

Ways Of Perceiving, Curation Essay - Grind of Femininity

Name: Freya Booth

Student no. 1901485

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Tutor's Name: Julia Lockheart

The exhibition I plan to curate, entitled 'The grind of femininity', will include a range of different wallpapers from the same artist William Morris; a different design on each of the most popular skate parks across central London. These include: White Grounds, South Bank, BAYSIXTY6, Victoria and Mile End Concrete Bowl. The wallpaper will be plastered across all aspects of the skatepark, completely replacing the dirty, concrete and graffitied ground and ramps with traditionally feminine floral patterns. This will explore the idea of double coding expressed by Charles Jencks in his book 'The New Paradigm in Architecture' Jencks (2011). The idea of changing the surface texture to a smooth floral but keeping the harsh forms integrates masculinity and femininity within a predominantly masculine scene. Jencks spoke about how architecture in a 'postmodern' world 'is ironic because these various forces conflict and often contradict each other, producing bizarre results; and it is poetic because the consequences are presented in deadpan, colourful juxtaposition.' (Jencks, 2011, p.75).

Thus, the idea of bringing a new feminist art to the world of skateboarding would be widely appreciated as art is already a huge part of the culture of skateboarding, from the fashion and graphics of the boards to the street art. There was even an exhibition at one of the locations I plan to use called 'The Southbank Show, which displays artwork from around the world by skaters and creatives involved in the scene' (Vogue.com, 2018). Furthermore, this will apply the concepts of 'The Asociación de Arte Útil' (Byrne, 2016) as I want to simultaneously use social media to show use value and 'to produce an international online and offline resource' (Byrne, 2016, p.61) which will 'Challenge the field within which it operates' (Byrne, 2016, p.61), this being femininity in skateboarding. Therefore adding a hashtag to the art - #grindoffemininity; See Fig.1 below:

Fig.1



In this image, using White Ground Skatepark, in central London, as an example, I have created a visualisation of how the space would look when utilising the wallpaper entitled 'Willow Boughs Minor Wallpaper' (Morris, 1960s) to coat the concrete. The effect of the wallpaper completely taking over the surface pattern of the skatepark reflects the aim of the exhibition as it symbolises the injection of female energy into the harsh space. This also reflects a literal sense that females should be more inspired to take up skateboarding. A group called 'the Park Gang enacted a bodily resistance to other girls at the park who used emphasised femininity as a source of power. This discursive and embodied resignification of girlhood challenges conventional thinking about today's girls and their disassociation from a feminist politics.' (Pomerantz, Currie and Kelly, 2004). This speaks of not only creating a balance of sexes in the sport, but combatting the females that take their rights for granted after years of women fighting for equality - 'postfeminism'.

I have chosen this wallpaper for the reason that it is among the most traditionally feminine wallpapers that Morris has created along with the other wallpapers that I have chosen. The repetitive leaf imagery that flows across the repeat feels very effortless while having an almost dated and housewife style of design; a direct link to the 'problem of gender inequality' (Bäckström & Nairn, 2018, p. 424) that is spoken about in this study that relates to a history of this and then recent progress. To me, this is one of the most recognisable designs that he has done. This is appropriate as this means that more people could potentially understand the print and draw more people to the parks as this widespread exhibition does have inclusivity and equality at its forefront.

The hashtag will be in bold at all of the locations, I have shown here that it is printed across the wall as this will make it visible for everyone while having the possibility of it being a backdrop for instagram imagery when the skaters use the park. This furthering the idea of inclusivity as it will reach many different people, not just men, when it is posted onto an extremely visual platform that is also all-embracing. The font of the text also reflects the style of the graphics that are used within skate culture's own art because it is bold and pleasing to the eye while being appropriate to the meaning of the hashtag itself. Showing that femininity is an important subject among all people. This is because femininity is often regarded as wrong when associated with a man - 'Thus, men repress their own feelings, devalue *femininity* because of its emotional side, are afraid of women and disappointing in their relationships with them.' (Cambridge Dictionary, n.d).

Fig 2



Fig 3



To give some context, Fig.4 shows on the map that the Skateparks, and therefore the exhibitions' artwork is spread across central London to make sure it reaches a dynamic audience. It is even within walking or skating distance so could be a choice for the audience to experience all five as they will show simultaneously. Having this in London is solidifying the notion that the social media aspect of this is achieved to the full as it is the centre of technology and cosmopolitan.

