

Visual Enquiry 1: Site Specificity Report

In this site-specific report, I wish to go over some examples of site-specific work made by other artists and photographers and how it impacts me and the development of my site-specific exhibition. I am also going to face some questions that I must relate to the work, and I will also provide an evaluation of the questions at the end with my ideas around them.

Site specific work is art made to be displayed at a specific site or closely related to the place. It allows the work to become a seamless part of its surroundings and opens avenues to explore a site's history and values. Site-specificity makes for immersive work and artists utilize this to connect to the audience through their own personal or unique way. Works like this can sometimes be easy to grasp the concept of however some others are harder to contemplate and understand, especially if you are just looking at photos of it and you are not at the site itself. Some examples of this work are integrated into their place and in society or nature and others forms of work can be moved to diverse sites in which it can still be displayed in. I personally like how many different options and routes you can take to create and display a site-specific piece, and it is something I would utilize and consider more often in future through my own creative process.

Here are the questions that I decided to choose:

“How can site-specific artwork transform a site itself?”

“How could a work be transferred to another site, changing its purpose/impact?”

I decided to go with these questions because they focus on how the site itself is used and manipulated and I feel like it is a key thing to understand how a singular site is changed and impacted so much yet how you can also have work that can be put up anywhere but its context or intention might shift slightly. It is something that I did not fully consider before looking at and now it seems like I could utilize it more and benefit from making it a part of the content rather than just limiting myself to just work on a wall.

JR: Face 2 Face:



JR's "Face 2 Face" works are excessively large prints that originated to cause controversy and challenge the ideology of two religions and principles that are currently in conflict and disagreement. It was JR's first international project, and its size was roughly: 70 x 100 cm // 27.5 x 39.5 inches. These were all lithographs, printed using a special machine called a Marinoni machine which is used for large-scale printing. I feel like the size plays a large part in the ways that it could be interpreted as feeling almost condescending or unavoidable in a sense. The expressions of the people in the portraits could also be interpreted as feeling exaggerated or humorous but I can imagine that seeing those images all the time near my house would make me feel quite restless and unsettled, especially if it were photos of someone who I did not particularly like.

The work spans across a whole wall that is also intentionally purposed to separate and segregate the groups who are in dispute so JR has turned this space into his area to exhibit and present his piece and it works very well even as an image however I can bet it is a lot more impactful standing next to it and seeing its physical size difference. This piece is also interpreted differently by the people who are affected by this conflict and the work as they respond to it on a more personal level compared to someone untouched by the foundation of this work.

In correlation with this piece, I want to focus on how site-specific work can transform a site itself and I feel like in this example the sight of the wall put up to split the sides represents divide and creates animosity anyway and I would agree that it has been turned into a more reflective area by the work being displayed and it challenges people to see it from a different perspective. The area has been affected by conflict for a long time, so such a sudden and large piece of art (in an important space) is a bit of a head-turner for locals and people internationally viewing it. I think as it antagonizes people it also challenges them to "see the other side" and peek through a reflection of

what they do not see, or to see that they are the just the same people pulling faces or being miserable to a camera. This work is a one of a kind piece as I doubt it will ever be put up again and even if it was to be it wouldn't be as significant as time has passed and we have seen the work however this is something that I can imagine will only be done once, so the site plays a really big role in where the piece is displayed and if something similar on a similar scale will return to that area. I believe this work could not simply be moved to another location as its sole purpose has been stripped away and it is just the shrapnel of his work they would be showing around. I feel the actual “piece” in this example of work is where it has been placed and what it stands for. I can also imagine that it is unbelievably hard to go to an area where there is a world-famous conflict going on to print what could be argued as a bit of a political or social stunt. Because of the chosen site it has almost lost a lot of its formality and due to it being outside and exposed it is in a sense of abandonment and loss of protection compared to the other pieces and examples of using an interior site.

Erik Kessels : 24 hours in photos:



Erik Kessel's "24 hours of photos" are an abundance of images that were posted and printed in a frame of 24 hours. We see a variation of images and instead of seeing particulars we just mostly

see the mounds of printed photographs that represent not only the physical nature we hold with photos and how many we share and what this looks like physically as opposed to being online. The work's natural space to be viewed is online and we often see photos appear then disappear off our screens such as on Instagram. However, in Erik Kessel's site-specific piece, we get to see the physical value and representations of our online use as he somehow manages to transform the unseen into the overwhelming. This site is also highly interactive, and it allows viewers to explore through the collections of photos that make this work. It also makes the individual portions of images that may be picked up by fate or curiosity much more special and unique. Does anybody else know every image included in this collection and has anybody been able to look through them all?

For this chosen piece I want to focus on how work can be transferred to a different location/site and how its purpose or impact can change. I feel that if this work were to be placed elsewhere in a different country, building it would still hold its value and its longevity to be viewed in different states as I feel like the work is very stretchable in the sense of it being able to be used repetitively, if not the work than at least the idea. The site in this case is expandable and the requirement to hold this exhibition would be to get a room big enough for many photos to be let loose and navigated through / around. Another thing to mention about this piece and how it links to the question is that it's not a huge pile of images, it's a big sheet of images being held up so although the space isn't entirely filled, it gives off the illusion of heaps of photos and I was thinking that the sheet can be molded or spread in different sites in various positions and angles. For example, this piece was also displayed in the middle of a church and although it is the same piece its intention and context shift aside because the sheet is not spread out as much and it is more in a pig heap or dome which is a lot different to its previous depiction. From the site changing to this church, we go from representing the work as being a collective of media and an example of our online usage to having a more religious or surreal view on it. A collection of images in a white-out room is quite different from a cold, brick, church and even that alone gives the viewer some sort of impression



To compare both works to both the questions I have chosen I want to focus firstly on “How can site-specific artwork transform a site itself?” and in “24 hours of photos” we can clearly see how the work gives off an impression and fills the space in the room. More than anything this work thrives off empty spaces and areas that allow the work to not only be demonstrated but cast up to have the effect it should have as it crams in every nook and cranny with a photo. On the other hand,

“Face 2 Face” would not work in this way as its value is at the site itself even though the work could be moved to another site elsewhere. For sure the prints could be shown to people who are interested but the site it is in is the intended environment for the work to be looked at and it is the artists intention for people to look at it there. It also in a way makes the work exclusive to people who are local or willing to make the trip.

For the second question: “How could a work be transferred to another site, changing its purpose/impact?” I want to start focusing on “Face 2 Face” and how its context or integrity could be impacted by moving its site. For example, if JR’s work was moved elsewhere or showed around before being sold, the intention of bringing an audience to this very real world problem would have gone, and its purpose would be for the work and the artists ability to show off his creation as opposed to putting art up for it to stay there and signify its originality and environmental factors. As mentioned previously, however Erick Kessel’s “24 hours of photos” have been and can be moved to other sites for it to be shown to people. I think it can be shown off in different sites, however it could not be seen outside on a horrible, windy day and it is very restricted as opposed to where it can go even though it is able to be moved around. I think the sites this piece is most effectively displayed in are specific with how big the room is and what they can use to compare the amount and size of the images towards, but the example of JR’s work is one that I could not expect to see anywhere else.