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Surface Pattern Design

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Imagined Exhibition – ‘The Only Way is Up’

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Imagined Exhibition Space

'The Only Way is Up' is the title of the imagined exhibition I have decided to create. The theme of this exhibition is litter and how much of the world is consumed by waste. Turning this into more of a positive than a negative, my exhibition is aimed to create a sense of understanding and realisation of just how much litter and waste we are surrounded by. My aim is to include 5 artefacts from different artists/authors which links to the theme of recycling, reusing and creating visually pleasing pieces out of the horrific waste we leave behind.

The idea I have come up with is to have the exhibition in a tiered room with about 4 levels, which get smaller the higher up you go. This idea will help to create the mindset of being down low on a city or town street, and up high on a hill or mountain. The reason why I have gone with this idea is because from personal acknowledgement I have noticed how much litter there is in busy city streets and how little litter there is up high on mountain paths. The room will consist of normal, plastered walls but the ceiling will be glass to create the sense of outdoors. There will also be air conditioning to create the 4D sense of fresh air and wind as we would experience if we were to be outside. I hope that the visualisation of my exhibition will have an impact on their behaviour beyond the gallery space.

Some theories I have found that link to my exhibition idea is ecofeminism, futurism and the cradle-to-cradle theory. The idea of ecofeminism and futurism are a contrast to each other as "Futurism rejected artistic and cultural tradition in favour of a technologically oriented future. It celebrated war as a liberating force, freeing the present of the weight of the past, and admired speed, machines, youth, and violence." (Buchanan, 2018, pp. 200-201). This shows that the idea of futurism is mainly focussed on the speed and process of getting things done rather than the idea of equality, unity and appreciating people for their skills and work ethic. "Futurism inaugurated the avant-gardist attack on the autonomous status of art in modern bourgeois society" (Bowler, 1991) showing that futurism wasn't focussed on individuals at all and mainly on the idea of getting things done, quickly.

Linking on to the theory of futurism is the cradle-to-cradle theory. It is more of an approach to reusing materials and using them to create day to day resources instead of creating more materials which will end up on landfill. "In 2005, MBDC created the Cradle-to-Cradle Certified Products Program to recognize high levels of sustainability achieved by its clients and to inspire others to optimize their products and "rethink the way they make things." (McDonough, 2021). The cradle-to-cradle theory really focusses on ways to reuse materials, and also ways of turning existing dumped materials into reusable resources. The idea of futurism, where they want to quickly create materials suitable for today's society, links well with the cradle-to-cradle movement as they have ideas which work well together.

However, ecofeminism is "a work that envisioned a future in which feminist attitudes prevailed, thus saving the planet from its seemingly inexorable course towards eco-death." (Buchanan, 2018, p. 163). The theory of futurism was heavily focussed on fast pace development of technology in order for the best and most up to date imagery to be produced. With the use of futurism, uniqueness and personal touch disappeared to many things especially artwork. Also, futurism and the cradle-to-cradle theory completely takes

away from the purpose of ecofeminism, they don't have a focus for women and the skills they have, they only want to focus on getting things done. However, ecofeminism focusses on work that can be developed to fit in with a modern and up to date society but are inclusive to women. "Ecofeminism has been concerned with the complex interrelationship between environmental degradation and women's subordination." (Foster, 2021). The purpose of ecofeminism is so that women can have the same opportunity as men, so they don't get looked down upon, be seen as any less than a man or be thought to need a man to do specific tasks, especially in the development of devices and machines of the future.



Figure 1 – 'The army of figures made of rubbish have been seen in front of the ancient Pyramids of Giza in 2002'.

My plan is to use HA Schult's exhibition 'Trash People' as inspiration, to create human sized models out of litter and waste found on the streets of Swansea. Each level will have a different number of models, with the idea of more models on the ground floor to create an overwhelming crowded sense to make the audience have a physical and emphasised visualisation of just how much litter is on the local streets we walk, which will give a sense of curatorship throughout the exhibition. As the levels go up, there will still be life sized models surrounding the area however they will decrease each level you go up to show the difference in waste and litter lower down on streets than higher up on mountain paths. "Ha Schult is trying to draw attention to the environmental issues." (Meamar, 2015) The idea Schult is emphasising is largely linked to the idea I am also trying to get across, so by using the life-sized trash models within my exhibition it will create a physical sense of understanding on just how serious the litter problem is in the UK.

