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A lost memory

The exhibition, titled A Lost Memory, will explore the theme of trauma in hope to touch on what it is like to be a victim of physical abuse and childhood abuse. This topic is important in today's society because it is important to end the stigma around trauma and highlight the effects trauma has on physical health and mental health and how it affects society. Victims have reported feelings of shame and self-blame due to the stigma which has the effect of victims avoiding help (Schomerus, 2021). 1.9 million heart disease cases and 21 million depression cases could have been

avoided if they did not experience more than one traumatic event in their childhood (Felitti, 2021). The questions this exhibition will explore include whether art therapy is a good tool for helping people deal with their trauma, does art have the power to raise awareness of this problem on dealing with childhood trauma. The artists that will be included are Jachike Carpenter, Tatsina Yeilstrava and Aya Eye Okamoto. Their work is looking at their childhood experience and how the trauma has affected them.

The ongoing effects of childhood trauma in later life can be extensive and affect individuals and wider society. More than 80% of people who have been incarcerated have suffered from childhood trauma (Bellis, 2019). Due to the high amount of people in prison suffering from childhood trauma you can't help but wonder would the number of people going to prison could have been avoided if they had received support on how to cope with their trauma. That is one of several factors in today's society that trauma affects. One of the main issues around trauma is substance and alcohol abuse. 77% of people who are addicted to substance and alcohol have at least experienced one traumatic event as a child (Khdev, 2021). It is important to deal with the social issue of trauma because of substance issues and mental health conditions that have been closely linked to trauma and the behaviours can have massive effects on our health care system.

Art can play a role in helping individuals cope with their trauma. Art therapy is one of the best ways a professional can help support the individuals to learn about their problems and find better ways to cope (King, 2022). King explores how art therapy can be used as a way for people to express themselves from the experiences they have been through. "Art has a way to allow a person to fully express his feelings words can sometimes be narrow, where art has no real limits" (King, 2022, p. 6). Shetty (2020) discusses how abstract art therapy is used for holistic treatment. Abstract art therapy is a form of psychotherapy that uses art as an approach of expression and communication. The benefit of using this method is to focus on thoughts, expression, and communication (Shetty, 2020). This theory is not used for a diagnostic tool instead it is used to address emotional issues that can be confusing and distressing to a person (Shetty, 2020). Art is a great way of coping mechanism to deal with stress and mental health for example "we can all use art therapy for to relieve stress or tension, or as a model of self-discovery" (Shetty, 2020, p. 13).

After researching the topic surrounding trauma and focusing on the theme. The artists I have selected all use their work to touch upon their personal experience around childhood trauma and abuse, and physical abuse towards women, in hopes of raising awareness. The reason as to why the artists have been chosen because their work goes well with the topic as society wants to end the stigma around trauma and seeing how art can help raise awareness around this topic.



Figure 1 the don't see me Jachike carpenter 2019

Don't See Me (2019) by Jachike Carpenter is trying to portray the abuse that so many have experienced, including the artist itself. Carpenter (2019) goes on to talk about that there are so many different types of abuse for example physical, emotional, mental, and sexual, they all take things from a victim that should never been taken. The painting represents the psychological affects that the abuse can have on a person well-being. The artwork has this narrative of storytelling by showing how the abuse may take from and the writing of please don't see me adds to the narrative well. I have chosen this artwork because the thing that draws my attention the most is the writing saying please don't see me and the is hiding. This shows the harsh reality of how scary abuse can be and how isolated the victim is.



Figure 2 stop painting Tatsiana Yeilstratada 2017

Stop (2017) by Tatsiana Yeilstratava is trying to raise awareness and to stop domestic abuse towards women. This painting has achieved what the artist has intended to do because of the little details in the painting on the arms showing different forms of physical abuse. The affect this work has on the audience is that victim feels that they have no voice to speak up against the abuser and is shown well by having hand covered over the victim's mouth. Another detail in the artwork is the writing of the word stop behind the woman head it all most symbolize that the victim wants to say but is too afraid because of the consequences of speaking out. The work has been selected because the work symbolises how difficult it is for the victim

to speak out against the abuse in fear of the consequences and people not believing them.

