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The focus of the exhibition is sustainability within the fashion industry. Consisting of 6 artworks by various artists and movements, the exhibition seeks to expose the consumer focused nature of the fashion industry (Fletcher, 2014), and how it exploits garment workers and the environment. It takes place in The Capitol Shopping Centre in Cardiff, looking into the theory behind what a shopping centre is and what it represents, and recontextualising this through a theme of sustainable fashion.

The Capitol Centre highlights the growth of consumerism as a shopping centre is no longer enough, going shopping now has to be a whole experience (Baudrillard 1998). The retailers inside The Capitol Centre, a small centre that held just a few shops, moved to the newer, much larger St. David's Centre where shoppers can spend their whole day, moving us into this idea of "Experiential Shopping" (Avello et al 2011). This study highlights that the aim of experiential shopping is to increase sales, as when people are enjoying themselves they are more likely to make impulse purchases, as well as return more often. This demonstrates how exploitive these fast fashion retailers are as they will innovate the shopping experience for consumers, in order to increase sales, but will still use cheap labour and ways of production.

Utilising the vacant shops and walkways within The Capitol Centre maintains the familiarity of walking through a shopping centre; looking in at the shops either side of you stocked full of items, 'window shopping', however what you will see in this exhibition is much more bleak, creating an alternative atmosphere around going shopping.

In 2015 Banksy opened 'Dismaland', a recreation of the famous 'Disneyland' but with much darker tone. A study by Florian Freitag (2017) illustrates theme parks as a type of installation, they are "multisensory environments" intended to immerse the visitor, but for commercial gain. Although Banksy's Dismaland isn't intended to make a dig at Disney Land itself, or theme parks in general, its message is still directed at anti consumerism. It recognises that the creation of multisensory experiences are used to groom visitors into spending money, and creates his own multisensory experience but with the aim of disturbing the viewer, making a stab at consumerism and capitalist culture (artbanksy.com 2015)

Drawing inspiration from Dismaland, this exhibition highlights the idea that shopping centres, similar to theme parks, are this symbol of consumerism, intending to transport the shopper to this utopia that "provide[s] all the immediate gratifications" (Miles 1998). The exhibition does this by exposing the harmful environmental effects and lack of ethical practise that are behind the curtain of the brands that provide these experiences and we subsequently buy into.

Definition: *Fast Fashion*

"inexpensive clothing produced rapidly by mass-market retailers in response to the latest trends"

Oxford Dictionary

As affordability is still a massive factor for consumers (Fletcher,2014), it is essential to raise awareness about the environmental costs within the fashion industry to put sustainability in consumer interest. This exhibition will illustrate some of the issues within the fashion industry, such as the poor treatment of garment workers and effect on marine life, to inform the viewers about what to look for from the corporations they buy from.

Writer Kate Fletcher talks about how fashion retailers fuel our desire for new experiences by producing a quick turn around of items. Its argued that depriving us of this would deprive us of our

non-material needs such as identity and creativity, leaving us in a sort of 'poverty'. However, the fashion we consume leaves those who produce the clothes in material poverty as low wages results in them not being able to afford adequate food and shelter, and unsafe work environments can subject them to sexual harassment and injury (2014).

Desire for new things can be rooted in other much deeper issues such as low self-esteem, as often when we are consuming something, it is the feeling it gives us that we consume more than the item itself (Baudrillard, 1998). Fast fashion companies profit off of this, highlighted by the definition, they have no desire to express identity and creativity (Edelkoort, 2015) as their basis is having a quick turnaround of products that are all very similar and often recreations of designer fashion, but at a low cost to sell to the masses.

