

Exhibition of Body Positivity

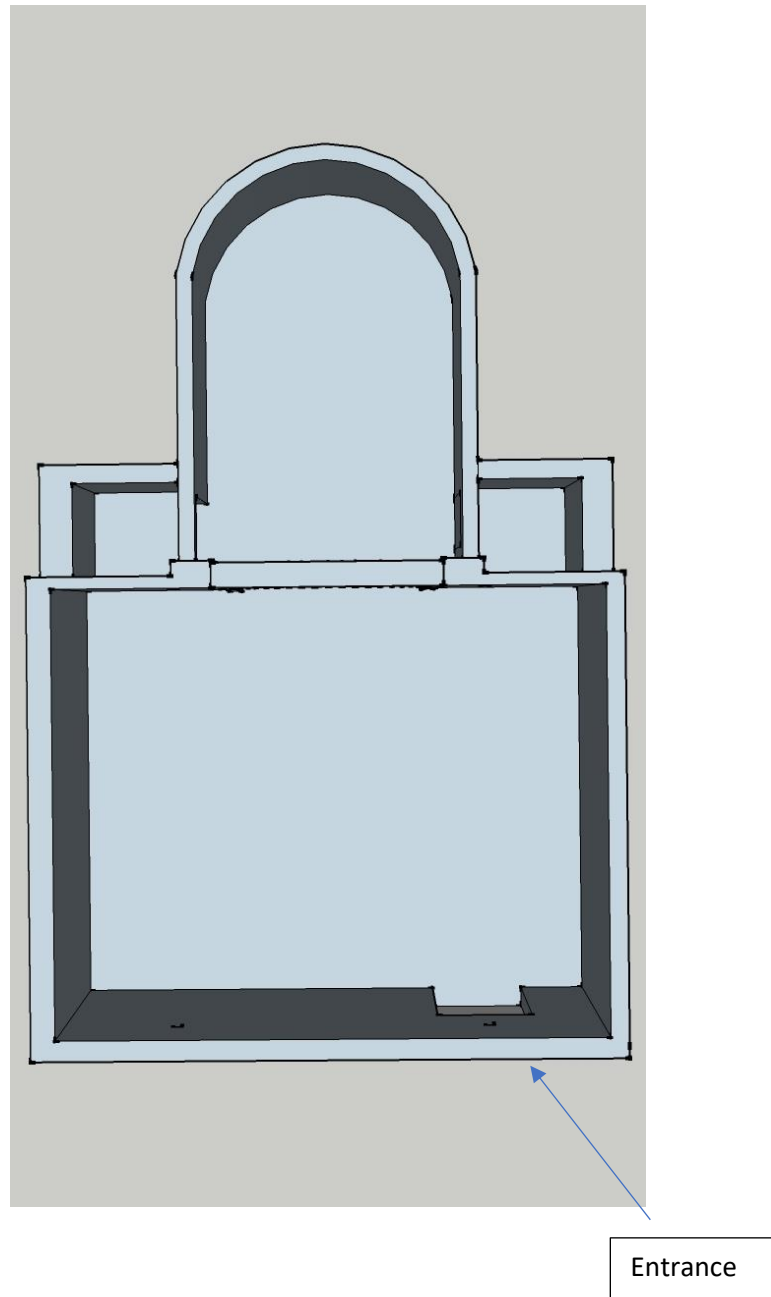
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Graphic Design

Word Count: 1504

Martin Bush

Figure 1



I will be hosting an exhibition showing the art and photography of body positivity as a social movement. This movement advocates the acceptance of all bodies no matter the form, size or appearance. The vision I have designed would include the image above as it is the building where I would curate my exhibition. I have marked the area where the entrance would be, in my square space would include paintings, photographs and articles about body positivity, body struggles and identity. I would feature the paintings and photographs framed, hanging on the walls and the articles projected onto one of the big walls, easy to read.

When I would visit art galleries in London, I would notice that they often have television or projectors of articles or information about the art and artists that have been featured there, so this is where my idea of using articles came from. The reason I would want my exhibition to look like this is so that people could explore the space freely and look at everything in their own time, I would also have seating's in the centre for people to rest and admire the work around them or to sit and read through one of the articles or stories. As a curator for this exhibition, I want to explore what curation means to me and what it means to society so that I would be able to conceptualise what my exhibition would look like to be accurate.

Curation is the action or process of selecting, organizing, and looking after the items in a collection or exhibition. When I am being a curator, I can see that I am selecting what kind of work I would want in my exhibition, I am organising where they would go and also preserving these pieces of work in my exhibition. "Curators, for Obrist, are responsible for the critical information that is transmitted between and through the objects of an exhibition." (Buckley and Conomos, 2019, page 60.) This quote is from the book *Companion of Curation*, I agree with this quote to an extent. I believe curators are responsible for the information that is transmitted between objects and the exhibition but it is also the spectator's responsibility to understand what is being portrayed in the exhibition and to ignite the mind into pondering of the effects this exhibition could have, socially or politically.

