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Proposal of the exhibition

1. **Matthias Grundewald** *"Isenheim Altarpiece"* 1512-15
2. **Kathe Kollwitz**, *"Survivors"* 1923
3. **Regina Jose Galindo** *"Estoy Viva"* 2014
4. **AWC Ronald Haeblerle, Peter Brandt** *"And Babies? And Babies."* 1970
5. **Tania Bruguera** *"Crying Room"* 2011

Theme: **VIOLENCE AND PAIN**

"While violence is presented as an excluded object of society, it is prime mover of human, and a discrete component of social self-modification"

(J. Chapman, 2017)

I chose 'Violence and Pain' as a theme of my curatorial exhibition, as in my opinion this concept is the history of one of the most universal subjects where there's still not enough representation to convince the viewer of the real truth nowadays, by revealing violence so widely understood over the centuries.

My idea to get the attention of a spectator through the show is intended to curate the following:

"shock". It is directly related to the concept of contemporary aesthetics, which almost always, perhaps for the sake of critical art, is connected with an experience that is intended to stimulate the recipient not intellectually, but emotionally. It is intended to arouse in him those reflexes which, through everyday life, through cultural reality, he forgot. All this through appropriate treatments, is not always an expression of artistic craftsmanship, but based on a well-thought-out idea.

As Alain de Botton writes in his book *Art as Therapy* the art is a re-sensitization tool. He thinks, that "art peels away our shell and saves us from our spoilt, habitual disregard for what is all around us." As he noticed "we recover our sensitivity and look at the old in new ways." (De Botton and Armstrong 2013, p.59)

For example, let's look at two statements by philosophers representing different, so as not to say – extreme – metaphysical positions:

"I would like to include this term (epiphany) as a locus of manifestation, which signals to us the presence of something that is otherwise inaccessible and which has the highest moral and spiritual significance." (Taylor, 1992, p.772)

"The importance of aesthetics lies not only in its ability to be a critical tool for exploring social practices, but also in the role of a signpost for social improvement." (Berleant, 2010, p.209)

Following those inspiring statements, I have researched and chose five different, but very powerful works which in my opinion, have enormous ability to arouse the thoughts and reactions about pain and violence. Both of which are concealed by the tools of the culture of shame and silence. Following

through, the Braidotti's demand is to create a new framework for the development of ethical relations – affirmative ethics and as one of the productive ways to develop new forms of resistance. (Braidotti, 2008)

The starting point for affirmative ethics is pain and suffering. Pain, in addition to other negative sensations bares the heart of subjectivity, as Braidotti writes, – affect, affectivity, that is, the disposition to influence others and be open impact. The philosopher talked about conceptualising pain, which will allow affective manifestos neutralization of negativity. However, we cannot pretend that pain does not exist, but to transcend the resignation, relief and passivity that arise as a result of deep injury or loss. According to the affirmative ethics of negative effects, they can be transformed as they contain the potential to cross them towards positivity. And entities not as individuals, but as participants in a dense network of exchanges and relationships. Braidotti therefore calls for a way out of the experience of pain, not by its denial, but by the bonding, the effort of compassion, the attestation, empathy, co-responsibility, collective creation and horizons of hope. (Braidotti, 2006)

For my exhibition I chose the works which should simulate the viewer, deepen emotions and require a certain intensity of awareness by more reflective engagement with the content (Sontag, 2003, p. 93). Each of them has a different view on pain and suffering and evoke a huge range of feelings and reflections. As a curator, I wish to engage people and lead them back to a more accurate investigation of what is more valuable, which is to become more sensitive to the pain of others and to be ready to act in justice and oppression of the innocent.

The crucifixion depicted in Matthias Grunewald's painting masterfully shows the agony of Christ suffering and weeping in pain through the nails in his feet and hands. An emaciated body covered in ulcers and wounds reveals the monstrous suffering inflicted on Christ by us- the people who delivered him to unjustified death. For me, this is the most violating act that happened to one person in biblical history. Through this image, we would like to enrich the viewer with knowledge and reflections on the enormity of the pain that we can ask and perhaps ask others to support our actions and decisions to. Christ showed us his great love through his devotion for us and our sins. He also teaches us that despite the suffering we should be able to forgive. He does not want such a desire – just love and service to loved ones as he declared: "Love one another; as I have loved you" (Genesis, John 15:12). In the book "Art as Therapy" the author asks us to consider some themes: "(...)the need to find a dignified echo of our sorrows and the power of art to help us feel less alone with and confused by it."

