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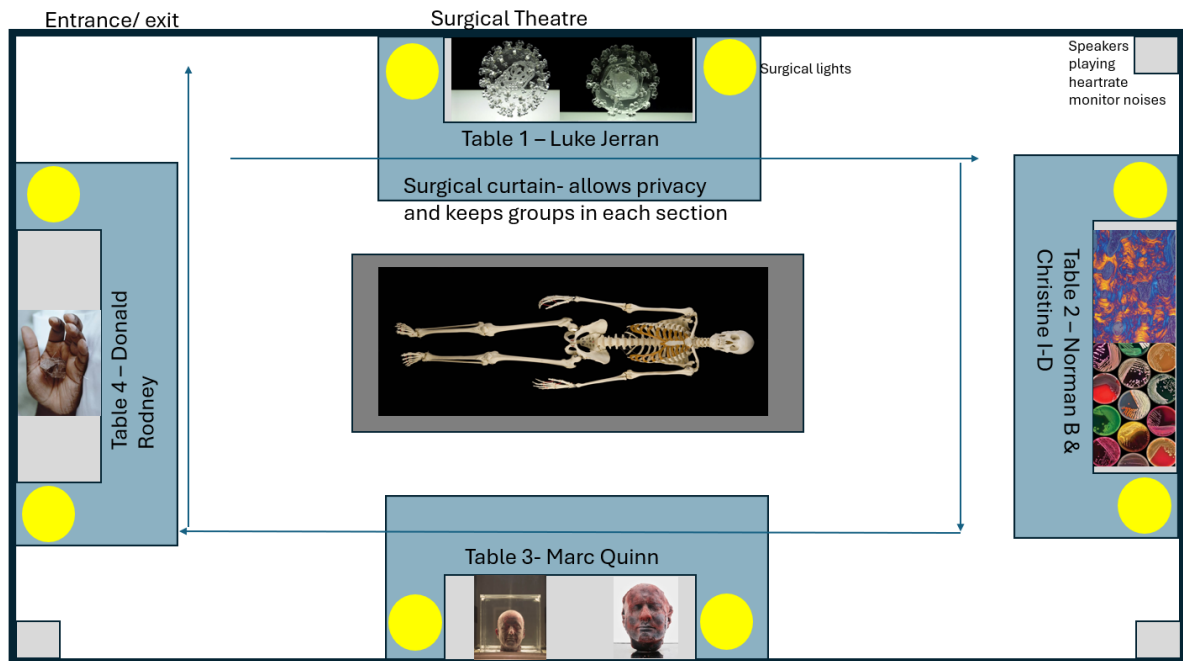
BA Design Craft

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Tutor: Julia Lockheart

Plan

- Intro (200) – uncomfortable art (the body, diseases, health)
 - Gallery setting – Hospital/ operating theatre.
 - Installations on surgical tables
 - Room dim with operating lights over installations to highlight.
 - Heartbeat monitors noises – occasional flatline
- 1. **Luke Jerran** –
 - 1.1. Explain –
 - 1.2. Evidence –
 - 1.3. Discuss -
- 2. **Norman Barker & Christine Iacobuzio-Donahue**
 - 2.1. Explain –
 - 2.2. Evidence –
 - 2.3. Discuss -
- 3. **Donald Rodney**
 - 3.1. Explain –
 - 3.2. Evidence –
 - 3.3. Discuss -
- 4. **Marc Quinn**
 - 4.1. Explain –
 - 4.2. Evidence –
 - 4.3. Discuss -
- Conclusion (100)



The main theme of this exhibition is discovering artwork in relation to the human body and diseases. All the pieces curated for this exhibition are related by either their focus on the human body in the sense of the outside of it, or in a more biologically related sense. Each aspect of this will also explore how artwork can sometimes be unsettling or taboo, yet beautiful or intricate when further explored.

