

Ways of Perceiving Curation Essay

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‘2100’



‘2100’ is an exhibition portrayed in a world seventy-nine years from now. I set the scene in Swansea Old Boys Club, a derelict and abandoned building as seen in the above photographs. This is a curative decision to portray the sense of a dishevelled world in which humanity have overrun nature, and, in turn, humanity itself. The reason for setting this exhibition in 2100 is inspired by David Attenborough’s A Life on Our Planet video clip, along with other artefacts, that all seem to land on 2100 almost as the deadline of Earth’s devastation, by which time the natural world and in turn humanity, cannot take anymore.

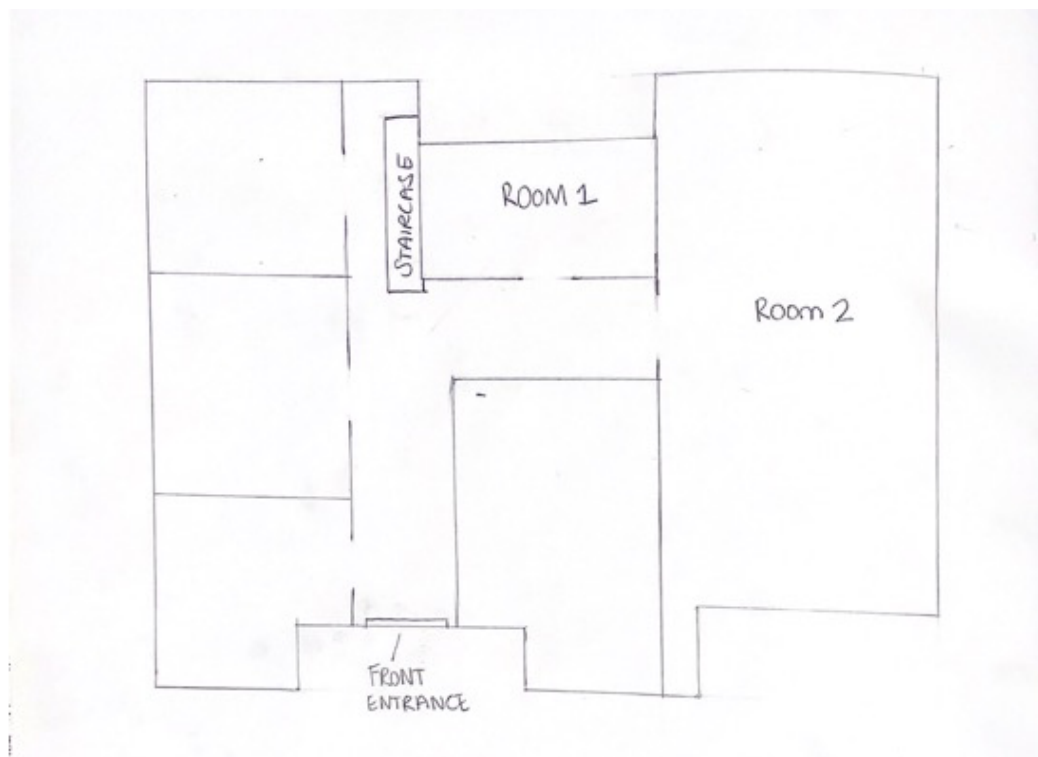
I have gathered five pieces of work which support my exhibition, deriving of an opening video clip and a following four graphic designs that are powerful by use of various graphic design techniques. For example, I have tried to show the power of typography, infographics, illustration, and colour in the pieces I have chosen. All artefacts act as warning signs to humanity of the detrimental effects of climate change, of which we have ignored in this ‘2100’ setting. The aim of these warnings is to instil a sense of urgency in observers, that, currently, we are doing just this - ignoring these warnings ourselves by not taking enough measures to change our ways today. One thing that connects all these works is the theme of time running out and slipping away before we can save our world.