(de Botton and Armstrong, 2013, p.70)

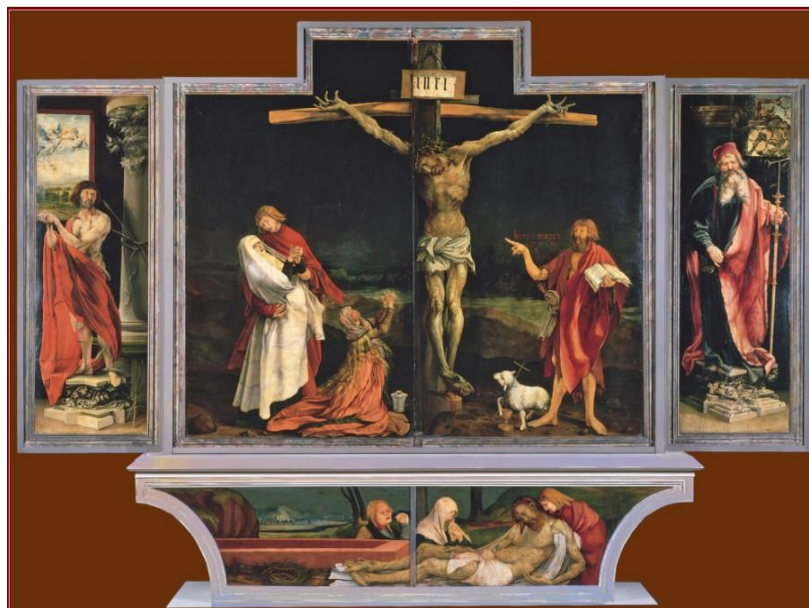


Fig.1 Matthias Grunewald "Isenheim Altarpiece" 1512-15 Oil on panel, 2.69 x 6.50m

On a right hand side of the room, I chose the extremely powerful work of Kathe Kollwitz "Survivors" as it show amazing expression of emotion by depicting the displacements of the war. In my opinion, it is one of these pieces, which catch a breath in my throat, makes heart churn and provokes to cry. Experiencing the art of Kathe Kollwitz we can also experience the most raw human emotion and reflection about the loss and pain of others. On the other hand, this piece invokes the miracle of survival (Sontag, 2003). As a curator, I wish to continue to pass on and distribute not only the powerful graphic language which the artist uses in her work to reach the broad and audience as possible in engaging anti-war sentiment. I wish "...to remain sensitive to the pains suffer by our ever-troubled species and its urgently imperilled planet" (de Botton and Armstrong, 2013, p.73). This can be made by taking responsibility for what happened in the past to act and prevent the war and its effects for the anytime in future.

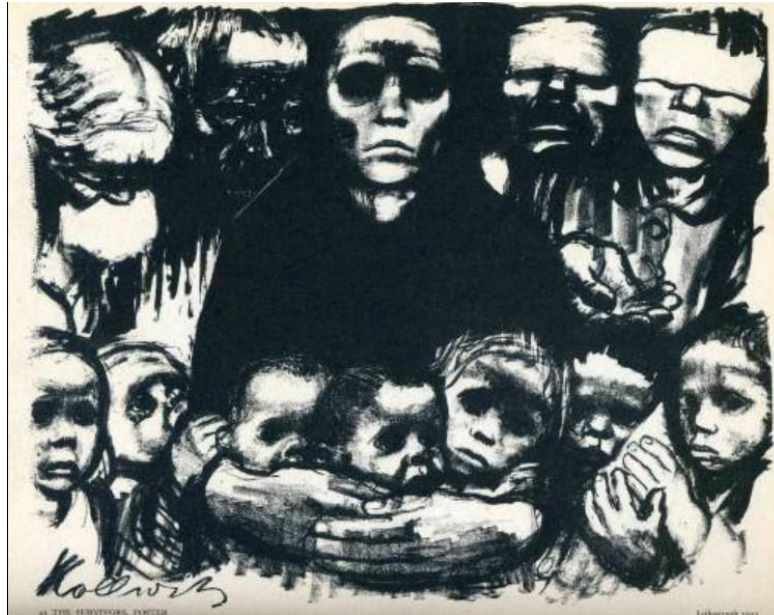


Fig.2 Kathe Kollwitz, "Survivors", 1923, Museum Koln.

