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# **Narrative Beyond Artefact in Exhibition Design**

A thesis

submitted in partial fulfillment  
of the requirements for the degree  
of

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at

**The University of Waikato**

by

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# Abstract

Exhibitions have undergone a shift from being presentation oriented to visitors' experience focused. Visitors associate themselves with stories stronger than other methods of absorbing information. Therefore, museums and galleries invite specialists from film/theater industries to design exhibitions for enhancing experiences in space. Bal points out the potential of merging these two disciplines by analyzing an exhibition through film criticism, *mise-en-scene*, which shares similar methods to exhibition design techniques but has wider perspectives in supporting the completion of the narrative.

This research investigates the possibilities of applying *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool for narrative based exhibitions. Two self-curated exhibitions explored the benefits and challenges for the application of this film technique using an action research methodology. The intent of this research is to offer insights into the cross-disciplinary merger in exhibition design, additionally, evidence of its possibilities and limitations is provided.

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# Glossary

This section outlines the definitions of keywords, which are used in this thesis.

Exhibition	Collection(s) of displays in the public, museums and galleries in particular.
Exhibition Design	Process of creating an exhibit, from conceptual design to physical installations. (Berger et al., 2007)
Exhibition Designer	The person who creates the three-dimensional experience in exhibitions.
Curation	The act of a curator to organize and oversee an exhibition. (Tzortzi, 2007)
Curator	The person who is responsible for external relations, identifies the visitors, promotions and collection of artefacts in exhibitions.
Narrative	The sequence that connects all events together ("Narrative," 2010). From Chapter 3 onwards, narrative refers to a story.
Story	The plot of incidents that connect together to form a narration that contains a beginning, development and ending. ("Story," 2010)

# Chapter 1 - Introduction

Exhibitions are the core business of museums and galleries. With increasing public interests, curators apply exhibition design strategies to enhance visitor experience. Storytelling is an effective way to achieve this (Bedford, 2010) because visitors associate themselves with stories and stories have the abilities to evoke personal memories. Using narrative storytelling links artefacts together in space and therefore builds connection between visitors and the exhibition.

The value of stories is seen among fiction narrative in film/theater (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004). Techniques and concepts from cinematography have a history of use in exhibition design and critique. Bal's (2008) analysis about the exhibition *Partners* curated by Ydessa Hendeles shows that film techniques aid understanding the sequence behind space and artefacts in exhibition design by using *mise-en-scene* to evaluate the exhibition compositions. This film criticism has not been used explicitly as exhibition planning tool. In order to examine if film/theater tools are effective in planning stage of exhibition design, the research question posed in this thesis is: How can *mise-en-scene* be used as an exhibition planning tool for narrative based exhibitions?

This research is of interest to exhibition designers and curators who are exploring narratives in space to enhance visitors' experiences in museums and galleries; and also aimed at experience designers, urban designers and artists whom in general are considering to apply stories in their design and artwork for developing the connection with people.

Chapter 2 investigates current literature by first looking into the brief development of exhibitions over the past decades. This is followed by an analysis of the compositions of different elements in space and how to apply narrative in exhibitions. This chapter ends with an in-depth discovery of film technique, particularly *mise-en-scene*, and how it is possible to connect it with exhibition design.

Chapter 3 and Chapter 4 use action research to explore and reflect upon *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool. Chapter 3 introduces and reflects upon the praxis loop of the Pilot Exhibition *From Despair to Hope*. Chapter 4 reports upon experiences with an original curated exhibition, *SHUT UP!*. Both Chapters 3 and 4 include documentation of the planning process and analysis that was developed along the way.

Chapter 5 concludes this research and provides recommendations on how to use *mise-en-scene* as a planning tool for narrative based exhibitions.

## Chapter 2 - Literature Review

Since beginning of the 21<sup>st</sup> century, museum and gallery exhibitions have shifted away from solely object-based presentations. Instead, the focus has increased on how to develop a memorable exhibition for visitors who come from diverse backgrounds and have different personal experiences. Visitors tend to react to the exhibitions that are able to connect themselves emotionally (Hein, 2000). With this transition underway, the demand for curating storytelling type exhibitions has increased; but it is hard to measure and prepare for story-based exhibitions without accurate planning tools and instructions.

This chapter begins by exploring the historical development of exhibition design in the past decades along with the shift of roles in which curators and visitors take part in modern exhibitions. Secondly there is an analysis of the core relationships that narrative stories form with the exhibition environment. This identifies the similarities between film/theater fiction and exhibition narratives together with the emergence of these two disciplines. Finally, an in-depth exploration ends this chapter with regards to the film theory *mise-en-scene* and its potential connection with exhibition environments.

### The Rise of Exhibition Design

Exhibitions have become more popular. Everyone of all ages find museums and galleries to be places where they can relax, be entertained and gain new knowledge.

The focus of this section is to outline briefly the development in the exhibition world, which due to an increasing demand from society, resulting in a change of focus for museums and exhibition curators. Visitors' interests have become a decisive factor in decision-making for exhibition design.

## **Bloom in the Exhibitions World**

Trade shows, World Fairs and early department stores are the precursors to exhibitions. The purposes of displays in these places were not only to communicate the relevant themes and products; more importantly they served the aim of showcasing the conceptual ideas of design communications, as well as creating a social environment for the public (Berger et al., 2007). From the late 1960s onwards, increasing interest has been shown towards these types of places, and exhibitions became "a new language" (Matthews, 2007).

Expansions of gallery and museum exhibitions started with growing interest from the public, in which people no longer needed to travel to a specific city for them (Altshuler, 2013). An increasing number of exhibitions have been set up around the globe as well and these began to reflect and present art practices in the society, which makes it easier for the public to take part in this unique experience in the art world.

The complexity of exhibitions has extended with various themes, sizes as well as locations due to the increasing demand. Specialists from multi-disciplines, such as psychology, education and architecture, etc., were asked to join the exhibition team to ensure the knowledge that was

communicated through artefacts enriching and the conceptual design of the whole environment was aesthetically appealing. (Matthews, 2007)

## **Shift of Museum Focus**

“Museums are not museums without exhibitions” (McLean, 1999, p. 83). With increasing interest blooming in the art world, interactions between visitors’ expectations and the focus of exhibitions have led to a shift in exhibitions in museums.

Exhibitions with artefacts that are displayed plainly based on chronological or aesthetic order have lost part of their audience. Especially with the fast pace in technological development, everyone now has access to information about certain artefacts online; museums, therefore, need to create a package for experience as a whole to attract visitors.

From the early 21<sup>st</sup> century, a transition started in the museum world from the focus of presenting artefacts to visitor-centered experiences (Hein, 2000), “in particular a shift towards considering visitors as ‘active’” (Macdonald, 2007, p. 149). Visitors are proactively seeking for the link that connects artefacts and the whole exhibition environment together (McLean, 1999), and willing to participate in exhibitions if there are any interactive components.

## **Focuses Shifted for Exhibition Curators**

With the shift in museums, “the most important people in the cultural world are not artists but curators” (Acord, 2010, p. 447). Exhibition curators have become essential at shaping the meaning of experience design in exhibitions as well as the link that connects artefacts and space together.

In the early days, the primary task for curators was to represent “collections to audiences in a specialized and highly political environment” (Russo & Watkins, 2004, p. 595); exhibitions and displays were not common to the public. By the late 1980s, having been influenced by the ‘graphic revolution’ (Matthews, 2007) for almost two decades, exhibitions became popular in the art world, not only to high authorities, but also to the general public. Curators were more sensitive about visitors’ interests and the messages that were communicated through exhibition displays (McLean, 1999).

Curators’ primary tasks have now shifted to arranging the relationship between space and artefacts, and more further, how to present the deeper meaning that links everything together in space. In this new exhibition environment, curators’ skills and knowledge are crucial in curatorial practice (Russo & Watkins, 2004). Curators have become the bridge that connects visitors and exhibitions together, and their abilities of transferring the thematic information through spatial arrangements for reaching visitors is one of the critical successful factors of an exhibition.

DeVorkin (2006) pointed out that how artefacts are presented and linked in space do largely depend on the availabilities of resources as well as the main theme that ties with the exhibition and curators’ subjective point of

view. Every curator has a slightly different vision towards similar issues, but all curators take into account that how to present these stories through space is one of the fundamentals in exhibition design.

*As described by Heinich and Pollak (1989a), an exhibition is more than the sum of its parts; it is the curator's "oeuvre", which illustrates a particular curatorial argument or perspective. (Acord, 2010, p. 449)*

Some crucial curatorial decisions are made onsite during installation days rather than the planning stage. Because there are three things that are hard to plan on paper or on screen – the exact final form of unfinished artefacts, the relationship among artefacts and the connection between artefacts and space (Acord, 2010). Although curators have a narrative on how they would like to arrange artefacts in space beforehand, which usually plays the role of a general guidance and no final decisions are made until the curator sees everything in person.

With a curator's job changing from gathering a collection of artefacts to arranging experience design in space, various types of exhibitions give more opportunities for everyone in the society to seek for what aligns with their own interests and provides a memorable experience for people from different age groups and diverse backgrounds.

## **Visitors Create Their Own Meanings in Exhibitions**

The blooming of exhibitions worldwide has shaped visitors' expectations of exhibitions towards a unique experience in public spaces. Museums and galleries have provided exhibitions a venue to create meanings that are larger than the sum of each artefact (Viña & Mattelmäki, 2010).

Furthermore, exhibition designers have taken visitors into account with the aim of encouraging them to apply their own understanding above the metaphors for creating a memorable visitor experience (Hirzy, 1992, as cited in Tate, 2012).

Messages that exhibitions communicate are not always the same (Turpeinen, 2005). Artefacts contain their original meanings, but new metaphors can be applied to each artefact based on different time and space. There are many types of exhibitions covering almost all fields and subjects relating to people in society. Therefore, exhibition environments become a large platform, in order to provide the public with an experience into which people can associate themselves.

Macdonald (2007) stated that visitors create meanings and stories that were not planned by the curator, while Matthews (2007) argued that the “designer has a role in framing and shaping meanings in exhibitions” (p. 9). Curators do leave enough space among all set-ups in exhibitions for visitors to fill in the gaps themselves. However, without the overall narrative being designed properly, it is challenging for visitors to interpret their own meanings on to the artefacts. So in order to engage visitors on a personal level, curators use artefacts in space to create a framework, which allows visitors to illustrate the message by bringing in their own memories and applying the knowledge that they have from various backgrounds (Turpeinen, 2005).

## Summary

Exhibitions are becoming popular and are familiar to the public.

Presentations of artefacts in museums and galleries are no longer plainly information focused. Curators have started to take visitors' experiences into account while making design decisions for exhibitions.

Exhibitions are now designed in a way that visitors are able to fill in some of the gaps in the exhibition narrative with their personal experiences and an exhibition as a whole aims at evoking visitors' memories and connecting with them on a more personal level. As a result, the shift of exhibitions to the visitors' experience has been successful.

## Storytelling in Space

With the growing demand and interest from the art world, exhibitions have become part of people's daily life. Displays without a deeper meaning slowly lost their audience. Museums and galleries as well as curators have shifted their focus on how to engage visitors and provide a unique experience in exhibitions. Applying storytelling-based narratives in exhibitions became one of the main strategies (Bedford 2001).

Storytelling is one of the natural skills that humans have, which is also one of the easiest way for people to absorb new knowledge and memorize important events. A variety of narratives are used to engage audiences in different ways and exhibitions are no exception (Bedford, 2001). Tzortzi (2007) suggested that some fundamental qualities in exhibitions are non-replaceable:

*A theoretical as well as practical key issue in the design of art museum and galleries is how the layout of space interacts with the layout of objects to realize a specific effect, express the intended message or create a richer spatial structure. (p. 2)*

Matthews (2007) described exhibitions as 'books on walls'. But unlike any stories in print media, exhibitions build a three dimensional immersive environment for visitors and it is the atmosphere created through exhibition design that engage and connect visitors with the whole environment (Turpeinen, 2005). Aimed at creating narratives that can effectively communicate with visitors through space, it is essential for curators to keep the balance of how much information will be presented implicitly and explicitly through the arrangement of artefacts.

An in-depth discussion about storytelling and storytelling in open spaces for experience design will be given in this section, along with a specific focus on narrative in exhibitions and how inherent spatial elements, sequence of artefacts and information exposition shape the development of narrative in exhibitions, which therefore affect visitors' experiences.

## **Storytelling: The Fundamental Way People Learn**

Storytelling is one of the most essential and powerful ways that people absorb new knowledge. People tend to have stronger reactions towards stories.

It is natural for humans to remember stories more easily compared to a list of arbitrary instructions. "Information not structured as a narrative is more likely to be forgotten" (Bedford, 2001, p. 28). Stories create scenarios

based on different time and space for people to associate their imaginations with (Bedford, 2001).

Stories do not only exist in histories, books, films and/or verbal conversations, they also appear in space and environments. Especially in the present, storytelling in an open environment creates a huge impact on people; it makes the space becomes visually attractive; but more importantly, because these narratives in the public create a sense of belonging for everyone. Metro stations in Paris and Berlin (Viña & Mattelmäki, 2010) are typical examples, in which their design, style and narrative connect strongly with the city's culture. Hence, there is a connection between the person and the city to create an identity with its citizens, which will not be forgotten by travelers and visitors.

With the emergence of storytelling in space, the environment that communicates develops an experience which is memorable for people of all ages.

## **Experience Design in Space**

The goal of experience design in space is to create an environment that communicates and storytelling is commonly used as a design strategy (Viña & Mattelmäki, 2010). Museum and gallery exhibitions accommodate many visitors on a daily basis, so it is essential for exhibition designers and curators to take experience design into account.

Stories and space share similar properties, they both have meanings and trigger memories, and stories always run through time in space. Berger (2007) mentioned, "With all the changes in technology over the centuries,

the way people perceive and enjoy space has remained remarkably similar” (p. 28). Environments that communicate are usually designed around a central story; through presenting the story in space, it aims at constructing an experience that engages audience on an emotional level and creates a space where people can relax and enjoy themselves (Berger et al., 2007).

Visitor experience is a fundamental factor for making design decisions about experience design. How to create an environment that interests visitors as well as being able to showcase the surroundings relating to its culture becomes important. A case study (Viña & Mattelmäki, 2010) from the *Stora Hitellet I Fjällbacka* hotel in Sweden shows that it attracted more tourists by creating a story about a sea captain, Chaeles Klassen. All rooms in the hotel are built in various themes that compose the whole story. It is the experience of staying in this hotel to discover the complete story of Chaeles Klassen that interests most people.

## **Experience Design in Exhibitions**

Experience design is about creating an environment that communicates and understands how to use narrative structure in space as well as other interactive elements to engage and attract visitors. With growing interest from the public about museums and galleries, exhibitions have become a main platform for experience design practice. (Berger et al., 2007)

The majority of exhibitions are constructed under a theme; curators work around the chosen theme to arrange artefacts and space for creating the sequence that is suitable for the development of exhibition narratives.

However, not everyone goes to museums and galleries with a specific purpose, in fact, large numbers of people go to exhibitions to relax and be entertained (Packer & Ballantyne, 2002). Therefore it is essential for curators to create space that is able to connect with visitors' past experiences and bring back some of their memories in order to make the space become memorable as well as creating surprises (Tang, 2006) to encourage discovery.

Though exhibition designs use storytelling as their main strategy, it is the whole experience exhibitions provide that distinguish themselves from other story telling events (e.g. story hours in libraries). McKey (2007) suggested that there are four key elements in creating an exhibition experience: the exhibition as a whole, space within exhibition, artefacts and their surrounding space as well as the narratives that connect all artefacts together. All these elements interact are used by the curator to create an unforgettable visitor experience.

## **Narrative in Exhibition - Architecture and Spatial**

### **Sequence**

Museum and gallery architecture has been considered as one of the major components for narratives in exhibitions. It plays an influential role at supporting the development of narrative in space, also a determined part of the sequence that controls visitors' movements.

Space is as indispensable as artefacts in exhibitions (Tzortzi, 2007). Visitors are usually concerned about their own experience in exhibitions and tend to compare similar experiences they have had in other places. So apart

from attracting visitors by the content (artefacts), the context (environment) also needs to be relevant and be able to tie in with the exhibition theme. Thus the atmosphere of 'a whole story' for visitors can be created. (Bedford, 2001)

Designing an environment that speaks means considering the space inside museums and galleries together with arrangements from inside out to reflect the theme. National Museum of the American Indian is a typical example where the building, the surroundings, as well as the interior design, were all done for the purpose of reflecting the cultural content that the museum is provided as a whole (Berger et al., 2007).

Apart from supporting the completion of narrative environment as a whole, the building architecture also determines how visitors will move inside the exhibition space. Development of narrative sequence needs to go along with some set features in space, like the direction of where the walls go, stairs, furniture, as well as other non-movable boundaries. The curator's primary task is to take all these elements into consideration as part of the narrative (McLean, 1999). With non-moveable boundaries, it is always better to apply a role for them to play in the narrative than avoid them. This is because all features inside the exhibition building speak for the exhibition as a whole and are able to guide visitors towards a specific direction in understanding the narrative.

## **Sequences in Exhibition Narrative**

Architecture affects how the narrative should be developed. There are usually two types of sequences in exhibition spaces, one is the grid; the other is single sequence (Tzortzi, 2007).

Grids give visitors a lot more freedom to explore every possibility in space; as a single sequence speaks for itself in which curators set the route and visitors can only follow the one direction sequence for their movements. The major difference between these two is the type of narrative that is present through space. A grid is more suitable for open narratives, where curators have less control of the pattern regarding how visitors should walk in exhibitions. A single sequence is more applicable for the development of a strict narrative in which the curator sets the framework to let visitors follow through.

Every element in exhibitions is important; architecture restricts part of the development of narrative, but also opens up new possibilities of applying something interesting in space that can link to the environment as a whole.

## **Narrative in Exhibition - Artefacts Arrangement**

In museums and galleries, deeper symbolism is usually applied onto artefacts rather than for what they originally stood. The messages and values that communicate through the whole environment are transferred through artefacts and their narrative (Turpeinen, 2005), which is the arrangement and sequence that link artefacts together (Wolff at al., 2012), and it plays a fundamental role in exhibition environment.

Exhibitions present artefacts in different time and space; meanings change every time they are displayed in another environment for a new purpose (Tate, 2012). Artefacts in exhibitions are no longer being considered as single objects; two other layers of meanings have been applied which are the narratives that link artefacts together in space and the space that these narratives create for visitors' own understanding to build up personal connections with.

The reason why artefacts are put together has always been the same; it constructs and supports the development of narrative in space as well as limits visitors' movement (Ciolfi & Bannon, 2012). No two artefacts or artefact sets would be put together randomly; the more complex the patterns are the more complicated the narrative could be developed.

However, it is also essential for curators to understand how visitors perceive the message that exhibitions are communicating. Designing the sequence through artefacts in exhibitions usually aim at creating a story that people can associate himself or herself with; because storytelling is the fundamental way people learn and gain new knowledge (Bedford, 2001). By constructing a story in exhibitions through artefacts, curators create a framework to evoke visitors' memories and experiences in the exhibition experience; in other words, the aim is to engage visitors on a more personal and emotional level.

## **Information Exposition in Exhibition**

Keeping the balance of how much information to reveal through exhibition design can enhance visitors' experiences. There are two extreme

types of information exposition in exhibition environments: 'fully-contextual labels' (DeVorkin, 2006) or keeping written information to a minimum (Turpeinen, 2005).

