

To house this exhibition, I intend to assemble a large, prefabricated structure, consisting of a corridor (10 metres long) as the sole entrance and exit, and a tall, cylindrical room (30-metre diameter, 20-metre height) as the room housing the installations. This structure will then be shrouded and obscured under a large red and white circus tent, and in addition to this, placed directly in the centre of Piccadilly Circus, London (Fig 1). This facade plays into the themes of subverting expectation and perception in the exhibition, setting the precedent that “The relation between what we see and what we know is never settled.” (Berger, 1972, p 5). The space within is soundproofed and makes careful use of light, deliberately darkening the entrance tunnel and high ceiling of the exhibition room to not only emphasise the installations but to create a lack of external input, transporting the audience from the centre of London to a site that exists only to explain the exhibition’s narrative. Once entered, they will face the dark, featureless tunnel towards the bright light of the main exhibition hall doorway.

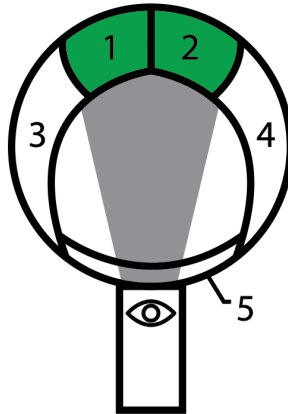


Fig 2

By design, from the doorway, a viewer should only be able to see the central focus piece, placed on a crescent-shaped stage at the opposite side of the gallery room (Fig 2). This central focus consists of two installations, in proximity of each other save for a fine split line through the center of the room.



Fig 3

The first installation, placed on the left-hand side, is a portion of a futuristic light installation created by Andela Andea, a set piece of twisted rubber tubes, LED light strips and assorted plastic shapes (Fig 3). The installation appears disorganised, random and sporadic in its placement, a “blend of chaos and control” (Colossal, 2018) and serves as an embodiment of maximalist style in an extreme measurement.



Fig 4

In deliberate contrast to this, placed on the right-hand side would be the “Throwback” black-painted aluminium sculpture by Tony Smith (Fig 4), to be placed in a grayscale-painted surrounding. Similarly to Tony Smith’s other sculpture works, this piece is a highly compelling example of minimalist art that uses surfaces to manipulate lighting and features clearly defined edges and straight lines to create a striking visual impact.

These two aesthetics are placed in such a way that they are both contrasting and oppositional to one another, but still making use of Gestalt theory’s principle of proximity, as we perceive objects “placed close together” and “enclosed in a common space as belonging together” (Wong, B., 2010) and encouraging a far more critical view of these seemingly contrasting styles. The use of proximity introduces Husserl’s concept of a Noema, highlighting the immediate contrast in aesthetics and initiating the act of intending, setting expectations for further exploration of this contrast in the exhibition’s other installations. This mirrors Husserl’s analogy of the red rubber ball, where at first glance, one might assume the ball is “red and ball-shaped everywhere” (Lewis and Staehler, 2013, p. 23).

In addition to this, it emphasises the subjective nature of perception by highlighting how different viewers might interpret this same installation differently based on their individual experiences, attitudes, and background knowledge. By placing these two pieces together as one on a stage it creates an instant fixation with and foundation for the rest of the exhibition, it cannot be missed, nor ignored even before entering the room.

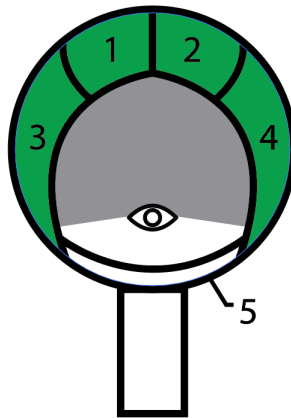


Fig 5

As the audience explores the room further, they may become aware of two further installations in their periphery, placed at the same level as the audience, lining most of the wall and floor space leading up to the door (Fig 5).



Fig 6

On the left-hand side, on the maximalist side of the split line is the third installation, a selection of furniture from the “David Bowie Collection of Memphis Group Art” previously displayed at Sotheby’s (Fig 6). This furniture would be accompanied by several portraits of David Bowie similar to the original installation. This combination of the Memphis group’s “clashing hues, abstract designs, and plastic laminate” (hommes. studio, 2020) work and Images of David Bowie’s almost larger-than-life character creates a nearly surreal and chaotic space in the exhibition.

