

Ways of Perceiving, Curation Essay

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This exhibition presents recent artworks that address the social and political issues that have currently surfaced. For the next generation of artists, these works heavily influence creative exploration. Recognising the importance of the historical canon,

“‘canonisation’ expresses a process in which specific aspects of culture are established as crucial’ and address the issues of society focusing on the few not the many.” (*Langfeld, G. 2018, P.1*)

The artworks selected establish the idea of reconstructing a new society. Moving from Postmodernism to Metamodernism. Both are crucial,

“a sense of renewed hope of renewed urgency to do something, to create, to go forward and yet very much still people were tied to the postmodern distros” *What is Metamodernism?* (Robin, P. and Akker, D. 2014)

Historically political art flares when devastation occurs. The painting, *The Raft of the Medusa* by Théodore Géricault, depicts the wreck of 1816. A group of 150 were stuck on a lifeboat for 13 days



Figure 1: Géricault, Théodore. 'The Raft of the Medusa'. 1818-1819

which “descended into murder and cannibalism” (Zelazko, A. 2020). The painting unsettled the French government as it highlighted that the lower ranks were left to die. Depicting the truth and exposing violation from powerful individuals.

Street art provides a visual perspective, accessible to all people. In this new changing world, where history is being looked at with fresh eyes, politics has never been an aspect of life that heavily influences every individual. It is becoming a weapon against injustice to be self-educated. The artistic collective moves towards a future learning from horrors of injustice and replacing these foundations with fair values. This action describes the combination of postmodernism and metamodernism. In the exhibition there is a [documentation video](#) of the slave trader’s statue (Edward Colston) being pushed into a harbour in Bristol. Accompanied by the statue of Jen Reid, created by Mark Quinn. The



Figure 2: Mills, Jen. Edward Colston statue will be fished out of harbour and moved into a museum. 2020

video represents postmodernism tearing down the outdated toxic routes of our country. The statue represents metamodernism, what we put in its place.

Despite the powerful position artists hold when evoking political and social change, like many areas of society there is prejudice “*work made by women accounts for...around 2 percent.*” (Halperin, J. and Burns, C. 2019). Recent events such as BLM protests have surfaced similar issues “just 2,000 artworks in the UK’s permanent art collections are by Black artists” (Larbi, M. 2020) the National gallery alone has more than the number of black artworks over the UK.

This exhibition presents powerful political artworks that imply the canon affect, postmodernism and metamodernism ideals. To ensure accessibility, every artwork will be shown outside in site-specific locations, simultaneously. This will allow the exhibition to be non-selective in terms of race, class, and status.

Returning the statue of Jen Reid to the plinth of Edward Colston in Bristol will relinquish a feeling of power to the black community, insulting the white privileged legacy that Colston exploited. Mark

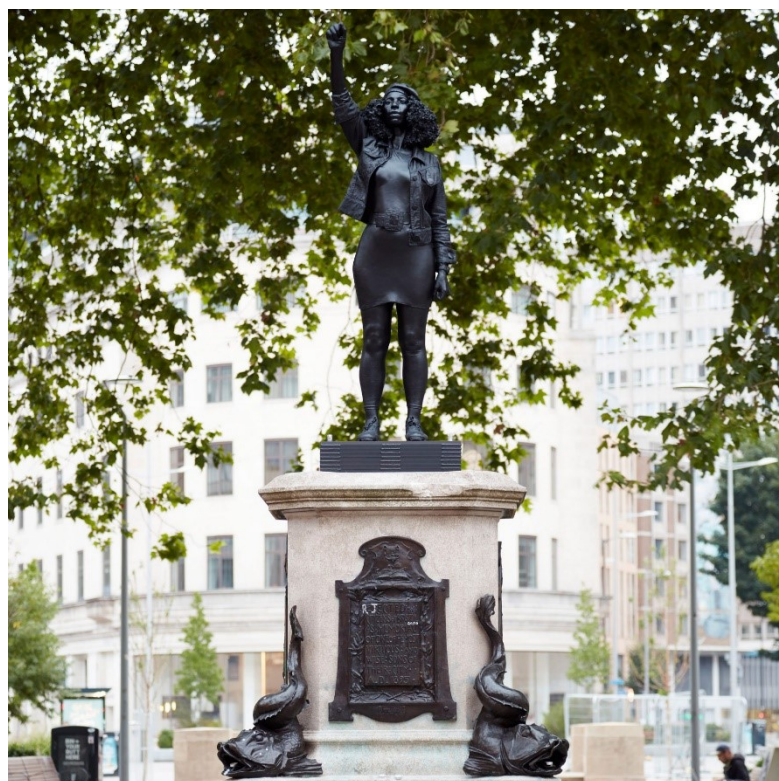


Figure 3: Quinn, Mark. A Surge of Power. Black Resin and Steel. 2020

Quinn and his team placed the statue on the plinth “shortly before 04:30 on Wednesday” (*BBC News, 2020*) merely hours after the Edward Colston statue were thrown in the harbour, amid a BLM protest. Many questioned Quinn’s replacement of the statue, due to his white privilege. Whereas others praised Quinn’s message “If we have allies, it doesn’t matter what colour they are” (*Reid, J. 2020*) it seems shameful of Bristol council to take the statue down due to Quinn’s whiteness, when blatantly ignoring Jen Reids wishes as a black woman. Stripping Reid of power and voice

“Black women’s exclusion from positions of power within mainstream institutions has led to the elevation of elite White male ideas” (*Collins, P.H. 2000, P.5*) further supressing her minority.