On the third wall on the left from the entrance I decided to hang an anti-war poster of the Art Workers Coalition, Ronald Haeberle, Peter Brandt "And Babies? And Babies." I want to keep with my postulate of

revolting and engage spectators to shake their minds because no one can withdraw from the experience. Rosi Braidotti remarks in her article 'Affirmation, pain and empowerment', that the aim of effective art history would be to move a heart and its associated "shocking to think" in order to not only describe the conflict or crisis and analyse, but to resolve it in the first place as everybody is involved (Braidotti, 2008.)

"Yet, it may be possible to begin to use of photographs according to the practise addressed to the alternative future. This future is a hope which we need now, if we are to maintain a struggle, a resistance, against the societies and culture of capitalism" (Berger, 2009, p.60).

Such images as this poster can not be more than an invitation to pay attention, to reflect, to learn, to examine the rationalizations for mass suffering offered by established powers. Who caused what the pictures show? Who is responsible? Is it excusable? Was it inevitable? Is there some state of affairs which we have accepted up to now that ought to be challenged? (Sontag, 2003, p.102)



Fig.3 AWC Ronald Haeberle, Peter Brandt "And Babies? And Babies." 1970

In a bigger room I decided to place the film from the performance of the Cuban artist - Regina Jose Galindo titled “Estoy Viva”. The artist uses her fragile body as a meaningful medium to a strenuous trial in a physical and mental way. Sexual discrimination, cultural injustices and violence are the worrisome powers which keep on the present societies but Galindo unveil them in very blunt way. Her aim is to break collective indifferences by creating strong and intensive image depicting the unpleasant situation using honest, universal language. “Woolf professed to believe that the shock of such pictures cannot fail to unite people of good will.” (Sontag, 2003, p.4). I am sure the “Estoy Viva” will raise many questions and also wake up the audience’s moral and ethical perceptibility.



Fig 4. Regina Jose Galindo, “Estoy viva”, 2014, Performance.

I am sure and aware that viewing all those powerful artworks can evoke a range of emotions though the pain, compassion, indignation or even disgust or distraction. All of those feelings are so familiar for every human and they can be so strong that the spectators may feel a great need to let them go. Therefore, they have the opportunity to unite in one place with others and experience the “catharsis” in one room – “Crying Room”. This installation of Tania Bruguera is created to force crying- to evoke empathy and at the same time to rethink what it is to feel of others and if we can feel better if we feel for others.

