

Imagined Display Space (Exhibition, Festival, Performance etc)

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To create an imagined gallery titled "The Disruption of the
Traditional Modern Gallery", covering the art works that will be

present in the exhibition, analysing the reasons behind each aspect of it

Entitled "the disruption of the traditional modern gallery", for short "the anti-gallery".

This essay looks to explore the perception and the impact on the structural quality and kinetic energy that tethers the five different artworks and place of situ. In Jacques Rancière's *"The Emancipated Spectator"* he expresses the following "it (emancipation) beings when we understand that the viewing is also an action that confirms of transforms the distribution of positions" (Ranciere, 2011). To recapitulate, the exhibition will be in an abandoned schoolhouse with the artwork under the floor, covered with a glass sheet to protect it. This is to distort the way the viewer perceives the work dependent on the setting it in which they are seeing it, how it can impact the spectator's emotions and thoughts towards the artwork.

The intended exhibition space will be placed under the floor of an abandoned schoolhouse, in the corridor, with old schoolwork up on the walls for example. The existing flooring will be removed, and the five artworks will be placed vertically along the floor respectively with a three-metre distance between each piece. As the intended building once made education accessible to those of any class, the anti-gallery makes art equally accessible to those of any class. As education is to a school, is what art is to a gallery it provides the vessel for perceiving.

Rudolf Arnheim states "No object is perceived as unique or isolated. Seeing something means assigning it a place in the whole" (Arnheim, 1954). In the context of the exhibition, the way in which the art is shown is equally as important as the place it is shown.

This exhibition aims to understand the way in which art is viewed distorts the perception of worth and importance, by deconstructing the archetypical white gallery space. Notably the artist that pioneered displaying his artwork in a white cube setting was James Abbot McNeill Whistler. He wanted to challenge societal norms by displaying a "group of white paintings, in white frames inside a room with white walls. He wanted to create a strange and uncomfortable experience for the viewers, hanging the pictures so far apart that produced the feeling of being inside and almost empty space" (Galan, 2019). Whistler wanted to create a divide in the Victorian public, those who understand (intellectually elite) and those who do not (working class). This whiteness was regarded as cold, sterile and austere, this less than welcoming format of presenting his artwork created an exclusive atmosphere where the contemporary element was hard to understand for the general public (BBC, 2012). "His cold and sterile space became the symbol of the aesthetics of bourgeoisie" (Galan, 2019). Whistler provided a foundation for what would become the modern gallery, the default way in which art is displayed.



Figure 1. White Cube Bermondsey (2021)

In the 1976 essay by Brian O'Doherty illustrates "the modern gallery space as a constructed along the laws of rigorous as those for building a medieval church" (O'Doherty, 1976). He notes that the outside world must not enter the gallery and is thus the windows are sealed off, the walls are painted white and the ceiling is the source of light. Much like the stained glass in a church, the art appears to be stood still in time, preserved and never to be touched. This utopic way of viewing art removes the relatability by causing a physical divide, the sterile and hostile environment makes viewing the art less personable. Coming away from this notion,

creating a more accessible and understated gallery where the space revolves more around the art than the surrounding.

There appears to be a divide, certainly nowadays of those who want to uphold the tradition of displaying work in an uncontaminated, sterile and typed white cube and those who oppose to display the work in a more accessible and approachable way for the general public instead of the minority of the public. This sense of elitism and inequality in the art realm is dissipating, art is seen as an outlet for many and benefits mental health and other illnesses.

Gladstone and Howarth-Gladstone attributed the Hong Kong-based gallerist Chang Tsong-zung in collaboration with others and the academic, critic and curator Gao Shiming developed the 'yellow box' as a critical substitute for the white cube in the early 2000's.

This article begins with a discussion of the yellow box and how it can be understood to intervene critically in the curatorial paradigm of the white cube (Gladstone and Howarth-Gladstone, 2017)

Motion is captured, defined in a series of marks across a surface, this idea of walking over the artwork can be interpreted as blurring the line between the exhibiting of art, and performance art. One is also called to raise the point of ownership of an artwork,

when a multitude of viewers, the audience, is captured, the scuffing and imprint of marks as previously discussed can be seen to provide a new realm of interpretation of originality. Tony Orrico (Orrico, n.d.), performance based artist teeters on this notion of performance and art, does the performance piece become the exhibition piece or is it the mere act of creating it? I propose to use a technique that shows where people have walked on the glass, raking light photography (RAK), it is a process in which allows one to document surface textures (BPG Visual Examination - Wiki, n.d.).

An example that could be interpreted as pertinent, is the moon landing. Neil Armstrong's first footprint can be seen as symbolism of the leap in humans compacity to space exploration and journey, the advancement of technology. This same symbolic idea, can be related to the anti-gallery, the footsteps on the glass is the first footsteps for the anti-gallery.

