

Ways of Perceiving, Curation Essay

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The theme of this exhibition is Feminism. The title of the exhibition is 'safe space', allowing it to be a place for anybody, and for it to be a safe place for everybody to discuss the topic of feminism. This is a topic that can go down so many paths and been a popular topic for multiple decades. It is a movement which women fight for equality and to have a voice in their lives. The exhibition will not focus on just one aspect of feminism, it will showcase different pieces of work that do not really have the same story, but all show case the same theme and the battles that the female gender has to experience for equality. The exhibition will show case the work of Judy Chicago, Frida Kahlo, The Guerrilla Girls, Faith Ringgold, and Tracy Emin. The theories of Edward T. Hall's Proxemics will be applied to the curation of the exhibition.

The term proxemics was introduced in 1966 by Edward T. Hall. Proxemics is the study of "set, measurable distances between interacting people (1974)" (Gomboc-Turyan & Tourtellotte, 2010). According to Hall (1966) "Proxemics refers to man's use of space as an aspect of his culture, i.e., conversational distance, planning, and use of interior space, town layout, and the like", cited by Chiara Rubessi (n.d). Proxemics can be applied to any space designs such as a kitchen space, a gallery space and even a classroom. The Galley that will host the exhibition is the Mission gallery.

Originally, the Mission Gallery was built as a Church in 1868, by Benjamin Bucknall as a non-denominational Seaman's Mission (Gallery, 2022). "The church was to serve the [...] seafaring community around the docks [...]. The Mission wanted to provide a safe and spiritual haven for the seamen, a place where they could feel closer to home" (Church, n.d.). These buildings were originally built for men only and women would not have been allowed

to enter them. For this is the reason, this is the choice for showcasing the aforementioned exhibition. Allowing the same to be a safe space for women and it is going against why it was originally built for. The women artists whose work be on display, are of women who fought and are fighting for equality for women. Frida Kahlo is one of the most well known women artists around and appreciated by everyone. The Guerrilla Girls, are a well-known group of women who are unknown, they wear guerrilla masks, going around the city of New York putting their work up, in the fight for feminism.



Fig One

'The dinner party' by Judy Chicago – Fig One, will be placed in the centre of the room in the exhibition. In choosing this space is that it will be taking up most of the floor area allowing it to be a focal talking point of the show, and it is the first piece that viewers will focus their attention to. The exhibit is made up of four parts, place setting on a triangle table represents 99 Women, 999 more names are shown on the ceramic-tile floor, a timeline of names on heritage panels and a sequence of tapestry panels (Gosling, et al., 2019, p. 140). "Perhaps, the most ambitious attempt at monumentalizing great women" (Gosling, et al., 2019, p. 141). This piece honours the lives of 1,038 women. The importance of the piece is that it represents the empowerment of them. This is a central exhibit and cannot be overlooked.



Fig Two.

'The Two Fridas' by Frida Kahlo- Fig Two, will be presented on the left side of the exhibition as you enter. This will be the second piece to be viewed and is the oldest piece of art in the exhibition. This piece is a self-portrait of Kahlo, representing her two personalities, after her divorce. One is a representation of her being independent and dressed modern and the other has a traditional style with a broken heart. The image shows the holding hands suggesting that they are in support of each other through difficult times, as the traditional one is shown to be in pain emotionally and physically (fridakahlo.org, 2022). "The Two Fridas, linked by blood, support one another in a sorority of strength eclipsing the superficial relationship of marriage" (Gosling, et al., 2019, p. 87). This piece addresses that a women can go through so much hurt, especially when going through a divorce, and with the more modern Frida holding the other hand could represent that the traditional one is accepting her fate and parting the way from her old personality with her former husband and is ready for a new start.



Fig Three.

As viewers continue around the exhibition *"For the Women's House"* by Faith Ringgold – Fig Three, will be the third piece seen. It will be a mural that was on the wall at the side of the women's House of Detention on Rikers island, New York, dedicated to the inmates, which is no longer there as the facility became a male prison. However, this has been created since with oil on canvas (Museum, 2018). This Mural is split into eight sections, showing women from all communities and races, representing them in public service, childcare, policing, and teaching (Gosling, et al., 2019, p. 110). When this piece was created in the 70s, women in workplace was rare, as they were expected to stay home and look after the children, home,

and husbands. This piece represents the achievement of women in work and what they were fighting for and “Was located in the women’s prison emphasized the need to bring all women together to break more than chains” (Gosling, et al., 2019, p. 110).