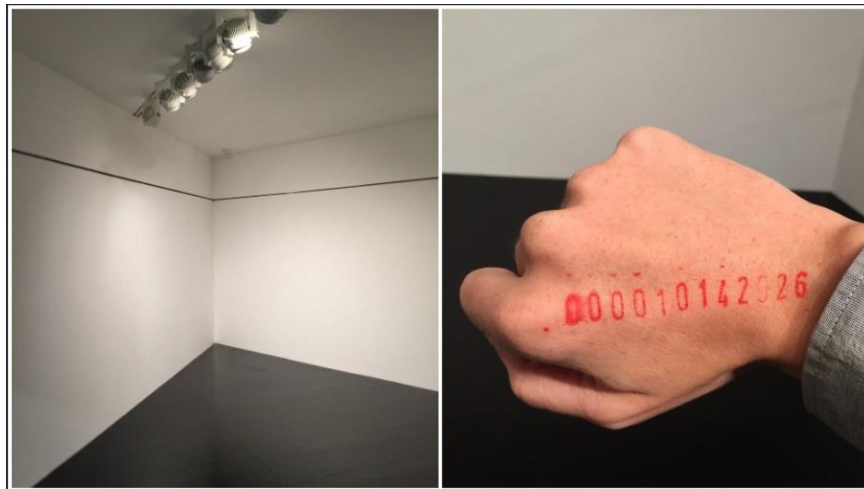
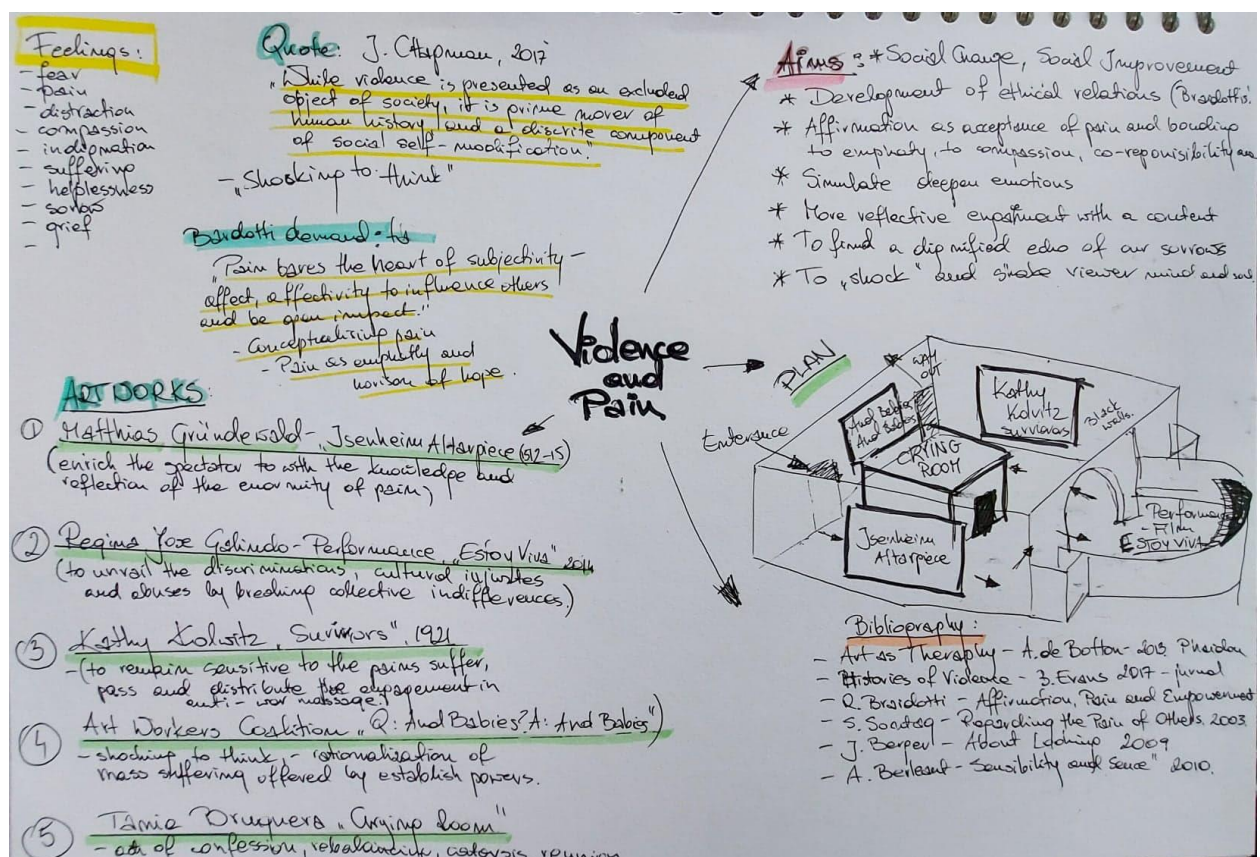


