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Sexuality, Body and Exhibition.

The context of this writing is to be able to collect information from the three keywords sexuality, body, and exhibition, I will gather information from artists/authors to attempt to create a question. I want to make sure I include a comprehensive selection of artists in this assignment, I will include artists within different areas of art such as Impressionism, Abstract, and Confessional, etc. For me to get more knowledge I will look into various artists that link well with each keyword such as Tracey Emin for body, Richard Prince for sexuality, and Vincent Van Gogh for exhibition. All these artists produce different forms of art within their work in which I am fascinated to explore. I want to also include a range of authors/philosophers that fit well within these keywords such as Lisa Blackman, Jeffrey Weeks, Ellen Dissanayake, and Bruce W. Ferguson.

Sexuality

“Sexuality is in part of being shaped and reshaped by the way in which we think and write about it.”(Weeks, 1986, p.4)

Talking about sexuality is a topic that is still taboo to this day, but it makes it easier these days as a lot of artists exhibit and communicate it through their work. When it comes to sexuality it is about contextualizing our current knowledge of gender, sexual performatives and spectrums, it is a way of expression of one's self and it's something that is personal and diverse to an individual. After getting more knowledge on sexuality from the book Sexuality by Jeffrey Week, I have been able to learn why the term sexuality is so important and relevant. “The more expert we become in talking about sexuality, the greater the difficulties we seem, to encounter in trying to understand it” (Week, 1984, p.1)

Sexuality is all about images, words, and visions as it resembles the body, people think sexuality displays the way it is being treated today. Most of the time it is seen as a protean force, it depicts itself on the body and supplies the energy of desire. As we explore and research sexuality it seems to be uncertain by contradiction. Sexuality today is more than a root of pleasure, it is being seen as a political and honourable battlefield. “ Although today we may claim to be a little more confident in knowing what is ‘sexual’ or not, we are still in as much of a fog as those pioneers in interpreting its implications.” (Week, 1984, p.7). Information from social anthropology shows that sex has become an awareness for a broad range of sexualities writing other cultures, they act as a state of ‘laboratories’ which may be the reason why we have to be educated when it comes to the diversity of human institutions. The reason why sexuality is viewed differently today is down to the movement of women, women have been able to create a movement that we are familiar with. Feminism represents power and strength, not only for women but for equality and

sexuality. Feminism has brought awareness and supplied accurate knowledge not only politically but to male beliefs. They have been able to bring attention to the lack of speech for the term sexuality.



Richard, P. (2008/2011)

Together

For instance, this piece is by contemporary artist Richard Prince. This piece is a part of a series of reflections on the present's eroticism. What I like about Prince is that he isn't afraid to communicate within his work especially when comes to sex. He combines pornographic images with his own sketches and drawings to create a detailed composition. People who see sexuality as a subject that shouldn't be spoken about or is too "graphic" would disagree with this art style as talking about sex is inappropriate rather than educational. The reason why Prince finds his artwork to be important is that it is education, especially for modern people. The lack of knowledge people have on sexuality is the reason why there is a struggle for the future of sexuality, it could possibly be for diversity and change. "Sexuality pinned you down like a butterfly to the table, if you break with this tradition, if you reject the idea that sexuality embodies its own values and goals, then you are faced with complex problems of alignment and choice." (Week, 1984, p.10)

The way the figures are presented in Prince's work fascinates me because the poses are quite bold and distinctive, it shows bodies in different poses and expresses sexuality in a different form. He doesn't care about what people think when it comes to his work and because of that, it has inspired people to not care about what others may think of them, especially sexuality-wise. Not everyone will like what you do or represent but by an individual carrying on representing it, it shows strength and gratitude. Not many artists have an actual distinctive message when it comes to their work but Prince has such an influential attitude towards his work and sexuality it helps people to not be weighed down with a universe expectation. "The originality of contemporary attempts to develop a historical approach to sexuality lies in their willingness to question the naturalness and inevitability of the sexual categories and assumptions we have inherited." (Week, 1954, p.16)

Sexuality holds a historic approach that has resulted in it being assessed and judged, it has constructed questions from it being able to connect to social experiences. How does sexuality construct itself? Does it communicate politically, socially, and economically? Is sexuality a choice or is it oriented? What is its connection with its movement and power? Does sexuality hold more than one principle? What is its importance?

Body



Tracey, E. (2015)

My Lips Moved Across Your Face.

