Two senses of 'installation' – what does it mean to place a work of art?

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Abstract

The objective of this dissertation was to discover what it means to place a work of art. I based my hypothesis on definitions, not biased opinions, by asking the same four questions throughout my research. My key focus was to find the answers to these questions so as to discover the role of placement in art.

'What does it mean to place an artwork?'

'Does artwork translate to the area it is placed?'

'Is said environment part of the artwork?'

'How does the environment make the artwork change?'

The first point in my research was to explore brief periods in history, examining the function of art and its placement throughout the ages. I then overviewed how the placement of art is presented in modern gallery space; unconventional space and installation. I discovered that where and how one places art will affect how it is perceived.

I used sculpture to experiment with space by situating an object in various environments to gauge the effect of placement. I found it was more effective to produce a purposeful piece of artwork, rather than using an object to test the technical features of placement.

This exercise evolved into creating my installations. By using this art practice, I hoped I could discover what it means to place a work of art.

I reviewed my portfolio (installations) to understand how the purpose of the work affected placement. This, combined with my research on art function and placement throughout history, led me to my final conclusions.

Art placement has developed new meaning from how it was perceived in previous eras and the way artwork is presented today translates to the space it resides. The function of an artwork defines how the placement affects it and the meaning of placement differs according to the viewer's individual perspective.

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Introduction

I have always gravitated towards installation or site-specific works. This has been the case throughout all my creative activities, including studies on my undergraduate course. My interest led me to be intrigued about my surroundings; develop an understanding on how the space where art is placed can be utilised; how it contributes to the effect; also, the actual meaning of a work of art. Through my research, I became aware of how differently other artists define their finished works. Some believe that once the artwork is placed/hung, it is finished. However, others think that creating the work is only part of the art and placement influences how the art is perceived.

I looked at the physical aspects of how a piece of artwork fills a space and the conversation between the artwork and location. I considered the theme (the context of my art; e.g. identity, life, childhood) and method (sculpture, painting, installation) I would use to execute my design.   I then focused on the issues regarding the placement of art to discover how and where one places it affects how it is perceived. I gradually realised that this broad theoretical question was less interesting than actually making the artwork for my exhibition and I will go on to explain my conclusion further.

My current and previous works had meaning or significance, which directed me to present the work in a certain way. By working on a piece of art without true substance, I was unable to freely explore my thoughts. It was difficult to imagine forms or objects filling a space for the purposes of answering a question that had more than one layer of meaning.

I had forgotten the main components that feed into what it means to place art into a space such as: environment, emotion-effect, sight, touch, sound, taste, smell, which affect how we as humans, take in an experience. "The job of the artist is always to deepen the mystery" (Lachman, n,d)

My initial approach changed and my new objective was to create work as an artist. With this in mind, my work was produced with the purpose of it being art before it was introduced into a space. By doing this, the work fulfilled its basis and I could reflect on the space around it, which answered any and all questions that I had asked.

I wanted to generate an understanding of art placement throughout history; how the role of arts changed in the personal and public sphere and compare this with how we use art in this modern era and the new artforms that emerged to question its placement. After gaining a brief knowledge of arts history I looked into how psychology and emotion influences art. The correspondence of emotion filtered into the placement and layered meanings in artists artworks, as well as my own installations. I was using my works as a window to emotion, which affected placement.

It was important to re-analyse my previous installations in this thesis. By breaking down my installations, I evaluated why I had placed objects the way I did and how emotion and psychology were projected in my artwork. This allowed me to effectively use each piece to constructively answer my questions and hypothesis.

1. The presentation of art objects through history

The first point in my research was to review some moments in art history. I looked at how certain eras presented art objects in their respective times and how the function affected the placement.

i.   Paleolithic Art

Figure 1. Maxime Aubert, *Cave paintings* (2014) Photograph

Paleolithic Art generally consists of paintings on rocks, cave walls and ceilings. By looking back at this era, we can see what it originally meant to place a work of art. 'Dating back to 65,000 years ago, the cave paintings and shell beads are the first works of art dated to the time of Neanderthals, and they include the oldest cave art ever found.

In three caves scattered across Spain, researchers found more than a dozen examples of wall paintings that are more than 65,000 years old.' (Greshko, M. 2018) 'Evidence suggests that they were not merely decorations of living areas, since the caves in which they have been found do not have signs of ongoing habitation. Some theories hold that cave paintings may have been a way of transmitting information, while other theories ascribe them as created for a religious or ceremonial purpose. Prehistoric men may have painted animals to "catch" their soul or spirit, in order to hunt them more easily, or the paintings may represent an animistic vision and homage to surrounding nature, or they may be the result of a basic need of expression that is innate to human beings.'(New World Encyclopedia, 2018).

The essay '*Cave Art and Paintings and Their Meaning*' (2013) highlights the fact that indigenous animals were painted by using different techniques, in various styles; using materials found locally. The consensus of opinion is that this art was created for the purposes of communication rather than decoration. For instance, the paintings found in Lascaux and Chauvet's caves in France illustrate bovines and horses, compared to the caves of Altamira in Northern Spain, which show more bison, horses, boars and deer (Dr. Marchello, 2013).

The paintings display the animals in hunting situations, or show off their physical attributes, indicating whether they should be feared or hunted. Similarly, caves in Saharan, Africa display paintings of indigenous wild fauna and animals of that time, supporting the theory that paintings were created for transmitting information to other cavemen (Dr. Marchello,2013)

Figure 2. Saura, *World's Oldest Cave Art Found—And Neanderthals Made It* (2018)
Photograph

Dr. Elaine Marchello states "the paintings are consistent with the idea that the art is related to the importance of hunting in the economy of Upper Paleolithic people".

This is the earliest example of how art function affects placement. Significantly, the paintings are situated in areas of the caves that were not used as living quarters, indicating they were placed there for religious, ceremonial or expressive purposes.

The placement of the art highlights its importance as a message, not as an everyday decorative image; meaning you would actively have to go that area to view the art.

ii.   Ancient Egyptian Art

The Ancient Egyptians were one of the earliest civilisations to incorporate art. It was of great importance in various aspects of their lives. Generally, the works we see on display in museums were products of royal or elite work-shops. These pieces fit best with our modern aesthetic and ideas of beauty and art.' (Dr. Clavert, A. 2013)
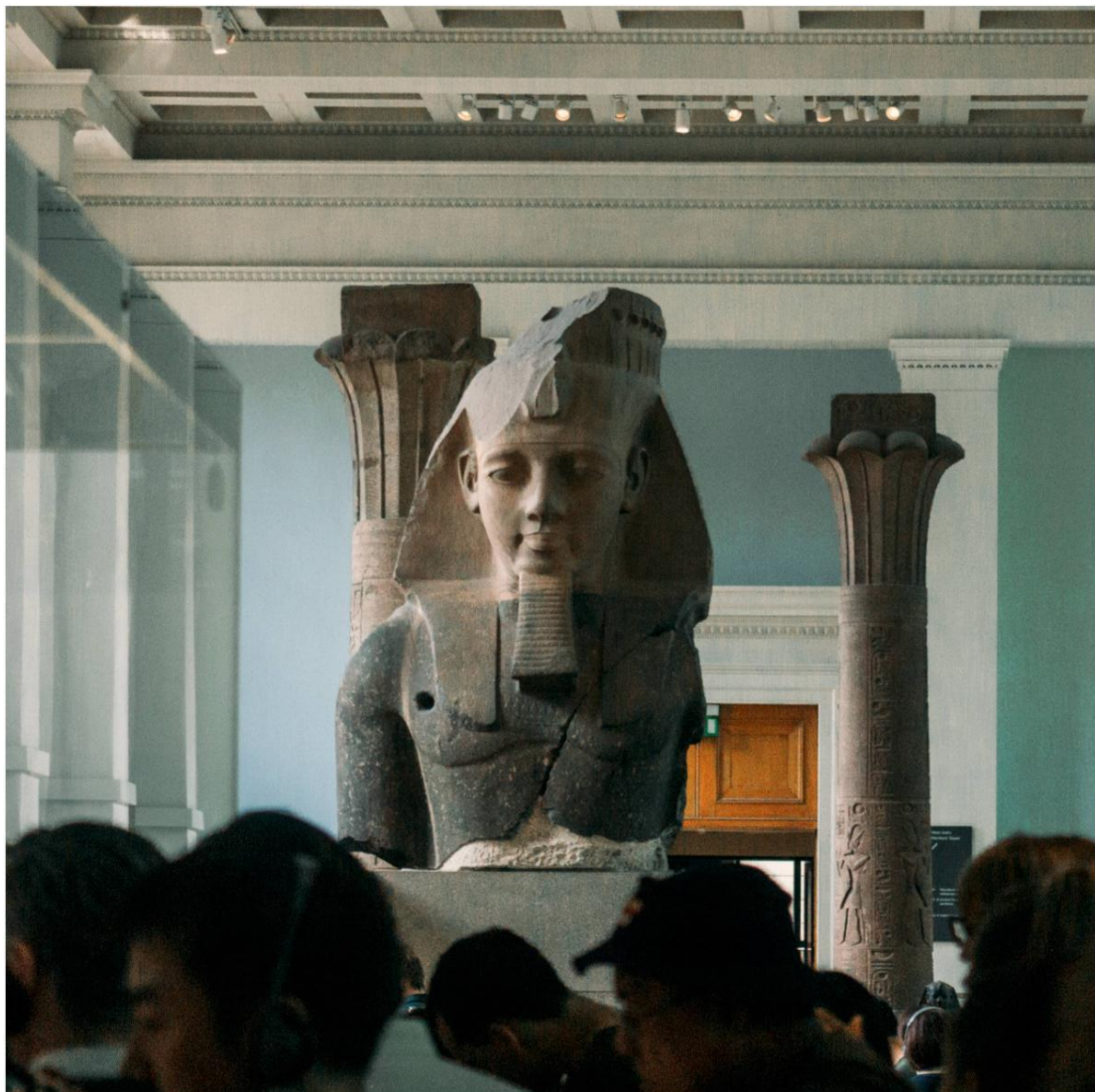
Figure 3. Edvin Richardson, *King Tut Head Bust in Museum* (2019) photograph

The Egyptian civilisation was highly religious. Thus, most Egyptian artworks involve the depiction of many gods and goddesses - of whom the Pharaoh was one.

In addition, the Egyptians' respect for order and conservative values led to the establishment of complex rules for how both Gods and humans could be represented by artists. For example, in figure painting, the sizes of figures were calculated purely by reference to the person's social status, rather than by the normal artistic rules of linear perspective. Head and legs always in profile; eyes and upper body viewed from the front. (Visual-arts-cork, n.d)
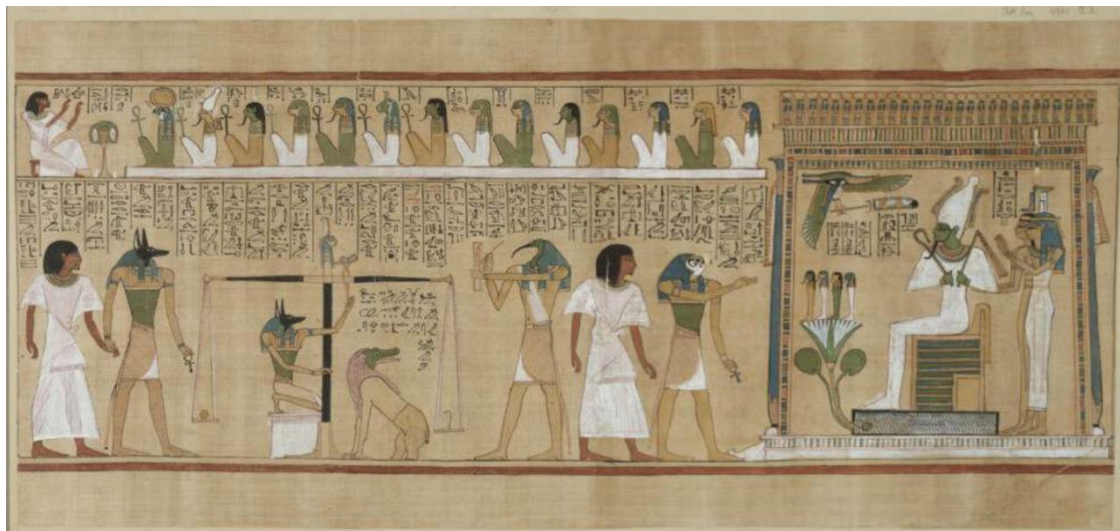
Figure 4. The British Museum, *Book of the dead of Hunefer* (1990) Papyrus

The primary function of paintings and hieroglyphics was to help with the rituals of the afterlife. To Egyptians this was not considered art as we see it. Though arguably by definition it could be considered as a form of site-specific art. (The term site-specific refers to a work of art designed specifically for a particular location and that has an interrelationship with the location) (Tate. 2019)

