

Site mapping: *Swansea Botanical Gardens*



Grace Archer

Site: *Botanical Gardens, Singleton Park, Sketty, SA2 8PW*

My location of choice for the exhibition is the Swansea Botanical Gardens, located in the northern area of Singleton Park. Already being a creative space, with sculptures and murals dotted around, it leads me to believe that another artist commission wouldn't be an outright 'no'.

The park itself is beautiful and the botanical gardens even more so, which makes it a very nice location to create work in and invite others to view. There is already a fair amount of information about the gardens online, stating that they were built in 1926, with the history of the park being documented since 1847; meaning that the potential archived material is vast, which would allow everyone in the group to have their individuality within the project.

In December, the botanical gardens will be open from 10am-3:30pm, with it being open access to all, as Singleton park is accessible 24/7, making it a good location to attract attention for the exhibition.



Glasshouses in early 20th C.

Research:

The area in which I think we should work with inside the gardens is the glasshouses; which were built between 1987 and 1991, standing on a footprint that was established 60 years earlier. Both glasshouses have a 'theme' with one being the "Cool Conservatory" and the other "Tropical", which already gives two different areas to work as a group. The gardens offer plants located from around the world: Southern Europe, Australia, New Zealand and South America. There's an attentive community behind the making of the Botanical Gardens from 100 years ago to now, with the 'Friends of Swansea Botanical Gardens' group supporting with the upkeep of the gardens and raising funds through the plant shop. The garden itself features a rock garden, Japanese bridge, ornamental gardens, and a wildflower/wellbeing garden. With these sorts of features, a collaboration between the glasshouses and the outside area could be made, following the footsteps of Eric Kessels 'Muddy Dance', to offer an interactive experience that celebrates the history of the land.

Suggested theme/context:

As the gardens are already very historical, that would naturally be an element to celebrate within the work as a group. I think the main theme of the project could be in association with its community, and what that's looked like over the years. Being able to bring awareness to those that have literally shaped the land would be a good way of giving back to them, being a community that raises their own funds to support the gardens. To bring light to the transformation of the gardens over the decades would also be nice way of celebrating the 100th anniversary of the Botanical Gardens being open. The gardens are incredibly colourful and full of texture from a compositional perspective, and so being able to add to that from an artistic viewpoint would only enhance the space even more.

Site Images:

Outside of the glasshouses is an area of patterned flower beds, which is already creating an interesting system of inviting people to walk amongst nature. Depending on the weather or materials used, there could be an incorporation with the outside area with the glasshouses, expanding the artworks across the gardens, and allowing people in the group to have a different kind of space to work with.