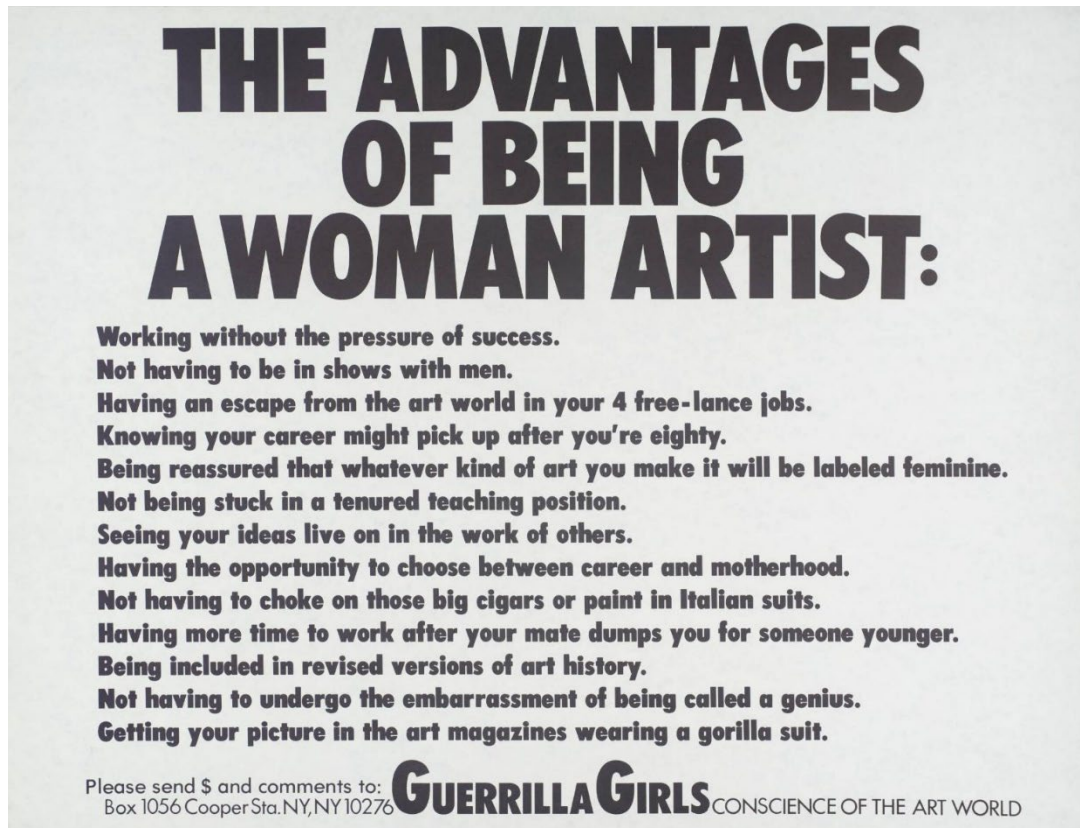


Fig Four.

“The Advantages of Being a Woman Artist” by Guerrilla Girls fig- four, is the fourth piece shown in the exhibition, designed in the late 80s. It was created to cause destruction. “Guerrilla Girls have been working to expose sexual and racial discrimination in the art world, particularly in New York” (Manchester, 2004/2005). This poster is mocking the woman artists but what they are saying is true, especially in the 80s/90s women artists were seen as a joke and it was not seen as a career for a woman. Addressing this back to Feminism they are using facts in a humorous way to get the point across that woman are

not seen as being as successful as men. “This is one of our all-time favourites, which we did encourage female artists to look of the sunny side” (Girls, 2022).



Fig Five.

For the last piece that would be seen in the exhibition, is a textile piece called “*Hate and Power Can be a Terrible Thing*” by Tracy Emin- Fig Five. It is a piece which is dominated by words. It was created using pink wool blankets, roughly sewn together by hand, to give more of an authentic personal feel (Tate, 2009). This piece was created through self-expression, using blunt powerful sentences, political and social related text. Despite being made in 2009 it reminded me of the time when women would applique and reuse old materials to create something new. It is a very feminine piece, with the use of colour, for

very political views. The text within the piece makes references to the hatred towards women by men as women have always been considered to be maternal and be empathetic. "I hate women like you" and "you cruel heartless bitch", these are some of the harsh words portrayed within this quilt.