You can see how the primary function of a piece affects how it's executed, compared to Paleolithic cave paintings, which could have been for religious or ceremonial purpose. They are expressive and lifelike, whereas Egyptian paintings are formal and inexpressive.
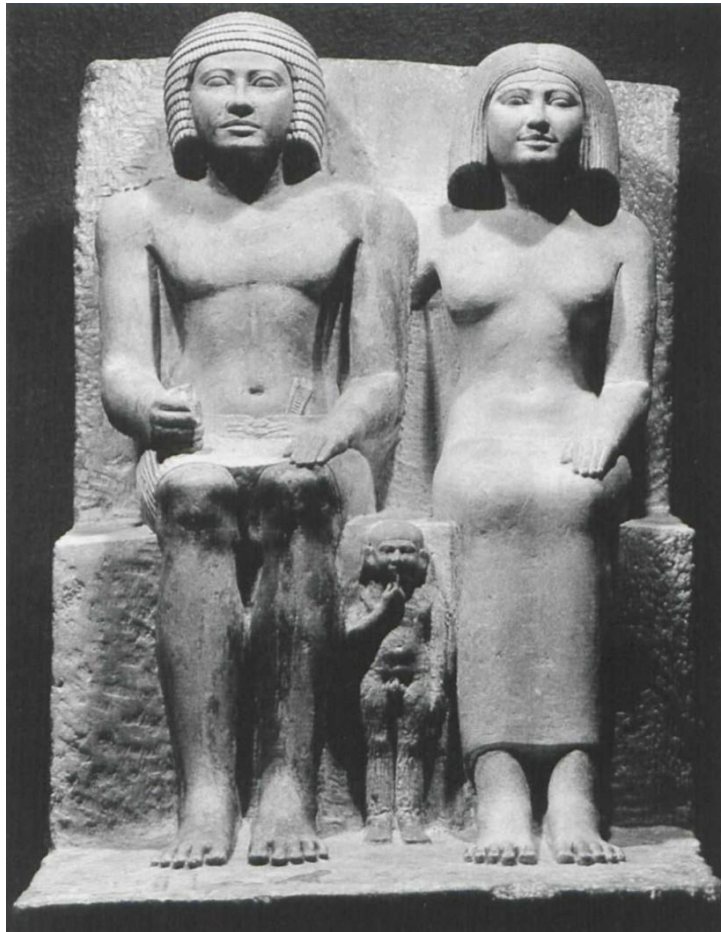
Figure 5. Jan Assmann, *Pair Statue of Kaemheset and family*; Egyptian museum, Cairo. (1996) photograph

For Egyptian sculpture and statues, the rules stated that male statues should be darker than female ones; when seated, the subject's hands should be on knees. Gods too were depicted according to their position in the hierarchy of deities, and always in the same guise.

For instance, Horus (the sky god) was always represented with a falcon's head; Anubis (the god of funeral rites) was always depicted with a jackal's head. Egyptian sculpture was highly symbolic and for most of Egyptian history was not intended to be naturalistic or realistic. (Visual-arts-cork, n.d)

Here we can see how the function of an art piece (for this instance a sculpture) has affected its placement. The sculptures were not made for personal expression; there were restricted guidelines for creating and placing the artwork which physically showed the importance of an individual.

The environment in which the sculptures are placed has changed how people would perceive the work. These sculptures were made to be placed in tombs or temples, designed to benefit a divine or deceased recipient. A sculpture was always surrounded by three walls so it was protected and can only be viewed from the front.

For example, artistically restricting the way a sculpture was purposed for and placed effected the pose of the sculpture. The face should look straight ahead, into eternity, and the body viewed from the front should be vertical and rigid, with all the planes intersecting at right angles. (Visual-arts-cork, n.d)

The Egyptians' conservative beliefs truly restricted artistic expression, which in turn fixed what it meant to place a work of art in that era.

iii. Ancient Greek Art

The ancient Greeks lived in many lands around the Mediterranean Sea and had close contacts with other civilisations such as the Egyptians, Syrians and Persians. Cultural influences from these civilisations can be seen in the Greek Arts, such as the geometric styles seen prominently in architecture; namely the Doric, Ionic, Corinthian orders.' (The British Museum, 2014)
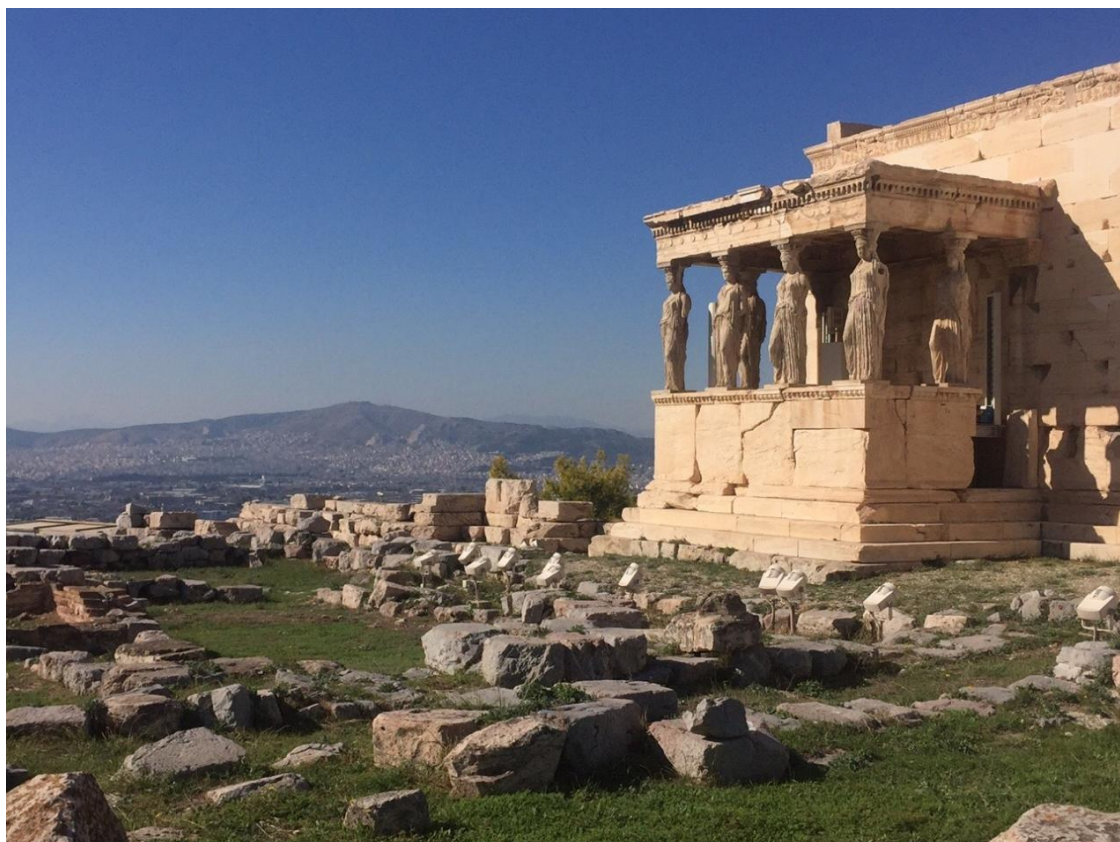
Figure 6. Yasmin Cox, *Old Temple of Athena, Athens* (2016) *Photograph*

We see influences from other cultures factoring how the ancients Greeks displayed their art, in comparison to the ancient Egyptians who were not influenced by any other civilisation and their style ultimately remained unchanged.

'This civilisation is embedded in our collective consciousness - prompting visions of epic battles, erudite philosophers, gleaming white temples, and limbless nudes (we now know the sculptures - even the ones that decorated temples like the Parthenon - were brightly painted and of course, the fact that the figures are often missing limbs is the result of the ravages of time).   Artists were free from centralised political control or restrictions, they no doubt were driven by the market demand for particular styles, subjects and fashions.' (Dr. Gondek, R, 2014)

This is one of the defining differences from ancient Egyptian art. The ancient Greeks made works that were practical, however they were free to express without government restrictions, which led to various ways of presenting their art.

Figure 7. Sothebys, *A group of Greek pottery vessels, 5TH/3RD Century B.C* (2020) photograph

'It was said that most pottery vessels were for everyday use, not for display. Though the few exceptions are the large Archaic monumental vases made as grave-markers, trophies won at games, and pieces made specifically to be left in graves.' (Wiki Zero, 2019)

This is an example on how function effected display; everyday usage of pottery was made for a practical use; however grave-markers or trophies were large and impractical for everyday usage and were only to be viewed. This is one aspect of how the function of the pottery changed its physical properties and placement.

Figure 8. Tronchin, *Aphrodite from Knidos, Musei Vaticani* (2008) photograph

Ancient Greek art was influenced by the philosophy of the time, which shaped the way they produced art forms. 'During the Classical period, artists further refined sculptures of the human figure to reflect a canon of ideal beauty: Praxiteles's *Aphrodite of Knidos* In the book *The Republic*, Plato says art imitates the objects and events of ordinary life. It is a copy of a copy of perfection, and so even more of an illusion than ordinary experience.' (Artsy, 2019)

Figure 9. Spencer McDaniel, *The Athenian Philosopher Socrates (c. 470 – 399 BC)* (2019) photograph

As with pottery, the Greeks did not produce sculpture merely for artistic display. Statues were commissioned either by aristocratic individuals or by the state, and used for public memorials, as offerings to temples, oracles and sanctuaries (as is frequently shown by inscriptions on the statues), or as markers for graves. (Wiki Zero, 2019)

The ancient Greeks, like the ancient Egyptians, produced statues for graves or ceremonial use. The only defining difference is that these monuments were made purposely for public display.

They created grand gateways and temples with statues to honour deities. The architecture itself was a work of art, decorated with pediment sculptures, which were painted brightly in order to be noticeable.

iv. Ancient Roman Art

'Greek art certainly had a powerful influence on Roman practice; the Roman poet Horace famously said that "Greece, the captive, took her savage victor captive", meaning that Rome (though it conquered Greece) adapted much of Greece's cultural and artistic heritage (as well as importing many of its most famous works).

Figure 10. Khan Academy, *Polykleitos, Doryphoros* - (Spear-Bearer) or Canon, Roman marble copy of a Greek bronze, c. 450-440 B.C.E. (Museo Archaeologico Nazionale, Naples) (2014) photograph

It is also true that many Romans' commissioned versions of famous Greek works from earlier centuries; this is why we often have marble versions of lost Greek bronzes such as *the Doryphoros* by Polykleitos.'(Zanker, 2019)

This is a defining moment of art history. Artistic expression has moved direction from religious conformity to creating artwork for pleasure, whilst still holding strong influences from its predecessors.

Figure 11. Riess. C, *Inside a Roman house* (1879) drawing

'Roman art encompasses private art made for Roman homes as well as art in the public sphere. The elite Roman home provided an opportunity for the owner to display his wealth, taste and education to his visitors, defendants, and clients.

Since Roman homes were regularly visited and were meant to be viewed, their decoration was of the utmost importance. Wall paintings, mosaics, and sculptural displays were all incorporated seamlessly with small luxury items such as bronze figurines and silver bowls. The subject matter ranged from busts of important ancestors to mythological and historical scenes, still lives, and landscapes—all to create the idea of an erudite patron steeped in culture.' (Zanker, 2019)

This era was a pivotal turning point for the function of art works, as stated before, the function of art was for both public and personal use. This change in attitude towards art is what signalled the transition in presentation.

v.   Renaissance Art

Renaissance art, which includes paintings, sculptures, architecture, music, and literature, was produced during the 14th to16th centuries in Europe, under the combined influences of an increased awareness of nature, a revival of classical learning, and a more individualistic view of man.

Figure 12. Yasmin Cox, *St. Mark's Cathedral - Venice Italy* (2016) photograph

'After the Middle Ages, the artists of the Renaissance studied the sculptures, architecture and art of Ancient Rome and Greece to inspire them. The classic art of the Romans had a significant influence on art for many years.' (Ducksters, 2019)

With this new idealisation, the artists of the Renaissance not only adapted well, but fine-tuned the way they presented art in their respective time. *The Basilica of Saint Mark, The Accademia*, *Teatro La Fenice* (opera house) for example, architectural masterpieces carved on the outside and beautifully carved statues adorned upon the building. The interior is decorated in mosaics, paintings and carvings. The buildings were designed to display artwork, regardless of whether it was to be seen by the public.

Figure 13. Pietro Tessarin, *La Fenice Opera House, The Royal Box* (2018) photograph

'There are two distinct eras in the Renaissance. The Early Renaissance (1400-1479) - Artists learned by trying to emulate classical artists focusing on symmetry and creating the perfect form and The High Renaissance (1475-1525) - A rising interest in perspective and space gave the art even more realism.' (Ducksters. 2019)

Art had multiple functions in all aspects of life in this new era of expression. The artist, Michelangelo, represents Renaissance art in its respective function. His sculpture, David, depicts the biblical hero tense before the fight, unlike his predecessors who portrayed him triumphant after his battle with Goliath.   Although there were some restrictions to preserve functionality, Michelangelo had the freedom to create the artwork he envisioned.

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Without these restrictions (as in the ancient Egyptian era) the placement for artworks organically flowed and was to be viewed by the general public as well as the elite. This led to the early establishment of galleries.

The Galleria dell'Accademia is one of the earliest known gallery spaces. Later in the 18th century, *Sala di Saturno Palazzo Pitti* also displayed art works in a gallery setting. However, the layout was not well presented. The walls were cluttered and over crowded with artworks of various sizes placed where they would fit. Frames were big, intricate and gold, distracting the eyes from the painting itself.

