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Contextual Practice

Imaginative Exhibition Space

The exhibition space is titled 'Reuse the Natural'; this reflects the idea of how publicised sustainability is becoming. I will be looking at the concepts of various artists and theories associated with Space and how "The term 'space' will refer variously to the virtual space of two-dimensional images, to the social spaces inhabited by art objects, and to the constructed spaces of buildings and other environments" (Guest, 2012, p. 219). I will touch upon how artists use their artwork to deconstruct various issues within society and the environment such as the terms Sustainability and Eco-friendly, looking at the work of Vanessa Barragao, John Sabraw, Edith Meusnier and Maday to place within my exhibition space. Their work curates the idea of reusing or reimagining the use of everyday waste or materials.

I chose to use the concept of eco-friendly artwork as my topic to discuss within my exhibition, the name 'Reuse the Natural' gives an initial thought to the theme before entering my imaginative space. My exhibition is placed within the Glynn Vivian Gallery in Swansea, I chose this space as it is local to me and to the art university I study at. Holding the exhibition there, as it is a popular gallery for the university students which will be the next generation of artists and designers, the exhibition will therefore act with an educational purpose, as "The very essence of craftivism lies in starting a conversation. By creating something that gets people to ask questions" (Greer, 2014, p.3).



Figure 1 – (Larcombe, 2022)



Figure 2 – (Larcombe, 2022)

Upon looking for an exhibition space I visited the Glynn Vivian with my course, this space as seen in figure 1 (Larcombe, 2022) was exactly what I needed, the main room has a very historic but grand feel to it, as (Bachelard, 2014, p. 4) said “We read a house” “We read a room”. As artists our work needs to speak to the audience however it also needs to be seen. In order to be seen we place work in various locations to allow those to really see the concept behind the work. Understanding the theory behind the ‘Charging bull’ sculpture by Arturo Di Modica, (The Associated Press, 2021). This piece really highlights how there is an equal split between the work itself but also where its placed. If when in a room we read it (Bachelard, 2014, p. 4), what happens when work is placed in an environment which it does not have any attachments to. We begin to deconstruct; deconstruct signifies the breaking down of something into a simpler or more understandable form, as “the art of deconstruction is a process that aims to lead to the truth, but we may ask what kind of truth and whose truth? The general truth remains the same but the detail is very different” (Duncan, 2017, p.1). If deconstructing relates to ideas of honesty or clarity, this should mean that when investigating something we are in search for what is factual or right. Within design, deconstruction is used to understand pieces made by artists or designers to follow their journey and vision for their work. We break down a piece to look at how artists did what they did, this makes work better as its shows the truth, we sometimes need to look back at how we got to a certain point in order to move forward.



Figure 3 – (Larcombe, 2022)



Figure 4 – (Larcombe, 2022)

