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P NUMBER: 2004415

PROGRAMME OF STUDY: BA Fine Art

MODULE: ADAD4019

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Ways of Perceiving – Curation Essay

Looking into Abstract Art-

My exhibition is based on abstract art. For this exhibition I have chosen 5 artists that I feel will fit my theme well, and whose work I really enjoy and want to share. Abstract art is a painting or a sculpture that does not depict a person, place, or thing in the natural world. The word abstract means to separate or to withdraw something from something else. The term 'abstract' can be given to art that is based on an object, landscape, or figure, and where forms have been simplified or schematised.

Abstract art is the theme I decided to study because I enjoy how it has different interpretations of the subject matter, I like how with abstract art, the subject of the work is what you see, such as the colours, shapes, brushstrokes, size, scale and in some cases the process itself. I enjoy not knowing what I am looking at and thinking about the meaning and concept behind the abstract piece. Abstract art is important to be discussed in relation to now because abstract art is non-representative which was realised because abstraction can be traced to impressionism, Post-impressionism, and Cubism. Abstract art now is two and three dimensional, it can be vast or small and it can be made with many materials on many surfaces, it has so many forms.

Bridget Riley, Gerhard Richter, Morgan O'Hara, Pat Steir and Dora Maurer, these are the artists that I am researching and touching upon in my exhibition. These 5 artists create abstract pieces of artwork which fits my theme. I have chosen one piece of art that each of

these artists have created and putting it into my own exhibition that I will be making. In my exhibition I wanted to choose artists and artworks that were very different to each other so that there would be a variety of different styles of artworks to look at, so when searching for my artworks I made sure to get a good selection with different styles, colours, shapes, and scales.

Abstract artists do have a lot in common even if their works are not similar. Abstract artists do not need the outside world to express themselves and do not create a representation of a person, place, or an object. The artists place their focus on abstract expressionisms, which is a focus on spontaneous, subconscious expressionism, they focus on the medium itself, which exists without representation of a subject. The physical world does not matter within abstract artist work as they make no attempt to capture it.



Figure 1, Bridget Riley's, *Blaze 1*, 1962

Victor Vasarely, one of the many people who influenced Riley's optical illusions, it was from her influencers that she started to create geometric abstractions, which mostly include patterns in black and white or even alternative colours, which produced illusions of movement and topography. This piece created by Bridget Riley was made to create the perception of movement. It reflects Riley's interest in capturing sensations experienced in nature, such a dazzling sunlight. Blaze is a succession of concentric circles made of zigzags. The 'zigs' of one circle meet the 'zags' which make chevrons form and then makes the composition appear to rotate. The object type used to create this piece was painting and the materials used were emulsion and hardboard.



Figure 2, Wassily Kandinsky, *Circles Post*, 1866

Wassily Kandinsky uses the movement of German Expressionism within his abstract works, including this piece of art. He experimented with colours and ways of evoking emotions as this was his primary interest when creating his art. “There is no must in art because art is free”, (Kandinsky, W. 2010), is what Wassily Kandinsky said about creating abstract art, he is basically saying that you can do whatever you desire to when it comes to art, you do not have to create something specific, it can be anything.

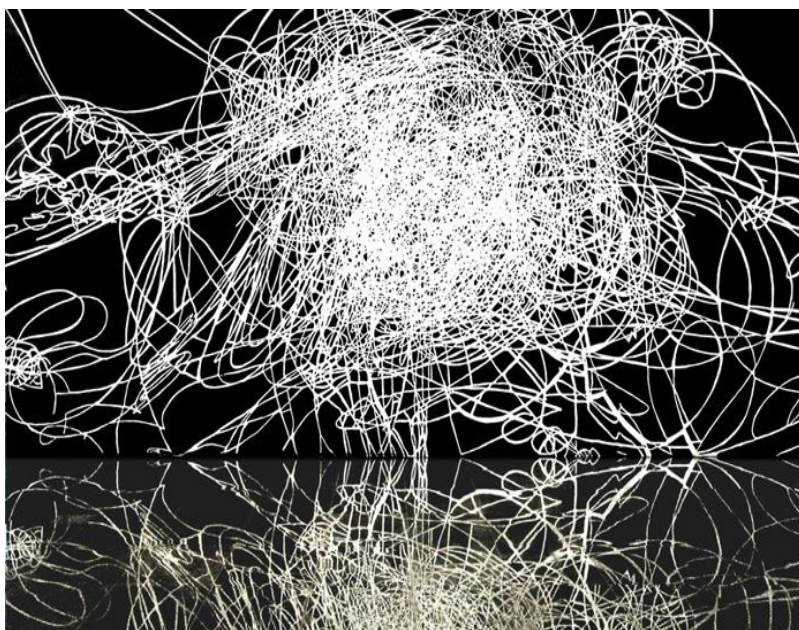


Figure 3, Morgan O'Hara, *Kung Fu Battle*, 2005

This is a performative piece made by Morgan O'Hara. She tracks the trajectories of live movement. She creates transmits three-dimensional movement onto the two-dimensional plane of paper. She observed a performance and followed a precise procedure to create this piece. Sharp pencils are held in both of her hands which allows her to simultaneously translate movements into a variety of lines. O'Hara suggest: "I'm trying to track the vitality of movement in real time, in such a way that my personality doesn't filter it out and I'm not interpreting or emoting. I am not expressing myself. It goes through my body, so these look like my lines."



