

WAYS OF PERCIEVING CURATION ESSAY

DOMINIC BREWSTER

TITLE: THE GOOD, THE BAD AND
THE UGLY

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Module: ADAD4019

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Word Count: 1426

The Good, the Bad and the Ugly

Entitled, ‘The Good, The Bad and The Ugly’, an exhibition in which the audience is forced to encounter discomfort alongside joy. I’m allowing the chosen pieces to evoke contrasting emotions, creating questioning of their condition and placement. Are they allowed to feel either emotion when something so close to one another are so far removed?

Much like the acclaimed lyrics of the king, Mr Yellowman, disc jockey and magnificent lyricist, ‘the good, the bad and the ugly’ which highlights the hardship of growing up in the slums of Kingston, Jamaica, against the jump of the upbeat “one drop rhythm”. Most would listen and want to dance, ignoring the lyrics and feel the rhythm. However, when you delve further into the meaning of the words covering those staccato beats, you realise the song is not as ‘upbeat’ as it might initially appear.

“Me say the life in ah de Ghetto no sweet
Sometime we can't get good food to eat
And sometime lord say we don't have no sheet
And sometime we haffi sleep on the cold concrete”

(Genius, 2022)

In a time of conflict and hardship that is hitting so close to home, it’s important for people to regroup themselves. Alongside Russia’s invasion on Ukraine, this curatorial engagement hopes for realisations of humanity and solidarity, how we come together in times of hardship, looking out for those less fortunate. Some people growing up in the western world, having struggles of their own,

yet still so guarded from situations of massacres and genocide, wars of welfare and poverty, even when they have been national affair. The audience is to have the knowing that bad things happen but sometimes we cannot do anything about them. I feel it is important that we are all enlightened to the good, the bad and the ugly that is all ever present in the world.

Alike the great western classic, I want people to see all perspectives of life and people. There are good things in the world. `There are bad things in the world, but also there are ugly things. Good is good, bad is bad, but bad does not necessarily have to be ugly.' Good will always persevere.

“The way we see things is affected by what we know or what we believe.” (Obrist, 2014 p. 4)

It is my belief that we must strip away our prejudices and initial perceptions and see an image for what it is. Encompass all of the work and question what is before you.

In my chosen series of art, I show the documentation and subjective-ness of life. Contrasting imagery of joy and despair, to represent truths, from different angles. Stimulation of deep emotional responses, known as ‘Meta-emotions’, the notion of triggering a multitude of emotions at once. Expressions of elicit and defined emotions of confusion, anger or happiness (Noy and Noy-Sharav, 2013).

“Emotional responses are often regarded as the keystone to experiencing art, and the creation of an emotional experience has

been argued as the purpose of artistic expression” (Wikipedia Contributors, 2021)

To achieve the hard hitting response, the selected work needs to get up close and personal with the nature of the subject. The likes of Bruce Gilden and David Hurn are precisely the kind of imagery needed to encapsulate this feeling of cross emotions and bewilderment.



Figure 1 Nord pas de Calais, France. 1993-1994.

Bruce Gilden, an astounded street photographer based in New York. The self taught artists, has had a lifelong fascination with the motion of life on the streets (Gilden, 2014), collating a large collection of graphic, frank, candid and honest imagery. Has a clear passage of photographing versions of the truths of individuals whom are often brushed under the carpet of the poverty line, capturing “everyday life and society’s outsiders with a confrontational yet empathetic eye” (Brennan, 2020). Those individuals that would be disregarded as ‘ugly’, resembling with a major sense of *anti-essentialism*, there is no singular truth or identity (Barker.C p.7). Allowing the audience to create an alternate judgment and perception of those of which they would never usually consider to gift a second glance.

The image as shown in Figure 1, is a commissioned piece from Gilden’s Bleus series. This portfolio of imagery captured the documentation of traditional farming in Northern France, of which is vastly being replaced with the advances in technology, thus replacing people (Gilden, 2014). This is the image the viewers will first see as they enter the Mission Gallery. It will be placed quite simplistically alongside a photograph of David Hurn’s. This is very much so, in contrast to Gilden’s unorthodox style of photography, showcasing the artist dynamic ability to story tell.

Figure 2 *Residents of Sun City, 1992, Hurn. D (Magnum Photos, 2020)*



David Hurn, a Welsh photographer, established in the 60s through his work with famous figures alongside the reputable Magnum photography. The internationally established photographer, has documented life on all corners of the globe collating works with such, “succession of bizarre coincidence” (Bbc.co.uk, 2020) that formed his collection over his extraordinary 70-year career. Equally had prowess to convey stories and activate such prevalence and emotion.

Aforementioned, Figure 2 is the work of David Hurn, which will be the second presence to be witnessed by the audience. Taken on a trip to Arizona, Hurn travelled to the homes of the elderly and found their resident’s attitudes uplifting, “a vivacity that Hurn found infectious” (Magnum Photos, 2020). An image filled with infinite and zestful depth of life.

Through this Grand narrative of audacious photography, Hurn provides us with positivity and excitement.

"I thought the idea of it being the exact opposite of where I lived was an interesting concept, and consequently would allow for interesting images"

- David Hurn

(Magnum Photos, 2020)

With the two images placed side by side, the intention is to confuse and neutralise emotion. When you look at one you feel glee and an aura of merriment. However, then forced to see the moments before a life is taken. How can you still be smiling?