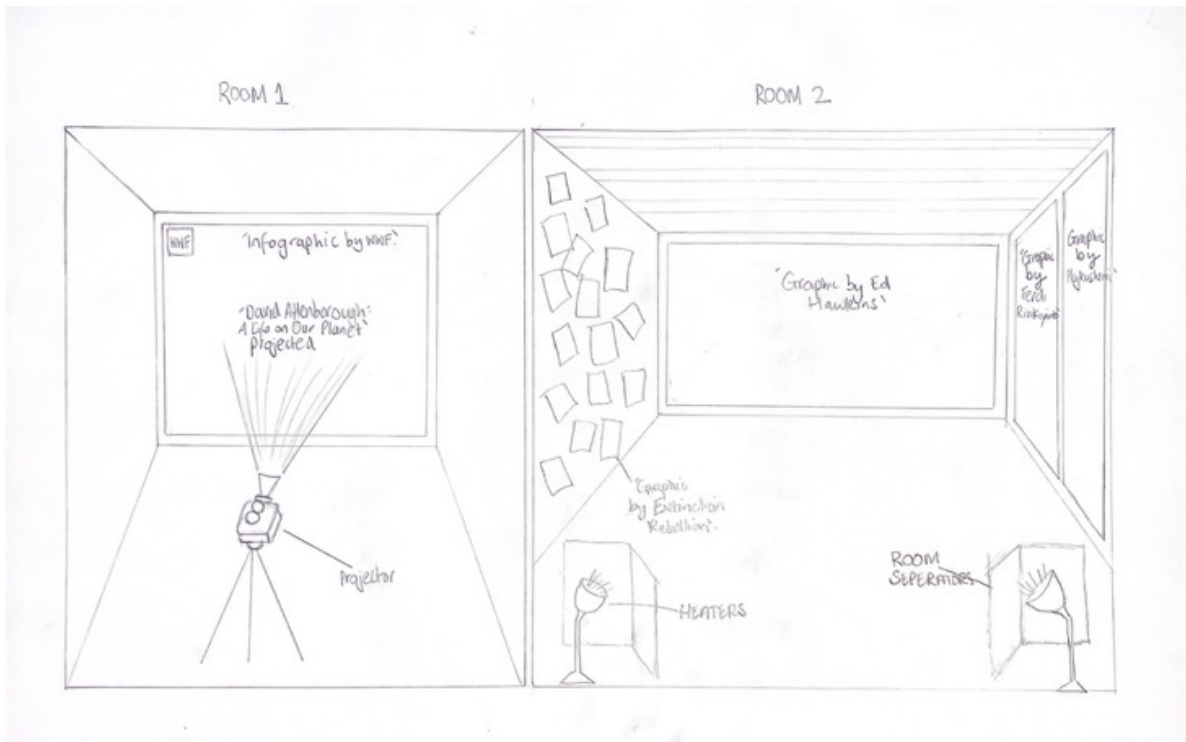
Observers will begin by walking through the front door of the Old Boys Club and making their way to the back of the building, a curative decision to allow them to experience the disarray of the setting. Room one will be the first stop, with the adjacent room being room two. Every detail is important in an exhibition, as everything will impact how the observers feel, even down to the way in which the pieces are presented. For example, presenting pieces

with sensitive and painful meanings behind them in a certain way, for example by hammering the artworks into the wall rather than mounting it neatly, can send a strong message in itself, perhaps alluding to the “emotional rawness” of those artworks (Brower, 2018). Therefore, this inspired me to have the pieces hammered into the derelict walls, to reflect the damage humanity has caused by ignoring these warnings.

Room one contains two different artefacts, the video clip, projected onto the centre wall, and an infographic on the very same wall. The decision of a separate room for these is to allow the spectator quiet time to listen and reflect on the powerful clip that begins to play on entering the room and the important infographic behind it, and then step into the scream of ignored warnings from multiple graphic designers in room two. The placement of artefacts by the curator need not follow an approach in order of creation but can more interestingly follow aesthetic interests such as pattern, symmetry and emotional feeling (Thomas, 2016).