Figure 14. Johann Zoffany, *The Tribuna of the Uffizi* (1780) Oil on canvas

In conclusion, from looking at brief aspects in art history until the present time; each period, religion and status heavily influenced where and how art was presented. Looking back to how art was originally exhibited, it is understandable how we in the modern era have created the white cube as a new way of exhibiting. Even though artworks of self-expression existed they were heavily over shadowed in their respective times. Religion ruled, dominating artworks with depictions of heaven and hell, composing visions of gods, angels and demons.

The artwork of the ancient Egyptians and ancient Greeks was only to be viewed in religious settings or in the homes of the wealthy and elite. It was in the ancient Roman era that the function of art truly transcended, with artwork being made for pleasure and exhibition. Wealthy Roman homes were decorated with paintings, mosaics, sculptures, bronze figurines and silver bowls, which showed off their wealth, education and taste to guests. Elite Romans would have monuments and statues both inside and outside of their residences.

The Renaissance period was the defining era that brought forth the idea of the gallery as a presentation of art works. Galleries as we know them today are a fairly new idea. This leads back to where I compiled my original questions.

'What does it mean to place an artwork?'

'Does artwork translate to the area it is placed?'

'Is said environment part of the artwork?'

2. White Space

How does the placement of an artwork today translate to the space it resides?

Before reviewing the differences of art placed in galleries and museums, I will be basing

my hypnosis on a ground work of facts related to the building types.   I will not be

focusing on economic or financial bases of the two entities and avoiding basing this

hypothesis on biased opinions.
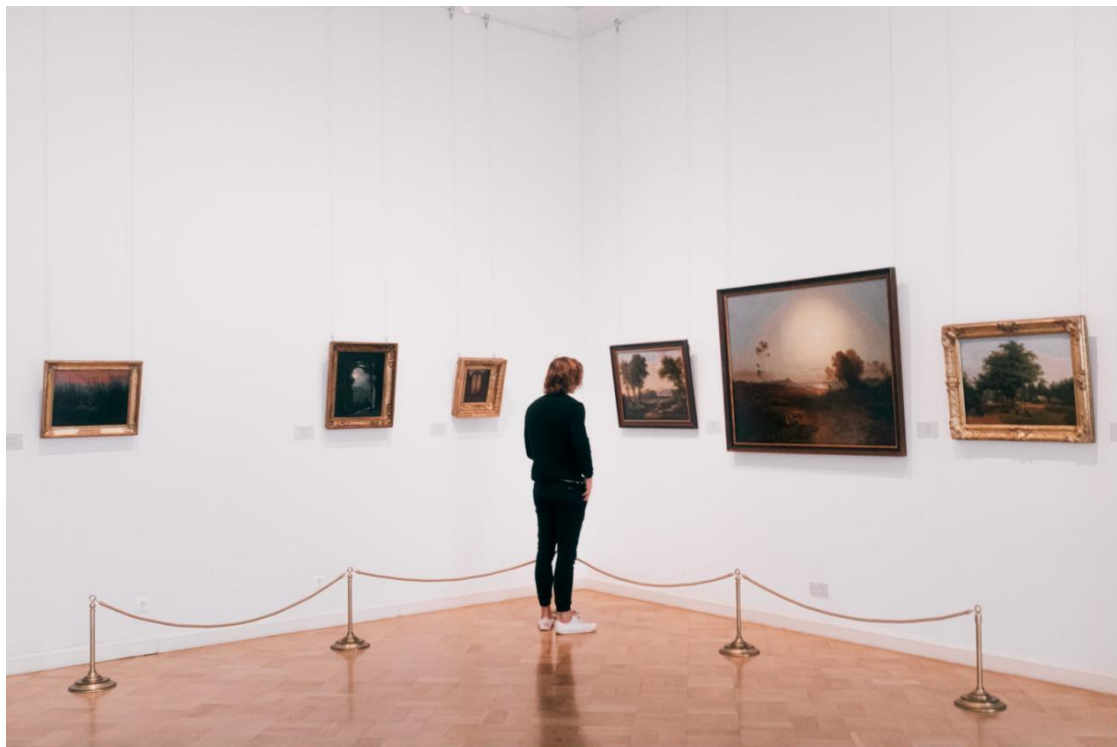
Figure 15. Daria Shevtsova, *Person in Black Long Sleeve Shirt and Black Pants Standing on Wooden Floor* (2020) photograph

Cambridge Dictionary Definition; Art Gallery (2013)

A building where works of art can be seen by the public.

A place where works of art are shown and can be brought.

Cambridge Dictionary Definition; Museum (2013)

- A building where objects of historical, scientific or artistic interest are kept.

By definition, a museum is for the preservation of a selected interest by a foundation/collector/government for the public to view, and a gallery is to promote art works and for the public to view with the possibility to buy art. There are only a few technical differences, but nothing to reveal the contrast of placing a work. By looking at the physical attributes of the entities, this should unveil clues.

Similar characteristics: Art works are typically shown in pristine white spaces with minimal distraction and controlled lighting to showcase the exhibited art in a specially created aesthetic environment.

A museum is a place of relics and information of the world, and although some hold art works from centuries ago, we do not view it as we would view the art of today. However, in a gallery we view everything as art regardless of what is presented to us. Perhaps with the introduction of modern art the idea of art as an idea or concept has evolved.
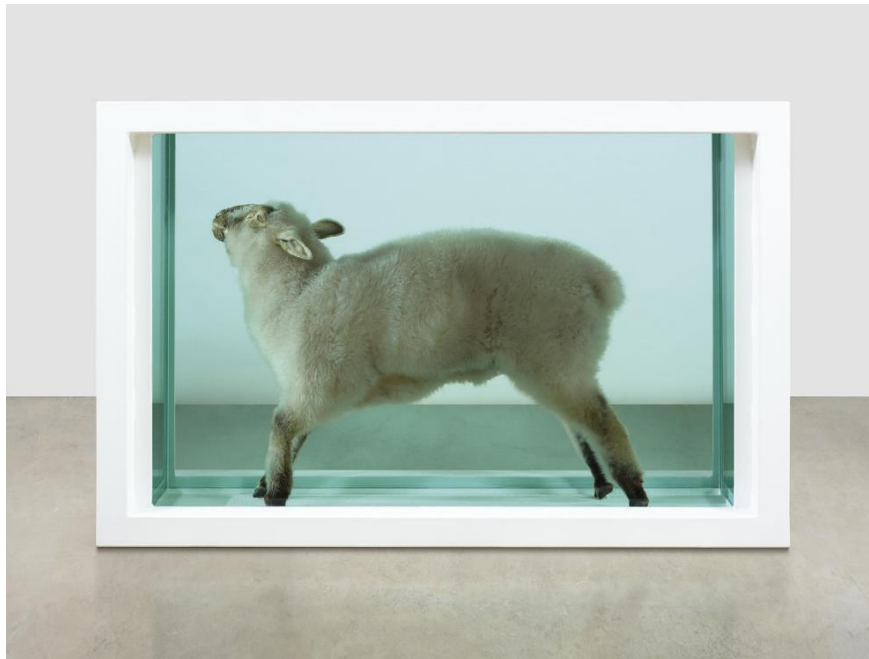
Figure 16. Damien Hirst, *Away from the Flock* (1994) photograph

Up to modern times, art universally consisted of paintworks and sculpture. We now

have photography, video/film making and performance art. With these new and vastly

different materials they force a new way of presentation.   This has blended with the

popular movement conceptualism; i.e. art for which the idea (or concept) behind the

work is more important than the finished art object. It has made for some interesting

works and opened a platform of objectivity.

For example, Damien Hirst's collection *'Away from the Flock'* would be considered by

some to be science, biology; a piece of anatomy; something we would see in a zoo or a

museum. Lacking any traditional skill or medium, is this glorified coffin still to be viewed

as art work?   I theorise that the environment in which '*Away from the Flock'* is placed is

a key condition to how it was received by viewers.   By actively knowing what kind of

environment a person is entering can create pre-emptive decisions.

Typically, if this artwork was presented in a museum, we would be appreciative of the piece, but probably would not have considered it to be a work of art. However, by seeing an animal encased in glass/ formaldehyde solution in the gallery setting we know preemptively that this is a piece of art.   No questions asked, just the viewer developing their own meaning of the work. The framing of the animal and the setting defined and stapled the piece as art.

Figure 17. Natural History Museum, *Blue Marlin* (2016) photograph

Andrea Fraser's performance art challenges the notions of museums and the thoughts of gallery visitors.   In Fraser's '*Damaged Goods Gallery Talk Starts Here* 1986 and *Museum Highlights: A Gallery Talk* 1989' she takes the guise as fictional docent, Jane Castleton, and takes groups of the public on a tour around the museum.
Fraser keeps to elements of a typical gallery tour, but also passionately parodies descriptions of common docents on the building, toilets, cloakroom and shop.

Exaggerating praise to each item, challenging the questions of personal taste and the notions of dignity, in which she felt artworks, museums, and gallery visitors should embody.

Andrea Fraser's performances highlight the conditioning of the mind; whereby a response becomes predicable in a given environment as a result of reinforcement. Gallery environment is for art and all sources tell the viewer it is as such and Museum environment is for relics and knowledge for the past.

As said previously, regarding the factual differences of the entities, there are still non-arguable similar physical characteristics. 'Over the past 10-15 years the line of gallery and museum has been blurred. Nowhere is the disintegration of this barrier better illustrated than at the enormous Los Angeles outpost of the Swiss gallery Hauser & Wirth.' (Neuendorf, 2016)

A grand building, white inside and out, the interior open planned with large plain walls. Pillars and low plinths adorning art works are the only detail of the building itself. The layout of the structure is quite reminiscent of the Greek temples we see now, washed away of any colour. Even though there are galleries and artists embracing this 'new' way of presentation, there are other artist practices that undermine the need of a gallery space.

3. Unconventional Space

Performance, video, photography, text and land art are all practices that can undermine the need of a white space. The use of new media and modern social constructs opens a fresh and experimental way of presenting work. By evaluating these practices, they reflect my hypothesis, embodying the questions.

'What does it mean to place an artwork?'

'Does artwork translate to the area it is placed?'

'Is said environment part of the artwork?'

'How does the environment make the artwork change?'

Each practice that I briefly explored reflects reasons as to why the space and the environment the work was placed in was an important aspect to the piece. This challenges the white cube theory indicating there is more to presenting artwork than just placing it in a blank space. Land art pieces are universally made for one specific site (known primarily as site specific art). The piece may be inspired or built to incorporate the space in which its placed.

Artist Andy Goldsworthy creates sculptures from natural materials and resources found on site; his art is known for being ephemeral.

Goldsworthy views his artistic process as a collaboration with nature. This statement solidifies why Goldsworthy's sculptures are to be placed in nature. All the materials are found on each specific site and the sculpture is made.

To remove the sculpture from this place would counter point the whole purpose of his art works. Goldsworthy's art illustrates how the environment is part of the art.

Figure 18. Andy Goldsworthy, *River Ice Wrapped Around a River Stone* (1992) photograph

Figure 19. Martha Rosler, *Housing is a Human Right* (1989) photograph

'Artist Martha Rosler works in video, photography, text, installation, and performance.

Her work focuses on the public sphere, exploring issues from everyday life and the

media to architecture and the built environment, especially as they affect women. With

technology, it has extended a new way on how to display work.' (Rosler,2019) Rosler's

uses text in her work to make a more prominent statement. Her work is displayed on

billboards or spectacular signs in New York commenting or protesting on human rights

issues. This is an example of what it means to place an artwork and how it can be

received by viewers.

Figure 20. María Evelia Marmolejo, *Anónimo 3* (1982) photograph

'Performance Artist Maria Evelia Marmolejo was born in Colombia. Much of her work intertwined preoccupations that pervaded throughout her production; such as political oppression in Colombia in the 1970s-80s; social and economic conditions in Colombia and Latin America; environmental issues and the situation and role of women, including aspects related to the representation and functions and symbolic meanings of the woman's body.' (ARTNexus, 2019)

'Anónimo 3 (1982), for instance, was conceived as an atonement ritual in which she apologised to the Earth for years of pollution.

The 15-minute performance in Valle del Cauca, Colombia, consisted of her covering her face with gauze and her body with surgical tape, then performing a vaginal wash over a toilet bowl in the centre of a circular patch of earth. The fluids that fell to the ground were intended to re-fertilise the area.' (Chernick, K, 2017). This work epitomised the fact that art translates to the area that it is placed.

