

2114455

Ways of Thinking

ADAD4019

Imagined Curated Exhibition

‘Times come and gone’

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Imagined Curated Exhibition

In this essay I will showcase my imagined curated exhibition around theme and will analyse each piece of artwork I have selected and explain why I have selected them. I will take the floor plan of my chosen site and developed a theme which relates to the site and learn how to curate an exhibit professionally, researching the correct dimensions of the artwork and site from reliable sources and placing them digitally using the software Photoshop in the correct proportions, considering the importance of positioning in a way intended by the artist, and arrange the artwork so that they speak to each other and flow.

My chosen theme for my imagined exhibition is 'times come and gone', analysing the diverse functions of a certain site over the years. I intend to hold my exhibition in the future renovated space inside The Palace Theatre Swansea as I feel it is relevant to my theme and have selected five relevant pieces of work which support my concept. I plan to do in depth research into the history of The Palace Theatre and its many functions and uses throughout the years since it's opening in 1988. I will explore how a function of a site will change depending on the view of the people who will be using it. "I can't tell you what art does and how it does it, but I know that often art has judged the judges, pleaded revenge to the innocent and shown to the future what the past suffered so that has never been forgotten (John Berger (2011))."

The Palace Theatre Swansea



(Image: WalesOnline / Gayle Marsh)

I have chosen The Palace Theatre in Swansea as the location for my Imagined Exhibition as I felt it was a suitable site in relation to my chosen theme; 'times come and gone'. The Palace Theatre is a grand, grade II listed building situated in the heart of Swansea. Since its opening in 1888, the theatre has had a multiple of uses. "The charming Swansea Palace theatre opened in 1888 as a music hall named the Swansea Pavilion Theatre of Varieties (Theatretrust, 2020)."

It is interesting how the meaning of a site can change through its uses and the people who congregate there and the once loved by some for different reasons entirely. The building was opened as a Theatre in 1888, became a nightclub in the 1960's and finally, before its closing in 2006, it became a gay night club. "By the early 1960's it became a bingo club, then by the 1970's a 'private' club. Closed in 1991 it then became a nightclub which has been through several ownerships, closing in 2006 (Cinema Treasures)."

After its closure in 2006, once a grand, busy and popular venue it is now a sorry

looking building forgotten and left to deteriorate. Plant growth damage is visible in every crevice of the building, indicating the affects of time and nature due to being abandoned for so long. "Swansea Palace theatre closed as a nightclub in 2006. The building was in private ownership and had been in a dangerous state of disrepair both internally and externally, becoming increasingly water and plant growth-damaged (Theatretrust, 2020)."

However vacant and desolate the Palace Theatre may be, you can't help but feel that it is fitting with the city of Swansea. Many beautiful, old buildings in Swansea have been abandoned or demolished possibly due to the lack of money the council has for restoring these properties. "The poverty of our century is unlike that of any other. It is not, as poverty was before, the result of natural scarcity, but of a set of priorities imposed upon the rest of the world by the rich (John Berger)."

After being unused for years it is great news that the council have decided to restore the building and turn it into office spaces.

PALACE THEATRE, SWANSEA - PROPOSITIONAL TO CONCEPT
PROPOSED GROUND FLOOR PLAN



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Fig. 1 - The proposed ground floor plan (Image: Swansea Council)



Artistic Impression
Palace Theatre Swansea/ Collaborative Workspace Proposal

GWPA
www.gwp-arch.com

Cynghor Abertawe
Swansea Council

Fig. 2 - How Swansea's Palace Theatre will look once it is transformed (Image: Swansea Council/ GWP)

The Flatiron Building

1919

Samuel Halpert American



The first piece of artwork I have chosen for my exhibition is 'The Flatiron Building' painted in 1919 by Samuel Halpert and will be the first artwork the viewer will see when entering the exhibition. "It is often compared architecturally for its similarity to the Flatiron building in New York, with its dramatic exterior on a triangular site (Theatrestrust), 2020).

I chose this painting as it is very similar in design to The Palace Theatre and highlights the dissimilarity between both locations. "This dynamic painting of New York's Flatiron neighborhood, on the edge of Madison Square Park, is representative of his more naturalistic work from the late teens (Met Museum 2000-2022).

Built in 1902, The Flatiron Building situated in New York City, is a prosperous building, a powerful contrast to The Palace Theatre. This highlights the contrast in potential of a site depending on its location. “The strange power of art is sometimes it can show that what people have in common is more urgent than what differentiates them. It seems to me it’s something that theatre can do, but it’s rare; it’s very rare”. (John Berger)

Medium: Oil on canvas

Dimensions: 40 × 34 in.

Wesley Chapel, Swansea, 1941

Will Evans

Glynn Vivian Art Gallery



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The next piece of artwork I have chosen to include in my exhibition is 'Welsley Chapel' by Will Evans 1941. Situated on College Street, Swansea, Welsley Chapel was destroyed during the Swansea three night blitz. "On the south side of College Street it is easy to miss a head-high plaque between two shops which states: 'To the glory of God this tablet indicates the site on which the Wesley Chapel, College Street, was situated. Opened February 1847, destroyed by enemy action February 1941'(Gower Hidden History)". Just a short five minute walk from The Palace Theatre, the demolished building was almost a representation of what the palace theatre could have looked like if the bomb had dropped closer. It should be a reminder of what could have been lost and what should be preserved and honoured, instead it is left to perish.

