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Task: Curate an exhibition = 1483 words

Tutor's name: Martin Bush

For this assessment, I confirm that I have not used Generative AI to support me in structuring my submission, including creating a draft argument structure, identifying parts and headings. I confirm that I have not used Generative AI to create text for my submission. I confirm that I have not used Generative AI for creative materials, such as images.

Awakening as the Art of Design.

Buddhist philosophies are, for me, an intriguing source of inspiration, both in life and in design. This is precisely why I want to dedicate my exhibition, titled Awakening as the Art of Design, to this theme. I chose the location of Swansea Mumbles Pier, during a beautiful sunny holiday weekend. These are undoubtedly ideal conditions to be more present in the here and now. This is crucial because the majestic landscape of this place encourages a momentary detachment from contemporary reality. Moreover, I want this event to avoid the overstimulation we often feel during daily responsibilities, but to align with key Buddhist values, such as mindfulness (Harvey, 2000, p. 60).

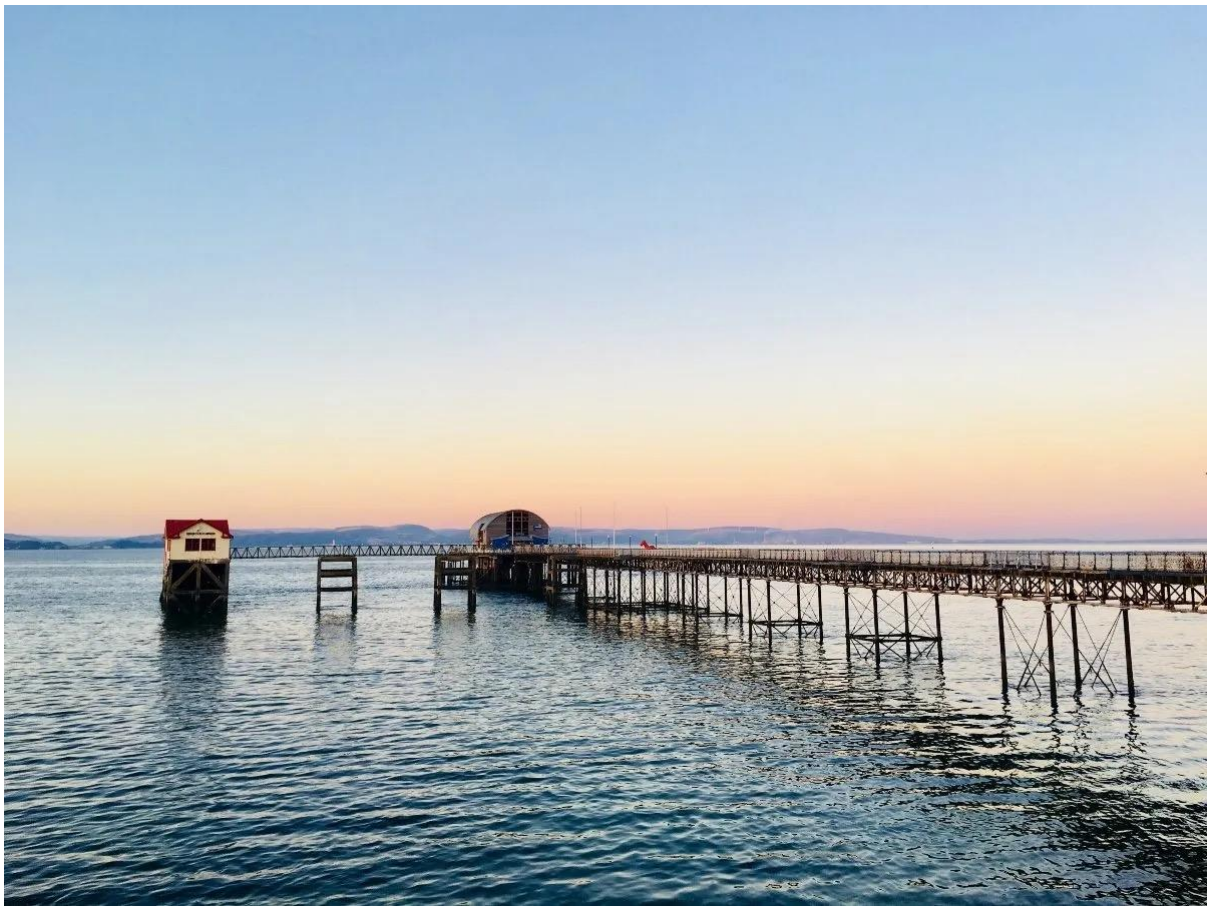

Fig 1, (Oyster House Mumbles, n.d., *Promotional Image of Mumbles Pier)*

Fig 2, (Katei, 1890, *Lotus in Bloom*)

The first piece in my exhibition is Lotus in Bloom, painted by Taki Katei in the 19th century, currently housed at the Minneapolis Institute of Art in the USA. This painting embodies the theory of minimalism and simplicity, allowing the viewer space for reflection and contemplation. The monochromatic palette reflects the essence of spirituality. The inscription on the painting, when translated, means “Unstained by muddy waters, the most beautifully scented of flowers,” which, in the context of Japanese culture, signifies the intention to preserve its roots despite global cultural changes. The philosophy of this work refers to simplicity in its inner strength and mindfulness.

