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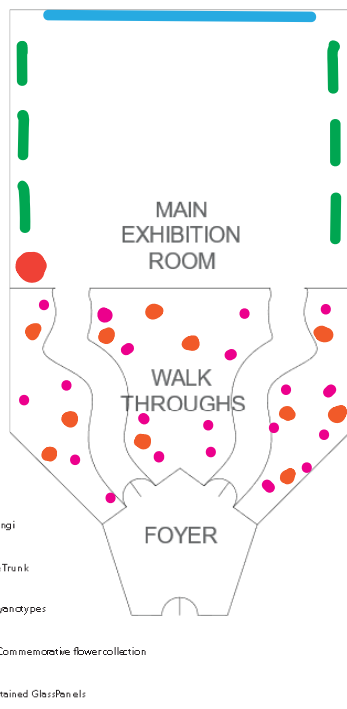
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Course: Design Craft

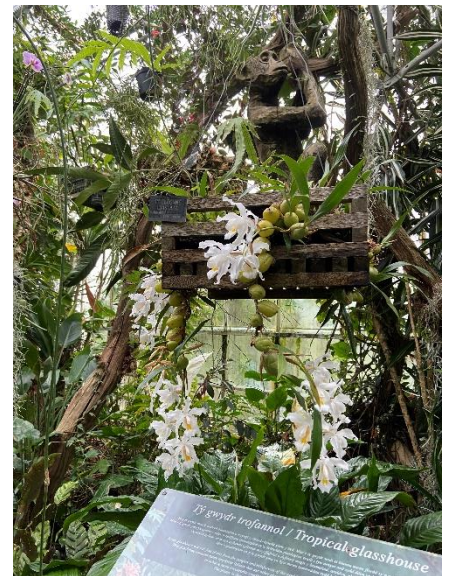
Lecturer: Julia Lockheart

Word Count: 1,381

The main theme of the exhibition is nature and glass. The subject of the art pieces on display all have a connection to nature, such as flowers, plants and fungi. Within this theme, the nature of colour has been considered.



2 Greenhouse



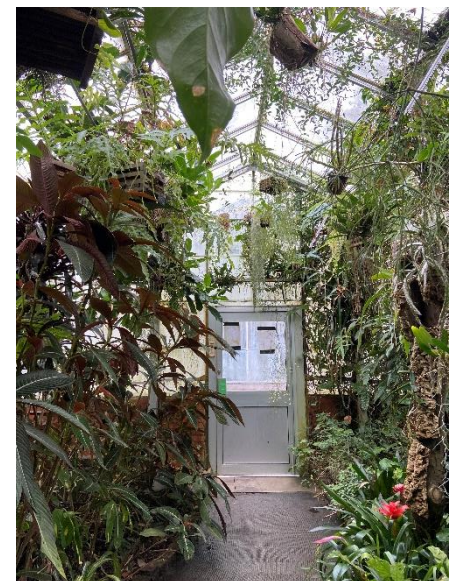
3 Greenhouse



6 Greenhouse



4 Greenhouse



5 Greenhouse



7 Greenhouse



8 Greenhouse



9 Greenhouse

The chosen venue for the exhibition is the large, public access greenhouse that sits in the Botanical Garden of Singleton Park in Swansea. The reason for this is that it fits in with the natural theme of the exhibition and the glass exterior of the building adds another dimension to the viewing experience. Colour passes through glass, different shapes and angles of glass changes the colours. When glass is placed at a certain angle towards the light, the reflection of the luminaire can be seen, which can add different wave lengths of colour (Livingston, 2021). During the day, the different intensities of the sky will change the perception of the colours of the art pieces. As a feature of the exhibition, when the sunsets, to show how light changes how we see

things, the main exhibition room of the green house is lit up in different coloured light. For instance, red light hides a lot of colour because it absorbs other colours as they pass through a red filter. This is because red only reflects red light so other colours are perceived as red (Viennot & de Hosson, 2012).

