Ways of Perceiving Exhibition Essay

Tracey Munro

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Curating an imaginary exhibition

Political Views

Politics has always been depicted within art whether it's to show awareness of certain issues concerning the public eye, shape people's perspectives, or commenting on an individual or group's views and can be traced back to as early as 40,000 B.C. This early art has allowed us better to understand the more primitive civilisation and society and how they interacted. Art regarding political and historical events have always been found popular and favoured amongst many people either as the piece of art supports their views such as Banksy's 'Behind the curtain' (2002) which was popular due to the piece representing members of authority and control pulling a 'curtain' over the publics views/mind and not showing the whole truth which can be found by the boy in the artwork pulling back the curtain or the piece of art shows the need for change such as Keith Haring's 'Free South Africa' (1985) which demonstrates South African Apartheid, where the majority of the oppressed black society against the white minority in South Africa.

Some artists prefer to show their message or point of view in a more physical medium to better connect with and have an impact on their audience. One such piece of art is 'Gun Country' (2014) by Michael Murphy, found in front of the Grand Rapids Police Department in West Michigan in the U.S.A., which consists of 150 toy guns that are suspended from lines above to give the illusion that they are floating in midair however, when standing in a certain spot together the toy guns make up the map of the conterminous United States. This piece of art was designed to try and get individuals thinking and talking about their stance on gun laws within America which as we know is an ongoing topic of debate to this day.

Art isn't only used by an individual but can also be used by groups or parties to get a point across, statement heard or even warp perceptions for example the famous War Propaganda Poster made

by James M. Flagg and used by the U.S. Government in 1917 reading 'I want you for the U.S.ARMY enlist now' to try to get individuals to sign up to the army by featuring Uncle Sam pointing directly at the viewer to try make them feel wanted and that they were being addressed directly or during World War II the famous 'We Can Do It!' (1942) created by J. Howard Miller (an American graphic artist) as part of a series that was originally used to boost teamwork and increase the size of the workforce for the Westinghouse Electric Company but has later and more recently represented female defence workers and was used to empower woman working withing places such as factories during the war the war by showing a 'strong' figure (Rosie the Riveter). Both artworks were used and show as war propaganda as they were used to promote the U.S. Government and army in a positive light so individuals would sign up and fight for their country.

Exhibition Venue

Mission Gallery Swansea

Mission Gallery is one of the most inspiring spaces in Wales for the contemporary arts. A unique, architecturally beautiful space, the building is a rich resource for the local and wider community providing artists at all levels and experience, opportunities to display and make work while developing our audiences enjoyment, understanding and knowledge of art.

Founded by artists in 1977 as 'Swansea Arts Workshop Gallery', Mission Gallery has since developed a national and international reputation for presenting dynamic and distinctive programming. Boasting a proud forty-year history of delivery and a strong reputation for supporting and nurturing artists, Mission Gallery has taken artistic risks; showing ambitious, diverse work by established and emerging artists across all disciplines, from Wales and beyond. Mission Gallery has a thriving Learning and Participation Programme aimed at all ages and abilities, building strong and meaningful cultural partnerships within artistic and education institutions. Mission Gallery is proud of the important collaborations, projects and exchanges developed with

cultural organisations in New York and Venice, building our international work through programming, partnerships, and residencies.

