

Report: Site-Specific Exhibition

Name: Jamie Sides

Site Specific Exhibition Title: entractre

Rationale

- Clearly articulate why the chosen site is meaningful. What historical, cultural, or social importance does it hold? How do these attributes align with the conceptual framework of your work?
- Conceptual/Contextual Ideas: Discuss your group and individual interpretations of the broader themes your exhibition explores, such as identity, memory, community etc.

The site chosen by Libby was one of great interest to me. Me and her had similar ideas in terms of the type of place we would like to look into, I originally had invested time into scouting out and talking with the people from the Grand theatre.

Libby chose the palace theatre as her choice.

When it came to be put into groups and I was in Libby's group with that site I was very excited and happy to be working on something so close to my original intentions.

My final exhibition piece was a short film approximately 9 minutes long in the silent format. The reason I chose this was that when me and the rest of the group did some investigation into the history of the site we discovered a very interesting and important piece of the building's history. Somewhere in the early twentieth century the building was converted into a cinema. But just before that it was the first place in the entirety of Wales to show a silent film. Which i suppose it means any film at all.

<https://www.timeout.com/uk/news/this-derelict-victorian-theatre-which-once-hosted-charlie-chaplin-is-set-to-reopen-080524>

Upon learning this I was very eager to explore the idea of a video format for the exhibition. It took not much convincing to the rest of the group. With this initial idea to fit with the context for my idea, the rest of the group as I looked into exploring its time as a gay club, a theatre, and the more contemporary coffee shop and offices it has been converted into now. Some members of the group believed it sat in a limbo between the old and the new. I agreed on this statement from the perspective of the building itself. Maintaining a lot of what made it the iconic theatre while also being

clearly a contemporary building with only really a few elements of the interior being maintained, so I agreed and the group explored ways of doing this. Eventually a couple of the group felt it was in limbo spiritually, creating a dissonance of the old world. I disagreed with this statement but allowed for it to of course be a consideration. Eventually this idea of the spiritual limbo became the title of the exhibit. Entr'acte meaning the space between shows in a theatre. Its been converted to latin to sound more interesting, which I didn't agree with but in a vote it won.

Eventually when we all agreed on what to do we naturally split off. We maintained meetings and agreements on location and when to share ideas with each other. It was important to me for my piece for it to feel like you can see the context of why it was shown the way it was. Setting off to make it in black and white on a piece of technology that would create an old aesthetic to fit the theme I was chasing, the theme of the theatre being the host of the first film in Wales. To me that held great importance to me and my personal friend group. As a fan of cinema i ran with this theme to do it as best a job i could and seize the opportunity.

All in all, however , I'd describe that we agreed on memory as a core theme. All of us were working on themes of reviving the old days and history of the building, less identity but more nostalgic memories. An attempt to transport people back to an earlier time of the palace theatre, by surrounding them in reminders of the history they stand in.

A Summary of the Research

- Provide a concise overview of the research you have conducted over the past semester that has led you to the production of your site-specific intervention.
- Demonstrate your understanding of primary and secondary research skills taught over the past 18 months in developing your ideas from concepts to final installation. (Site visits/ practical experimentation, data collecting etc.)
- Use visuals!

I will mostly discuss my own research and the research I contributed to with the group, as we all had to investigate different aspects to learn more about our artworks.

I read a lot of secondary sources such as the timeout article

<https://www.timeout.com/uk/news/this-derelict-victorian-theatre-which-once-hosted-charlie-chaplin-is-set-to-reopen-080524>

And publications from the BBC.

I remember seeing a BBC news piece on the palace theatre while I was at work earlier in the year. I remember it talking about the fire and how it's now a new place for people to work and the youth to access. When I went to visit the palace theatre for the first time for this project I admit I was confused as to what the BBC meant by a "place for the youth" as it was incredibly quiet and tended to be frequented by office workers and elderly people having tea and cakes. This reminded me of a key point as to not believe everything you see on TV. I then decided to visit the archives to see if I could dig up any footage or sound recordings of the era I was interested in. I emailed for a visit but they said to come in anytime. On my visit I was disappointed to be told they had no information on that era other than some publications from the 70s about Anthony Hopkins. Which was not what I was looking for, but they did their best to help. Instead I resorted to researching the theme, rather than the direct context.