I have looked at various displays from white gallery and non-gallery spaces. There is one type of art that has an interesting and sometimes complicated relationship with space – Installation.

i.   Installation - an analogy between gallery and unconventional space
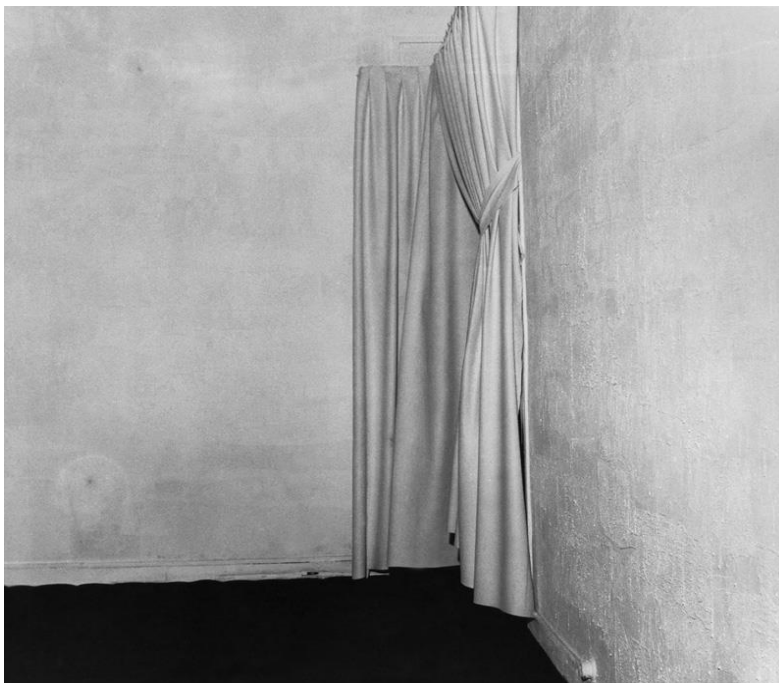
Figure 21. Max Klein, *The Void* (1958) photograph of Installation

Installation is a relatively new style of art, which has only recently become popular. One of the earliest works that helped pioneer the art form was *The Void* (1958) by Max Klein. The work was a white gallery space–open and empty. Another early work to gain attention was *Words* (1961) by Allan Kaprow which featured randomly displayed rolls of paper with words. As spectators walked through the jumble of words, they would listen to music played on multiple record players. Though these are the earliest accounts of installation art, the term wasn't coined till the 1960s.' (ArtHistory, 2017).

Installation art is typically site-based and invariably refers to interior installed works. Exterior pieces are referred to as land art. Works may be permanent or temporary in nature. Many museums and galleries host installation artworks and other works may be installed within private or public spaces.

Many installation artworks have been designed in the context of their proposed space. Unlike a non-descript museum wall where framed artworks are displayed, the space surrounding the installed work is part and parcel of the work itself. The environment of the work becomes part of the artistic experience when it comes to installation art.

While some works of Marcel Duchamp might be called installation art, in nature as installation art has evolved, it has come to be a broad term that reflects a multitude of styles and mediums. Many recent works have emphasized the interactive experience of the viewer. The new medium of technology (video, film and sound) has influenced artists into creating installations of immersion, whereby viewers are immersed in a virtual reality.   Most importantly, perhaps, the movement continues to change, reflect new styles, and attract new artists to its form' (ArtHistory, 2017).

Installation is an art form that I have used frequently over the years. Although installation could be a vital tool for my research, I had to conduct some physical research on the separate entities of display, gallery and unconventional space. I will be conveying my thoughts through the use of sculpture.

4. Allan's Day Out

Through my evaluation of arts placement in history and modern art practices it became evident that there are many factors in defining what each question means to each subject. I wanted to use sculpture as it is one of the prominent art forms used throughout each era. In this modern age, a sculpture can mean more than portraying one's status and I wanted to explore my four questions, with something in common with the past, to see how the questions changed.

'What does it mean to place an artwork?'

'Does artwork translate to the area it is placed?'

'Is said environment part of the artwork?'

'How does the environment make the artwork change?'

During my Masters course, I wanted to create work that reflected these questions. My first step was to sculpt a miniature figure of an elephant made from mod rock; which I primarily used as a subject to begin a technical and research standpoint. I decided on an elephant as it is my favourite animal, due to its structure and size.

Figures 22, 23, 24. Yasmin Cox, *Allans Day Out* (2018) photograph

A book written by Slinkachu, '*Little People in the City*', (2008) was a key inspiration for this project and reflected some of my questions. Slinkachu created street art installations using miniature figures interacting with life sized insects and objects. He photographed the interactions in such a way that restricted the viewer's view. This emphasised the unusual ratio.

Figure 25. Slinkachu, *They're not Pets Susan* (2008) photograph of Installation

I was mesmerized by this book and I found its concept to be brilliant. The different perspectives create a new and different world. There are many familiar things in the photographs, which somehow look foreign. The normality of mundane scenes depicted as exciting environments forces you to take in every detail. I found this to be a quirky way of presenting the work.

As with Andy Goldsworthy's work, the physical piece is temporary as the final product was intended to be viewed in photo form for documentation. My thoughts were that, by recreating this method of photo restriction, it would help me progress to find answers to my question; how art is placed affects how it is received.

In my photography, I was focusing on how the elephant would look in different surroundings and what effect and atmosphere the photos would present; deliberately obstructing the viewer from forming any grounding of the scale of the sculpture. Instead of creating a small world like Slinkachu, I was creating a big world with small objects.

Figures 26. Yasmin Cox, *Allans Day In* (2018) photograph

I moved my photography indoors so that the images would convey a contrasting story. These photos show Allan with everyday household items which create a parody of its wanderlust counterpart *'Allan's Day Out'*. The viewpoint of the '*Allan's Day In'* collection is reminiscent of the fictional tiny people known as *'the Borrowers'*; with images of Allan hiding behind objects and looking fragile against the environment.

Reviewing the collections (*'Allan's Day Out' and 'Allan's Day In'*), I was pleased with my photos, although I felt there was no progression with my theories, or answers to my chosen questions. The only enlightenment I gained from this experiment was that the photos taken outside were more successful than those taken inside.

It is easier to accept Allan in the 'outdoor' setting as we can derive a correlation of real elephants in their natural habitat and in turn accept Allan, the sculpture, as a sentient being.

Using similar expected elements creates a believable story. For example, we expect to see a 1920 French landscape painting in a traditional golden frame, rather than a modern strip frame. The viewer expects a familiar object to be presented in an expected way.

Figure 27. Yasmin Cox, *Allans Day In* (2018) photograph

I soon realised that I was viewing my sculpture as an ordinary object, rather than a piece of art (one of my basic questions; **what does it mean to place art**). There is function and meaning to all artwork, historical and contemporary. I was taking the photos from a purely typical photography standpoint (aesthetically pleasing, nice angles, perfect lighting etc.), rather than focusing on what is actually happening in the image. I was not viewing Allan (the sculpture) as a piece of art.

After reanalysing the basic function of artforms, such as landscape, photography, installation and historical artworks, I found an underlying aspect that I had yet to consider in my experimentation. That is the contribution of human emotion and the study of its prevalence; from cave art to the modern era. Not every era necessarily displayed it in an expressional way, as did the cave men, but emotions and feelings were still conveyed; for example, the ancient Egyptians with their hieroglyphics depicting heaven and hell, the gods and death.

I decided the best way to interpret how emotion plays into an art piece was to look back at my previous exhibitions; deconstructing and reviewing why I presented them that way and view them with my questions in mind.

5. Human Emotion

The prevalent inspiration for each of my previous works has been driven from human emotion, though the form of subject matter has varied with each work dependent how meaningful it was to me. In review to this, my works have been able to establish a strong statement on their chosen subject matter and reasons as to why items or objects were placed.

i. 'Pain is Beauty' FE End of Year Show Group Exhibition 2014

At the entrance to the greenhouse, there is a dirt path leading to a small concrete bridge over a stream. You can hear the sounds of the water cascading into the pond; see the water whirling about, the fish swimming around and the birds chirping and flapping about above you. The smell of various exotic plant life fills your nose as you make your way through the vegetation. The path continues, curling around the foliage of the greenhouse. Along the path; there are framed black and white photographs of exotic animals, with bloody human handprints smeared over the glass.

There are plaques of writing on the individual frames; but instead of the identified animal's name, medicine or meat is written in its place. On the opposite side of the path, there is a zebra patterned footstool on which a collection of items resides. Each item is made from the bodies of the presented animals; such as ivory combs and medicine. Behind the stool a drawing of a tiger with piercing eyes is staring back at you; there is bloody writing over the paper. Pain is beauty.

Slightly further down the path, huge canvases hang above the foliage. The first depicts the head of an elephant appearing in a bloody reflection; looking into its unavoidable future, its skull in a pool of blood, stripped of its tusks.

The canvas at the far end shows a giraffe; with its skin and flesh falling apart, its bones and anatomy appearing through. The giraffe is sharing a similar fate to the elephant; but in this case its flesh has been poached and eaten.

The centre-piece spreads across three canvases and features a rhino, elegant and vulnerable; its horn bleeding. The painting is an ominous foretelling of the sad fate of the rhino.

Figure 28. Yasmin Cox, *Pain is beauty* (2014) Oil on canvas

From the early stages of my becoming a rounded artist, I naturally gravitated to utilising the space around me. My first exhibition, the 'Pain is Beauty' collection at University College Writtle, was set in a greenhouse.

In developing this series, I not only focused on the theme and colour scheme, I also worked on how I would incorporate my paintings into the surroundings. I wanted to utilise the environment and maximise the impact on how my work was viewed.

The background of foliage highlights and frames the canvases in the foreground, creating a striking impression. The harsh colour scheme of black, white and red, solidifies the statement with such a contrast that it displays an aggressive truth. We look at these animals and acknowledge their beauty, but never really come to terms with how we ruin them. We turn a blind eye to the harsh reality the images portray. We are not used to seeing them like this.

The overall feedback received was the viewers found the experience captivating but shocking. The artwork was not overly graphic, but the message was clear; animals suffer at the hands of humans for their bodies.

ii.   'Goodbye - My memory loves you; it asks about you all the time' - BA End of Year Show 2016

From the corner of your eye, you see a dimly lit hallway and a small table with a lamp and other objects that you cannot quite make out from the distance. You walk down the hallway and as you proceed, you look to your left and see photos filling a large space of the wall. There is just enough light for you to see the images.

The first photo is a single black and white image of a baby. The other photos gradually reveal more images of this person's life. You analyse the photos, taking in the details, noticing that he played football; joined the navy and got married. Many of the photos show him happy and amongst people.

As you follow the trail of photos you see his life played out before you; from childhood to adulthood; his connections with family and friends. You follow the trail until it finishes with a final photo, showing him as an old man. He looks tired, but happy and you realise that this is the last photo ever taken of him.

Your eyes wander to the table and you see three items next to the lamp; a card reading Grandad; a hairbrush with a few strands of hair caught in the bristles and a photo frame. The image in the frame shows the man and a little girl wearing matching football shirts.

The light illuminating the area to the right draws your attention to a living room. As you enter, the smell of tea and cologne fills your nostrils and a scratching, crackling noise makes your ears itch. You scan the room and see a blank TV wired to a video cassette recorder. Cassette tapes are scattered on the rug that covers the floor in front of the table. A record player is placed on a cabinet next the TV; the source of the scratching, crackling sound. A record is continuously spinning on the turn table, waiting for the resident to reset the needle, but you cannot help but feel he is not coming back.

In the opposite corner stands a table and chair. The pillow on the chair, which is slightly pressed into itself, has 'Home is where you are' stitched into the fabric.

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Various objects rest on the table; a clock stuck at 5pm; a book about cowboys, reading glasses upon the book and the glasses case beside it. You see an open packet of ginger nut biscuits and a half-drunk mug of tea, with tea rings staining the inside. Biscuit crumbs are sprinkled on the pillow and the floor. The imagery on the mug is a childish drawing of flowers and the words 'I love my Grandpa'.

Figure 29. Yasmin Cox, *Goodbye - My memory loves you; it asks about you all the time* (2016) photo of installation

This room seems so lived in, yet feels so empty. You can still hear the scratching of the needle on the record. As you take a step back, you begin to take in the five picture frames hung around the walls.

The black and white photos feature a girl, alone in various locations. You realise that she is an older version of the little girl seen with the old man in the frame on the table. The black and white images are melancholy; she is seen with makeup running down her face; bare in a bath tub; sitting in her own vomit and at the bottom of a claustrophobic stair well.

This installation is an example of me using space to my advantage. I was given an area that consisted of a hallway, leading into a room off to the side. The hallway wall with its chronology of photos was an important component for the installation. The images lead the viewer through my grandfather's story; giving them a taste of his life from birth to death; his experiences and the bonds he had with friends and family.

The viewer forms a connection with my grandfather; developing empathy for him through the photos. They could analyse and experience his life at all stages; seeing how he physically changed, deteriorated and eventually succumbed to lung cancer.

The layout and the authenticity of the photos creates a hard-hitting effect. Starting from the first photo of my grandfather as a baby, the quantity of photos grew (as did his experiences in life) and filled the wall until they eventually came to an end with the last photo ever taken of him.

There is something about photos; the ease in which we take them makes you believe there will always be another opportunity; especially in this digital age. We never stop to think about the frailty of human existence and the possibility that this will be the last chance to capture their image.

The living room shows remnants of my grandfather; everything he left behind, but he is absent; gone forever. It was a hard task to convey my grief, let alone persuade strangers to experience the pain I felt for the loss of this person. Each detail was crucial for the installation to simulate this feeling. The smell, the visual images and noise were all important to create an immersive experience for the viewers.

The viewers could smell my grandfather's cologne, tea and ginger nut biscuits. They could see his best-loved book on the table, with his reading glasses sitting on top. They would notice the crumbs sprinkled on the pillow and floor and think he had just been eating biscuits and the half empty mug of tea, showing the tea stains, as if he had just been drinking from it. The indented pillow on the chair made it look like he had just got up and left the room.

