combination of reality and fantasy in a straightforward primitivistic style representing the pain with her body twisted in blood, she shows how discomfiting the feeling was going through such tragic time in her life period. Lastly, Edvard Munch was selected to display a piece of his artwork, an artist who also expressed his thought and feelings throughout painting. Edvard's oil on canvas piece 'Anxiety' made in 1894 is one of his most famous works in a relation to his work 'The Scream'. Edvard's paintings had predominantly expressed his anxiety and depression, the expression on the people's faces depicts negative emotion that related to Munch's mental state at the time. Edvard Munch communicates his experience from suffering with anxiety and depression throughout every piece of artwork, an experience of anxiousness and horror so invigorating that it feels just as contemporary today as it did 124 years ago.

Imagined exhibition layout:



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