Symbolically, the lotus represents enlightenment and is one of the main representations in Buddhism (Fowler, 1997, p. 63). The artist sought to show beauty in challenging times. In today’s world, where technological progress has significantly accelerated the pace of life, this painting may prompt reflection on the essence of mindfulness (APA, 2023).

Fig 3, (Anon, 1250, *Wheel of the Buddhist Law,Rinpō,*)

The next piece in my exhibition is the Wheel of the Buddhist Law (Rinpō). This ritual object, made of bronze, was created around the 13th century in Japan. The lack of an author is common in Asian art from that period. The piece was acquired by the Metropolitan Museum of Art in New York in 2015, donated by Mary Griggs and Jackson Burke (Metropolitan Museum of Art, n.d.). The object depicts the Wheel of Law, which symbolises the Dharmachakra, one of the oldest Buddhist symbols. The absence of unnecessary decorations and its symmetrical shape help to highlight its symbolic message, which is a subtle approach to design. The famous eight spokes of the wheel, visible in the piece, refer to one of the key Buddhist teachings, namely liberation, which carries a significant message. At the same time, to experience this, one must remain mindful. The Buddha compared the Dharma in one of his parables to a raft that is needed to reach a goal but should be discarded once the goal is achieved (Cush, 1994, p. 2). A contemporary viewer might see in this a metaphor for human struggles with excessive attachment to material things. This philosophy is intricately linked to Buddhism, particularly in the esoteric tradition.

The artisanry of this piece suggests that its gilded, yet simple structure may have played a significant role for the religion and its followers. In the central part, we can see the previously mentioned lotus flower, which underscores the essence of the entire piece. However, a contemporary viewer may struggle with interpretation, as the lack of an author can significantly influence the reception of the work, particularly in Western museums (Vassiliou, 2017).

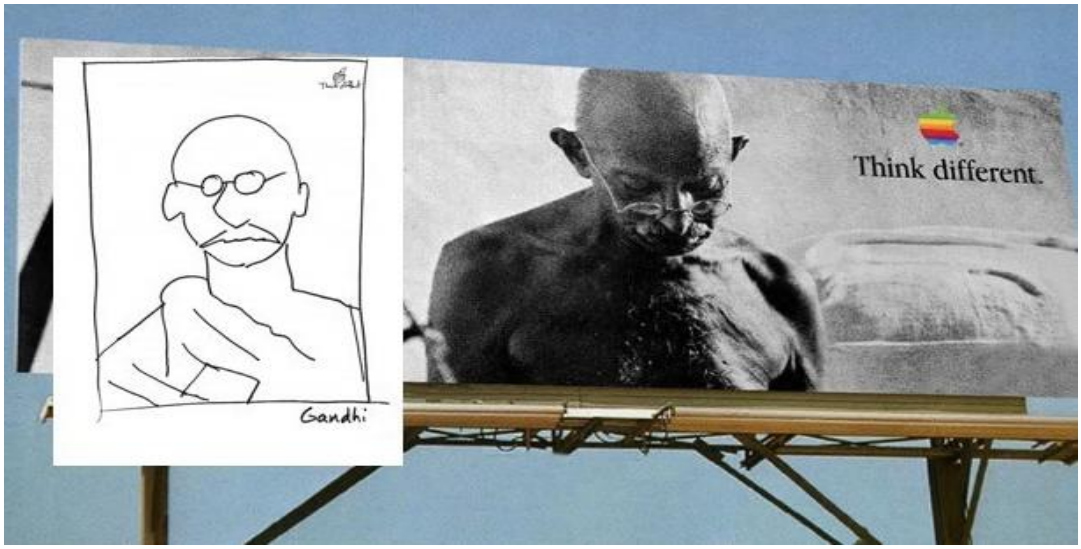

Fig 4, (Tanimoto, 1997, *Think Different*)

