

Ways of Perceiving, Curation

Essay

For this task I will be curating an exhibition entitled ?. It will be an exhibition that is centred around the human mind and the psychological aspect of existence. It will aim to demonstrate to the audience that they are a small part of a much bigger set of events. The exhibition will consist of just 5 visitors who will be selected according to their economic backgrounds. It will be in Iceland as this is often considered to be one of the most primal locations on the planet, somewhere where the Earth is largely untouched. This is an important factor as it will take the visitors back to their evolutionary roots. The exhibition will not exhibit any forms of artwork other than the visitor themselves alongside some scientific equipment. I believe this is crucial for the exploration of the self. The exhibition will take place one evening in early September. This will ensure that it lines up with the sunset (approximately 8:00pm) so that as the subjects leave their container it will be getting dark.

The exhibition itself will be held in the centre of Iceland next to the Hofsjökull. This is the third largest glacier in the country and the biggest active volcano on the island. Here, 5 shipping containers will be placed approximately 1.5km apart from each other. This is to ensure that the chances of the visitors meeting once they've finished the exhibition are minimal. These containers will be 8ftx8.5ftx20ft (standard sizing for a container). They will be dropped into position via helicopter and will be on the ground for a total of two and a half days to ensure minimal damage to the surrounding wildlife. Inside the shipping containers there will be a layer of soundproofing to line the walls to ensure there is no disturbance to any wildlife that passes the containers and vice versa. There will be no light source in the containers other than a small projector hidden in a small box in the back-right corner of the container. All surfaces of the container will be painted with a substance known as 'Vantablack' which is an acrylic paint that absorbs '99% of visible light'. This will ensure that any light will be absorbed leaving the visitor in complete darkness. My thinking behind this comes from the quotes' "We read a house" "We read a room" (Bachelard, G. (1958)). In response to this thinking the subjects' minds will be completely blank and open to the events that will unfold while they are in a space with no visible features. Unknown to the visitor there will be 3 items on a pedestal, waiting for them once they exit the container. These will be a high-powered electric consumer telescope, a microscope along side slides and equipment for gathering specimens and finally a pistol with a silencer attached. The pedestals will be made from logs or boulders found in the vicinity of the exhibition thus ensuring a sustainable means of displaying these items. These items will be free to use by the visitor for 2 hours once they have left the container. After the 2 hours they will be collected from their location and flown home to their country of origin immediately. This whole exhibition is inspired by the metanarrative theory. Metanarratives are universal beliefs and theories, for example science, religion, truth etc. "Metanarratives are the overarching stories we use to justify activities, institutions, values and cultural forms. They are the assumptions that underpin what we think and do." (Adams & Dyson, 2004, p. 237) This whole exhibition relies heavily on this theory as it is based on and around most scientific discoveries and theories describing life.

The visitors will be selected from UK residents, each with a different economic background. This is to demonstrate what effects the exhibition has on different economic backgrounds. Two of the visitors will also be from a religious background which again will be randomly selected. This will also demonstrate the effects of the exhibition on those who believe in a deity and those who do not. The

subjects will be flown out to Iceland a week in advance and they will all be able to use this time as a sort of holiday. Each subject will have access to the same resources such as hire cars and tours to ensure there are no differences in their experience. These expenses will be pre-paid for them. During this week they will be monitored, with the results being used to tailor the exhibition in small ways to the subject.

Each visitor will be provided with plain black clothes to wear to the exhibition. Their shoes will contain a small tracking device so that their location can be monitored during the exhibition. They will also be asked to swallow a pill containing a same device so that in the event that they remove their shoes, they can still be traced. On the day of the exhibition they will be collected in completely blacked out SUVs at approximately 18:30 and taken to a random airport. From here they will each be helicoptered to their specific container. Whilst they are being flown they will be blindfolded to ensure they do not know their location at any point.

The exhibition will begin an hour after the last visitor has been shut in their container. This ensures that each visitor is in the same approximate physical and mental state when the exhibition begins. During the exhibition there are 5 main themes that will be explored: How the planets came into existence, how life came into existence, teachings from the Greek philosopher Diogenes, how life develops and how the universe will end. Each theme will be approximately 30 minutes long and will each consist of videos and still images relating to that subject. These will be pulled from online videos, documentaries, and books for example: *Earth Story* (Lamb, S. and Sington, D.) which contains facts about the beginning of the Earth, how the Moon came into existence and how events like volcanos shape and nurture our very existence. These will be designed to educate the reader about their existence. For example one of the documentary extracts will be Professor Brian Cox, an English Physicist who is currently a professor of particle physics at the university of Manchester, explaining how life is a geological biproduct between salt water and fresh water mixing, this then creates the small electrical current needed to jump started life; "...and there's that waterfall, that cascade of protons, the same thing that's happening in the cells of your body, in the body of every living thing on the planet." (Cox, 2019). Quotes from Diogenes will also be displayed in this presentation. Quotes such as "I know nothing, except the fact of my own ignorance." (*Diogenes of Sinope: Life and Legend*). This will enable the subject to have in depth thoughts about their own lives and what really matters to them. I have chosen Diogenes because he was famed for questioning possessions. It could be said that Diogenes lived one of the most natural lives of any philosopher. He was closest to his most primal self and thus was able to learn a lot about the existence of man and what it has evolved to be. They may interpret these presentations how they want, however they will each be shown the same things. Once this stage has finished the doors to the container will open and the telescope, microscope and pistol will be visible in that order.