There are some arguments on how much information should be available for visitors in written formats. DeVorkin (2006) suggested that in museums with historical settings, 'fully-contextual labels' should be applied. McKey (2007) supported this by stating that the relationship people have towards museums "are typically established through words and texts" (p. 164), which referred to 'silent dialogues'. However, on the other hand, in a successful case study for Hunt Museum in Limerick, Ireland, the information display was kept to a minimum purposely to encourage visitors to discover more information as well as to create opportunities for visitors to talk to museum experts face to face (Ciolfi & Bannon, 2010).

It is hard to judge how much information is necessary to be provided in exhibitions, but either extreme might lose the interest of visitors. On the one hand, when too much written information is given, some visitors might just prefer to look for these information online or from libraries. On the other hand, not providing any written information might not help if the narrative in the exhibition is not fully developed to the visitors' expectations. Russo and Watkins (2004) tried to apply no information at all for the artefacts in their exhibition *Material Intelligence*, which failed to guide visitors to view a certain artefact as part of a group with deeper meaning but not individually.

Written information does indeed help to create narratives in exhibitions, but it should not be a compulsory component if the exhibition itself is able to build a clear narrative through space with the arrangement of artefacts.

There is no guidance or principle on how much information exposition is the best in exhibitions; it depends on the nature of the exhibition as well as the main purpose behind it.

## **Summary**

Storytelling is the simplest way that people learn since birth; it is easier for people to absorb new knowledge through stories rather than formal instructions. Taking storytelling as a design strategy, public space turns into an environment which provides experiences for people to relax and be entertained.

Exhibition design is a typical and successful example from experience design. All the elements within the space, including architecture, surroundings, artefacts and boundaries, etc., are taken into consideration during the design planning stage on how to merge everything in exhibitions to make the environment speak.

Sequences in space connect everything together. Artefacts are given new meanings when they are displayed in a specific way for supporting the development of exhibition narrative by keeping the right amount of information shared explicitly with visitors to create the atmosphere for self-exploration and discovery.

# Film Theory in Exhibition Design: *Mise-en-Scene*

Viña (2010) suggested that there are similarities regarding the storytelling strategies which film/theater and exhibition use; they both aim to create a unique experience for people through time and space.

In order to further explore the relationship between these two, this section has chosen the most common technique in cinema (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004) – *mise-en-scene* – as a breaking point to discover the in-depth core relation between film/theater and exhibition as well as looking into the film making methods that are used in exhibitions but not yet explicitly stated and linked.

## Definitions about *Mise-en-Scene*

*Mise-en-scene* is a rather broad film critique term without an exact definition due to the massive areas that it covers; but in general it relates to fictional narratives the most. Two most commonly understood definitions of *mise-en-scene* – ‘multiple frames within film’ and ‘expression of design aspects’ – will be discussed in this section along with their connections to exhibition design. (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004).

Understanding the first definition – ‘multiple frames within film’ is rather straightforward – it stands for the frame compositions in one film and emphasises on how each frame works individually as well as the joint

effect for supporting the development of the film (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004). It is similar to running a slow motion for a film to break down every single scene and look at their details separately. Although these scenes have been broken down individually instead of running through time as a whole, settings in each scene are still able to present the core value and concept from the film and help push the storyline to go further.

The other definition of *mise-en-scene* – ‘expression of design aspects’, was originally derived from theater plays. It is similar to the literal understanding of *mise-en-scene* itself, which means ‘putting everything together into the scene’. It covers lightings, space design, set design, costumes, props, actors, and everything that appears on stage or in front of the camera that is part of a scene (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004).

Settings in *mise-en-scene* give the director absolute control of camera movement, which can guide the audience towards a specific direction that is intended and to create the atmosphere that is able to connect with the audience emotionally.

## ***Mise-en-Scene: Differences between Film and Exhibition Design***

Although how stories are constructed in film and exhibitions are similar, the way that time and space are presented is significantly different.

Therefore, two key aspects from *mise-en-scene* will be taken into consideration to compare the differences between film and exhibition – ‘viewer’s eye’ (audience) and ‘staging: movement and acting’ (actors and their movements) (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004).

## **Active Visitors and Passive Audience**

Bal (2008) suggested that visitors in exhibitions are active, whereas audiences in cinema are passive. On one hand, the audience in a cinema has no control over the time of a scene or their movements, which they will be sitting for the whole duration of a film. The length of time as well as the development of the story is decided beforehand, which does not give audiences any choice of rethinking some of the scenes and scenarios while the film is playing. At the same time, the amount of content that is available for a viewer's one-eye full is static and does not allow discovery either. Although Burch (1959) has argued that all elements in one scene should be considered equally important, film does not provide the chance for audiences to look into everything in detail at the cinema.

On the other hand, visitors in exhibitions experience a completely different situation. They encourage personal discoveries, while time and repetitive movement are unlimited within the set sequence. Curators set up the framework of a story and leave gaps and create surprises to evoke visitors' experiences and emotions. Visitors have control of how long they are willing to spend inside an exhibition space and in front of specific artefacts as well as how many times they would like to enjoy the exhibition.

## **Different Type of Actors in Film and Exhibition**

The second major difference between film and exhibition falls on actors and their movement. In film, the key responsibilities for actors are to bring the story to life. All actors are humans and chosen by the director, to

follow a certain script for developing the story. Acting in film also has vocals that guide the audience through, but as a result, it basically leaves not much space for engaging the audience in real time.

For setting exhibitions side by side, there are not any actual actors for the story that is communicating through space. Actors in exhibitions are the artefacts and visitors, “it is the interaction between them that constitutes the play” (Bal, 2008, p. 19). The curator has control over the arrangement of artefacts as well as the sequence behind it, but he or she cannot control the emotions, personal experience and knowledge that visitors bring along.

Film/theater perspectives have been used in exhibition design before. An exhibition called *Etiquette of the Undercaste* at Experimental Gallery invited an art director from a theater company to curate and design the exhibition, which was significantly successful (McLean, 1999). The outcome from this exhibition and the discussions above suggest that there is potential to merge these two disciplines together for creating an engaging visitors’ experience in exhibitions, especially taking film/theater aspects into consideration during the planning stage.

## **Storytelling in Space and *Mise-en-Scene***

*Mise-en-scene* is used from the beginning of the pre-production stage in film/theater, to strongly support the development of narrative and give guidance to the director along the way for keeping the narrative strongly developed; while storytelling in space shares similar qualities with *mise-en-scene* for creating a rich experience to attract visitors.

The one full eye-view of what the audience is able to see within one scene has been emphasised a lot in *mise-en-scene*; all elements in space play their roles to enrich the details and messages which the scene is communicating (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004). What people can observe at once becomes essential. This aspect of *mise-en-scene* is able to strengthen the development of a story in space, especially for exhibitions that are narrative based. Curators use storytelling as a design strategy in exhibitions to create gaps and the unexpected to attract visitors; blocking visitors' eye-views and limiting them to see what is right in front of them can create mystery in space and encourage visitors for personal discovery.

Sequence among artefacts designed by curators in exhibitions and the set routes on how visitors should move around in space is similar to the camera movement aspect that *mise-en-scene* has, in which the director oversees all the camera events (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004). The way artefacts are displayed, how they are linked together as well as their positions in the venue are carefully designed to suit the narrative and guide the visitors to view the artefacts in a specific way and from a certain angle. Exhibition *Partners* is a typical example. Two of the rooms that were connected with each other in *Partners* contained absolutely different content. The earlier one was full of photographs with people of all ages holding teddy bears; it created a cozy and warm environment. Visitors walked through the small doorway to the room next to it afterwards, which only had the sculpture of little boy kneeling on the ground facing visitors with its backstay at the far end of the space. Placement of this sculpture guided the way that visitors walked in space and out of the visitors' curiosity when they turned around to look at the front of the sculpture, they were shocked to see Hitler's face. (Bal, 2008)

The way visitors walked through the space in the set sequence in *Partner* and performed the action of looking at the front of the sculpture is similar to a director controlling the movement of a camera in film to slowly develop an unforgettable shocking experience for the audience. Designing an exhibition that talks is similar to creating a movie; how the camera moves in film to capture different focuses is used as a technique in exhibition design.

## **Film Making Methods and Exhibition Design**

“The transfer between disciplines and practices is quite useful” (Bal, 2008, p. 15). Various film techniques have been applied in exhibition design and there are huge potentials for the merging of these two disciplines.

In order to create an exhibition that can engage with visitors on an emotional level, stories are usually applied as the narrative. The fundamental part of building up a story is to create tension. Wolff (2012) and Hoffmann (2003) suggested using dramatic-plot, referring to tensions in dramatic narrative structure in film/theater, which helps to develop the narrative in space as well as enrich the narrative structure. Since stories in space can create rich experience for visitors, Viña (2010) mentioned that the use of screenwriting and storyboarding could be useful to ensure the integrity and coherence of the story in space.

From previous discussions, applying film techniques in exhibition design has proven to be able to enhance visitors’ experience. As for *mise-en-scene*, which is the film technique that most people are familiar with (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004), this has been used as an exhibition tool of critique to

analyse exhibitions, so it is possible to further develop *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool to strengthen the planning process and design an exhibition from the broad perspectives that *mise-en-scene* covers.

## Summary

In the past, curators set the framework for everything in space and presented all the information that was available to visitors. There was not much engagement between visitors with space and artefacts in real time, which was similar to the film director controlling everything in film to present to his/her audience.

With the development of exhibitions, people started to see the connections between cinematography and exhibition. By taking an in-depth view of *mise-en-scene* and using it to compare and analyze exhibitions, this creates a lot of potential for the merger of these two disciplines at designing an experience in exhibitions that is both unique and able to connect with them on a personal level.

In order to create experiences in exhibitions, some museums and galleries have invited people from the film/theater industry to direct the exhibition; also some curators and exhibition designers have tried to apply simple film techniques to enhance the narrative development through space with successful results. Combined with the dramatic effect *mise-en-scene* has in film/theater, applying *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool can potentially create a larger impact at designing exhibition experience for visitors.

## Chapter 3 - Pilot Exhibition: *From Despair to Hope*

The Pilot Exhibition is called *From Despair to Hope* consisted of various sets of photography installations. The work itself was completed as part of another academic paper, *CRPC502-14B – Theory in Action*, at the University of Waikato. Agreed by the course convener for *CRPC502-14B*, Lisa Perrot, the process of developing this exhibition is not considered as part of the thesis. However, the evaluation of *From Despair to Hope* a part of this thesis. A signed copy of agreement and the essay submitted for *CRPC502-14B* are provided in Appendix A.

Development of the narrative for *From Despair to Hope* followed the dramatic curve narrative from film and fiction literature. Many Hollywood films adapt this narrative path to develop their story. It starts with a brief introduction about the background followed by a few tense moments in order to build up the climax; the problem is usually solved towards the end of the story. In this section, for evaluating narrative based exhibitions, the broader aspect in cinematography, *mise-en-scene*, will be taken as an exhibition analysis tool to reflect on the exhibition planning process and outcome to prepare for the New Exhibition in Chapter 4.

In summary, the research question for the Pilot Exhibition is: What exhibition design aspects require specific attention through *mise-en-scene*?

## Methodology

This section will outline briefly the methodology that both the Pilot Exhibition and New Exhibition followed; a full discussion will be covered in Chapter 4 along with the New Exhibition.

A key aspect that these exhibitions followed is action research, which covers the whole praxis loop that includes four fundamental stages: planning, making plans into action, observing the process for understanding problems, identifying the problems and proposing new solutions. These stages connect to each other in circles to generate new ideas and take them into practice again for finding other problems that were not yet discovered in order to enhance the practice process.

(Hopkins, 2008)

Discussions of the Pilot Exhibition focuses on both observation and reflection stages to complete the action research praxis loop in order to identify new problems and propose potential solutions by applying *mise-en-scene* in exhibition design for preparing the New Exhibition.

The Pilot Exhibition *From Despair to Hope* is a series of curated photographs that contributed as part of a group exhibition called “*Picture This*” that was aimed at exploring time, space and narrative via various forms and approaches. It was exhibited at Creative Waikato, No. 131 Alexander Street, Hamilton, New Zealand from 20<sup>th</sup> to 31<sup>st</sup> October 2014. The discussions follow the four key aspects in exhibitions: artefacts, space, architecture and lightings.

# Documentation

The following footage are provided to prove the authenticity of this exhibition, which includes a published exhibition brief, posters displayed in the venue and an installation overview in *Figures 3-1 to 3-3*.

## What is?

**From Despair to Hope**

From Despair to Hope is a project that experimenting film narratives in physical exhibition environments.

Sometimes artefacts have different original meanings other than the one given by the curator in exhibitions. Like the photo of a lovely teddy bear is put in a collection of WWII photos, it could show the brutality of war. It is the settings and the sequence that gives artefacts new meanings to serve the set theme.

The chosen film narrative for this project is called Hollywood Classical Narrative, which in a simple way of explaining it, discover a problem, solving the problem and problem solved.

This project is aimed to show one's internal emotional changes from feeling despair about everything to various struggles over the process, then regarding hope at the end.

Everyone has more or less experienced something similar with at least one of the following situations: kids lost their favorite toy, the loved ones passed away, being abandoned by someone important, etc. It's the about, the emptiness and loneliness makes you feel that the whole world has turned upside down. But if you try to look at it from a different angle, hope is always there.

From Despair to Hope

Given the fact everyone takes various length of time to get themselves back out from the negative emotions, photos are quite ideal as the medium to present this narrative, because there is not set time limit on each and every one of the photos.

CREATIVE ALLIANCE  
WAIKATO INSIGHT

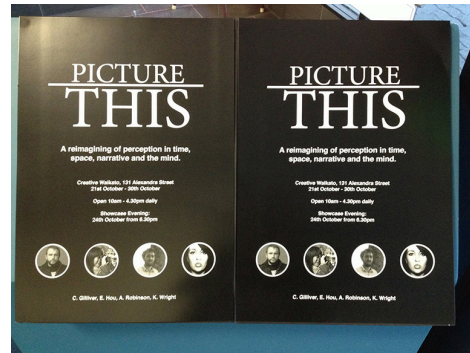


Figure 3-1 and 3-2: Left, published exhibition brief. (Designed by author, Oct 2014)  
Right, group exhibition poster. (Designed by Kristy Wright, Oct 2014)

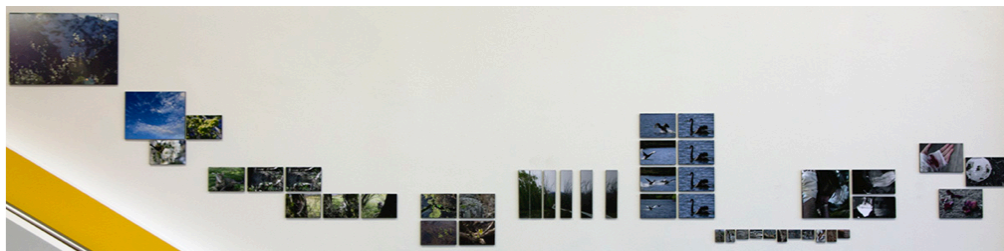


Figure 3-3: Installation overview. (Photographed by author, Oct 2014)

The installation is divided into nine parts to aid further discussion of the Pilot Exhibition. The overview for all nine parts is shown in *Figure 3-4*; Close-ups images and a description for each part in the next section follow.

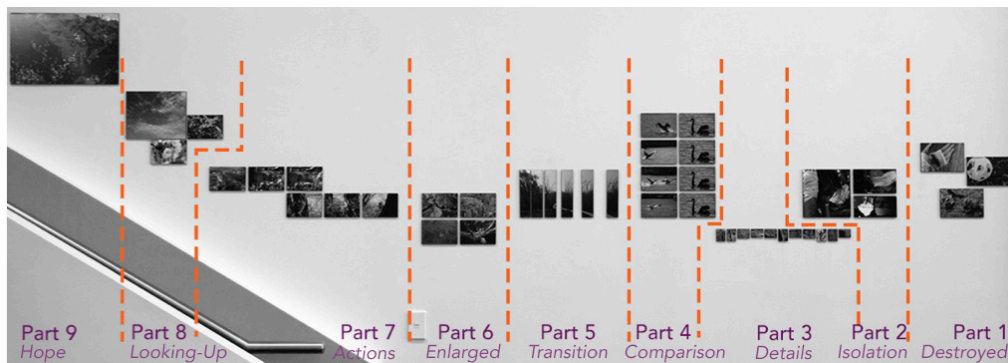


Figure 3-4: Exhibition divided into nine parts. (Photographed by author, Oct 2014)

## Descriptions for Each Part of the Exhibition

This section provides a detailed description for all artefacts in this exhibition along with a close-up view of each part of the installations. All footage and full documented installation photos are in Appendix B.

- Part 1 “*Destroyed*”: From top down, the photos show a bleeding hand with bandages wrapped around it, a burnt lantern left in the forest and a few fallen off dry rose petals. All backgrounds in these photos were blacked out to put the emphasis on the wounded objects. As the entry for the exhibition, it was aimed at setting a tone full of negative or even hopeless emotions and gave a shocking effect to some of the visitors.



Figure 3-5: Part 1 - “*Destroyed*”. (Photographed by author, Oct 2014)

- Part 2 “*Isolation*”: A model is blindfolded in the photo at the top right, his mouth is covered in the bottom right, and his ears are covered in the left one; in order to portray the message ‘can’t see, can’t talk and can’t listen’ through the photos. Colors used in this

part play the role of transitioning between Part 1 and Part 3. The two on the right remain in black and white, which is the same as the background colors in Part 1 and the left one contains unnatural colors.



Figure 3-6: Part 2 - "Isolation". (Photographed by author, Oct 2014)

- Part 3 "Details": A group of various close-up images about small details in the nature/surroundings, like dead branches, leaves, rocks, tree patterns, etc., were printed out in small sizes which required visitors to have an extreme close-up observation in order to view all the details clearly. It was designed to show the acknowledgement of surroundings that people are dominated by negative emotions they have at the starting point of resolving themselves out of despair.

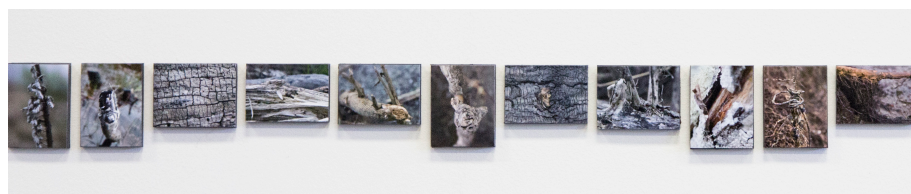


Figure 3-7: Part 3 - "Details". (Photographed by author, Oct 2014)



Figure 3-8: Two of the original photos of Part 3. (Photographed by author, Oct 2014)

- Part 4 “Comparison”: Two-columns of photos of swans were shown; the right column was a duplication of the same photo four times; the left column contained various actions of swans. It was a metaphor for comparing the reactions of someone who is in deep thought and things that are happening in the surroundings.



Figure 3-9: Part 4 - “Comparison”. (Photographed by author, Oct 2014)

- Part 5 *“Transition”*: This is composed by six separated cuts that were divided from the same photo. From right to left, the photos showed the transition from dead branches to vivid lively green trees, which is the original scene. The gap between each part became smaller towards the lively green side. The name of this part *“Transition”* spoke for itself, it aimed to show the in-between process that negative emotions were slowly changing towards the positive.