Fig. 4

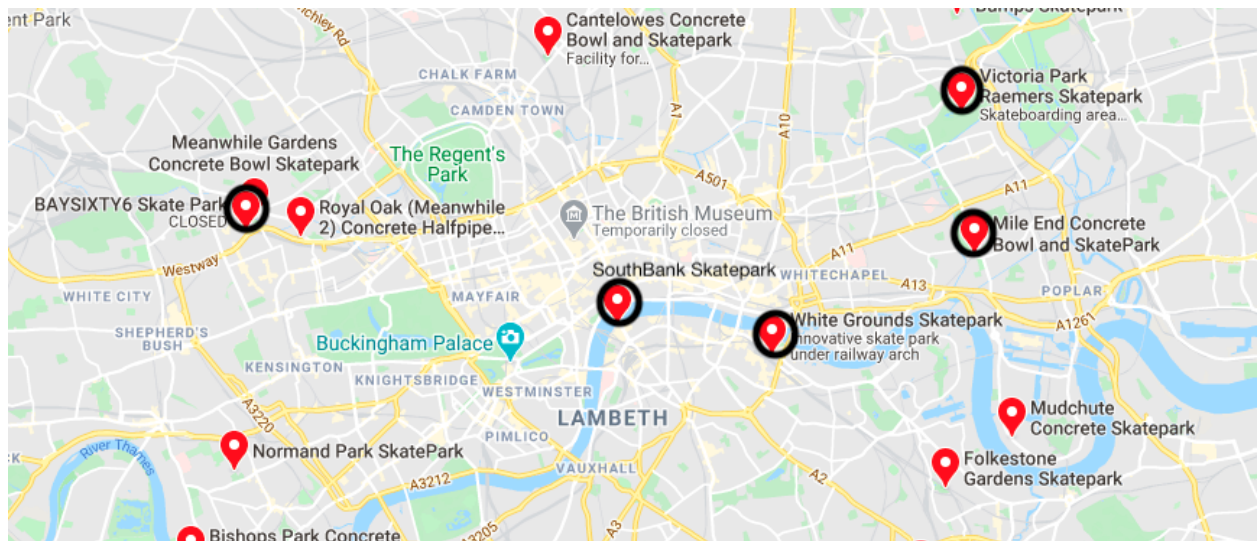


Fig. 5



Fig. 6



I will be using the 'Pimpernel Wallpaper' (Morris, 1876) at the SouthBank Skatepark as again this is an extremely floral and traditional looking design that will contrast the rough and dirty aesthetic that is popular at this place. The usage of this park will add a great aged look to this wallpaper which will be documented well on social media when the target audience of youthful skaters of all genders and interests as well as artists and creatives alike, frequent the skate parks. As 'In an art world where artworks are being replaced by experiences, passive

audiences are giving way to active 'users" (Byrne, 2016, p.62), highlighting that including the audience is important.

Fig. 7

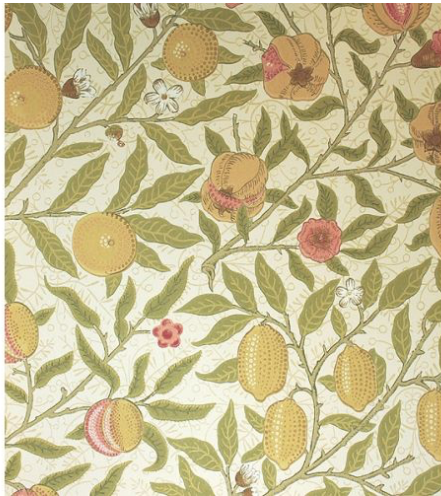
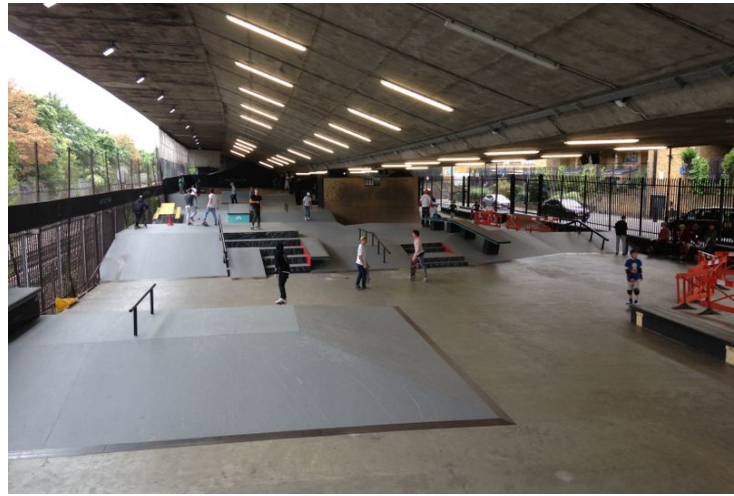


Fig.8



'Fruit Wallpaper' (Morris, 1860s) will be plastered across BAYSIXTY6 Skatepark. This is another one of the wallpaper designs that I regard as a more obviously Morris piece of work and from the images, this park looks to be one of the larger skate parks in London so it makes sense to apply a beautifully rich floral to fight the minimalist right angles and grey tones across the space.

