

Student Name: LUCY DE-LA-HAYE

P Number: 1902404

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Ways of Thinking Lecturer's Name: Martin Bush

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Through the methodology of scenographic and contemporary curation, I intend to display 5 mediums of art that have been created by 5 independent and contextually unrelated artists, but nonetheless, collectively contribute to the most relevant era of today; the Digital Era. The exhibition, named 'Submerge', will support my concept that the merging of art and technology *should* be embraced amongst the other eras of art- therefore it must be accepted that it too, has its own aesthetic value, emotive quality, conceptuality and ideology of beauty. As suggested by Iasmina Petrovici in their paper '*The Concept of Beauty in Digital Art*', despite being an innovative mode of art, digital art can still be considered beautiful and is "present in new and unlimited expression forms, valences and possibilities" as it demonstrates the same criteria which gives art its aestheticism through harmony, proportion and symmetry (2014, p.212).

In a world which has rapidly become predominated by technology, the paradigm of beauty has remained stagnant and has not revolutionised as steadily. The acceptance and understanding of digital art have been a controversial topic within cultural theorists for several decades, as many are opposed to the idea of the unification of technology and artisanship. Theorist Jean Baudrillard argued that contemporary visual cultures were just a creation of previously produced work, therefore being a 'hyperreality'; a repetition of reality where the originality has become lost or forgotten. 'It is the generation by models of a real without origin or reality: a hyperreality' (1983, p.2). But I believe if we can consider technology to be, fundamentally, a *tool* that exemplifies an artist's emotion, concept and aesthetic, then digital art should be appreciated as much as paintbrush or pencil. Because they too, are used to represent the reality the artist is portraying- *All* art is a simulation of what the artist perceives, so why has contemporary art been so heavily criticised? The effort and consideration of a digital artist is still as ostensible, and an example is found in *White Heat Cold Logic: British Computer Art*, as Malcolm Le Grice accounts how it took him 9 months to create 8 seconds of computer-generated film (Bedworth, 2009, p.33).



Fig 1

The exhibition would be found on the Great lawn, Central park, New York, and will be 40.5m x 10.1m in size. I intend to place it within an unconventional exhibitionary environment to instigate the juxtaposition of technology within another form of beauty; nature. This will encourage the audience to recognise that “there is beauty in the ubiquitous contrast and coexistence between nature and technology” Brustowicz (2017). This contentious placement will also beg the question: is one form of beauty lesser than the other because it is digital?

As Curator Kathleen Mcleen states in her essay ‘*Do Museum Exhibitions Have a Future?*’:

museum exhibitions might be an obsolete medium on the dying limb of an evolutionary tree, and unless they significantly adapt to their rapidly changing environments in the coming years, they could be headed towards extinction. (2007:117)

This era has allowed the expansion of the traditional exhibitionary format and has outgrown its consolation in museums. The choice of location can help to emphasise and support the concept behind the exhibition, much like the surroundings of the ‘Submerge’ display. The contrast of nature against technology contradicts the out-dated idea that beauty comes in one criterion.



Fig 2

The first piece of work I intend to unveil would be a digital installation piece via anamorphic illusion, produced by Korean-headquartered creative agency, d'strict. Named WAVE, it would be found on outskirts of the second story, accurately presented in figure 2- thus the name of the exhibition being 'Submerge'. Jun Lee, business development director at d'strict, said:

We want to create overwhelming experiences. Waves are beautiful and dynamic in themselves, but we chose them as our subject because they evoke feelings of comfort – which is much needed now. (2020)

Understandably, this piece epitomises Baudrillard's argument of "second-hand truth" which therefore "reality becomes lost and loses its referential value" (1998), but I think the emotional influence intertextuality and anti-authoritarianism can have should be foremostly appreciated. Susan Sontag writes that "it is in art that beauty as an idea, an eternal idea, is best embodied" (2002, p.21-26). The idea behind this piece of digital art is to invoke an emotion- an emotion to uplift passing pedestrians within our current climate; an aesthetic value infused by environmental elements (Petrovici, 2014, p.214).

