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Exhibition title- Warped Reality

Introduction

I have decided to create an exhibition on the theme of warped reality. Warped reality is the concept of looking at the world beyond the surface, as you want to see it rather than as it looks. I see the exhibition as an escape from the reality of everyday life at the moment. Instead of the repetition of current life that is the coronavirus pandemic, currently feeling like this will be an endless cycle of restrictions from shops being shut, keeping our distance, wearing masks to a full lockdown, we can enter a world that is different from reality.

The exhibition consists of three photographers and a sculpturer, who work differently in the theme of warped reality. I have used the work of Jerry Uelsmann, Erik Johansson, Andric Ljubodrag and Antony Gormley to illustrate the themes of human exploitation of nature and climate change, and to look at perceptions of the world and how we can manipulate these images.

Context

The construct of warped reality, in my own words, would be seeing the world in a different way to which we see it in everyday life. For example, how buildings, objects and places look, what happens if this view is just all constructed from the way we have been brought up to see the world? Our perceptions of things in life change every day, from simply meeting someone new or being told something different about the world that was always there but you never knew about it, now you see things differently. Warped reality from a video game side of things is very different and the same thing because it shows a true representation of life. For example, someone dying in front of you starts to become easier to handle in real life by seeing it happen over and over in a game, to the point of warping the very reality you live in to being what people don't want where death, murder and robbery becomes desensitised (Rosenblum, 2016).

Isaac Lidsky (2016), who is blind, explains the concept of reality. His version of reality is different to our reality as he has to know what things look like from others, or to simply feel things. For example, in a toilet, he thought he was at the sink and then realised it was a urinal. If he had the ability to see he would actually feel like things are a lot different to what he thought it was (Lidsky, 2016).

Lidsky's interpretation of everything, because of his blindness, relies on his feelings, not what he can see. I want to take this idea and use my exhibition to open up people's minds, to evolve as a person and not to be stuck in one mindset. I want the images to make people think about the world in a different way.

John Bergers (1977), in his book *Ways of Seeing*, speaks about how in the Middle Ages fire made people think about hell. I felt that these ideas linked with the ideas in my exhibition. I think everyone sees things differently in the world because of their own experiences (Bergers, 1977). We now see fire as simply a source of heat and a sign that is sometimes danger, but in the past for people that was not the case. For example, in modern times we no longer see fire as hell because things such as fire have become more explainable. For me hell does not exist, so I would never think of fire in that way as people did during a more simple time.

The other influence for this exhibition is Plato's *The Allegory Of The Cave*. I feel that this story illustrates my theme well. What is seen inside the cave was just an illusion of what was actually happening outside the cave, and when someone got free of the chains that were holding them, he saw reality for himself. In the exhibition I want to explore the idea that one day we might realise that everything we see is just an illusion we are being shown (Jowett, 2017).

The artists I have chosen for my exhibition illustrate aspects of warped reality in different ways. The work by Jerry Uelsmann shows what the world would be like if nature was to take the planet back from humans and inevitably win against the human race. Erik Johansson's surreal work is just brilliant because of the emotions it stirs, with some being happy, sad and destructive so I knew he needed to be a part of the warped reality exhibition. I chose the work by Andric Ljubodrag because

his way of changing reality really caught my attention and is a lot different from the previous two artists. Finally, I chose two sculptures by Antony Gormley, who is 'best known for his work with human forms, which he created chiefly from casts of his own naked body' (Kathleen Kuiper, 2010).

Artists and Artworks

Jerry Uelsmann



Fig. 1 *Untitled*, 1982



Fig. 2 *Untitled*, 1969

Jerry Uelsmann, born 1934 in Detroit, Michigan, is one of my favourite photographers. The two pieces of work I have chosen illustrate well the title and theme of this exhibition.

While looking at the old house in the first image, created in 1982, you will notice how the home is slowly turning back into its original form. The wood in the house is turning back to its original form that would have been a tree before mankind decided to reform it to fit the purpose they wanted, instead of what nature intended it to be. The second image, created in 1969, depicts a small dirt island and trees floating. My interpretation of this image is that nature will always take back what is theirs and we will never be able to stop this happening. I feel this will always be inevitable as either we will advance one day and leave this planet and nature will take back what is rightfully theirs, or

humans will figure out a way to destroy themselves, then nature will slowly take over as it will be the only thing left.

Erik Johansson



Fig. 3 *Nature couldn't take it anymore*, 2019



Fig. 4 *Drifting Away*, 2013

Continuing the theme of Nature reclaiming the earth are the two pieces of work by Erik Johansson.

Johansson was born in 1985 in Gotene, Sweden.

The first image, *Nature couldn't take it anymore* made in 2019, shows nature literally throwing the only man-made thing in sight, a house, as if it wants the territory back like an animal protecting its territory. The animal will do anything in their ability to remove the enemy and in this warped version of reality nature seems to have a sentience, literally throwing the man-made building through the air and away from their territory.

The second image, *Drifting Away* made in 2013, has shown the warped reality in a different way again. Here is a hint into our own future, a version of our earth in a different reality, floating away because we didn't stop affecting our planet with carbon emissions, and the ice caps carried on melting and forced humanity into glass domes to protect itself.

Andric Ljubodrag



Fig. 5 *Chick-Fil-A*, 2010



Fig. 6 *Palm*, 2015

Andric Ljubodrag was born Belgrade, Yugoslavia in 1965. In the first image, Chick-Fil-A made 2010, there are many different details to keep an eye out for. For example, the one man is killing the cow and the other men are cooks looking like they are creating some sort of stew with the cow, and the sea representing the water in the pot. He is using the image of the cow and the sea to show nature fighting back against human destruction.

