

World Art Tour- Changing Environments and the Impact of Nature, Environment, and the World on Art in Different Cultures and Settings Around the Globe.

Introduction

For this essay I am an independent curator, a selector of art for a global exhibition (George 2015). I propose a travelling exhibition where the art is located in the place it was originally made, with the actual environment as its backdrop. This will allow visitors to experience art, and see, hear, smell, and fully immerse themselves within each piece of artwork. I aim to showcase how five artists from five distinct biogeographical areas interpret that experience in their artwork. I have chosen artists depicting work of the desert (Egypt), rainforest (Amazon), frozen tundra (Iceland), savanna (Africa) and mountains (Japan), due the diversity of their work, each piece will be exhibited in the specified biomes.

The world gallery tour would work as a traveling gallery space. Where the work is located around the world, I would prefer the gallery walls in each country to be plain to reduce the gallery taking anything from the art (Smithson 2009). Each piece will be hung next to the landscape depicted in the art. The viewer would travel to each of the five locations in the order they choose, and which seasons, depending on their willingness to be faced with harsh conditions.

Context

Physically observing each environment through the seasons would show how the artists' inspiration changed through different conditions of weather, climate, and structure of the landscape. But also, if the mental state of the artist alternates, then therefore, so does the process and outcome of the artwork.

My research and personal preference in identifying the artists chosen is that they are so different, but I feel each captures the energy and atmosphere of their homelands and each individual landscapes. For this worldwide exhibition, the map (FIG 1) shows the areas the visitors of the exhibition would travel to.

Fig 1. Map of Art positioned in Gallery Space. The viewer would fly around the world to visit each piece of artwork in its natural environment:

1. C. Morgan McIlhenney, Egyptian Desert
2. Nixiwaka Yawanawá, Amazon Rainforest
3. Asgrinur Jonsson, Frozen Tundra of Iceland
4. Wycliffe Ndwiga, African Savanna
5. Hokusai Katsushika, Japanese Mountains



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Concepts and abstractions of the world art tour exhibition begin with meaning and purpose. The viewer of the artwork will choose which locations they want to travel to first. In choosing which location to visit allows the viewer to make an executive decision into the physical circumstance they will be faced with to experience the art (Smithson 2009). From knowledge, the harsher the environment, the more real it is to experience the artwork and the thoughts and understanding behind the artist while they created their masterpieces. The environments influence the colors in those taken from the earth, bleached by the sun, dyed from roots, plants and insects (Recker 2019). The more able and adventurous the viewer is to deal with extreme conditions, the more active experience they will have within the Biome, and the conditions each artist was confronted with to find the location for their landscape artwork. Less confident viewers may experience more thought provoking and philosophical side to the experience of the Biomes and artwork.

These biomes and artists were chosen because they are the most diverse for my concept of a world art tour and they capture the unique atmosphere of their home-landscape. Egypt's Desert is hot, dry, vast, and serene. It is a harsh environment but stunning views of flowing wave like sand dunes, these areas of the desert are host to plants and animals, which over millions of years have evolved to withstand the extreme temperatures. Egyptian art follows themes and colour schemes being bleached by the sun, yellow/gold and blue. The reason for limited colour palate is the lack of dyes found in the desert, traditionally blue dye came from scorpion blood, but modern methods have found an alternative dye source (Recker 2019).

Fig 2. "Egyptian Landscape" C. Morgan McIlhenney born in USA is most famous for his landscape paintings of the desert in Egypt with special and historic buildings such as the pyramids and religious sites.



The Amazon rainforest is one of the most inhospitable places on earth, especially due to terrain and weather. 7,000,000km² is the total size of the basin, 5,000,000km² is rainforest with huge hills cliffs and waterways. It is easy to become lost in the jungle and requires some level of survival knowledge. The artist Nixiwaka Yawanawá is a tribe's man of the Amazon currently living in London. His artwork is full of colour and vibrancy with intense detail throughout. Original art from the Amazon is full of colour as roots, plants and insects provide the most vibrant and creative colours (Recker 2019), figure 3 refers.

Fig 3. No title. Nixiwaka Yawanawá's Amazon Jungle



The Icelandic frozen tundra is an environment credited to its vast changes of temperature and sunlight, home to green grass and mountains or its expansive frozen tundra, depending on the season. Asgrinur Jonsson is an Icelandic artist who focuses on the beautiful views and stunning colors and wildlife, described as being calming and flowing depicting the mountain ranges and flowing glass hills. Figure 4 refers.