These small details leave evidence of his life being lived in this room. Combined with the static TV and the scratching of the vinyl record, an air of emptiness is created. You understand that someone must have been here to tune in the TV and finish the tea; however, the feeling of loss is evident.

It was all so personal to him and to me, but a common enough setting for the viewer to insert themselves into the experience. It hit home that this was a real person with a life, family and belongings. The photos ended abruptly and just like that; he was gone. These were haunting memories with the only condolence being the array of items my grandfather left behind.

Compared to my first exhibition, I optimised and took full advantage of the space I had been given. Everything was placed with intent and propose, every inch of space, whether it was used or not, was worked to maximise the effect of the images to create the installation artwork. Instead of a bland hallway to walk down to turn into a room I used the environment as a tool to help illustrate my story.

The wallpaper was decorated with a stubble patten to create a slight contrast on the wall, but not enough to divert attention from the objects and photo frames I placed in the room. The room itself is another key aspect of the installation. The photos I put into the frames were not images of my grandfather, or random images to fill the frames.
All six frames in the room contained black and white images of me; grieving. Each photo illuminated an aspect of my pain. The images were simple and minimal; taken on my phone to capture a raw image and persuade the viewer to look at a heart-breaking reality.

Since this exhibition; creating an environment as part of my installation artworks has become my signature. I naturally gravitate to using the surrounding space to highlight my artworks. I stimulate the senses of the viewer, by using sounds, smell and touch to heighten the experience my work produces.

Persons viewing the installation told me that they were so immersed in the environment, they forgot they were in a building showing other exhibitions.   The experience made them believe that they were walking through someone's living room.

This was due to details I had incorporated such as the wallpaper, ceiling and the position of the furniture and the objects resting upon them; including the mug of tea; the cushion with an indent and the smell of my grandfather's cologne.

The overall feedback was that the installation had actually brought the viewer to tears; they had been persuaded to mourn for someone that they had never met. Although, the experience was very moving, it made them feel vulnerable in the knowledge that losing a person close to them could and would happen at any time.

iii. 'To be One's Own Woman'
BA End of Year Show 2017

Red translucent curtains hang in the doorway. You make out a red path leading to a plinth adorning a sculpture. Brushing past the curtains, you enter the room, your eyes following the path to the plinth. You see bold black words stenciled on the plinth; *'To be one's own woman'.* The sculpture, illuminated by a singular light, glistens in its beams. The sculpture is shaped like a body of a plump woman, but there are red roses sprouting from the neck. Red petals fallen, resting on the surface of the plinth. Around you, the walls display prints of nude women, bright red flowers representing their heads.

Figure 30. Yasmin Cox, *To be one's own woman* (2017) photo of installation

What it means to be a woman

Women are often compared to flowers, from the softness of their skin to their virginity. The object of this exhibition was to 'give the middle finger', mocking phrases such as 'delicate as a flower', which are used in a derogatory manner against women.   This phrase implies that woman should be congratulated for their helplessness, while men are punished for the same characteristic.

"Flowers are beautiful and there is a myriad of breeds". This interpretation shows that there are many different kinds of women and the one thing that sets them apart is their unique forms of physical beauty. Wollstonecraft goes on to say that when flowers are "planted in too rich a soil, strength and usefulness are sacrificed to beauty."

The word "planted" signifies that once a woman is taught the norms of her culture such as; the way she must behave, dress, speak, and a copious number of other things, there is nothing else for her to learn, therefore, she sacrifices her strength and usefulness to beauty (Graduateway, 2019).

Sacrificing is a very harsh word with many negative connotations, for Wollstonecraft to use such a word he is issuing a very powerful statement, especially considering that the women are "sacrificing" such important physical human characteristics. Wollstonecraft is upset to see that women are "sacrificing their strength and usefulness" to beauty which is such a frivolous asset to society. The very last section of Wollstonecraft's quote states this, the flaunting leaves, after having pleased a fastidious eye, fade, disregarded on the stalk, long before the season when they ought to have arrived at maturity. One cause of this barren blooming I attribute to a false system of education, gathered from the books written on this subject by men, who, considering females rather as women than human creatures, have been more anxious to make them alluring mistresses than rational wives' (Graduateway, 2019).

I used a mix medium of printing ink for the flowers and line work for the bodies. The lines are precise and prominent on the paper. The flower is pressed with thick lines, giving the resemblance of a real live flower; which is naturally formed. This forms the centrepiece.

This exhibition was a dedication to woman of all kinds; sizes, shapes, ethnicity, gender, with large breasts, small breasts to no breasts. All in various poses (bent over with tampon string, legs spread masturbating, breast-less) and forms (muscular, obese, pregnant). The presentation of the actual drawings is reflective of its meaning. Some are framed or mounted; landscape and portrait; large and small. Instead of a wall full of framed illustrations, the viewer has to refocus on each image they view and actively look at the detail and shape of each drawing. To be a woman can be many things; there is no set way of how a woman should be; we are human.

The overall feedback was that the viewers found the images to be stunning and beautiful, and thought it was wonderful to see various body shapes. They thought the woman who lost her breasts to cancer was a strong piece; shocking, but at the same time sexually provocative.

Collectively, over the years I have always gravitated to installation. I naturally want to use the space around me when creating an artwork, and as stated before, human emotion has also been an inspiring aspect of my work. Now that I had gained a renewed understanding of the core drive to my work, I could apply it to my research questions and create a piece of art.

After this development, I reflected on a few possible ideas before progressing forward on my final work. A theme that I had been lingering over, was childhood perception; how we saw the world as children and how as adults we now view the world. One possibility in how to execute the work was by using site specific art; i.e. creating one piece designed to solely exist in that place.

Another idea, following on from site specific art, was creating a trail of art and exploring what it means to place work in a particular area and how the space contrasts to the art. A different variation of this would be to place identical pieces in different areas (instead of different art pieces along the trail) to experience how the site of the work changes the atmosphere of the piece.

My questions about art and placement have been slowly brewing over the years of my education. I have a natural gravitational eye for installation, and I feel it would be the best practice to pursue as I've been exploring space in this medium over some time. I will be able to build on my current understanding and focus upon areas I have yet to explore. I feel this will bring me closer to understanding space and what it means to place a work of art.

I decided to use childhood perception as my concept as I was emotionally motivated towards the theme. Now that I had decided a concept, I needed to solidify its bases and decide on display and placement by using informed decisions.

6. Childhood in my Art

My observation was that many artists use childhood as a theme in their work; although numerous depictions are bitter sweet and reflect upon the loss of innocence. This includes artwork created by Marina Abramović or Jean-Baptiste.

Some artists show works that appreciate childhood, like those created by Sarah M Bender or Andy Warhol. However, it is still hard to find pieces of celebration or those that convey positive feelings about growing up.

My aim was that my works should not only celebrate growing up, but also acknowledge the negative side of transitioning into adulthood. These are the 'bad' things that occur in growing up; the mysterious behaviour; the impatience of wanting to be grown, but still being a child; the excitement we felt when acting upon our impatience; pretending to be adults and in effect mimicking our idols.

After visiting the zoo, I found the aspect of the various types of animal's outward appearances had relation to the materials around them.   I contemplated their relation to each other and reflected back on my childhood perception of them. I imagined a sculpture made from branches taking a similar form to a snake. This is not a realistic style as the viewer has to take a double look at the feature and let their imagination make a correlation between the two. I considered how the imagination can change normal objects and how they are brought to life; although when we grow up, we lose a part of that and dismiss things that are not real.

For a child, shapes of clouds become objects; the forms of trees and bushes become animals and objects in the dark become monsters. The psychologist, Jean Piaget, quoted: "What we see changes what we know. What we know changes what we see". Now that I had made a final decision on practice and medium, another aspect of my work was to consider which materials I could use for a sculpture and how they would interact with the natural elements such as rain, sun, wind etc.

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At the beginning of the course I came across a project set in New York. The task was simple; you could create anything you liked as long as it related back to coffee. I found this task quite inspiring, so I decided to create a piece driven by the conditions. My thoughts drifted, reflecting on how our taste in hot drinks changes from childhood to adulthood; from hot milk to hot chocolate and then on to coffee and/or tea. This led me to consider how our reading becomes more sophisticated. We all have at least one childhood memory of being curled up in bed with a hot drink, having our favourite book read to us. Now as adults, some of us will sit in a coffee shop with a hot drink and a good book.

Figure 31. Yasmin Cox, *New York Coffee Project* (2017) photograph

I decided to create a physical connection with nostalgia using silhouettes of iconic children's stories pasted onto bottles containing ingredients of our favourite beverages. I made sure to use an ingredient which identified with the character in the story, such as 'Alice in Wonderland' with tea bags, 'Winnie the Pooh' with sugar, 'Where the Wild Things Are' with hot chocolate and 'The Cat in the Hat' with milk. I also considered how the words of these stories affected us. I used coffee stained paper for each page containing text from the books each character came from.

The New York coffee project inspired me to reminisce on childhood objects and what they meant to me. I was reminded of the Teddy Bear I used to carry everywhere with me. The Teddy Bear is the symbol of childhood innocence and reminds us of being cared and nurtured for by our loved ones. From birth we are given a plush animal, usually a bear, and we carry it with us throughout our life. Over time we gradually detach and stop sleeping with them. The Teddy Bear may remain as a companion on our bed, or become an ornament on a stand, or we may put into storage or pass it onto another deserving child. The Teddy Bear is as innocent as we once were. In essence, the Teddy Bear represents the physical form of our lost innocence. For a moment, when we hold them, we connect to things we yearn for.

For my next piece of installation art, I decided the sculptures would be Teddy Bears as they have such strong symbolism. There were various routes I could have taken, but I decided to present the Teddy Bears in a way that deliberately contradicted its virtuous meaning. In a way, I tarnished its reputation; changing the perception of the viewer; persuading them to look at the Teddy Bears in ways we would not normally imagine.

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I looked at the exhibition *'Childish Things at Skarstedt'* featuring artists Vija Celmins, Robert Gober and Mike Kelley.' The exhibition engages with the deeply personal and often repressed memories of childhood. Looking back on this formative period from adulthood, the artists incorporate keepsakes and domestic objects charged with emotional and physical connotations, to emphasise the influence of childhood on their personal and artistic development' (Fused. September 2015).

Figure 32. Mike Kelley, *Ahh…Youth* (1991) photograph

I really gravitated towards Mike Kelley's work. I loved his use of stuffed animals. Incorporating his own childhood experiences, playing with the tension between the everyday objects used in his (and Rober Gobers) work and the power of these objects to unearth our emotions.

"My biography is fairly dull. It's much better to fill in these empty spaces with fiction than the boring truth. I filled in the blanks with pastiches of things that had affected me when I was a child: cartoons, films…" (Kelley, M. September 2015)

Mike's use of humour, irony and seriousness employed by his use of childhood objects, stories, fears and fantasies, really engage your mind and visually captivate.

By using colourful toys connected to a time of innocence, Mike is able to touch on deeper subjects and engage with more challenging and fraught material.

'The cinematic suite of images gives credence to Kelley's admission to creating fictions around his own childhood and also invites the viewer to project their own experience of youth onto the work. Although seemingly playful and innocent, the alienation of the images in single frames heightens the discord between the happiness of childhood play and the disaffections of the adult artist, conscious of the traumatic memories such images may harbour.' (Fused. September 2015)

"When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things" (Kelley, M. September 2015).

I found this to be a stunning quote, which made me think how we as adults constantly reminisce about how fragile childhood was; how some of us wish that we could relive it or could have experienced it differently. This is focusing on the past and what we cannot ever get back.

Instead of looking at what we may have missed or lost as a child, I would focus on the exploits of growing up and how our experiences have shaped us today. I wanted to create a celebration of experiencing life to the full; to interpret the diminishing of innocence and childlike wonder to mischievous adult curiosity. By achieving this, the adults viewing the installation would be able to relate to this experience.

I would incorporate the use of sculpted bears representing the young following their curiosity. Although what they are curious about is not always what a parent wants them to explore. For example, drinking, swearing, sex, drugs etc.   Perhaps this theme was a calling to my own childhood as I have fond memories of my own Teddy Bears and my bedroom that was decorated with Teddy Bear wallpaper.

7. Epiphany

Now I had chosen 'Teddy Bears' as my new subject, I doubled back and scrapped the 'Allan's Day Out' project. I wanted to depart from the subject of elephants, but stay with the concept of childhood. I started from a fresh standpoint, with new found vigour. This enabled me to reanalyse what was needed and echo my ideas without suffering any pitfalls. I was learning and growing from the experiences I had with my previous works and exhibitions.

To review my questions as an artist, I needed to create a meaningful piece of art that had a purpose and an end. My previous works had been successful as I had used placement with meaning instead of aimlessly placing artwork anywhere that made it 'look nice'. Items can be placed in a situation by default to be aesthetically pleasing.

If the situation calls upon it, having or doing something because it looks nice can be justified. The only time it is not appropriate is when the art is not conveyed to the best of the artist's ability and they are happy with a 'half-baked' exhibition that just looks 'OK'.

I was not decorating a room in a house, filling space for the sake of it. I had logical and conscious decisions to make regarding my work, which in turn would help answer my questions. By following a direction and making deliberate decisions regarding my work, the placement would not be presented randomly; although I understood that some things would be out of my control. Nothing to do with art is straight forward, or can be 100% planned.