Figure 3-10: Part 5 - *“Transition”*. (Photographed by author, Oct 2014)

- Part 6 *“Enlarged”*: Details in nature, such as germinating plants or greens grown between rocks or wood cracks, which are similar to the small details in Part 3, but printed in a lot larger size with a more vivid tone to show the differences about what emotions are absorbed from the things around.



Figure 3-11: Part 6 - "Enlarged". (Photographed by author, Oct 2014)

- Part 7 "Actions": The motion of a cat was captured, jumping between woods and trees with close-up emotions. In the lower three photos from right to left, the cat came from behind a tree and then looked around. For the upper three, in the middle and right one, the cat was looking back with strong emotions; in the left one, it showed peace and the cat was looking up to the sky. It was designed to express the obvious emotional changes, when the positive side took over and was able to accept the surroundings as they were and the negatives and the destroyed part were fading away.



Figure 3-12: Part 7 - "Actions". (Photographed by author, Oct 2014)



Figure 3-13: Two of the original photos for Part 7. (Photographed by author, Oct 2014)

- Part 8 “Looking-up”: The bigger photo showed the sky and the two small ones were of flowers with light coming from the back; all three came from the camera angle of bottom view.



Figure 3-14: Part 8 - “Looking-up”. (Photographed by author, Oct 2014)

- Part 9 “Hope”: Backlight shot photo printed as the largest size in the whole exhibition that stands for hope.



Figure 3-15: Part 9 - "Hope". (Photographed by author, Oct 2014)

## Discussion

Discussions for *From Despair to Hope* focused on the relationship of four key elements in the exhibition environment: artefacts, space, architecture and lighting. It was aimed at taking an insightful view of the relationship and overlap between these elements and some of the results later served as a basic framework for the New Exhibition.

## Artefacts and Space

The given space for this exhibition was limited to a two-dimensional wall which is three meters long and five meters high. It is hard to put *mise-en-scene* in place given the fact that one of *mise-en-scene*'s key aspects is to look at each frame individually. This perspective was applied in a limited way for *From Despair to Hope*, which it was not able to block visitors' eye-level view completely while the sizes and separation of photographs

meant that the views could not focus on all images in details at the same time either. Space was one of the essential elements that would affect the visitors' understanding of the set up of the places and objects. It was not only about the relationship and sequence that linked everything together, but also the depth and the mood of the whole storyline that were represented through space.

The form of artefacts was unified in the exhibition *From Despair to Hope*, in which all the artefacts were photographs. This was done on purpose so that the forms of artefacts would be able to be compared with the ones in New Exhibition in Chapter 4, which were object-based; therefore making it possible to examine how different forms of artefacts could affect the presentation of narratives. Apart from using distinctive space between each set of artefacts to support the development of narrative behind this exhibition, thoughts were also given into the space among artefacts as well as between each part, to make that the story is more interesting and to build up a framework to give visitors enough room for their own interpretations for the exhibition narrative.

All the spatial designs in this exhibition were aimed at creating a sense of narrative and developing a sequence that joined all the artefacts together. The parts in which space played a more obvious role by affecting the new meanings of artefacts will be further discussed. The three artefacts were neatly joined together but not aligned in Part 1 "*Destroyed*"; these artefacts were aimed at creating a sense of struggle and helpless emotions. The space among artefacts gave depth to negative feelings, which was like an explicit character showing all the emotional outbreaks in order to make the visitors feel their emotions from what happened in their past based on their own background and experience. When everything was joined

together, this group of artefacts was powerful to bring back the memories for some visitors who have had experienced something that had made them feel similar. There was no specific alignment for this group of artefacts in order to show the nature of negative emotions, which was always unexpected for the one who was suffering from it.

In Part 2, *“Isolation”*, the three artefacts were neatly joined together and aligned as a group. The main purpose of arranging artefacts this way was aimed at creating an atmosphere to remind the visitors of their immediate reaction right after something sad and negative happened in life; most people tend to shut themselves down completely for a certain period of time to block out everything. *“Isolation”* contained the artefacts in a closed shape, metaphors for those who lock themselves in a box and black out all their connections with the outside world. There were some overlaps between Part 2 and Part 3 *“Details”* in space, but the set up of Part 2 was able to create a sense of ignoring what happened in Part 1, which was the inner emotional downside, as well as Part 3, which were the surroundings.

Part 5 *“Transition”* was another typical example of how to use space to support the development of narrative in exhibition. It was the main transition part of the whole exhibition. Before Part Five, the emotional changes were toward despair; from Part 5 onwards, hope was slowly coming. All artefacts were originally from the same photo that was taken. In order to apply new meanings to it, the photo was divided into six parts, by using the space between each of the two parts to show the process of one’s inner emotional changes. The space in Part 5 among artefacts played an important role for the change of time, which was able to show the emotional changes when visitors are standing right in front of this set, and while visitors were walking from the right (despair) to left (hope), the

space between artefacts changed as well. It created the sense of which time is always needed while going through the process of regaining hope in life.

## **Artefacts and Lighting**

No specific consideration for lighting was taken in this Pilot Exhibition. The only lighting in the venue was the one in the building itself, which was bright and up on the five-meter high ceiling. The lighting had no ability to focus – giving an even tone to the whole space. This arrangement of lighting did not help to support or create the mood that is suitable for the exhibition narrative. A single ambient light setting does not create focus or depth to draw the attention from the visitors' eyes and this made it worse for this specific narrative based exhibition. Without controlling lighting properly, it is hard to show the darkness of the negative emotions and contrasting brightness of the positive emotions.

## **Space and Lighting**

Space and lighting are two of the essential supports to tell the story behind artefacts to visitors, because lighting can help to create space as well.

As in the exhibition *From Despair to Hope*, no lighting had been planned due to budget and venue constraints. It was therefore difficult to know the effect of lighting and how it was used to create positive and negative space in the exhibition area and how useful lighting was for assisting the development of the sequence behind the exhibition narrative.

The space for this exhibit was limited; instead of having a three-dimensional space, which could best present *mise-en-scene*; this exhibit was installed on a flat wall. The outcome for having an exhibit on a wall within the limited space meant it was not easy to block out the visitors' view. There was no way to completely separate each set of artefacts and create a sense of having various frames in a film as *mise-en-scene* usually does.

## **Architecture and Artefacts**

The connection between artefacts and interior design of the building was an important consideration in this exhibition. *Mise-en-scene* is widely used in theaters and every theater has its own unique design. Stage designers must consider the architectural design of the stage and the building. Stage design for a play also utilizes the architectural design as part of the set for the play and takes advantage of the venue set up to better communicate the story to the audience.

In the exhibition *From Despair to Hope*, although the space was limited, the advantage of being located near the stairs helped to better transfer the meaning of looking forward to the future to seek hope, which fitted the sequence of the whole narrative and helped inform the narrative. From the middle of Part 7 "*Actions*" onwards, artefacts were placed in a flow that followed the movement of the stairs going up, which both Part 8 "*Looking-up*" & Part 9 "*Hope*" used looking up to the sky or a higher place as the metaphor for a better future. The connections among artefacts and architecture fitted the narrative sequence and were aligned with the meaning of artefacts along the stairs.

## Overall Effects

When considering the four elements of architecture, lighting, space and artefacts working together as a whole, it is far more powerful than any of the combinations discussed before. All elements in exhibitions tend to have their own meanings while being analyzed separately, but when actually taking the whole exhibition into consideration, more new meanings can appear. When these new meanings are applied, artefacts along with everything in space become the narrator and actors in a play to try to communicate a different story to visitors.

With the exhibition *From Despair to Hope*, all nine groups of artefacts of various sizes were put next to each other purposely and different tones applied to each group. The meanings of the artefacts then changed. With the given brief of the exhibition, it was easier for some visitors to put themselves into the scenarios; memories came to their minds based on their past experiences and backgrounds, etc. This exhibition became more than just an exhibition; every single detail mattered in the whole set up; nothing was designed randomly, and everything had its usage and meanings as to why it was designed to be there.

## Summary

There were three major disadvantages in this exhibition: the first was the lack of lighting, especially with the given theme about showing someone's emotional changes; the two sides of emotions could have been a lot stronger with the support of lights and shadows. The second one was not being able to block visitors' eye-view between each part of the artefacts.

The element of curiosity was lost by providing the opportunity for visitors to glance the whole exhibition at once; therefore, some of the visitors might not be interested to further discover the deeper meaning that was not immediately obvious from a scene based viewing. Lastly, although there was a detailed exhibition brief provided for visitors, as the whole exhibition space was opened up, visitors might have missed the brief or not been interested with written information at all. As a result, it was hard for visitors to completely understand the exhibition narrative.

But on the other hand, placement of the artefacts did take advantage of the architectural design of the venue in order to support and develop the narrative. The sequence beyond artefacts created a framework for visitors to apply their own memory and experience to it, which was one of the key successes of this exhibition, especially the visitors who paid attention to the details and were willing to discover the hidden information, for them to be able to connect themselves with the exhibition on a personal level.

The Pilot Exhibition as a whole created an effect that was larger than the sum of any individual parts. By using a dramatic curve to build up the narrative, it managed to create tensions which attracted visitors from different perspectives. Although the design aspects do not fit with *mise-en-scene* very well, but it is still valuable as a pilot exhibition to examine what are the potential limits and possibilities of applying *mise-en-scene* in exhibition design.

## Conclusion

In general, this exhibition worked well in communicating the narrative through artefacts. With the limited space, the selection of artefacts fitted together well and was grouped into various scenarios to compose the narrative. However, by looking at the exhibition through *mise-en-scene*, there are several recommendations for further research in order to answer the research question for this chapter:

*What exhibition design aspects require specific attention through mise-en-scene?*

- Information Exposition - Without the audience reading the brief, the story itself was not necessarily apparent. It is worth taking into consideration how to present the narrative with a minimum amount of information exposed, because not all the visitors are interested to read a large paragraph before entering the exhibition venue.
- Lighting - More attention is needed on how to use lighting to create a different atmosphere to support the development of exhibition narrative. Using this exhibition for example, the side presenting the dark mood of despair should have been a lot darker than the side representing hope. The transition of the lighting from Part 1 to 9 should have been a gradient which becomes brighter and brighter. Various spotlights can also help to create focus in certain sets of artefacts to draw visitors' attention.
- Forms of artefacts - Further investigation will be needed to figure out what are the differences by using various forms of artefacts to

build up narrative based exhibition and how different artefact forms could affect the way visitors understand the exhibition sequence as well as the new meanings behind them.

- Sequence and Framing - There was a set sequence in exhibition *From Despair to Hope*, however, there were no space dividers in the exhibition venue to block the eye-level views of visitors and it allowed visitors to enter the exhibition from any point of the sequence, which destroyed the narrative to some degree. Especially for the visitor who did not start from the beginning of the exhibition, some of the sequences might not make sense for them apart from a group of photos. For further research, it is crucial to make sure that each main set of the exhibition is isolated from each other, using space dividers or utilizing the architectural design of the building to block visitors' view. The aim should be to let the visitors focus on what's around them and require visitors to pay close attention to their surroundings within the limited space to experience what the curator is trying to communicate.

## Chapter 4 - New Exhibition: *SHUT UP!*

Bal (2008) used *mise-en-scene* to analyse and critique a well-developed exhibition in order to explore the connection between exhibition narratives and film. From the analysis and discussions in Chapter 2, there is a common ground shared between exhibition environments and film/theater plays. For engaging visitors at a deeper level, narratives link artefacts and space together in exhibitions, not only by creating 'surprises', but also by building a memorable experience in which visitors are able to relate themselves to the exhibition at a personal level. Previous discussions showed that there are huge potentials for taking *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool. In this New Exhibition, the following two aspects of *mise-en-scene* will be used for creating narrative based exhibition:

*All the frames within a film that is able to stand alone but still support developing the narrative. (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004)*

and

*The broad design aspects basically include everything that appear in a scene, which covers lighting, space design, actors, set designs, etc. (Bordwell & Thompson, 2004)*

This chapter will firstly take a look at the methodologies that the New Exhibition was based on; followed by the documentations and analysis of the exhibition planning process to which *mise-en-scene* was applied as an exhibition planning tool. Criticism of the pros and cons of using this film/theater technique in exhibition design will be given towards the end of this chapter, while providing suggestions and advice to curators and

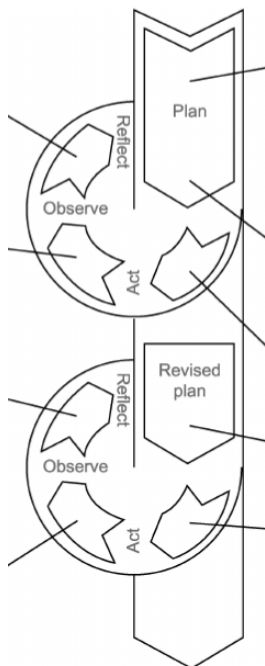
exhibition designers who will be interested in using the same method for exhibition planning. In summary the research question is: 'How can *mise-en-scene* inform the exhibition planning process'?

## Methodology

This section outlines the methodology that this New Exhibition followed, and how to use these methodologies to measure the outcome for this research.

## Action Research

In simple terms, action research is learning by doing. This research follows the action research model as shown in *Figure 4-1*.



*Figure 4-1: The 'Action Research Spiral'. (Based on Kemmis and McTaggart 1988: 14, cited in Hopkins, 2008)*

There are four key aspects in this method: planning, acting, observing and reflecting; then it loops to a new circle, which contains the same steps until the whole problem is solved. The last step of reflecting is essential; it gives researchers a clearer idea of the outcomes from previous circles and build up foundations for the upcoming ones.

## **Abduction-2**

With the complexity the research question for this exhibition has raised, action research is a better option than the traditional research method. A specific method of design thinking/action research will be introduced shortly. It will guide this research through how to use *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool; therefore, enhancing the research process.

This method is called Abduction-2 which is a term introduced by Dorst (2011) in the application of “design thinking” (p. 521). The general setting for problem solving in the equation is “WHAT (thing) + HOW (working principle) leads to RESULT (observed)”. This is the “core to the ‘context of discovery’ in the sciences”; when two out of three are known, the mathematics is easier to be solved.

As in design, although there might not be an absolute outcome for everything, there is always a purpose behind every design project, either for clients or for the society, so in order to fit design into the problem solving equation, the outcome is changed from “RESULT (observed)” to “VALUE (aspired)”. (Dorst, 2011)

The basic reasoning pattern in productive thinking is Abduction which comes in two forms – what they have in common is that the outcome of the process is conceived in terms of value.

The two forms of equations for Abduction which are Abduction-1 and -2:

*Abduction - 1:*

**??? + HOW (leads to) VALUE**

*Abduction - 2:*

**??? (thing) + ??? (working principle) (leads to) VALUE (aspired)**

Abduction-2 is more sophisticated than Abduction-1, which is the category that this New Exhibition falls into. The outcome for the exhibition is clear, which is using *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool to apply a narrative in an exhibition. However, because *mise-en-scene* is barely used outside the theater/film context, the HOW (working principle) in the equation of Abduction-2 remains unknown in the exhibition environment, which leads to the unknown of WHAT (thing). “That means we have to create a ‘working principle’ and a ‘thing’ (object, service, system) in parallel.” (Dorst, 2011, p. 524)

## **Framing**

Schön (1983) first introduced framing in design literature aimed towards finding a standing point where a complex situation can possibly be resolved.

Dorst (2011) gave a suggestion for the complex situation that occurs in Abduction-2:

*The double creative step requires designers to come up with proposals for the 'what' and 'how', and test them in conjunction. The most logical way to approach this complex problem situation is to work backwards, as it were, starting from the only 'known' in the equation, the value that needs to be created, and then adopt or develop up a frame. (p. 525)*

In this research, working backwards is one of the main solutions to the research question. One of the key aspects in *mise-en-scene*, which is 'narrative', is necessary to decide on further action steps in the planning process. The problems and conflicts that occur in the exhibition planning process and the other scenarios that are triggered by that specific problem which will be further analysed to provide advice and suggestions to others who may follow a similar process for exhibition planning.

From the discussions above, the research for this thesis follows the action path by adding analysis into the praxis to discuss the possibility of using *mise-en-scene* for exhibition planning, and to sum up the principles and paths that other designers can follow in the future.

The exhibition was called *SHUT UP! – Miscommunication Technologies Exhibition*; which was held at Creative Waikato, No.131 Alexander Street, Hamilton, New Zealand from the 13<sup>th</sup> to the 20<sup>th</sup> of March in 2015.

Organizing of the exhibition included planning, producing, marketing, set up, opening and artist lunch talk.

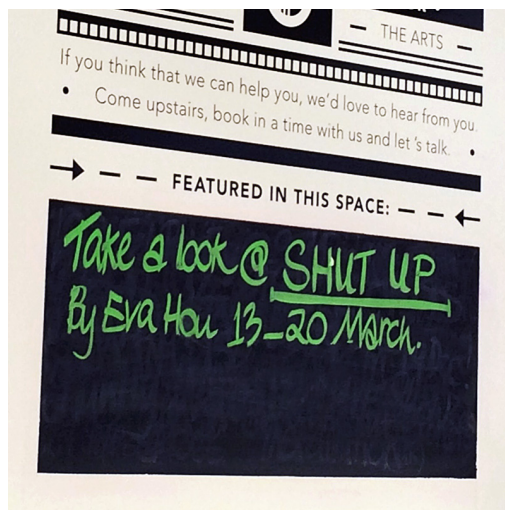


Figure 4-2: Notice board at Creative Waikato with exhibition details. (Photographed by author, Mar 2015)

## Documentation

This section provides brief documentations for the exhibition *SHUT UP!*. An overview of the exhibition, planning, production, set-up, opening and artist lunch talk.

## Exhibition Overview

With the fast pace that technologies have been developed, face-to-face communications are decreasing among people. *SHUT UP!* was a narrative based exhibition which intended to show the miscommunication between children and adults among multifarious technologies. In order to express the strong emotions behind miscommunication, the name *SHUT UP!* was chosen. The exhibition was divided into seven different sets; the brief of each set and their names will be given in table below. Full-documented footage of all installations and detailed descriptions are provided in Appendix E.

Name/Artefacts	Narrative Contribution
<p>Set 1 <i>"Confused"</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tall side: a tripod with an old large format analogue camera.</li> <li>- Lower side: a smaller analogue camera, empty photo frame and broken pieces of films everywhere.</li> </ul>	<p>The tall side represented adults and the lower ones stood for children. Tensions were slowly building up from Set 1 to Set 4, shown by the artefacts on the children's side getting messier.</p>
<p>Set 2 <i>"Ignored"</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tall side: Neatly organized stationary.</li> <li>- Lower side: Drawing pens put in gradient and a teddy bear with red paint all over it.</li> </ul>	
<p>Set 3 <i>"Troubled"</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tall side: Old sewing machine, threads, buttons and fabrics put together nicely.</li> <li>- Lower side: Threads, buttons and fabrics were dragged and thrown into a corner.</li> </ul>	
<p>Set 4 <i>"Annoyed"</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Tall side: Well-organized tools for hands on work and displays of 3D-printed objects.</li> <li>- Lower side: Large number of screws thrown everywhere, left along with a teddy bear and broken 3D-printed toys.</li> </ul>	
<p>Set 5 <i>"Attention"</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- A fallen TV</li> </ul>	<p>Something major had happened which required serious attention.</p>
<p>Set 6 <i>"Process"</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Spherical shaped artwork composed of cables.</li> <li>- Two computer mice – old and new – were placed separated with their cables joined together.</li> <li>- 3D-printed hand playing a piano keyboard.</li> </ul>	<p>The changes between adults and children after the incident in Set 5, where it is a progress from the adults feeling frustrated to slowly understanding the children.</p>
<p>Set 7 <i>"Harmony"</i>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Cardboard made mechanical craft robots.</li> </ul>	<p>Cooperation between adults and children</p>

Table 4-1: Brief descriptions for artefact sets in exhibition SHUT UP!.