The venue selected for this exhibition is a hospital surgical theatre as it relates to the theme of the human body and diseases, and related to how this exhibition's main aim is to dissect areas of art that can be seemingly unsettling and examine them in a closer manner. The pieces are intended to be displays on surgical tables to give the viewers the ability to inspect each piece, with surgical spotlights over each one to set the scene of the pieces being dissected by the audience. This relates to John Berger's theory that 'The meaning of an image is changed according to what one sees immediately beside it or what comes immediately after it.' (Berger, 1972), as each part of the exhibition is linked by the similar theme of the human body and diseases, yet can also have smaller off links to one another through different underlying themes. To add to the atmosphere in the venue, the sounds of a heartbeat monitor will be played in the background, with the occasional flatline when each group is finished at each point of the exhibition. The intended effect of this is to make the audience feel like they are in a surgical setting and to give them a connection to the artworks; as if they're inspecting a live body. Through the setting and placement of works during this exhibition, the goal is to give the audience a more mindful insight into diseases and the human body by breaking through the barriers of their discomfort, while also allowing for the appreciation of the beauty and depth each piece provokes. This can be supported by the non-patient responses from An Evaluation of Peoples' Responses to "The 7,024th Patient" Art Installation, where one interviewee stated that the 'transportative nature of the installation created a spatial-temporal shift in which viewers were metaphorically imported into patients' experiences.' (Lapum, et al., 2014)



Figure 1 - Swine flu glass sculpture (Jerram, 2012)



Figure 4 - HIV glass sculpture (Jerram, 2012)

Luke Jerram's work on glass microbiology is featured in this exhibition due to controversial effect his work has on viewers, where they are both intrigued and repulsed by his work; intrigued and attracted due to the beauty behind the delicate and intricate features of the glass pieces, yet repulsed due to them being blown up sculptures of disease pathogens such as HIV, malaria and swine flu, all of which are deadly and harmful diseases. The aims of including these pieces in the exhibition are to draw attention to the global impact of deadly viruses, some of which such as HIV are generally taboo subjects due to their negative sexual connotations. Exposing the reality behind such viruses in an artistic setting allows viewers to contemplate STD prevention and control, which supports human capacity for sexual intimacy within healthy relationships (Semaan, et al., 2006). Within this exhibition, these pieces allow the viewer to explore the disease pathogens in great detail as each piece is a million times greater than the actual size of the pathogen, which also gives more insight into how something so small can cause such a significant impact to the human body and those living with the diseases.

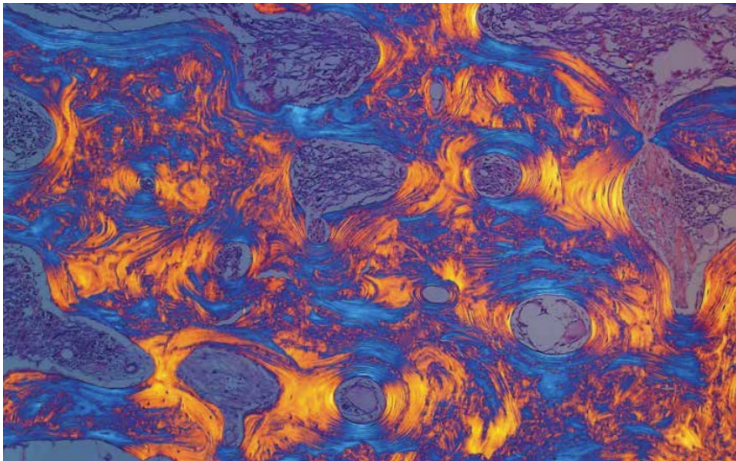


Figure 7 - The human brain (Barker & Iacobuzio-Donahue, 2012)



Figure 6 - Agar petri dishes (Barker & Iacobuzio-Donahue, 2012)

