

The 5 senses

Ways of perceiving, curation essay

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BA Surface pattern design and textiles

Introduction

The five sense exhibition, a space full of live art interacting with each of the 5 senses. The exhibition sparks up multiple conversations such as Thai politics, sexualising women, creative re-imaginings and creative processes. The process of creating art for an exhibition is much more valuable than simply observing the final piece according to Tim Ingold's theory in 'the textility of making'. Therefore, the exhibition being constructed will be the exhibition itself. Michael Polanyi's theory of the 'tactile dimension' will also come into play as Margaret What's Hughes displays this in her work. Both theories will be explained further in this essay. I will also explain what modernism is and ways in which this exhibition will be built in modern way.

Context

Smell- Richard Wilsons

Sound- Janet Cardiff

Sight- Margreat Whats Hughes

Touch- wife of yu the great Wuhan China & Molly Malone Bosken, N. (2017)

Taste- Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Green (2010), Rirkrit Tiravanija.

Tim Ingold

Michael Polanyi

What is Modernism in exhibitions?

Modernism is the 'current search for new forms of expression' Kuiper, K. (2025). Sparked up following World War 1. An example of modernism in art would be Édouard Manet's 'a bar at the folies-Bergere', a painting of a lady in front of a mirror looking out behind the bar. He breaks tradition by attracting focus to how his art is just that, paint on a canvas purposefully being able to see brush strokes in the art.



The 5-sense exhibition will be a modern take on curating an exhibition. With interactive art pieces, modern topics and creative displays of art.

1) TASTE

Who's Afraid of Red, Yellow, and Green (2010), Rirkrit Tiravanija.



‘Who’s Afraid of red, yellow, and green’ was an interactive exhibition located in the Hirshhorn Museum in Washington, DC. They invited people to have a meal together while watching protest imagery being painted on the walls by Rirkrit Tiravanija. The real time art being painted is in protest of Thai government policies. This challenges conventional norms of how art is displayed in exhibitions.

Ingold, T. (2010) notes that the process of making is more validating and important than the final product itself. The theory is very clear in this and many parts of the exhibition. Through entering, grabbing a meal, sitting down with others and observing someone's process of painting a mural of an important topic of discussion. Seeing the process and enjoying the meal with others promotes conversation and community.

Michael Polanyi writes about the tacit dimension. He explains that experience, practice and skills are important for learning and human cognition. He says that tacit skills can be passed down from cultures and communities.

This part of the exhibition will be located at the beginning so that the flavourful Thai food can spark the taste buds and have the guest's senses heightened from the moment they enter. Hirshhorn (2019)

2) Touch- Molly Malone & Chinese first dynasty Bosken, N. (2017)

This is a statue, built in respect and admiration for the founder of the Chinese first dynasty in the year 2070 BC. This and many other statues such as Molly Malone in Dublin have been damaged by tourists groping their breasts. Molly Malone is a part of Irish folklore; it is uncertain if she was a real person or just fiction. However, the theory suggests that she was based on a real woman who died in Dublin 1699. These two statues test the morality of the guests as they will either choose to objectify the objects or respect the objects and learn about their rich history. This is a part of Michael Polanyi's theory where touch is critical for human cognition and learning, this means they learnt this behaviour from somewhere. Either

from their past or from seeing someone else's behaviour on the day of the exhibition.

'The statue of the wife of Yu the Great stands holding hands with a statue of her husband and his matchmaker. Yu the Great was the founder of China's first dynasty in the year 2070 BC.'

'Officials are now starting to complain that tourists have been damaging the statue. This area is now worn down and discoloured. Government authorities feel that the behaviour is disrespectful to their culture. However, they do not believe that this behaviour will change anytime soon.' This part of the exhibition will be placed in the next room with the two statues facing each other. Bosken, N. (2017)

3) Smell- Richard Wilsons

In the next room there will be Richard Wilsons installation consisting of room filled waist high with recycled engine oil. A surreal experience for the audience, as the surface of the oil reflects its surroundings creating a dystopian alternate reality of sorts. Many said that when walking through the installation you were hit with a very strong smell of engine oil. Although the instillation was made to create a "Tardis-like space" as Richard Willson explained in an interview with the Guardian. Haider, A. (2019)

4) Sound- Forty-part motet

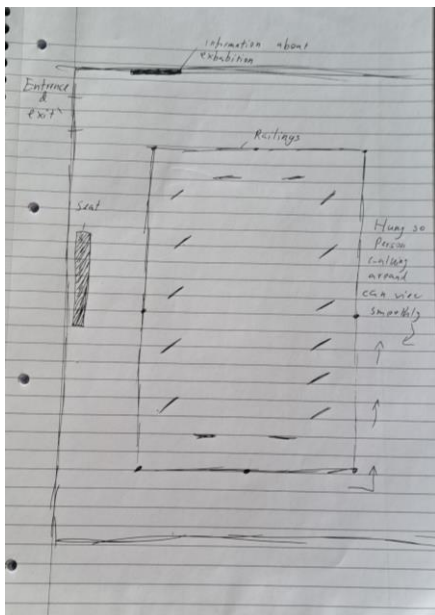
Janet Cardiff worked with 40 choir singers, recording their voices singing 'Thomas Tallis' playing each voice through one speaker. These speakers will be set up in a circle in the Salisbury Cathedral to create a personal experience for the listener. 'The speakers are carefully positioned in eight different groups of five, responding to the structure of Tallis's complex vocal piece, or motet. Each group forms a choir of five singers with

different vocal ranges: a bass, baritone, tenor, alto and soprano.' Tate (2017). Janet Cardiff's Forty Part Motet.

The ability to come up close to each individual speaker is a very personal experience which wouldn't have been socially acceptable to do with a real choir.