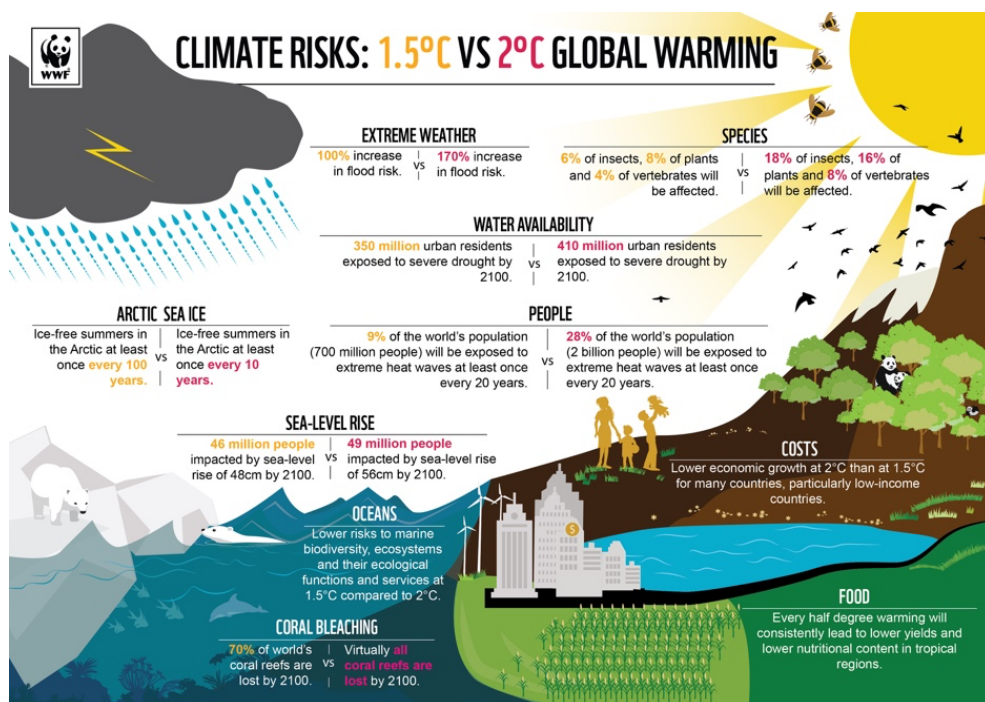
Therefore, I have curated my exhibition in order of what I feel would trigger the most impact and shock in observers, by placing the intense video clip and infographic first we are educating the observer on the importance of the issue I am presenting before the yell of cries from designers, like a punishment to the human race for their ignorance. If not ordered in this way, the exhibit would not send the right message.





<https://youtu.be/SlevksDBa8>

[Fig. One]



[Fig. Two]

Fig. One must be played from 44:10 to end. It describes the likely catastrophic world changes from the 2030s to 2100, highlighting the reality that humanity's "blind assault on the planet has finally come to alter the very fundamentals of the living world" (David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet, 2020). The clip conveys, in this 2100 exhibition, the events that occur in our world up to "now" – 2100. The theme of time permeates here through the decades Fig 1 takes us through, instilling a sense of doom. As the projector finishes displaying Fig 1, we are left with the looming infographic behind, echoing the words of Attenborough with devastating facts about climate change, many with the deadline of 2100.