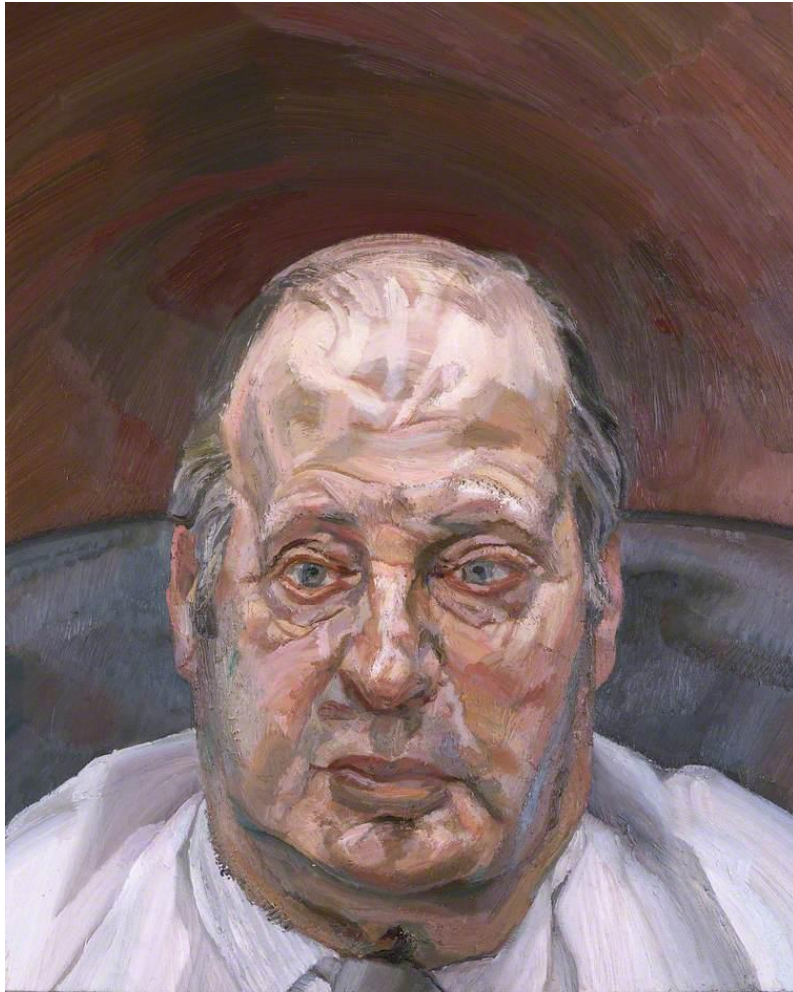


Figure 2. *'The Painter's Brother, Stephen* by Lucian Freud (1985-6)

The first piece of artwork I intend to be place is *'The Painter's Brother, Stephen'* by Lucian Freud- Figure 2. The size of the painting height 51cm x width 40.9cm (The Painter's Brother, Stephen | Art UK, n.d.).

This is one painting I have always admired, Freud was renowned for painting portraits with startling eyes, "penetrating gaze was part of his weaponry" (Lampert, 2011). Would this beguiling expression discourage the public to walk on the painting? I hypothesis there will be a few contrasting individuals; one whom walks on the painting with either dislike to the painting, those unread on this artist and those

who ignore it. Then the other, one which walk around it that finds the painting appealing and choose to walk around it, know the artist's work, this has an impact on the way the individual chooses to see it. The first, may indicate lack of respect or discernment by physically walking on the painting, the second shows admiration and reverence by walking around it shows they want to fully appreciate the painting. By giving the public the option to walk on the artwork will show comparatively more on the individual piece rather the gallery as an entity.



Figure 3. *'Félix Pissarro wearing a Red Beret'* by Camille Pissarro (1881)

The second piece of artwork I propose to display in my exhibition is 'Félix Pissarro wearing a Red Beret' by Camille Pissarro- figure 3. The dimensions of the paintings are 46cm x 55cm (Category: Félix Pissarro wearing a Red Beret (Camille Pissarro) -

Wikimedia Commons, n.d.). I chose this piece for my exhibition as it is pertinent showing an adolescent in an education setting. This impressionist painter, famous for his paintings of his family members, the above piece is an example of many which were painted delicately and sensitive to the minutia that adorned the painting. "The comfort of being able to observe them at home and not in a formal studio environment means that often, it is images of their own children that reveal artists at their most free and least constrained" (Children in Art, 2018) The painting of Pissarro's third son, Félix, shows him in a three-quarter profile, capturing his gaze.



Figure 4. " *The Climax*" by Aubrey Beardsley (1894)

The third artwork I intend to show in my exhibition is figure 4 '*The Climax*' by Aubrey Beardsley (1894). Beardsley was known for being risqué for his time, the leading artists for the Decadent and Aesthetic movement. This illustration was a part of the series of 16, for Oscar Wilde's 1891 play *Salome*. The illustration depicts the femme fatale kissing the severed head of John the Baptist (The Climax (illustration) -

Wikipedia, 2020). His alternative style of illustration created a satirised Victorian value of sex. These more controversial and contentious illustrations is what drew me to his work, I want to create this controversial undertone that Beardsley created, breaking the norm of the 'white cube'.