## Planning

Planning is a fundamental part of this research because it followed Abduction-2, using the working backward method aim at joining *mise-en-scene* and exhibition planning together. *Mise-en-scene* is not a common term that people usually use in exhibition environments. Therefore, all the unknown challenges for both successful and unsuccessful decisions will be all recorded in detail with further discussions about the possibilities of how to enhance and/or improve for future decision making by using *mise-en-scene* for exhibition planning.

Three main tools were used for planning *SHUT UP!*, which included storyboard (Figure 4-4), floor plan (Figure 4-5), and a script (Figure 4-6). Apart from these tools, a large amount of brainstorming and research took place previously (Figure 4-3). There were 40 initial concepts for the exhibition narrative, which got narrowed down to a final one.

Among all the initial ideas, the following one was chosen to be the main direction for developments of narrative in the first place: In a conversation, as soon as one starts speaking, the other(s) automatically cannot talk until the one who is currently talking finishes. The internal emotional changes of the one who is listening and can't talk shows up first as frustration and anger and then calms down to slowly become patient. It is aimed at reminding people to be patient and the need to learn the art of listening; apart from listening to what you want them to say, more importantly, need to pay attention to what the other one(s) actually intended to communicate.

This chosen narrative was modified a couple of times through the process with a major change towards the end of the planning stage due to external

limitations, but the main direction of 'miscommunications' remains the same; this will be discussed in the future sections.

②

- \* calm slowly (冷静)
- ↳ (not angry/annoyed anymore, but absent-minded before calm to try to focus to listen again)
- ↳ lives
- ↳ (vocal) "I haven't finish my speech, how are you feeling right now?"
- ↳ "okay, since no matter how much I am wanting to talk won't work, I might as well really starting to pay attention to what you are trying to say? why how you keep insisting that? Any other meanings that you are trying to tell others? what would it be? How?"
- ↳ something to show a "process", from extreme to calm.
- \* Understanding (理解/理解性/理解)
- ↳ "oh right, I understand (not know nor listened) what he/she is trying to say. Should have ~~try~~ tried to understand what the others want to express before actually ~~replying~~ replying or what I thought they mean. Should have been more patient & able to communicate with people around properly!"
- \* frustrated (set)
- many cables stuck together like a big lock, a mouse or two hanging down from the cable lock.
- many different shapes (in its development) plus the development of other electronic, TV for example, one TV inside another, one inside another. (could mirror?) (反差效果?)
- OR
- really tidy, logical, with amount of stuff, (belong to the same catalogue, BUT, sometimes, just one, completely out of context, be put among other things.
- \* the struggle of a traditional fashion designer? (hand crafted product designer?)
- \* struggle of a design process.

spotlight on sth empty, to show the emptiness one has among other things, something small in details, many of them which require visitors time to look through everything & think.

arrangement should come from the citing (highest part of the one to floor.

↑ citing ↓ floor

potential hints link things together!

- signage
- description of the exhibition & academic references.
- vocal (?)

curve

excursion

time

time

recreation period between negative excursion to my focus on listening again

- many or maybe along with the lost motion, could just be a hint of something towards the exit, to make the whole idea explicit to all visitors, regardless they understand or not.
- "the biggest communication problem is we listen to reply, but not communicate." (or sth else).
- on 2 of conversations, (TV signal on/off)
- two things get strong contrast & bounce back & forth.

Figure 4-3: Brainstorming notes - The narrative was further developed by using a dramatic curve to consider the amount of potential tension points through the whole story, so as to decide how to divide the exhibition space up.

1

partially

entirely for visitors

OR

or subsequent period

partially

2

same photo or artifacts

proportion

same in (size for example, but contrast matters need to be stronger)

different emotions (color)

paper, strengthening, permeable, technological, point vs 3D printed objects

\* if photos printed out big (could hang from the ceiling through)

3

rise-up scene

miscommunication

(slowly build up)

4

5

+/-

6

close

towards the end beginning of (?)

cut off all the 'collies' in a sudden so leave empty space for a bit (certain distance)

'blank space'

7

the two things slowly 'communicate' again

8

the two things join together from their common ground

the two things slowly 'communicate' again

o long loop of permeable + objects, development of something, like cable plugs, towards the end (especially)

two groups of artifacts started slowly from both side, the join a bit together

actual object: cfr link into (v.s.) or paper

drama

Figure 4-4: Initial storyboards - The space was divided into various parts and this was connected to the potential artefacts to decide placements for the artefacts as well as the shape and length for each part to support developments of the narrative.

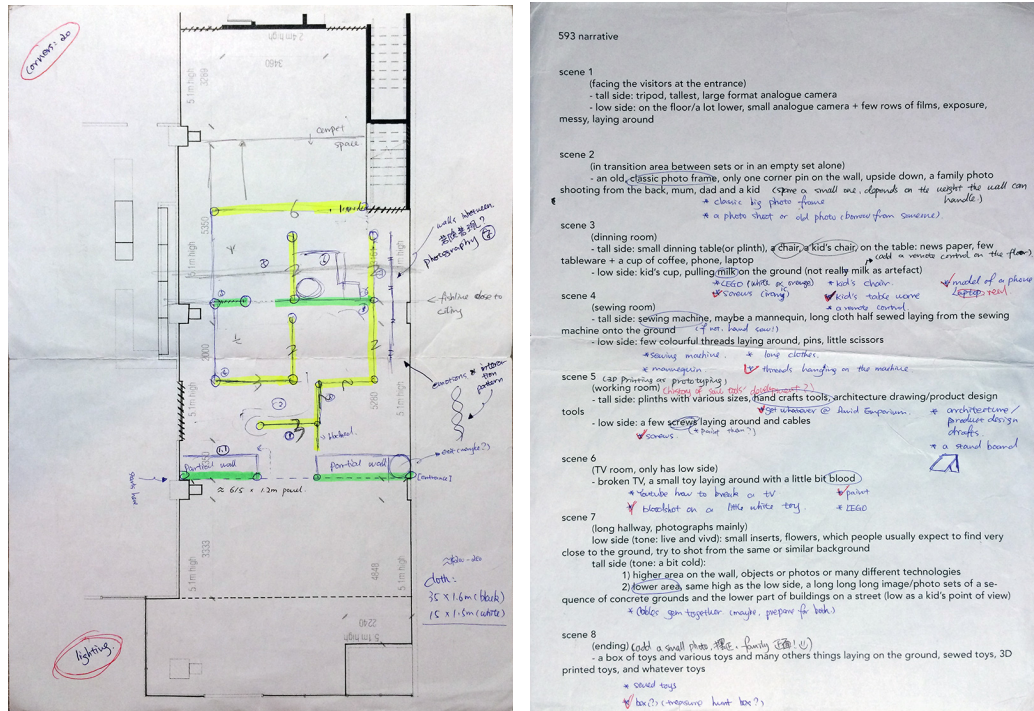


Figure 4-5 and 4-6: Left, floor plan - The various parts of the narrative were mapped on to the floor plan of the venue for figuring out the exact space and locations, which hence decided the visitors' movements. Right, narrative script - Further development of the narrative of exhibition with already known artefacts as well as the ones that still needed to be outsourced.

## Production

During the production stage, two main things were made specifically for this exhibition: signage and partial walls.

- Signage – Displayed in the venue to remind visitors not to touch the artefacts as well as not to step into certain areas where artefacts were displayed on the floor.
- Building the partial walls – Due to a limited budget, partial walls used in this exhibition were hand built, which consisted of two-meter tall wooden sticks with a wooden base and double layers of eco-cloths were applied around the wooden sticks to complete the

wall. Details and parameters of the partial walls are provided in Appendix D.



Figure 4-7 and 4-8: Production process of wooden interaction. (Photographed by author, 2015)

Marketing materials included designed posters, fliers, invitations and social media banner. A full description of all marketing materials is provided in Appendix C.

## Set-up

Setting up the process took longer than expected. The exhibition was originally planned to open to the public on 9<sup>th</sup> March 2015, and the installation of the exhibition took place on the 7<sup>th</sup> and 8<sup>th</sup>. However, the set-up actually took four days longer than expected and was only completed on the 12<sup>th</sup>. So the exhibition was officially opened to the public along with the showcasing evening on the 13<sup>th</sup> of March instead of the 9<sup>th</sup>.

One of the main reasons for the delay was due to the time which was used for the completion of all hand-made partial walls. By following *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool, it is fundamental to block the visitors' eye-level view from each set in the exhibition. So the time it took for building up the space dividers was necessary. There were a lot difficulties during the installation process, included stabilizing the wooden interactions on the floor, because the floor of the venue was covered by carpet, so cotton tape was the only option that was available at the time to keep the damage to the carpet to a minimum.

Also the weight of all the wooden bases was too light; they were not heavy enough to hold the weight of the eco-cloths. Therefore, bricks were placed on the top of each wooden base to make sure the 'wall' did not fall. Dumbbells were originally used to give the base more weight in order to keep the eco-cloths straight, however, with limited budget as well as the shape of the dumbbells, it was not a wise idea to have at least one dumbbell per wooden interaction, so bricks were used instead.



Figure 4-9 and 4-10: Bricks put on the wooden base. (Photographed by author, Mar 2015)



*Figure 4-11: Completed installation view for the hand made "wall". (Photographed by author, Mar 2015)*

## Opening

The opening/showcase evening of the exhibition was held on 13<sup>th</sup> March 2015 at Creative Waikato, between 6:30pm to 8:30pm. Refreshments were provided to all the guests. Everyone invited was welcome to bring their family and friends; there were approximately 35 people including a few who came in randomly.



*Figure 4-12: Presenting at opening night. (Photo supplied by Jason Sebastian, Mar 2015)*



Figure 4-13 and 4-14: Left, installation view for the entrance; right, information fliers. (Photographed by author, Mar 2015)

## Artist Lunch Talk

Invited by Creative Waikato to do an artist's lunch talk which started around 12:30pm on 17<sup>th</sup> March 2015 to talk about the initial concept behind the exhibition; as well as walking the participants through the exhibition and answering their questions.



Figure 4-15: Presenting at the artist's lunch talk. (Photo supplied by Chi Wang Choi, Mar 2015)



Figure 4-16 and 4-17: Demonstrating and explaining exhibition settings to the visitors. (Photo supplied by Chi Wang Choi, Mar 2015)

## Discussion

There were many challenges during the whole process by using *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool due to its unfamiliar usage in the discipline of exhibition design. In the following section, the analysis of the pros and cons for each stage in the exhibition process are given, along with further exploration into the relationship between various elements in the exhibition environment and how they interact and affect each other.

## Introduction

In the exhibition *SHUT UP!*, the two aspects of *mise-en-scene* were used to support different things. They went hand in hand to help develop the process of this New Exhibition. The definition of the broad aspects of *mise-en-scene* that are covered in theater, focus more on the logistics that help to make sure every design element is taken into consideration. Another definition about ‘framing’ was used in developing the exhibition narrative and how to map the story in space. Telling a story in a physical exhibition

environment is like breaking a film into frames. There is no time limit for how long each frame will last in the story; visitors are the ones who have control over time in exhibition environments. By using *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool, every set in the exhibition needs to be independent from each other which creates ups and downs and surprises for visitors, but all sets should still relate to the main narrative that is the center of everything.

Exhibitions with specific story-based narrative might not suit visitors who are not interested in exploring and investigating the exhibition in detail, and impatient visitors might get bored easily. Because a lot of details were taken into consideration during the planning stage, it would be hard to understand what the exhibition was trying to communicate without careful observation. Some visitors were able to discover new things every time they walked through the exhibition, and the more they observed, the more they realized why the details were set in a certain way to strengthen the narrative.

## **Planning Process**

Deciding on what narrative was to be applied in the exhibition *SHUT UP!* was a primary task at the beginning stage of the exhibition planning process, and it shaped the choice of artefacts and venue. After the Pilot Exhibition *From Despair to Hope*, it was decided that the New Exhibition would be a majority object-based exhibition that take place in a three-dimensional area. This was aimed at exploring the difference of how space could affect the development of narratives and looking into what messages various forms of artefacts can communicate through space.

## **Brainstorming**

Brainstorming occurred at an early stage to find keywords that are relevant to the potential narrative ideas. The keywords expanded how the story could be applied in exhibition.

The first consideration was what types of artefacts needed to be sourced. A few initial ideas were astrology, fortune telling and technologies; these decisions were made based purely on personal interests. Once the key words were narrowed down to these three, further research took place by looking into the providers of the potential artefacts as well as what stories these key words could develop. After taking all the external factors into consideration, 'technologies' was decided as the main direction for this narrative based exhibition.

## **Sourcing Artefacts**

Once the main direction of artefacts was decided, what kind of potential narratives may be formed behind these different groups of artefacts was considered. At this stage, not only is the narrative that would apply through the whole exhibition important, resources are also a main concern, as well as time and manpower.

Firstly, the time required for sourcing and producing artefacts needed to be considered. If the preparation timeline allowed, more complex production could be undertaken; otherwise, it is better to reduce risks by choosing pre-made artefacts. The New Exhibition went with the latter option.

Secondly, artists who could potentially provide the artefacts were essential to the exhibition planning process as was time. What artefacts were available? Who would provide the artefacts? and From where would the artefacts be collected? Time was limited preparing for the exhibition *SHUT UP!*, so majority of the artefacts were sourced from the curators current acquaintances. The acquaintances were asked to provide artefacts that represented their thinking on technology.

Outsourcing artefacts by having 'technologies' as a keyword behind the whole exhibition was not the best solution that could have been chosen. Because it did not follow the traditional and ideal path that *mise-en-scene* has, this led to various difficulties in the later stages of planning, including a major shift in the exhibition narrative. Generally, the design aspects *mise-en-scene* express through theater and film all follow a certain script. By the time the director starts to consider all elements on the stage or in front of the camera, the script of the play or film would have been written already. Therefore, the director knows where to put the props and what kind of actors to choose to cast for best representing the film. Whereas in this exhibition, sourcing artefacts without knowing the script was similar to looking for actors in a general catalogue before knowing the genre of the film. On the bright side, more artefacts were prepared than were needed, which did give the curator enough space to decide what could suit the narrative the most; but on the negative side, some specific artefacts were still missing a week before the installation days. While sourcing artefacts, the communication between curator and artists were too general, which made things harder for the artists to provide objects that were relevant.

## **Floor Plan and Storyboard**

As the previous stages did not follow through what usually happens within the pre-production stage of films and theater plays, so the process of sourcing artefacts and developing narrative went hand in hand to form the final story in the planning stage for this exhibition. There are many ways that a story can be developed; the simplest is to slowly build up tension towards a climax with all the problems resolved before the story ends.

This exhibition originally tried to develop its narrative by using words as a brainstorming and planning strategy, but it did not turn out well.

Exhibition design is an action that engages people within space and time, so it is hard to plan by only using words. Therefore, a storyboard and floor plan of the venue were introduced along with the dramatic curve diagram to help form the story. The benefit of having a dramatic curve diagram was to create a clearer idea of how many parts the narrative should be divided into in the exhibition space.

The dramatic curve diagram was useful in deciding how many sets a complete narrative could possibly have in directing where the New Exhibition narrative should go and how to combine these sets with the floor plan. Along with the floor plan, it was a lot easier to consider how to divide the exhibition space up to suit the narrative. Mapping the dramatic curve diagram with the floor plan, also gave the curator a better control of how long approximately a visitor might spend in each set and how changing the length of each set in space could support the development of the exhibition narrative.

Once the floor plan was divided into various sets, the storyboard came into place. At this stage of the planning process, certain groups of artefacts were confirmed, so the already existing artefacts were taken into consideration along with the creation of the storyboard. Although the process seemed to be going smoothly at this stage, something important was still missing, which was the script – the complete storyline with details for the narrative.

The storyboard was not successful for this exhibition, due to the fact that it was not easy to create a proper storyboard without a well-developed story. Even though some of the artefacts were in place as well as the floor plan, but without the script, it only felt like having some sense of the general direction without knowing what exactly to do. But on the other hand, the benefit of mapping a storyboard with the floor plan is to gain a better idea of how the transition between each set will be like. It is similar as mapping time into space, which made it easier for the curator to gain an overview for the development of the narrative in *SHUT UP!*.

## **Venue and Architecture**

Flexibilities of the venue as well as the architecture are fundamental in shaping the narrative development. How flexible the venue is depends on whether or not the venue allows external space dividers to be built or add in other external functions that the exhibition space does not originally have. It would be easier to experiment with space to make it suitable for the narrative if the venue is flexible enough; otherwise, if the venue is not flexible, the only way of fitting the narrative in space is to change the narrative to merge with the exhibition environment.

In the exhibition *SHUT UP!*, the venue was in between: it did allow whatever was needed for the exhibition to be brought in, but was not too flexible in terms of setting up partial walls and lightings.

Following *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool, proved to be a challenge because it was essential to divide the space for this exhibition. Without separating the space, it was hard to create the effect of blocking the visitors' eye-level view for exploring one scene after another. During the planning stage, the decision of how to build up partial walls and what materials to use was changed a couple of times due to limited resources, like budget and the reality of the venue, etc. Limited budget did not allow fully hired all stand-alone panels for dividing the space.

Two weeks prior to the exhibition opening, with the finalized narrative about miscommunications between adults and children, thoughts were given to divide the space up by only using cloth that would hang around at waist height for an adult, so that they would be forced to see from a child's point of view. However this meant that it will only be able to block the eye-level view of children who were not taller than that, but all the adult visitors would still be able to see through at least half of the setting with one glance.

This idea got abandoned easily. Because the narrative of the New Exhibition was between children and adults, in order to create the scenarios which were able to show how these two groups of people see things differently, half of the artefacts would have to be put on the floor or lower than the average height of an adult. Using partial walls that were only able to block the viewpoint from the waist, which is around 1.2 meters in height, might have confused the adult visitors even more. Relating this with *mise-en-scene*, blocking eye-level views to only 1.2

meters high is like constantly showing half of the ending for a film right after the audiences enter the cinema.

A few days to the installation of *SHUT UP!*, it was decided to use cloths and wooden sticks to create partial walls that were two meters high, which were able to fully block almost everyone's view to create the environment of letting visitors go through the whole exhibition frame by frame without knowing what to expect next. Ideally it should have been the same height as the ceiling, but taking the reality into consideration, the ceiling of the exhibition venue is around five meters which was too tall for space divider creation; so two-meters for partial walls was a good height as it was able to block almost all the visitors' view point. The partial walls helped develop the narrative by following the concepts of 'frames' in *mise-en-scene*, in which all these frames are independent from each other, but when linked together, they become a complete story. It also created the dramatic effect most narratives have by providing surprises under unexpected circumstances.