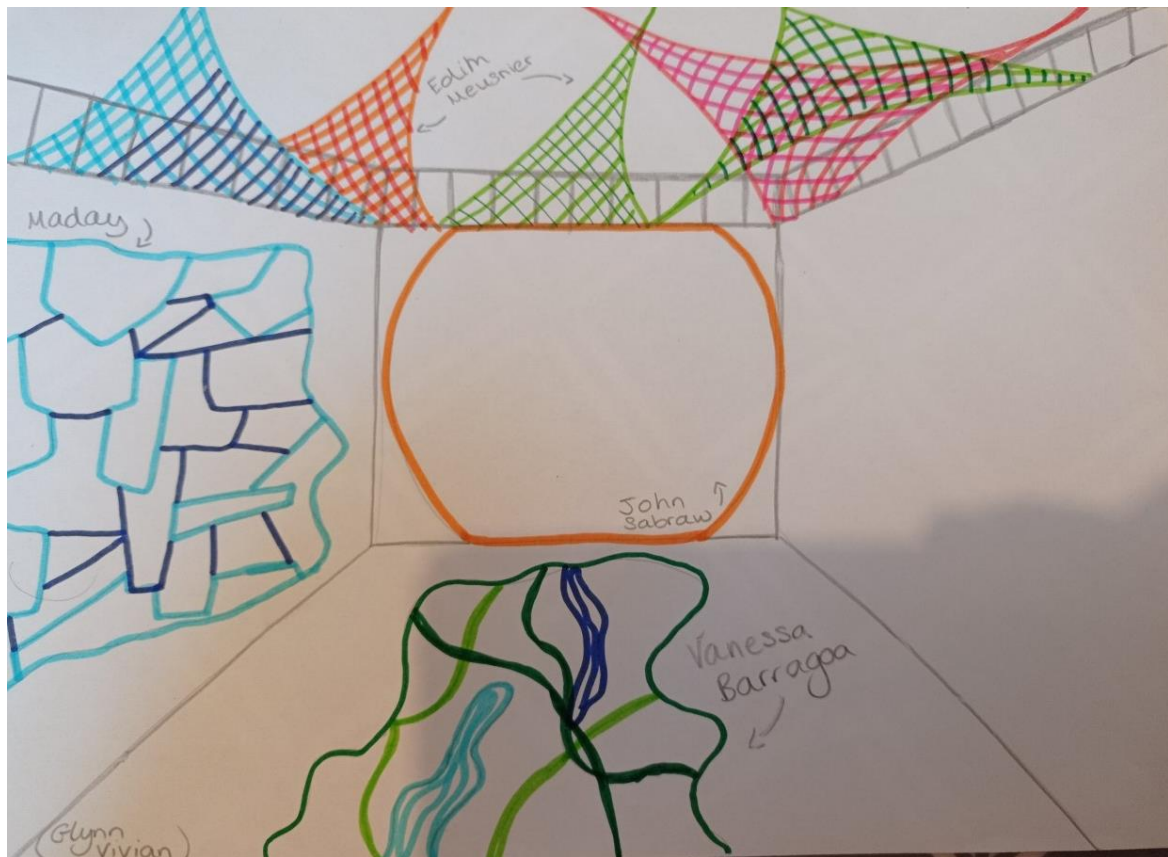


Figure 5 – (Larcombe, 2022)

Figures 3, 4 and 5 depict how the artwork is displayed within my gallery space. I chose to create a 3D structure of the gallery space, as I could really visualise the surroundings. Working with a blank canvas can create a sense of uncertainty as we are “Curious about this idea of enhancing the ordinary, the mundane, even the ugly, and not taking away its identity or its functionality but just giving it a well-tailored suit” (Sayeg, 2015). The artwork will be placed within a different area of the main room, on the ground floor of the gallery.

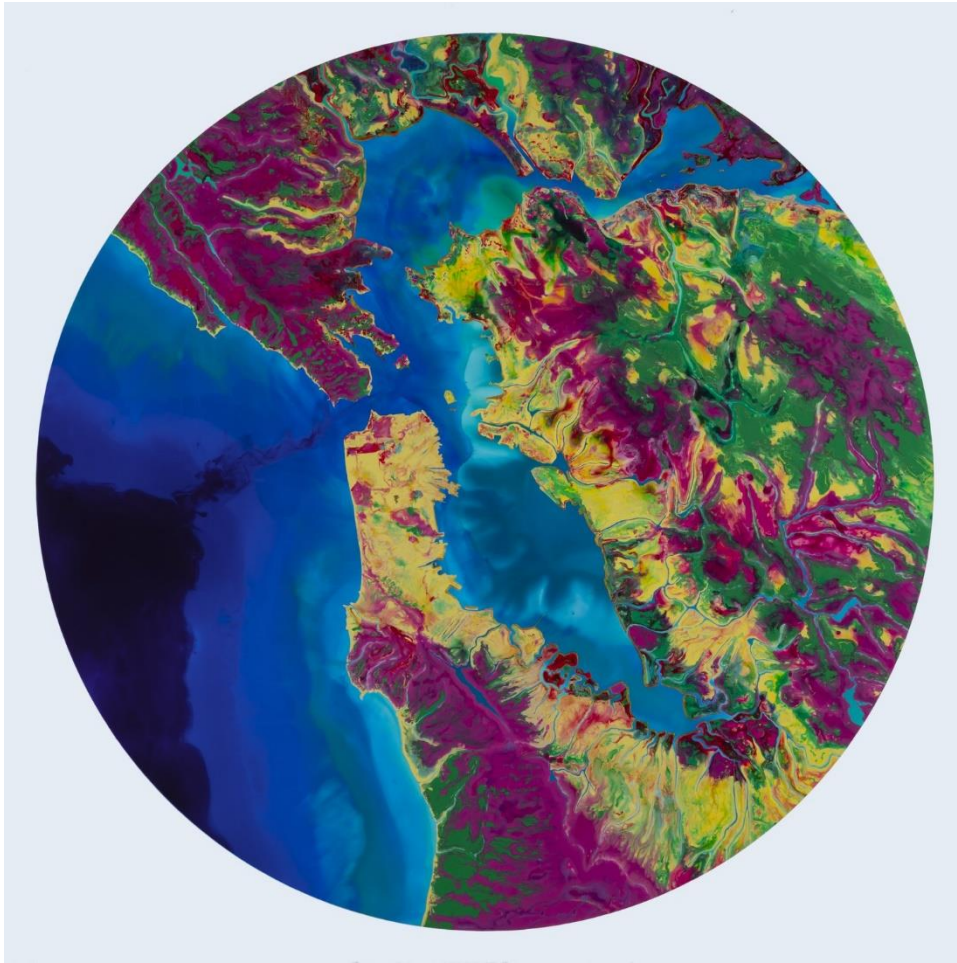


Figure 6 – (Sabraw, *Hydrophylic*, 2021)