I adapted and flexed my ideas, materials, lighting etc. in order to understand how I could best convey my art and project the feelings I wanted to provoke from the viewer. Coming to my conclusions, it was time to start progressing to my final work. I knew I wanted to work with sculpture as I felt this would be the best way to utilise and execute my ideas towards my research questions. I used sculptures as I wanted to make a physical object rather than paint or draw. My personal preference was to use clay to make the sculptures.

8. Bears

I decided it was necessary to create four bears in order to achieve my vision. I drafted out my ideas with intent and planning, refining my ideas as I went along.   I had to consider what materials to use to make my bears. The sculptures had to be fairly heavy and sturdy enough to be able to withstand the weather and other physical 'dangers', such as vandalism, destructive animals etc. However, I still had to place chains around my sculptures to weight them down, in order to be able to photo the effect without them being moved by the elements.

Technique and process:

I used the following materials to construct my bears:

- Cardboard or/and styrofoam

- Air dry clay

- Mesh

- Glue gun and glue

- Metal chains

- Clay carving kit

- Acrylic paints

- Lacquer spray

Figure 33. Yasmin Cox, *Bear line up* (2018) photograph

Bear 1

I decided to sculpt my first bear in a standing position. I wanted the bear to look animated so that it would become a part of its surroundings, rather than it be rigidly posed and detached from the environment. I designed the sculpture's physical form using multiple sources; specifically, a real bear, the Victorian vintage style toys and my first Teddy. Nostalgia has always influenced my works and I wanted my bears to be a familiar incarnation of childhood toys so that the sculptures would play into the viewer's own memories.

I created the sculpture of the bear; carving out layers of fur, which ruffled and crossed in directions, just as a real or Victorian bear fur would.   I created a stitching effect to shape the paw pads within the fur.

The belly and snout were carved reflecting the technical structure of a stitched bear. Although I had used sturdy materials, it was essential to me that the sculpture displayed a plush or softer effect.

The glass eyes normally used for soft toys appeared too lifeless on my sculpture. I decided to used clay button eyes, which rectified this issue and continued the plush feeling I was setting for my sculpture. I wanted the sculpture to appear real and childlike, mixing the child's perception of reality. This style of sculpture would be one of the best ways to blend a lullaby and my idea in photography form.

Bear 2

The second sculpture I crafted was made to complement Bear 1. I applied the same physical characteristics; the stitching effect on the paws, button eyes and slightly ruffled fur; however, I made some changes to provide more individuality. Although the design was still based on the Victorian vintage styled bears, it was also influenced by iconic cartoon bear features; round face, big ears, tattered fur etc. I wanted to create the feeling of nostalgia inspired by the Victorian vintage bear and early television cartoons such as the 'Care Bears'.

This sculpture was made with its arms high and open as if it was offering a hug. The bear's stance is slightly off balanced in this position, making its appearance very animated. I opted for this pose as it reflects the wants of a child; how the child hugs the toy, mirroring the actions of its owner, resonating the purpose of the toy.

Additionally, by creating the sculpture in a 'movement' position, the use of props could be incorporated into the photos. This would build a more convincing interaction between the sculptures and objects in their environment and create opportunities to immerse the bears into various activities. In effect, the bears could have lively and visually interesting interactions between each other, as well as being able to use objects.

Bear 3

The third bear was designed after the results of my experiments with Bear 1 and 2 led to my sculptures being displayed indoors. This meant I could lose some of the materials such as the chains required for weighing the bears in place. Bear 3 could be made considerably smaller now that the elements were not to be factorised into its making. However, this was not as a problem as Teddies come in all shapes and sizes.

The inspiration for Bear 3 came from adapting the style of 'Tatty Teddy', which has a cross stitching effect, with some influence from the Victorian vintage bear. This meant all the sculptures would have some unity in the contrasting shapes, sizes and colours.

Bear 4

Bear 4 was constructed at a later date; after I had almost come to a conclusion on how I was going to present my final exhibition.

This bear, the biggest of the sculptures, was a hybrid of 'Tatty Teddy', with its cross-stitching effect; the Victorian vintage bear design and the huge, plush fairground teddies, often seen hanging from the stalls in a sitting position with blank looks on their faces. I used the style of the Victorian vintage bears in all my sculptures to keep the sense of collection, but the other styles to bring out an air of distinction.

The position of Bear 4 was chosen after some consideration. I drew many sketches and scenarios on what the bears could possibly be doing, which brought me to the decision of Bear 4 being made in a sitting position. As said before, with Bear 1 and 2, it was important to have the variety for creative freedom in my photography and the realism of nature.

I created the bears in different colours and shades as I wanted them to present an air of individuality and personality. I did not want to them to appear conformed or uniformed as this would present a cult like feeling. Their diversity makes them appear more organic.

The main factors that went into deciding the colour palette were:

- The areas the photos would be taken: It was important for the bears to complement their background. A neutral colour palette would expel the risk of clashing; leading the viewers to appreciate and take in the surroundings of the installation.

- Personal opinions on bright colours: By using subtle colours, it allowed the viewer to view the bears in their surroundings without forming strong initial opinions about their appearance. Strong colours would cloud the viewer's perception of the bears in the installation. For example, the bright colours and patterns used for their counterpart 'Build a Bear', can look quite gaudy and distracting and may lead you to instantly dislike the bear due only to its appearance.

- Tradition: As I was using Victorian vintage bears in my design it made sense to use a traditional colour palette. By using a traditional, well known colour palette for my sculptures there was more opportunity for the audience to associate the bears with their memories; reminiscing about their own childhood.

- To dress or not to dress: This was a perplexing decision to make. In the 19th century, the Victorians did at times dress their bears; although as stated in the point made about 'Build a Bear', colours could be distracting and the clothes could also create this problem or effect. Clothes come with their own symbolism and ideas of gender, so this would add a new and unwanted layer to my work.   I wanted the sculptures to be viewed, first and foremost, as they were; Teddy Bears. I did not want the viewer perceive a bear as a girl because she is wearing a dress, or as a boy because he was wearing a certain type of hat etc.

For the sake of utilising every possible avenue my work could take, I did experiment with dressing them in various outfits; however, I found this looked comical. This was possibly due to the bears being rigid objects, which looked uncomfortable against the fabric of the clothes.

I concluded that the bears did need accessories; but clothing was distracting and, as theorised, the 'genders' became too 'in your face'. I wanted them to be viewed as just Teddy Bears.

On average, it took me about one week to make each bear. I used bows to decorate them, drawn from examples of Victorian vintage bears. The bows gave the bears a 'little wink' of their own individuality; layering more personality to the sculptures without them being issued with genders.

Each bear was adorned with a bow around their neck, except for Bear 2. I found that due to a technical point in its design, placing a bow on Bear 2 made it look robotic. The colours of the bows were chosen to complement the bears fur and style.

9. Early photo experiments

Figure 34. Yasmin Cox, *If you go down into the woods* (2018) photograph

I began taking my collection of photos of Bear 1. I soon realised that I was too focused on the physical act of taking photos, instead of concentrating on the context, like the *'Allan's Day In and Out'* series. I felt I was going back to stage one, but with a different subject.

The early experimentation with my bear had resurfaced some memories. Old nursery rhymes came to mind, such as '*Round and Round the Garden'* and '*Teddy Bears Picnic'*. After much deliberation and analyzing the lyrics of each rhyme I chose '*Teddy Bears Picnic'* by John Walter Bratton (1907) as my source.

I chose '*Teddy Bears Picnic'* over *'Round and Round the Garden'* for three reasons. The first being it was rather short with little conceptualisation. The second being I found it less inspiring than *'Teddy Bears Picnic'*. The final reason was that the lyrics for *'Teddy Bears Picnic'* perfectly represented the direction I was taking my concept.

Lyrics

If you go down to the woods today

You're sure of a big surprise

If you go down to the woods today

You'd better go in disguise!

For every bear that ever there was

Will gather there for certain

Because today's the day the

Teddy Bears have their picnic

Picnic time for Teddy Bears

The little Teddy Bears are having

A lovely time today

Watch them, catch them unawares

And see them picnic on their holiday

See them gaily gad about

They love to play and shout

They never had any cares

At six o'clock their Mommies and Daddies

Will take them home to bed

Because they're tired little Teddy Bears

Every Teddy Bear who's been good

Is sure of a treat today

There's lots of marvellous things to eat

And wonderful things to play

Beneath the trees where nobody sees

They'll hide and seek as long as they please

'Cause that's the way the

Teddy Bears have their picnic

Picnic time for Teddy Bears

The Little Teddy Bears are having

A lovely time today

Watch them, catch them unawares

And see them picnic on their holiday

See them gaily gad about

They love to play and shout

They never have any cares

At six o'clock their Mommies and Daddies

Will take them home to bed

Because they're tired little Teddy bears

Because they're tired little Teddy bears

The rhyme, *'Teddy Bears Picnic'*, really illustrated my concept and projected my vision forward. The lyrics are very mischievous and playfully bounce back and forth between the viewpoint of the 'adult' and the 'child'. I wanted to inspire an elevated feeling of happiness; persuading the viewer to laugh and celebrate life.

For instance, artist Marina Abramović's negative aspects of her childhood feeds into her work in her 1997 performance piece '*Balkan Baroque*'; her mother and father displayed on video behind her as she sits on a pile of cow bones with three copper sculptures containing water. This suggests a spiritual purification. The act of self-purification is, however, performed by Abramovic who, for six hours a day over four consecutive days, washes with a metal brush, soap and water a pile of cow-bones, scraping the last bits of meat from them. This purification 'to the bone', as suggested by the expression itself, this clearing away of ballast (beautiful or ugly, pleasant or unpleasant, personal and collective past), becomes an individual work of mourning without which no rite of passage can occur. In Abramovic's childhood she was made to uphold her mother's strict compulsive relationship to cleanliness and order; which you can see reflected in the performance stripping all the bones of any remembrance of meat (LIMA, 2020).

Artist Paula Rego's paintings and pastel pieces often feature details of storybooks or folk-themes from her native Portugal; her works commonly feature female children in distorted or unsettling settings. Rego's *The Maids* (1987) one girl is manhandled by a maid while the other strokes her mistress's head in a sinister way; the work displaying psychic pain. The *War* (2003) painting is one of the many works that illustrate the negative and brutal effects of the world on a child, the piece displaying physical pain (Brine, 2019).

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Marina Abramović and Paula Regos use feminism, various mediums and themes in their work though ultimately children and childhood are filtered in their work in a depressed truth. Despite the fact I want my work to feel more light hearted, I want truths of the past to be present in my work. Nonetheless my works direction will move towards a joyful aspect of life, even though it handles some adult themes, the piece will illustrate childlike glee in the forefront, such as in works by Andy Warhol and Sarah M Bendera.

Andy Warhol is iconic for his screen prints of movie stars. This obsession with celebrity culture stems from Warhol being bedridden from Sydenham's Chorea. This is a nervous disorder causing involuntary rapid uncoordinated body movement, primarily in the face hands and feet. Because of this, he became a hypochondriac, and found himself in frequent isolation due to his bedridden condition. A radio and pictures of celebrities were his only companions. His childhood experiences and comfort later defined his practice and subject matter (Culture trip, 2020).

Andy Warhol also created a set of children illustrations in books namely one called '*The Little Red Hen'* and others such as his children's book printed on silk-screened stiff board pages. Warhol's illustrations were expressive and colorful, bringing fun and humor to the importance of social values (Popova, 2020). Humor being an aspect which I will work with in my current piece.

The use of children's books as inspiration is quite a popular source. Sarah M Bendera, like Paula Regoa, uses children's books as influence to her work tackling serious themes of feminism, however by using *'The Little Red Hen'* from the classic children's book as her alter ego, Bendera mocks female roles and confirmatory. This allows the audience to sympathise with women and laugh at the ridiculous lengths they go to. Looking at Bendera's work there is often a sense of nostalgia and sentimentality in the imagery.

In contrast to Marina Abramovića and Paula Regoa darker tones, Andy Warhol and Sarah M Bendera's works make a vibrant and vivid impression and feel more playful on the meaning of their works. This is what I wanted to achieve in my final piece.

In this big world we encounter so many different things; although somehow, we share similar stories, with most people sharing the same experiences at one time or another. I find this to be fascinating.   We talk about our first experiences being the same or similar and bond over memories of our adolescence; sharing our experiences and reflecting how they helped us become adults. In one form it could be an unspoken rite of passage.

10. Development

My initial idea was to follow a path leading 'into the woods', mimicking the lyrics of the nursery rhyme; which would evidently lead to the installation of the bears. I was adamant that I wanted the installation with Bear 1 and Bear 2 to be situated outdoors.

My first thoughts revolved around making the sculptures and placing them with the picnic items in the outdoors environment. The items included a picnic blanket, beer bottles, cupcakes, weed and a condom full of gummy bears. I wanted to place them in specific ways so that the picnic would appear normal at first glance, but on further inspection the viewer would see the not so innocent aspects.