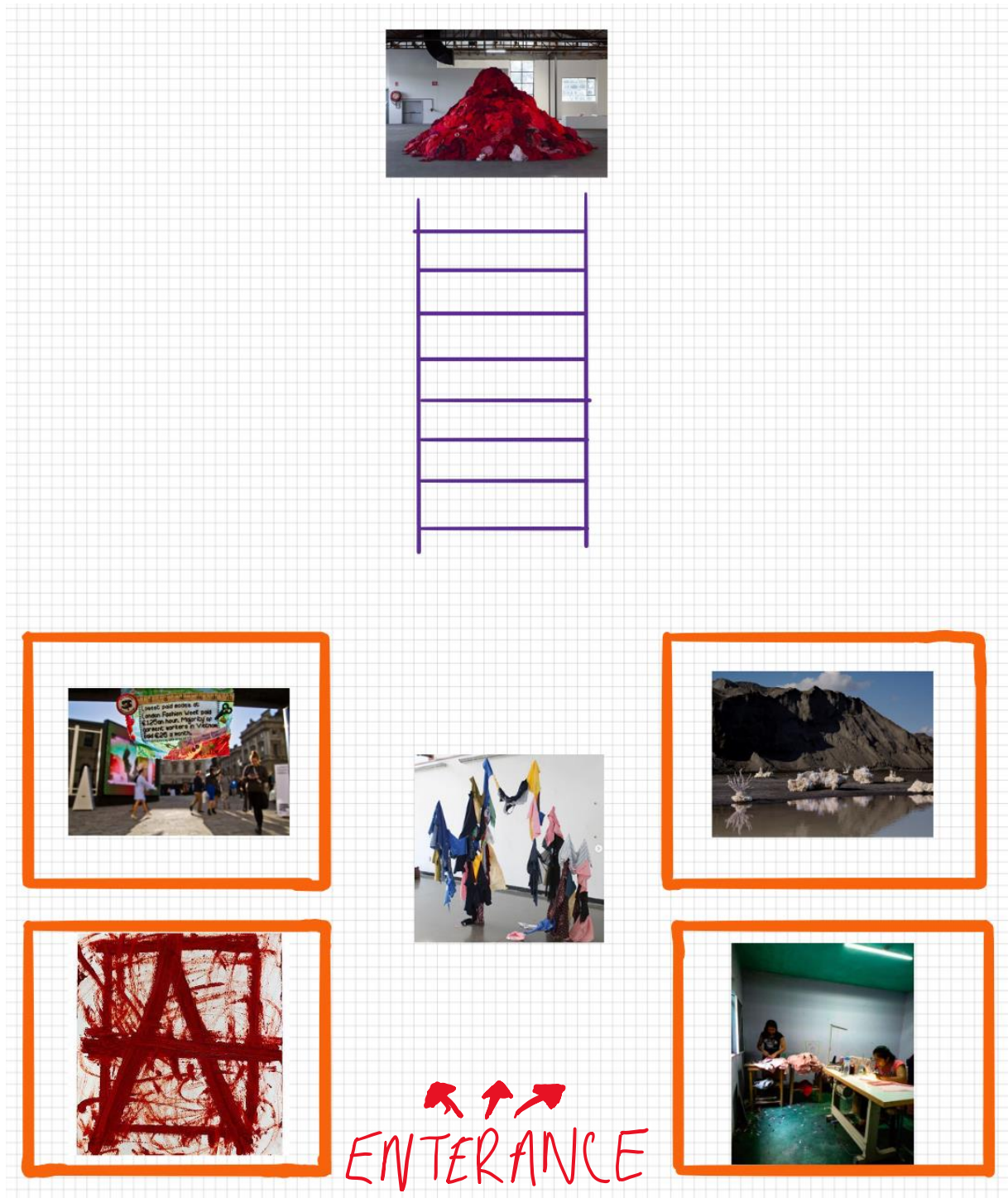


Fig. One: Ralph, L. (2021) Map of Exhibition



Fig. Two: McCartney, S. (2020) McCartney A to Z Manifesto: Spring 2021 Collection

As you enter, the first room on the left will be occupied by Stella McCartney's A-Z Manifesto. Twenty-six individual artworks by various artists such as Jeff Koons and Olafur Eliasson depicting a letter from the alphabet, each letter standing for a different word in Stella McCartney's Manifesto, on the topic of being more sustainable within her brand. A big focus of McCartney's A-Z Manifesto is being circular, making efforts such as reusing materials from previous collections to reduce wastage and the need for new materials. This reuse of materials is a key element of a Circular Economy (Colucci et al, 2020)

Establishing a more 'circular' approach within fashion production is recognised as an effective way of making the industry more sustainable due to the vast amounts of water and energy required to make fashion items (Fletcher, 2014), as well as the wastage produced by the 'throw away' culture that has formed with the rise of fast fashion (Colucci et al, 2020).

Referring back to the idea that consumers are now seeking an 'experience' when shopping (Baudrillard, 1998), circular methods such as clothes swaps and returning items to stores so they can be repurposed can provide an experience, as they are methods that actively involve the consumer (Colucci et al, 2020). The aim is for the viewer to recognise this and see there doesn't have to be sacrifices in sustainable fashion.

The Manifesto will be displayed like a band wrapped around the room, so you are forced to walk around the whole space, making it more engaging and interactive. The atmosphere of the space being a vacant shop will help enforce the idea of fashion sustainability to a consumer, as they will be

familiar with the feeling of walking around a shop, yet will be subjected to a message of sustainability, helping to recontextualise the space.