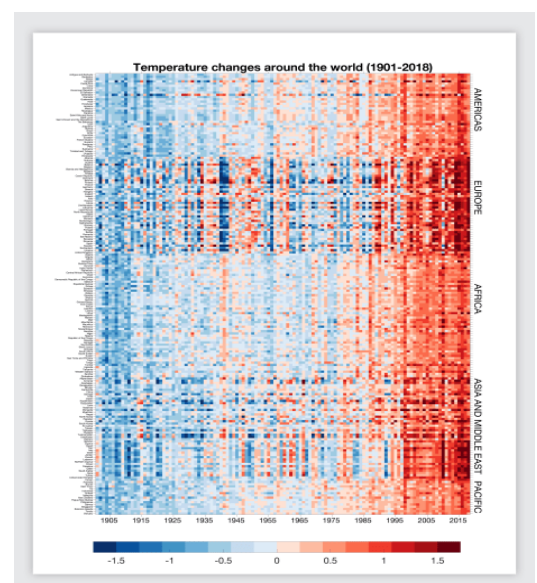
The human brain is "evolutionarily wired to understand images" and so infographics are a powerful way of communicating as much information as possible in a visually grasping way (Dunlap and Lowenthal, 2016). Fig. Two is by the Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF), and provides observers with facts and predictions that echo the video clip, to reinforce these to observers. Again, the theme of time running out is presented to us within this infographic with the repeated reference to 2100.



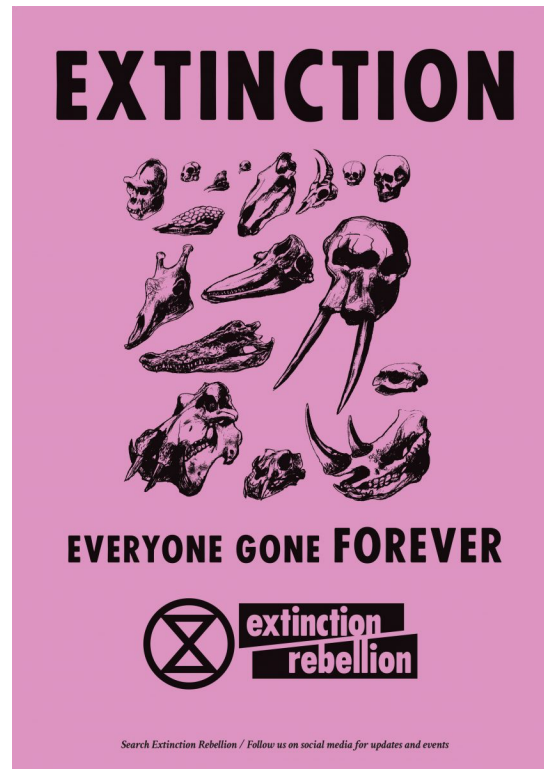
[Fig. Three]

Observers are directed to enter room two, where they are blasted by the heat in the room provided by two outdoor heaters in the corners, hidden by room separators to keep up the illusion of a globally warmed world as it could be in 2100. By this time the atmospheric temperature could be as much as five degrees warmer (Tollefson, 2020), therefore making it uncomfortably warm in this room filled with the shouts of climate change warnings, almost like the heat reprimands humanity for doing so wrong by nature. Therefore, this experience is curated to make observers uncomfortable.

Fig. Three will be displayed on the centre wall in large scale (2.4 x 6 metres), immediately grabbing the observer's eye like a shock to the system. The power of colour and pattern is prominent in Fig. Three, a graphic



design by scientist Ed Hawkins, with it speaking so many words about the warming of our world without saying a single word. It represents the earth's atmospheric temperature from 1905 to 2015, see photograph on the right which is what Hawkins based this graphic on. The importance of colour choice by a designer is highlighted as integral to delivering the right message to observers (Seahwa, 2021). Again, the theme of time runs through this piece, screaming 'time is running out' with its gradually changing colours to red, the universal colour of extremes, communicating danger and 'stop' to observers (Colour Matters, 2021).