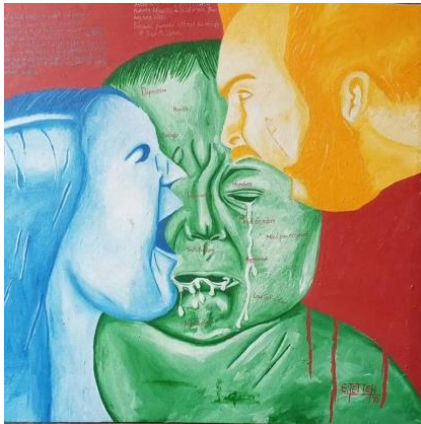


Figure 3 abuse painting Emmanuel Tetteh 2020

Abuse (2020) by Emmanuel Tetteh is trying to show this narrative on arguing is part of married life and there is no way around it. The artist explores when child is having to see this argument it can be considered child abuse (Tetteh, 2020). The artist is trying to represent what effect it can have on a child mental and physical health from the impact of this environment. This painting achieves this affect by symbolizing the baby crying with the word's depression and hopeless around the baby to portray the affect it is having on the child. The reason this work has been chosen for the exhibition is that the artwork will have a massive impact on the audience because in society people tend to have strong reactions to when children have been mistreated.



Figure 4 In dolore, iunctus Aya Eye Okamoto 2017

In dolore, iunctus (2017) by Aya Eye Okamoto is about having the opportunity to express my inner feelings around my childhood trauma through my work. The artist's work goes well with the exhibition as we are exploring the theme around how art can be a helpful tool in dealing with trauma. The work will have a significant impact as I have selected the artwork where the child has a black eye to get the audience talking about the topic of children being mistreated and how we can best support the children, so they do not end up repeating the cycle.

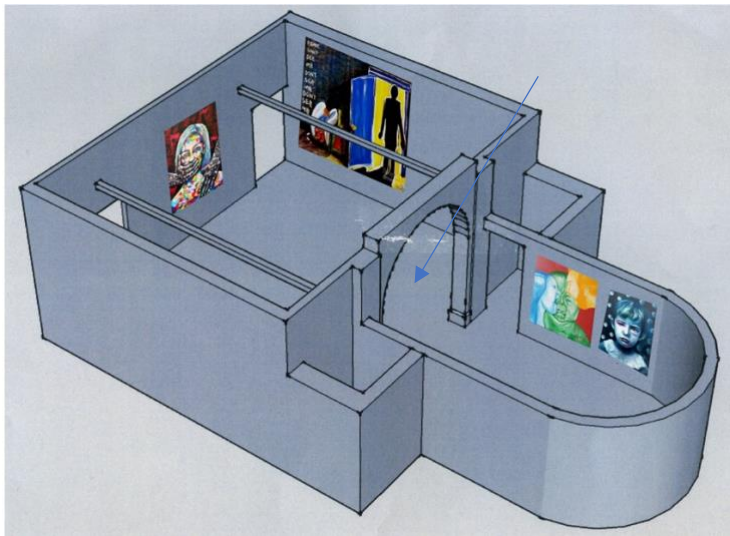


Figure 5 Layout of exhibition

There will be a curtain where the arrow is on the layout (see figure 5) to hide the more hard-hitting paintings to potentially be seen last. This will create an impact on the audience to start having a conversation around the topic. I have done this to be able to have the effect on the audience to show the harsh reality of dealing with abuse. The images that have been chosen to go behind the curtain are both of children being mistreated which in society people tend to have strong reactions to children who have been mistreated.

These paintings have been hidden because they will start a conversation about how we can best support the children, so they do not end up repeating the cycle. The rest of the paintings will not be hidden as these paintings are not as hard hitting. The other paintings work well because their work is using their personal experience around abuse and making work to raise awareness. The curtain helps this affect because by hiding the painting of the children it is symbolizing if the children did get the right support, then the abuse would not have continued into their adult life.

“I do think that art can change society. I don’t think it’s one artwork that does it, I think it’s the collective effort of artists and institutions together” (Janković, cited in Tate, 2017)

An artist’s project or exhibition may be limited to a set timeframe. It can only reach the limited amount of people who attend the gallery. For the work to have a greater effect on society the artists would have to continue their work beyond the exhibition. Communities of artists can work together on similar issues to bring awareness to the problem. Separate artists working on the same theme can help to keep the issue in the public’s knowledge. Art is just one part of raising awareness for important issues, but it has the power to help bring these issues forward.

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