

Ways of Perceiving – A Curation Essay.

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Titled '*The Prop Makers Workshop*', I intend on creating a prop exhibition which will be held in an already existing warehouse. The props I will take into account to include in my exhibition will be from popular British films. These props will have a range of different time frames contextually, shifting from newer productions to older productions. The intention of these different time frames that these props will come from will include all genres and will not be limited to just one set genre. This is significant as it will allow the people who are viewing it to relate to the genre and acknowledge the variety of props and their significance in my exhibition, which will inevitably result in a wider range of audience. The warehouse will be put into a one way, conveyor belt like system, in which the viewers will enter in one way and leave out another way. To do this, I will build high shelves and glass cabinets in which certain props can be placed, as well as having things hanging from ceilings and walls so the viewer is surrounded by props. This inspiration stems from the MGM (Hollywood) Studios 'Backlot tour' at Disney¹.



Figure 1

To expand upon my ideas for my exhibition, I will use a regular storage warehouse. This warehouse will be converted inside to have a specific feel, mood, and atmosphere to convey my inspiration onto my audience. It will be transformed from a plain, bland and empty warehouse to portray itself as a warehouse filled with creativity so therefore the ideas of the individuals that created the props can be looked at and experienced by the viewers, whilst also simultaneously creating an effect on them that will expand beyond their own creativity and through what they can see before them. This intention on trying to “create a space that is other” as commented upon Foucault, M (1984) *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias Architecture /Mouvement/ Continuité* October (“Des Espace Autres,” March

¹ Attraction Archaeology: Studio Blackout Tour *T blog website* date accessed 9th May 2020 < <https://touringplans.com/blog/2020/01/11/attraction-archaeology-studio-backlot-tour/> >

1967 - Translated from the French by Jay Miskowiec).² Going upon this theory of Foucault, my specific intention in relation to my exhibition, is to transform the warehouse into a space of novelty. In order for me to curate an atmosphere for the warehouse, the lights will ultimately not be changed to the exterior of the warehouse, as I would want the audience to experience peculiarity, and explore their innovative ideas of what might be within. Moreover, the shelves will have the measurements of W950 × D1200mm and a height of 3000mm for the racking allowing them to tower over the audience, as well as the items hanging down from the ceiling and walls, to portray this feeling of empowerment from the area surrounding the audience. My main aim is to make the audience aware of the focal point of the light on the props to enable them to centre their attention to these particular items and therefore this will prevent the audience looking elsewhere, which will pinpoint my aim even further of using the light to create an atmosphere of curiosity. As mentioned briefly before, the movement the audience will be taking around the exhibition will be primarily one way based following a particular one-way system, flowing through several hallways created by the shelves surrounding them. My reason for this wanting of a one way system is due to the reasoning that people will be able to perceive and read the items in a very individualistic way around them visually and mentally, meaning the overall perception of my audience looking at these props may differ. Galton Bachelard brings some meaning to this idea through his statement “We read a room” (Bachelard, G. (1958) *The Poetics of Space*. Boston: Beacon Press)³ the viewers focus will not be able to dwell on one specific thing, in fact they will be constantly reading and processing the items around them.

Throughout the exhibition I want viewers to continue experiencing inquisitiveness even when they are inside the building based off the objects that surround them, for example someone’s curiosity about my exhibition could be how a certain prop is made. While another person’s sense of wonder could be incited due to the fact that they have not realised in retrospect, how large a certain prop is compared to how it looks on screen.

*“We keep moving forward, opening new doors, and doing new things, because we’re curious and curiosity keeps leading us down new paths.” – Walt Disney.*⁴ I particularly took on board the motive of this curiosity as outlined in this quote, to use it as an inspiration for my exhibition, which helped me along the way to piece together the exact image of how I wanted to visualise the warehouse. I intend to have the space set out in different sections, in this following order - action props (props that are used physically), dressing props (furniture and outfits), action vehicles/other. As the audience travels through the exhibition, they will experience each section and the degree of value the props played within the films that they originated from. As soon as the person[s] enter the building they will immediately be stepping foot into the action prop section, this space will consist of props that actors

² Foucault M 1984. *Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias*. France: French Journal Architecture/Mouvement/Continuite page 8

³ Bachelard G 1958 *The Poetics of Space*. Page 59

⁴ Walt Disney Quotes *Brainy Quote Website* date accessed 9th of May 2020 < https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/walt_disney_132637 >

have used physically. This brings a personal connection to the audience and allows them to understand the props due to them being used by icons of the film industry i.e. different actors that may have been admired by the specific audience in my exhibition. This will therefore result in the audience making a link between these props which may make my exhibition a greater success overall.

Following upon the first section props, the audience will then progress further onto dressing. This will promptly allow a swift transition to exemplify my concept of a natural flowing movement of the audience concurrently. Additionally, with the audience being transposed to a new section of my exhibition, with different surroundings it could also bring about the contemplation of opinions towards the furniture and clothing. These opinions could lead to a series of debates which could benefit the exhibition in the sense of good critique, as people's views help create an understanding as to what is morally right and wrong. For example, the attention to miniscule details of my exhibition could potentially have significant impact, in the sense of my audience potentially have negative connotations over the use of the specific colours such as the colour grey due to its musky and rugged appearance. This could be related to the statement given by the University Press in which "audience knowledge and audience expectation" (Verevis, C. (2006) *Film Remakes*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press)⁵ can help bring up judgements. These judgements are what contributes to the overall feel and atmosphere of the exhibition, however if one audience sees my exhibition and pays attention to miniscule detail such as the choice of colour as I have previously mentioned, they can take away the overall negative association of my exhibition and voice their opinion through word of mouth which inevitably would have a greater impact on future audiences that would plan ahead on seeing my exhibition.

In order for my exhibition to be successful and have rewarding outcomes, I need to acquire proficient reasoning on all possible grounds to ensure that the end product is satisfactory for both me and the audience, therefore my main aim is to portray the message of my exhibition regardless of the consequences or failures. Nonetheless, I also need to take into account that there may be some unexpected failures along the way, and these should be dealt with efficiently to minimise disruption. To put this into perspective, I need to make sure that I display my props and dressing to put the point across, but this needs to be done in a manner that is complainant with health and safety procedures. If for example, one of the props hanging off the wall, was to not be secured safely, I would be personally held accountable for the damage caused to the audience and the reputation of my exhibition would be a potential victim to slander.

⁵ Verevis, C 2006 *Film Remakes*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Page 129

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