## **Installation Process**

Similar to theater/film, things did not go a hundred percent as planned in *SHUT UP!* during the installation stage. Two things were under-estimated in this exhibition: the time that was needed in building the partial walls, as well as how much space would be needed which was marked on the floor plan. During installation, the space of each set was increased to make sure that more than one person could walk through the hallways at once; in addition, the positions of some of the artefacts were changed to make them more suitable for the space and the narrative. It is hard for

exhibitions to have rehearsals like theater plays do, so the installation day would technically be the first day that the curators are able to walk through the whole story in space.

## **Importance of Excess Artefacts**

Having a broad range of artefacts to choose from can help the curator to make a better decision on how the artefacts can suit the narrative in exhibition. Like in films, the director always takes more shots than the film requires so that during post-production the director is able to choose which shots will be able to better present the flow of the whole narrative. This also applied in *SHUT UP!*. The installation day was the first time that the curator was able to feel the narrative in space, and walking through the exhibition space was totally different from planning everything on paper. Minor changes in sequence and artefacts can end up changing some of the sets.

In this exhibition, a few major changes were made among the artefacts in the last two sets to represent the resolution of the problem between children and adults to a happy ending. Because it is always easier to communicate large amount of information through photos, so initially, thoughts were given into using photographs in Set 6 "*Process*". But in order to examine and compare the effects and results that different forms of artefacts could have on exhibition narratives, so artefacts in Set 6 changed to objects only, same as the rest of the exhibition. Without the extra artefacts that were prepared, these changes would not have been possible.

The second change was made during installation day, which is the last group of artefacts in the final set. It was originally planned to have three soft toys sitting closely to each other for creating a sense of home, although the result did seem okay once everything was in place, but the connection between this set and the previous one was missing. So the whole final set ended up being turned into a group of cardboard made mechanical craft robots, which showed the cooperation between children and adults as a better outcome compared to the soft toys.

## **Lighting**

Lighting is one of the essential elements in the exhibition environment; it affects the way how visitors perceive what is in front of them; it also changes the tone of the environment and how visitors would understand the narrative as well as the relationships among artefacts. Lighting can also create highlights and shadows, which can be beneficial for shaping the narrative.

However, unfortunately, no specific lighting was set up in *SHUT UP!* due to the limited budget; the only lighting available were the bright, white lights on the ceiling which is about five meters high. A lot of disadvantages showed up without proper lighting. With the large amount of artefacts displayed together, without lighting it was difficult to emphasize on the key ones. It was also a challenge on how to create the right tone for the narrative without lighting. With the exhibition *SHUT UP!*, the disadvantage of having no specific lighting shaped the narrative of this exhibition in such a way that not too much special lighting would be needed in the final installation.

## **Space and Narrative Complexity**

The size of the space for exhibition is important because it largely decides the size of narrative that is able to be presented in that venue. That aim of using *mise-en-scene* was to let the visitors enjoy and discover the tiny details in the scenes, so being able to block out the rest of the exhibition is essential. Taking space and artefacts into consideration, for a complicated narrative, the requirement for space is tougher than simple narratives because the story itself needs space to develop and to build up the sequence for visitors to walk through.

The space where the exhibition will take place plays an essential part of developing the narrative. No two spaces are the same in the world; so even with the same narrative, it needs to have slightly different settings in different places. Turning space into part of the narrative is complex in an exhibition environment: the area of the room, where to display the artefacts, and the density of artefacts in each room of the whole exhibition environment all speak of a unique meaning compared with one another.

### **Area of a Room**

Room here means the space that each set takes in exhibitions. Two aspects are valued for discussions based on the New Exhibition: the actual size of the room and the shape of the room. Both aspects affect the way how visitors will walk through the room and how much time on average they might spend. Thus, in other words, the size and shape of the exhibition space can determine the approximate time and lead the development of the narrative in various directions.

Sets 5 & 6 in this exhibition were typical examples. After the venue had been divided into various spaces, Sets 5 and 6 were the two most different ones compared to each other. Set 5 was a square and had the smallest area among all the sets, while Set 6 was the longest in terms of length. In other words, if the visitors did not change their pace, it would take them longer time to walk through Set 6 than Set 5.

When it comes to the effects space has on narrative, with smaller space like Set 5, it is hard to show the process of discovery and the development of an event, because the length is limited and it does not take long for people to walk through the space. With the size Set 5 had, it served as a transition point. Therefore, in order to maximize the usage of the smallest room in space, Set 5 was turned into representing the climax of the narrative, although the area of the space was small, but the emotional effect it created was bigger than some of the previous sets with larger areas. As for Set 6 which was a rectangle with the approximate proportion 1:4, it was a lot easier to show some narrative development that would take time, because visitors would generally have no choice but to spend a longer time to go through the area. As an outcome, Set 6 was designed to represent the process of merging for the two generations – children and adults, and how these two work together to try and solve a problem.

### **Positioning Artefacts in a Room**

Placements of artefacts in space can change visitors' observations in the exhibition environment. Something hanging from the ceiling can represent the action of flying; while something on top of a plinth can just be simply put there for display without a strong message. Artefacts displayed on the

floor might be something that requires attention, because it is outside the normal logic of artefact placements in exhibitions.

Walls and ceilings are another context from which things can be hung. The same object can have different meanings when it is positioned differently. In this research, it was not possible to hang anything from the ceiling nor wall, instead, different heights of the plinths and the floor were used to create narrative complexity. From Sets 1 to 4 in this exhibition, artefacts were displayed on two different heights in general; the plinth and the floor. Everything on the plinths were arranged in a tidy order to represent adults. In contrast, artefacts on the floor were messy to connote children. The messiness on the floor became worse through the development from Sets 1 to 4. It created curiosity among visitors when they walked through the exhibition. With the displays being separated on two different surface types and heights, it was easier for visitors to realise that there were two things happening at once in the same space but with different focus and tension.

### **Density of Artefacts in Each Room**

Density here means how many artefacts are in one cubic meter within the exhibition environment. It is definitely not the case that the higher the density of artefacts in a room, the better it is. It depends on what is the most suitable amount of artefacts that can better represent the narrative in that space. As in graphic design, leaving some space might result in a better outcome; less is more. The density of artefacts will be further discussed by using examples in the exhibition *SHUT UP!*, which included the following

aspects: quantities of artefacts, various sizes of artefacts, and sizes, amount as well as placement of the plinths.

### Quantities of Artefacts

Set 4 had a large number of individual artefacts on both sides of the room, especially on the inner side which represented the child. Many screws were scattered all over the place across the whole plinth and on the floor. The placement of screws was such that the scene created a sense of messiness as well as telling visitors that someone is doing it on purpose to throw everything out from that box. However, it does not always work that increasing the number of artefacts will necessarily create tension. After the large number of artefacts in Set 4, visitors might have started to get visually tired, because the previous sets required a lot of attention from the visitors to be able to understand the whole narrative. As Set 5 was where the climax of the whole narrative was laid, instead of having more artefacts in one space, only one artefact was displayed there; the fallen TV.

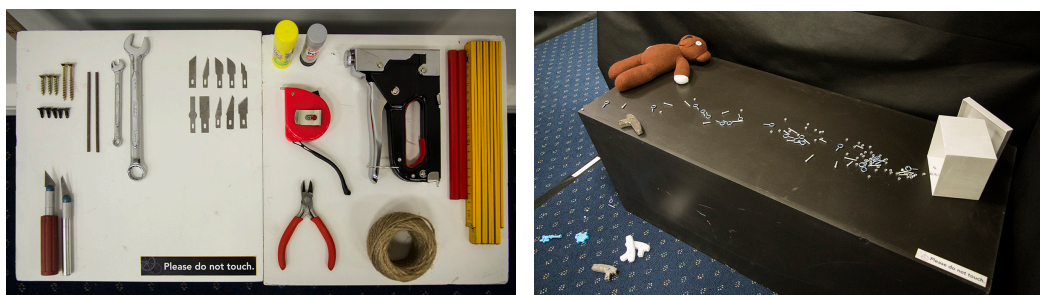


Figure 4-18: Artefacts in Set 4 "Annoyed". Left, part of the well-organized work tools; right, messy screws, teddy and broken 3D-printed toys. (Photographed by author, Mar 2015)



Figure 4-19: Artefacts in Set 5 "Attention", the fallen TV. (Photographed by author, Mar 2015)

### **Varying Artefact Size**

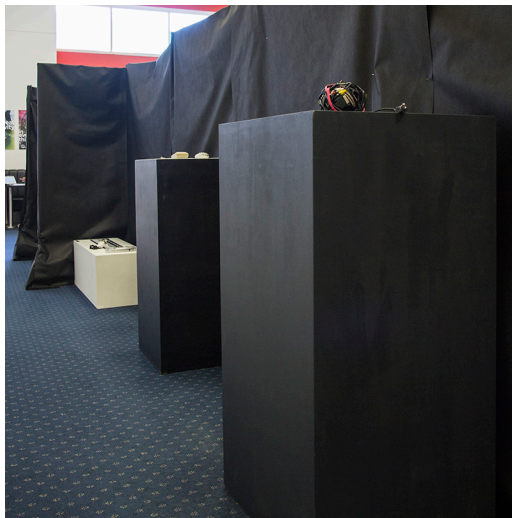
Comparing Set 4 and 5, the density of quantity was decreased, however the density of artefacts in one square meter was increased. The space in Set 4 was a lot larger than 5, even the huge number of artefacts in Set 4 were not able to fill the space; however, the space base of Set 5 was a lot smaller in which one TV is was capable of filling up the space, which made visitors feel more crowded and depressed. Therefore, Set 5 was able to create the most tension in the whole exhibition space.

### **Plinths and Controlling Display Height**

Plinths were taken into consideration as artefacts in this exhibition due to the fact that different placements, vertical or horizontal of the same plinth, as well as the color of the plinths, are able to help develop the narrative.

Set 6 was an example of how plinths in space supported the narrative. The reason Set 6 was chosen is because this was the only set where the plinths mattered the most and was originally designed to be part of the story instead of only playing the supportive role for the artefacts. The density of

plinths horizontally and vertically as well as their colors, changed through a transition in Set 6 from the first tall, skinny and black plinth to the third one which is a lot wider, lower and white. The transition of these plinths was aimed at supporting the cooperation process between children and adults. The transition to the harmonious period took longer than when the adults were struggling period, so the horizontal space that the first plinth took was less than the last one.



*Figure 4-20: Plinths in Set 6 “Process”. (Photographed by author, Mar 2015)*

## **Multi-pronged Approach**

During the planning stage, a reflection on currently available artefacts was done to figure out what other artefacts will need to be sourced for achieving the completion of the narrative. It is always ideal if the whole exhibition planning process can start by having a complete script of the narrative, then a storyboard and floor plan followed by the search for artefacts, and then putting all the artefacts into place. But in reality, most of the circumstances did not allow the curator to follow this ideal process, so there is a multi-pronged approach among available artefacts and

conceptual narrative to shape the actual script to completion for applying narrative in an exhibition environment.

By using *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool in this exhibition, there were conflicts between the ideal flow for exhibitions and the reality. This conflict is more noticeable in narrative-exhibitions than general exhibitions. In general exhibitions, when the narrative is too simple with no story behind it, everything becomes easier during the planning stage; the sequence and placements of artefacts are not overly important. Like an art exhibition for example, as long as all the artwork looks artistically elegant, the exhibition will be successful. However, in narrative based exhibitions, looking aesthetically attractive is not the only purpose. If visitors can barely understand the story behind artefacts, one of the original purposes of the exhibition is missing.

## **Narrative Based Exhibition**

Curating a narrative based exhibition equals directing a film, the most significant differences are actors and time. There are no actual actors in narrative based exhibitions and visitors have control over the time that they would like to spend with each set and the whole exhibition.

## **Invisible Actors and Implied Actors**

Although narrative-exhibitions do not have actual actors like film/theater do, there are two types of actors that only exist in narrative-exhibitions – artefacts and visitors. Artefacts are implied actors; display of artefacts

applies the movement of actors through the whole exhibition, and usually aim at hinting some information for visitors. The screws in Set 4 for example, the sequence of the screws themselves implied an action as well as the fallen TV in Set 5. Also, the simple graphic at the entrance and in the last room of the exhibition also implied messages that were relevant to the exhibition narrative. The role of implied actors – artefacts – are similar to the roles of supporting actors in film/theater.

Bal (2008) argued that the visitors in exhibitions are actors themselves; in this exhibition, they were given the name of invisible actors. The reason they are called 'invisible' is because none or barely any of the visitors would have the mindset that they are the main part of narrative based exhibitions and they are creating a story for themselves as soon as they step in to the exhibition area; and for each and everyone's unique story, the only audience is themselves as well. It is the memories, backgrounds and personal emotions that the exhibition is able to bring back for the visitors that create the story alongside the sequence of artefacts.

Visitors come from various backgrounds with different knowledge and interpret artefacts differently, they focus on specific things that not everyone else might. But they themselves are the main actors in the 'play' that they are involved in the exhibition. Visitors do feel emotions towards artefacts when they see them, especially where there are significant changes of settings in the exhibition environment; this is what connects and engages visitors with the exhibition and makes it memorable for them.

In the exhibition *SHUT UP!*, visitors firstly went through the first four sets where there were artefacts on both the plinths and the floor. There were two sides in every set of the exhibition, people from different age groups

might have associated themselves with artefacts on different sides. While the visitors walked through these sets, they may have had different internal emotions that related to the artefacts which are unique to every single one of them, so visitors would start to create their own story along the way.

A climax is always needed in a storyline; in this exhibition, the climax is the fallen TV in Set 5. After the visitors walked through the first four sets, they might have had the inertia of thinking that something similar was going to happen in the upcoming sets. However, suddenly, as soon as they walked out of Set 4 and towards Set 5, a TV on its side on the floor represented the metaphor for a child tripping over something large. It was a shock for some of the visitors, but it did play the role of a climax successfully to grab the visitors' attention to actually connect everything together and make visitors think of what was happening behind this exhibition and what the curator was trying to communicate with the visitors with a setting like that.

## **Static Time and Dynamic Time**

Bal (2008) argues that in physical exhibition environments, time is not controlled by curators, but visitors, which is not entirely true. After experiencing the use of *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool for *SHUT UP!*, the result suggested that it is neither correct nor wrong to say that the curator of narrative based exhibitions has the control over time.

Two terms describe the role that time plays in narrative-exhibitions: static time and dynamic time. These two terms complement each other in narrative-exhibitions for creating a unique experience for visitors.

## **Definitions**

- Static time is the time created by the curator through space, regardless of whether there are any visitors or not; the static time always exists. It is the sequence that links all the sets together for the completion of a story.
- Dynamic time relates to visitors, and is changeable. No two visitors would share the same dynamic time; it is approximately the time that each visitor spends in the exhibition, including the different length of period that they spend to examine each set or a specific artefact.

## **Samples**

Time runs differently in exhibitions than film/theater. In film/theater, the director has definite control of how long the show is going to last for, because the audience in theaters and cinemas are passive, so they just sit there for the whole time and follow the flow that is designed by the director until the end. However in exhibitions, curators have no control with how long the visitors will stay in the exhibition for, which is dynamic time. In narrative-exhibitions, the dynamic time is important, because that is going to be the length of time for the complete story. Without the

visitors noticing it, they are contributing to the development of narrative in narrative-exhibitions.

Curators do not have absolute control over how long each visitor will spend in the exhibition but this does not mean the curator has no control of time at all. Especially in narrative-exhibitions, it is essential for the curator to keep the flow going and to use the relationship between space and artefacts to create time. As from the previous discussion, the relationship of time and the size of the space for Set 5 and 6 is a good example. So it is essential for the curator to at least keep the static time going, without a proper control of static time, visitors will not be able to bring in the dynamic time and enjoy the exhibition.

## **Information Exposition**

One of the last things requiring consideration from the curator is information exposition, which in other words how much verbal/written information about the exhibition and the artefacts will be made visible for the audience. Keeping the balance of this is fundamental for exhibition planning; it directly decides where the curator wants the visitors to gain the knowledge of the exhibition: from the exhibition narrative, or content of the artefacts and/or artist statement, or the combination of any. In this research, the first option was chosen, so the curator kept the information exposition to minimum.

In the original *mise-en-scene*, actors played a key role in exposition; all the background setting, tone and composition were aimed at supporting the roles that the actors played. Although not all the information is exposed

either in film/theater, certain information was visible or half visible. Along with the composition of everything on stage, audiences were able to apply their personal knowledge to understand the invisible messages. By keeping information exposition to a minimum in this research, it was aimed at testing how much of the storyline visitors would be able to get without receiving any background information. Hence, even the artefacts were all unlabeled in this exhibition. But towards the end of installation, one decision was made to hint at a small part of the narrative without exposing too much. At the entrance and at the final set, there was one graphic at each place which showed that the narrative has something to do with the relationship between children and adults. At the entrance, the graphic showed the distance between children and adults, which led to the chain sequence that happened later on in the exhibition. In the final set, the other graphic showed a happy family together to relate back to the graphic by the entrance and also as the ending of the narrative.

It is important to keep a suitable balance of how much information to give away in exhibition environments. If too much is given out, some of the visually inclined type of visitors will get bored of reading all the information; at the same time, the curator might rely too much on designing the information instead of focusing on designing the space and the arrangement of the artefacts. On the other hand, giving out too little information would confuse visitors as well. Although we gave out the graphics at the beginning and end as information exposition in *SHUT UP!*, but it was still hard for the visitors to understand the narrative until they knew more about the behind-the-scenes thoughts on it.

How much exposition to provide for the visitors really depends on the type of exhibition, the narrative, the venue, etc. It would be better for

narrative based exhibitions to have less written information for the visitors compared with educational or historical exhibitions, for example.

## **Advantages and Disadvantages**

Using *mise-en-scene* gives a clearer guideline to the curators and exhibition designer as to what details he/she will need to be concerned with and how to create a tone that would not only suit the designed narrative, but also engage visitors with their own experience. However, there are also some disadvantages by using this method for exhibition planning and these need to be improved.

### **Advantages**

Using *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool gave the curator more control over everything for the whole exhibition. The curator is like the director in a film/theater who is able to oversee all the details from the beginning; *mise-en-scene* also serves as a framework to tell the curator what perspectives to pay attention to regarding how to present an engaging narrative through the artefacts.

### *Single Sequence Narrative*

*Mise-en-scene* as exhibition planning tool works well in a single sequence regarding how the audience walks. With strictly developed narrative as the New Exhibition, *mise-en-scene* helped set up the tone for the whole

exhibition and to guide the curatorial decisions. The development of the story takes space, because everything will need to be divided into sets for the purpose of developing the narrative; the more complex the story the curator wants to tell through artefacts, the more sets will need to be in place for creating various tensions which will lead to the resolution of the problem toward the end. It is not necessary to have a large amount of artefacts to show a complicated narrative in exhibition environments, in which space and tone among artefacts play a more important role.

### *Visitors' Engagement*

Using this method of exhibition planning also helps the curator to keep visitors in mind at all times. In other words, it was useful at improving visitors' experience for *SHUT UP!*. However, if the exhibition itself is not narrative focused, this planning method might lack value. So it largely depends on who are the target audience as well as what kind of message an exhibition wants to communicate to the public. For example, showcasing a specific artist's work probably does not need the use of *mise-en-scene* as exhibition planning tool, unless there is a strong sense of narrative behind it.

### **Disadvantages**

On the other hand, there are certain limitations by using *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool. Firstly, during this research, the whole logistics and the development of the narrative went hand in hand, but without the narrative set up properly in the first place, it was really hard

to decide how much space and how many full views of the scenes would be needed in the exhibition venue. The ideal way of handling this was to have everything planned in a set sequence, decision on the narrative goes first, sourcing artefacts, and then start planning and installation. But things do not usually happen in the ideal way; in fact, most of the exhibition planning process is a merger of everything. It connects with externals from different areas, so unknown events occur.