I had not given much thought to the resistance of the picnic items in regards to the elements and when I came to set up my installation various practicality issues arose to sabotage my efforts. The wind was a prominent issue; strong gales blew lightweight items away and the picnic blanket rippled, making air pockets. The sound of the wind, passing cars and people walking by became very distracting. Due to all these factors, it became evident that the great outdoors may not be the best environment to present the installation.

After some thought and deliberation, I came to the decision that placing the installation outdoors did not complement my work and I could create a synthetic environment which would work better. Evidently, there are some small outdoor sculptures such as Tracey Emin's *70 Bronze Birds* (2018) which works well. My sculptures were small, but there were many other details to analyse in the installation. This was a contributing factor in deciding that a more neutral environment was required.

Universally, most outdoor sculptures are on the larger scale and demand the viewer's attention. The grounds available for me to use were not working for me.

I did not want to set the installation too far away from the main exhibition. I wanted the public to physically view the sculptures as that was an important component of my work.

Although I would not be creating the installation outside; stylistically, I wanted to include some sort of greenery in the piece. I decided that a greenhouse was going to be the primary setting of my installation. The greenhouse had all the conditions that I desired for my piece; a path to follow, plantation and greenery, with no interference from the elements. However, this location created new issues; the first being the vast space inside the greenhouse. I needed to find a way to keep the viewer focused on the installation by highlighting where it began and finished.

I scrapped the picnic projection and created the idea of a trail of bears. I referred back to my initial inspiration of Mark Kelly's statement 'putting away childish things' and reflected on the mischievous lyrics of *'Teddy Bears Picnic'*. I decided to litter the path with bears carrying out outrageous activities such as having sex in the bushes, tattooing each other and smoking weed etc. This accentuated my childhood theme; away from adults' eyes, children want to experience what the grownups do.

I created two more maquette bears (Bear 3 and 4). I sketched positions and layout ideas to develop an understanding of how the installation would be placed. I loosely took the planning for how the bears would be placed into account when making Bear 3 and Bear 4. However, even though the 'ingredients' were all there for the 'perfect' installation, when put together the result was subpar.

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At best, the experience could be described as cute and funny; funny being one aspect that I did want to project in my installation. However, viewing the walkway, I was unable to respect the installation as a work of art. I had created a crude display, lacking context or story, which did not allow the viewer to build upon their own experiences. The display itself looked messy, unrefined and lacking in emotional impact. The installation did not complement its surroundings, unlike my installation *'Pain is Beauty'* (2014), or works created by Andy Goldsworthy who uses natural resources and materials and the space available onsite to elevate and frame his artworks.

The sculptures seemed so small compared with the vast space in the greenhouse, it effectively drowned out the impact of the installation. The thought of sculpting more bears came to mind, but the vast space would still overwhelm the small sculptures and the message of my work would be lost. I had to start afresh, strip the installation down to the bare bone and rebuild from aspects highlighted in its raw form. I had to build from the important components to create a well-defined structure of artwork. To do this, I turned to the 'white box'.

By using a typical gallery space with white floor and walls, I had a blank canvas with nothing obstructing the background and floor. Working to a 4D frame, outlining details of the individual objects, I set up the installation in a similar way to the original picnic piece, with a few minor differences; i.e. the addition of Bear 3 and 4. The props were incorporated more and the sculptures positioned to interact with the objects; smoking a joint, drinking from a bottle etc.

Figure 35. Yasmin Cox, *Party Bears* (2018) photograph

Through this experimentation, I gained a new understanding and respect for the 'white box'.   The 'white box' is very useful when displaying minimalist work and an important component of conceptualism. Sometimes a blank space complements and finishes a work of art. Tracey Emin's installation *'My Bed'* is a grand example of simplistic surrounding tunneling; with the focus on the bed and the items scattered upon it. Also, Fabian Bürgy's sculpture works placed in bare white rooms; each work being clean, precise, simple and placed with intention.

Dubbing my new work, *'Party Bears'*, I began experimenting with the space. I was motivated with the idea of minimalism and moved the props and bears into position. I was able to control the bears interacting with each other, the objects and the surroundings, which I was not able to do in the other environments.

Light

I decided to use multiple lamps as light sources. It was interesting to see the shadows form where the light hit the sculptures and props. The shadows created a secondary image to view; an illusion, more to see than just the installation itself. This was reminiscent to *'A Distant Call'* by Tim Noble and Sue Webster. By using a dark room, with the work illuminated by lamps, the piece went from static to kinetic. The lively ambiance the installation projected was what I was working towards. Like my previous exhibitions, it was finally gaining essence.

I had created an atmosphere of emotional freedom and happiness. I adored many things from this installation; the silhouettes emitting from the bears and props, the actions of the bears and the layout. The lighting changed the feel of the piece and I decided to incorporate it into the installation.

The installation was set in such a pristine space, I felt that people would hesitate to enter the area to experience the views from different angles and take in the smaller details.

This happened at my exhibit, 'To be one's own woman' (2017), which was in a similar setting; white box, white floor, with a red 'carpet' leading through the installation. (Figure 30). The viewers who did not choose to walk down the path were unable to appreciate the full effect of the artwork. My main objective was to create an immersive experience; without entering the space, half the artwork would be missed. One way to help combat this issue was by using photography. I could take photos of different angles on the installation and place them on the wall. However, it seemed meaningless to have photos of different views of the same setup. I could only use photography if it brought depth and narrative to the installation instead of just being repetitive.

Reviewing the book *'Little People in the City'* by Slinkachu, I analysed the photos to see what aspects of the story they brought forth. I also looked back to the photos of *'Allan's Day Out'* and the 'bears in the wood experiment' to find a common denominator that made them compelling.

The common factors were:

- Angle: A strong point of focus and depth of field
- Simplicity: Enough various objects to create a story that is simple and quick to understand
- Emotion: Compelling; humorous; on the edge of melancholy
- Subject: Familiarity of objects, experience and interaction

I chose five common experiences, which we all universally experience typically as a young adult when we first come into contact with sex, drugs, alcohol, tattoos, betting/gambling.

Figure 36. Yasmin Cox, *Naughty Bear* (2018) photograph

I photographed a collection of scenes with each bear acting out one of the chosen themes; all against a white wall and floor. I was pleased with how the bears presented the themes; although overall the photos were stark and rigid. The tone seemed ominous; the air of fun and humour had evaporated. The dead background and looming shadows changed the essence of the theme entirely. The images seemed to be a forewarning of what was to come if they continued to travel on that road from bad habit to addiction.

I knew that I could develop the photo narrative further and it would be key part in my installation. However, the photos currently came across as 'artsy'; trying to make a deep, impactful statement on addiction. I had not used all the components that *'Little People in the City'* had used.   The installation may have required a neutral setting, but the photos needed background to reflect grounding and familiarity. The bears had to interact and experience the themes together; forming a bond, instead of just looking sad and alone. 'Oddly enough, even when you know they are just hand-painted figurines, you can't help but feel that their plights convey something of our own fears about being lost and vulnerable in a big, bad city." (The Times, 2008).

I wanted my viewers to look at the scenarios and identify with these emotions by forming connections with the bears and reminiscing about their own experiences on the various themes.

I took a collection of photos of the bears. From a photography stand point, I worked the bears into the space using the chosen environment as my canvas and the bears as my paint. I illustrated the individual experiences as rites of passage; the things most children do when out with friends, unbeknown to their parents. These photos appeared fluid; the interactions creating narrative. This restricted perception on how the scene was viewed; a panoramic observation on the behaviour of the bears.

For experimental purposes, I captured some photos inside the house and outside on the street. After analysing the photos taken outside, I decided the bears seemed displaced to the props (alcohol, condom etc.).

The cars and telephone poles on the street made the photos distracting and displeasing to look at. Nothing really stood out in the images and no narrative could be taken from them.

Figure 37. Yasmin Cox, *Night life* (2018) photograph

The indoor experiments went exceedingly well. The photos had unity, described a story and were visually entertaining. I continued taking photos of the bears in different perspectives, with different numbers of the bears in the frames. The closeup images were good in a photography sense; they showed high detail, focal point and a nice contrast. However, they lacked the details of the story, compared to the long-distance shots of the bears all together.

I took various photos at different points of the day and night. The time did not really affect how the photos were perceived, but the night shots created lighting issues. I concluded that I would be taking the photos indoors and the time of day would not matter as it was not an aspect that could be perceived in the images.

I had experimented enough to confidently finalise my decision on taking the collection of photos for the installation. The first course of action was to remake Bears 3 and 4. The original bears were fine for my experimental process, but I wanted to make the new bears look as polished and refined as Bears 1 and 2. They would still look like scruffy, lively bears, but not as boxy.

After planning the positions and locations of the bears, I took a series of photos at each site. This meant I had a large number to choose from for my collection to highlight the installation. Experimenting with the placement of the bears was important; regardless if I liked a photo in particular, I would choose the images that fitted in with the collection as a whole, taking the aspect of how they flowed together into consideration.

I intended to incorporate people into the photos. The bears would represent the innocence of a child; their curiosity; their naivety and imagination. I wanted to bears to walk in on the said person, doing the bad things; as we did with our parents, some to more extremes than others. When taking the photos, it was less captivating and disruptive to have a person semi-interacting with the still objects, however it created a barrier between them. I found it much more enjoyable to have the bears interact with one another and by consequence it refined the overall development of the photos.

A realm was created where the bears became animated, developed character and individual personalities to produce a story of unwritten words.

I reviewed the props, assigning them to each theme and particular bear for the planned scenes. It was important to dedicate a room to each theme as each photo would demand the viewer's full attention to every detail. If I had taken the photos in the same room, the viewer would miss or skip over the small details as they were already familiar with the surroundings.

I incorporated the use of some of my furry, fabric Teddy Bears and used them as a design inspiration for my sculpture bears. By having more bears, the photos were livelier and I could work the fabric bears into poses the sculptures could not be placed in. This left more leeway when planning the setup of each scene. The fabric bears brought a grounding semblance, which provided the sculpted bears with authenticity.

It was important that I had both landscape and portrait photos for the collection so that when I hung them in the rooms in the installation, they would complement each other. It was important to edit the photos so that they complemented the installation. In previous exhibitions I had only changed the colour of the photos for a raw look; leaving the image grainy to accentuate the point of the concept. After creating a collection of photos and compared various filters, I settled for Sepia.

Sepia is a form of photographic print toning – a reddish brown tone added to a black and white photograph in the darkroom to "warm" up the monochrome image. The use of Sepia began in the 1880s, partially to make the photographs look better, but also because the chemicals involved slowed down the ageing process. A preservative of sorts. (Jarvis, C, 2016)

'Photographs can be thought of as tangible memories of the past, providing a lens to reminisce and revel in nostalgia. I've always felt like I'm traveling back in time whenever I see those warm, brown-tinted old pictures that belong to my grandparents. Even today, almost all new-age photo editing software has the 'Sepia' tone filter that helps you make your recently snapped picture look vintage'. (Pradhan, 2015)

Sepia is a colour that we automatically associate with memories and the past. By having this filter on the collection of bear photos it should subconsciously bring forth past feelings from the viewer. The filter was another tool to unify the photos and subtract any distracting colours or materials (light reflections on tiles). Overall, I was ecstatic with the final collection; each photo presenting a strong statement; visually defined with clear focal points; the images representing clear themes (sex, drugs, alcohol etc.). Now that the collection was complete it was time to re-valuate the installation as a whole.

Although the installation was entertaining presented as a 'typical' London gallery piece, the development of 'party bears' had reached its conclusion. I would still use the 'party bears', with their air of fun, in the next evolution of photos, but the physical space would be more elusive. The central point of the installation would now be the photos.

Artwork in the home has always had an importance throughout history, it is the subject and significance which has changed over time. In this modern era, art work is to be enjoyed by all and is a luxury in the home. Many people incorporate art differently in their residences and have varying opinions on what art should be. Framed images, canvases, or tagged photos on a grid or wire are the most popular way to show art in the home. Photos can be clustered together in different sizes, or a large image may be displayed in a big singular frame on its own. Some artwork consists of an image displayed across several canvases.

There were various ways I could show the collection. I wanted to use an informal way to present the photos, but not in a way that they would sink into the walls. As they were the central point of the exhibition it was decided that they would be A1 photos (frame sized 66cm by 97cm).

From an interior design point, it was time to design the layout of the room and use the space to frame the photos; such as in a living room, bedroom etc. As the theme of my work was childhood and growing up, I decided to base my installation on the style of a nursery. The colour scheme was rustic, not only to complement the photos and the bears, but also to build on the impression that sepia subconsciously insinuates. I disregarded the idea of having a fake window with curtains; the walls would only feature the photo frames so that there were no distractions. This would also prevent the impression of overcrowding.

The only furniture I used was a cot and a rug, which I centered in the room along with the sculpted and fabric bears. The cot, which had a mat and a blanket, was used to give the viewer an initial starting point on the subject matter, manipulating their frame of mind. The bears were specifically placed in front of the cot; a statement of a sculptural art piece. The viewers were able to experience the bears in both in the physical and photo form; this was designed to provoke their dormant memories.

I created a synthetic environment for the installation, which resembled existing living spaces. This created a stage for the overall artwork; the focal point of which was the photography. The photo frames were large and the objects were minimal.

