

Ways of Preserving, Exhibition Essay

Name: Natalyn Dorn

Student Number: 2304984

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Tutor: Julia Lockheart

Entitled 'SOS, save our seas', with this exhibition I intend to curate the importance of ocean waste and how the trash we do not recycle affects our marine environment. Focusing on our biggest ocean polluter West Africa, Senegal means it is important for younger generations to know how one can keep our beaches clean, having an outdoor exhibition will attract more locals from Swansea where my exhibition at Swansea Bay beach is held. Having carefully selected the pieces I want to curate from Marina Debris Plastic Trash Collection, along with two companies Sea Life and The Ocean Cleanup; to talk about their goals and outcomes, I am hopeful that this event will allow people to see and act to help our marine life to stay alive.

Using the open space, such as the local beach I want people to start building a potential relationship with our ecosystem and our marine life. Allison states that *"There is no sole human relationship with the ocean with which all people will identify: each individual has different interests, experiences, economic stakes, emotional investments and cultural and social ties to different aspects of the ocean"* (Allison, 2020, p 393). When people come to this exhibition, I want them to start releasing the impact we have on our environment and that with small changes such as less plastic and more sustainable choices, we will start to see small changes in our ecosystems. Gaining a better relationship with our home, the planet Earth is a crucial step to stopping the suffering of all the damage we do as humans.

During COVID-19, our planet had a break from all the harmful substances we were emitting. Jacobo (2020) wrote in an article that *"The coronavirus pandemic has had an unexpected side effect in Venice, where the normally cloudy canals have transformed into water crystal clear enough to see fish swimming below"* and not only that the locals were stating that they spotted dolphins in the port. This is a perfect example that we are harming our earth and need to start acting now, before it is too late. Our marine life had a break during the time our lives stopped, we need to make sure we can help them again so they can be safe to return to their home without any harm done to it.



Fig. One

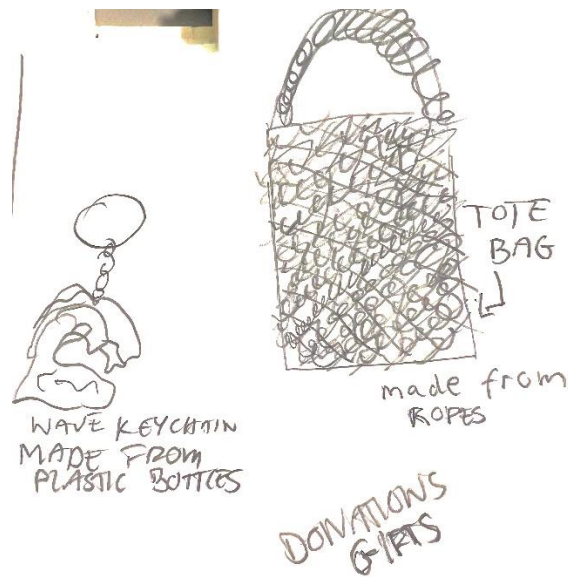


Fig. Two

Upon arrival to Swansea Bay beach, *Fig. One*, you will be greeted by one of the staff which will hand out leaflets containing our activities timetable and a map of what you can expect from the exhibition, with that that you can pick up a bin bag and gloves where you can pick up trash that you find along the coastline that you can later trade in for one of our prizes at the shop. You will also be asked to donate a small amount to contribute to The Ocean-Cleanup Organisation, where you will receive a tote bag and a keychain, *Fig Two* made from trash collected around the UK beaches and recycled into these products.



Fig. Three

At the beginning of the exhibition, where our event beginnings, I would like The Ocean-Cleanup who are a non-profit organization, developing and scaling technologies to rid the world's oceans of plastic, founded by Boyat Slat to be placed. They aim to put themselves out of business once the oceans are cleaned. Choosing to invite the organisation was based on what they do and how impactful it has been to our environment. Slat states that, *"Every year, millions of tons of plastic enter the oceans, primarily from rivers. And the plastic that's afloat within the oceans isn't going away by itself. To effectively solve the problem, we need to both halt the trash flow from rivers and remove legacy plastics from the oceans at the same time."* (Slat, 2013) This is of course a big project especially with how much plastic we are known to throw out, but I am hopeful that with this event spectators who walk past these talks and get involved, will realise how important it is to help get involved with these projects. This is our planet, and we need to work together to make sure we are protecting it from any harm and saving our future generations.