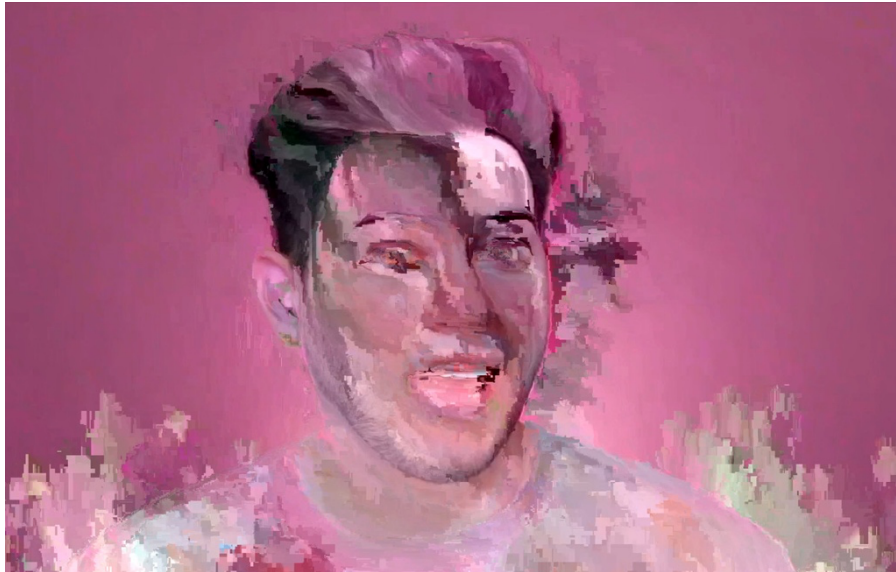


Fig 3



Fig 4

When entering the building through the doors underneath the digital instalment, the audience would be greeted by two pieces of art, displayed on the wall. The First [figure 3], is a form of Glitch Art, named Datamoshing. Created by David Kraftsow, this process is the manipulation of frame formation in videos by removing media files - resulting in frames that should change, to be frozen for a small fraction of time, before freezing onto the new frame (Aldredge, 2017). Utilizing Datamoshing techniques enables us to engage some of the normally unnoticed artifacts of media communication in modern society (Ito et al. N.D, p. 165) Unintentionally, Datamoshing became a method of showing error within video, but instead of it being considered a mistake, a beautiful style was produced through it.

The second [figure 4] is created by multidisciplinary artist, Andreea Robescu. Her work is a bricolage of photography and acrylic paint, used to construct different styles of typography, which are then edited later on Photoshop; thus, being named mixed media. It was created to “break the boundaries of how the body and facial features are illustrated through photography in the fashion industry” whilst she “expressed and embraced the human sexuality in a playful and empowering way” (Lustnation, N.D.)

These pieces furtherly support my view of digital art ‘becoming its *own* ideology of beauty’, which includes characteristics of versification, interactivity and virtuality. This view is supported by Daoxun Wang, when he states that within digital art “non-existent things can be created at random by humans’ intuition and imagination by means of blending and generating the techniques” (2014). He continues to explain that they have “characteristics of homogeneity” that delivers information through images, sounds etc. which “break the characteristics of traditional aesthetic principles and form virtual aesthetic categories.” To appreciate the beauty in digital art, one must understand that it has become its own interpretation and differs from the traditional boundaries set.



Fig 5



Fig 6

The next two pieces of art will be placed opposite each other within the exhibition. Figure 5 shows the work of Prateek Vatash, a Graphic Designer, who states on his website that he's "primarily using a blend of 3D and 2D media, brings together forms and content taken from multiple interests in the fields of typography, architecture, interior design, and the occult" and "aims to express and inspire others through his artwork, and use that as a medium to explore new horizons" (Vatash, N.D).

Figure 6 is a digital Illustration by Sam Pratt, a technique he learnt through classic oil painting that transcended and infused into digital work, where he works with a Wacom and stylus. He comments in an interview that his concepts are not surface level; "I'm obsessed with the future and will likely spend my life hurdling towards it, always looking over my shoulder" (Moore, 2012)

When looking at the definition of beauty in art, it comes in many forms, for many theories. Formalism considers "exemplary arrangement of its elements" to be beautiful, Emotionalism conveys that it should "effectively evoke feeling or understanding in the subject viewing the art", whereas Functionalism believes "art should serve a purpose" (Lumen, N.D). As expressed at the start of this

essay, I believe that Digital art repetitively shows signs of beauty that deeply consists of aspects from each of these theories, created by incorporating all previous definitions and producing its own, innovative definition of beauty (Garousi, 2012). Looking at figure 4 & 5, both pieces hold deep connections to arrangement of elements, expressed through bold colouring, shape and symmetry whilst still being driven by concept. “An excellent digital work is a multi-element fusion, the best way for the author to release emotions” (Zhenyu, 2019). However, I believe it’s important to accept in this Postmodern Era of art, that art can be made from anything, and can have instant meaning but also that the idea matters more than the art itself.

