

Student Name: Emily Phillips

P Number: 2101485

Programme of Study: Surface pattern design

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Ways of Thinking Lecturer's Name: Julia Lockheart

"Recognition" is my exhibition based on the importance of Arts and Crafts, as decorative art has been "marginalised and undervalued" (Gani, 2021) since the movement began. I will explore the role of arts and crafts: in activism and protest through the British 'craft' movement; in improving mental health; and, in promoting global unity. "Recognition" comes from the term "recognoscere", meaning "to acknowledge" and "know again", signifying to the audience that we should re-learn the value of arts and crafts, as art is "a force for social progress" (Rivera, 2017) and it plays "a significant role in our society." (Taylor, 2020) Therefore, this exhibition is about highlighting, and recognising some of the roles that craft plays in our society.

Historically, the marginalisation of low, or decorative art stemmed from "craftspeople [being] considered working class" whilst other forms of creativity, such as painting and architecture, received a "luxury status" as the artists moved in "high society circles" (Eden gallery, 2021). As William Morris states in 'Hopes and fears for Art', art has become "divided among great men, lesser men, and little men" (Morris, 1882), with the "little" man being a craftsman. Since the publication, there is a need now more than ever to 'recognise' the intrinsic value that 'decorative' art holds, not just over high art that Morris labelled "unmeaning pomp, or ingenious toys for a few rich and idle men" (Morris, 1882) but as a great contributor to society.

The values of the British arts and crafts movement, led by William Morris, "challenged a developing economy, Industrialisation, the growth of cities, the dominance of the urban bourgeoisie, and secularism." (Crawford, 1997). The movement also had ties with Marxism, and William Morris' "politicised art theory...ought to be recognised as the first English language attempt to produce a Marxist theory of art" (Hemingway, 2006). However, even though Morris theorised about a classist dichotomy between "high" and "low" art, he states that the two cannot be "severed" (Morris, 1882) as together art has the "potential in building socialism", even though high art has "varied and contradictory roles within capitalism." (Rivera, 2017) Suggesting that art and craft, whether contributing positively or negatively, impacts society.

The political agenda associated with historical decorative arts can be seen in the modern craftivism movement. Craftivism, a term created by Betsy Greer, is about "challeng[ing] injustice in the world" (craftivist collective, n.d.), echoing both Marxism and the British Arts and Crafts movement. Whilst the British Arts and Crafts movement were directly opposed to capitalism, 'Craftivists' campaign on wider issues such as climate change, feminism, and, most recently, have shown solidarity with Ukraine by emphasising the importance of global unity (craftivist collective, n.d.).

Community- centred values prevalent in arts and crafts may also support mental health, and aid well being. "Participatory art-based activities enhance... well-being and quality of life" (Beauchet et al, 2020). For example, "How to" Arts and Crafts viewings increased significantly on Pinterest in the UK during the Covid-19 pandemic (Hill, 2020), a time of uncertainty and isolation. Furthermore, " textile craft helped [the participants of a study] cope with depression and negative feelings, while offering

social support and positive relationships” (Craft Council, 2020) highlighting how arts and crafts supports individuals, whilst also building longer-term social support networks, which is especially important as “Clinical depression has surged to epidemic proportions in recent decades” (Jowit, 2018). Therefore, the aim of this exhibition is to ‘recognise’ the role that art and craft holds in communities, and to ‘know again’ artists for their craft work and political impact. “Marxists argue that one can only begin fully to appreciate and understand a work of art by examining it in relation to the conditions of its creation.” (Rivera, 2017). Therefore, community-based craft projects, that also positively benefit individuals, can arguably increase the ‘social’ value (and power) of the finished piece.

The first exhibit, “The Red Dress Project” is a collaborative piece by Kirstie Macleod, taking 13 years (from 2009-2022) to embroider and can be seen in figure 3. The initial aim was to “generate a dialogue of identity through embroidery, merging diverse cultures, with no borders.” (Red dress embroidery, n.d.) Macleod uses her craft to promote global unity, as “embroidery is a language and can be used to communicate” (de la Garza, Hernández-Espinosa and Rosar, 2021). The semiological codes stitched into this dress symbolises the collaborative and non-discriminatory nature of embroidery, whilst protesting for female empowerment “through the creation of something beautiful” (Red dress embroidery, n.d.). Placing this embroidery piece in museums around the world, celebrates the idea that “all handicraftsmen [are] artists” (Morris, 1882). As one can only understand art by analysing the context of its creation (Rivera, 2017), the global journey of the dress is also part of the artwork, as Paul Black states, it has become part of “its identity, process and, in fact, function” (Red dress embroidery, n.d.).

