

Ways Of Perceiving Essay

Punk Rebellion Exhibition

The cultural revelation I will be analysing follows the timeline of punk rebellion era in the 1970's. Many individuals argue that the concept of Punk and the characteristics of this genre was a regional phenomenon that instigated a pivotal moment in cultural history (Snellings, n.d.). The punk rebellion emerged during the 1970s as a countercultural movement, primarily in the United States and the United Kingdom. The recognition of this era was characterised by its rejection of mainstream societal norms and values such as conventional fashion, music and political ideologies (Snellings, n.d.). The uniqueness of the punk movement meant that the niche taste in fashion, music and art was often criticised and ostracised for being 'out of place' and 'difficult'. However, supporters of the movement believe that punk rebellion encouraged alternative societal beliefs as well as changing the way people discussed social stratification in Britain during the late 1970s (Simonelli, 2002). For people who identify themselves with the punk rebellion, the concept of punk is more than statements made by fashion and music; it is a historical milestone that has introduced a sense of independence for punk rebellion supporters in modern society (Simonelli, 2002).

My exhibition aims to follow and depict the punk rebellion movement whilst simultaneously guiding and providing the audience with a deeper understanding of

punk subculture. The exhibition will also show the complex and overlooked view of culture during the 1970's through the form of art, graphic communication, music and fashion design.

Untitled Linder (1976)



(Tate, 2020)

‘Untitled’ by Linder was released in 1976. The piece of art was inspired by pornography and popular magazines during the period of 1970 to 1980 (Tate, 2020) and will be showcased as the first piece of art in the exhibition. ‘Untitled’ was commissioned as a part of the album sleeve for punk associated band ‘Buzzcocks’ in 1977 who were originally formed in Bolton, Greater Manchester (Tate, 2020). Linder was greatly involved in the punk music industry within Manchester as the founder, lead singer and creative force behind the Punk band ‘Ludus’ which was founded in

1978 and continued until 1984 (Tate, 2020). The inspiration behind this piece follows the process that lies behind the punk movement breaking societal boundaries (Clark, 2003). The piece of art could be argued to cause discomfort amongst the audience is also criticised for having connotations of pornography which some individuals may find unpleasant. However, it is important to note that 'unwritten' is open to interpretation which is a critical attribute of punk rebellion. This piece identifies with sexuality and pornography which are both extremely controversial topics that encourage the audience to engage in ways that best suit them. The topic of sex was viewed as an appeal during the punk movement, a way to rebel against society and use sexualised content to gain a sense of power against the British establishment (Langman, 2008). Forms of adornment, fashion and lifestyle can be perceived as a way of claiming agency to resist domination (Langman, 2008). By releasing this piece of art, Linder expresses support of the punk rebellion, which is associated with empowerment, and reinforces the idea that it is acceptable to express rage and protest (Langman, 2008). The punk community soon began to gain dominance and recognition by allowing the human body to be the basis of empowerment and authenticity; a cultural revelation that has permitted recent and current generations to become more sexually uninhibited and have ownership over body image and sexual dormancy (Langman, 2008).

Vivienne Westwood (1970)



(Onessimo, 2022)

The punk rebellion was a critical statement for the fashion community during the 1970's. Vivienne Westwood was a fashion designer that was intrigued by acts of rebellion which was reflected in her style and design of clothes which began in 1971. (Westwood, n.d.). Alongside her husband Malcolm, who was the founder of punk-rock musical band 'The Sex Pistols'; the pair opened a store to sell fashion pieces that were inspired by breaking boundaries (Westwood, n.d.). Westwood was faced with prosecutions under the 1959 Obscene Publications Act, due to selling t-shirts with provocative printed slogans. Westwood responded to the prosecutions by deigning and creating more fashion statements that incorporated visual aspects of sexual fetishism and bondage into everyday fashion. This breakthrough against the Obscene Publications Act enabled society to believe in sexual dormancy and own sexuality at a time where it was considered taboo (Westwood, n.d.). The development of patriarchy and satisfying the 'gaze' was unlike anything in Britain during 1974

(Westwood, n.d.). Ownership of sexuality became a strong topic during the punk rebellion and Westwood was an organic catalyst for this through her art creations. The aim behind this piece is to follow the independence of sex during the punk rebellion, continuing Linder's controversial of pornography and sexual advertisement.

Jamie Macgregor Reid



As established, The Sex Pistols were a well-known band during the era of Punk in the 1970's. During the late 1970's, The Sex Pistols built an iconic image for themselves as a Punk band by associating themselves with being openly controversial, rebellious and outspoken (Ehmann, 2022). The branding antics became a staple for their well-