“If the body is not simply a natural body, the rightful province of life and biological sciences, then how can bodies be examined and interrogated through frameworks that have been understood as more social or cultural?” (Blackman, 2020, p.2)

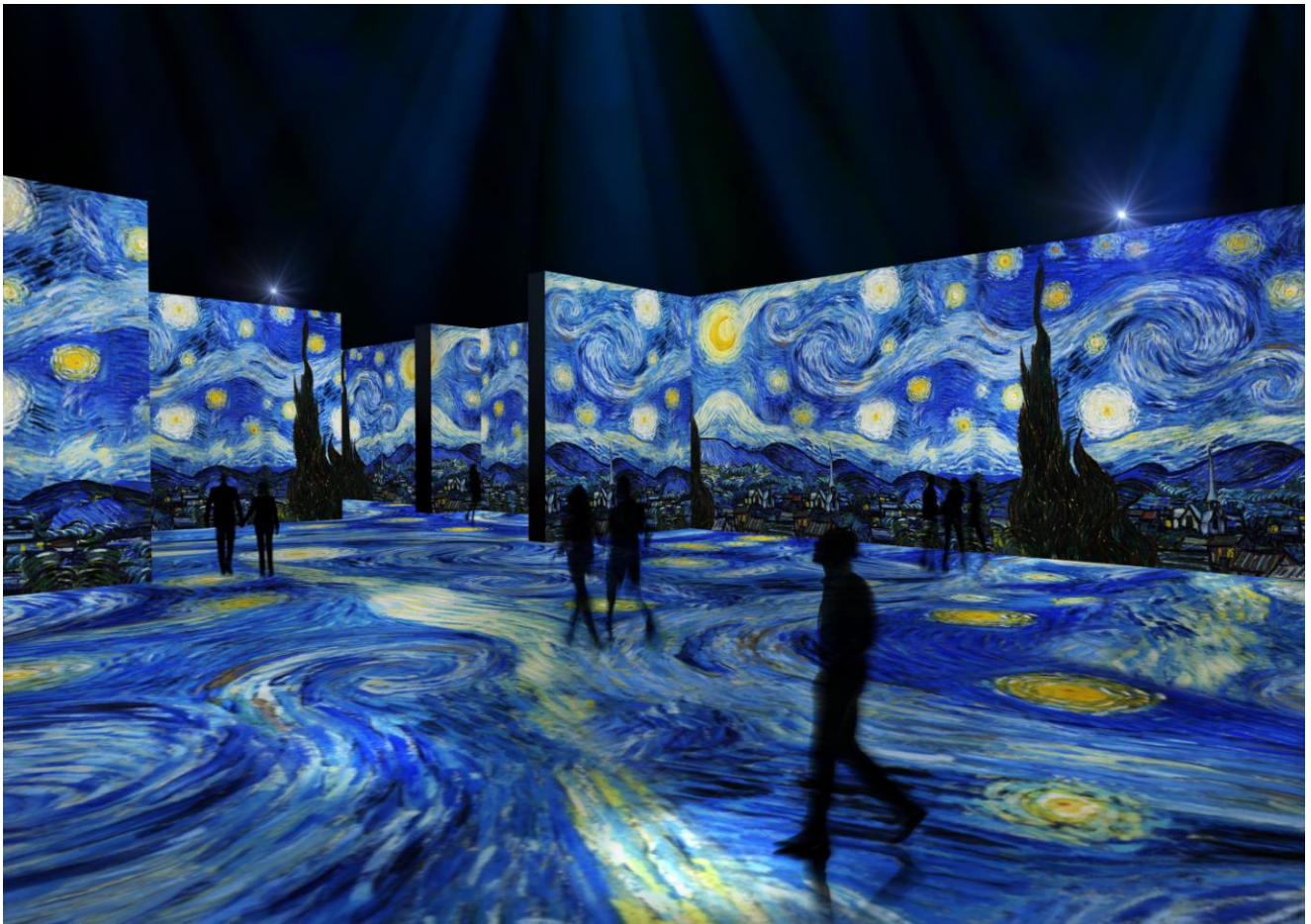
Tracey Emin is a contemporary artist who is very expressive, she interprets her art with emotions that she has been through as well as personal experiences. Her artwork is all about passion and love when it comes to becoming a woman, it communicates to the audience about self-exploration of the woman's body. The type of nude and self-portraits Emin creates all connect to her life story and what she had to go through such as pregnancies, rape, and abortions, these emotions get interpreted within her artwork in a unique form. Even though she has had an awful journey through her life, she has had the courage and creativity to share the stories that could also help someone else.

As a woman it is difficult to love yourself, always comparing yourself to other women, making sure to keep up to society standards. Emin's work combines all those feelings and emotions into an art form to be able to communicate through her piece to the audience, the self-portraits in her work resemble herself as she has always thought of herself as a “frumpy, middle-aged woman, at 43 years old” (Emin, 2003). Women are pressured to look good all the time, the messages in her work reassure women that you should be feeling good health-wise, it's not all about looks.