Fig1



Fig2



Fig3

These three objects will symbolise everything that they have just learned. The telescope will be able to show them deep space objects like nebulae where stars are born as well as the local planets like Mars and Venus. The microscope will be able to show them the building blocks of life like cells and bacteria. Beside the microscope there will be a small syringe and cotton buds so that the visitor will be able to view their own cells as well as any specimens they want to observe if they wish. Finally the gun will be a poignant reminder that everything they have just witnessed can be taken away in a split second and it will emphasise that life is fragile. They will experience all of this whilst in an amazing landscape and underneath the entire cosmos which will be visible as it would be dark by the time they exit the container. It is important to note that once the doors open the subjects are free to do whatever they want for the next two hours. Any destructive actions however will be paid for in some way. Once the two hours has ended the subjects will be collected from their locations by a helicopter and flown to Reykjavik airport. From there they will be flown straight back to the UK where they will be taken back to their homes.

The aim of this exhibition is to demonstrate the complexity and beauty of everything that has and will exist. It will also serve as a means of showing the subjects that they are a very small part of a much bigger puzzle and show them that there is no real meaning to life because everything will end eventually, however whatever this existence is, it is surprisingly complex and amazing. In addition to all of this and perhaps most importantly, they will embark on this 'journey' in the most amazing place on Earth. They will be somewhere where the Earth is largely untouched, showing what life could have been like.

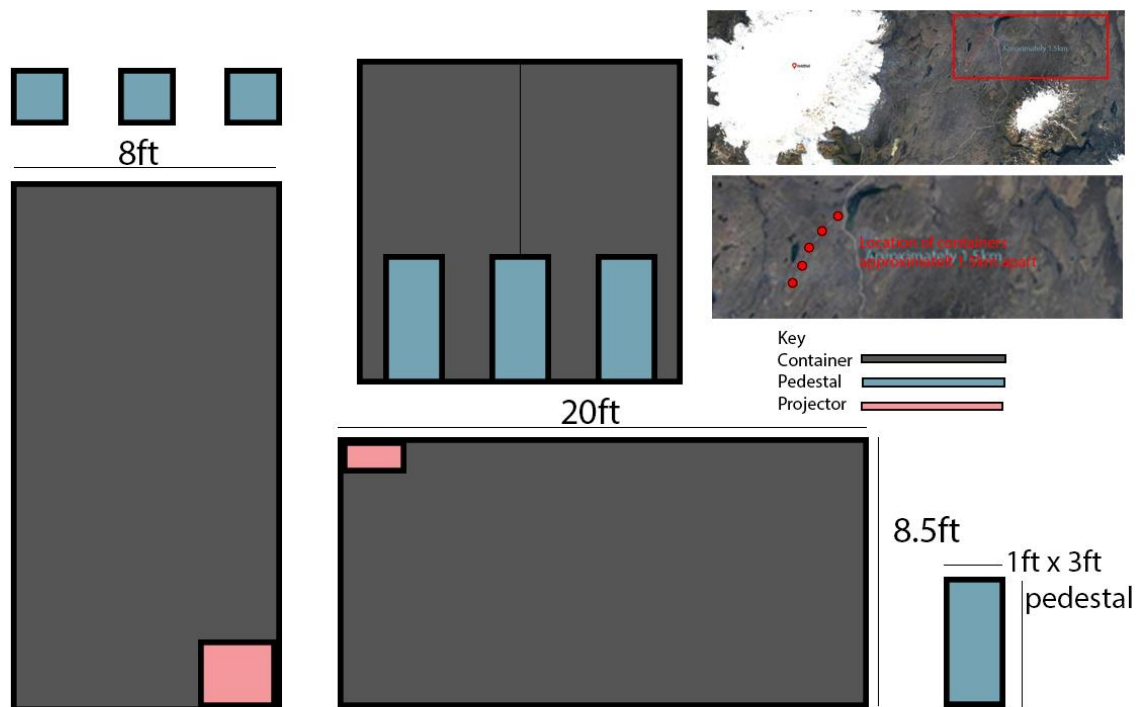


Figure 4: Package drawing of container and a diagram of their locations (Ludlow 2020)

Figure 1: A celestron Nexstar 5slt

Shop, C. and Telescope, C., 2020. *Celestron Nexstar 5 SLT Computerised Telescope - Celestron UK*. [online] Celestron UK. Available at: <<https://www.celestron.co.uk/shop/celestron-nexstar-5-slt-computerised-telescope/>> [Accessed 11 May 2020].

Figure 2: A GXM F2000 compound microscope

Microscope, G., 2020. *GXM F2000 Compound Microscope*. [online] Onestopnature.co.uk. Available at: <<https://www.onestopnature.co.uk/GXM-F2000-Compound-Microscope>> [Accessed 11 May 2020].

Figure 3: An MK Pistol replica with silencer.

gunfire.com. 2020. *MK Pistol Replica With A Silencer - Black*. [online] Available at: <<https://gunfire.com/en/products/mk-pistol-replica-with-a-silencer-black-1152207199.html>> [Accessed 11 May 2020].

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