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“Exploring art outside the gallery space discuss how artists have developed art practise utilising space and or place. Focus on one or more practitioners and or thinkers”

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In this essay I will be discussing how artists have used, controlled and managed the outside world to produce artwork. I will look into artists who utilise the urban environment by discussing artists who work with civilisation and infrastructure. These artists either perform or take photographs in busy, man made and humanly populated spaces. I will also discuss artists who are more connected with nature and make use of the earth's natural materials to create art, this can be creating and displaying work outdoors, using natural materials or playing with the earth. This essay will consider art styles, practices and movements which are driven by the outdoors and will show a positive side to work outside the gallery. This essay breaks down the glory of the gallery and instead focuses on the new, unrestrained creativity the outdoors provides for artists. I will discuss theoretical issues as well, such as our modern ideas of space and environment, which is restricting and limiting our true potential of utilising our earth. I will also discuss artists who look at climate change for inspiration to their work and use their art to notify and educate people on this climate crisis. As I will go on to say, artists are pushing and stretching modern society's concept of nature and altering it; you will see that artists are also utilising and exploiting space outside the gallery by creating masterpieces without it.

First, I will look into photographers. When considering art outside of the gallery space, photography may be a perfect example. It is a well respected and popular form of art that often takes place away from the formal gallery space. While most traditional artists aim to have artwork displayed in galleries, photographers tend to be more accessible, with purchasable books, zines, posters and often freely displayed on social media platforms. Photographers are often inspired by their surroundings and use that outside space as the art; the art is already made, created by someone or something else whether it be infrastructure or mountainsides. The space and place is often the art, we can see this obviously in the new rise of "street photographers", a term which means to capture and record everyday life in a public space (James Maher, Jamesmaherphotography.com, September 5th 2022). These street photographers such as Henri Cartier-Bresson and Vivian Maier wander an urban environment in search of candid beauty. This is art that is created without the use or need for galleries and has grown as a somewhat revolution to the art world since the introduction of portable home cameras.



Thomas Demand, *Room (zimmer)* (1996)

A photographer who utilises space outside the gallery is Thomas Demand, he is a German sculptor and photographer who creates domestic and constructive spaces for the purpose of photographing them (authors at MoMA, moma.org, unknown date). Demand creates paper sculptures of architectural spaces and natural environments alike from the media or his personal experience. These sculptures are often plain, with no writing or logos, solely focusing on the space itself and how objects have place and use. Once Demand has photographed his created spaces he destroys them, leaving only the picture as proof of the ethereal space and its past presence (Roxana Marcoci, MoMA.org, March 4th – May 30th, 2005)



Robert Frank, *Parade Hoboken, New Jersey* (1955)

Another well respected and renowned photographer is Robert Frank, a Swiss man who found fame in the states in 1947 for his unique and unconventional work. Frank was often considered a fashion photographer and worked freelance for companies such as vogue and charm (authors at IPC, ipc.org, date unknown) He captured his art on the streets. He used

the urban and modern space as his subject and found no use or need for galleries. He went on to produce a book titled “The Americans”, (Robert Frank and John Kerouac, 1958) a photo book which was available to purchase by the public, and viewed anywhere. This was art that was not static but flowing, the art travelled between homes, cafes, schools and more. His work was not refined to a fixed location on the wall of a gallery where only visitors could see it but accessible to all, no matter location. He used the space and gave back to it. An MFA researcher and artist alike who studies matters such as urbanism as art is Justas Pipinis. He is the author of the paper “Art as Infrastructure” (Art as Infrastructure, Justas Pipinis, 2016), which is a report on “the social efficacy of art by addressing it as a contemporary western infrastructure for social cohesion”. Within the paper he looks into infrastructure theory and anthropology of art to describe what is purpose and meaning to civilisation compared to that of the “art world”. He analyses values and visions from that of architects to the artist, questions arise such as who has created and therefore owns rights to the art, the builder or the photographer? Is a photograph of a building or person at work truly art? do these things have meaning and value to the artistic world or is it just an illusion with illogical reasoning behind it. Either way, the paper explores the creation of art within the urban world and how it is often done without the inclusion of galleries or museums.



Louise Bourgeois, *Maman*, (1999)

Secondly, I will be looking at sculpture. Sculpture is an ancient form of traditional art and one that is deeply rooted in our outdoor world. Early man created sculptures from bone, ivory and stone from around 30,000 BCE for art or religious purposes (unknown author, beginnersschool.com, November 3rd 2016) similarly now, modern man creates sculptures of same material with same intent. Sculpture is often displayed outdoors but more than anything holds its relation to the outdoors from material. Traditional materials for sculptors

are stone, clay, marble and so on; it is the earth. The artist has moved, changed and altered the natural resources to create something new, a sculpture. A great example of this is Mount Rushmore (Gutzon and Lincoln Borglum, 1941) , a massive sculpture of American presidents carved directly into the face of a mountain, this is art that is made from natural materials, created in an outdoor space and is displayed outside of the gallery.

This leads me on to discuss art as a tourist attraction, although galleries such as the Louvre and The National Gallery London get millions of visitors each year so do outdoor exhibits like Louise Bourgeois's iconic spiders, Robert Smithson Spiral Jetty and Anish Kapoor's Cloud Gate. These are artists who moved away from the gallery space and embraced the unpredictable beauty of the outdoors. A conceptual art movement named "Earthworks" was a term popularised in the 1960's and means to shape the land itself or create forms within the land using natural and locational materials such as rocks, pebbles, and bark. (Authors at MoMA, [moma.org](https://www.moma.org), date unknown) this technique is still in use to make location specific art. When art is created in the earthworks manner it is almost spiritual and mystic, the artist physically alters the earth, big or small, they change the structure of Mother Nature, move her, displace her, evict, uproot, shift her. The artist is the God over the art. This leads me on to the art, material and artist that can have significant meaning to the location. In Wales we have a large connection with the slate and coal industries, so native artist Margaret Lloyd creates pieces of engravings and paintings onto traditional welsh slates. (Danielle Lipiec, [gazettenet.com](https://www.gazettenet.com), May 12th 2018) Although her work is displayed inside a gallery, the material is found outdoors and the medium is of importance to her region and location.