Fig. 9



Fig. 10



Victoria Skatepark, is visually more displeasing out of the five I have chosen as there is little graffiti and the artwork that there is, is mostly tags or word art, which are not necessarily the most attractive form of graffiti. I will plaster the 'Mary Isobel Wallpaper' (Morris, n.d) across this concrete as it will be a shocking transition as there is such a large juxtaposition between the two looks. This reflects the ideas of 'Skateboarding Beyond the Limits of Gender' (Bäckström &

Nairn, 2018) as they discuss the difference in treatment of men and women within the sport. Therefore the message will be widely appreciated and examined with such a change to the overall feel of the place, furthermore it should be commonly noticed by the skaters, locals and even tourists.

Fig. 11



Fig. 12



Lastly, at the Mile End Concrete Bowl and Skatepark, I will be showcasing the 'Bird Pomegranate Wallpaper' (Morris, 1960s) as I feel that the round pomegranates within the design reflect the curvature of the bowl along with the distinct, large half spherical feature. And as this is one of the cleanest locations, a more busy print would function well at creating a more drastic transformation when wrapped onto the concrete.

From this exhibition I will convey skateboarding as a gender balanced sport and use the wallpaper as a manifestation of the real femininity that I will apply. Although a UK based exhibition, it will reach an international audience through the application of Instagram and will 'have direct and lasting social, political and economic impact.' (Byrne, 2016, p.61) infusing the skateboarding culture with equality. It will also be great exposure of a new style of art to the people of this sport to explore 'the idea that a new urban order is possible, one closer to the ever-varying patterns of nature.' (Jencks, 2011, p.72) describing how the cultures are always evolving and in this case creating a more inclusive atmosphere within skateboarding. Meanwhile, the '#grindoffemininity', along with the imagery that will be posted, will aid this spread in a modern virtual way creating a buzz around the exhibition among the many skaters, artists and feminists behind the instagram accounts and getting them involved in the exhibition. The sheer scale will disrupt and shake the city creating a 'colourful juxtaposition' (Jencks, 2011, p. 75) of pretty wallpapers on rough and worn surfaces, leading to a successful spread of the message to formulate a more inclusive community and inspire females especially to join the sport. Therefore reiterating the study by Bäckström and Nairn as they discuss how it is important for there to be a balance in this sport and to encourage a fearlessness for girls to feel that they are welcome.

Figures:

Fig.1: my own photoshop edit from the source of Fig.3. (White Grounds Skatepark, n.d)

Fig.2: Willow Boughs Minor Wallpaper. (n.d.) *William Morris & Co.* Available at: <https://www.fabricsandpapers.com/willow-boughs-minor-wallpaper> [Accessed 20 Apr. 2020].

Fig.3: White Grounds Skatepark. (n.d.). *Slam City Skates London*. Available at: <https://www.slamcity.com/community/skateparks/london/white-grounds/> [Accessed 19 Apr. 2020].

Fig.4: Map of Central London. (2020). *Google Maps*. Available at: <https://www.google.com/maps/search/skateparks+in+london/@51.5205603,-0.3164204,11z/data=!3m1!4b1> [Accessed 20 Apr. 2020].

Fig. 5: Pimpernel Wallpaper. (n.d.). *F&P Interiors*. Available at: <https://www.fabricsandpapers.com/pimpernel-wallpaper> [Accessed 19 Apr. 2020].

Fig.6: Southbank Skatepark. (n.d.). *Slam City Skates London*. Available at: <https://www.slamcity.com/community/skateparks/london/southbank/> [Accessed 20 Apr. 2020].

Fig.7: Fruit Wallpaper. (n.d.). *F&P Interiors*. Available at: <https://www.fabricsandpapers.com/6191-fruit-wallpaper> [Accessed 19 Apr. 2020].

Fig.8: Bay sixty 6 Skatepark. (n.d.). *Slam City Skate London*. Available at: <https://www.slamcity.com/community/skateparks/london/bay-sixty-6/> [Accessed 20 Apr. 2020].

Fig.9: Mary Isobel Wallpaper. (n.d.). *F&P Interiors*. Available at: <https://www.fabricsandpapers.com/18975-mary-isobel-wallpaper-taupe> [Accessed 19 Apr. 2020].

Fig.10: Vines, N. (2014). *Victoria Skatepark*. Available at: <https://www.skateparks.co.uk/london/mile-end-skatepark/> [Accessed 19 Apr. 2020].

Fig.11: Bird and Pomegranate Wallpaper. (n.d.). *F&P Interiors*. Available at: <https://www.fabricsandpapers.com/bird-pomegranate-wallpaper> [Accessed 19 Apr. 2020].

Fig.12: Mile End Skatepark. (n.d.). *Slam City Skates London*. Available at: <https://www.slamcity.com/community/skateparks/london/mile-end/> [Accessed 20 Apr. 2020].

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