Once I knew I was going to be making a short film in silence and in black and white I watched 3 films from different eras to learn a style I wanted and how to capture that old feeling I was looking for

- Sherlock Jr Buster Keaton 1924



- The maltese falcon 1941



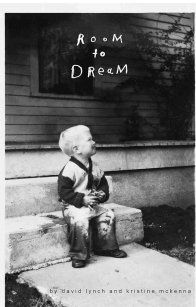
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- The lighthouse 2019



The reason I watched these was to mix them all into my own style. I had never made a film before and so I needed to watch these films in a new way, a way where I could see why certain choices worked, what visuals would be doable on a shoestring budget on a short time frame with no experience on now obsolete equipment.

I also have been reading room to dream. A book I started reading before we started for second semester. This also taught me about filmmaking but it wasn't research i did as i was already reading it



I learnt in my 1st year of university that the best research is to read and do. Or see and do. In this case I had my 3 secondary sources/inspirations and would simply watch with a pen in hand and my notebook. Drawing a short list, writing a script, making notes of ideas. I'd actually been circling around the idea of a black and white short for some time and had about 12 pages written. I instead decided to adapt what I could to fit into the new idea. Roughly 1 original page survived in total, mostly imagery ideas.

After the 1st week of shooting and 2nd site visit, I believe my research stopped. I knew the history and I knew my inspirations, I from that point would just write in the cafe ideas. Surrounding myself in the space walking around thinking. Writing and drawing shot ideas and a non linear "plot"

On my 3rd site visit however I did delve into a 15 minute recorded interview with ZED the cafe manager of the palace theatre. In the interview he supplied his perspective on the modern era of the building, what it meant to him etc. this was the only primary source I could get my hands on. Doing this interview didn't change my preconceived ideas or shift my tone of the film. But what it did do was give me an interesting insight into the people who work their, i learnt more about Zed's personal life as well as how he appreciates the space, etc

 [Zed interview tape .mov](#)

In conclusion, my research was not skipped but I felt an inspection into the theme was more important in order to give the original context justice. I made sure to get primary sources such as my visit to the archives and my interview tape. But most of my research was secondary and just experimenting

Techniques Developed for the Production of Your Body of Work

- Outline the tools, materials, or methods employed in creating your work. Highlight innovations or adaptations that you have considered to align with notions of 'site specificity'.
- Practical Application: Describe how these techniques contributed to the final exhibition and supported its conceptual aims.
- Use visuals!

The whole production was filmed on an old sony pd150 DVcam using 40 minute tape reels. I did this because of 2 reasons. The 1st was to find a way of resurrecting a now obsolete method of filmmaking, of course silent films were on crank film cameras. A now completely inaccessible tool for someone like me. So I decided against film, purely for budget and time constraint purposes making it impossible. This pushed me into tape. I purchased the camera out of my own money for £320. This allowed me to have an obsolete piece of equipment for a much more affordable price with still some remanence of digital software i could edit on a modern computer. The second was to mirror my biggest inspiration in life David Lynch, a man who used the same camera in 2006 to make his film Inland Empire



Using this camera I believe made it all real. As my lecturer asked me why not put a filter on footage from a modern camera. I admit it would've been a much easier

way of getting across the visual I wanted, but I believed that the context needed to fit the final product. And doing it that way wouldn't have done that. I made it in a way that allowed it to speak on its own, the natural poor quality, the natural black and white that the viewfinder of the camera is forced to show, no colour. To actually shoot with no audio, I made sure no microphones were plugged in as all modern cameras have built in ones. By doing that it makes it a true silent film, there is no audio and never will be, its not in a file just removed its actually silent.

I had to truly devote myself to the work this time, it wasn't a case of I could take some photos or find some in an archive. I had to devote every spare time I had to either writing, filming or editing.



I had written in the past and have always enjoyed reading so that came quite easy.

However, editing was hard. I'd never done it before and learnt everything from scratch. And probably the worst way possible. I didn't watch a video or something most would do. I needed the editing to feel like 1920, hard cuts, freeze frames and cuts to black. I read the built in articles on premier pro and imovie, I mixed both softwares together in order to make the final product.

In order to edit the tape I had to daisy chain wires.