Fig. Four

Walking alongside the coastline, away from the talks with The Ocean-Cleanup; Spectators might come alongside some trash that was dropped by previous groups where they are encouraged to pick up. This will lead them to their second location which is organised by the aquarium known as Sea life, Fig Four. Here I wanted to curate a small event for all age groups, where families will be placed into groups of six to ten. One of the Sea Life staff will take them alongside the beach finding marine life that is local to Swansea and UK and talk about a few projects they are involved with.

One of the projects I would like them to explain is their charity partner the SEA LIFE trust which operates two marine animal sanctuaries, Cornish Seal and worlds first Beluga Whale Sanctuary. Starting off with *"The SEA LIFE TRUST Beluga Whale Sanctuary was created with support from Merlin Entertainments and Whale and Dolphin Conservation (WDC) with the aim of providing beluga whales with a safe and more natural home."* (Sealife, 2015). Which is one of the sanctuaries I want them to talk about due to these animals being extinct and needed to have a close eye on them. This will allow the spectator to feel some sorrow and engaging with the help of saving these marine creatures.



Fig Five



Fig Six



Fig Seven

While the spectator makes their way towards the end of the exhibition, I wanted to curate Marian Debris art pieces in a way that shows that these pieces were originally trash. I decided to invite Debris an “*Sydney artist who transforms garbage found in the ocean or washed up on the beach into intricately constructed garments*” (2016) as she would perfectly fit into the exhibition. Especially as I like how Debris wants to portray that “*The waste we create keeps coming back to haunt us*” (Debris, 2016) which is exactly what I want to show spectators, but also encourage artists to use what they find around as inspiration rather than go out and buy more materials, which could also end up in our landfills.

I have placed the models in various places around the beach, as if they were trash laying on the beach that was dropped by one of the locals where the fashion show begins. Starting with the first piece, *Fig Five*. This model will be laying on top of the sand, buried slightly under to show that this trash was once a hidden takeaway container, discarded by the trashy owner which come into the hands of an Artist Marian Debris who turned into a stunning dress known as “*Takeaway Queen*” (photographed, Monching Flores).

Second model, Fig Six will be lying next to an abandoned boat, almost as she is wrapped around the boat, this will represent the nets that wrap around marine life especially turtles. The reason why I want to curate the model this way is because of her dress being made from fishing nets that were found in the Pacific Gyre and were created By Debris into this stunning gown called “*A Captive Audience*” (photographed, Larue)

Last Piece in the fashion show is Fig Seven, which will be one of the models that walk around the beach as if she is being taken away by the wind. Her trashion outfit is a layered gown made entirely out of plastic bags, which were found along the beach and inside the ocean. “*BagLady*” (photographed, Monching Flores) was given as a name to this art piece which I wanted to curate, that way due to the nature of plastic bags getting carried away by the wind to unknown places.

As shown in Fig One, that would conclude the whole exhibition located at Swansea Bay Beach. I am hopeful that not only will this exhibition let future generations to get involved with various of projects to help our oceans, but I also hope that this brought some creative ideas to artists who are experiencing art block and want a new way to use materials where new pieces of art can be made, and trash can be recycled. Together we can save our planet and continue to build relationships with our ecosystems, where our kingdoms can live in harmony.

Figures

Fig One: Swansea Beach (2024) Exhibition Map [Digital Generated Image]

Fig Two: Product Sketches (2024) Prizes obtained by Trash [Digital Generated Image]

Fig Three: The Ocean Cleanup Logo. (n.d.). [Digital]

Fig Four: Sea Life Logo. [Digital]

Fig Five: Flores, M. (n.d.). *Takeaway Queen*. [Digital Photograph]

Fig Six: Larue (n.d.). *A Captive Audience*. [Digital Photograph]

Fig Seven: Flores, M. (n.d.). *BagLady*. [Digital Photograph]

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