Fig. 4 Asgrinur Jonsson "Autumn Sunlight"



African Savanna is a vast land of dry grass, very flat horizons, beautiful spanning sunsets and a huge range of animals from lions to elephants. Wycliffe Ndwiga born in Africa captures the essence of landscape and animal paintings, through high detail and flow of colors and imagery. The medium he uses is oil or acrylic paint. However, traditional African artists would use natural colors and dyes from bugs like beetles and mosquitoes, and other critters for blood, venom, and other such colored body parts to draw with. In the current World the use bugs and insects for their dyes and colors en-masse, such as the cochineal bugs, used for dyeing food, clothes and surfaces re still used. Figure 5 refers

Fig 5. Wycliffe Ndwiga “Zebras Drinking”



Japan's mountains are breathtaking to say the least, most famous being Mount Fuji, an active volcano located close to Tokyo. It is depicted in many paintings and art works at great scale. The mountain itself is incredibly dangerous only offering few safe paths and routes, that can only be accessed at certain times of the year. One of Japan's most famous artists is Eukio-e artist Hokusai Katsushika, notably famous for the Great Wave. His work is a created using a traditional Japanese technique called wood block prints, a traditional process and skill, which takes years of practice and training (Marks 2010). Traditional woodblock is simply carving an image into wood and using as a print. Modern methods have been created to make this process faster and easier, such as Lino cutting. Figure 6 refers

Fig 6. Hokusai Katsushika "Immune Pass" in Kai province



Artists and Artwork

The chosen artist all are landscape painters and creators, selected for their specific locations. They paint the places they have travelled and explored to find the imagery in their artwork. McIlhenney's landscape painting of Egypt is simply titled as "*Egyptian landscape*". The piece encompasses the heart and reality of Egypt with its hot climate, bright sun, and unusually lacking in green natural colors, apart from the tall scarce trees. From depicting and analyzing the painting the viewer will understand the sand in the air, dry dust and low visibility McIlhenney would have seen when he traveled to Egypt in 1930. Pops of bright colors can be seen in the painting, of flowers or a bush located at the base of the visible trees, giving some life and energy to piece, the red giving the viewer a sense of heat. Refer to figure 7.

Fig 7. Egyptian Landscape” C. Morgan Mcilhenney born in USA is most famous for his landscape paintings of the desert in Egypt with special and historic buildings such as the pyramids and religious sites.



Nixiwaka Yawanawá's selected piece has no title or name, simply referred to as art from the amazon rainforest, see figure 8. The painting is large, vibrant, depicting the spirit of the jungle with life and movement. In the centre of the image, is a tiny figure of a woman, almost like a jungle mermaid, connected to the elements sitting on leaves and trees on the jungle floor, while the rainforest around her moves and thrives. The fauna hints at the constant sounds and movement. Searching deeper into the painting it is noticed that it is night in the rainforest, illuminated by the stars but still awake and still moving.

Fig 8 No title. Nixiwaka Yawanawá's Amazon Jungle



Asgrinur Jonsson is an Icelandic artist and painter. He is one of the first artists in Iceland to make a living out of his paintings. He is famous across the world. The selected piece of Jonsson's is called Autumn sunlight, painted in 1920, see figure 9. The oil on canvas painting depicts a harsh, cold frosty sunlit tundra, lake and people running, enjoying the outside. The colors used are blues, purples whites and hints of orange, red and brown, all combined to communicate a calming painting that represents Iceland and its incredible sunsets, bodies of water and mountains. Looking deeply into the painting the feeling of freedom in uncovered, vast open space, fresh clean air, a truly liberating and unburdening atmosphere.

Fig. 9 Asgrinur Jonsson "Autumn Sunlight"



Wycliffe Ndwiga is an African born artist from a tribe in Kenya, he has always had an interest in art and creation from a young age. His art medium is acrylic on canvas but is known to deviate from this style. The painting chosen for the art tour is called zebras drinking and is simple as its title, three zebras drinking from a water hole in the Savanna. The colour palette chosen to indicate the land looks dry, the more yellow grass than green, bright sun glazing overhead, the openness depicted by the only deep shadows from the zebras. The blur of the background could suggest heat radiating off the ground.

Fig. 10 Wycliffe Ndwiga "Zebras Drinking"



Hokusai Katsushika is arguably one of the most famous Japanese born artists creating famous woodblock prints such 'The Great Wave'. His work created by woodblock or ukiyo-e (Marks 2010) carving detail into wood, and inking and pressing to form prints. Katsushika also painted the famous 36 individual views of Mount Fuji. The one picked for this exhibition is called the 'Immune Pass' in Kai province, and is a view of hills and Mount Fuji with trees and blue sky. The key features in this woodblock print are the traveling man and his horses ascending the great hills and mountains of Japan, a climb which is hard, even for experienced walkers and climbers.

Fig. 11 Hokusai Katsushika "Immune Pass" in Kai province



Conclusion

As Smithson (2009) says, if 'fantastic work is badly installed, it lets the work down'. Setting up an exhibition around the world needs collaboration, care the environments don't damage the work and written information, health and safety and budget considerations to guide interested visitors around this immersive and unique global exhibition.

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List of figures

- Fig 1. Map of Art positioned in Gallery Space
- Fig 2. "Egyptian Landscape" C. Morgan Mcilhenney
- Fig 3. No title. Nixiwaka Yawanawá's Amazon Jungle
- Fig. 4 Asgrinur Jonsson "Autumn Sunlight"
- Fig 5. Wycliffe Ndwiga "Zebras Drinking"
- Fig 6. Hokusai Katsushika "Immune Pass" in Kai province
- Fig 7. Egyptian Landscape" C. Morgan Mcilhenney
- Fig 8 No title. Nixiwaka Yawanawá's Amazon Jungle
- Fig. 9 Asgrinur Jonsson "Autumn Sunlight"
- Fig. 10 Wycliffe Ndwiga "Zebras Drinking"