Fig 5. Tania Bruguera, *“Crying Room”*, 2011, Installation

All of the art pieces will be displayed in Mission Gallery in Swansea not only because of the uniqueness of architectural space but also its destiny as a church in the past – gathering people who want their inner transformation. The artworks will be hanged on a black wall with just pointing lights to emphasize the atmosphere of concentration, compassion, grief and melancholy. Each work will be display on a separate side of the room to prevent the distraction and encourage the spectator to deepen contemplation on the viewed piece. I am planning to place the crying room in the centre of the first

room to create a one-direction hallway where people can walk freely without stepping on each other. It is important that in the gallery there cannot be more than five people at one time to avoid interruption. I hope that people can realise that this exhibition is created for something more than just looking for the death and blood on a face, but also as moving their mind and heart. I hope to create a place of many new reflections and series of conversations. A place we can all experience a great amount of familiar emotion evoking us not only to unite but to rethink and redefine about the pain of others. By the listening of silence, pain and death, to indifference, to anger and hatred, to constantly opening oneself to guilt and shame, and also to seeking desires for life, relationship, care, solidarity and art and through art.

Fig.5 Mind map of ideas.



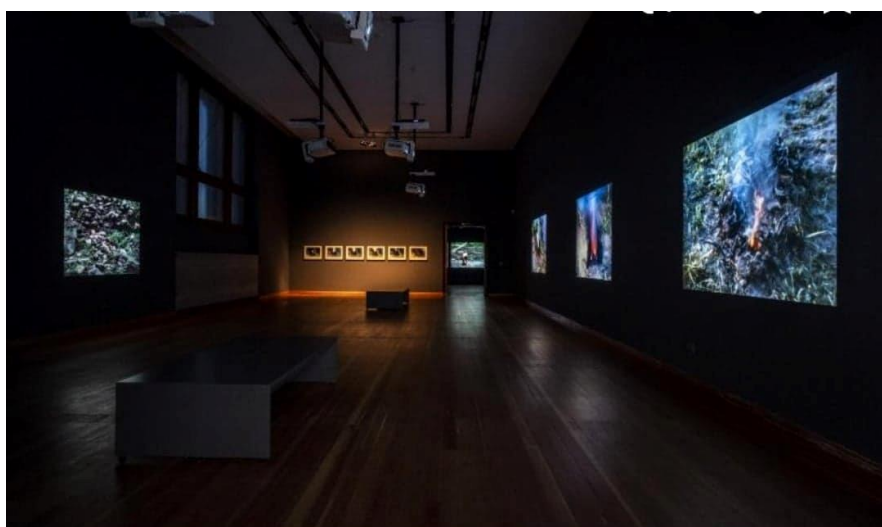


