

Interdisciplinary Practice Project Proposal

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Disciplines: Nature, Psychology

Aims:

The subject matter of my paintings are deformed woods in the park, regarding to the negative emotions and thoughts from my personal experience related to my hair pulling disorder condition. To have a greater understanding on my subject matter, deformed woods, I would like to learn more about trees' health through site visiting, also the relationship between nature and mental health.

My project will be focus on Richmond Park, which is a national nature reserve and a European special area of conservation, and is currently managed by The Royal Parks. Through consulting with psychologists and trees conservation parties, I hope to have more insights on how the relationship between nature and emotions can contribute in my art making.

Objectives:

- To study the shape of the tree trunks and what cause its deformation (e.g. Pollarding, Burls)
- To explore the relationship between man's role in shaping the nature
- To study the relationship between mental health and trees
- To examine the role of trees in other artists' painting, and the linkage between art and psychology

What I Intended to do:

Trees Studying

- On site visiting, documenting different shapes of trees and the cause of the deformation
- Research of information of tree health (e.g. online database of Woodland trust and The Open Air Laboratories (OPAL))
- Contacting parks or trees organization for more insight, probably a visit or voluntary activity to see how tree care is taken regularly (e.g. richmond parks, Observatree, or Woodland trust)
- Have a walk in the park with a tree expert

Relationship between Trees, Art and Psychology

- Look at other artist's work that has trees as the subject matter (e.g. Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland and George Shaw)
- Interview with an art historian about trees in painting (probably Alexander Collins from University of Edinburgh)
- Look at journals about the link between Art and Psychology
- Interview with a psychologist (probably Nimmi or Denise from our class)
- Have a walk in the park with a psychologist

Expected Outcomes

- Develop work based on the knowledge of Richmond Parks, trees conservation and deformed trees
- Develop ideas that bring together ideas from painting, trees and mental disorder
- Consider art as a platform to create dialogues, information of psychological state or daily challenges of the disorder sufferer, and make it more accessible to other audiences

Potential Collaborators:

I will try to contact the organizations and psychologists on the list. Names marked with * is my first choice collaborators.

Trees

1. *Friends of Richmond Park <http://www.frp.org.uk/>
2. *The Royal Parks Richmond Park
3. Wimbledon and Putney Common Conservators
<https://www.wpcc.org.uk/>
4. Observatree <http://www.observatree.org.uk/>
5. Woodland trust <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/plant-trees/advice/caring/>

Psychologists

1. Nimmi Hutnik - psychologist, from MA painting
2. Denise Harrison - art therapist, from MA painting
3. Prue Whyte – Chairman of Board of Conservators, was a scientist and therapist in mental health

Curator

1. George Shaw – Artist and Curator of “Graham Sutherland: An Unfinished World”

Timeline

March

- Contacting collaborators
- Review database about tree health and Richmond Park
- Revisit Richmond Park with psychologist or tree expert (hopefully can reach any park collaborators)
- Documentation of deformed trees with photography

April

- Literature review on tree, mental health and arts
- Interview with Art Historian
- Review paintings of Paul Nash, Graham Sutherland and George Shaw
- Interview with psychologists

May

- Complete the Supporting Written Documentation
- Give a Verbal Presentation