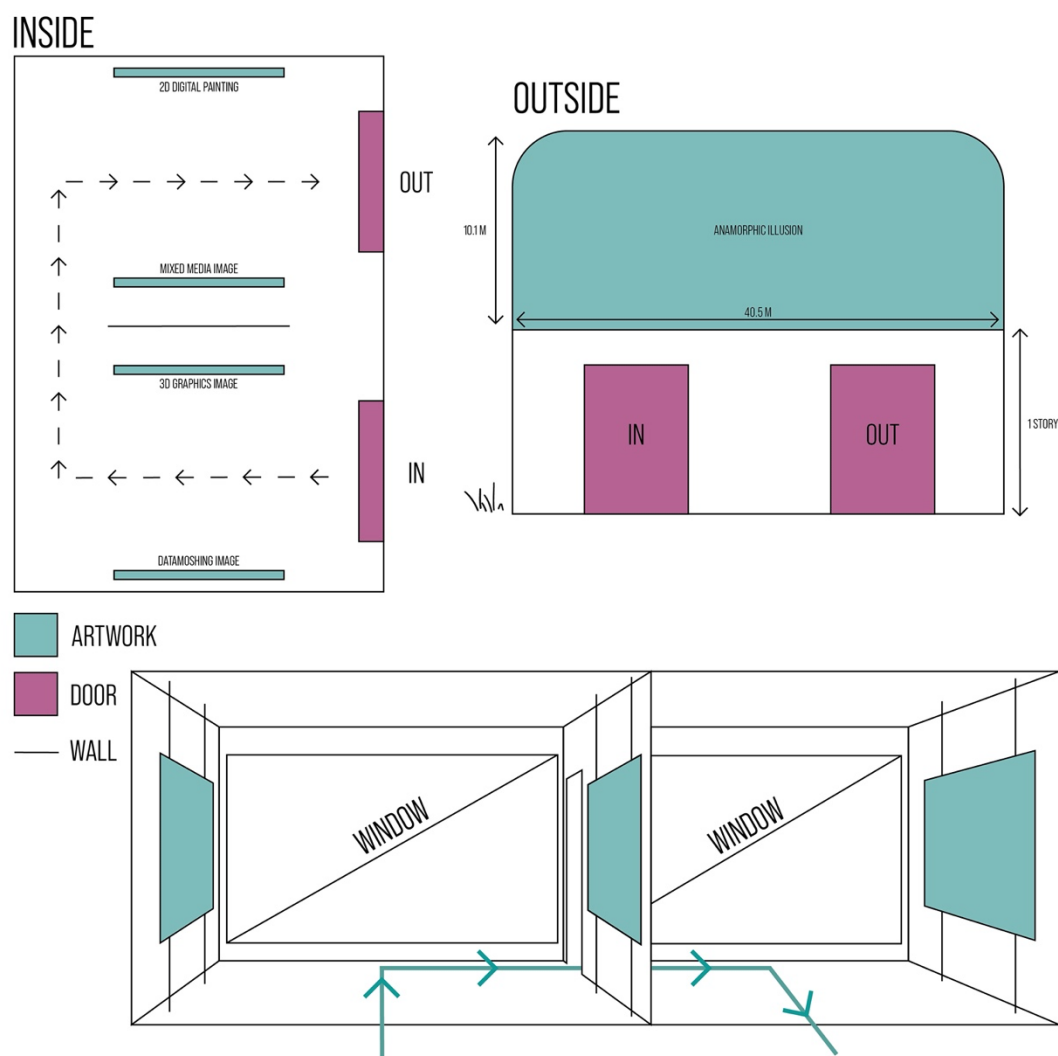


Fig 7

As depicted in figure 6, the exhibition will be quite large and spacious, with walls painted white, to direct the viewers to the two main points, without any decorative distraction; the artwork, and the

large windows showing the view of Central Park. “The primary means for ‘explaining’ an artist’s work is to let it reveal itself... Space is the medium in which ideas are visually phrased” (Storr, 2006, p.23). Everything within the exhibition will be stark white, except for the art pieces, to enforce the idea that no outside stimuluses, such as theories and other artistic movements, should influence the way someone perceives artwork- In this building, there is only room for acceptance and appreciation for work in front of them. If they can admire it, and consider it a form of ‘beauty’, then that should be the only important statement to that individual. I believe art on a whole is circulated around how it can make the viewers *feel* and how it’s interpreted by that viewer, not what the cultural theorists and other audience members claim, ‘true art’. Against a white background, with bright white lights, the art will be the brightest and most beautiful parts of the room. A clear view into the park will allow the juxtaposition of ‘digital vs. nature’ to still be apparent and to keep the message, that ‘beauty comes in many forms’ visible.

Figures

Figure 1: De-la-Haye, L (2021) *Submerge Exhibition within Central Park* [Digital Generated Image]

Figure 2: d’sstrict, (2020) *WAVE* (Samsung 8K curved LED digital signage) Seoul, South Korea.

Figure 3: Kraftsow, D. (N.D), *Untitled* (Digital manipulation of You-Tube video).

Figure 4: Robescu, A. (N.D) *Painted Words* (hand-painted typography, illustration and photography)

Figure 5: Vatash, P. (2018) *Illustrations 2018 - Volume 1* (3D Graphics)

Figure 6: Pratt, S. (2020) *Ambassador* (2D Illustration created on a Wacom)

Figure 7: De-la-Haye, L (2021) *Exhibition Map* [Digital Generated Image]

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