Although her artworks may look gruesome to some, her paintings capture not only her emotions but what her body had to go through at the time, such as the ghostly figures and passionate blood-like lines. She explores the mind of the body by exhibiting the rawness and truthfulness that comes to becoming a female, the composition of the figures are exhibited in a state of grief and depression, she captures the body in all angles such as the hips, legs, and torsos. Emin had brought out the truth about the body years ago but as a society, we were all too slow to acknowledge it, the human body is something that has always been sexualized. Especially for women, it is harder to appreciate the woman's body these days as society has added the label that breasts or legs are sexual, it's hard to name one part of the female body that is not sexualized. "We need to be mindful of what happens to our views of the bodies if we continue with the tradition that would locate reflection and reason within the mind." (Blackman, 2020, p.6)

Philosopher Luce Irigaray believes that women are being seen like subjects if they assimilate to the male subjectively, her work has produced a discussion on the definition of feminism and the sexual contrasts. Irigaray believes that "Her contributions to feminist theory and continental philosophy are many and her complete works present her readers with a rewarding challenge to traditional conceptions of gender, self, and body." (Irigaray, 1985) Irigaray discusses how one way we may defend the relation between our language and sexuality is by looking at the similarities for construction, our bodies have been labelled as a "default" to the masculine by it being set up as a "master subject". "Man and the Earth were no longer at the center of the universe and this displacement removed the central nature of the male subject, and placed him as a potential other." (Irigaray, 2012) I can see where Irigaray is coming from as women are seen as the "other" compared to men being viewed as the "subjects" all based from our bodies. This links well with sexuality as it has also been defaulted for men making it easier for them sexually.

Exhibition



Vincent, V G. (1889)

Starry Night

Immersive London Exhibition (2021)

The term exhibition embraces the form of anthology, it is described as a method to become the medium through the ways of an art form. A prime example of this is Vincent Van Gogh's immersive London exhibition in London. Van Gogh was a well-known post-impressionist painter who worked in ways that were able to capture vision, emotion, and beauty. He was an artist that was very observant and imaginative and he always wanted to share his insight of the world with his audience. Starry Night is one of his most famous pieces and is always known for its immersive exhibition. Exhibitions are valuable because they are the primary site of exchange when it comes to the political economy of art, this is where the importance is established. Contemporary exhibitions are commonly known for their control of cultural meanings of art, it shares the message of power and influence of exhibitions, such as it being for their histories, their construction and the socio-political implication that are only

now starting to be acknowledged and theorized. "As the exhibition phenomenon itself comes under close scrutiny, its failures and fissures become more apparent" (Ferguson, 2005, p.5). Exhibitions are starting to expand the decency of the experience, even by writing about exhibitions increases the knowledge about their reinforces of the topic showing that it's worth the study.

Now looking back to Van Gogh's exhibition of *Starry Night*, Van Gogh painted this piece to resemble what he saw from his window before sunrise, "This morning I saw the countryside from my window a long time before sunrise, with nothing but the morning star, which looked very big" (Van Gogh, 1889). The piece depicts the view from the asylum that Van Gogh was in, he made the piece pleasantly beautiful by showing the village, emphasizing on different areas. It interprets a "magical" feel to it, especially after knowing where he drew it from. The dark spires in the foreground from the painting are related to cemeteries and passings. This links well with Van Gogh's quote "Looking at the stars always makes me dream. Why I ask myself, shouldn't the shining dots of the sky be as accessible as the black dots on the map of France? Just as take the train to get Tarason or Rouen, we take death the reach a star." (Van Gogh, 1888.) as the relation to this piece gives this quote a special significance. This artwork as an exhibition is really meaningful, especially when its presented as an immersive exhibition. The audience has the chance to really grasp onto the emotions that Van Gogh must have felt in that asylum, it also gives the audience the chance to be in the painting, to explore and see details more clearly, to capture the connection between Van Gogh and *Starry Night*. "The totality which many art exhibitions and anthologies seem to claim to embody is a fiction and even a fantasy" (Ferguson, 2005, p.1)

To come to my conclusion and reflection on my three keywords, I have been able to conduct initial ideas for my proposed question. I have gotten the chance to explore the three keywords as well as linking them to various artists, authors, and philosophers, it has helped me not only learn about the keywords but has helped me have a better understanding of the history of the keywords and what they mean today. Through the proposal, I have learned how artists represent themselves and share the meaning behind their work. The artists I have explored have represented a message within their work all in a different and unique way, they also had a personal story to share. This led me to think about how and why artists may want to communicate through their work? What are the reasons? What are the expectations? These type of questions were lingering around in my head whilst doing this assignment as I wanted to learn more, I found out how they exhibit their work, the body language within their work, and the sexualities that some interpret within their work. Artists like Emin and Van Gogh are artists that are able to build a relationship with the audience, they have personal stories that people can relate to, but even after researching for this assignment I still feel like I haven't been able to answer my own question which yet leaves me questionable again. By making me more curious it has led me into the question for the dissertation. How do artists use their art as a form of expression and communication?

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