

Assignment title: Looking into the Light

Module: Learning in the Digital Era

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Introduction:

This essay will look at two exhibitions such as the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA) and the National Museum of Cardiff. From looking at both of these exhibitions the process of which lighting is used will be evaluated and whether the lighting is successful at showing off the piece of work displayed. For the Museum of Modern Art, the chosen artwork to evaluate the position of lighting of is the Starry Night by Vincent Van Gogh which was created in 1889. Furthermore, for the National Museum Cardiff the chosen artwork is the Entrance to Cardiff Docks, evening by Lionel Walden which was presented by the artist in 1917. The specific lighting used in this museum is assessed to see whether it is effective at presenting the artwork on display and which type of lighting is used to display the chosen exhibit. Also, this essay will provide an insight of how I would hypothetically display, position and which type of lights I would use to present two pieces of artwork which I have put on display if I had to show them to viewers. Lighting is a critical component in museums which illustrate art for viewers to see because it needs to highlight and accentuate the colour, texture and the shape of exhibits. With the correct lighting it can make the image appear to jump off the canvas and can allow the scene a three-dimensional feel. Lighting plays a vital role in guiding visitors to museums such as the MoMA and the National Museum Cardiff because the way the lighting is positioned and what type of lighting is used can be used to draw the eye of viewers to the stunning artwork presented and will make their experience much more worthwhile (Sylvania, 2015). Lighting in these museums must highlight and accentuate the colour, texture and shape of exhibits whether if they are modern art, 2D paintings or 3D sculptures (Sylvania, 2015).

Museum Of Modern Art:

From looking at the Starry night piece of artwork by Vincent Van Gogh it was very noticeable that the display lights were positioned in a way which allowed the painting to be very eye catching, just from the lack of shadows surrounding the canvas and a perfect small rectangular shadow was the only visible shadow underneath the oil canvas painting. The lack of shadows from the positioning of the lighting on the canvas had allowed the painting to be very visible for the viewers from every perspective. Also, the brightness of the lighting used

to display the work had allowed the colours of the painting to stand out and to see the type of texture, shape and made the piece of artwork to seem like its moving which allows viewers to see the true amazing aspects of how talented Vincent Van Gogh was. The lighting also allowed the viewer to see the movement of the thick brushed stroked swirls and the media that was used by Van Gogh, which are seen throughout the painting. Furthermore, the lighting in MoMA for the Starry Night allowed the composition of the lights to not show any signs of reflection onto the piece of artwork which made the painting clearer to the eye. There was no direct sunlight to affect the texture, hue and didn't reduce the life expectancy of this particular piece of artwork in the MoMA. The correct lighting is an essential feature in this art gallery because it can enhance the art viewing experience and can also bring the artwork displayed like the Starry Night to life. Without sufficient and correct positioning of proper lighting art pieces can appear dull, distorted or muted (Lighting, 2022). The Starry Night by Van Gogh had to be very well lit because of how dark it is in some places and this allows the viewers eyes to perceive the artwork more effectively. The Museum of Modern Art use LED lights, these specific lights are the best option for art lighting because of their superior rendering capabilities. LEDs can deliver significant energy savings when compared to traditional light sources and can enhance the visitor's visual experience.



National Museum Cardiff

From looking at the Entrance to Cardiff Docks, evening piece of artwork by Lionel Walden, which is displayed in the National Museum Cardiff it's clear that the way the lights were situated were in such a way which allowed the entire oil painting to be seen by viewers very clearly, and had allowed every detail, stroke, texture and colour to be absorbed by viewers to

really take in the piece of artwork created by Lionel Walden. Also, the type of lights which the National Museum Cardiff use are smart LED light fittings which allows visitors to see paintings such as the Entrance to Cardiff Docks, evening more effectively and these types of lights provide superior colour rendering index (CRI) compared to traditional light sources. From the use of LED lights, it made the oil painting canvas look bright coloured, translucent and is easy on the eye. This museum has zero UV light transmission and has a vital a74 roof glazing system meaning that the artifacts will always be protected from the UV light deterioration. The lights are positioned in a row between the painting and the other side of the wall, on the ceiling and not pointing directly at the piece of artwork. The LED light used has less energy than any other lights and uses more than seventy five percent less energy than the incandescent lighting for an example. From the effective positioning and selection of sufficient lighting, the artwork by Lionel Walden can be seen by viewers more visually and can truly allow them to witness his great artwork. LEDs with a CRI of >90 are the best for art museums and galleries to enable powerful, vibrant reds (Airius, 2022). The higher the numerical value of CRI will enable the light fixture or bulbs colour rendition to be more effective (Airius, 2022). For example, if a CRI of 80 is considered generally good. However, the CRI of 90 is considered much more effective and successful at presenting artwork (Airius, 2022).



Hypothetical exhibition

When it comes to displaying two pieces of my own artwork such as two paintings, the lighting which I would typically use to present my artwork with would be LED lights, this would be the most effective option to lit up my artwork for viewers to see clearly. From using lighting such as LED lights they can release less heat and fewer infrared rays which traditional bulbs produce. This can help to protect the longevity of my artwork. Also, LED lights are a great option because they can provide consistent bright light which can allow my oil painting to seem very clear to the eye for viewers and they can last a long time compared to other bulbs (Koehler, 2021). For the placement and angle of the LED lights I will position them in a way which would reduce the shadows and glare caused by recessed or track lights. The positioning will be at a 30-degree angle to the artwork, this will ensure that the beam strikes the very centre of the painting (Walker, 2022). This will allow the painting to be very eye catching for the viewers of the painting and every detail, brush stroke and texture can be seen more effectively by the way the light is positioned. Also, I would make sure to place the artwork away from any windows and direct sunlight because the colours and details of the artwork can therefore fade and can cause the painting to discolour. Sunlight is very damaging to paintings due to the ultraviolet rays when exposed to a piece of artwork. Some paintings can start chalking when exposed to UV light for long periods of time and can be harmful to many materials, including paint pigments and canvas. From the usage of LED lights in art museums it allows the true and proper colours of photos, paints, artifacts and more to be seen more effectively. In addition, it illuminates the small and hard to read texts which are alongside the pieces of art in the museum and galleries this is why LED lights are so effective when it comes to using them for art purposes. This is why I would use these types of lights because they are much more successful at presenting artwork and can last longer than most other light bulbs which saves money. When presenting my art pieces, I would make sure that the LED light is not too close to the artwork because it could cause it to fade over time and ruin the piece of art I have produced. Light-emitting diode (LED) bulbs are becoming much more popular in art museums which light up their paintings because they will not cause the pieces of artwork to erode which is very beneficial. The type of lighting used to display my artwork is crucial this is why I have decided to use LED lights to allow all viewers to fully experience my artwork in great lighting so they can see every aspect, detail and media used.

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