
Ways of Perceiving, Curation Essay

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The exhibition I intend to curate will be entitled 'Dichotomy', which features artwork from four different artists which work together to support the concept of this curatorial exploration. The exhibition will focus on Edward Titchener's theory of Structuralism (1909-10) alongside the study of Horticultural Therapy (Smith 2020) with the intent to hold the exhibition on one of New York's floating gardens. Exploring the themes of nature and its interconnection with the human mind and the boat is a prevalent space in creating a tension between the concept and artworks presented.

Structuralism is a way to analyze the mind, to find how it fits together and forms experiences in correlation with physical events. We do this by looking at emotions and feelings, and ultimately looking into elements of consciousness. The connection between man and nature are intimately interconnected with the style of life, evidenced within nature. Studies have shown patients with mental health issues get substantial benefits from horticultural pursuits. A great deal of research has been taken into the benefits of working in the natural environment particularly for those suffering with PTSD, affecting each part of the brain. (Mattson, 1992. P163), Nature and man are interlinked, both have structuralism in them and both impact on the elements of consciousness.

By creating an 8meter x 6meter free standing grey room with a ceiling which you enter at the start of the exhibition. The audience are walking into a mind of someone who lives with PTSD. From there the audience will experience the full impact of what horticultural therapy can do to ease and calm a mind. The walls will be painted grey to psychologically force the brain into a natural sense of gloominess, in correlation to the brightness outside, taking the idea of this room from Hans Ulrich Obrist, who summarized, "*other visual cues in the space were reduced to a minimum, resulting in a clean, spare gallery space that we know today as the white cube*"(Orbist,2014, p.29).

The Spector's who come to this exhibition, will come away from it more aware and calmer. I propose that instead of using this just as an exhibition it will also be an experience, using curation to ease the mind even if it is for the time they are spectating.



Fig. one

In the middle of the room is placed, 'Unmade Bed' by Tracy Emin's (Figure. One). This piece represents the messiness of a person's mind in a literal way. The unmade bed and the rubbish around it, is a boundary of two spaces. The intent around using this piece of art is to make the Spector aware and think about the impacts a messy room can have on the mind but ultimately the other way around too. *"An unattended mind can create havoc for you because your mind is amazingly receptive to whatever suggestions may be dropped into it"* (Jones, 2004). This will be the largest piece in the white room with the sizing of 5meter x 4meter and 2meter tall. The sizing of this piece will not only be the first thing the Spector sees when entering the space but also it will give the Spector's a stadium which hopefully will lead to them creating their own punctum,



Fig. two



Fig. three

As a photographer I wanted to show pieces of artwork from my discipline, these are two pieces of work by a photographer called Kaven the kid (figure two) and (figure four). These will be placed in the room on your immediate left and immediate right. Cardoza produces these pieces of work to explain *“both metaphorical and literal images that depict my past experiences, emotions and perspectives.”*(Cardoza 2019) This links well to my theme of structuralism and how the brain may work and affects us, especially when looking at someone with PTSD. These two pieces of work create a contrast from the subtle colours of the empty grey walls but also from the work by Tracy Emins.

Both images will be printed out at a large size, fitting to the dimensions suited for the walls of the grey cube, printed at 5m high and 3m length wise. These images have been placed across from each other to make the Spector’s eye travel around the room, making it feel like they are not the only ones with these intense large-scale photos of bodies surrounding them.

On the immediate left of the wall will be Figure two, it is a dark image and complies with the thoughts of distress and that dark place in your mind, where you feel like you can’t get away from those voices which leaves the Spector to feel suspended in that feeling of anxious anticipation and contemplation when experiencing the impact of this state. Figure three will be on your immediate right, it is a very similar photograph to figure two with the cluster of people and the sense of the whole look of the image, but at the same time such a different photo, It is showing that PTSD can be vivid, like the yellow in the photo and it can really effect those darker thoughts and make them louder. With the contrast between both photos, it shows both sides of PTSD; the dark and scary parts and the vividness of that.



Fig. Four.

Mary Mattingly's floating garden (Figure Four) is the exhibition space, but it is also a piece of artwork within itself, *"viewing nature scenes dominated by vegetation... produce increases in positive feelings: reducing negatively toned or stress related feelings such as fear, anger, or sadness."* (Ulrich & Parsons 1992. p.102). This piece of artwork was originally made when hurricane Sandy hit New York, it was used to let people gather food that they couldn't find in the city for free as in New York it is illegal to grow and forage food in public parks, such as tomatoes, thyme and strawberries. This is an important factor to think about when this was chosen for the exhibition because it provided natural food and wellbeing to an urban area and the destroyer became the healer much like our minds and the act of nature.

The barge will sit at the original size at 130-by-40 feet, the size, and the freedom to roam around it plays a massive part in the experience of the exhibition. Nature *"whether experienced in the wilderness or as "nearby nature" viewed passively through a window, reduces stress and increases an overall sense of well-being"* (Lorbaz, 2011, p20). The Spectator becomes less aware of what goes on in their heads and the effects it has on their daily lives. A simple action of going in the garden, gives you a sense of what you have to do for yourself and lets you, *"tend to your mental garden with a bit more regularity"* (Jones 2004).



