

Ways of Perceiving: Illusion

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I intend to present an exhibition starring a collection of work by both very well-known artists and some that are not so well-known in order to raise awareness of their work. I will be paying particular attention to Müller-Lyer's theories of optical illusion (1889). I am going to hold my exhibition in a completely imagined venue. The reason I have not chosen a literal venue is because I intend to emphasise the theme of illusion and cause the spectator to become active thinkers in this space. They might ask themselves 'Am I where I think I am?'. I have decided to build this venue in a form of multiple glass domes. It will have small glass corridors conjoining the domes as I believe this would be a great addition to enhance the experience for the denoter and support my concept of mirage. I have chosen an appropriate selection of artwork to display within this space of exhibition which is in favour of my themes of illusion and perception. The whole building will be on one single floor with no staircases or incline to provide easy access to all people.

I plan to build a glass dome measuring 25 metres in diameter with a central height of 15 metres. This will be the main building with a small concrete corridor at a 30 degree angle. This corridor will only be fitting for a single file line of observers to avoid them obstructing each other's view. This passage then leads the observers to an 18 meter-wide and 12 metre height dome which is attached by a small archway to yet another dome, sized 15 metres in width and 10 metres in height. I want the domes to essentially represent what we visualise with - our eyes. I will be using one-way glass to build these domes so viewers are able to look through the glass from inside the dome but not from the exterior, intending to be an illusion in itself. The exterior of the domes and joining corridor will appear to be mirrored to the spectator before they enter the buildings in order to adhere to the illusion conception. Eyes look like small domes from the outside. The human can see out from the eye, but not in. The single-file corridor will be perfectly symmetrical and have evenly painted white walls. Here is a diagram of the corridor:

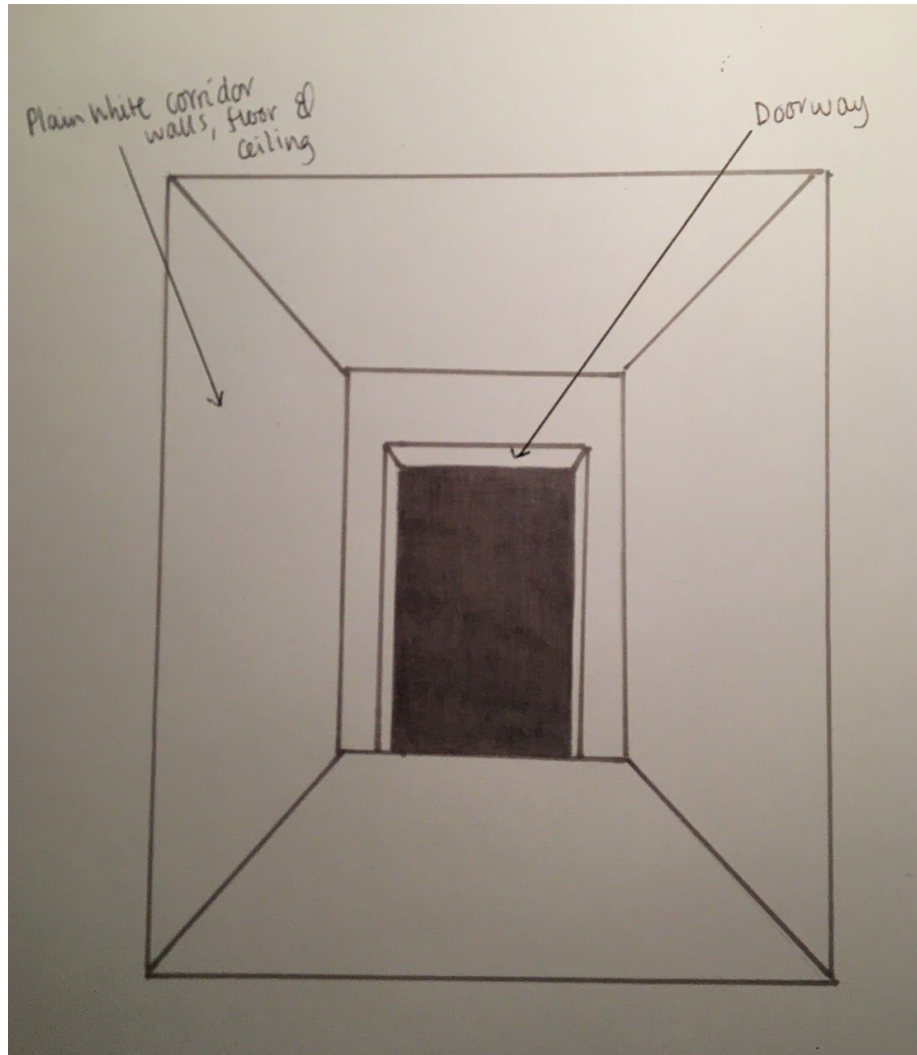


Figure One

By using plain white walls and perfectly symmetrical shapes I intend to juxtapose against K.C. Cole's article in the Los Angeles Times: 'One Thing Is Perfectly Clear: Nothingness Is Perfect'. Within this article, Cole states:

We live in an imperfect universe. This comes as news to no one. What may surprise people, however, is that our universe exists only because of its imperfections. In fact, when people say "nothing is perfect," they are literally correct. Nothingness--and only nothingness--is perfect. Everything else is a little bit off. (Cole, 2000).

The stark white walls will also help the observer to process the artwork they have seen in the previous room.

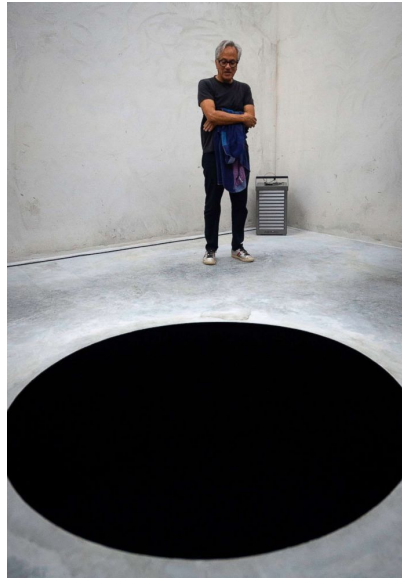


Figure Two

The largest dome will be featuring the 'Descent into Limbo' installation by sculptor Anish Kapoor (2018) - Figure Two. It will be placed centrally and have a 15 metre diameter to almost fill the circular room. At a first glance, it appears to have been painted onto the floor but is in fact an eight metre-deep black hole. This intentional illusion is simple, yet effective. It will be placed centrally with enough space around the circumference for viewers to spectate from all angles. I have decided it will be enlarged from its original size to 15 metres in diameter, in order for it to be the main focus and a bold beginning to my exhibition. Considering a black hole is such a powerful and rare occurrence, spectators will be extremely intrigued by this installation in my exhibition. The reason I chose this installation is I think it is a brilliant example of an illusion. The viewer thinks it is just a large, flat black polka-dot painted onto the cold, concrete floor as this is the most logical and simple viewing but it is in fact an actual eight metre-deep cavity. The black hole could even resemble the pupil of the eye in my exhibition as I have compared the domes to eyes.