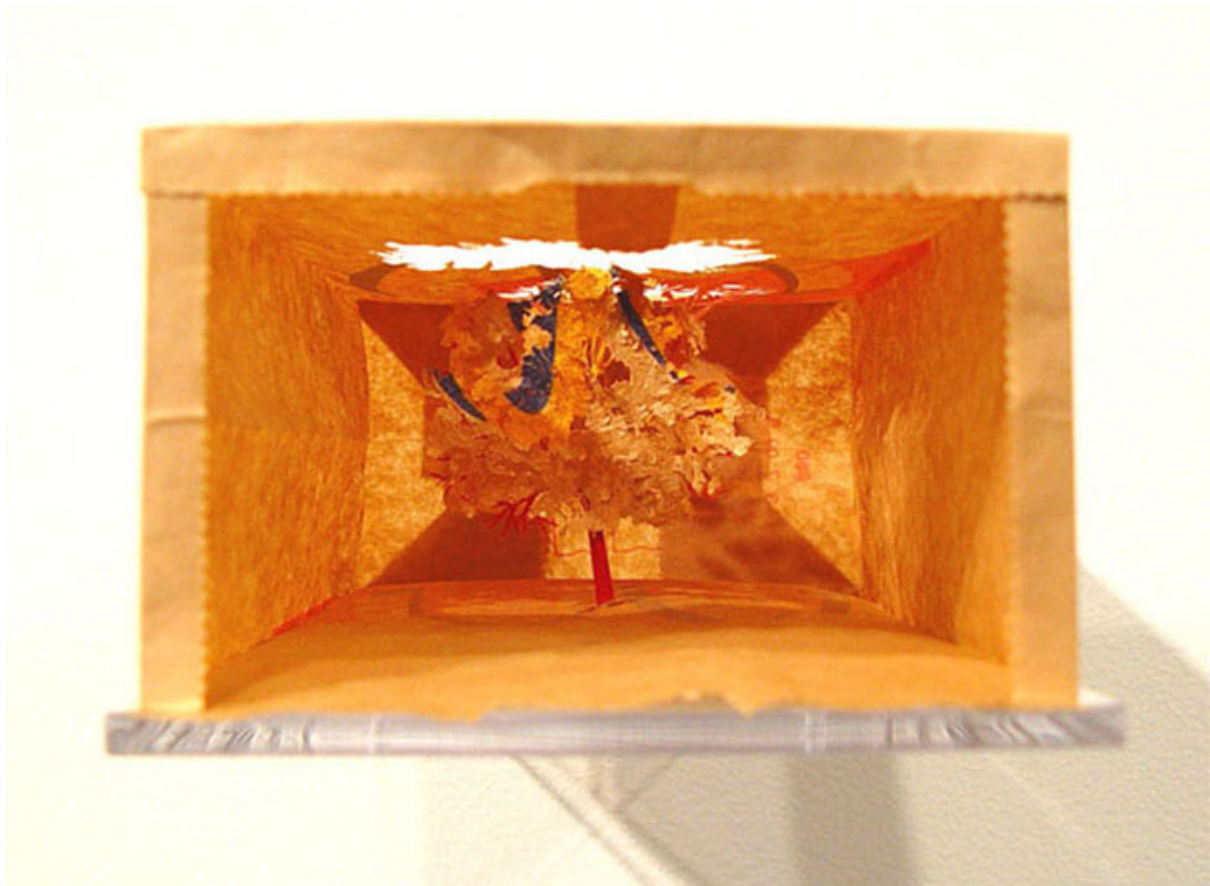


Figure 2 – 'Yuken Teruya Golden Arch Parkway McDonald's', 2005.

