

Student Name: Erin Smith

P Number: 2000855

Programme of Study: Graphic Design

Module: ADAD4018

Ways of Seeing Lecturer's Name: Martin Bush

Title: The Truth Behind The Beauty

Total words = 1705

Named 'the truth behind the beauty', This exhibition will offer 5 different Art pieces from 5 different artists. Each Art piece will aim to impact the audience, triggering a variety of emotions where the audience will leave thought provoked and motivated towards change in our world. This exhibition aims to bring light to the to the issue of gentrification in brick lane and the broader issue of white supremacy and further equality among people. Race, Religion and class are topics which are heavily being ruthlessly discriminated over still in the 21st century. The fight for equality needs to be pushed now more than ever. We can't sit back and let those in power continue to mistreat those from different cultures, change starts with the people of our nation.

When researching the broader issue of equality and white supremacy, I was on the search for a fresh incidence to give context and fire to my exhibition. This is when I came across the massive crisis currently happening in brick lane London. Modern day Brick Lane has achieved world-renown, thanks to the enterprises of the Bangladeshi community living there, who have made it into a vibrant pocket of Bangla culture that attracts people from around the globe. But it's under threat. Brick Lane is being suffocated by gentrification. The owners of the Old Truman Brewery venue are seeking to develop a five-storey office building and shopping mall slap bang in the middle of Brick Lane. (Boyle, 2020) The development will ruin the area's historic character, drive up rent prices to unaffordable levels, and push out the primarily working-class people of colour and small independent businesses that have sustained and called Brick Lane home for decades. (Peek, 2015) "It means more than the arrival of trendy shops, much-maligned hipsters, and expensive lattes. The very future of American cities as vibrant, equitable spaces hangs in the balance." (Moskowitz, 2018).

"Rich people bring money, but they don't bring anything else with them - no art, no culture, no community spirit." says Crisis homeless charity worker Yolanda de los Buies, who has lived in Brune House, on the Holland Estate, for 18 years. I hope that this exhibition will cause the tourists and locals to wake up and fight to save the much-loved diversity and spirit brick lane embodies.

The issues brick lane community face sparked ideas for the perfect venue for my exhibition. The exhibition will be located in a popular local market which is based in a giant carpark. The raw emotion experienced by the locals combined with the excitement and buzz of the tourists would create a complex thought filled environment, boosting the awareness success rate. The cultural diversity of this market is unheard of, everyone and anyone are welcomed with open arms creating the perfect environment to celebrate diversity while making noise against gentrification. (David, 2015) While the artwork will be hard hitting, I hope to not take away from the much-loved vibrant atmosphere brick lane market is known for. This multi-cultural busy atmosphere will bounce of the artwork enhancing its meaning and providing context to the audience. The art will be plastered in mural form across the 4 carpark brick walls, in effort to create an urban feel to the exhibition, giving a nod to the graffiti world which is often associated with protests. The artwork speaking for the people of brick lane.

Fig.1 (Art, 2021)



As you walk through the door into the market, figure 1 will be in front of you blown up in large on the back wall. This art piece will be 140 sq. ft allowing the piece to stand out and create impact within the monster sized room the market is held. I chose this piece as the immediate first sight because it is clear to be a very controversial statement in aim to spark conversations, promoting discussions of the reality of White supremacy. Whether the audience agrees or not with this statement the purpose of this art piece is to invite curiosity and encourage questions. In success, the audience will be motivated to continue venturing around the room on search for further explanation and meaning behind the statement. This art piece can be perceived in a wave of negative and positive perspectives; however, the importance should be focused on reflecting on the history of the statement and how it relates to your individual experience and morals. Some would argue that the statement should say 'People can't be trusted with power'. I disagree. The purpose of this form of art is to spark conversations, making society talk about uncomfortable issues in order to break down the systemic issues that are imbedded within us from birth. The public and activist artist Ann Lewis said "it made me confront my whiteness. It made me confront the discomfort of being reminded of my privilege.". This speaks volumes of how much power this art piece holds, hopefully awaking all people who visit.

Fig. 2 (Lopes, 2017)



As you take your first few steps into the market your eyes will be drawn to this beautiful bold piece. The art piece is called 'White supremacy is killing me'. I want the exhibition to have a meaningful flow to it where each design is strategically placed in the room to provide the audience with a story telling experience. The unfortunate reality of many people's life story. "White supremacy is a racist ideology that is based upon the belief that white people are superior in many ways". (Saad, 2020) As the viewers walk around the market, I want to make them question the art works reasoning, reflect upon their morals and piece together what's going on behind closed doors in this tourist filled place that's a magnitude of

different ethnicity's home. I have chosen this Bengali lady to represent the people of brick lane as a protest statement, the mural style will add to this protest freedom of speech idea. (Waclawek, 2011) (Lewisohn, 2008) The conversation regarding white supremacy has recently been shone upon in the media, after a number of recent events regarding racism set the world in disbelief. Being a relevant issue in today's society, hopefully this art piece would further push the conversation to continue educating one another for change. The beauty of the lady in the art piece speaks volumes for the necessity of equality. The beauty does not come from her appearance but from the courage and charisma it takes to stand up for what's right. The vibrant teal and pink background add to the beauty of the design, almost contradicting the heaviness of the white supremacy conversation, perhaps taking the weight off of the subject suggesting it should be spoken about freely. The black and white portrait allows the women to be just seen as her true self rather than being judged. By the colour of her skin or her religion.