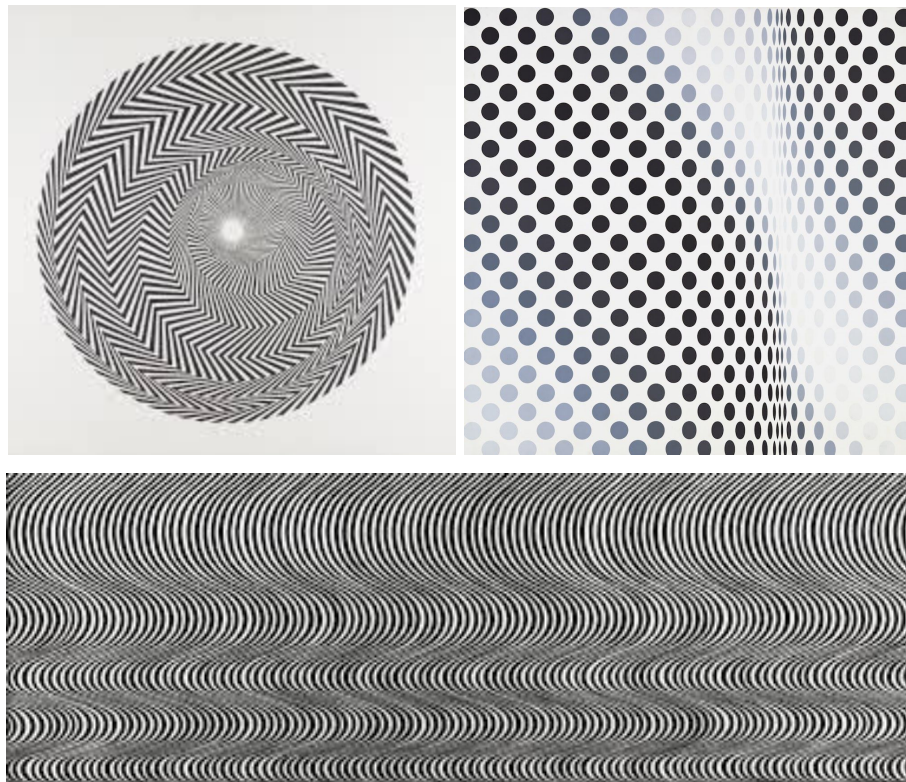
Figure Three

Displayed on the ceiling of the 18 metre diameter dome, I intend to present 'Nothing But Curves (The Perfect Woman)' by David Zambeck (2020) - Figure Three. It is an acrylic painting of what appears to be a young woman on canvas. This piece of work will be projected onto the ceiling of the 18 metre glass dome as I think the natural curve of the dome will contribute to the title the artwork was given: 'Nothing but Curves...'. It will cause the observer to view this piece in a different, more literal way than they would if it was the flat original canvas. It will encourage them to actively engage in the artwork, it might seem more curious than it would if the piece was just flatly displayed on a wall. My intention is to use this piece of artwork to really encourage the observer in thinking in detail about how artwork is used visually to make conversation. The monochrome tones aren't too vibrant as to take away the real meaning of this work. No bare, natural face has that sort of curvy texture, this abstract aspect of my exhibition exaggerates the fact this woman would not be seen as stereotypically perfect by society as her face does not appear to be the norm. However the title of the painting suggests it intends to sexualise her in the way of having 'nothing but curves' and being 'the perfect woman' because of this. This is quite a controversial image, Feminism is an advocacy and political ideology which has been around for a very long period of time. It is becoming more known to young people nowadays as children learn about the historical female-lead political movements in school, modern singers and songwriters tend to use forms of feminism in their songs. Beyoncé's song 'Flawless' includes a lengthy speech by Nigerian female writer Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie:

Because I am female
 I am expected to aspire to marriage
 I am expected to make my life choices
 Always keeping in mind that
 Marriage is the most important
 Now marriage can be a source of
 Joy and love and mutual support
 But why do we teach girls to aspire to marriage

And we don't teach boys the same?
We raise girls to see each other as competitors
Not for jobs or for accomplishments
Which I think can be a good thing
But for the attention of men
We teach girls that they cannot be sexual beings
In the way that boys are
Feminist: the person who believes in the social
Political, and economic equality of the sexes (Ngozi Adichie, 2014)

The majority of women today are not tolerant of being sexualised and objectified by men in this way.



Figures Four, Five and Six

I have chosen to display three pieces of Bridget Riley's visual experiments in the 15 metre dome - Figure Four, Five and Six. Figure Four will be to the immediate left of the entrance, Figure Five will be to the right and due to Figure Six's longer length, it will be displayed on the back wall as the viewer enters the dome. All three pieces of artwork have only monochrome tones. Because of the clear difference between the blacks and whites, these illusions are a successful way of

tricking the eye. The curves on the walls of the domes will append to the concept of illusion and mirage.

Figure Four 'Blaze 1' creates a sense of dizziness and literally tricks the eye into thinking of it as a moving image. The zig-zag pattern creates a curling repetitional spiral effect, making the viewer's eye slightly confused and warped. Allsup claims that in Riley's work 'there's no need for bodily immersion, it's all about the eye and the very act of looking.' and that 'Riley's iconic 1960's optical paintings play games with our eyes.' (Allsup, 2019). This painting will be printed as 6 metres height and 6 metres length.

Figure Five 'Pause' is made up of black polka dots painted onto a white background. It has been painted for the viewer to think that the image is curved, but in actual fact light is being projected onto parts of the painting to imitate a curve on the flat canvas. Swanson writes 'When your brain tries to figure out what color something is, it essentially subtracts the lighting and background colors around it'. It will be printed as 6 metres in height and 6 metres in length.

Figure Six 'Fall' will be printed as 4 metres height and 10 metres in length. This piece of art has a recognisable connection to David Zambeck's 'Nothing But Curves (The Perfect Woman)' showing the curves as a pattern rather than a skin texture.



