

EXHIBITION REVIEW – Lola Preston

For the first component of this module, we were tasked to create and organise an exhibition between all of us, sorting out curation, publicity, hospitality and all other aspects. Firstly, we began by establishing if we wanted a theme to run through the exhibition as a whole so we could then go about creating pieces in line with this, however as this exhibition was in place of our end of year show, it was decided that we would all put forward a work in progress representation of what we have been working on so far throughout the year. Although this allowed lots of freedom when it came to creating my piece, it made it harder to create a cohesive feel within the spaces as there were lots of different themes and subjects, I feel it also allowed for a slight disconnect between the work of the fine art and photography students, on which I will elaborate further later in the review.

As a group we went to visit the 'Swansea Open' exhibition at the Glynn Vivian gallery, which presented a wide variety of work covering many different themes and subjects, so was beneficial for us all to see as our exhibition was also going to cover a wide range of things. Within the exhibition all the art was organised based on subject matter, for example all the portraits were grouped together on one wall and landscapes on another and so on. This created the sense that all the work was blending into one, not giving the viewer the opportunity to encounter the pieces as individuals as it felt they didn't stand out as much as they should've done. Therefore, we decided it was best not to group our work based on subject matter, but rather have them positioned based on colour and theme to keep the viewer engaged when walking through the exhibition and allow for each piece to be seen as an individual. The exhibition also used a salon hanging style, meaning not only were the pieces lost in groups of the same subject, but they also felt quite cramped on the wall which added to the sense that individual pieces were getting lost within the mass. The space in which the exhibition was situated had limited natural light and relatively low ceilings, adding to the crowded feel of the space and not providing much space to give around each piece meaning they were all hung very close to one another. Although I felt as though the salon hang wasn't a complete success in this case, I have seen spaces in which it has worked quite well, an example of which being the Royal Academy summer shows. The rooms within the Royal academy are much larger than that of the Glynn Vivian with higher ceilings, meaning when the work is resented in this way it feels less cramped and more purposeful, the work is also grouped by theme which creates more of a flow throughout (see figure.1).



Figure.1

As some of the spaces that we had to work with for the exhibition were relatively small, for example the corridor, we thought it best to hang the work in a more linear way and leave a decent amount of space between each piece to prevent a squashed feel and allow each work to be viewed in its entirety.

Once we decided the way in which we wanted to hang the exhibition we went about trying to see which pieces worked well together, doing so by putting print outs of all the work on a big table we all looked and made different connections. This was a great way to see links between works that may not have been so obvious otherwise, gaging which pieces had similar themes or visual elements that bounced off each other. We then did a walk around of the space to see which spaces might lend themselves to certain pieces of

work, referencing back to people's exhibition proposals if they specified a specific spot. For my piece I didn't have a specific space in mind, however I did want somewhere with good lighting in order to see the painting fully and as I planned to piece to be relatively large, I also wanted there to be enough room to be able to step back and look at it fully without it feeling cramped. The space that ended up working best for me was in the foyer, next to a glass door which worked well with the piece as there were 3D elements added on top that are highlighted when they cast shadows due to the influx of natural light through the windows (see figure.2 for the finished piece)



Figure.2

Then for the general organisation of the exhibition itself, we began by deciding a name and ended up with 'Passing Rhythms' as we felt it helped suggest the fact it was a work in progress exhibition. We then assigned jobs to small groups of people to make all the tasks quite manageable, I was in the group in charge of organising the bar and refreshments. For

this we asked everyone to put in a small amount of money to go towards a few drinks and then on the night of the exhibition we set up a table in the café and provided everyone with refreshments throughout the night, as well as overseeing people who were buying catalogues and postcards which were in the same space.

Overall, I feel the exhibition was mostly successful as it seemed to result in positive responses from the public and had a good turn out on the opening night, due to the promotion via the Instagram page and the posters that were made by my peers. Everyone's work flowed nicely throughout the space and complimented each other well, however, there did feel as though there was a slight disconnect between the fine art space and the photography space in the way things were presented. In the future, when organising an exhibition with both disciplines, I think it would be crucial to maintain communication between the two groups in order to create a more cohesive feel overall. I also think the addition of titles would be nice to add a little more information for each piece, as although there was a catalogue with additional information, not everyone picked one up leading to the context of some pieces potentially being missed. Despite this, I think that the exhibition as a whole ran pretty seamlessly and visually worked well.