

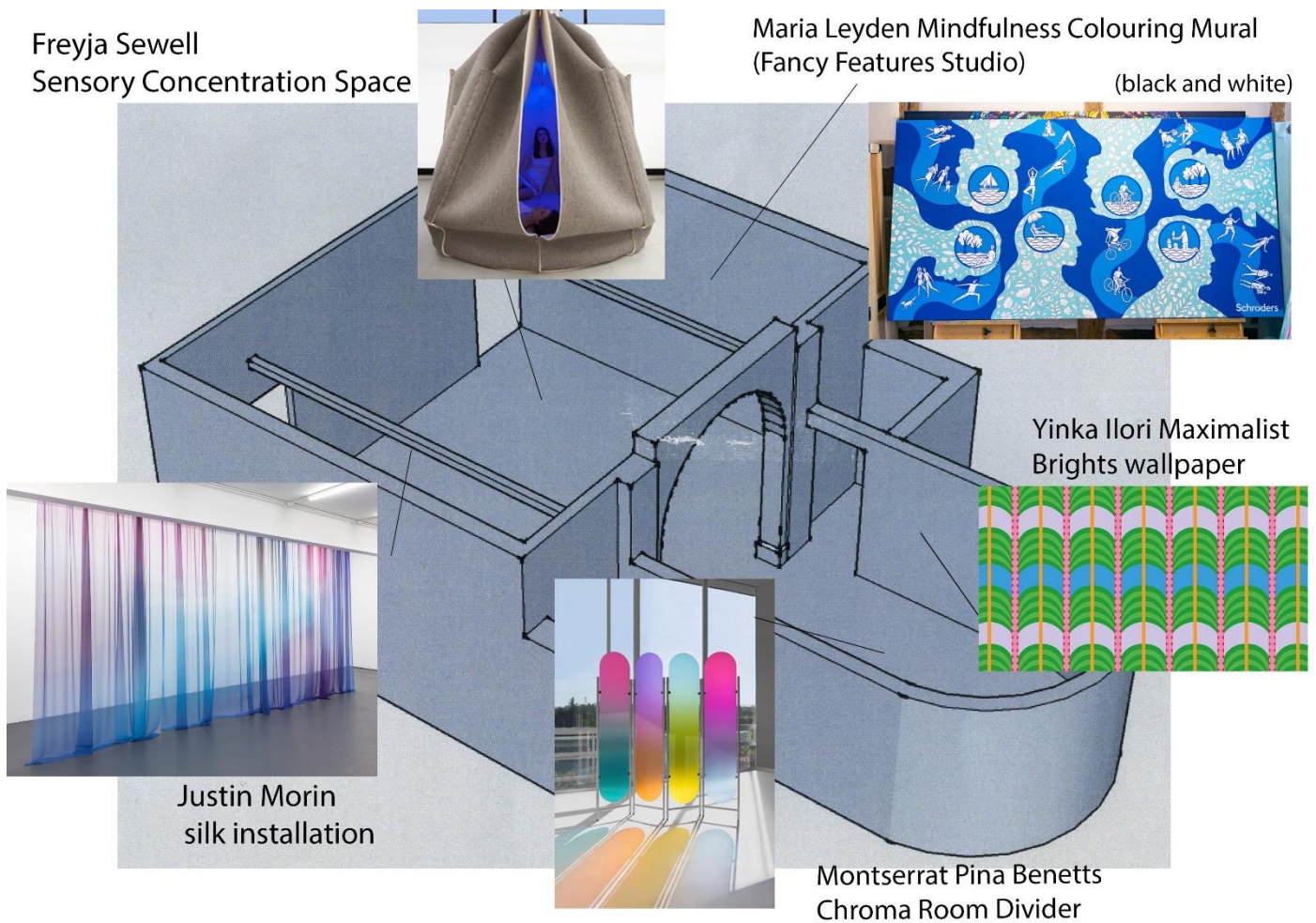
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Map of my imagined exhibition held in the Mission Gallery.



My imagined exhibition focuses on the psychology behind colour and how this relates to colour therapy to improve mental health and wellbeing. The exhibition is held at the Mission Gallery and displays the work of five artists whose work explores this idea. The artists are Justin Morin, Montserrat Pina Benetts, Freyja Sewell, Yinka Ilori and Maria Leyden. My imagined exhibition is an experience for visitors of the idea of colour therapy and the experience of different emotions through colour.