Figure Seven

Once the viewer has walked through all three domes, they will eventually come to a walk-in artificial wooden cave. Wherever the viewer faces and looks, there is some form of wood. I have

decided to use this installation by Henrique Oliveira 'Parada Dos Quasólitos' - Figure Seven as it juxtaposes the stereotypical natural caves formed of stone. The recycled man-made walk-in cave is, in my eyes, not only an optical illusion but a physical illusion, too. The tree trunk-like sculptures are throughout this cave and lead the viewer through the cave and to the end of the exhibition. Due to the current global warming issues we are facing, I hope the fact that the wood used to build this cave is recycled, eco-friendly and is still aesthetically pleasing will entice the viewer and raise awareness of these issues and how humans can help if we recycle and reuse things as much as we can. Tim Laseter expresses: 'In the U.S., according to the Environmental Protection Agency, the average consumer generated 2.7 pounds of trash each day in 1960 — and 2.5 pounds of that went straight to the landfill.' (Laseter, T. 2010).

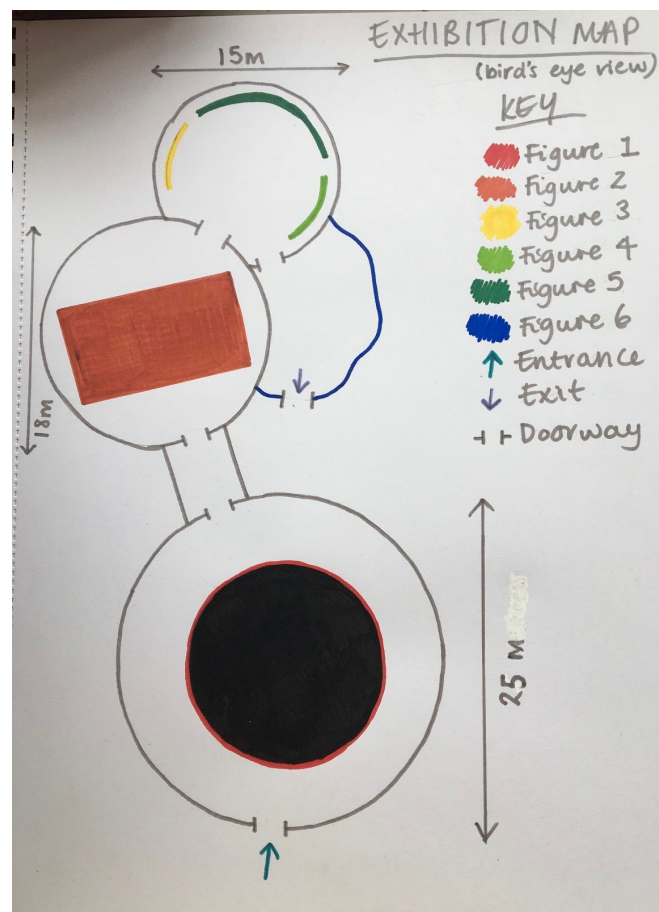


Figure Eight

As can be seen in Figure Eight, my exhibition will be accessible to all people as it's all on one level. It will have plenty of room and high ceilings for viewers to look around at their own pace and will also be well-lit in all areas perhaps except Figure 6 where it is a little more cave-like. I have added a key in order to clearly map out my ideas. My intention of outcome from this exhibition is to leave viewers puzzled but even more curious about how artists communicate in their pieces of artwork.

Figures

Figure 1: My own image and drawing.

Figure 2: Kapoor, A. (2018) *Descent Into Limbo* [Installation] Serralves Contemporary Art Museum, Porto.

<https://abcnews.go.com/International/man-injures-falling-black-hole-art-installation-hole/story?id=57384851> (Viewed: 29 March 2020).

Figure 3: Zambeck, D. (2020) *Nothing but Curves (The Perfect Woman)* [Acrylic Painting on Canvas], 'Artfinder', online store. Available at:

<https://www.artfinder.com/product/nothing-but-curves-the-perfect-woman/#/> (Viewed: 20 April 2020).

Figure

4: Riley, B. (1962) *Blaze 1* [Painting] Available at:

<https://a-littlebird.com/2019/10/24/bridget-riley-at-the-hayward-gallery/> (Accessed: 19 April).

Figure 5: Riley, B. (1964) *Pause* [Painting] Available at:

<https://a-littlebird.com/2019/10/24/bridget-riley-at-the-hayward-gallery/> (Accessed: 19 April 2020).

Figure 6: Riley, B. (1963) *Fall* [Painting] Available at: <https://frieze.com/article/seeing-believing-1> (Accessed: 20 April 2020).

Figure 7: Oliveira, H. (2013) *Parada Dos Quasólitos* [Installation] Available at: <https://www.designboom.com/art/multisensory-wooden-walk-in-cave-by-henrique-oliveira-10-29-2013/> (Viewed: 21 April 2020).

Figure 8: My own image and drawing.

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