Figure 4, Pat Steir, *Elephant Waterfall*, 1990

This piece by Pat Steir was created by pouring and flinging layers of thinned paint onto canvas. By creating this it allowed the indexical trace of her process to become the image itself through releasing herself from conscious considerations of imagery and compositions. She used a ladder to work directly on unstretched canvas tacked to a studio wall. Delimited chance, with a studied deliberate release of control were incorporated into her painting methods.



Figure 5, Dora Maurer, *Relative Quasi Image*, 1996

Movement, displacement, perception, and transformation have remained consistent threads in her work. She developed increasingly geometric and abstract drawings and paintings in the 1970s and beyond. The exhibition culminates in a room of her recent paintings, in which overlapping colours create a sense of shapes floating in space.

These are the five artists and artworks that I selected to use for my exhibition, each artist creates their work in an abstract style, but each work is different in their own ways.

By rejecting the idea of representation, the artists are exploring point us to the world of 'feelings', as opposed to 'things'. One thing that all abstract artworks have in common is that it is a way of expressing, it is expression art as it lets the artist to communicate visually without the forms found in objective reality. There are many movements within abstract art, which include German Expressionism, Fauvism, Cubism, and Abstract Expressionism,

My final decision on where I decided that I wanted my exhibition to be in the Mission Gallery. I decided that this would be the best place to have my exhibition as the attention would not be taken away from the artworks.

With the layout of my exhibition in the mission gallery I have decided to place Dora Maurer's *Relative Quasi Image* (1996) on the front wall as you walk through the doors, then enlarged on the right wall as you walk through the door, I will have Pat Steir's *Elephant Waterfall* (1990), facing the piece *Elephant Waterfall* I will place Morgan O'Hara's *Kung Fu Battle* (2005). Then as you walk through the gallery into the next room with the curved wall, I will have *Blaze* by Bridget Riley with Wassily Kandinsky's *Circles Post* (1866) on the opposite wall.

I have placed all these artworks where I feel that they fit in best and where they complement each other best. I decided to place Dora Maurer's *Relative Quasi Image* at the front as I really wanted a colourful abstract piece to be the first piece seen to draw the

viewers in and gain attention, therefore I thought that this piece would be a good piece to start the exhibition with.

I decided to place Pat Steir's *Elephant Waterfall* and Morgan O'Hara's *Kung Fu Battle* opposite each other in the first room as I thought that these two works were very similar and had a few aspects in common, such as the dark colours in the backgrounds and then white on top to create an abstract painting/ image, I thought that these two works would complement each other well being opposite one another. Lastly, I decided to place Bridget Riley's *Blaze 1* and Wassily Kandinsky's *Circles Post in the next room with the curved wall*. I decided on this as both pieces involve a series of circles to create an abstract piece so I thought that these two pieces would complement each other well. I also enjoy the colour contrasts between both pieces, as *Blaze* is made in just black and white whereas *Circles Post* is made with a variety of different bright colours.

As I mentioned I chose the Mission Gallery as the place where I wanted to my exhibition to be. I created a small model of the Mission Gallery using cardboard and paints. I decided to create this cardboard model as I wanted to show what my visions of the gallery space would look like, by doing this it really helped me visualise what I wanted my gallery space to look like as I could move the works around and see where I wanted them to be placed. I have added some images of my ideas and plans below.



Figure 6, Celyn Lewis, 2021



Figure 7, Celyn Lewis, 2021



Figure 8, Celyn Lewis, 2021



Figure 9, Celyn Lewis, 2021



Figure 10, Celyn Lewis, 2021



Figure 11, Celyn Lewis, 2021

Figures-

Fig. 1: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/riley-blaze-p05083>

Fig. 2: <https://www.wassilykandinsky.net/work-370.php>

Fig. 3: <https://www.fougallery.com/morgan-ohara-live-transmission-in-the-dark>

<https://www.morganohara.com/sw20051.html>

Fig. 4: <https://news.artnet.com/art-world/pat-steirs-waterfall-paintings-subject-major-site-specific-commissions-barnes-hirshhorn-2019-1349261>

Fig. 5: <https://www.tate.org.uk/whats-on/tate-modern/exhibition/dora-maurer>

Bibliography-

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3. National Gallery Scotland, Bridget Riley, Available at: [Blaze 1 | National Galleries of Scotland](#)- Accessed 8th April 2021
4. Fou Gallery, Morgan O’Hara, Available at: <https://www.fougallery.com/morgan-ohara-live-transmission-in-the-dark>- Accessed 8th April
5. Art net, Pat Steir, Available at: [Pat Steir Will Make Monumental Waterfall Paintings for Both the Barnes and the Hirshhorn in 2019 | Artnet News](#)- Accessed 8th April