Quinn had the resources to make the statue and display it while BLM was being spoken about “If I’m in a position to put something like this up quickly, while the conversation is happening, there’s a duty to do it.” (*Quinn, M. 2020*).

[A recording of the statue being pushed into the harbour](#) will be played on repeat, directly projected onto the words ‘Edward Colston’. There will be pieces of metal covered in black sheets creating a cube shelter around the plinth, allowing people to see the clip in daylight. This cube format enclosing the video will represent the confinement of black and ethnic minorities. Entrapping the words ‘Edward Colston’ will remind the audience that the movement is threatening injustice. Edward Colston’s name is being disrespected by his statue’s death.

The artwork ‘stop telling women to smile’ addresses the perverse harassment that Women face on the streets, by Tatyana Fazlalizadeh. This work has been exhibited in many different countries which conveys how common this form of harassment is,

“In the focus on sexual harassment, sexual politics has become obsessed with what may in fact be a dangerous symptom of increasing male rage” (*Friedan, B. 1991, P.9*)

expressing the violence of harassment. The work will be displayed in Mexico, which was exhibited in 2014.

Portrait drawings of women that Fazlalizadeh interviewed and photographed with captions/words that the victims wanted to say to their harassers. An admiring way to give women a voice, express their trauma and regain power over their bodies. The artwork communicates deadly foundations within society “The role of the postmodern thinker or artist must be to explore and question this contemporary situation.” (*Malpas, S. 2005, P.3*). The artists supportive undertone highlights a path



Figure 4: Fazlalizadeh, Tatyana. Stop Telling Women to Smile. Paper and wheat paste. 2014

to recovery for these women “what do women who live in Mexico city go through?” (*Fazlalizadeh, T. 2015*) implying an atmosphere of metamodernism.

The wheat pasted images will be spread in locations where the women are often harassed. There will be 10 locations in Mexico City. At least 5 images per space to represent the scale of street harassment. To further the metamodernism ideal, the artist will paste the works high up on buildings. Physically lifting victims faces and stories to convey their worth.

My next artwork is called ‘water rhythms: listening to climate change’ collaborated by Susie Ibarra, Michele Koppes in 2020. Two speakers playing recordings of melting glaciers in: Indian Himalayas, Pacific Northwest coast mountains and greenland ice sheet. Expressing the direct effect that fossil fuels have had on the planet “2013, global carbon dioxide emissions were 61 percent higher than they were in 1990” (*Klein, N. 2014, P.11*). This piece forced the public to listen to the despairing environmental crisis caused by climate change,

“bystander effect... the more people we assume know about a problem, the more likely we are to ignore” (*Marshall, G. 2014, P.37*)

Explaining why large groups in society ignore climate change.

I will curate this including the two locations that the artists originally chose; Jack Poole Plaza, Canada and Tyrrel Glacial Lake at Innisfree Garden, New York. The contrast between urban and natural



Figure 5: Ibarra, Susie. Koppes, Michele. Water Rhythms: Listening to Climate Change. Electronic Speakers. 2020

surroundings ensure the message reaches all types of people. The speaker in Innisfree Garden will be moved slightly to the right. The sun will set directly behind the tall speaker to portray the idea that everyone focuses on the sun. An attempt to shift focus to our closest natural source, the Earth.

Luzene Hill's performance artwork 'Retracing the trace' was performed in 2015 at the Eiteljorg museum, Washington. The work will be presented where the artist was raped "Hill went on a jog through Piedmont Park in Atlanta" (Chen, W.H. 2021) raising awareness of the danger women face travelling especially when it is "still dark" (Chen, W.H. 2021) and the instilled fear we must cope with.

First, the artist lies down and directs to be covered in red pieces of string "start off light...toward the body, you get it a little bit heavier" Luzene Hill- "Retracing the Trace" (Hill, L. 2017) symbolising



Figure 6: Hill, Luzene. Retracing the Trace. Three diameters of satin cord. 2015

blood, dirt, and brutality. The string left a body shape, implying the memory of trauma. Hill picks up the string and sticks it to the walls surrounding “visually represents the number of rapes that go unreported in the United States in every 24 hours: 3,780” (*Weisman art museum. 2017*) the string gets stuck to the wall between the numbers of a 24-hour clock. The process is sentimental, Hill evokes her experiences and pays respect to other victims, in a delicate, dynamic installation.