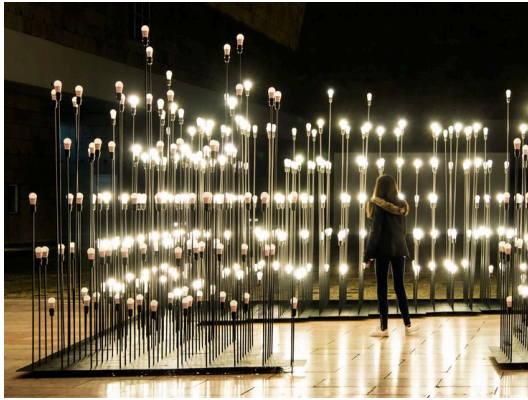


Fig 7



Fig 8

However, on the right-hand side, on the minimalist side of the split line the fourth installation, is a collaboration between two works. The first is “LEDscape” by LIKEarchitectes (Fig 7), an interactive “maze of light” (domus, 2013.) that will instead line the wall of the exhibition room, an installation that glows and dims in proximity to viewers. Intertwined amongst the lights will be the Ikea Mueseum’s “Hagberg + Hagberg” installation (Fig 8), a collection of furniture designed by Martha and Knut Hagberg. These two works together are a perfect example of a clean and controlled minimalist environment, using light and form precisely to draw the viewer's attention.

Similarly to the first and second installations, both of these aim to capture the unique qualities associated with two entirely separate styles, but now in more comparable settings. With both exhibitions focusing on furniture design, the audience's perspective must shift from viewing these styles as completely distinct to comparing and evaluating which resonates more with their own living space. This shift mirrors Gaston Bachelard's idea that “inhabited space transcends geometrical space.” (Bachelard, 1994, p 47). As viewers see these styles applied to everyday objects and furniture, their opinions may change. Those initially drawn to one style might find themselves intrigued by the other, recognizing how these designs could transform their own inhabited spaces.

This leads to a shift in our perception, as the audience is still in the process of intending the exhibition as a whole. The narrative is now changing as the audience looks at the other installations, especially in comparison to their initially formed preconceptions of what the exhibition may hold. This aims to result in an epoché for the audience and a reservation, or “suspension of judgment” (Lewis and Staehler, 2013, p. 14), which may further lead to differing opinions and expectations to those decided immediately in the doorway.

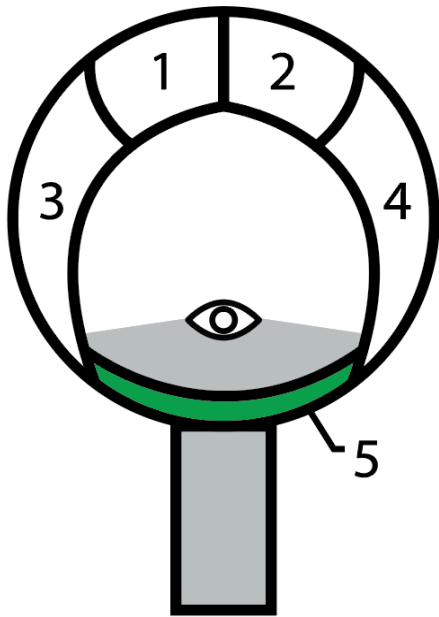


Fig 9

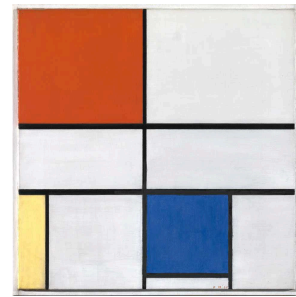


Fig 10, 11, 12 & 13

The final installation is placed deliberately behind the viewer's intended direction of perspective for most of the exhibition. It is a time-lapsed projection installation that is to be shone on the wall directly above the doorway and features a large combination of several graphic designs and artworks from several, varied artists from both minimalist and maximalist-derived aesthetics. These pieces are run as a video and blend into one another seamlessly to form a constant, shifting series of patterns, a synthesis of aesthetics. A few examples of these blended works include pattern designs from the Memphis group, and artworks from Bauhaus, De Stijl, and Jackson Pollock.

This installation aims to challenge all now-established opinions and expectations by presenting a completely new outlook to the audience. It attempts to demonstrate that these aesthetics, despite their distinct and contrasting qualities, have the potential to be combined and synthesised into something entirely new and unified. This installation invites viewers to reconsider the boundaries and limits often imposed on contrasting styles, encouraging them to perceive the possibilities of blending and integrating different elements into a cohesive, greater whole. Once again mimicking a principle of Gestalt theory, "The whole is not only more than the sum of the parts, it is different because it has whole-properties that determine the part-properties as much as the other way around." (Wagemans et al., 2012, p 35) This connection highlights how the combination of contrasting aesthetics can result in a new entity with emergent properties that transcend past the individual elements.