The process was complicated but here are some images of the daisy chain



To explain. The tape is fed into the camera in VCR mode. The camera then has AV cables and one S video cable fed into another set of AV cables that is then connected to a Capture card. The capture card is usb, so it's then connected to a usb to usbc adapter which is then connected to my MAC. The Mac then has a quick time player. The mac detects the av as a camera extension, the quicktime capture application then can record the fed tape. Press play on the tape and record on the mac at the same time to record. I'd then feed this into imovie to make a timeline. And then feed the imovie timeline into premier pro.

As I discussed before. Why do it this way when it's much more hassle. And the reason is for the art. If the art is not authentic to the context or the source material then why do it all. Why fake it when making it more legitimately can be more fulfilling, more true and in the end it is just better.

When showing the work the obvious solution is projection. Every movie theatre in history has projected their films. And that was the clear route into the way of showing the work. However where and how I project it was equally as important to the final piece and the work and film itself. I went through a few iterations of where to show the work before taking on some advice from my lecturers and building it into the shelves of the cafe. Projecting into a small space between wine glasses. Making it a piece of the building. Having some scenes of the film actually perfectly

filling that gap. It became a mirage like image. As it filled the space but



synthetically. The illusion.

The film therefore only artistically works when seen in the space it was projected. As an artistic work you can only ever view it in that space to get the whole immersive experience, to remove the shelves or watch the film on its own wouldn't fulfill the whole message or theme. It only works when in that space. Making it completely site specific.

Individual and Group work overview

- Provide a summary of your contribution to production of a final site-specific exhibition.
- What role did you take in the group?
- What have you found challenging throughout the process?
- How have you overcome any hardship that you have dealt with both in the making of your work, and working with others.
- What team and personal skills have you learned/practiced that might be useful in your professional development for future career opportunities?

The final exhibit was very audio visual, rather than just photographic prints. My personal contribution made sure to include my collaborators doing their works. If you watch the film there are snippets of every student in my group, working, collaborating or even simply relaxing. I made sure that their work is echoed in mine. Their efforts to create the space feel cohesive are in my film and it's that I'm proud to have contributed myself.

In terms of roles, we all were the same level of creative power when it came to what was being exhibited. Libby and I worked hard together to make the film and I helped her anytime I could to return the favour and make sure no one person was carrying all the weight.

It was challenging to have equal say in what the exhibition would be called, advertised, etc. Rebecca likes the limelight a lot and that's not a bad attribute but it did make it difficult to get our own ideas for marketing to work. I remember Libby having to push extensively to get the tickets with the serrated edge and bend in the ticket. Rebecca and Millie both hated the idea and Libby had to really push back in order to get her idea out there. I personally am very easy going, I won't be pushed around but in my eyes as long as no one is being bullied and it works, then it shouldn't be a problem. Other than that it was very smooth in terms of building it. It did however feel like me and Libby were left to our own devices when it came to installing and deinstalling. Which is probably why we worked together a lot. In order to get it done easier. In the hardships of producing the work, the daisy chain had about 4 different variations before I finally found a combination of cables together that worked. I also spent roughly 2 full days of editing. As in nearly 48 hours of editing. I can't see a timeline but I know I

would work on it usually for 5/6 hours a day usually after work from 10/11-4/5 and i did that for maybe a week in total split across the 5 or so weeks of the project. That was hard but I fell in love with the process. I also couldn't stand the film. I truly couldn't watch the footage until it was over. It wasn't until I watched it in the theatre that I truly could enjoy the final piece.

In terms of team skills I can use them. I know I can control a room if need be, however i didnt want to in this scenario as I just wanted to focus on my piece. I know how to contribute and bring a piece of critical thinking, I also felt as if I was the most calm. Millie cried at one point and Rebecca got very stressed, Amelia wasn't present at times. I felt I was always composed and confident in the final piece.

In personal skills I now can edit, direct, film, write and mock up shot lists for moving image work. My career goal is to direct. Now I've finally dipped my toes in it. I'm hungry for more. It's something I can develop and improve as I age and I'm happy I got to do this in this year and module.

Evaluation of the Exhibition

- Execution: Assess the success of the exhibition in addressing the site's history, community, or spatial dynamics. Provide installed shots of your exhibition work.