### *Lack of Script from the Beginning*

Planning exhibitions in this way makes the curator similar to a director in film/theater. However, a key aspect was missing at the beginning of the exhibition planning stage for *SHUT UP!*, which is the script for the exhibition narrative. Having only a general direction and a rough idea of what the curator wanted to communicate with the public was not enough. Without detailed information about how the story is going to develop, it was hard to consider a plan and know what each 'scene' is needed exactly for achieving the success of the whole story beyond artefacts.

### *External Factors*

Not every exhibition venue will have the functional settings that would be needed for a certain narrative. The narrative for *SHUT UP!* changed a few times in order to fit with the exhibition venue during planning and set up stage. It was restricted by the tight budgets and limitations in the venue, especially lighting.

## ***SHUT UP! and From Despair to Hope***

The fundamental difference between *SHUT UP!* and *From Despair to Hope* was the form of artefacts, which the ones in *SHUT UP!* were all objects, as were all the photographs in *From Despair to Hope*. It is harder to use objects only without photographs. Photographs tend to be able to reveal more details and motions than objects do. As for objects, their combination in the same scene, their placement as well as the relationship among them is essential, because it helps the narrative to develop. Nothing should be put next to each other randomly.

Artefacts from both exhibitions were all set up to follow a certain sequence; the main difference was that, in the exhibition *From Despair to Hope*, artefacts were on a two-dimensional wall only and the space for that installation did not block out the rest of the exhibition; which meant visitors could enter the installation from anywhere they liked and visitors were able to gain a full eye view of the exhibition as a whole. Because the exhibition was set in a specific sequence, with visitors able to enter the exhibition from any point, it was hard for the visitors to get the whole narrative and to try to understand what the curator was trying to communicate.

On the other hand, with the exhibition *SHUT UP!*, all the sets within the space were blocked from one another, so visitors had no choice but to follow the set sequence to enter the space for the set narrative. Some people tried walk through the space backwards, which the narrative did not make as much sense as the normal sequence and visitors felt that part of the narrative was not complete.

## Summary

Action research was used as the methodology, for *SHUT UP!* which used *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool to develop a narrative based exhibition in a three dimensional space.

The planning and installation process was more complicated compared with preparing for a general exhibition. By following *mise-en-scene*, it was essential to have at least a rough idea for the narrative in mind from the beginning. Therefore, it would be easier to map the narrative in space to ensure that the exhibition space is able to communicate the story through artefacts and their arrangements properly. There were a lot of uncertainties during planning and the set-up for *SHUT UP!*, so it was necessary for the curator to be flexible, especially the preparation of artefacts. With extra artefacts prepared, the curator was able to try out different artefacts at the same spot and decide what artefacts suited the narrative development the most.

There is no guideline on how many artefacts would be most suitable for any space. Mapping a narrative in space is complex. Unlike film/theater in which actors and their movements are explicitly addressed in front of the audience, exhibitions have other types of actors and time runs differently as well. In *SHUT UP!*, artefacts and the sequence that linked them together composed the framework of the narrative, however, the narrative would not be completed until the visitors took part in it.

## Conclusion

*Mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool gives the curator planning frameworks to consider various perspectives during the design process, and plays a role in mapping the narrative into physical exhibition space. The two different aspects of *mise-en-scene* that took place in *SHUT UP!* were used to answer the research question for this chapter:

*How can mise-en-scene inform the exhibition planning process?*

The first design aspect of *mise-en-scene* brought into the design process for *SHUT UP!* is the concept of 'multiple frames within a film' (Bordwell, Thompson, 2004). This perspective firstly helped divide the exhibition narrative into several parts; therefore, the exhibition space was divided into various sets accordingly and mapped them in space. Secondly, it gave the curator a clearer idea on how to complete the narrative in space by not only following the development of the story, but also adding dramatic effects for creating surprises. These surprises were created to make the exhibition memorable and support the development of the exhibition narrative at the same time, like using the fallen TV to build up the climax of miscommunications between adults and children in *SHUT UP!*.

Thirdly, *mise-en-scene* emphasizes on the quality of information inside the same frame. So it challenged the curator to take every element within each set into consideration to determine how to form the complete narrative.

The second design aspect is the broad design expressions that *mise-en-scene* covers (Bordwell, Thompson, 2004). It gives the director absolute control of camera movements, which the emphasis on actors and their movements in film/theater played a fundamental role during planning for *SHUT UP!*. Props and surroundings in film/theater are theoretically

merged with actors and their movements in exhibitions. Artefacts are also the actors; same as the surroundings and set designs in this exhibition, in which surroundings spoke for how the sequence connects all artefacts together. So *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool reminded and emphasized the connections and important roles that artefacts play in space for the curator.

## Chapter 5 - Conclusion

The purpose of this research was aimed at exploring the possibilities and limitations of using *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool through praxis. Based on this objective, this research is successful. With the observations and critiques along the whole progress of this research, a clearer idea has been developed in order to answer the research question:

*How can mise-en-scene be used as an exhibition planning tool for narrative-based exhibitions?*

This chapter will outline the general discoveries during the exhibition planning process, followed by suggestions and advice for narrative based exhibitions through applying *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool; further research will be recommended towards the end.

### Discoveries

There is an ideal path that exhibition planning can follow based on *mise-en-scene*, when resources are unlimited, including budget, manpower, time and artefacts. However, the majority of exhibitions do not fall into this category, there are always some impediments that limit curators' and exhibition designers' decision-making. Furthermore, exhibition design process usually involves people from various disciplines, many uncertainties regularly happen along the way. The ideal path should be considered as a general guidance, but exhibition designers and curators need to be flexible enough to accept any changes that happen in the process.

Ideally, when applying *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool, the curators and exhibition designers should have a clear narrative in mind about what they are willing to communicate through the artefacts with explanations of the developments of narrative in space in detail. Searching for the ideal venue and location to present this concept should follow along with the outsourcing of artefacts. Once everything is confirmed, displaying artefacts in space should be the last step.

However, more than one of the stages in exhibition planning that were mentioned would need to happen in parallel to each other, so it is a multi-pronged approach among the availabilities of resources and the initial concept for narrative that shapes the final narrative along the way.

## **Recommendations for Narrative based Exhibitions**

Based on this research, there are some considerations when using *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool.

1. *Mise-en-scene* is suitable for planning fiction-based narrative; for non-fiction ones, general exhibition design principles could work. Dramatic curve is a commonly used narrative structure in fictions, which the two exhibitions discussed previously in this research both followed. *Mise-en-scene* was well expressed through this narrative structure in space. Using dramatic curve to develop the exhibition narrative is able to assist the curator at dividing the narrative into several parts and giving emphasizes at various tension points, especially the climax. Therefore, it gives the curator

a clearer idea on how to map the space with the narrative accordingly and it becomes easier for the curator to decide how many sets that the space can best present the exhibition narrative. The more complex the narrative is, the more space and artefacts will be needed; more is relative here regarding the scale, which does not necessarily mean the quantity of artefacts or sizes. While considering how much space might be needed, size of the venue does not matter much if the space is able to be divided into the correct amount of 'frames' for telling a complete story; the same is applied to artefacts.

2. The planning stage should prepare for unexpected circumstances. In narrative based exhibitions, the preparation stage for a small to medium size exhibition in general is usually shorter than producing a standard 90-120 minutes film, which means in most cases brainstorming the narrative for exhibition and out sourcing artefacts will need to happen at the same time. Although having a general idea of the exhibition theme is not enough to provide a detailed guideline to look for exact artefacts, the general direction can be the first step at setting up the narrative. The whole process of finalizing narrative in exhibition is like running through a pyramid with a bouncing ball. It starts on one surface from the bottom of the pyramid and gets developed, and when it almost hits its limit on one side, it searches out other surfaces for another path to climb higher. There are three decisive factors at the bottom of this pyramid, which are the narrative for exhibition, available artefacts and the space itself. In order to develop a complete narrative, these three cannot let one or the other go.

3. Flexibility is essential in the process of developing exhibition narrative as well as searching for artefacts. Having more artefacts than needed during the planning stage is useful, because there will be more choice of which artefacts are more suitable for the exhibition narrative. Especially by following *mise-en-scene* as an exhibition planning tool where the 'frame' concept sets the framework that each set of the artefacts should be individual from each other, without connecting to other sets of artefacts, a specific 'frame' should still tell a story on its own; but once all the 'frames' are linked together, a larger story with deeper meanings should appear.
4. Use arrangement in space to fully communicate the narrative. It is worth taking the whole space into consideration to be a placement for the artefacts, including the ceilings, walls and ground; although it is not compulsory to fully utilize the space, but *mise-en-scene* emphasizes on the equal importance of information displayed within a 'frame' to set up a specific tone and create surprises and shocking effects to visitors. By maximizing the usage of the whole space, it is able to encourage visitors to explore and discover new information that is not inside their usual eye-level view in order to engage them at a deeper level.
5. Lighting is a must in exhibition design because it changes the focus point for visitors and sets the tone of the whole setting. In a room with many artefacts in place, lighting emphasizes the key messages in the narrative as well as setting the right atmosphere for visitors to experience the meanings beyond artefacts. Not all venues provide good lighting that would suit narrative development. In

this case, curators and exhibition designers should consider the venue's original light settings during the planning stage.

## **Limitations**

There were three major limitations in the exhibition *SHUT UP!*. Firstly, due to limited budget, lighting was not able to be set up properly, apart from the lights that the venue had, there were no specific ones to emphasize the exhibition. Secondly, for the specific purpose of examining how to communicate the narrative without too much information exposition, there was almost no written information given regards to the New Exhibition. Last but not least, the places to display artefacts were limited in this exhibition. Only the floor and plinths were used, which due to the reality of the venue and strict budget, artefacts were not able to hang from either the ceiling or the space dividers.

## **Further Research**

With the limitations in *SHUT UP!*, further research is required to examine their pros and cons.

Lighting is an important element in film and theatre. Therefore a more complete investigation of *mise-en-scene* in exhibition design would include control over lighting. Budget and venue facilities meant that no lighting was set up for either the Pilot Exhibition or the New Exhibition. Further research can examine how lighting can shift visitors' focus hence affect the development of narrative in space.

Information exposition is a critical topic on how much is enough for an exhibition. The available written information in space between the two exhibitions discussed in this thesis was significantly different. A detailed exhibition brief contained too much information for the Pilot Exhibition in comparison to the New Exhibition which had close to zero information provided. Not all visitors understood the whole exhibition without hearing the concept behind it, nor did they like to read too much text. Both exhibitions did not use labels onsite to explain any artefacts or artefact sets; it is worth exploring further in the balance of written information in space and how to use labels to assist visitors for understanding the exhibition narrative.

Due to space limitations, artefacts were not able to be hung on walls or from ceilings in the exhibition *SHUT UP!*. Taking the perspective from *mise-en-scene*, it is important to not allow visitors to see all details with one glance, further research is suggested to discover how to fully utilize the whole exhibition space for displaying artefacts to support the development of the narrative.

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# Appendix A: Distinctions between CRPC502 and CGRD593 in Pilot Exhibition

This section provides the agreement that was signed between both parties of CRPC502 and CGRD593 as well as the essay that was written for CRPD502-14B for separating the practice loop of the Pilot Exhibition *From Despair to Hope*.

## Part 1: Agreement Between CRPC502 and CGRD593

### Distinguishing CRPC502 and CGRD593 work of Eva Hou

An outcome of the meeting held at 2014.08.21 Thursday, 1100 in G.G.13. Present: Emmanuel Turner (Master's Supervisor), Lisa Perrott (CRPC502 Lecturer), Jianting 'Eva' Hou.

The meeting discussed the extent to which Eva could share work between these two papers and to ensure the deliverables for each paper were distinct and of suitable size for a combined work.

#### Outline of CRPC502 Assessment:

- Proposal for final exhibition project based on a chosen theory.
- 3000 written essay exploring the chosen theory.
- Physical exhibition between 20 - 31 October at Creative Waikato.

#### Outline of Master Thesis:

An exhibition without any theme and sequence usually confuses its audience; this thesis aims at exploring the possibilities using narrative to communicate with the audience as well as assist the curatorial decision making. The proposed research mode uses action research focusing on narrative beyond artefacts in exhibition design.

#### Outcomes

There is a separate theory deliverable for 502 and 593; Eva will deliver a different document for each paper that meets the expectations of that paper. The exhibition work is graded as part of 502 and will be graded on theory, process and outcome - but not reflection. The masters work will close the praxis loop by reflecting on the process of creating the exhibition and then commenting on theory.

As agreed by:

HOU Jianting (Eva)  
Student

Lisa Perrott  
CRPC502 Lecturer

Emmanuel Turner  
CGRD593 Supervisor

# Part 2: CRPC502-14B Essay: Dramatic Curve in Exhibition Planning

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## **Introduction**

With the increasing demand of art and exhibitions, new expectations developed among museum and gallery visitors. People are no longer satisfied with passive exhibition, instead, they are seeking to build their own inner connection with the artefacts. This essay will focus on how to use dramatic curve narrative structure in exhibition planning to enhance visitors' engagement.

Looking at exhibitions from the curator's point of view, what are the messages and impressions they want visitors to obtain from the exhibitions other than that the artefacts look nice or interesting? How can personal connections built up between visitors and artefacts become important? People are natural storytellers; they can easily connect the contents surrounding them with their own background, previous experience and knowledge, then add in their own imaginations and feelings for everything to develop into a story. Setting up a story behind artefacts will increase the visitors' engagement.

Dramatic curve as one of the most basic storytelling structure is well known to most people. Using a film narrative as a guiding structure to plan and build up an exhibition challenges the curator's professional knowledge in the specific field as well as an in depth understanding of the sequence among artefacts, also, the connection between artefacts and space; more importantly, it enables the possibilities of engaging visitors on a more personal level.

## Storytelling in Exhibition Structure

“Art museums and galleries are both educational and entertaining attractions, but also provide the most passive visitor experience. They display two-dimensional works, sculptures, multimedia works, or installations for visitors to contemplate and interpret” (Lorenc, Skolnick & Berger, 2007, p62). How to engage visitors in a passive exhibition environment can become challenging. This encourages curators and exhibition designers explore new ways of thinking about exhibition structures.

Lorenc, Skolnick and Berger argues in their co-edited book, *What is Exhibition Design*, that all exhibitions have one thing important in common, which is that all exhibitions tell a story, which is not true. There is no doubt that all exhibitions have a narrative behind it, but not all narratives tell a story. Exhibitions can be organized chronologically, or aesthetically by color, by shape or randomly just for the sake of just making it look unusual or pretty. A typical example is the exhibition for showcasing as in *Figure 1*. The exhibition space has been designed with all her significant work, the unique dots are her identity. The space itself is well organized for the audience to enjoy the atmosphere created by Yayoi Kusama’s artworks. However, apart from knowing that is art, as well as recognizing her work if anyone see it somewhere else later; it is hard for the visitors to have a sympathetic response to establish a more personal and emotional connection with the whole exhibition environment. Exhibitions with only a set theme is not enough; the narrative needs to be a storytelling narrative to engage with visitors. (Lorenc, Skolnick & Berger, 2007; Altshuler, 2013; Wendt, n.d.)



*Figure 1: Installation Photos, Yayoi Kusama.*

With the strong influence from new media, exhibition design has become a multidisciplinary subject, therefore, how to curate an exhibition that tells its own story become essential for curators. Bedford argued that “stories aided humans in defining their values and beliefs and allowed the listener to project their own thoughts, feelings and memories onto the story and ‘... make connections between museum artifacts and images and visitors’ lives and memories” (Bedford, 2001, p.30). This challenges curators to take visitors into consideration during the planning stage for an exhibition, passive visitors’ experience becomes a past tense. Storytelling is part of human nature since everyone was born, people respond to stories to a certain degree, so setting up a storyline in exhibitions makes it easier to engage with the visitors; visitors are willing and look forward to participate and co-narrate the story in the exhibition themselves. (Bal, 2008; Kelly, 2010)

In the highly competitive world between what new media can provide people world wide, physical exhibition needs to have a revolution for making sure that it is still attractive to visitors to experience it in a three dimensional environment instead of browsing the photographs of the artefacts in an online gallery at home from their own computer. Curators need to discover and consider new ways of thinking for the exhibition structure and put this into action.

## Dramatic Curve

People generally expect things to happen in a certain order, like the stock market has its own life cycle of ups and downs based on various external factors. It is the same for the dramatic curve in story telling. Dramatic curve narrative structure is one of the most well known and widely used Classic Hollywood Narrative Structures, it follows people's common sense of the process of how something should happen in a specific way. It is not only beneficial for filmmakers by using dramatic curve as a guideline, but also useful for exhibition designers to engage with visitors in a three-dimensional space.

Stories following a dramatic curve start by addressing the problem which sets up the tone and context for the story that is going to happen.

Following that are a few conflict points where various tensions are developed to increase the intensity of the story before it reaches the climax.

Then the problem will slowly be solved towards the end. Like in the movie *Lord of the Rings*, it is obvious that the dark lord Sauron's one ring causes massive problems across middle earth. During the years of fighting against Sauron, the companionship of nine is founded to return the ring to Mordor. At the end of the movie, the addressed problem of Sauron's one ring is solved, when the ring was thrown into the fire of Mordor where it can be remade. Although there are various highs and lows during the development of a story, but with a dramatic curve, people generally know that the main problem will be solved towards the end.

This narrative structure has become important and easy for the majority of people to understand the development of a story due to its clear composition that concludes the four essential parts of story telling clearly. A narrative with a clean beginning, middle and end; a narrator who is able

to drive the story forward; a path which gives a clear structure to the story as well as the context and background information about the story.

(Lorenc, Skolnick & Berger, 2007)

Exhibition '*Waffen werfen Schatten (Shadow casting Weapons)*' has a very clear demonstration of understanding the dramatic curve in an exhibition environment.

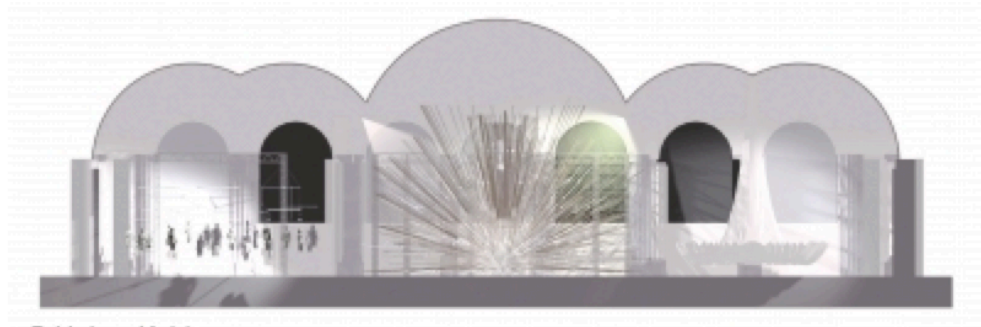


Figure 2: Floor Plan, *Waffen werfen Schatten*.

