



MATERIALITY EXHIBITION

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Introduction

The location for the exhibition 'Materiality' is on privately owned rural land in Ceredigion. This site has been selected because of its natural space, giving a wide variety of environmental features. These features include a running stream, many species of wildflowers and variety of ancient trees, of all shapes and sizes, casting shadows that differ throughout the days and seasons. Electricals can be made available, so the pieces can be illuminated to allow for adaptations for sensory impaired viewers.

"Places are also used for awakening certain feelings like comfort, security, belonging, being anchored, self-expression, and freedom to be oneself" (Smaldone et al., 2005). Having an open air gallery is an opportunity for viewers to find themselves, explore and reflect on themselves.

The preliminary condition for curating as it is understood in existing literature, is almost exclusively related to the organisation of objects within space, while the relationship between objects is the means through which a 'curatorial text' is developed (Weinberg, date, p. 24). I interpret the word curation to mean that I am a guardian of the chosen space and how the selected objects can be read or interpreted both individually and together. Such spaces incorporate an astounding richness of meaning, spiritual and ritualistic purposefulness, and an awareness to the construction of space (Weinberg, 2014).

For this exhibition, I have chosen five artists, each specialising with a different material and how they have made their works appeal to the mainstream viewer. I have chosen to include artwork from glass artist Dale Chihuly, a metal sculpture by Richard Serra, ceramic art by Beate Kuhn, environmental sculpture by Andy Goldsworthy and textiles by Sheila Hicks. The diversity of the works is based around the materials used and creates interest in the juxtaposition of the pieces selected.

The exhibition itself is aimed towards those who appreciate art, in its many forms and have an appreciation and gratitude for the materials used.

Key

1. The Sun, Dale Chihuly
2. Double Torqued Eclipse, Richard Serra
3. Blackness, Beate Kuhn
4. Woven Branch Circular Arch, Andrew Goldsworthy
5. Cordes Sauvages Pow Wow, Sheila Hicks



Figure 1. Map of woodland. Approximately 1 acre.

1. Dale Chihuly



Figure 2. The Sun. Dale Chihuly

Dale Chihuly is a renowned glass artist, from the USA, who began his career in 1963. Originally weaving glass into woven tapestries, he then developed his work into glass blowing. He unites bright colour and form, drawing the eye to small, intricate details. Details that are similar to natural forms, such as the way ivy winds up trees, tumble weed and the curls of afro Caribbean hair.



Figure 3. The Entrance to the exhibition, looking down towards exhibit 1.

The piece 'The Sun', was originally unveiled in April 2014, consisting of 1,573 individual hand-blown elements, and measuring 5.5 metres, will be positioned at the entrance to the exhibition, where there is variant shade. An electrical connection will allow this piece to be illuminated from many angles during the darker nights, giving enjoyment to people with sensory sight impairments. By presenting this piece in this way, the viewer can view the piece from many angles and in many shadows and form a different belief with each step.

The next piece in the exhibit from Richard Serra, shares similarities with this piece, as they share a sensory element. They are both circular in form and large scale. Dale Chihuly's piece is colourful and embodies energy. In contrast Richard Serra's sculpture is dark and sombre. Dale Chihuly's 'The Sun', is made from handblown glass and can be fragile in its nature, whereas Richard Serra's sculpture is constructed from industrial steel, using manufacturing methods.

2. Richard Serra



Figure 4. Double Torqued Eclipse, Richard Serra 1997

Richard Serra is an acclaimed steel sculpture artist from USA who began his career with his first exhibition in the Museum of Modern Art in Dubrovnik, Croatia in 1960.

Made from steel, this sculpture, 'Double Torqued Eclipse', measures 4 x 10 x 8.2 metres. This piece is immersive, where the viewer can be consumed within it, as if within the womb. The viewer then has time to reflect and exiting as if reborn, giving them exploration of their own vulnerabilities. When stood within the sculpture, the sounds of nature are amplified off the steel walls, giving the viewer an auditory experience.



Figure 5. Inside the woods, looking up from within the sculpture.

When standing within the sculpture itself, viewers can look up and see the sky, with encroaching trees, like a kaleidoscope above them, giving them another avenue of reflection.