Fig. 7,8,9. Exhibition of Ana Mendieta, Gropius Bau,



Fig.10

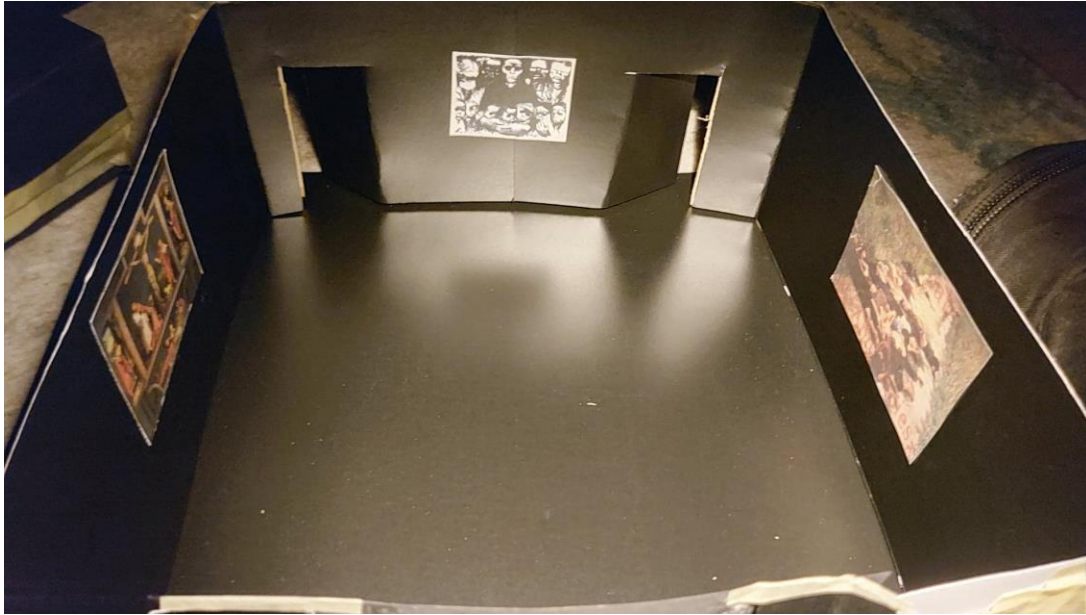


Fig.11



Fig.12



Fig.12a



Fig.13



Fig. 14

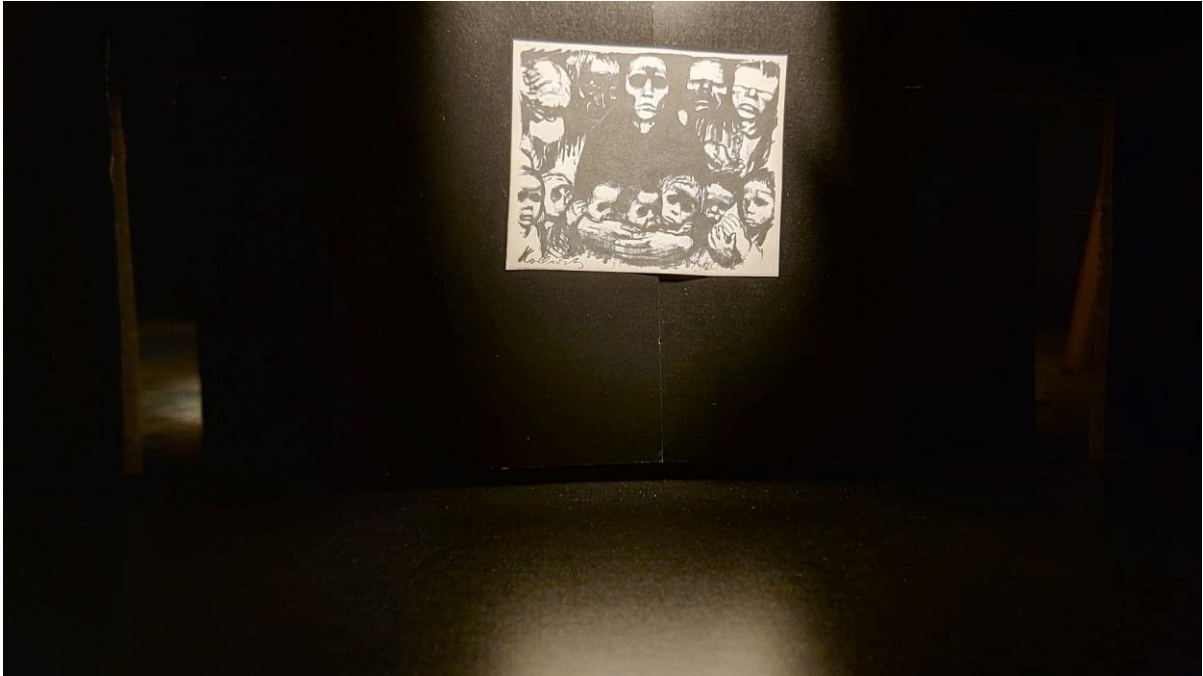


Fig15

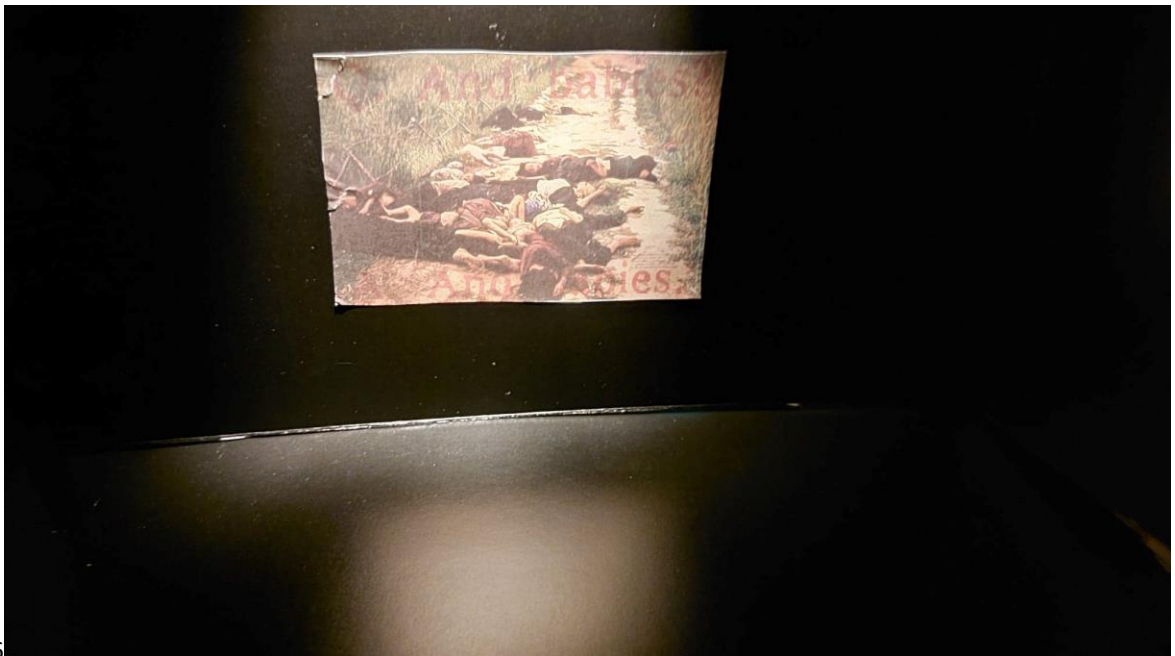


Fig.16



Fig.17

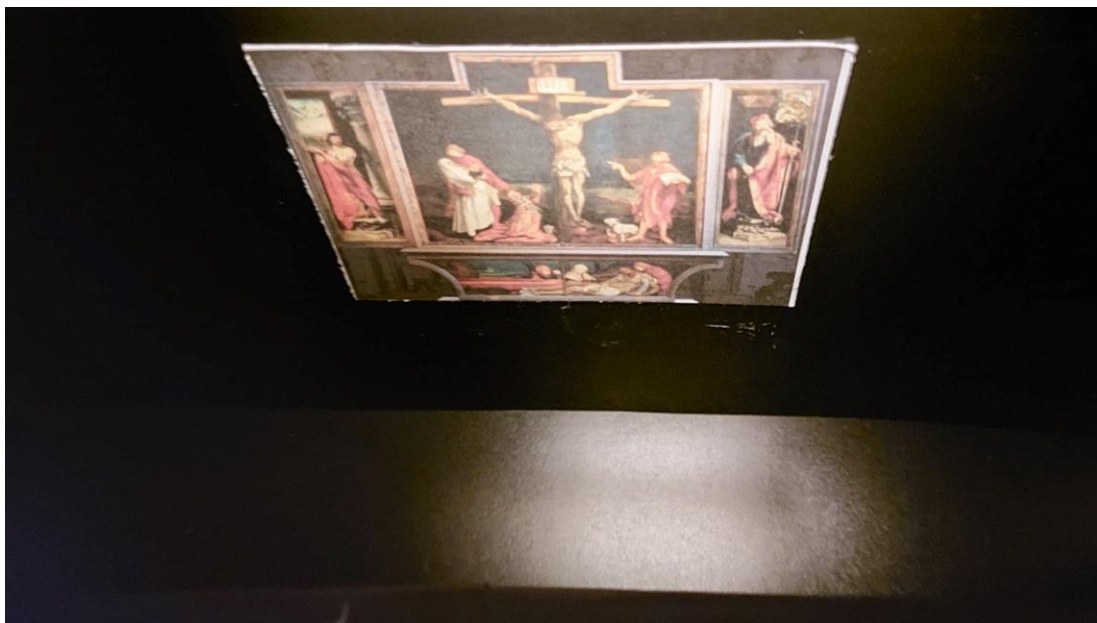


Fig.18

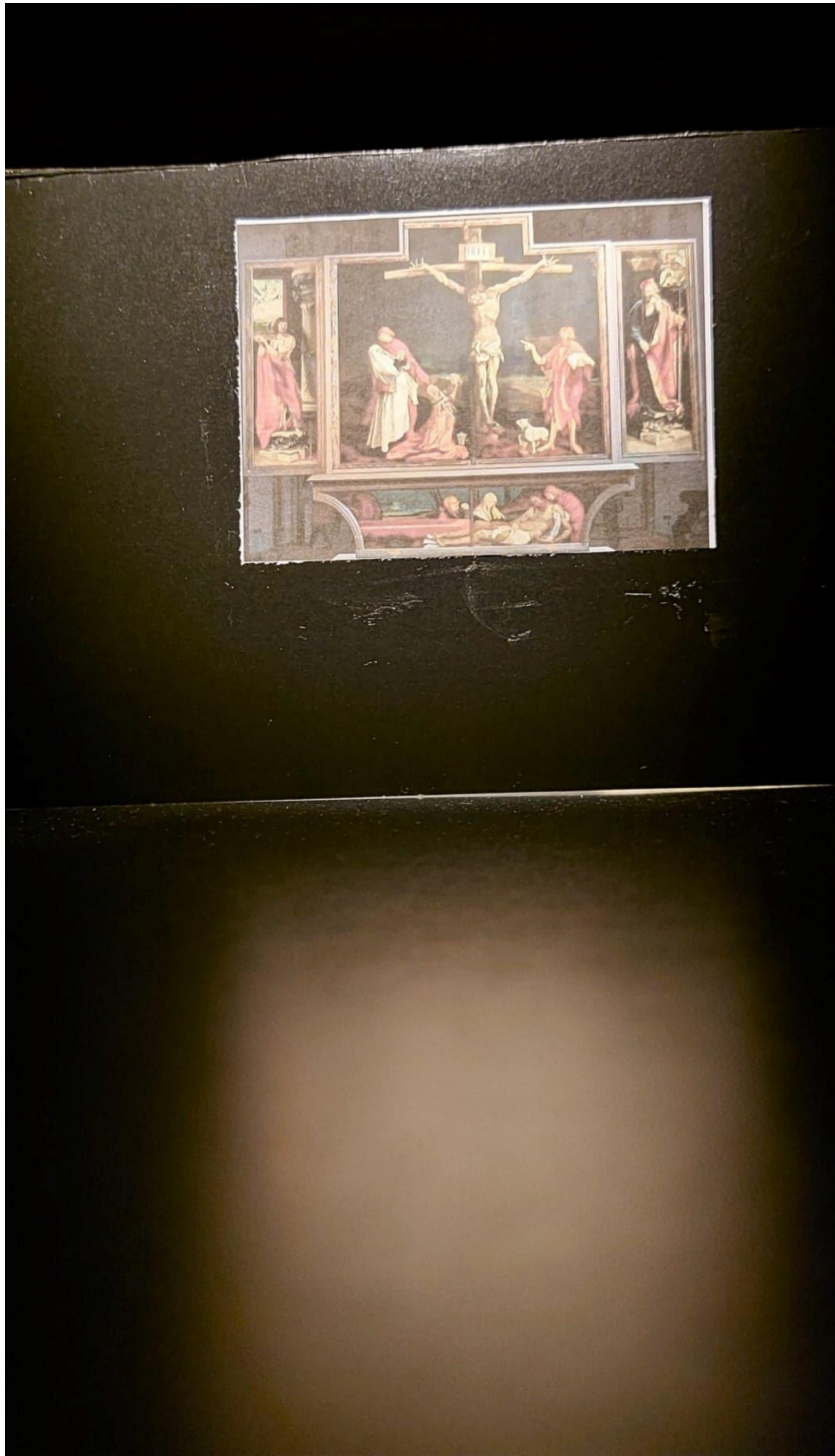


Fig. 19

Fig.9-19 3D Model of the Mission Gallery planning Exhibition titled *Violence and Pain* made from cardboard and black card.

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