When Curating this piece, there will be a constructed wall for Hill to place string onto. The string conveys the materiality of rape. Two large panels will be installed, made from MDF and supported by wood. These two walls will touch at an angle and be painted white. Hill will lie on a diagonal in front of the walls, directly onto the mud furthering the grotesque filthy process. The string placed onto the walls will be covered in mud, leaving stains.

My next artwork is by a Chinese artist called Ai Weiwei. The installation is called ‘F Lotus’ presented in the Belvedere museum, Austria, 2016. The work is made from refugee’s life jackets, placed side by



Figure 7: Weiwei, Ai. F Lotus. 1005 used life vests. 2016

side on floating rings made to look like a lotus flower blooming. The donut shapes are placed on the pond in the shape of an 'F' in old English font. The font is a symbolism of old traditional racist values and the devastation it occurs.

When exhibiting this work, I will still use the real-life Syrian refugee's life jackets conveying hard inescapable reality. Addressing the theme migration, I will ask the artist to move the F to the bottom side of the pond. This change will express a sense of unsettlement that victims of war face "forced out from our home" *Ai Weiwei Interview: Our Judgement is Crippled* (Weiwei, Ai. 2019) which the artist can empathise with.

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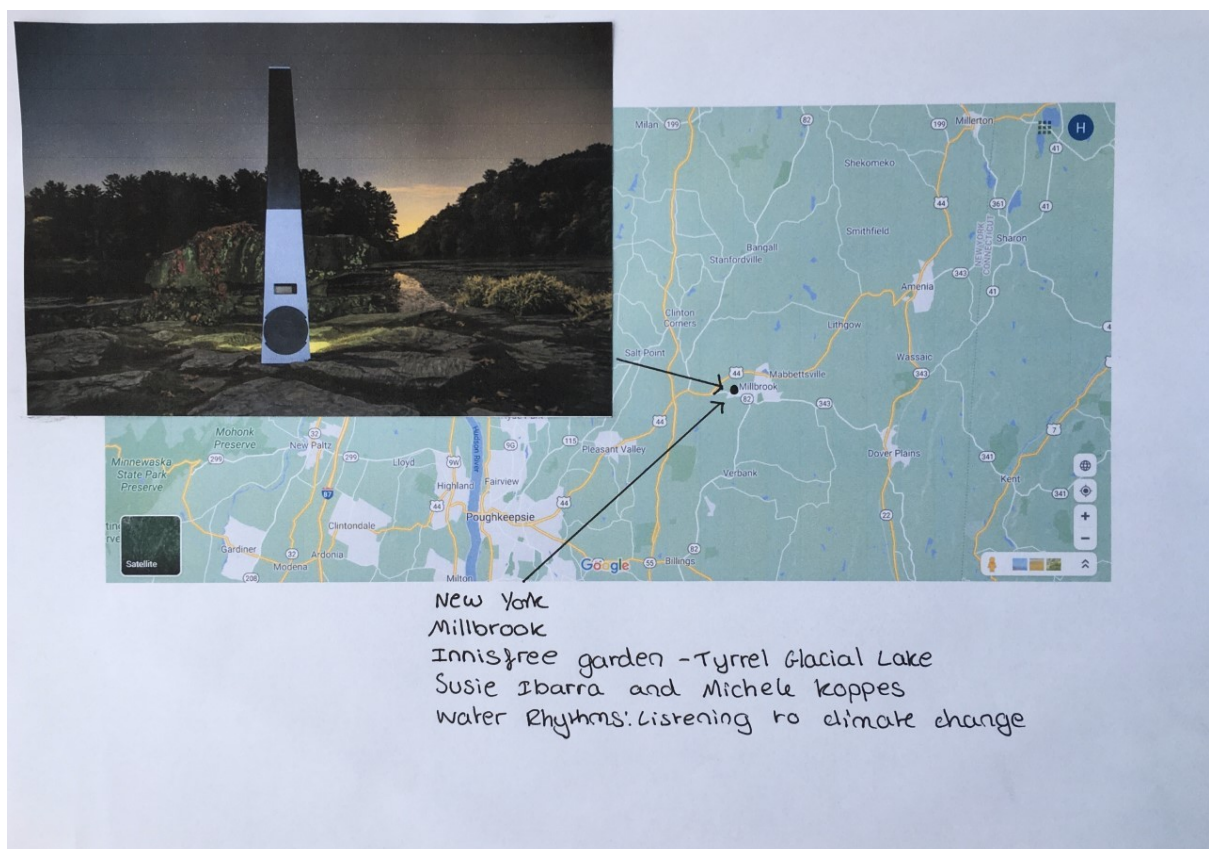
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Canada
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