Fig. five



Fig. Six

Displayed on the outside of the box, 'fix' (Figure five) and 'stay' (Figure six) are abstract pieces of sculpture by Antony Gormley who creates work that "communicates what it is like to be alive" (Gormley. 1995), Linking into my theme of structuralism as his sculpted bodies are vessels, which both contain and occupy space (Gormly,1995). He confronts important questions of where we as humans stand in relation to nature. These two sculptures were picked carefully to show that we are weathered by the outside world, the unevenness and the rusty material instantly makes you think about the impact of the environment that they have been placed in.

Firstly, On the right side of the boat just after the grey room will be 'Fix' (Figure five), it is a symbol for the silent observers of the outside world and the dichotomy of humans with nature. Humanity do a lot of observing to help ourselves, to create that sense of feelings and a more aware consciousness, whilst also observing the nature. At the end of the boat looking out over onto the horizon will be 'stay' (figure six). This piece was picked to show how open and free we can feel when we are able to embrace the outside world and the nature with open arms. It creates a different experience for the conscious mind to react to, in a positive way instead of how the mind would automatically respond with PTSD, giving them a new experience and a sense of worth and freedom.

Gormley's sculptures balance and anchor each other as a collective, towering at 8 foot 7 inches, above eye level, it will let the Spector look up and embrace the same feeling while looking round the plants and the surroundings on the boat. The importance of having them outside the grey cube is to symbolically show how nature views humanity out of the confines of our hubris.

Fig 1	
Fig 2	
Fig 3	
Fig 4	
Fig 5	
Fig 6	

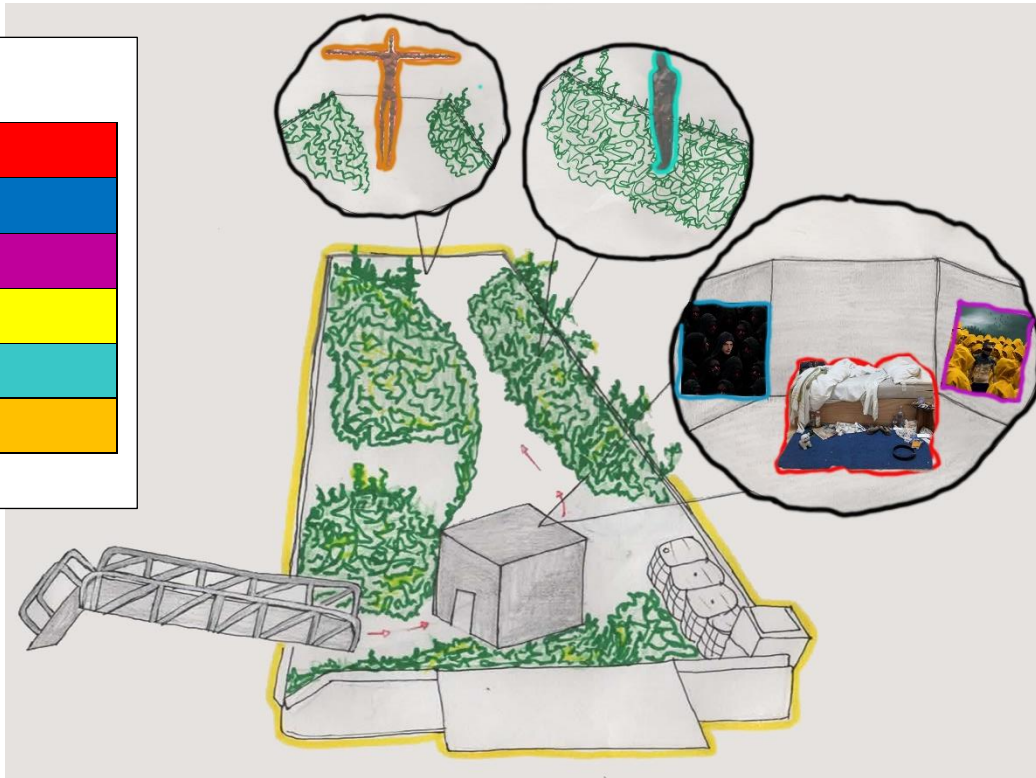


Fig. seven

As shown in figure seven, the exhibition space has been curated in a way that it is open and calming. With using both the nature and the white cube method to show the work, the space falls straight into the hands of my themes of how horticultural therapy helps people with mental health issues but also with the theory of structuralism; its importance of being on such a hard and tough structural platform re-enforces how human life is taking over natural habitats and that this has a huge effect on us as humans and being surrounded constantly by big and dark buildings takes that natural sense of wellbeing away from us. So positioning this in the water surrounded by the bustling city of London, it gives the Spector's a break from that busy life style and lets the parts of their brains relax and forms new experiences and adds to the elements of their consciousness.

Bibliography

Figure One: Emins, T. (1998) *My Bed* (box frame, mattress, linens, pillows, and various objects) Tate Gallery: London

Figure 2: Cardoza, K. (2019) *Untitled* (photographical digital print)

Figure 3: Cardoza, K. (2019) *Untitled* (Photographical digital print)

Figure 4: Mattingly, M. (2013) *Movable feast: Mary Mattingly's floating garden* (wood, metal, tan rubber) Hunts Point: Bronx

Figure 5: Gormley, A. (2014) *Stay* (Cast iron) Land: UK

Figure 6: Gormley, A. (2017) *Fix* (Cast iron) Galarie Thaddaeus Ropac: Austria

Figure 7: Hibbertgreaves. E (2020) *Exhibition Map* (Digital Generated Image)

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