When viewing the exhibits, the viewer can then see the contrast in scale between this piece and the following piece from Beate Kuhn. The previous exhibit is dark, bold, and overpowering and in contrast, Beate Kuhn's artwork consists of more natural colours, intimate curves, and contours, with small and intriguing areas that require further investigation by the viewer.

3. Beate Kuhn



Figure 6. Blackness, Beate Kuhn 1980

This is the smallest piece in the exhibition, measuring approximately 25.5 x 30.5 x 30.5cm. It was first unveiled in 1980 and will be placed on an old tree stump plinth and illuminated from below.

Beate Kuhn hails from Dusseldorf in Germany and her ceramic work is intricate, with organic detail, clean lines and natural colours, which can be perceived in many ways by the viewer. Whilst viewing this artefact in the identified location, the viewer can imagine themselves as part of a social structure of insects dwelling within the small nooks and crannies of the piece. They can visualise a community of life within the structure and relate this to their own community, or experiences and outlooks on life.



Figure 7. Within the bluebells

The peacefulness and quietness of the natural surroundings can be related to the following piece by Andy Goldsworthy. Clay as used within Beate Kuhns work is naturally found and this relationship of natural materials is echoed in the placement of the work by Andy Goldsworthy.

4. Andy Goldsworthy



Figure 8. Andy Goldsworthy Woven Branch Circular Arch 1986

Andy Goldsworthy is a renowned artist from the UK, specialising in sculpture and photography. He follows a contemporary style, using natural materials, such as wood, leaves and forest debris.

The dimensions of this sculpture are unknown, but this sculpture brings about feelings of birth and rebirth, allowing the viewer to be taken back in time. Depending on the weather and time of day, this sculpture could also have a kaleidoscope effect on its surroundings, highlighting areas of reflection for the viewer. The hole can be seen as a passage through time, a symmetrical portal allowing viewers to reflect on past times.



Figure 9. Woodland walk

The artwork by Andy Goldsworthy emphasizes the circular form which is in direct contrast to the branching elements that create the artwork, directly contrasting with the structural composition of the work produced by Sheila Hicks. Additionally, the colours used in both pieces are significantly different, Andy Goldsworthy uses natural materials and Sheila Hicks uses multicoloured textile art to create her work.

5. Sheila Hicks



Figure 10. Cordes Sauvages Pow Wow, Sheila Hicks 2015

Sheila Hicks is an American artist, specialising in textiles and fibre. I have chosen and placed this piece, suspended between two trees. I would like viewers to see the impact of decay within a piece and how this can alter not only the appearance of the piece but the meaning.

I have also chosen to put this next to the stream with a small trickling waterfall, as I would like the viewer to sense the auditory feedback of how this piece looks like a colourful waterfall.



Figure 11. Next to the stream

Conclusion

By shaping historical narratives and cultural memory, we are not only shaping our identities and therefore the behaviours that we adopt for the future but are taking an essential part in communication systems and their development (Weinberg, p.29).

Many galleries appear to be very sterile, with white walls and ceilings and highly polished floors. There are usually no windows, but lots of bright, artificial light. Most galleries often have signs requesting the art is not touched but here, viewers can touch the art, feel it, see it and to hear it, alongside the noises of nature and for them to understand the impact of the exhibits on the way that they perceive the pieces. The viewer has a space to understand that the intimacy of the pieces can be seen and felt just as well, in an alternative setting to sterile galleries.

When an exhibition piece is observed, the impact it has on the viewer is shaped by learnt assumptions regarding art, such as beauty, form, taste and genius. Within this exhibition, viewers are drawn to aspects within the individual exhibition pieces that may not be observed or appreciated in a gallery setting.

Space and place are important because the placement of objects and their context impacts how these objects are read. "People's identities are created through defining themselves in relation to places" (Jorgensen and Steadman, 2001). The openness of the outdoor space, in this case, a natural space, allows the viewer freedom to explore their own thoughts and reflections as they traverse through the exhibits. 'Contrary to landscape, place provides a midway between an objective fact and a subjective feeling, which Entrikin (1991) calls the betweenness of places. Places and geographical locations play a significant role in reminding us of our own past and our own history. Places and geographical locations can attach meanings to places and can affect their identity. "Places can also remind us of some particular periods in our life through nostalgia (Hay, 1998, Gustafson, 2001), usually childhood memories are an important example of how places became meaningful".

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