I investigate colour therapy as it is important to be open minded to reduce stigma around therapy and mental health in general. By creating an imagined exhibition with this at the focus, it will give an insight into how colour can be used to change how we feel, and I aim to distract visitors from the stresses of daily life. For example, "soft pastels...have to ability to relax and calm the body and mind" (Clark, 2020). This is important as colour is all around us, "colours are everywhere... they make life enjoyable" (Grondin, 2016, p.67), and knowledge of colour psychology can be incorporated into our homes or workplace to improve wellbeing.

According to the book '*The Elements of Colour*' by Johannes Itten, "colour must have a mystical capacity for spiritual expression" (Birren, Hagan and Itten, 1970, p.6). This is why work that uses colour can change our feelings and subconscious. An example of this spiritual expression is Freyja Sewell's 'Sensory Concentration Space' (see Fig. 2).

To highlight colour therapy analysis of the principles of colour psychology, colour associations and how different colours such as green make us feel is needed. In the book *'The Elements of Colour'*, the authors note "colours are forces, radiant energies that affect us positively or negatively" (Birren, Hagan and Itten, 1970, p.12), which has been considered through the work I have chosen to exhibit.

My exhibition includes pieces such as wallpaper from Yinka Ilori's 'Maximalist Brights' collection and one of Justin Morin's Silk Installations in gradients of blue and purple. Furthermore, the walls of the gallery space are white which is clean and "symbolic of new beginnings" (Rockett and St George, 2019, p.139), as well as it having a "historical association with healing and spirituality" (Clark, 2022). This also makes the colourful pieces in my exhibition stand out.



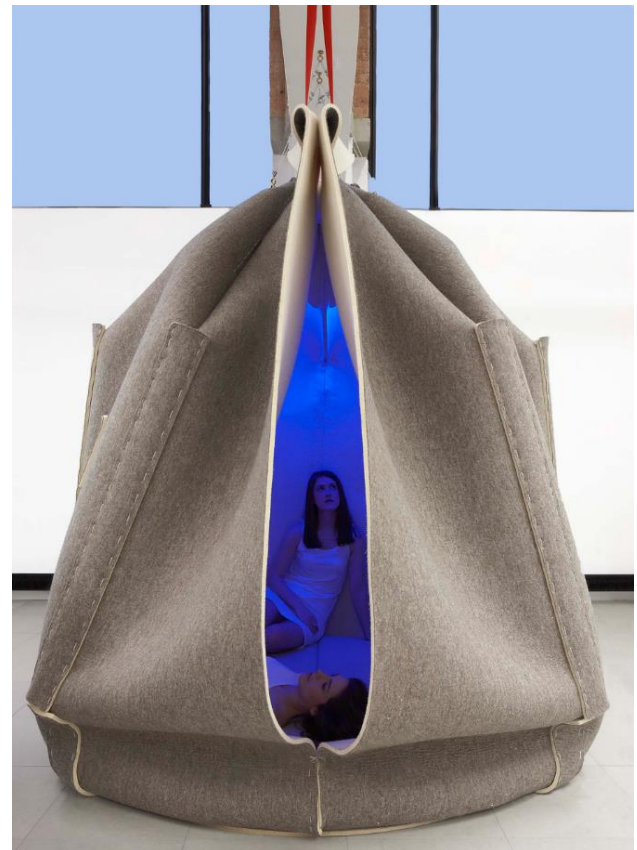
(Fig. 1.)

Displayed towards the back of the room, in front of the windows is the 'Chroma Room Divider' (Fig, 1.) by Montserrat Pina Benetts which is just under 6ft (180cm) and was manufactured in 2020 (1st Dibs, 2022). The divider is in front of the windows so that the light will reflect the gradients of colour into the surrounding space. This will make the divider feel bigger than it is, "every coloured object reflects colour into the surrounding space...the glossier the surface, the more conspicuous these

reflections will be” (Birren, Hagan and Itten, 1970, p.80). I have chosen this piece as the colourful reflections from the natural light creates a calming atmosphere in the surrounding space which can change how visitors feel and highlights the idea of colour therapy. Interestingly, in the book *‘Eye and Brain: The Psychology of Seeing’*, it states “Newton named seven spectral colours: red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet” (Gregory, 2015, p.18), some of which are used in the Chroma divider, linking to Isaac Newton’s Colour Theory.