Figure 1, “The welcome blanket” by Jayna Zweiman, celebrates, our “complex individual and collective narratives” (Zweiman, n.d.) by aiming to cover the USA / Mexican “Trump’s wall”, to highlight that all refugees are welcome. The use of craft is a “tangible way to recognize and celebrate our global humanity ... that immigration is vital for the continuing vibrancy of our society and growth of our nation.” (Zweiman, n.d.). Zweiman uses craft to question political agendas, just as William Morris believes that crafts are “clear teachers of (history).” (Morris, 1882). The blankets are distributed to refugees, as “The identity of craft embraces more than art” (Buszek, 2011). The craft is functional, contributes to humanity, and made by the general public - it has a “direct connection to humanity” (Buszek, 2011). As Risatti identifies, “the role and identity of craft in modern ... society” (Buszek, 2011) are important issues. Craftivism unites art and society together.

Figure 4, “The Covid-19 stitch journal” by Claire Wellesley-Smith, also collaborative, shows the importance of connection, using craft to “explore... feelings about the pandemic” (Wellesley-Smith, n.d.). Participants not only completed simple stitch exercises but also responded to the emotions of loss and isolation that lockdown brought. Craft is said to “reduce social isolation, and lower inflammation and stress hormones such as cortisol” (craft council, 2020), and can also help “achieve a sense of control and management of [one’s life] and environment” (Pollanen, 2006), highlighting the importance of participation in art, especially collaborative work. In a mental health study looking at the effects of craft projects on mental health, participants described their finished craft projects “as if it were an image of oneself” (Pollanen, 2006). Not only does the finished piece of art hold social value, but the participation, the process of making, holds value too, reflecting The British Arts and Craft movement, who “were focused not so much on the design of the objects, as on the experience of designing and making them” (Crawford, 1997).

Arguably one of William Morris’ most famous designs, Figure 2- ‘The Strawberry Thief’ is my final exhibit. Morris’ production was small scale, with all aspects of the wallpaper overseen by the artist, working “in opposition to the economic inequality and degradation of the human condition brought

about by industrial capitalism" (design after capitalism, n.d.). Morris believed "The essence of craft is bound to the hand" (Morris, 1882). Therefore, there is no division between the 'worker' and the 'management', as craft has the ability to cross this capitalist curated chasm. Connecting to the process of making gives humanity purpose, since crafting as a hobby increases the feeling of "empowerment" (Pollanen, 2006). However, William Morris goes further, to state that "without these arts, our rest would be vacant and uninteresting, our labour mere endurance, mere wearing away of body and mind" (Morris, 1882) Our final exhibit 'recognises' that controlling our labour in the artistic process has the potential to fulfil, where labour in industrial capitalism does not.

Henri Lefebvre states, a "[social] space is a [social] product... the space thus produced also serves as a tool of thought and of action" (Lefebvre, 1991). This is why the exhibition is in the grounds of the 'Jardin de Tuileries' in Paris. This garden, open to the public, is situated next to the Musée de l'Orangerie, which houses many 'high' art pieces, such as Monets 'Waterlilies'. Juxtaposing these two exhibitions highlights the differences: craft and art, free and ticketed, of social benefit and cultural status, and asserts that 'high' and 'low' art cannot be "severed" (Morris, 1882), that decorative arts should have the same 'recognition' as high art. The proximity of this exhibition to the cultural epicentre of Paris is activism in and of itself, to highlight the idea that "there is no clear line partitioning craft from art" (Buszek, 2011), just as there is no clear line separating craft from society. As a venue for an exhibition, a public park holds an active space in our society, owned by all and accessible to all; alternatively, placing this exhibition in a private gallery would become an economic barrier to the general public and convert the value from egalitarian to elitist, rejecting my premise that art is "not for the few" (Morris, 1882). Merleau-Ponty explains that the narrative "transforms spaces into places and places into spaces" (1967), therefore, although my exhibition is not part of the 'high' art in the Musée de l'Orangerie, it redefines 'craft' into 'art' and 'open spaces' into 'museums'; ultimately, recognising the value of craft, and also recognising that we need to redefine what we value in society.