Figure 3 Film Poster (babylon, 2019)

To watch end scene -

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_EybfMcRt4



Brinsley Forde in Babylon 1980 - Cant Tek No More

Figure 4 Screenshot of Video (Forde, 2009)

The far end of the gallery space will be filled with a video piece, incorporating a different medium for spectators to engage in. The 3-minute visual and sound piece is the end snippet of a film titled, “Babylon”, it is a conversion on the position of racism and police hostility in the early 70s. The goal for this clip, is to engulf the dome and curvature of the gallery space. Using projection mapping and sound cushioning, the video and sound will take place to merge and blend into the shape of the wall. So, when a person enters the space they are surrounded by the echo of “Lion, LION”, a word repeated in the scene. They become emerged into an environment that could evoke stress or angst. With the video progressing into a more hostile and energised atmosphere, the feeling of erratic anxiousness and tension develop.



Figure 5 The Snail, 1953 (Tate, 2022)



*Figure 6 and 7 (Casa Buonarroti, 2019)
(Wikimedia.org, 2014)*

Both Henri Matisse and Michelangelo Buonarroti were closely considered to be the best artists of their lifetimes. Although one a sculptor and one an expert of colour, their pieces clashing entirely in aesthetic. It is crucial to remember that they both as artists rose to overcome challenges which forced them to change the way they worked almost entirely (holditnow, 2013). Matisse through battles of illness and Michelangelo through demands of the pope, was forced against his will to work differently. As a collective both created authentic disciplines in which hundreds of people, even after their passing are still fixated with both Matisse's ideology and Michelangelo's hyper-reality.

These two remaining artworks; The Snail by Henri Matisse and Portrait of Michelangelo by Jacopino del Conte (Casa Buonarroti, 2019), will be hung adjacent to the first two images, nearing the entrance of the archway to the video instalment. The aim would be to obtain an original Michelangelo painting, however the paintings are all vastly too big and would not fit into my chosen gallery space. It is worth noting that the purpose of an original painting would to not only highlight the fact that many of his and histories greatest works of art were reluctantly produced, he did not create these by choice.

On the contrary, the Portrait of Michelangelo by Jacopino del Conte an acclaimed work, that was attributed to Marcello Venusti (well-known for his rendition of Michelangelo's Last Super) (Wikipedia Contributors, 2022), is a rest bite of emotions. The presence of the portrait, leads to an appreciation of not only the succession of Michelangelo as a practitioner, but to those around him he inspired. The artistry performed by del Conte is a clarity of inspiration.

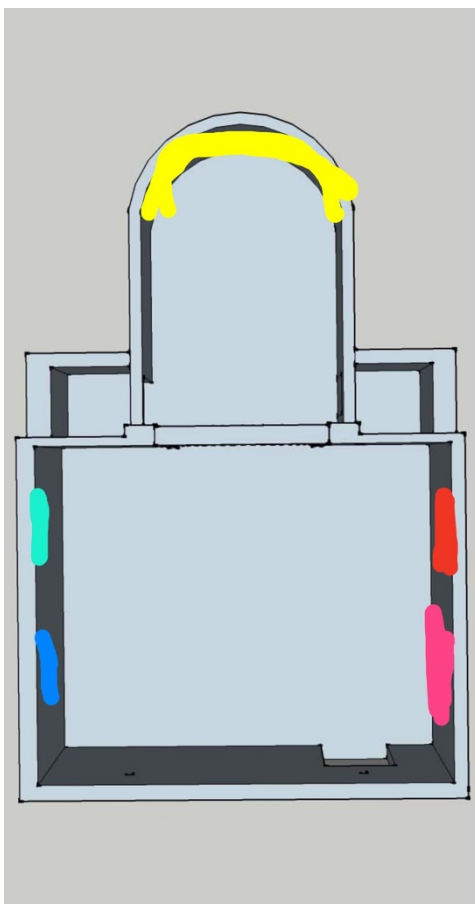


Figure 8 Mission Gallery Plan and Key

Key

- Blue – Bruce Gilden, Nord pa des Calais.
- Light Blue - David Hurn, Residence of Sun City, 1992
- Pink – Henri Matisse, The Snail, 1953
- Red – Jacopino del Conte, Portrait Of Michelangelo
- Yellow – Brinsley Forde in Babylon 1980 - Cant Tek No More

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Figures

Fig 1 - Gilden, B. (2014). *Bruce Gilden*. [online] Bruce Gilden. Available at: <https://www.brucegilden.com/book/bleus> [Accessed 14 Mar. 2022].

Fig 2 - Magnum Photos. (2020). *Living it up in Arizona's City for Retirees • David Hurn • Magnum Photos Magnum Photos*. [online] Available at: <https://www.magnumphotos.com/arts-culture/society-arts-culture/david-hurn-living-it-up-in-arizonas-city-for-retirees/> [Accessed 14 Mar. 2022].

Fig 3 – babylon (2019). *Brinsley Forde & Dennis Bovell Present: The Babylon Soundtrack – Live*. [online] babylon film. Available at: <https://www.uncarved.org/babylon/archives/605> [Accessed 14 Mar. 2022].

Fig 4 - Forde, B. (2009). *Brinsley Forde in Babylon 1980 - Cant Tek No More. YouTube*. Available at: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5_EybfMcRt4 [Accessed 14 Mar. 2022].

Fig 5 - Tate (2022). “*The Snail*”, *Henri Matisse, 1953* | *Tate*. [online] Tate. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/matisse-the-snail-t00540> [Accessed 14 Mar. 2022].

Fig 6 - Casa Buonarroti. (2019). *Portrait of Michelangelo - Casa Buonarroti*. [online] Available at: <https://www.casabuonarroti.it/en/museum/collections/other-works/portrait-of-michelangelo/> [Accessed 14 Mar. 2022].

Fig 7 - Wikimedia.org. (2014). *File:Michelangelo portrait.JPG - Wikimedia Commons*. [online] Available at: https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Michelangelo_portrait.JPG [Accessed 14 Mar. 2022].

Fig 8 – Mission Gallery Ariel Plans and Key.