The next display is medical photography from the book and display Hidden Beauty by Norman Barker and Christine Iacobuzio-Donahue, who use images of diseases under microscopes to spread awareness of the effects of diseases and to show how diseased tissue can become beautiful art. Each piece allows for exploration of the firstly strained tension in the viewers as they decide between feelings of appreciation of beauty, and the deeper understanding of how

deadly the diseases are and how these two trains of thought can be linked. When interviewed, Iacobuzio-Donahue stated that “Beauty may be seen as the delicate lacework of cells within the normal human brain, reminiscent of a Jackson Pollock masterpiece” (Iacobuzio-Donahue, 2013), comparing the swirls and splatters of colour to famous splatter artist Jackson Pollock, and depicting that the brain activity itself is a work of art despite it being naturally occurring images. This highlights the link between the biology of the human body itself and the exhibition theme of developing the viewers appreciation for the art and knowledge of the diseases while ‘simultaneously experiencing the beauty of the natural world and the pain of those living with these disease processes’ (Website , 2012).



Figure 9 - Self 1991 (Quinn, 1991)



Figure 8 - Self 2011 (Quinn, 2011)

The second half of the exhibition focuses more on the human body side of the artwork, bringing the viewers to the work of Marc Quinn, who creates sculptures of his face using his own blood. Over a series of 5 sessions, Quinn draws 10 pints of blood, the average amount in the human body (website , 2019), which is then poured into a cast of his own head and frozen, then placed in a clear box filled with silicone oil and stored at subzero temperatures to ensure the piece stays intact. The significance of using blood as the medium in these pieces is that it's a reflection of his own life as it is his own DNA and bodily fluids, linking to Quinn's reflection on his time as an alcoholic, as there is the works dependency on the electricity keeping it cold enough to stay intact, similarly to his own dependency on alcohol to live (Wilson, 2020). This piece comes with a sense of taboo and slight distress as the usage of bodily fluids is not always widely positively received, yet within this exhibition and being set in a surgical theatre which is closely associated with the use of blood, it allows for the viewers to see past the immediate preconceptions of blood and delve into the deeper meanings behind these pieces, such as dependency, self-reflection and legacy. Quinn repeats each piece every 5 years, linking his work to famous artists such as Rembrandt, continuing themes such as self-scrutiny in an autobiographical sense, as both artists recreate self-portraits across different stages in their careers to show reflection and change (Beranek, 2019).



Figure 10 – In the house of my father – tiny house made of skin (Rodney, 1996-7)

The final piece in this curation is the work of Donald Rodney, specifically the tiny house he made out of his own skin for his piece 'In the house of my father'. The skin was collected during the many operations he underwent to combat sickle cell anaemia (SCA), an inherited disease affecting mainly people of African and Caribbean descent (website, n.d.), which causes high death rates in infancy and shorter life spans in adults, which links the fragility of the house to the fragility of the lives of those living with SCA. This was similarly discussed by Eddie Chambers, who interpreted this piece as a 'delicate, simple dwelling seemed to symbolise the fragility and the near futility of Rodney having to live within a structure hopelessly unable to sustain itself or ultimately withstand even the smallest turbulence' (Chambers, 1998). This piece links to the theme of this exhibition as it forces the viewers to come face to face with the real-life effects of SCA as it is Rodney's own skin taken as a result of his struggle against the disease, the result of operations sitting in an operating theatre on a table, just as when it was procured, symbolizing a full circle moment. This piece combines both biological and social diseases as it exposes not only biological effects but the ethnical effects too due to the ethnical groups this disease mainly effects and further highlights their struggles, which Rodney delves into in his work surrounding the Black Art group, as he 'developed a highly personal vocabulary, for instance incorporating discarded x-rays as raw materials, though intending these references to medicine and the body to refer metaphorically to social sicknesses, including racism' (Barson, 2002). This also links to the work of Marc Quinn in the ways of both artists taking an autobiographical approach to their work and using their own bodies to reflect on deeper issues that they struggle with.

To conclude this exhibition, the viewers are asked to fill in a questionnaire relating to their opinions and feelings going into the exhibition, knowledge gained whilst going through each section, and then if their opinions have changed from their initial perspectives. The purpose of this exhibition is to cause the viewers to take a closer look at their definitions of art and beauty by presenting them with unconventional and thought-provoking pieces whilst still conveying a sense of beauty and deeper connection with the meanings behind each piece.

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