The exhibition is set up in various locations within the greenhouse as the visitors make their way through the plants. Visitors will be directed to enter in one way and exit the other end so that they experience the exhibition in the intended order. The main reason is for the visitor experience, so that there is a flow to the movement with all visitors going in one direction. As the space is narrow, this is more effective than allowing them to move in different directions. McIntyre (2009) states that this type of flowing movement enhances the experience for the visitor. Obrist (2014) also claims that it is helpful for transitions and passages with a space.

This exhibition calls out the inner biophilia in us which can be defined as, “the innate tendency to focus on life and lifelike processes” (Wilson, 1984, p.1). Wilson argues that we all have an urge to associate with other life forms such as plants. When discussing biophilia, Wilson suggests that “the future of the conservation movement depends on such an advance in moral reasoning” (Wilson, 1984, p.119). This could relate to conserving certain species of plants to ensure they survive. However, it could be argued that greenhouses could be stifling and uncomfortable for viewers who could be affected by the heat trapped and are not inherently part of the natural world. That said, as this is a small exhibition, the viewers will not be in that environment for an uncomfortably long time.

Information about the exhibition is distributed by leaflet in which they can look at while they are viewing the art works in display. This is to avoid people crowding around text on a wall in a small space and will also give them a souvenir of the event as they can take the leaflets home. These leaflets are printed on

plant paper containing seeds, so not only are they easy to break down, but also provide new plant life which will hopefully inspire them to grow their own plants or flowers.



9 Biodegradable Wildflower paper

To begin the exhibition, visitors are invited to participate in making their own cyanotype. This is a cameraless photographic process which leaves a negative imprint of an item in a blue background. It works by exposing iron salts to natural or artificial light, causing oxidation. This oxidation is what gives it a blue colour (Science and Media Museum, 2011). This fits in with the theme of nature as they will be using flowers picked from the garden, and it shows how light can be used to create art in different ways. The process is fairly simple to expose the prepared cyanotype paper with their chosen plants on top and then leave in the sunlight up to 15 minutes then rinse the paper with fresh water. “When exposed to natural or artificial ultraviolet light, are reduced to their ferrous state. Producing a high contrast blue image when oxidised” (Science and Media Museum, 2011). The “cameraless botanical photographs of the 1830s through 1850s suggest a move beyond a version of representation that inscribes a divide between copy and original and observer and observed” (Franchi, 2023). They are also “founding intersection between botany and photography” (Armstrong, p. 93). The leaflets provided also give details on how they can get involved in cyanotype making. After this, they will then be able to view pieces throughout the greenhouse.



10 Commemorative flower collection, Ellie Drake-Lee, 2024

Ellie Drake-Lee created large stained-glass panels that feature flowers, leaves, beach scenes and other aspects of nature. This exhibition features several of her panels standing floor to ceiling next to the windows so that the light from the external windows

shines through and creates colourful transmissions on that area of the greenhouse.

Her work is, “inspired by my love of nature, plants and my love of colour” (Drake-

Lee, 2024) and specialises in stained glass panels especially those that feature

outside. For my exhibition following pieces are exhibited: Elysium Triptych, Purple Echinacea, Yellow

Rudbekia and Autumn Beech Leaf. All of these are extremely colourful pieces which mimic the natural

colours of nature. These are well suited into the exhibition by integrating them within the plants. In

addition, her hanging stained glass commemorative flower collection of 1000 flowers are also included in the exhibition.