The third piece I wish to present is a poster from Apple's "Think Different" campaign, featuring an image of Mahatma Karamchand Gandhi alongside a sketch by Craig Tanimoto. The poster is divided into two main parts. On the left side is the sketch, which is simple, and hand drawn. It was created using black ink, which perfectly complements the right side of the poster, also in black and white. The sketch depicts a representation of Gandhi, highlighting his distinctive features such as his moustache and glasses. The overall design is very minimalist, with a noticeable signature by Craig Tanimoto, who produced the idea for this campaign and is also the author of the sketch (Posterama, 2024). On the right side of the poster, we see a black-and-white photograph of Gandhi, dressed in traditional robes. His figure exudes mindfulness and harmony, which aligns with Buddhist teachings. In the top right corner, there is the text "Think Different" alongside Apple's iconic rainbow symbol. The use of a simple sans-serif font does not distract from the photograph and sketch, allowing for greater clarity for the viewer (Reynolds, 2012, p. 7).

The poster symbolises the ideology that Gandhi followed, which advocated against the use or support of violence. It can be said that this awakened India anew. The combination of this ancient Buddhist wisdom with the contemporary rainbow Apple logo creates a powerful message. It suggests that, as a society, we should respond to the oppression of social minorities with empathy and democracy (The Loop, n.d.). This perspective remains a relevant issue in our world today (OHCHR, n.d.). However, applying Buddhist ideology in Apple's marketing may feel overwhelming for the viewer. Following Gandhi's thought, who opposed populism, one might wonder if the entire campaign can still be authentic for the viewer.

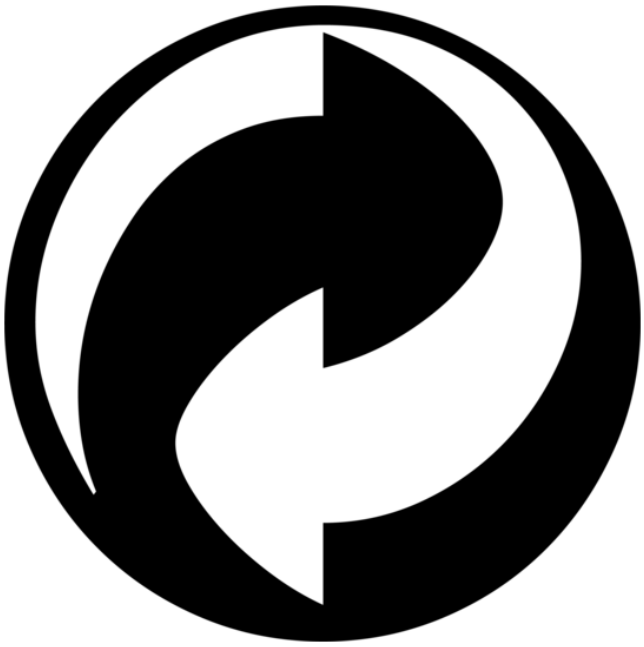

Fig 5, (Anderson, 1970, *Green Dot*)

My penultimate artefact is the recycling symbol promoting conscious ecology, the Green Dot, inspired by the traditional Taijitu symbol, or Yin-Yang, which represents the interdependence of two sides. The contemporary version of the symbol was inspired by the original, created by Gary Anderson in the 1970s (EKOBLOG, 2025). It is currently difficult to determine the author of the latest version, as it has been used by many organisations and individuals, adapted for various projects. The symbol is circular, with two arrows inside, signifying repetition. In this case, we have a black-and-white version, which excellently draws inspiration from the original Yin-Yang symbol. The reinterpretation of this symbol may highlight the urgent way in which we grapple with contemporary environmental issues (Lama, 2024). Moreover, the traditional Yin-Yang symbol aligns with key Buddhist teachings such as harmony, balance, and mindfulness (Buddhism: The Way of Emptiness, n.d.). The anti-materialist views historically adopted by Buddhist monks strongly support a low environmental impact (Keown, 2000, p. 115).

The Green Dot also embodies characteristics such as minimalism and reflects repetition, which the viewer may interpret as the cycle of life. This aligns with the project's aim of achieving environmental balance in the world and raising people's awareness. The design prompts reflection and raises the question of whether we, as individuals, engage in conscious actions towards our environment.