Exhibition Map

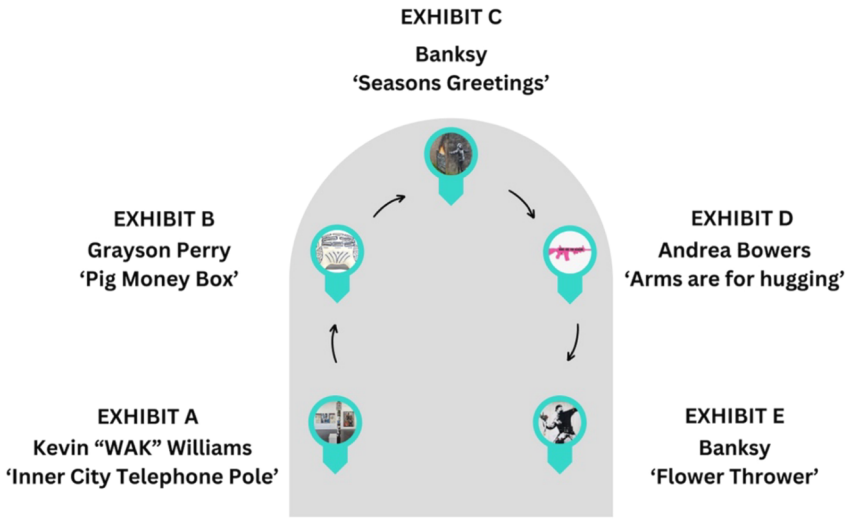

Exhibit A – Inner City Telephine Pole. One could turn the corner in any city in America and face such a brick wall, covered in a mix of graffiti, movie posters, and stickers encouraging passers by to organize and resist. Alarming newspaper clippings and the terror of racists draped in white robes and hoods are quieted by more hopeful images like that of President Barack Obama. Walker's *ZAP (Inner City Telephone Pole),* which is far less political in its imagery, but still places the viewer in an inner-city atmosphere.

Exhibit B – Grayson Perry, Pig Money Box. "Pig Money Box," created by renowned British artist Grayson Perry in 2017, offers a unique opportunity to explore the intersection of politics and art. At first glance, this whimsical ceramic sculpture may appear as a simple money box in the shape of a pig, adorned with colourful patterns and intricate details. However, upon closer inspection, "Pig Money Box" reveals layers of meaning and symbolism that invite viewers to ponder deeper questions about wealth, consumerism, and society.

At its core, "Pig Money Box" serves as a critique of capitalism and the pervasive influence of money in contemporary culture. The pig, a traditional symbol of greed and excess, is transformed into a vessel for storing wealth, highlighting the commodification of art and the pursuit of material gain. Through his choice of subject matter and title, Perry challenges viewers to confront their own attitudes towards money and consumerism, prompting reflection on the values that underpin our economic system.

Exhibit C – Banksy, Season's Greetings suddenly appeared just before Christmas 2018 on the wall of a garage in Port Talbot. Port Talbot is a little town in Wales, which is home to the largest steel plant in the United Kingdom. Consequently, black dust, a by product from the giant local plant, has been known to cover swathes of the town. During the summer of that year, a very large number of inhabitants even complained of respiratory issues. Because of this situation, with 9,68 micrograms of particulates per cubic meter according to a report, Port Talbot was presumably crowned as the most polluted town in the United Kingdom. That's probably why Banksy chose exactly that spot.

(Laurentis, 2022) It seems that a young child is taking in polluted air from the fire and smoke furnaces from the Port Talbot steel works.

Exhibit D – Andrea Bowers, Pink Rifles As a nod to the idea of a feminist army, as well as a protest against the U.S. government's gun policies, Bowers made five large pink cardboard assault rifles painted with slogans from the „March for Our Lives" protests, originally inspired by a CODEPINK action from several years ago. Andrea Bowers (*1965, Ohio) lives and works in Los Angeles. The colour pink, which is often associated with femininity and gentleness. This contrast immediately draws attention to the complexities of gender norms and expectations. Andrea Bowers, Pink Rifles" is a thought-provoking artwork that invites viewers to reconsider their assumptions about gender, power, and activism, and encourages critical reflection on contemporary social and political issues. The imagery of rifles in the artwork may also be a critique of gun culture and the pervasive presence of firearms in contemporary society. She may be highlighting the contradictions inherent in the glorification of weapons and violence, particularly in relation to issues of gender-based violence and activism for peace and social justice.

Exhibit E – Banksy, Flower Thrower

Flower Thrower is one of the most iconic images of the famous street artist Banksy**.** The stencil art piece depicts the man, bombing the establishment with flowers. The image is reminiscent of images from the 1960s campus and street riots and it is connected to the Jerusalem gay parade incidents. The name originates from a Poem "Wage Peace" by Judyth Hill, written after the events of 9/11 in 2001. Banksy's Love Is In The Air (Flower Thrower) prints feature a powerful anti-war image, poignantly debuted as a mural on the West Bank Wall. The man in the balaclava, seemingly about to throw a bomb, instead holds a bunch of flowers in a symbolic appeal for peace to replace violence. "Banksy - The Flower Thrower" refers to a famous piece of street art created by the elusive and anonymous British artist known as Banksy. The artwork depicts a figure wearing a hoodie and a bandana covering the lower part of their face, in the act of throwing a bouquet of flowers like a grenade. flowers symbolize peace, love, and beauty. It symbolises a peaceful protest or resistance against violence and oppression. The Flower Thrower" is a powerful and thought-provoking artwork that challenges viewers to reflect on themes of peace, protest, and the power of symbolism in the context of contemporary society.

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