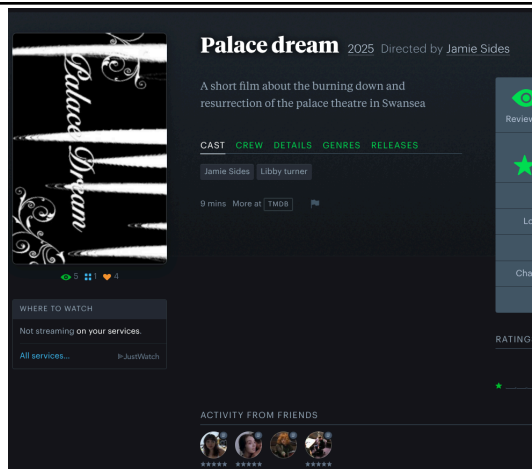
Audience Interaction: Discuss how the audience engaged with your work and the site. Provide photographs that document this process.

- Reflection: Identify areas for improvement and potential future directions for your practice.

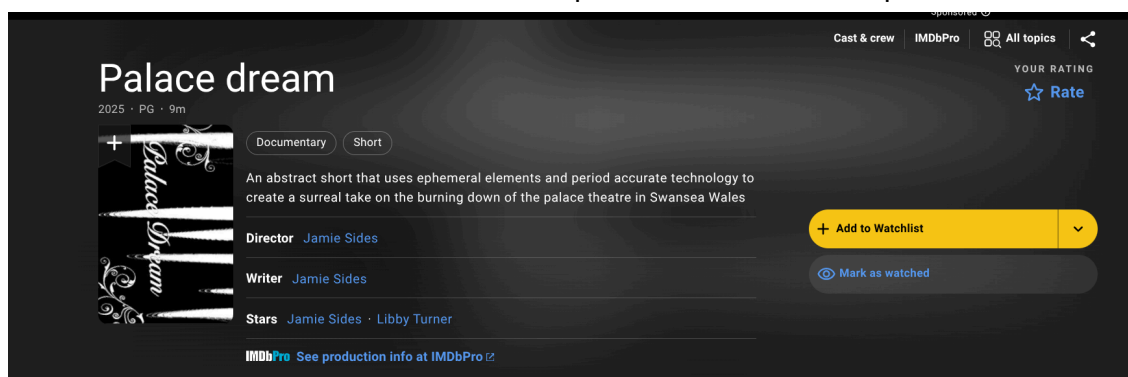
In the future I will most certainly be making another short. I don't know if the opportunity will arise in my course but I've had ideas for shorts and now I know I can do it. I most certainly will be pursuing that. And I intend to improve the process. Be a better writer, director and all around photographer, as it's my eye for image making if that's moving or still that got me into photography.



For people engaging in the work I have a unique piece of interactions others won't have. I managed to get my film as a legitimate title in the imdb database as well as TMDB and Letterboxd. Although there were a lot of people I know, I have had reviews and online interaction with the artwork.



<https://letterboxd.com/film/palace-dream/>



https://www.imdb.com/title/tt39112008/?ref_=nv_sr_srsq_0_tt_8_nm_0_in_0_q_palace%2520dream

To have this be something people can interact with and review, rate log and learn about online on an official film website that takes a lot of evidence to get a film on their is an achievement I'm proud of and happy to share with people.

People in the exhibition itself would often walk by and watch for a few minutes. I never expected anyone to sit and watch nearly ten minutes of silence but to have interaction for a few minutes was incredibly valuable to me. I asked some people who did look at it their thoughts and although it was mostly the simple "good" or generic response a few people did comment on certain shots and imagery they liked. No one was negative and that was a great result.



We had a lot of people come in around 2pm on Thursday and they were extremely interested in the work and it was a great result to have.

In conclusion I managed to push myself to a point of enjoyable difficulty. Using experimentation of different techniques and technologies. I expanded a skillset I always intended on doing. I managed to create a truly site specific piece that only works in the space it was shown, while connecting to a rich context that fits the theme and tone perfectly. I invested time in research both primary and secondary. I devoted time to find inspiration from 3 different eras of film. And I put effort into being an officially listed filmmaker on reputable databases such as imdb and letterboxd that both allow viewer participation and feedback. I worked efficiently as a group and came out with a piece of work I will hold with me most likely forever. I'm extremely proud of the final exhibit not only for me but for everyone involved.