Fig. 3 (Grimshaw, 2017)



Fig. 4 (Sayej, 2018)



Having Been a very intense exhibition so far I want to bring some happiness and life to the market using these two murals celebrating the beauty in cultural diversity. Figure 1 and figure 2 will be suspended from the ceiling in the centre of the room ensuring everyone visiting the market walk past and get to view them. These two images will act as the face of brick lane where all ethnicities are welcomed and celebrated. I hope these designs will remind people how important culture diversity is when brining soul and spirit to our lives. If we were all the same, life would be boring. With the Old Truman Brewery venues plans to take over brick lane, this culture diversity we celebrate will be destroyed. "London is disappearing, it is losing its identity," says Crisis homeless charity worker Yolanda de los Buies. The message of acceptance entrenched in these two art pieces is apparent. The authentic head wear and jewellery in these designs symbolise the celebration of cultural differences and traditions. The vibrant colours and bold patterns not only applaud the idea of equality but is eye-catching to an audience helping spread awareness. Something I found intriguing about these two art pieces is the intense glare both behold. Both looks are very similar which I perceive as pain and anger in their eyes. This creates a strong message suggesting the struggle their life has been in a constant battle for basic human rights and equality.

Fig. 5 (Kirk, 2021)



Fig. 6



Figure 5 and figure 6 will be on the last right-hand wall as you walk out acting as a conclusion to the exhibition. This is in aim to make awareness of the tragic reality brick lane is faced with currently where those in power are leaving the ethnic majority in brick lane homeless, due to boosting prices and building skyscrapers (Boyle, 2020). National Geographic states that 'Gentrification describes a process where wealthy, college-educated individuals begin to move into poor or working-class communities, often originally occupied by communities of colour.' (Society, 2019) This artwork simplifies this reality of gentrification. The concept of white people wheeling the communities' homes away and replacing them with money making skyscrapers is clear and impactful. These designs bring the exhibition full circle back to figure 1, the white power quote, leaving the audience motivated to make a difference and raise awareness while concisely showing the immediate link between white supremacy and gentrification.

To complete my exhibition there will be a graffiti wall space where the door is. Paint markers will be available allowing the audience the opportunity to sign and join the fight to save brick lane. The audience will have creative freedom to sign the wall in any design they wish, providing them with a fun fulfilling experience to end the visit. This Idea is in hope of providing the audience with a feel of the soul, excitement and passion brick lanes ethnically diverse community is filled with. Creativity is the heart of brick lane and I hope to show that through this exhibition. The main purpose of this exhibition is to show 'The truth behind the beauty'. Although filled with beauty, vibrancy and magic as seen in figure 3 and 4, the hard-hitting truth of the damages the savage government are doing needs to be realised.

Bibliography

- Art, B. S. (2021, April 17). "WHITE PEOPLE CAN'T BE TRUSTED WITH POWER," FROM DREAD SCOTT ON THE STREET IN MANHATTAN. Retrieved from BSA: <https://www.brooklynstreetart.com/2021/04/17/white-people-cant-be-trusted-with-power-from-dread-scott-on-the-street-in-manhattan/>
- Boyle, C. (2020, October 14). East London Advertiser . *Plans to develop Truman Brewery continue to take shape with one week left to submit objections.*
- David. (2015, June 9). *Everything You Need to Know About Brick Lane and Spitalfields Market.* Retrieved from The Montcalm London:

- <https://www.themontcalm.com/blog/everything-you-need-to-know-about-brick-lane-and-spitalfields-market/>
- Grimshaw, D. (2017). *Street*. Retrieved from Dale Grimshaw : <http://www.dalegrimshaw.com/street.html>
- Kemp-Habib, A. (2021, April 22). GQ. *The battle for Brick Lane's curry houses goes to the heart of British-Bangladeshi identity*.
- Kirk, S. (2021). *Leave Behind: Gentrification Project*. Retrieved from Turning Art: <https://www.turningart.com/art/leave-behind-gentrification-project-by-sam-kirk>
- Konor, A. K. (2018). *The Battle of Brick Lane 1978*. Grosvenor House Publishing Limited.
- Lewisohn, C. (2008). *Street Art The Graffiti Revolution*. Harry N. Abrams.
- Lopes, C. (2017). *White supremacy is killing me* . Retrieved from Art Public Montreal: <https://artpublicmontreal.ca/en/oeuvre/white-supremacy-is-killing-me/>
- Moskowitz, P. E. (2018). *How to Kill a City*. PublicAffairs.
- Peek, S. (2015, May 24). *Brick Lane: Gentrification threat to Spitalfields Bangladeshi community*. Retrieved from BBC News: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-32707564>
- Saad, L. (2020). *Me and White Supremacy*. Quercus.
- Sayej, N. (2018, July 5). *Celebrating Harlem: 'It's important to show art that reflects different people'*. Retrieved from The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2018/jul/02/harlem-art-cultural-diversity-saveartspace>
- Society, N. G. (2019, October 24). *Gentrification*. Retrieved from National Geographic: <https://www.nationalgeographic.org/encyclopedia/gentrification/>
- Waclawek, A. (2011). *Graffiti and Street Art*. Thames & Hudson.