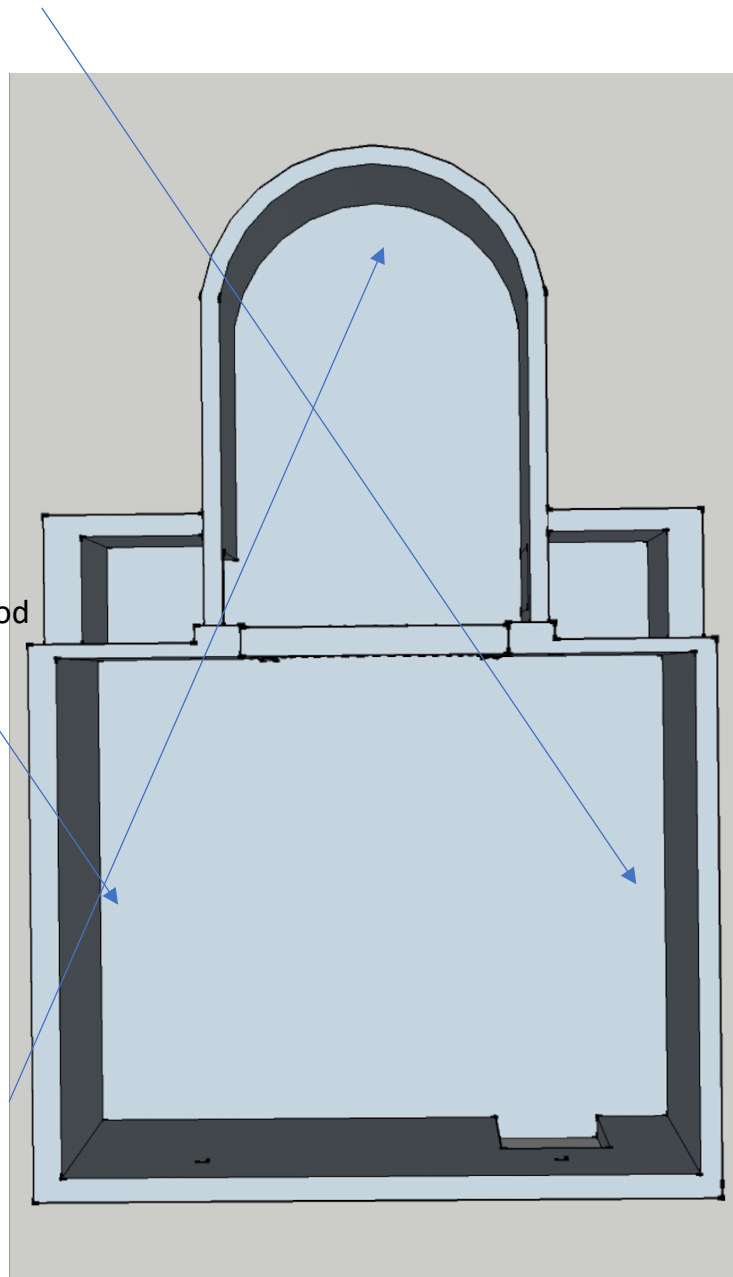
known provocative protest towards the British monarchy. Designer Jamie Macgregor Reid created the 'God Save The Queen' album cover which has become a heritage within the punk culture today (Ehmann, 2022). The band was heavily criticised by the British public during the time of release for their unapologetic approach towards facing social issues and breaking the standards of British culture (Ehmann, 2022). They stood up for what they believed in with great persistence and consequently became a British phenomenon and reference for those to speak up and rebel against the standards set by the hierarchy of class and status (Ehmann, 2022). Jamie Macgregor Reid was an English visual artist who saw vision in the punk rebellion and joined forces with the Sex Pistols, in showing dominance within his art and in result, creating 'the single most iconic image of the punk era' (The Independent, 2023). This iconic image has set a standard in the punk rebellion and as controversy followed, he concluded by setting the standard for punk visual design and showed the British public that art is more than just an image, it is a way of expressing, rebelling and breaking boundaries while supporting individual morals and beliefs.

Exhibition plan

Art piece 1- **Untitled** Linder (1976)

Art piece 2 –
Vivienne Westwood

Art piece 3- Jamie
Macgregor Reid



The punk rebellion exhibition will take place in the Mission Gallery – Swansea. It will be set in Swansea to demonstrate the importance of the punk rebellion across Britain. Swansea is an ‘artistic home’ in Wales and therefore will be the location of this exhibition. The exhibition will be set to transport an audience through a timeline of the punk rebellion era using the measure of art. Beginning with ‘Untitled’ by Linder which was created in 1976, the controversy behind this piece will hope to elevate the audience into a world of punk and allow them to have their own opinion of the punk era. However, this opinion may change throughout the experience as it allows the audience to get a sense of the rebellion unfolding. Each piece will be purposely placed in a structure that follows the subculture of punk, each with different artistic forms.

The second piece of art will be Vivienne Westwood, capturing the element of fashion within the punk rebellion and thus hopes to capture a different response from the first piece, while still following the topics of sex and rebellion from British culture. The theoretical correspondent of these pieces allows the audience to see the expressions of vulnerability that punk art enabled the British society to be inclined to feel, often rebelling against standards of sexual and provocative expectations.

Finally, Jamie Macgregor Reid’s visual art will be featured as the last piece in the exhibition. This allows the timeline of 1970s punk rebellion to continue unfolding for

the audience. The growing popularity of the Sex Pistols in the 1970s meant that there was inspiration for Reid to establish themselves through visual art. Reid will showcase last in the exhibition, concluding with the harsh rebellion against the British monarchy. The Punk rebellion is not just a historical cultural moment, it is said to be one of the reasons we are so free to live the way we do today (Clark, 2003).

Conclusion

In conclusion, the exhibition provides a summary of the punk rebellion which is articulated through art and aims to captivate the sense of urgency, anger and discomfort that the British public were expressing during the 1970's. Punk rebellion remains a phenomenon in today's society (Ehmann, 2022) and has opened up many opportunities that allow us to live freely in modern society. As we look through the exhibition, we can see a theoretical structure which enlightens the audience to the significant influence that art has had on the uprise of the punk rebellion. The exhibition allows the audience to engage with a range of emotions including vulnerability. In addition to this, the purpose of the exhibition will guide the audience down a path of expression and historical culture which will showcase the demand and popularity of the punk rebellion.

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