Shown in *Figure 2* is a floor plan for the exhibition. The set up is really simple; only three rooms in total with one single entrance; visitors start from the room on the right. Aimed at examining strategy, attack and protection of weapons, the title of the exhibition *Waffen werfen Schatten (Shadow casting Weapons)* gives the visitors a very brief idea about what to expect in the exhibition. The story starts when visitors enter the first room where they need to slip under a filigree baldachin hanging from the ceiling, the crowded and emotionless environment shows the vulnerability of humans in wars. That's the introduction of the story, the baldachin can be associated with a commander's tent where all the strategies of war begin. In the middle room, 1650 weapons composed an installation that takes up the whole room as the conflict and climax in the storyline; wars are happening, hitting the visitors like a thunderstorm. After the most intensive part of the story has been told, visitors walk towards the third room, which is the last one. The atmosphere has calmed

down, swaying liberally in the air are many iron shells of warriors, they seem strange hanging there, like many souls who have been set free. Whether the battle is won or lost, the set up of the exhibiton has transferred the message of *War is a Game of Life and Death* pretty well by following the dramatic curve narrative structure. (Holzer Kobler Architekturen, 2003)

Although the curator has not explicitly told the visitors what has been happening between the rooms, the narrative gap between each room has created space for visitors to put in their own imagination and interpretation to the situation for pushing the story to move forward. So the visitors become part of the story themselves.

Dramatic curve as a basic narrative structure is very easy to associate with any genre; with the simplicity it has also still of being able to serve as a basic storyline, it can fit nicely as a metaphor for visitors' experience in an exhibition. It can also support the curator to have a better control of organizing the artefacts during the planning stage.

## **Curation**

When random display of artwork titled with art no longer satisfies the majority of the common crowd, people pay more attention to the link among artefacts and how it engages with the environment as well as the audience themselves. Arranging artefacts in exhibitions by following the dramatic curve narrative structure makes the storyline more obvious and easy to engage visitors to interpret their own thoughts and meanings into the story to drive the story forward. But there is a fundamental difference

between narrative in film and narrative in physical exhibition – temporal dimension. Curators need to be able to keep the balance of time and space in an exhibition environment to ensure the story structure is well presented by the arranged artefacts, as well as keeping enough space for visitors to have their own interpretation of the story behind it.

Unlike film, time in physical exhibition environment is unlimited. In films, spectators stay still, each frame of every footage moves forward one after another through time by the director's pre-control. There is not a lot space and gaps have been left in between that are able to give spectators enough time to have their own interpretation. As in an exhibition, the concept of time has changed. Time is unlimited for the audience - the sequence of how artefacts will travel through time is arbitrary unless the route in an exhibition has been set. Visitors are allowed to join the curator as a co-narrator to have their own interpretation and add their own meanings among artefacts through the chosen length of time of their own to decide on the development of the story. (Bal, 2008)

In physical exhibition environments, "the role of actor is not only limited to the artefacts on display; both visitors and the artefacts are the actors, and it is the interaction between them that constitutes the play" (Bal, 2008, p19). *Waffen werfen Schatten (Shadow casting Weapons)* occupied three rooms with massive installations, shown in Figure 3.

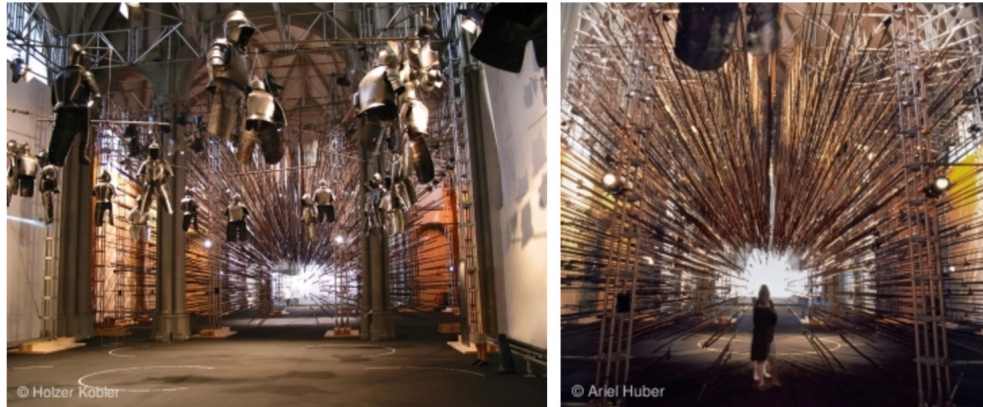


Figure 3: Left, *The Armor Room*. Right, *The Weapon Room*

All these rooms in *Waffen werfen Schatten* created a completely different atmosphere for the visitors to go through. From the moment the visitors enter the exhibition area, their emotional changes connect with the set up of the environment which continues the development of the story. Visitors are actors as well as co-narrators in this exhibition. When they enter the middle room - the weapon room, the strong emotional changes of fear towards the weapons was well planned by the curator; every weapon is directly pointed at the visitors. However, without visitors walking through the space to experience their emotional change, the story wouldn't be completed. The result of this war within the exhibition doesn't matter much, some people can take the story as ending the war with a great success although many people lost their lives; others can take it as a complete loss; loss of their family, land and the whole country. What is more significant in this exhibition experience is that visitors are able to engage themselves with the artefacts and the whole environment to create their own unique story. (Holzer Kobler Architekturen, 2003)

It is crucial for the curator to keep a balance between leaving enough space, both physically and mentally, in an exhibition environment to engage visitors; while at the same time, having a good understanding of

the sequence behind the artefacts in the exhibition, so as to build up the framework of the exhibition properly.

## **Project: From Despair to Hope**

Based on a film narrative structure, to plan an exhibition is challenging at some stage, but definitely gives a clear guidance for the curator during the process of what to follow. The project *From Despair To Hope* is an experimentation of planning an exhibition in a physical gallery environment using dramatic curve narrative structure as a basic guideline for the development of the sequence behind artefacts. Various stages during the planning process will be discussed to gain a better understanding of how a film narrative assists curators in decision making in planning exhibitions.

During the concept development stage, in order to leave enough space for visitors to have their own interpretation on the artefacts, the project *From Despair To Hope* has chosen a storyline of showing one person's internal emotional changes. The storyline has been divided into three main parts; one feels despair about all the surroundings at the beginning, there are various struggles during the process and hope is regained at the end. The aim is not to have an explicit reason of what causes the desperation at the beginning and to let the visitors to fill in the gaps with their own experience. Therefore, the introduction part of the story is told implicitly. It is designed not to present the whole introduction of the story through artefacts, but as soon as the visitors see the first group of artefacts, based on a human being's general common sense, the previous gap of the story will be filled in completely within their mind automatically.

When it comes to the examination of which medium to choose, photography is the first choice. While considering the exhibition as a storyboard, one of the best mediums to represent this storyboard is photography; so all the artefacts are photographs, like “a visual scenario for a cinematic vision of art presentation” (Bal, 2008, p16). There isn’t a set character who appears in all the photographs to show the emotional changes; instead, different things have been chosen to represent the emotions at various stages in the story. In the mean time, photos were printed out in multiple shapes and sizes to represent motions in different scales in order to attract the audience’s attention. With the arrangements of all photos, the whole installation is able to provide the audience an open space to interpret their own experiences and feelings into the story that are co-narrated by their own but directed by the curator.

After the medium and storyline have been decided, the design development stage of the artefacts is important; because it is not only the sequence among the artefacts that matters, the external environment of the exhibition space is predominant as well. The architecture and interior design of the space often represents the gallery or the museum’s culture, sometimes in order to have a successful exhibition, the exhibiton design needs to be able to merge with the surroundings to let the whole environment speak. The project *From Despair To Hope* works perfectly well with the interior design of the gallery space towards the end of the installation. There are stairs that lead to the gallery’s office. Taking the stairs as a metaphor of moving forward and looking up in life, the location of the stairs fits nicely with the end of the storyline behind the artefacts, where the emotions turn towards brightness and hope. (Lorenc, Skolnick & Berger, 2007)

In all, during the planning stage of the project *From Despair To Hope*, the dramatic curve narrative structure provided a very straightforward overview of the whole storyline. It not only gave a clear direction of the beginning, middle and end; but also enabled the curator to measure the length of each part of the story and the proportion of each session to ensure the development of the story among artefacts is at a pace that makes sense for the visitors.

## **Conclusion**

In order to curate and design exhibitions that are more attractive to visitors, passive exhibitions have become part of history. It now requires curators to look at exhibition structures differently.

They now utilise human nature – essential storytelling skill which help to develop exhibitions into an active experience for visitors. The tasks curators facing have changed from how to present artefacts in an aesthetically attractive way towards how to communicate with the visitors through artefacts. But still, it is a challenging topic among curators on how to better transfer the right message of each exhibition to the visitor in a more creative way. Having the support of dramatic curve narrative structure during the planning stage is a definite plus in the development of a more engaging visiting experience for visitors in physical exhibition environments.

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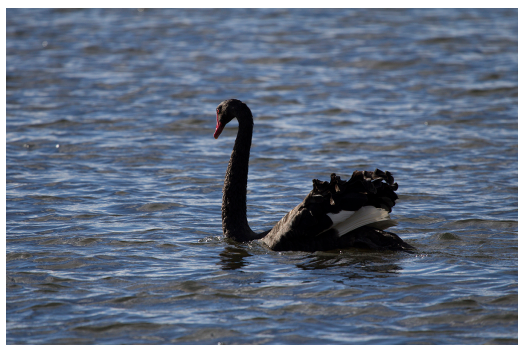
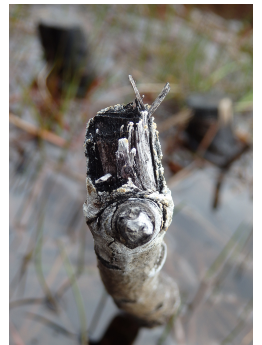
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# Appendix B: Full-documented Photos for Exhibition *From Despair to Hope*

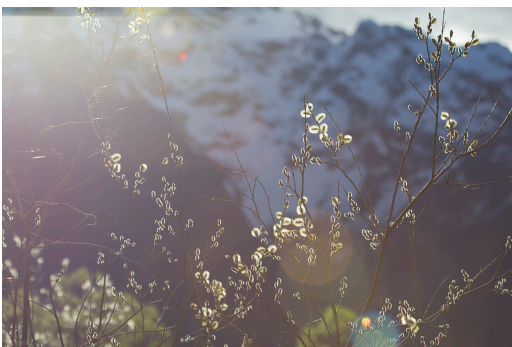
This section contains full-documented photos for the exhibition *From Despair to Hope*. All taken by author.

## Part 1: Footage of all photographs

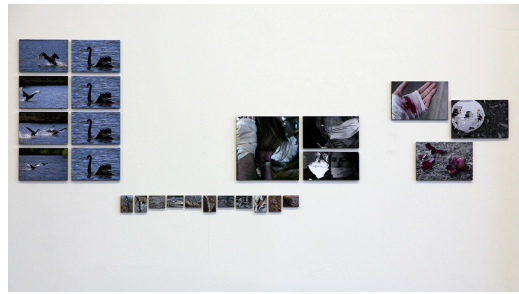








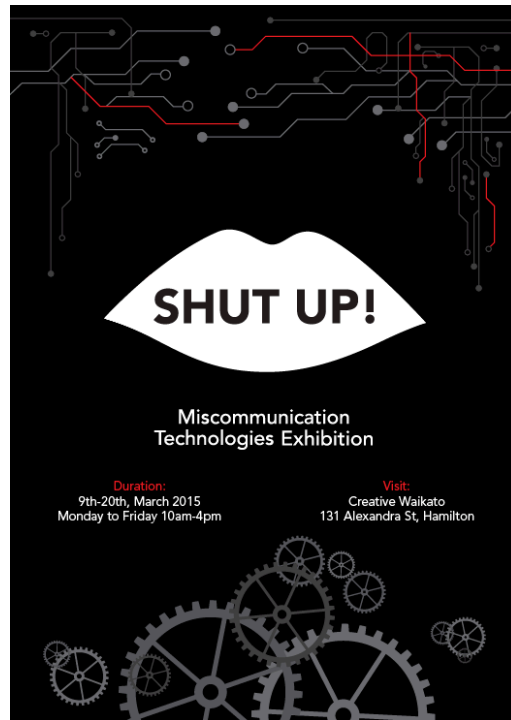
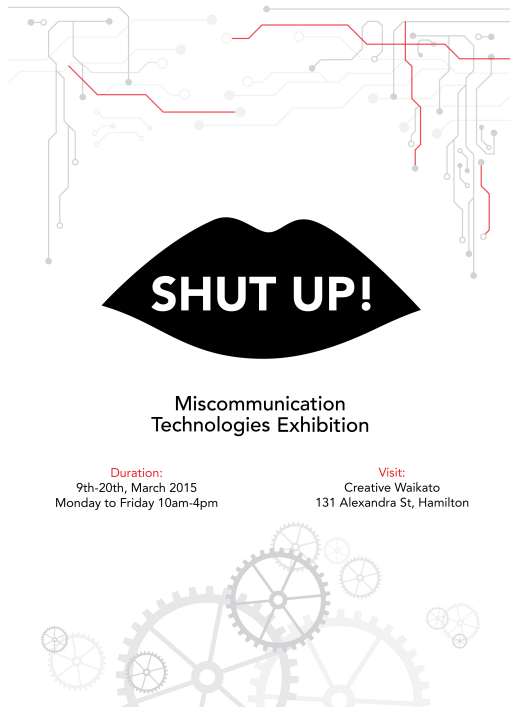
## Part 2: Installation Photos



## Appendix C: Marketing Materials for Exhibition *SHUT UP!*

Evidence of all marketing materials is provided in this section along with detailed explanations, which include A3 posters, A5 fliers, invitations and social media banner. All designed by author.

- Two versions of posters were designed in A3 size in both black and white to suit the colors of the wall and plinths in the exhibition. They were given to Creative Waikato for hanging on their promotional board and display windows.
- Fliers were A5 and designed to be left in the exhibition space for visitors who wanted to take a copy home. It contained a brief description of the exhibition's initial concept.
- Invitations were designed in a square shape, which also had two-colored versions to keep the design consistency through out all marketing materials. Details of date and time for the showcase evening/opening were on it. Invitations were handed to lecturers in the department as well as classmates, friends and main stakeholders, which included Creative Waikato, all contributors who provided artefacts and a few others through personal connections, like freelancing and volunteering.
- Social media banners were mainly designed for Facebook event, the event calendar on Creative Waikato's website, as well as their weekly newsletter.



C01 - Exhibition posters.

**SHUT UP!**

**About the exhibition:**

'SHUT UP!' is a miscommunication technologies exhibition that aimed at exploring applying narratives in physical exhibition space.

It is part of the curator, Eva's masters research at University of Waikato.

**About the curator:**

Eva Hou is a masters student at the University of Waikato studying Master of Media and Creative Technologies.

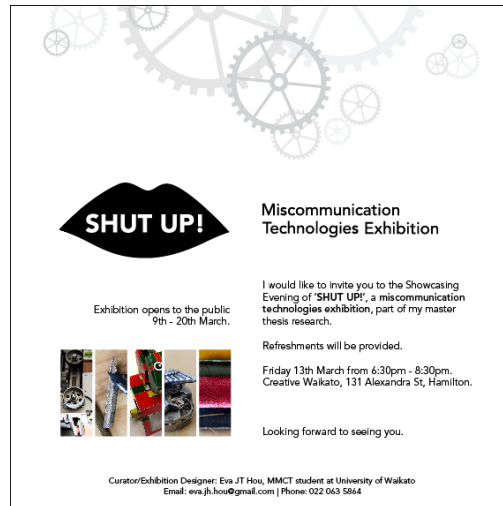
She is passionate about using photographs and objects to reveal social and environmental issues.

Creative Waikato, 131 Alexandra St Hamilton  
9th-20th March, 2015, Mon to Fri 10am-4pm

THE UNIVERSITY OF  
**WAIKATO**  
Te Kōwhiri Herekōwhiri

CREATIVE (A)KAMA  
WAIKATO (A)RANGI

C02 - Exhibition fliers.



C03 - Exhibition invitations.

**SHUT UP!**  
Miscommunication Technologies Exhibition

**MAR 13** "SHUT UP!" Exhibition and Showcasing Evening

Guests and Friends - Hosted by Eva JT Hou

Hosting ▾ Invite Edit ...

Friday, March 13 at 6:30pm - 8:30pm  
about 4 weeks ago

Creative Waikato  
131 Alexandra Street, Hamilton, New Zealand 3240 [Show Map](#)

"SHUT UP!", a Miscommunication Technologies Exhibition, part of my master's research; which I explored into the possibilities of using film narratives as exhibition planning tools.

Showcasing evening of the exhibition is on the 13th of March, Friday, 6:30pm onwards. Would be great to have you all come along to the showcasing evening. Feel free to bring your friends and families if you want. ^^

Refreshments will be provided.

(PS: The exhibition itself is open to the public between the 9th - 20th March 10am to 4pm, Monday - Friday.)

Curator and Exhibition Designer: Eva JT Hou  
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A massive thank you for the amazing people below:.... [See More](#)

Emmanuel, Anne and 15 other friends went


18	11	60
went	maybe	invited

SUGGESTED EVENTS [See More](#)

- University of Waikato Careers...**  
Wed Apr 29 at University of Wai...  
4 friends are going  
Join · Maybe
- FUEL NUTRITION'S 21 DAY N...**  
Monday at Fuel Nutrition Ltd  
2 friends are going  
Join · Maybe
- Mamma Mia! - Hamilton**  
Fri Jun 19 at Founders Theater

C04 - Exhibition Facebook event.

**SHUT UP!**



The exhibition is opened to the public between 10am - 4pm Monday to Friday during the two weeks. There will be a showcasing evening on the 13th of March, Friday, 6:30pm - 8:30pm.

[f](#)
[t](#)
[in](#)
[g+](#)
[✉](#)

**When**  
Mon Mar 9-Fri 20 2015

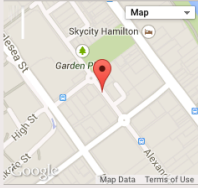
**Opening times**  
"SHUT UP!" is a miscommunication technologies exhibition designed and curated by a master's student,

**Where**  
Creative Waikato  
131 Alexandra Street,  
Hamilton

**Ticket Information**  
FREE

**Restrictions**  
General admission


**Contact**  
Eva  
Phone 0220635864  
Email [eva@4plus1seasons.com](mailto:eva@4plus1seasons.com)



[View large map](#)  
[Visit website](#)

C05 - Exhibition information on the website of Creative Waikato.

**Artists Floor Talk - Eva Hou - SHUT UP Exhibition**



Save-a-date for Tuesday lunch time - Free Artist floor talk with Eva Hou, curator of the intriguing, play on scale exhibition including 3D printed objects on display, Tuesday 17 March, 12.30pm

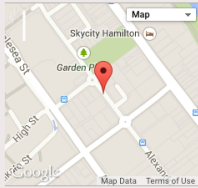
**When**  
Tue Mar 17 2015, 12.30pm-1.00pm

**Where**  
Creative Waikato  
131 Alexandra Street  
Hamilton  
HAMILTON

**Ticket Information**  
FREE

**Restrictions**  
General admission

**Contact**  
Michelle Crowfoot  
Phone 0274278928  
Email [michelle@creativewaikato.co.nz](mailto:michelle@creativewaikato.co.nz)



[View large map](#)

C06 - Artist lunch talk information on the website of Creative Waikato.