(Fig. 2.)



(Fig. 3.)

Situated to the left as visitors walk into the gallery is one of Freyja Sewell’s ‘Sensory Concentration Space’ (SCS). This 100% wool felt structure includes an iPad inside to change the sounds and colour of the LED lights in the pod (Design Bloom, 2014). It is a space that visitors can test, to focus on being in the present moment; “companies such as Google ... have addressed the need for rest and relaxation in the workplace by incorporating colourful light infused meditation chambers into their offices” (Clark, 2022). The colour changing lights are used for a reason and relate to the idea of colour therapy and how colour can change our emotions. Itten states that “nothing affects us more dramatically than the apparition of a gigantic colour corona in the heavens”, (Birren, Hagan and Itten, 1970, p.8). This illustrates how the colours in the pod can change how visitors feel. In addition, the colours shown in the images (Fig. 2.) are red, green, and blue which were colours tested with emotions in the article ‘The mechanistic basis of Chromotherapy: current knowledge and future perspectives’. The article found that “saturated and bright colours lead to higher arousal” and “red

was the most arousing colour” (Ismail et al, (2019). It is interesting that these colours are used in the SCS by Freyja Sewell and I intend for visitors to test the pod to see if it changes how they feel.



(Fig. 4.)

On the curved wall in the gallery is this wallpaper (Fig. 4.), designed by Yinka Ilori in collaboration with the brand Lick. This wallpaper is on the curved wall to mimic the shapes in the wallpaper design and for visitors to feel immersed by the colours used.

The artist Yinka Ilori aims for his work to evoke feelings of joy and he is playful with the colours he uses (Yinka Ilori Studio, 2022). I have chosen this wallpaper design as it uses strong colours and it is interesting how we tend not to use bold wallpaper in our homes even though colour can make us feel good. According to the book *‘Colours and Colour Vision’*, “the more saturated the colours are, the more pleasant and attractive they become” (Kernell, 2016, p.17). Therefore, the curved end of the gallery space makes visitors feel uplifted and according to an article by WGSN, “highly saturated hues can lift energy levels” (Clark, 2022) which is the aim for this area in the gallery. In relation to my

theme of colour therapy, the most dominant colour in this wallpaper is green and the colour green is “believed to be the most healing of colours, studies have shown that it is also the most restful for the human eye”, (Rockett and St George, 2019, p.136).



(Fig, 5.)

To the right of the gallery, draped from the light beams is one of Justin Morins silk installations. Looking at the image, the installation is quite wide, so it sits along the whole length of the gallery wall to make an impact as guests walk in. Also, as it is silk, it will move as visitors walk by. I have chosen this piece as I when I look at it, I feel calm and at ease which may be due to the deep blue and purple gradient, as well as it being made from silk which moves elegantly and looks ethereal. In relation to colour therapy, “gradients, ombres and layers of colour...enhance the sensory atmosphere of the home” (Clark, 2021). With this installation being one of the first things visitors see in the exhibition, it sets the mood of the gallery to be calm and mindful. Visitors can step into a space that distracts them from the real world.



(Fig. 6.)

On the wall to the left as visitors walk in is the 'Mindfulness colouring mural' by Maria Leyden in black and white so that visitors can colour it in themselves. I wanted my exhibition to be an experience for visitors to get involved which is why I have included this wall mural and the 'Sensory Concentration Space' by Freyja Sewell.

As well as colours alone being able to change how we feel, colouring in has proven to be very therapeutic and according to an article it is a "mindfulness activity, keeps you focused in the present moment on a task and gives you a break from the chatter of worry, fear and anxiety that can cause stress" (Barrett, 2015). Visitors will feel in the present moment from looking at the other pieces in my exhibition, and then can take part in a physical activity which may help them even more to feel this way.

Furthermore, the colours visitors use will be shades of blue, like the image (see Fig. 6.) as according to the book *'Extraordinary Interiors in Colour'*, the colour blue can "inspire feelings of serenity and contentment" and it is a "stress-busting colour" (Rockett and St George, 2019, p.136). A study into blue lighting also concluded that "blue lighting accelerates the relaxation process" (Minguillon et al, 2017). The emotional effects of the colour blue will make visitors feel a certain way and hopefully conclude and capture the overall intention of my exhibition.

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