Comparing this to my installation *'Goodbye - My memory loves you; it asks about you all the time' (2016)*; I had created this room to take the viewer on an emotional journey to another place to share my pain and loss. This nursery environment is a complete contrast to this. It was an elaborate setting for the photo frames to be displayed. The photos and frames were complemented against the sepia/monochrome palette of the walls. The space was designed to extract feeling from the viewer, but not necessarily take them to a new isolated place as this was not the meaning and importance of this installation.

A lamp hung from the ceiling and fairy lights gave a soft glow to the installation; Illuminating the frames and the bears; floating among the 'fireflies', echoing childlike wonder, beckoning you to come. This installation's striking aura pulled the viewer's attention; a subtle presence on what was within.

The installation was not designed to be 'in your face'. The work speaks to the viewer, rather than it being 'more than meets the eye'. The artwork is at first bewitching, but then evokes hilarity as the viewer gazes upon the photos, with an instrumental version of 'Teddy Bears Picnic' playing softly in the background.

11. Teddy Bears - Final work

Figure 38. Yasmin Cox, *Teddy Bears picnic (Nursery* (2018) photo of installation

Figure 39. Yasmin Cox, *Teddy Bears picnic* (2018) photograph

Figure 40. Yasmin Cox, *Teddy Bears picnic* (2018) photograph

Figure 41. Yasmin Cox, *Teddy Bears picnic* (2018) photograph

Figure 42. Yasmin Cox, *Teddy Bears picnic* (2018) photograph

Figure 43. Yasmin Cox, *Teddy Bears picnic* (2018) photograph

A dream of familiar harmony and joy is echoed by the beautiful and humorous photographs that surround it. What is interesting about this, is that I focused on the issues regarding the placement of art to discover how and where one places it affects how it is perceived. I gradually realised that this broad theoretical question was less interesting than actually making the artwork for my exhibitions.

I looked back through my development and decided that the hard-bodied bears remind me of the works of 'Paul McCarthy', although not quite as rude, a bit more of a subtle wink; which I love.

In this final exhibit, I felt I had developed an installation that conveyed complex feelings. I believe I had balanced the display features of modern gallery space and my own complex style of installation. Everything that I wanted to convey was interpreted to my audience, and many positive responses were expressed.

- "Transcending (everything wonderful about the space); you are taken into the room, and it's not what you expect; you're outside and you think there's going to be cute pictures."

- "It's the colour as well; everything is brown, which is what sort of interested me with the Teddies, and the placement of the bears, clay and stuffed."

- "My grandmother gave me a Teddy when I was a baby and I still have it."

- "I love it, there are so many layers to it."

- "It's the attention to detail; everything matches; nothing clashing; colours complementing, the pattern of the rug and wallpaper echoing each other."

- "You see cuddly toys as sweet and innocent; this turns it upside down. Seeing them as dirty bears changed my perception."

- "Can I have one?"

A few people thought I had made a small-scale model of the bears and environments because of how big they seemed in the photos. I did not make miniature versions of bears like 'Allan' the elephant sculpture. It was all about perception; the bears look bigger in the background (photos in frames). The environment they are in is of normal size. The photos were taken from different levels to gain the maximum perception of the bears. I wanted the viewer to experience the situations as if they were part of it. The photos taken at a higher angle were detaching.

Over the years, I have been quite nostalgic with my work and this piece was no exception. I used events in my life to inspire various parts of the installation; the aspects of the room and the Teddy Bear trim.

As children, when we are born, we are given a plush toy; bears being the most common. They represent childhood innocence. It is interesting how we become attached to the bears we remember from our childhood.

I was ecstatic when so many people came and told me about the bears they had as children and the memories they evoked. It was my intense memories about my soft toys that made me incorporate my first Teddy Bear in the cot in my installation. It was a homage to my own memories and experiences. I have grown up now and the cot is empty, bar the bear; I have left my innocence behind.

An unseen reaction to the installation was that various people wanted to take the photos or sculpted bears home with them. This surprised me as installation pieces are not usually sellable.

Although the installation is the artwork, the viewer perceived the actual objects. I looked at the objects as items to be used once, whereas other people wanted to display these items in their own home. The items had affected them so much they wanted to take them out of their surroundings and place them, perhaps with new meaning, in their own home.

As positive as the responses were, I did not expect reactions of foreboding and sorrow.

- "Where is the child?"

- "Why are bears lined up at the front? very un-childlike. A child would scatter them or a mother would place them in comfort zones, this is borderline sinister."

- "Cinematic experience leads me to think that there is sinister intent, or demonic, slightly disturbed, or haunted."

- 'Why is there no baby?"

The question arose: "Why was I not incorporating people?". I explained that by having people in the piece would attach identity. I did not want to create an impression of how people should feel, or create a face for people to see. The bears made the installation neutral; there was no race or gender pushed forward. The scenes were open for the viewer to reflect their own memories and experiences.

The positions of the bears were defined in three ways. The first definition worked with concept of the installation. The audience had a chance to view the bears in a static state. By seeing them in the physical form, standing innocent, the view cannot believe the actions of the bears in the photos; as a parent would be shocked with the actions of their own child.

The second definition was placing the bears into position for aesthetic purposes. I placed the bears standing on the rug in front of the cot to work as a plinth of sorts; showcasing the sculptures. This displayed them as individual entities and highlighted their physical details.

The third definition was to place the photos of the bears in large frames. As stated before, they are a focal point in the installation and not a hidden detail. If you compare this to my installation *'Goodbye - My memory loves you; it asks about you all the time'* (2016); there were subtle details for the viewer to reflect on.

I placed these bears and frames in a stylistic way, rather than a recreational way. The purpose of the installation was to create memory by association, not to transcend to another place. For this reason, it compared more to my installation *'To Be One's Own Woman'* (2017)

A complex range of emotions arose from viewing the installation *'Teddy Bears Picnic (Nursery)'*; both positive and negative memories were evoked. As people, we experience many of the same things; although not everyone has a positive childhood. Throughout my experiments and development of the installation, I did not really think how the negative side of childhood could affect the perception of the artwork.

I am pleased that various meanings and feelings were drawn from this piece. However, regardless of the concept and my intent to create a joyful experience, the installation was always going to evoke a certain amount of negative feelings as well as positive.

We all have varying experiences and have different perceptions of reality. As Marina Abramović (2016, unknown) said "I came to believe in the idea of parallel realities. I think that the reality we see now is a certain frequency, and that we're all on the same frequency, so we're visible to each other, but that it's possible to change frequencies. To enter a different reality. And I think that there are hundreds of these realities."

Conclusion

The aim of this thesis has been to break down the two senses of installation, the instalment of an artwork and installation art. What does it mean to place a work of art? more specifically the objectives:

'What does it mean to place an artwork?'

'Does artwork translate to the area it is placed?'

'Is said environment part of the artwork?'

'How does the environment make the artwork change?'

The first chapter, *'The Presentation of Art Objects through History',* provides an overview of the arts role through the ages. Although this is insightful, the knowledge was not used in my final works, or to make the decision in my thesis. However, this was still vital research as it illuminated other art practices and how modern art has evolved. It is always important to know the origins of your subject.

As highlighted in the chapters, *'White Space, 'Unconventional Space'* and *'Installation';* space, whether used minimally or to its maximum potential, was shown to be an important aspect of many forms of artwork.

Regardless to the type of art, there are always 'rhymes and reasons' to artists' decisions. These chapters show the importance of using the environment to elevate or flatter the subject and the meaning of the artwork. This resonated with me and I applied this to my own installations. It is important aspect of artwork and a feature of this thesis.

The chapter *'Allan's Day Out'* was a pinnacle part of my research as that is where I made a breakthrough between the placement of art and its relation to human emotion. The placement of artwork only matters when it has purpose; in most cases this means that the arts subject is trying to evoke a particular emotion or thought from its viewers. I applied this reasoning to my all my installations including my final work *'Teddy Bears Picnic (Nursery)'*. I was able to dissect each decision made regarding placement, colours and surroundings. Each decision was used to psychologically pick at the viewers' minds.

Throughout my thesis research, I learned that many aspects such as emotion and psychology were important to art, as well as its placement. These were important factors to acknowledge in this thesis.

I combined my research and evaluated my own installations to answer my question **'Two senses of 'installation' – what does it mean to place a work of art?**

I was able to break down my four objectives and apply answers with my works.

'What does it mean to place an artwork?'

I used no traditional mediums, such as paint on canvas or sculpture, for my installation *'Goodbye - My memory loves you; it asks about you all the time'* (2016). I only used household items and old photos. This installation is an example of what it means to place an artwork. The purpose of this piece was to tell the story of the life of my grandfather and convey the grief I felt after he passed away. I had to specifically place objects in surroundings that the viewers would find familiar; starting off with aligning photos of my grandfather in chronological order on the wall. I placed the photos like this show his life from birth to his last picture taken before he passed away. If the photos were not in chronological order, the context would not have been coherent for the viewer to gain any understanding of who this person was, or why they were hung in this particular way.

I had set the lights to dim, along with other environmental factors set in a particular way, to create a calm and relaxed atmosphere to help create the story alongside the photos. This helped me gain an understanding of how important the environment is to the artwork and how drastically it can change and set the tone for the piece. For example; If I had set the lighting differently or just placed the photos on a bedside table.

The furniture and personal items belonging to my grandfather had to be placed with precision. These items gave the viewers an idea of the type of person he was and created the impression that the room was being lived in.

As I had not used traditional practices or mediums, it was crucial that the placement of every object had a purpose; adding to the environment to create a harmonised atmosphere.

'Does artwork translate to the area it is placed?'

The installation *'To be One's Own Woman'* (2017) highlights how artwork reflects on the environment. I had used more traditional mediums and practices for this installation; drawing, printing and sculpture. However, the message 'what it means to be a woman' demanded a stark presence. The prints had to be presented in a raw manner.

I looked to galleries and white spacing, not just to view placement from a technical or analytical standpoint, such as Victoria Newhouse's '*Book Art and the Power of Placement'*. I wanted to know why I should use the white background. Galleries have to be considerate of artworks to be displayed as the pieces vary in all aspects of style, size, practice and medium. Modern galleries do not have distinctive wall lengths, textures or colourings as there are too many variables to complement all artworks.

I had to display many pictures of naked ladies, with blood red flower heads. White space was to be a complementing environment to the loud drawings, along with a black feature wall to complement the white sculpture. This installation illustrates that a neutral space can elevate an artwork.

'Is said environment part of the art work?'

The environment in which the piece is located plays a substantial role in displaying artwork.

In this modern era, there a number of new practices which are presented in a contemporary way. Even traditional artworks can be displayed in an up-to-date manner.

The new practices of video, sound and performance demand a change of tactics. These practices do not conform to traditional standards of display, as explored in the chapter *'Unconventional Space'*. Artists such as Andy Goldsworthy or Maria E Marmolejo incorporate the environment into their pieces.

The installation, *'Pain is Beauty'* (2014), was not site specific, it could have been placed in different settings such as gallery space. The installation was set in a greenhouse, which brought life and movement to the paintings (figure 28). If the artwork had been placed in a neutral environment it would have created a different impression entirely.

'How does the environment make the artwork change?'

Many factors of a space dictate on how artwork is delivered. Throughout each installation, the placement and environment filter into how the art work is presented. As an artist, my main practice is installation and the surroundings are equally as important as the featured artwork. Every detail of the space makes a comment about the atmosphere and artwork itself. The characteristics of the installation must complement and represent the ideal and statement of the artwork.

My installations, '*Goodbye - My memory loves you; it asks about you all the time' (2016)* and *'Teddy Bears Picnic (Nursery)*' display contrasting ways of how the environment is important and changes how the works are viewed.

In the installation '*Goodbye - My memory loves you; it asks about you all the time*' it was the environment that presented the concept of the artwork. The installation was a replica of my grandfather's living room, with personal items giving the viewer clues to the kind of person he was.

My installation, *'Teddy Bears Picnic (Nursery)'* was reminiscent of a child's room, but not designed to be an actual replica. The environment was created to display sculptured and fabric bears. The decoration of the room; the cot and its accessories were intended to draw out the viewer's own childhood experiences by memory through association. The decoration was a tool to manipulate the thought process and describe the theme of the installation.

For years I have been plagued by these questions, although universally there is no 'right' answer. Art is flexible and ever changing and the final comment on what a piece means is down to whoever views it.

Not everyone is going to like every piece of artwork created, or have a connection or understanding of the piece. However, I have come to my own satisfying conclusion. The bare foundation of an artwork is its function; just as it has always been throughout history.   The difference being that placements of artwork are limitless. Only the artist creating the work knows its true function and can decide on the placement and how it affects their work.

To me, as an artist, placement is important to my artwork. Installation is an important part of my art; it is a frame to my work. It is essential to know as an artist what placement means to the artwork and how it is incorporated into the piece.

'We dress for the season and for the event. What works for one doesn't necessarily work for the other. The same is true for art: Paintings need their own dress. A review of how art has been displayed in various eras is a powerful reminder of how quickly styles change. Even judged by the apparently simple criterion of making an artwork look good, the aesthetics of placement are subject to prejudices of the moment.' (Newhouse, 2005, p.212)

My overall conclusion is that art placement has developed new meaning from how it was perceived in previous eras and the way artwork is presented today translates to the space it resides. The function of an artwork defines how the placement affects it and the meaning of placement differs according to the viewer's individual perspective.

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