John Sabraw's work (figure 6 – Sabraw, *Hydrophylic*, 2021) is placed on the front wall between the exit and entrance doorways, (Figure 2, Larcombe, 2022). His work is incredibly detailed and thought provoking, it should be the first and last thing to be seen. Sabraw's work clearly shows how working with eco-friendly art materials, artwork can be produced with the same level of artistry but without harming the environment. John Sabraw's artwork is a circular panel, coloured using waste materials from industrial polluted rivers which are curated into pigments and dispersed onto the canvas. The creation of imagery using the pigments allow John and the audience to witness and "express the sublimity of nature but also the fragility of our relationship with it" (Sabraw, No date). This piece could be described as a bird eye view of earth, although the colours are amazing, it does reflect the toxic waste from the textiles industry, "While natural forms may inspire aspects of work, these forms become deconstructed, abstracted as they are monumentalised" (Griffiths, 2018, p. 88). Knowing work can be created from the waste of the industry, we need to start monumentalising the idea of reusing the natural waste from textiles.



Figure 7 – (sustainabletextilesdesign, 2021)

Maday's work is the second piece placed in the gallery space. This cloth mural is hung up on the side wall of the gallery space. This piece signifies the repurposed motive behind Maday's work, as she has used vintage clothing in the form of children's dresses to patchwork into the piece. Her work and art career are intertwined with the classes and workshops she teaches allowing communities to create sustainable and eco-friendly artwork. "We could call this beauty, 'beautiful strangeness', a beauty that is not quite familiar, tinged with newness, ambiguity and intrigue, which appeals to our innate sense of curiosity" (Fuad-Luke, 2009, p. 188) Maday has created a beauty with the old or unwanted waste, artwork no longer has to be something new but can be a reinvention of the old, we should always strive towards sustainability and also helping the planet. Understanding what an art audience wants but also what is needed creates a true discussion between the client and artwork, "Quite simply, they adopted a new client – the environment" (Fuad-Luke, 2009, p. 47). Artists look for what is new to adapt to movements, the environment has become more treasurable and loved over the years, allowing artists to reflect this in their work.



Figure 8 – (vanessabarragao_work, 2021)

Vanessa Barragão's Rug inspired by a trip to Picos de Europa displays the natural forms of our environment and earth, her murals are created using recycled or second-hand materials such as wool, which is then sculpted and woven into her amazing artwork (East, 2020). Barragão's work shows her desire to better the environment, the organic look and feel to her work represents a desire to be her best eco-friendly self. In John R. Ehrenfeld's book on Sustainability he talks about three domains of being sustainable.

"Our sense of ourselves as human beings: the human domain.

Our sense of our place in the [natural] world: the natural domain.

Our sense of doing the right thing: the ethical domain."

(Ehrenfeld, 2008, p.58)

This shows the stages artists will strive towards when creating sustainable work, artists who are able to keep their style and ethical values whilst being creative have opened the doors to eco art. Placing an artist like Barragão in the gallery space increases the motive for a reusing and natural imaginative space.



Figure 8 – (ManishaAR, 2020)

The gallery space works with all aspects of the room from walls to floor and then to the ceilings as a way of allowing the whole space to be incorporated. Edith Meusnier's, "Sortilège" piece uses everyday materials such as gift ribbons to create huge outdoor sculptures (Textile Curator, 2022). Her work is hung from the ceiling window within the imaginative Glynn Vivian gallery space which gives the outdoor lighting. Her work truly shows sustainability as her pieces are placed outside for the public to see. Betsy Greer talks about "The creation of things by hand leads to a better understanding of democracy, because it reminds us that we have power" (Greer, 2014, p. 3), this concludes Meusnier's work well as having power creates a change, this change can be a movement within the design world such as more sustainable and eco-friendly work, as design counts as a huge factor leading to harmful chemicals and waste demolishing our earth. Artists such as Meusnier are who we should look up to when creating. Having her work above my imaginative space will create an umbrella idea which should always be on the top of our minds to strive forward.

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Figure 9 – ManishaAR. (2020) *French Artist Edith Meusnier On How She Creates Sustainable Textiles Art*. Available at: [French Artist Edith Meusnier On How She Creates Sustainable Textile Art - Design Pataki](#) (Accessed: 15 April 2022)