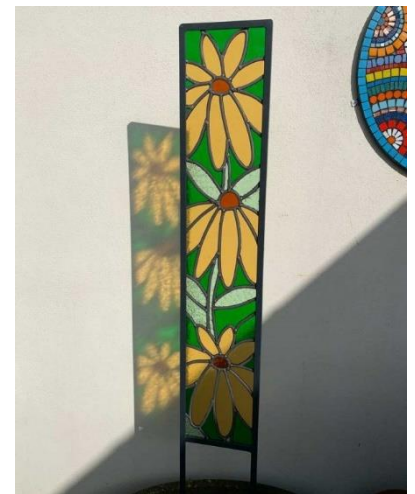
11 Autumn Beech Leaf, Ellie Drake-Lee



12 Elysium Triptych, Ellie Drake-Lee



13 Purple Echinacea, Ellie Drake-Lee



14 Purple Echinacea, Ellie Drake-Lee

Jason Middlebrook creates a range of sculptures with varying sizes with the general nature theme. The pieces that feature in this exhibition are his 25 mushroom piece ‘Fun with Fungi’ and his unnamed tree stump mosaic sculpture. These funky mushrooms are all individual and unique much like within nature itself. These are dotted around the greenhouse space within the plants so they are subtly engrained but also strikingly different. Mushrooms are an important part of the ecosystem, with mushrooms such as the matsutake playing an important part in making forests grow through their ability to nurture trees (Lowenhaupt Tsing, 2021), which is why they are an important part of the exhibition. The other Middlebrook piece is a mosaic tree trunk. “He is best known for the carved and hewn tree trunks he uses as canvases for geometric composition” (Artsy, 2024). As this is his most well-known piece, the tree stump is placed in the main area of the exhibition, where the glass surfaces of the small mosaic tiles can reflect

light into the area. Whether it is his sculptures, mosaics, or site-specific projects, Middlebrook's work invites viewers to contemplate the interplay between nature and artistic expression. As tree stumps can act as nurse logs to allow new trees to grow, the mushrooms and the tree stump can both be seen as symbols of regrowth.



15 Jason Middlebrook, *Mosaic Tree Stump*



16 Jason Middlebrook, *Fun with Fungi*, 2009



17 Angela Chalmers, *The Flower Collector*

Angela Chalmers is a cyanotype visual artist who has created a wide range of work exploring human and botanical forms. She uses “the process of alternative photography and painting to convey themes connected to memory, gender and identity” (Chalmers, 2024). The work on display in this exhibition are her ‘The Flower Collector’ and ‘Black Tea’ collections. Her work is not only a brilliant example to the visitors to inspire them with their own cyanotype papers but also offer a contemporary collaboration between nature and human forms. Her pieces are incredibly detailed and are hung in the main glass room. The blue works are hung at eye level in a series for easy viewing, whereas the Black Tea collection is hung higher among the plants, so they can be viewed when the audiences look up at the high plants. This links to their subject matter, as the images with human images are hung at human level, and the plant images are displayed with the tall plants.



18 Angela Chalmers, *Black Tea*

Overall, the exhibition gives viewers a further connection with the natural world. It is hoped that they will have a deeper affiliation with plants, flowers and fungi. By using an art exhibition to show different forms of nature, it is hoped that it will encourage the visitors to begin or maintain their artist interest.

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Figure List

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Figure 2 Authors own photo

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Figure 8 Authors own photo

Figure 9 Biodegradable wildflower paper, *forever finances*. Retrieved from:
<https://blog.foreverfinances.com/2012/07/wildflower-seeded-paper.html>

Figure 10 Commemorative flower collection, Ellie Drake-Lee. Retrieved from: <https://glassgardenart.co.uk/>

Figure 11 Autumn Beech Leaf, Ellie Drake-Lee. Retrieved from: <https://glassgardenart.co.uk/>

Figure 12 Elysium Triptych, Ellie Drake-Lee. Retrieved from:
<https://glassgardenart.co.uk/><https://glassgardenart.co.uk/>

Figure 13 Purple Echinacea, Ellie Drake-Lee. Retrieved from: <https://glassgardenart.co.uk/>

Figure 14 Purple Echinacea, Ellie Drake-Lee. Retrieved from: <https://glassgardenart.co.uk/>

Figure 15 Jason Middlebrook, Mosaic Tree Stump. Retrieved from: <https://jasonmiddlebrook.com/>

Figure 16 Jason Middlebrook, Fun with Fungi, 2009. Retrieved from: <https://jasonmiddlebrook.com/>

Figure 17 Angela Chalmers, The Flower Collector. Retrieved from: <https://www.angelachalmers.com/>

Figure 18 Angela Chalmers, Black Tea. Retrieved from: <https://www.angelachalmers.com/>