

my Self is the Art is:
**An art installation exploring self-
reflection in art-making**

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Research Question(s)

Main question:

How does self-reflection affect one's experience with art?

Supplement question:

What are the roles and relationships between artist and viewer?

Methodology: Project Overview

My research questions lead to a creative project which took form as an art installation. An art installation is an artwork in which time is an essential component in the experience and understanding of the artwork.

Academic research included journals, articles, artist and art museum websites, and critiques. Hands-on research was also involved, which included material and spatial studies to observe experiential qualities of potential installations.

As materials were gathered for the physical installation, research continued throughout the process as new iterations were created. Research and creation continued side-by-side throughout the completion of the project.

Methodology: Justification

Art gives an immediate response / immediate presence which the viewer is able to interact with and see one-on-one, face to face in real time ; also add about why installation?

Due to the self-referential nature of the question about art, as an art piece I felt the participatory element of an interactive installation would be best to represent and refer to this investigation.

As the project is about how one interacts with art, the ability to explore the art piece as an integral part of experiencing the art as well as being able to be seen as a participator and to see others participate in order to agitate self-awareness of the art-viewer role.

Methodology: Interdisciplinarity

This project is interdisciplinary in nature from the research combined in order to create the creative project. Research included information within both the field of art as well as within social-psychological literature: art, artists, art movements, art theory, social-psychological theory, and personal experiential literature.

I had to reconcile my idea of self and how one interacts with and experiences art; I had to consider the roles of both artist and viewer, and what the relationship between the two is, as well as what their relationship with art is – how one reacts to a given image or object and why our desires and actions lead us to these feelings.

Miguel Mesquita Duarte's "Photography and Writing, or the Intimacy of the Image" was an essential text, which studied the relationship between Maurice Blanchot's philosophies on otherness and Roland Barthes' *Camera Lucida*, a text on his theories of photography and the image (Duarte). It was a large influence on both research methods as well as findings.

Conclusions

Artists and viewers have both implicit and explicit experiences and understanding when interacting with an artwork. Artists have some intention for which they provide information for viewer to use to have a certain experience. In order to provide the appropriate information which will lead the viewer to have the desired effect, the artist must reflect upon their life experiences to pull images which can create applicable juxtapositions. As an art piece, it is recognized as a creation from actions which happened in the past – a “presence excluding or exceeding any present” (Duarte). This creates an experience which suspends the image-at-hand and the art-making process, an experience that creates a desire of “search” (Duarte) which leads a viewer to question, or investigate, their understanding.

Project Strengths

The way in which my project attempts to suspend the present-present and past-present, while addressing the viewer in both truthful and untruthful ways demonstrated a cyclical interaction between art, artist, and viewer. I feel this This augments the existing research of how a viewer experiences art as an image, or presence. By including multiple layers of “experience” – imagery (within periodicals), video, audio, and situation (interactivity) – the ideas of how a person reacts to image is expanded to and applied beyond the image of the photograph.

Project Limitations

The manner in which the research was conducted, with research and art being created both before and after one another could have created a challenge in being unbiased; occasionally the research was used to support the decisions made, as well as being used to inform the decisions made. This is due to the nature of creation within measured check points. The research conducted also typically leaned toward my interests, which supported the idea that reflection and consideration is made when experiencing art, so there were not as many articles on conflicting opinions.

Additional Information

This Honors Project was created in fulfillment of both Honors Project and School of Art BFA Show guidelines, and satisfies my Senior Capstone class requirements within the School of Art. The project was accepted into the BFA Senior Thesis Show, *Firmament*, which was a public online exhibition.

The following slides include images of *my Self is the Art is* as it was installed for the exhibition, as well as the artist statement which was presented for the show.

Artist Statement

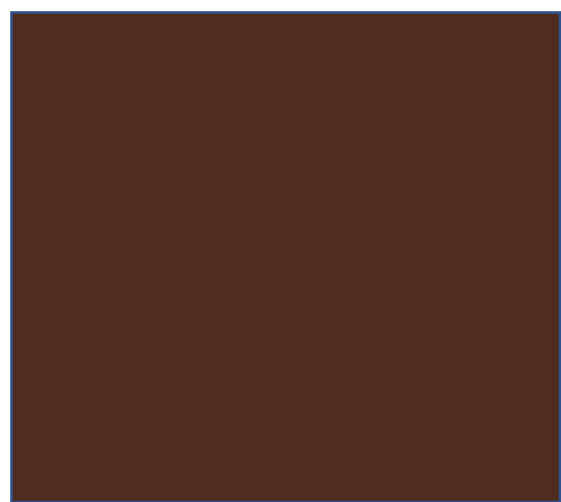
my Self is the Art is

The guiding question for this work is How does self-reflection play a role in artmaking, particularly involving tacit artist-viewer communication?

I consider the self to be the recognition of a sum of experiences which constitute a sense of being: the self is experiential baggage that actively shapes the way one experiences the world. Artists must analyze their self and assume the viewer's self to fulfil the intention of their art.

Art, loosely defined, points at or interacts with life and living – artists gather materials (visuals, ideas, audios, objects, etc.) and combine them to provide juxtapositions which create this experience. The artist looks critically at their relationship with these juxtapositions in order to anticipate what potential connections and experiences they might create for a viewer.

This installation explores this reflective, self-conscious part of artmaking and art-experiencing. Viewers are encouraged to sit down at the table, read the books, and watch the video; this participatory element is essential for the act of participation to become a prop of the work. As the piece is non-immersive viewers are susceptible to being watched: bystanders can see viewers as part of the piece, and thus viewing (participating) becomes part of the understanding of the piece.







Bibliography/Works Cited

Duarte, Miguel Mesquita. "Photography and Writing, or the Intimacy of the Image: A Dialogic Encounter between Barthes's Camera Lucida and Blanchot's Philosophy of Otherness." *Photographies*, vol. 12, no. 3, 2019, pp. 283–301., doi:10.1080/17540763.2019.1627392.