My exhibition is going to be based on body positivity, embracing all body types in media of art, photography and articles. "Exhibitions should be curated based on understanding and accepting that there is no knowing exactly where they may lead." (Buckley and Conomos, 2019, page 60.) This quote accurately expresses how I would want people to think when they visit my exhibition, Even the English novelist, George Eliot said: "It is a narrow mind which cannot look at a subject from various points of view." (Eliot, 1874, page 121.) Therefore meaning, experiencing an exhibition which is to celebrate different body types, it must be with an open mind.

The point of my exhibition is to not only celebrate women with curvier hips or bust but is to stand up against prejudice of bigger or slimmer people in society. "Big is beautiful" is a body positivity movement, which would be featured accordingly, but bigger people is not what I just want to focus on because even though 63% of girls and 58% of boys get bullied for their bigger size so does 30% of girls and 24% of boys for their smaller size. In my exhibition, I want to celebrate all sizes because everyone struggles with body image, no matter who you are. In my exhibition I would want everyone to feel welcomed and invited, my space would be a safe place for people of all different size, race and background.

The artists I have looked at are photographers but I will also be featuring writers in my exhibition, one photographer company I researched is Cheyenne Gil Studios, which their studio is a body-positive, fat-positive environment which their models include, cisgender, transgender and non-binary people. Their photoshoots are based in a boudoir, which is a woman's bedroom or a small private room. "Boudoir is a powerful thing. In a world where we're constantly bombarded with reminders of 'not being good enough' being seen is important." (Cheyenne Gil Studios.) This quote accurately represents why I chose these photographers to feature in an exhibition such as my own, Boudoir photography is about women feeling good about themselves, it is for them to admire their self and to show that size isn't what makes you beautiful, it's the confidence.

Another photographer, Elle Perez also does intimate shoots, working closely with the LGBTQIA+ community. "Perez visualises the complexities of gender identity: the scars left behind on a subject's chest after surgery." (Art21, 2019.) Body positivity is not only just about weight, but there are also so many aspects to body image, including, gender, age, height, size and body marks such as scars. Being

able to include these kinds of photographs in my exhibition would be a priority. An estimate of 200,000-500,000 people in the UK is transgender which more than half of them experience depression, suicidal thoughts or other, being able to represent them would show that they are beautiful no matter who they are.

Lastly, Anastasia Pottinger is a photographer who focuses on the beauty of bodies of elderly people and has shined a spotlight on the underrated and overlooked demographic.

Pottinger notes that modern society's obsession with youth is what initially inspired her to turn her attention to older subjects. To counter the airbrushed images and anti-ageing sentiment promoted by the media, Pottinger reveals-and celebrates-what living a long life looks and feels like. Using nothing more than "light, shadow, talent, experience, and her intuitive perspective," she captures snapshots that are as beautiful as they are raw, offering viewers a much needed look at real ageing bodies.

(Kelly Richman-Abdou, 2019.

<https://mymodernmet.com/100-what-time-creates-anastasia-pottinger/>)

As I said previously, body image is not just about weight. Age can be a huge factor in body issues, wrinkly skin, prominent freckles, saggy skin but what Pottinger does is show how all those factors can be beautiful, a large factor of society has a fear of ageing for one reason or the next but being able to show photographs of how beautiful you can be even with the factor listed it could make people a little less scared and more excited to grow up.

Ironically, in the mid-1990s Obrist was contemplating leaving the art world, but then applied his speculative curatorial objective to locating and cross-fertilizing the elements of an exhibition, treating it as a laboratory of ideas that will impact on society in a much broader context than the art world.

(Buckley and Conomos, 2019, page 61.)

What Obrist did in the mid-1990s is theoretically what I am doing with my exhibition as I do not want to only reach to the art world but to, also, seek presence in society and impact it in a way that changes the way people think about body image. I do not believe I can impact all of society with an exhibition but I do believe that I can make some people think about the work I feature in a way that is not just about art.

Among the art and photography, I would exhibit I would also include articles to share other people's stories to show that we are not alone, as an individual, you are not the only one who suffers from body image issues, uniting society is a powerful thing and by showing that we are not alone and that we all share these values would be a step in the right direction to changing the rules, as Naomi Wolf said, "We do not need to change our bodies we need to change the rules." (Jayne Crabbe, 2017, page 12.) Not only is being curvier but so is being smaller, as well as going from big to small and small to big, changing your body for your health and wellbeing is important and knowing that you are not letting down the body positivity by changing your body is also a good thing.

Continuing with my idea of including people's stories, one I would feature in my exhibition is Megan Jayne Crabbe's story. She wrote a book about her body image struggles until she learnt about body positivity, which changed her life. "It affects our relationships, how we treat others and how we think we deserve to be treated." (Jayne Crabbe, 2017, page 20.) I have taken this quote from her book because it speaks volumes. People struggling with body image issues are usually miserable so they act miserable which affects the people around them.

In review, I would like my exhibition to be meaningful and reach out to many different people, to show people's work and stories. I would like my exhibition to be a big impact on society and help with the body positivity movement

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Figures:

Figure 1: <https://moodle.uwtsd.ac.uk/mod/folder/view.php?id=179942> (Accessed: 1st March)