My exhibition will also be interactive, the idea is that the viewers will be given a compostable bag at the beginning of the exhibition and they will need to collect pieces of litter which will be on the floor and around the exhibition. The idea of a compostable bag physical artefact to use through the exhibition comes from the artist Yuken Teruya. "Shopping bags – in some ways the emblematic item of rampant consumerism" (Street, 2019). The way Teruya takes this negative issue and transforms it into a positive outlook of waste materials has inspired me to use waste bags as a part of my exhibition, as it is so important to remind people that every day 'essential' materials given to us can be used in a positive way and not just thrown away.



Figure 3 – 'Spring Sprang Sprung'.

Guerra de la Paz “find inspiration in the familiarity of ready-made ... evoke the significance of the human footprint and reveal psychosocial and environmental messages” (Guerra & Paz, 2008). Their work shows that preloved materials do not need to go to waste. Figure 3 shows that by reusing materials that would end up in waste can be used to instead create outstanding, fun, and unique pieces of artwork. The idea is that at the end of the audience’s viewing, they will be given the opportunity to create a piece of artwork out of the litter they collected. This will help the audience to understand that waste can be used to create incredible, unique pieces of art and will also give them something to take home, which will hopefully remind them of this exhibition and inspire them to help prevent littering, or even begin to create their own art from recycled materials.



Figure 4 – ‘Primary colour plastic installation’.

Including some artist drawn images on the walls of my exhibition space will add another sense of realisation of just how serious and unnatural litter and waste is. John Dahlsen creates realistic paintings of found plastic on local beaches. The use of these paintings in my exhibition will add a large realistic emotional effect on the audience as from a distance, the paintings look bright, colourful and fun as you can see from figure 4. However, as the audience get closer to the image and take time to view and understand the painting, they will realise that the artwork is actually a mass image of waste plastic found from various locations. The description Dahlsen made for this painting is “The image being an environmental art triptych painting of an installation assemblage of various collected and sorted, found objects – plastics, gathered from Australian beaches.” (Dahlsen, 2001 - 2019). The use of an old-fashioned technique of triptych painting but putting a modern-day twist on the image painted of waste materials will show just how desperately the world needs us to change our bad habits of littering.



Figure 5 – 'Crab with a hobby'.

Elza Zijlstra has come to realise the huge amount of plastic waste that gets washed up on beaches each day. She takes it upon herself to collect waste plastic from the beaches, takes it home and uses it to create her own, unique artwork. (Our Planet Matters, 2019) If more people heard about the work that Zijlstra does, we could potentially start to have a more positive impact on our environment and eco system in today's society. She states in a short film "Do you really want to pollute our planet to the maximum? Or do we want to do our best to preserve our own species and our eco system?" (Our Planet Matters, 2019). The idea for my exhibition is to have this 4-minuet short film playing on a TV on a loop. This means the audience will be able to watch and listen to an artist trying to make a difference, and hopefully this will have a positive impact on their view of litter, recycling and reusing and will motivate them to help prevent mass waste.