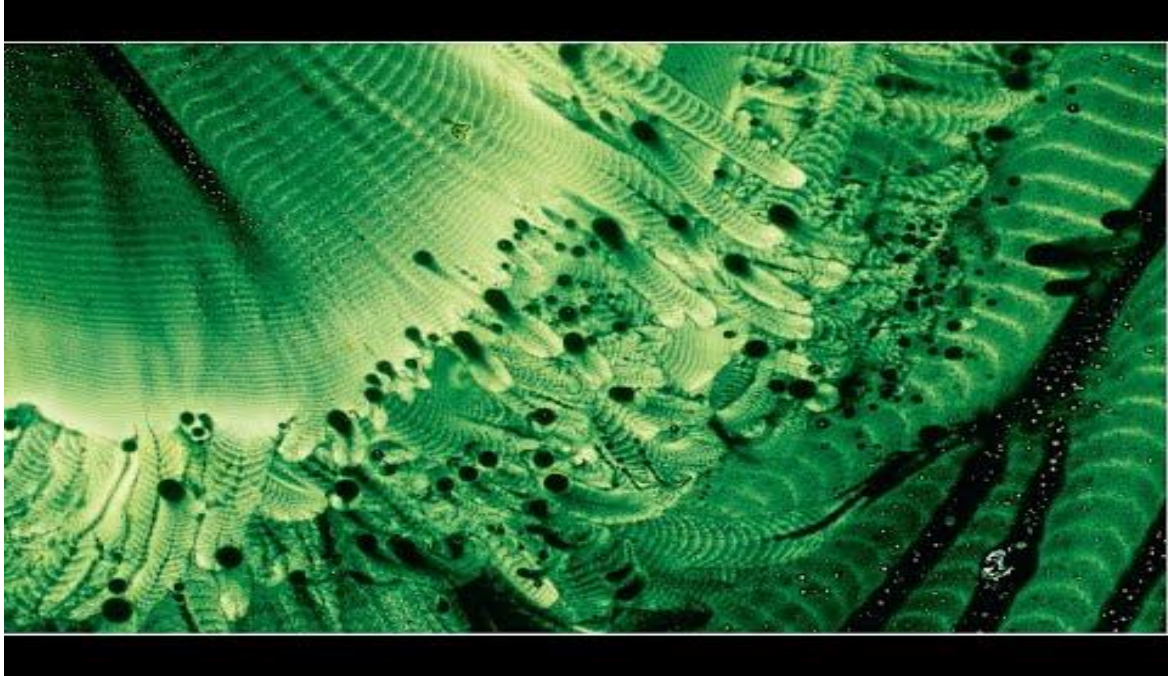
5) Sight

I would like to have this section of the exhibition hung exactly how it was hung in the Glin Vivian when I saw it in 2024. The papers were hung from wire string and sandwiched between two pieces of glass. I drew this illustration of how the exhibition was laid out.



The lighting was very dim and mainly focused toward the face of the drawings, this gave the whole installation a very professional tone and made the viewers focus shift towards the art. The art being suspended in the air gives the feeling of the art being a part of the space rather than being hung on the walls as per tradition. This artwork also being made from sound makes it feel as if the artwork is the sound around the space. I will enhance this effect by projecting videos of the art works onto the walls

spinning. This will make this room more visually stimulating and appear as if the sounds are in the room. laura.gill (2024)



DEAD GPK (2021)



Trilnick, C. (2015)

Tim Ingold- the textility of making

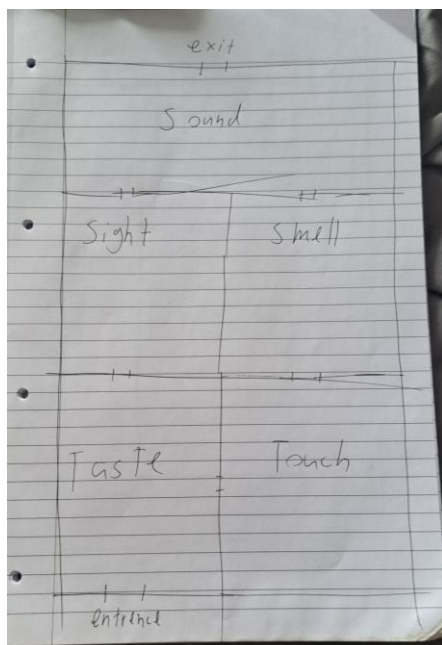
Tim Ingold explores the idea that making in any sense is a process that is deeply entwined with the notion of “text.” Ingold believes that making is a form of knowledge, where the makers materials and space makes the “text” that reflects a more personal reflection of the world. He also emphasises the process rather than the end product as value lies in the act of making itself rather than the final product.

“It is by intervening in these force-fields and following the lines of flow that practitioners make things. In this view, making is a practice of weaving, in which practitioners bind their own pathways or lines of becoming into texture of material flows comprising the lifeworld.”

Polanyi- book the tacit dimension

“The Tacit dimension” by Michael Polanyi dives deep into explaining tacit knowledge. This is the type of knowledge that is difficult to articulate but necessary for human understanding and action. He explains that most of what we know is not easily understood, rather it is done through experience, practice and skills. Tactic knowledge can be passed down through communities and cultures and is a crucial part of human cognition and learning. He emphasises the importance of tactic knowledge in fields such as science, art, and everyday life.

“We know more than we can tell” - Polanyi the tactic dimension (1966) this phrase captures the core of his argument that knowledge is not always fully expressible.



Conclusion

This exhibition will leave the guests with all 5 senses of the human body interacted with. Each of the guests will leave with a pamphlet explaining the 5 senses, what they do and a more in-depth explanation on how the art pieces correlated.

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