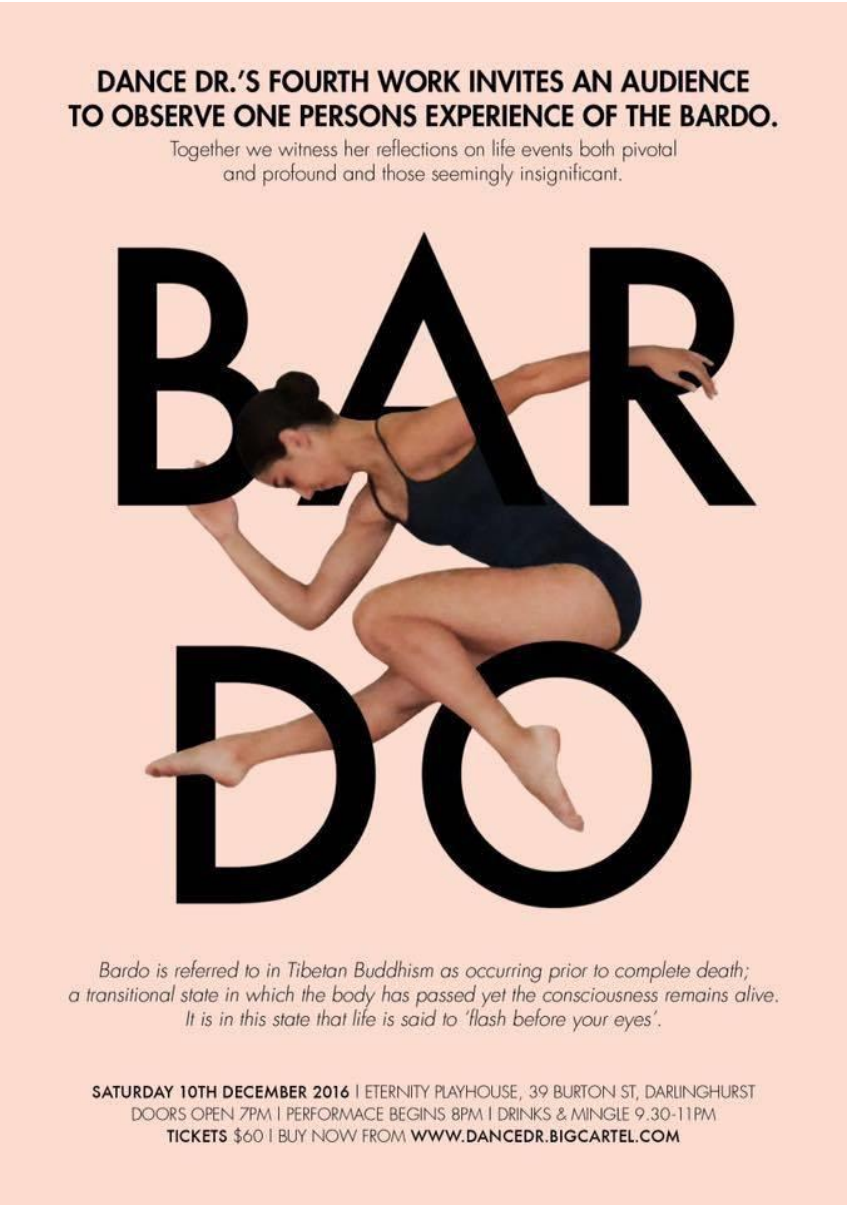

Fig 6, (Dance Dr., 2016, *Bardo*)

The final artefact in my exhibition is a poster titled Bardo, belonging to the dance group Dance Dr., which is based in Sydney, Australia. The poster promotes a dance performance. The graphic design was created by Dance Dr., as there is no reference to its author. Therefore, its creation date can be attributed to November 2016, the date of publication. Its appearance is dominated by a minimalist design, with a key role played by a woman and her body position integrated with the word Bardo. The dancer is in a subtle and feminine dance pose, gently lifting her left arm and leg, which emphasises harmony and tranquillity. Letters are overlaid on her silhouette: at the top, above her head, is the first part, "BAR," on which she also rests her left hand. In the lower part, "DO," the rest of her body is positioned, with her left leg extending into the middle of the letter "O," highlighting cyclicality. This visual element particularly relates to life and its repetition, in line with Buddhist beliefs about samsara (BBC, n.d.).

The overall design is seamlessly integrated with a sans-serif font, which helps maintain the poster's aesthetic. The delicate peach background adds subtlety against the black typography and the dancer's silhouette. At the top and bottom of the poster are details about the event, also presented using a sans-serif minimalist font. The word "Bardo" originates from Tibet and is associated with Buddhism, defined as "a state of existence from the moment immediately after death until the moment immediately before conception" (Chapman, 2017).

Interestingly, the word Buddhism means awakened or enlightened, suggesting that we are asleep, which a viewer may interpret freely depending on their spiritual development journey (Harvey, 1990, p. 1). Returning to the meaning of the word Bardo in the context of the poster and dance art, it invites the audience to join the dancer in reflecting on awakening to her true nature, which aligns with the entire Buddhist ideology and perfectly concludes my exhibition. This is an interesting example of how design and art can elevate our level of consciousness.

I hope that after viewing my exhibition, a moment of reflection will arise, connected to the contemporary rush of life.

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