## **Appendix D: Further Details of Production Process for Exhibition *SHUT UP!***

Partial walls used in this exhibition were hand built due to limited budget. Wooden sticks were used to be the intersection of all the space dividers; all the interactions were two meters high with one main wooden stick in the center with a wooden base composed of four pieces of small wood, each approximately 15 centimeters long. Two layers of paintings were applied on all surfaces of the wood, the base color of white was followed with black paint. Afterwards each part of an interaction was glued together; a total of nineteen were made.

All the wooden interactions were stabilized on the floor of the venue by cotton tape. Due to the venue being fully covered by carpet, it was not easy to tie anything on the wall or drill anything into the ground. So cotton tape was taken into consideration. Eco-cloths were applied across all the wooden interactions after the interactions were stabilized, and they become the 'walls'. In order to block the lights from both sides of the 'wall', all eco-cloths were double sided while stapled on, in a total 100 x 1.5 meters of eco-cloths were used.

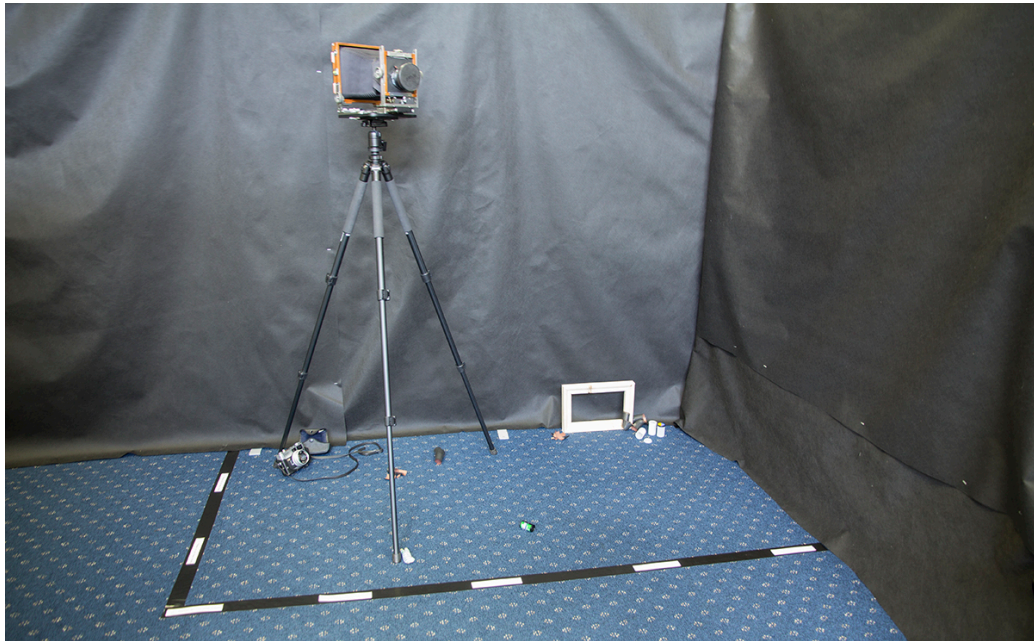
For safety reasons, all the bricks were wrapped in eco-cloths before applying on the wooden base and all stabilized with the base as well as the floor by using tape. In total, approximately 45 bricks were used. Depending on the weight that was hanged on each wooden interaction, different numbers of bricks were placed on the wooden base with a minimum of one, and a maximum of four.

## Appendix E: Full-documented Photos for Exhibition *SHUT UP!*

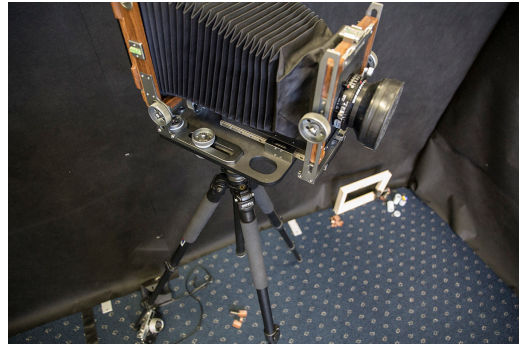
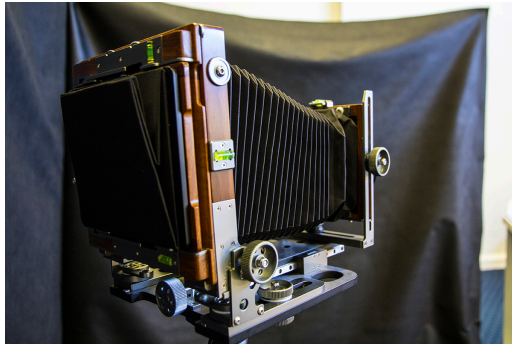
This section contains full-documented installation photos for the exhibition *SHUT UP!*. Photos were taken by author.



*E01 - Poster displayed at the entrance along with the info graphic that was hinted at the exhibition narrative.*



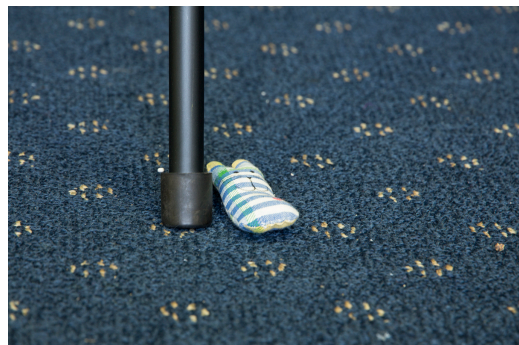
*E02 - Overview of Set 1 "Confused" in the exhibition.*



*E03 - Tall side of Set 1, a tripod with an old large format analogue camera.*



*E04 - Lower side of Set 1, a smaller analogue camera, empty photo frame and broken pieces of films everywhere.*



*E05 - Close-ups of the lower side in Set 1.*



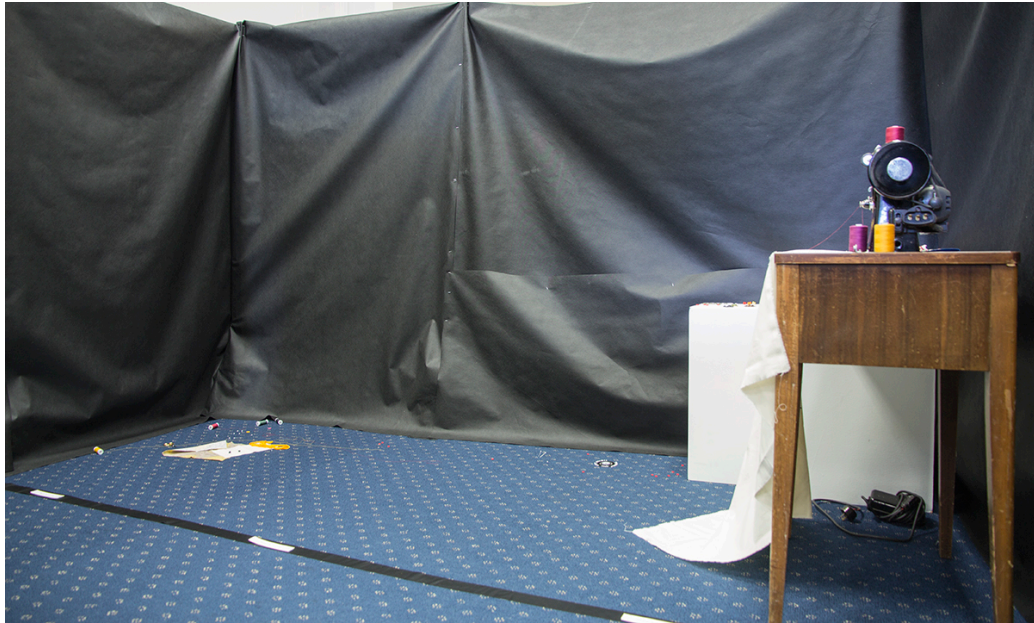
*E06 - Overview of Set 2 "Ignored" in the exhibition. The two sides of this set were separated on both side of the path. Upper, the tall side, neatly organized stationary. Lower, the lower side, Drawing pens put in gradient and a teddy bear with red paint all over it.*



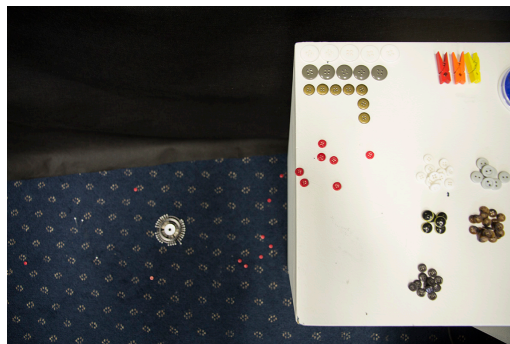
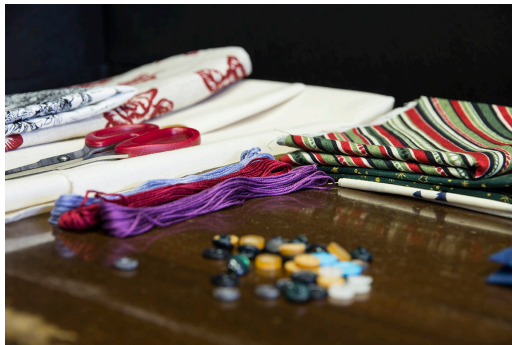
*E07 - Close-ups of the taller side in Set 2.*



*E08 - Close-ups of the lower side in Set 2.*



E09 - Overview of Set 3 "Troubled" in the exhibition.



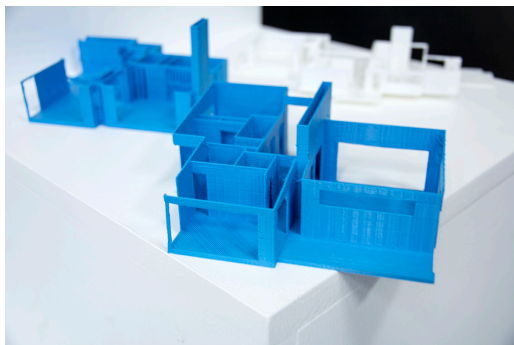
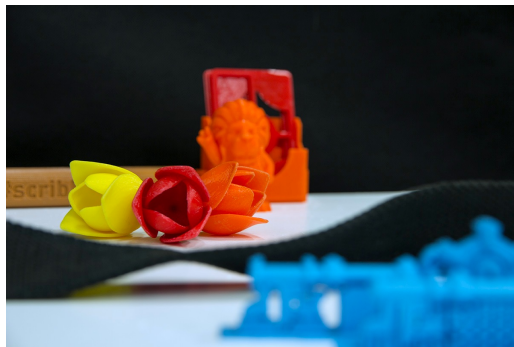
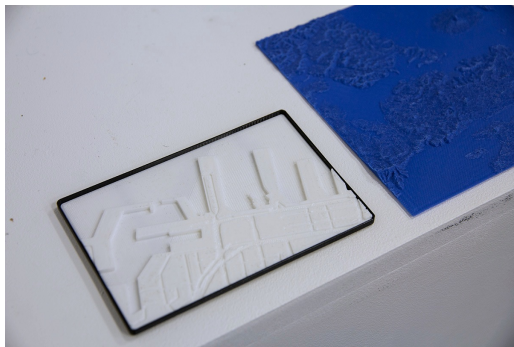
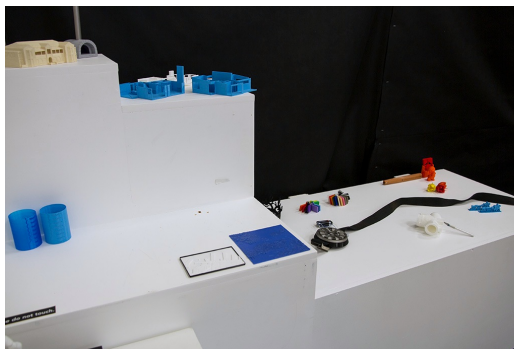
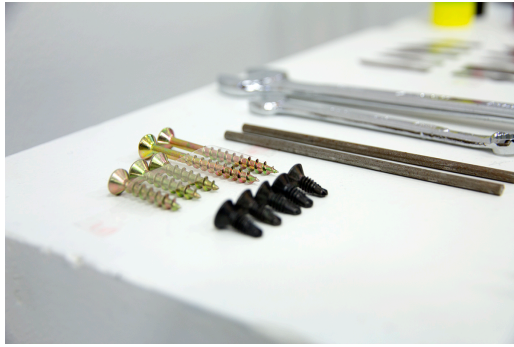
E10 - Close-ups of the tall side in Set 3, which everything was put together nicely.



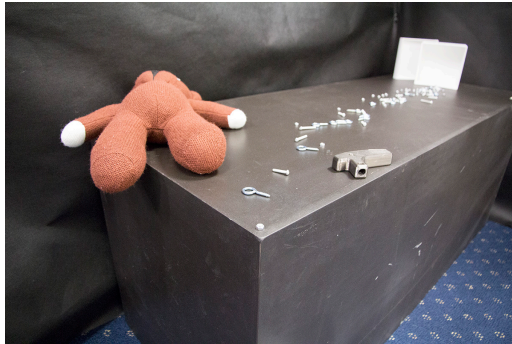
*E11 - Close-ups of the lower side in Set 3, in which threads, buttons and fabrics were dragged and thrown into a corner.*



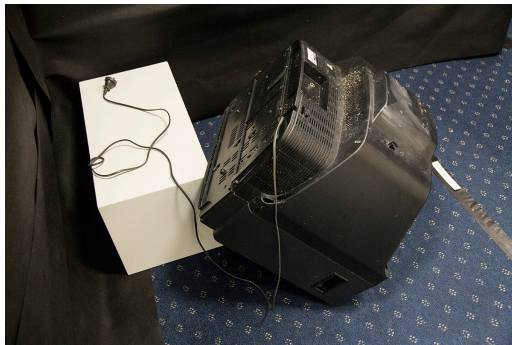
*E12 - Overview of Set 4 "Annoyed" in the exhibition. The left, white side represented adults, which were well-organized tools for hands on work and displays of 3D-printed objects. The right, black side represented children, which contained large number of screws thrown everywhere, a teddy bear and broken 3D-printed toys.*



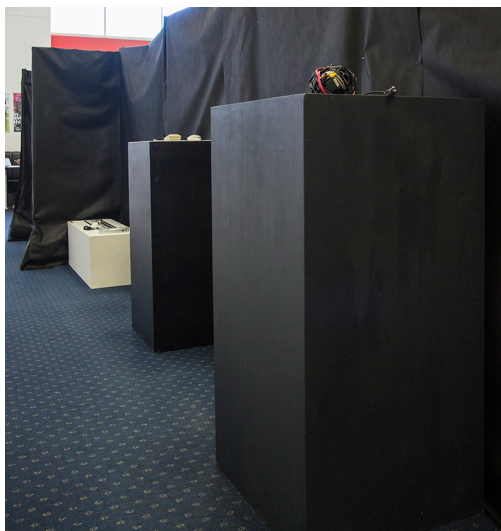
E13 - Close-ups of the tall side in Set 4.



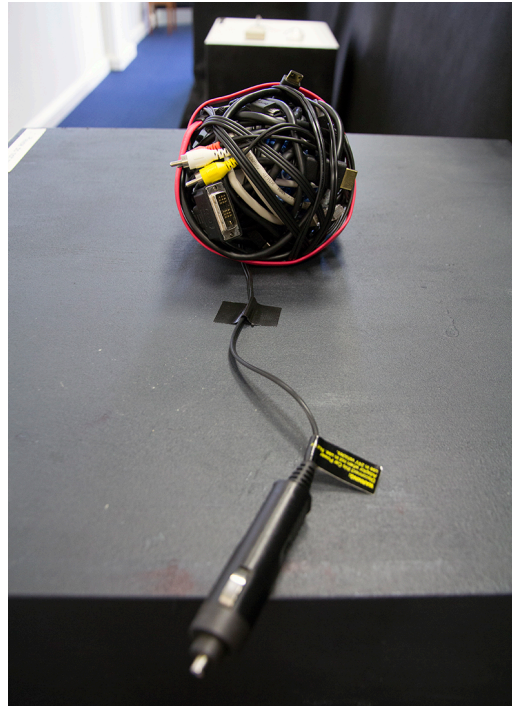
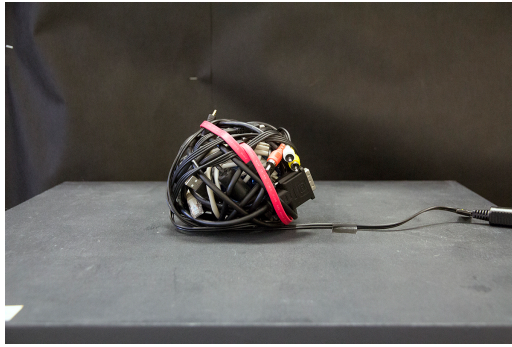
*E14 - Close-ups of the lower side in Set 4.*



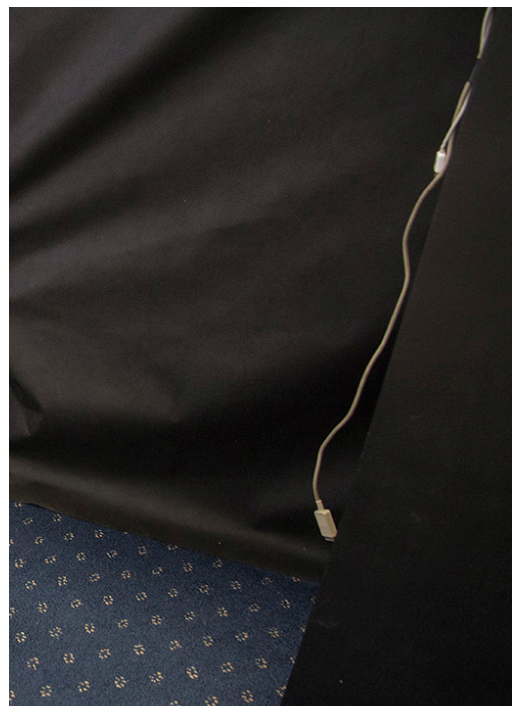
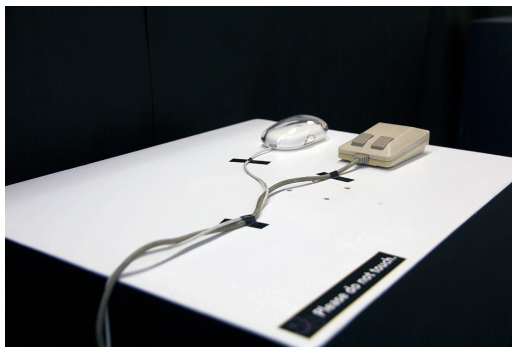
*E15 - Overview of Set 5 "Attention" in the exhibition, a fallen TV.*



*E16 - Overview of Set 6 "Process", which from right to left, the tallest plinth had a spherical shaped artwork composed of cables, the middle one had two computer mice, and the lowest white one had a 3D-printed hand playing a piano keyboard.*



*E17 - Close-ups of spherical shaped artwork composed of cables in Set 6.*



*E18 - Close-ups of the two computer mice in Set 6. Image on the right, cables of two mice dropped to the same height with the last plinth as a transition; the cable from the old mouse was also the metaphor for the effort that adults put in.*



E19 - Close-ups of the 3D-printed hand playing a piano keyboard in Set 6.



E20 - Overview of Set 7 "Harmony" in the exhibition, a group of cardboard made mechanical craft robots, with info graphic that was hinted the end of the exhibition narrative.



E21 - Close-ups of artefacts in Set 7.