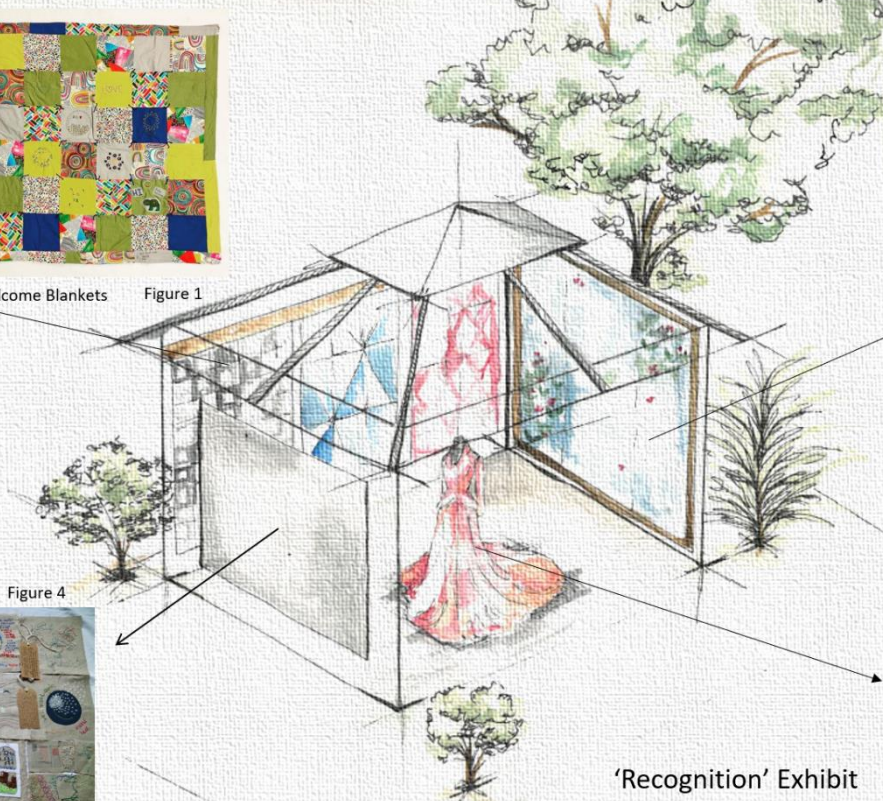
Welcome Blankets Figure 1



Covid 19- Stitch Journals



Figure 4



'Recognition' Exhibit in the Jardin des Tuileries

Strawberry Thief



Figure 2

The Red Dress Embroidery Project

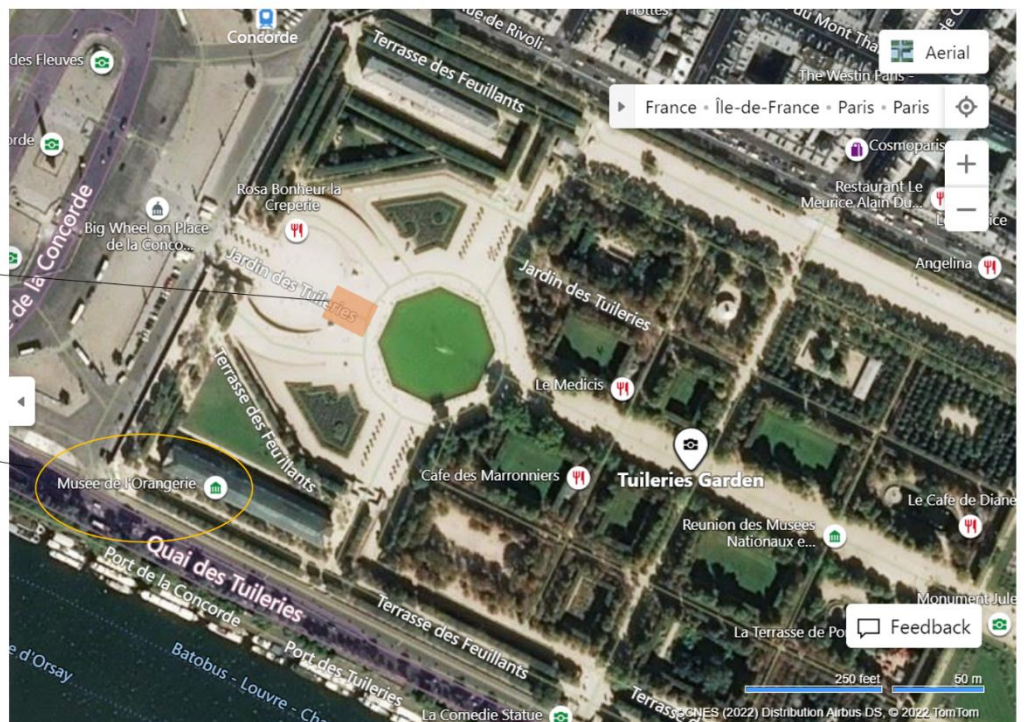


Figure 3

Location of the Exhibition

Musee de L'Orangerie

Figure 5



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Figure 1: Zweiman, J (n.d.). Welcome Blanket. [online] Available at: <https://www.welcomeblanket.org/> [Accessed 21/4/22].

Figure 2: V and A Collections (2020). Strawberry Thief | Morris, William | V&A Search the Collections. [online] Vam.ac.uk. Available at: <https://collections.vam.ac.uk/item/O78889/strawberry-thief-furnishing-fabric-morris-william/>. [Accessed 21/4/22]

Figure 3: reddressembroidery.com. (n.d.). The Red Dress. [online] Available at: <https://reddressembroidery.com/>. [Accessed 21/4/22]

Figure 4: Wellesley-Smith, C. (n.d.). Covid-19 Stitch Journal. [online] Available at: <http://www.clairewellesleysmith.co.uk/covid19-stitch-journal> [Accessed 21/4/22].

Figure 5: Microsoft Bing (n.d.) Jardin des tuileries, available at: <https://www.bing.com/maps?q=jardin+des+tuileries&q=SC&pg=jardin+de+tuileries&sc=6-19&cvid=2CBD7EED1ABE476CA403BFB680280199&FORM=QBRE&sp=1> [Accessed 21/4/22]