Figure 5. '*Dylan Thomas*' by Alfred Janes (1934)



Figure 6. *'The Palazzo Ducale, Seen from San Giorgio Maggiore'* by Claude Monet.

I have chosen figure 5 and figure 6 for my fourth and fifth piece of artwork. 'Claude Monet's The Palazzo Ducale, Seen from San Giorgio Maggiore' will be the last piece of artwork presented in my exhibition, the only landscape that will be shown. Figure 5- by Alfred Janes measures at 40.6cm by 30.5cm. Figure 6- by Claude Monet measures at 92.3cm by 73.2cm. Both artists worked on portraits and landscapes and have been shown in the typical white gallery space. Showing such famous paintings in a less conventional setting is what I aim to do.

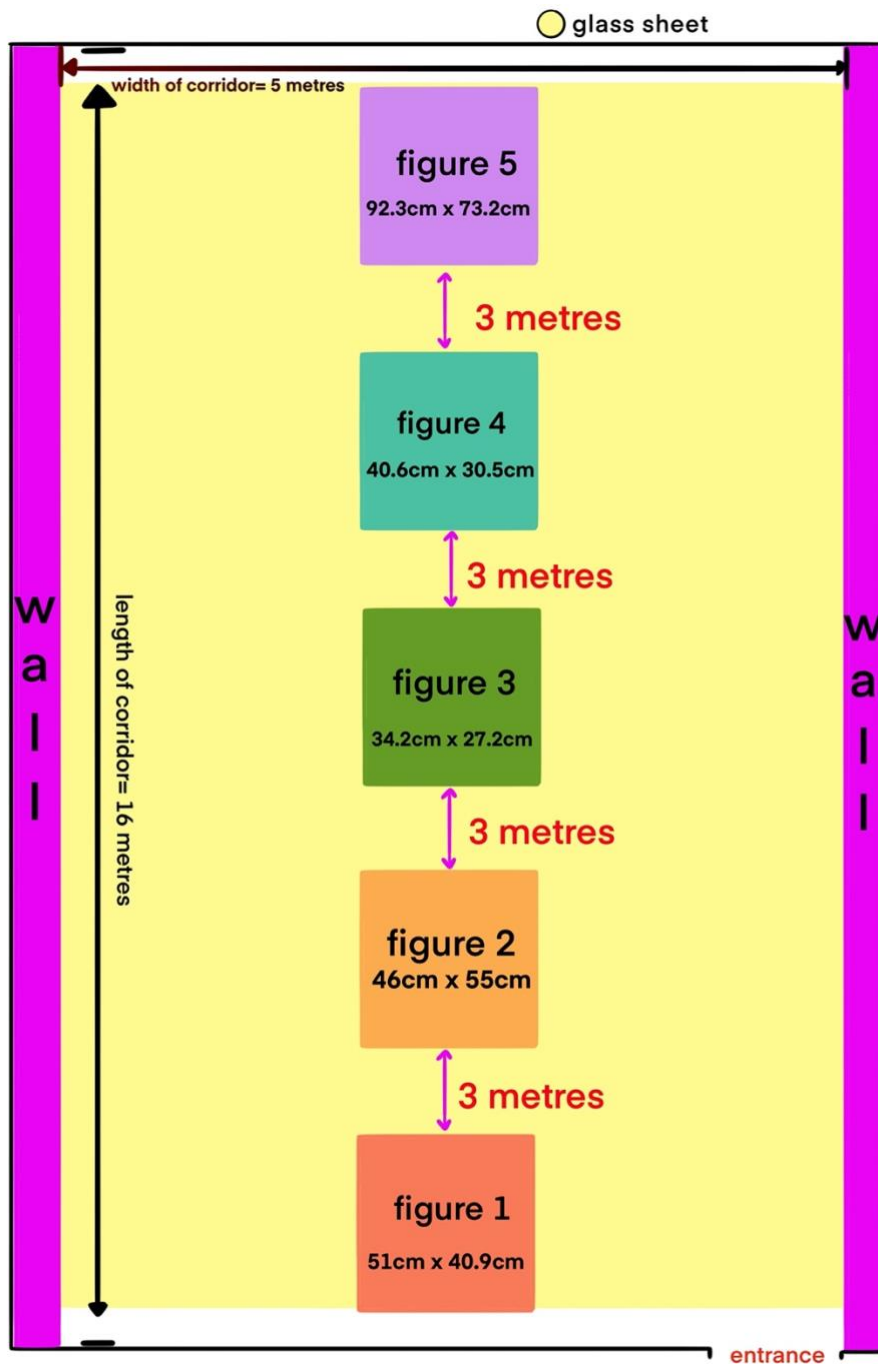


Figure 7. *'Map of the Anti-Gallery, Birds Eye View'* by Isabella Coombs (2021)

Figure 7 is the map illustrating what my intended exhibition space will look like, including the length, width, dimensions of artwork as well as where the glass sheet will be placed.

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Figure 7. Coombs, 2021. 'Map of the Anti-Gallery, Birds Eye View'.