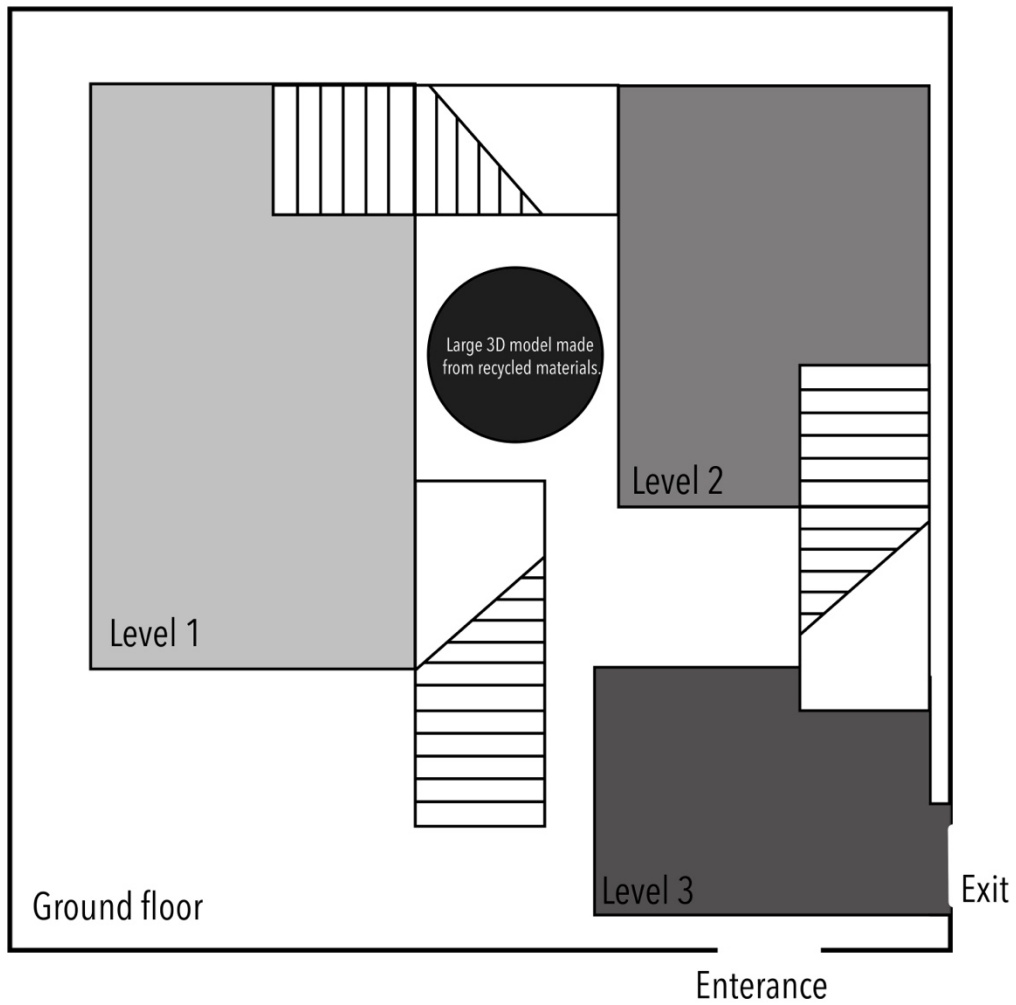


Figure 6 – 'The only way is up floor plan map'.

Above is the map I created of the imagined space my exhibition would be displayed. It consists of 4 levels, like previously stated and would be a suitable size to include each artefact and idea I have expressed. The idea would be to have the exhibition displayed locally to me in Swansea as that is my local area and the place I gathered inspiration, thoughts and ideas for my exhibition.

Figures

Figure 1 - 'The army of figures made of rubbish have been seen in front of the ancient Pyramids of Giza in 2002'. Available at: <https://www.artpeoplegallery.com/artist-ha-schults-trash-people-sculptures/> [Accessed on 16 April 2021]

Figure 2 - 'Yuken Teruya Golden Arch Parkway McDonald's', 2005. Available at: https://www.saatchigallery.com/artist/yuken_teruya# [Accessed on 16 April 2021]

Figure 3 - 'Spring Sprang Sprung'. Available at: <https://www.artworksforchange.org/portfolio/guerra-de-la-paz/> [Accessed on 16 April 2021]

Figure 4 - 'Primary colour plastic installation'. Available at: [https://johndahlsen.com/abstract-paintings/plastic-litter-paintings/primary-plastic-litter-painting/#lightbox\[20f4be1ed3c99b890c9\]/0](https://johndahlsen.com/abstract-paintings/plastic-litter-paintings/primary-plastic-litter-painting/#lightbox[20f4be1ed3c99b890c9]/0) [Accessed on 16 April 2021]

Figure 5 - 'Crab with a hobby'. Available at: <http://www.goodideasgrowontrees.com/trashworks/> [Accessed on 16 April 2021]

Figure 6 – Parkins, E, 2021. 'The only way is up floor plan map'.

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