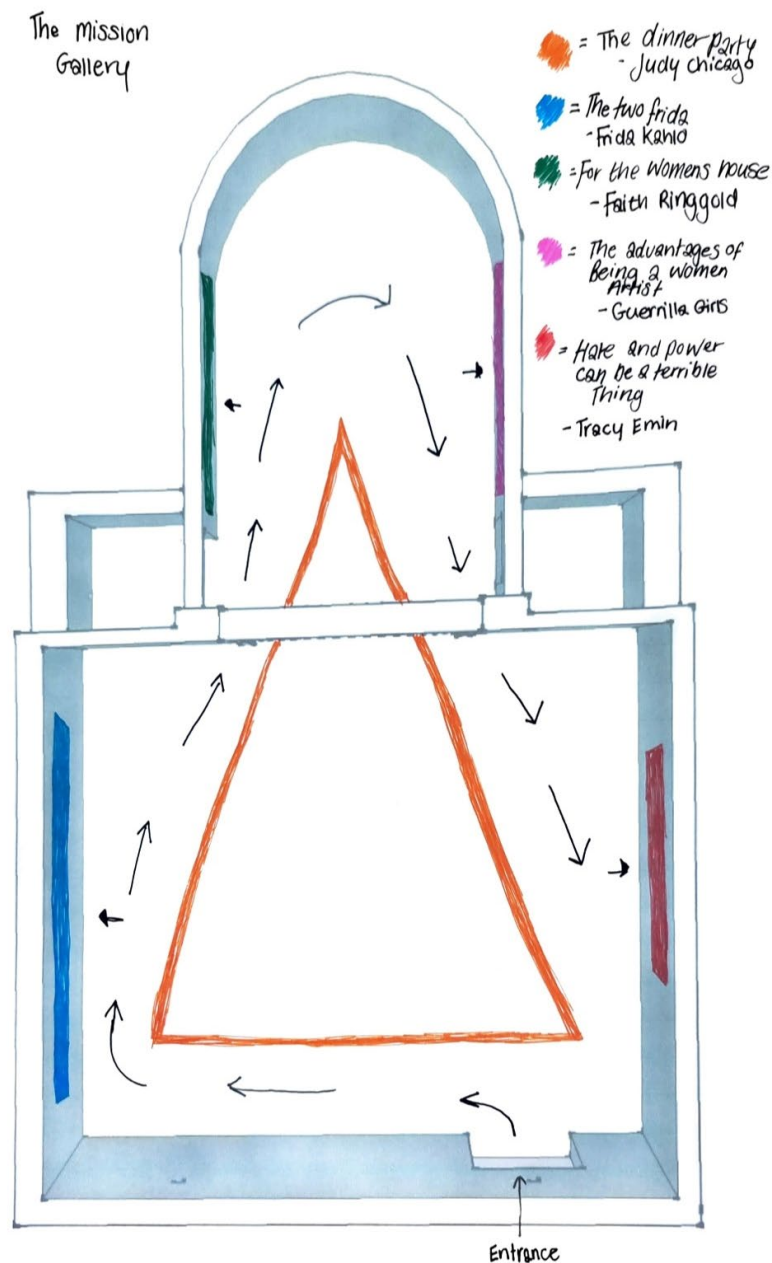


Fig Six.

The pieces of work in the exhibition seen in Fig Six, is the map of the exhibition, are placed in order from the oldest to the newest. They have been placed in this order to show the audience the different types of artworks that shows feminism throughout the years and they can compare them, seeing that the work made in the 21st century was very straight forward. "The choice of objects and their placement in semifixed-feature space can have a strong impact on the credibility of the occupant of a home or office" (ifioque, n.d.), going back to Edward T-Hall theory on Proxemics, in the gallery the art will be based on the semifixed-feature, allowing the audience to walk around and view each piece as there own individual.

Figures

Fig. One: Chicago. J (1974-79) The Dinner Party [Ceramic, Porcelain, Textile] Brooklyn Museum (Photo: Donald Woodman)

Fig. Two: Kahlo. F (1939) The Two Sisters [Painting]

Fig. Three: Ringgold. F (1971) The Women's House [Oil on Canvas] Brooklyn Museum

Fig. Four: Guerrilla Girls (1988) The Advantages of being A Women Artist [Screen print on paper] Tate Modern

Fig. Five: Emin. T. (2004) Hate and Power Can be a Terrible Thing [Textiles] Tate Modern

Fig. Six: Wild. N (2022) Exhibition Map

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