Fig. Three: Demers, E. (2019) The Sweatshops in Tehuacan

The room on the right will display a series of images captured by photographer Eric Demers. They were taken inside sweatshops in Tehuacan in Mexico, highlighting that the clothes we race to buy as part of the latest and everchanging trends, are produced in not so glamorous conditions. Rather than just having these images as prints displayed on the wall, they will be printed at a large scale, and suspended from the ceiling, but so you can walk amongst them, to create the feeling as if you were actually in a sweatshop. The fact that they are photographs rather than an installation recreating a sweat shop makes it feel quite ghostly as it is capturing something that is not actually there. This helps create the overall 'dismal' atmosphere (artBanksy.com, 2015). As they are hanging from the ceiling there may be slight movement as you pass them, this will add to the eerie feel, but also has similar imagery to the idea of a curtain, creating this metaphor around the idea that behind the curtain of these stylish clothes, are these horrible working conditions and harmful environmental effects.



Fig. Four: Lynn, C. (2019) Made in Taiwan

As you move down the corridor space, overhead will hang a textile piece by an artist on Instagram, Casey Lynn. The pieces, titled 'Made in Taiwan' are made using found fabric, which she has stitched, painted, and adorned with photographs, and hung messily, almost like a fallen washing line or tattered clothing. Moving from Eric Demers imagery that captures scenes in slum-like conditions, to under Casey Lynn's pieces will really help form the atmosphere, as you'll feel the space become smaller, getting a sense of how sweatshop workers feel. This will make the overall exhibition much more impactful as the viewers' senses and emotions are being tapped into.



Fig. Five: Bourguine, A. (2016) Coral Reef

The next room on the right will hold 'Coral Reef' by Aude Bourguine; a textile replica of parts of a coral reef using materials such as wool and lace. It is striking because instead of being bright and colourful which we associate coral to be, it is completely white and light tones of beige, appearing 'bleached'. This links with the theme of the exhibition as it is a cry out to society that ocean life is dying as a result of human activity. It also being a textile piece means that aesthetically it fits in with the other pieces as well as having fashion/textile connotations. The bleached appearance also works well with the lighting inside shopping centres being quite stark, enforcing that idea that the fashion industry is 'bleaching/harming/stripping the environment of its life and beauty'.



Fig. Six: The Craftivist Collective (2012) Mini Protest Banners

Attached to clothes rails in the final room will be a selection of 'mini banners'. Created by the Craftivist Collective, they are colourful, hand sewn banners, each reading a fact or message regarding the inequalities within the fashion industry. Initially they were displayed on railings and lamp posts around London during Fashion Week, as a piece of 'craftivism' (2012), however for this exhibition they hang off of clothing rails to further expand on the idea of recontextualising the space (Freitag, 2017), as they will hang in place of where clothing normally would, also creating the idea of exposing the unethical truth behind the clothing. They are very appropriate to this exhibition as they further promote the idea of fashion sustainability, but in an alternative way to the other artworks as they provide actual facts to reinforce the feelings and ideas presented by the previous artworks.



Fig. Seven: Blake, S. (2019) Blood Mountain

Utilising the escalators in the shopping centre, the largest artwork, Blood Mountain is located at the top of the escalator, forcing it in front of the viewer as they are transported towards it. This helps create an atmosphere of discomfort, similar to that created by Banksy in 'Dismaland' (2015) as the heap of red clothing is quite a daunting sight to come upon. Being on the escalators is also a moment where you are forced to pause, creating a feeling of uncertainty about what will be at the top as the viewer thinks about what they have seen previously. This artwork is a representation not only of the heaps of textile waste forming in landfill, but also of the blood shed in the production of textiles due to unsafe working conditions in sweat shops. In the mountain, T-shirts reading phrases such as 'Girl Power' can be seen, bringing attention to the fact that fast fashion companies will profit off of the popularity of things such as feminism, yet will be quite the opposite in the way they operate (Fletcher 2014).

Figures

Fig. One: Ralph, L. (2021) Map of Exhibition [Digital drawing]

Fig. Two: McCartney, S. (2020) McCartney A to Z Manifesto: Spring 2021 Collection [digital print]
Available at: [McCartney A to Z Manifesto: Spring 2021 Collection \(stellamccartney.com\)](https://stellamccartney.com)

Fig. Three: Demers, E. (2019) The Sweatshops in Tehuacan [Photograph] Available at: [The sweatshops in Tehuacán | Eric Demers](#)

Fig. Four: Lynn, C. (2019) Made in Taiwan [Found textile, paint] Available at: [Casey on Instagram: ""Made in Taiwan"" Found Fabric and acrylic paint • • • • • #fabricart #fabric #fabricartist #fastfashion #consumerism #fastfashionart..."](#)

Fig. Five: Bourguine, A. (2016) Coral Reef [Mixed textile] Available at: [Coral reef - Aude Bourguine](#)

Fig. Six: The Craftivist Collective (2012) Mini Protest Banners [Textile] Available at: [Project: Mini Protest Banner - Craftivist Collective \(craftivist-collective.com\)](#)

Fig. Seven: Blake, S. (2019) Blood Mountain [Found textile] Available at: [SUZIE BLAKE / ARTIST / PHOTOGRAPHER / FEMINIST](#)

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