I feel the second image, Palm, made in 2015, is showing the version of warped reality that everyone sees daily. So many different people keep using their mobile phones to get through life and create a reality, instead of simply going out and doing things for themselves.

When we finally return to a normal life after coronavirus will it be the same normality or a different one? I feel that it is going to be different. I think it will be a combination of the pandemic lifestyle and a more normal life, where we can do what we want again but still have precautions like masks in shops/indoor places. The normal life everyone is hoping to see will never come back fully or at least not in our lifetime and what we think wasn't a normal life will be the normal for a very long time.

Antony Gormley



Fig. 7 *BRIDGE*, 2017

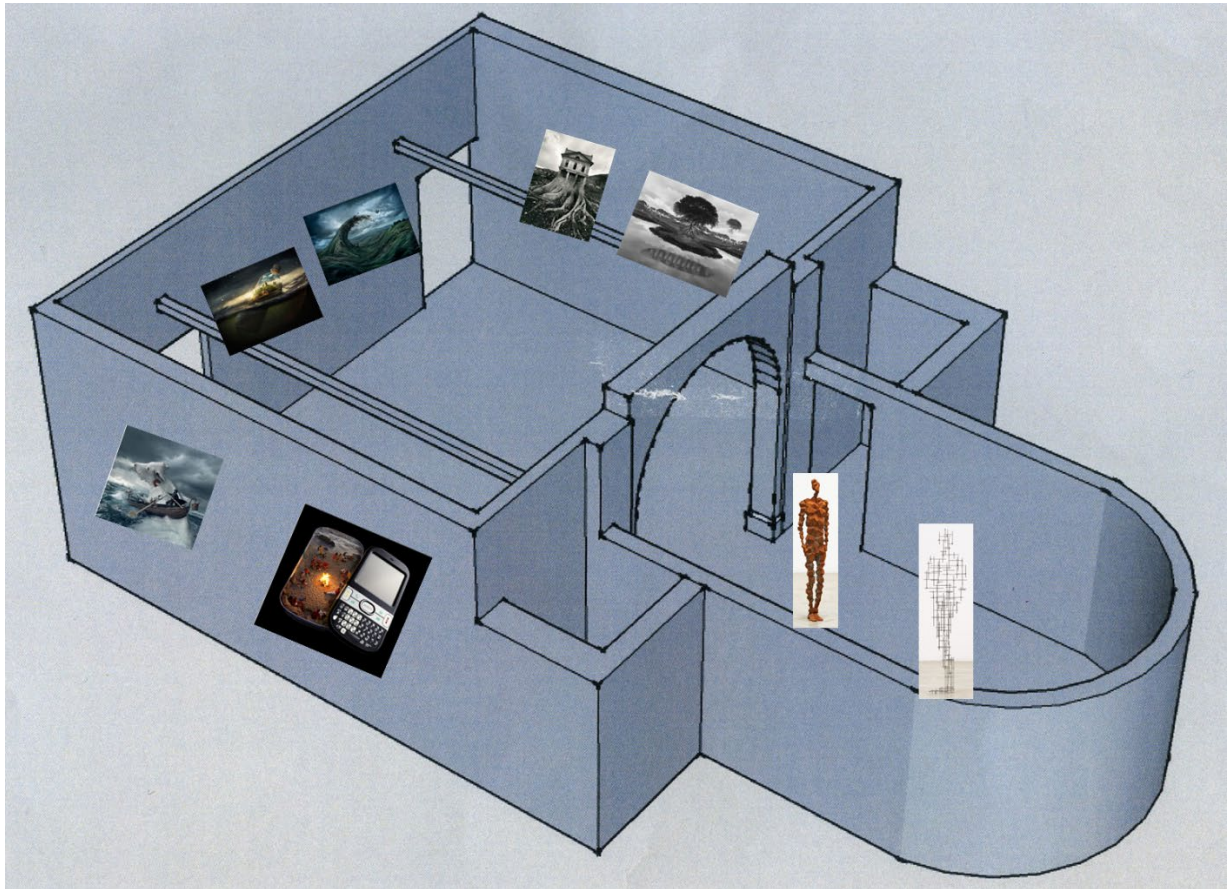


Fig. 8 *SCAFFOLD VI*, 2017

The final artist in my exhibition is a sculptor, Antony Gormley born in 1950 London, England.

The two sculptures I have chosen are Bridge and Scaffold, created in 2017 out of lead and fibreglass and cast iron. Both sculptures take the human form and look at it in a different way, as if it is warped or changed to look different to the typical human form. He has created a mould of himself and warped it to create these and many other different sculptures. These make me think that maybe somewhere out in the universe there is a version of humans that might even have evolved to look like these sculptures, and we can call this a warped version of our reality.

Exhibition floor plan



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List of illustrations.

Figure 1: Uelsmann, J. (1982) *Untitled*. [digital image] Available at: www.uelsmann.net (Accessed: 24 March 2021)

Figure 2: Uelsmann, J. (1969) *Untitled*. [digital image] Available at: www.uelsmann.net (Accessed: 24 March 2021)

Figure 3: Johansson, E. (2019) *Nature couldn't take it anymore*. [digital image] Available at: <https://www.erikjo.com/> (Accessed: 25 March 2021)

Figure 4: Johansson, E. (2013) *Drifting Away*. [digital image] Available at: <https://www.erikjo.com/>

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Figure 5: Ljubodrag, A. (NEED YEAR) *Chick-Fil-A*. [digital image] Available at: <https://www.andric.biz/>

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Figure 6: Ljubodrag, A. (NEED YEAR) *Palm*. [digital image] Available at: <https://www.andric.biz/>

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Figure 7: Gormley, A. (2017) *BRIDGE*. [digital image] Available at:

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Figure 8: Gormley, A. (2017) *Scaffold*. [digital image] Available at:

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