In turn, it also completes the exhibition's underlying narrative, remaining faithful to Husserl's red rubber ball analogy by disappointing the audience's intention. This leap from

contrast to synthesis mirrors the same shock as the discovery of the green, dented side of the red ball, we have to acknowledge that the exhibition was in no way following the original narrative the audience might have considered, and are now left to question and consider for themselves. A “retroactive crossing-out” (Lewis and Staehler, 2013, p. 23) has occurred and the audience is now, hopefully, left surprised and possibly confused, considering their thought processes while dealing with the fact that this revelation was only behind them throughout. As these now contemplative audience members leave, the expressions on their faces are masked by the darkness of the corridor towards the exit, ensuring the hidden narrative is kept as such for those who pass to enter.

Figure list

Fig 1 - England, A (2024) *Exhibition Location* [Digital generated image]

Fig 2 - England, A (2024) *Exhibition Map, viewing installations 1 & 2* [Digital generated image]

Fig 3 - Andea, A (2018) *Norðurljós* (light installation) Cris Worley fine arts, Houston, Texas, Available at: <https://www.crisworley.com/exhibitions/adela-andea4> [Accessed 7 May 2024].

Fig 4 - Smith, T (1976) *Throwback* (Sculpture) Pace Gallery-New York, Available at: <https://www.dreamideamachine.com/?p=47025> [Accessed 7 May 2024].

Fig 5 - England, A (2024) *Exhibition Map, viewing installations 3 & 4* [Digital generated image]

Fig 6 - Memphis (2011) *Installation view of works by Memphis at the exhibition "Bowie/Collector"* (furniture installation and photograph portraits) Sotheby's London, Available at: <https://news.artnet.com/market/memphis-bowie-collector-sale-sothebys-london-730169> [Accessed 7 May 2024].

Fig 7 - LIKEarchitects (2013) *LEDscape* (light installation) Lisboa, Portugal, Available at: <https://www.archdaily.com/317088/ledscape-likearchitects> [Accessed 7 May 2024].

Fig 8 - K & M Hagberg (2021) *Hagberg + Hagberg* (furniture installation) IKEA Museum, Älmhult, Sweden, Available at: <https://ikeamuseum.com/de/ueber/presseraum/award-winning-design-siblings-in-a-new-exhibition-at-ikea-museum/> [Accessed 7 May 2024].

Fig 9 - England, A (2024) *Exhibition Map, viewing installation 5* [Digital generated image]

Fig 10 - Schepel, S (2023) *Memphis Pattern* [Digital generated image] Available at: <https://dribbble.com/shots/22054462-Memphis-Pattern> [Accessed 7 May 2024].

Fig 11 - Pollock, J (1946) *Circumcision* (Oil on canvas painting) Guggenheim, New York, Available at: <https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/3478>. [Accessed 7 May 2024]

Fig 12 - Moholy-Nagy, L (1927) *A 19*, (Oil on canvas painting) Tate Modern, Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/albers-and-moholy-nagy-bauhaus-new-world>. [Accessed 7 May 2024].

Fig 13 - Mondrian, P (1932) *Composition C (No.III) with Red, Yellow and Blue* (Oil on canvas painting) Tate Modern, Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/piet-mondrian-1651/mondrian-guide-life>. [Accessed 7 May 2024].

Bibliography

-Bachelard, G. (1994). *The poetics of space: the classic look at how we experience intimate places*. Translated by M. Jolas. Boston: Beacon Press.

-Berger, J. (1972). *Ways of Seeing*. Edmonton, Alta.: The Schools.

-Colossal. (2018). *Explosive Light-Based Installations by Adela Andea*. [online] Available at: <https://www.thisiscoolossal.com/2018/01/explosive-light-based-installations-by-adela-andea/>.

-domusweb.it. (2013). *Like Architects: LEDscape*. [online] Available at: <https://www.domusweb.it/en/news/2013/01/07/like-architects-ledscape.html> [Accessed 4 May 2024].

-hommes. studio. (2020). *What Is Memphis Design Style And Why It Is Back*. [online] Available at: <https://hommes.studio/journal/what-is-memphis-design-style/#:~:text=Memphis%20Design%20Style%20Characteristics&text=Memphis%20Milano%20is%20often%20described>.

-Lewis, M. and Staehler, T. (2013). *Phenomenology : an introduction*. London, Uk ; New York, Ny: Bloomsbury Academic.

-Wagemans, J. et al. (2012) 'A Century of Gestalt Psychology in Visual Perception: I. Perceptual Grouping and Figure-Ground Organization', *Psychological bulletin*, 138(6), pp. 1172–1217. Available at: <https://doi.org/10.1037/a0029333>.

-Wong, B. (2010). *Gestalt principles (Part 1)*. *Nature Methods*, 7(11), 863–863. <https://doi.org/10.1038/nmeth1110-863>