Richard Serra, *Te Tuhirangi Contour*, (1999-2001)

Another artist I've looked into is Richard Serra, his work is large and often made of steel giving the impression his work is clunky, bulky and clumsy however, his massive pieces are rather eloquent and fluid, flowing like streams across landscapes. "Te Tuhirangi contour" (Richard Serra, 1999-2001) is a huge unconfined wall that ebbs over Gibbs Farm in New Zealand, this piece is site-specific and physically could not be enclosed within gallery walls. The scale of Serra's work allows the outdoors to be the perfect backdrop to his work, illusions of infinite space makes his art ethereal and striking against the greens and blues of nature. A theorist who focuses on space and the power it holds is Doreen Massey, she's a British radical geographer who wrote "for space" (Doreen Massey, February 8th 2005) which is a book where Doreen discusses how our views of the idea of space need to be changed. She discusses how some well established assumptions on space from hundreds of years ago are restrictive and restraining our understanding and grasp of location and positioning. Art created and placed outdoors can help us break free from these restraints and can open up opportunities for knowledge and higher consciousness to the outer world.

Lastly, I will be discussing performance art. As defined by TATE performance art is "artworks that are created through actions performed by the artist or other participants, which may be live or recorded, spontaneous or scripted" (authors at TATE, tate.org.uk, date unknown). Many great performance pieces have been conducted within gallery spaces such as Marina Abramovich "*the artist is present*" and William Kentridge "*I am not me, the horse is not mine*". However, I believe a truly impactful performance piece is constructed and displayed while outside the gallery, the connection and interaction with the earth is the interest and intrigue into the art and its meaning. Performance artists have a unique view on the world and their spirits ebb and flow with the natural current of the earth.



Ana Mendieta, *Imagen de Yagul*, (1973)

An artist such as Ana Mendieta is a great example of this, she is Cuban-American born and she described her work as “earth-body” where she literally sculpted and melded herself into nature, covering herself in found blood, feathers, clay, plants and mud. Mendieta used materials she found within her surroundings, this would have been impossible within a gallery space. She blended the line between human and earth, instead of seeing them as two separate entities she saw them as one, and went on to perform this belief while in nature. Mendieta had no use for the gallery while performing, the earth was her stage and often her only viewers were the birds, trees and Mother Nature. While performing her work, Mendieta would move mud, rocks and water to form a human essence around the location, she created a presence within nature either by physically bonding herself into the earth with flowers or roots, or leaving behind a human imprint into the land. Mendieta knew that her work would fade and change with the landscape so she did photograph her process, however the knowledge of her work being lost to the earth did not deter Mendieta from using nature as her stage. Although working within a gallery would ensure her work to be preserved, the artists still chose the outdoors, the unpredictable elements of nature added charm and captivity to the art. While her work would quickly fade, the meaning and importance of her work did not, she is one of the most well known and influential artist to have lived and I believe Mendieta is the greatest example of an artist utilising space outside of the gallery.



Mary Mattingly, *life of objects*, (2013)

A performance artist dealing with climate change is Mary Mattingly. She's an American born artist working in New York and is known for work such as "*Life of Objects*" where she observes the uses and manipulations of objects in the twenty first century. Within this body of work she pulled and pushed a boulder of objects tied together with string around the streets of New York to show the heavy, dragging and restraining weight of owning too much commercial stuff. She stated in an interview "this project illuminates the rituals and tragedies embedded in objects in a precarious world." (Greg Lindquist, art news.com, May 29th 2013) This artwork was created outside of the gallery, with the objects being Mattingly's own belongings from her home, then the work was dragged through the streets of her city; for the artist, she found the gallery to be futile and ineffective for the meaning and grasp of the piece. Mattingly allowed all different types of people to see this art, people who would normally have no interests in visiting galleries might have seen it and grew curious to its meaning. People on their way to work, children going home from school, the elderly and homeless may have seen this piece, giving them interactions with art even though they didn't visit a traditional gallery. Art outside the gallery space holds many opportunities, not only for people involved in the art world but also for those who are just experiencing and living modern life.

To conclude, from the examples I've provided above, I believe it is clear to see that artists have truly utilised and exploited art practise outside of the gallery space. From photography of buildings, infrastructure, and architecture that explore the use of the man made earth to

depict feelings, emotions and simply humans daily lives, to the use of clay and mud as a body coverings and mountains as canvases, we can see the importance of the non gallery space for artists and the significance art outdoors has made on the human race. Artists have and will continue to use the outdoors as a medium for creating art for many years to come, art outside the gallery is one of the most ancient forms of art and will continue to be made intentionally or not until the end of humans. It is natural for artists to be drawn to the outdoors for it holds patterns, encounters, movements, colours and more that are incredibly inspirational in the creation of art. It is no surprise that many artists display their work outdoors also, for nature is a great backdrop to a piece because anyone can interact and natures forces can take hold, which makes the piece even more exciting. From this essay we can see some artist thrive of personally creating and curating their art outside, most using the natural materials and all displaying outdoors, it shows how great and prominent art practise can be even without the use of a gallery.

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