Medium: oil on canvas

Measurements: H 58.1 x W 63.6 cm

Opera Ball

The palace theatre is probably best known by the Swansea community as the first place where Anthony Hopkins performed as a young man. "Sir Anthony Hopkins made his first professional stage appearance here in 1960 (cinematreasures.org)."

Through research I discovered that Anthony Hopkins is an artist himself, I thought it more than necessary to include his work in my exhibition. He creates almost abstract paintings using bright, bold colours, though his collection is small, a few of the works comprises of portraits. His artworks have a sense of madness and disorder, a reflection of his personality and character. "The face is not important. It's the eyes that are the most haunting part of one's soul. It's very primitive. It's childish art. It has to be childish because I am a child (anthonyhopkinsart.com)."

Limited Edition Serigraph on Somerset Paper

Dimensions 14" x 15.5"

Two Men Dancing, 1984 - Robert Mapplethorpe



'Two Men Dancing' by Robert Mapplethorpe is very powerful image celebrating the queer community. "During the 1970s and '80s, he photographed himself and his New York City coterie, which included musicians such as Patti Smith (his one-time Chelsea Hotel roommate), artists, socialites, porn stars, and members of the gay S&M underground ([artsy.net](https://www.artsy.net), 2022)." Although beautiful, the artwork has a sense of sadness to it; the men's vacant expressions and the use black and white tones, could be a representation of the time and the repression of the queer community. "Photographs bear witness to a human choice being exercised in a given situation. A photograph is a result of the photographer's decision that it is worth recording that this particular event or this particular object has been seen. If everything that existed were continually being photographed, every photograph would become meaningless (John Berger, 2008)"

The inclusion of this photograph within my exhibition is to represent the time the building became a gay club in the 1990's. "When in love, the sight of the beloved has a

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completeness which no words and no embrace can match: a completeness which only the act of making love can temporarily accommodate (John Berger, Ways of Seeing)."

Size: 19 1/10 × 15 1/5 in

Medium: Photography

The Giant Hand Of Vyrnwy - By Simon O'Rourke

The final piece of artwork I have included in my exhibition is 'The hand of Vrynwy'; a 50 foot sculpture of a hand reaching towards the sky carved entirely from the trunk of a single tree. Created by sculptural artist Simon O'Rourke, he was inspired to carve the hand after the tree was damaged by a storm. "I found out through a friend that the tallest tree in Wales had been storm damaged and was due to be felled, and that Natural Resource Wales who were in charge of the site, were going to commission an artist to carve the tree (Simon O'Rourke, 2011).

I decided to choose this piece as a representation of nature taking over, the same way that in a short space of time The Palace Theatre became completely covered in trees and plants. "The past is the one thing we are not prisoners of. We can do with the past exactly what we wish. What we can't do is to change its consequences (John Berger)."

This will be the last piece that will be seen by the viewers as they walk through the exhibition.

Exhibition plan



Fig. 1 - Entrance room inside The Palace Theatre (above)

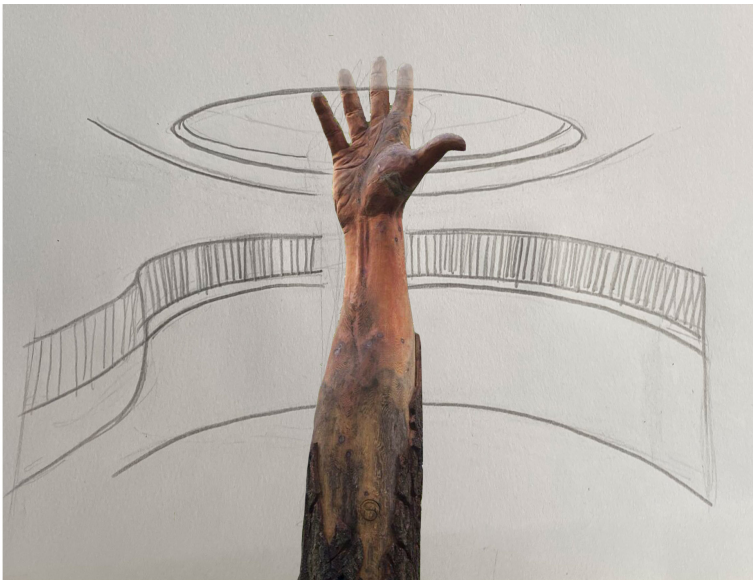


Fig.2 - Large theatre room (above)

Conclusion:

In this essay I have utilised the skills and techniques I have learnt throughout this module to curate my own imagined exhibition around the theme of 'times come and gone'. I have searched artists appropriate to my theme from reliable sources and attempted to place them in a way that I feel flows and tells a story to the viewer. In future I plan to learn how to use new software such as Adobe Substance 3D where I could create a virtual 3D exhibition, which would allow me to see what the exhibition would look in real life and get to experience the exhibition effectively.

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