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Mapping Potential Territories

For the site specific exhibition, the outcome of the Experimental Strategies module, I am proposing the Marina Towers Observatory in the Maritime Quarters of Swansea as a potential site for the exhibition. Architect Robin Campbell designed the building in 1989 for the local astronomical society, who used the space to lead public observing sessions and to educate the public about astronomy. The astronomical society occupied the space from 1993 until 2010, when they decided they could no longer afford to rent the space after a disagreement with Swansea City Council. The observatory is now home to a cafe. I believe the observatory could be an interesting site to hold the exhibition, as the building itself can be seen as art, because the architecture of the observatory makes it a unique space which walks the boarder between art and science. In addition to this, from a practical perspective, as the space is occupied and open to the public requesting permission may be fairly straightforward as it would be possible to go there and speak to someone directly, rather than replying on the internet to find contact information. Furthermore, the observatory is a short walk from the university, meaning that it would be an accessible space to all students.

The observatory has historical significance in Swansea, therefore looking at its history could prove useful as a research method to inspire work. Work created for the exhibition could be viewed outside of the observatory and still appreciated for it's aesthetic value, however displaying the work in the observatory would attach a strong meaning due to the building's history. This could enhance the impact of the work, allowing it to be understood on a deeper level by an audience.However, the coastal setting and distinctive architecture open up a possibility of looking at creating work from a geographical perspective as well.

I feel that an obvious theme of work relating to the observatory would look at space. However, there are multiple ways this could be approached, leaving a wide scope of possibility for creating work. This could be interpreted in a very literal sense, possibly looking at astrophotography and photographing the night sky. Whilst these images may be appreciated alone, presenting them in an exhibition at the observatory could add a layer of meaning to them. To add, the theme of space could also be interpreted in a more metaphorical or symbolic sense. Through the theme of space, it would be possible to explore a wide range of ideas linked to the universe, mystery, connection, and transcendence.