[Fig. Four]

By implementing lots of these small, repeated posters all over one wall this screams to the spectator 'how did we miss the warnings?', whilst also reinforcing this dooming reality of "Everyone Gone Forever". In addition, the ironic waste of paper is to highlight humanity's reckless use of resources; and this is particularly important for designers, as Jedlicka (2010) tells us that design decisions equate to around 80% of the life cycle impacts of a product or service. Similarly, Andy Warhol favoured repetition within his exhibitions, repeating a single artwork multiple times on one wall, which has been speculated as a tactic to comment on mass production in our commercial world (Maddox Gallery, 2020). Seen in the bottom right of the graphic is extinction rebellion's sand timer logo which again reinforces that "time is running out" (Dawood, 2019) as a theme that permeates through my exhibit and connects all involved artefacts to instil a sense of urgency in the audience.



[Fig. Five]

Fig. Five by Graphic Designer Ferdi Rizikiyanto is a powerful illustrative approach to again warn observers of time running out with the hourglass that's filling with a civilisation inside to resemble rising sea levels, and to really hit home that this directly affects humanity's way of life. The split between the natural scene of the icebergs melting and the urban life below really captures to an observer how everything we do is directly affecting nature and so we must start working "with nature rather than against it" (David Attenborough: A Life on Our Planet, 2020). Fig 5 will be displayed on large scale on one wall (2.4 x 1.5 metres) to have dramatic effect on its own and reinforce this theme of time running out that's permeated through the whole exhibition to have a finishing effect of dread and urgency in observers, so that they may start thinking about change.

Certain things must be considered concerning the practicality of my exhibition. For example, we must consider the safety of the building being used and ensure there are no trip hazards such as rubble and bricks and that the building is safe enough structurally. Also, we must be careful with the heaters used and ensure they do not present any fire hazard that might jeopardize the safety of observers.

Therefore, I aim for my exhibition to have a lasting impact on observers in realising the urgency of saving our planet, and how time is running out for us on this matter. I would like observers to leave with the feeling that everything is interconnected within this world we inhabit, and so each and every individual makes decisions every day that affect the functioning of nature and of other species. The larger aim is cause observers to be more thoughtful and conscientious about climate change and start to notice the warnings of graphic design that they may previously have been ignoring around them. After all, graphic design is everywhere around us today, and so really, we are just showing observers what is already in front of them in daily life.

Figures

Fig. One. Chew, S. (2020). *Sir David Attenborough A Life On Our Planet Witness Statement (We Need Immediate Attention)* [Video] Available at: <https://youtu.be/SlevvksDBa8> (Accessed: 18 April 2021).

Fig. Two. World Wide Fund for Nature (2018) *Our Warming World: How Much Difference Will Half-a-Degree Really Make?* [Infographic] Available at: https://www.google.co.uk/url?sa=i&url=https%3A%2F%2Fwww.wwf.org.uk%2Fupdates%2Ffour-warming-world-how-much-difference-will-half-degree-really-make&psig=AOvVaw0JuKtXlMZxVXOV6hoi7gae&ust=1620051427655000&source=images&cd=vfe&ved=0CAIQjRxqFwoTCOCg_4CYq_ACFQAAAAAdAAAAABAD (Accessed: 2 May 2021).

Fig. Three. Peters, A. (2019) 'This is one of the simplest and best climate change graphics we've ever seen'. *Fast Company*, 21st June 2019. Available at: <https://www.fastcompany.com/90367577/this-is-one-of-the-simplest-and-best-climate-change-graphics-weve-ever-seen> (Accessed: 10 March 2021).

Fig. Four. Dawood, S. (2019) 'How Extinction Rebellion designed "angry but peaceful" protest graphics'. *Design Week*, 17th April 2019. Available at: <https://www.designweek.co.uk/issues/15-21-april-2019/how-extinction-rebellion-protest-graphics/> (Accessed 10 March 2021).

Fig. Five. Polygrafi (2013) *Running Out of Time*. Available at: <https://polygrafi.wordpress.com/2013/10/29/running-out-of-time/> (Accessed: 8 March 2021)

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