

Doctoral Dissertation Summary

Art Graduate Course

Art Production Expression Specialty

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Title : Stained Glass - The Expression and Research of Environmental Issues as Artistic Subject

This dissertation addresses existing research in and the artistic expression of environmental issues as a subject using the medium of stained glass. Chapter synopses follow.

Introduction

The introduction explains the significance and purpose of the research.

1. To produce and exhibit original stained glass work
2. To validate whether my own experience as artist and researcher causes me to change my recognition of the environmental issues as a result of the production process of the artwork.

Chapter 1

Art and Social Issues

Chapter 1 discusses works based on themes of social issues of collaborators Ken and Julia YONETANI, Vick MUNIZ, Olafur ELIASSON, Christian BOLTANSKI. I discuss the background, the creative and production processes, and the different expression methods used by each.

Chapter 2

Contemporary Environmental Issues

This chapter addresses environmental issues of ocean plastic waste, soil pollution, and global warming. The chapter discusses the current situation of each issue above as a foundational understanding for the rest of the research. The chapter first discusses the actual quantity, content, and issues of ocean plastic waste. Then, the chapter addresses how waste is usually disposed of today. The chapter also discusses the success of Kamikatsu-cho, Tokushima in developing its process of eliminating waste, as part of its municipal “Zero Waste Declaration” campaign. The chapter continues with a discussion about California resident French

national Bea JOHNSON who has been able to live without producing any waste. The chapter addresses the problem of soil pollution, which often goes unnoticed and unseen. In addition, the chapter discusses the beginning of a solution to global warming, as well as current multinational discussions to solve global warming issues. These contemporary environmental issues serve as the basis of the artwork produced for this research.

Chapter 3

The Esthetic of the Japanese People and Harmony with the Environment

This chapter examines the harmony between the environment and Japanese esthetics of the Edo era, Yo-no-bi, the Japanese tea ceremony, and Zen in order to identify themes for the artwork produced for this research. The chapter first discusses how people during the Edo era used to waste nothing as an “Edo-era esthetic,” establishing a precedent for today’s “circular economy.” The chapter discusses Yo-no bi esthetic born from common wisdom and culture to cherish everyday objects, not just for the beauty of the object but also as a spiritual esthetic.

Furthermore,

I speak a common point with the reuse (reuse) that is reviewing the thing which I usually overlook by "the beauty of the tea ceremony", and doing a reinvention (recreate), the help of the solution of the environmental problem. The chapter discusses the repurposing of objects often overlooked, as a solution to environmental problems through re-use, exemplified by the Japanese tea ceremony esthetic. Finally, the chapter discusses the Zen esthetic where the ascetic acts polishing spaces is in fact an act of polishing the heart, creating beauty in sophisticated simplicity seen in the Zen world. For these Japanese senses of beauty, I mention that Japanese original culture to take good care of a thing is based on. The chapter concludes by asserting that the Japanese esthetics discussed above imply that cherishing all objects rather than discarding them as waste is a fundamental characteristic of Japanese culture.

Chapter 4

Environmental Issues as Theme

This chapter presents the artwork produced for this research using environmental issues as a theme, including an overview, production process, exhibiting method, and my observations as the artist and researcher for each piece of work. The works of art are categorized between the use of either plastic or glass material, starting with artwork produced for my master's degree exhibition, “Blue Ocean,” to the works for

this research, “Eternal Flowers”, “Signals”, “Sensors.” As part of the experience, beginning with works using plastic materials, as the artist and researcher, I realized that there exists a through-line from the ancient to the contemporary, where glass as a material is also an optimal material for today’s “circular economy,” and discuss the realization.

Chapter 5

Toward a New Expression Using Stained Glass

This chapter examines the development of glass, from focusing on glass as a building material, transitioning to color glass from the invention of flat glass plates, giving rise to stained glass, and the use of concepts of light in Christianity, the discovery of stained glass techniques, along with the changes in methods of expression. The chapter presents multiple examples of glass used to express different concepts in Christian architecture, of Henri MATISSE’s “Rosary Chapel Stained Glass,” and Gerhard RICHTER’s “Cologne Cathedral Stained Glass” after the beginning of the twentieth century. Following a long history in Europe, stained glass is finally brought to Japan during the Meiji era. This chapter discusses pioneering artists Tatsuo UNOZAWA and Sanchi OGAWA, who learned their techniques in Europe and the United States, bringing these to Japan. Contemporary examples of stained glass in Japan include collaboration with painters such as Ikuo HIRAYAMA’s “Showa Rokujunen Haru Furusato Nihon no Hana” installed outside the main entrance of JR Ueno Station in Tokyo, and characteristic works of stained glass artist Shinpei SATO. The chapter discusses works “Floats,” and “Okeanos,” produced for this research, including an overview and production process, in the context of the history of works discussed above through to today, and an exploration of a new expression using stained glass to produce environmental issue based artwork.

Conclusions

There are two conclusions from the research.

- (1) The expanded potential of stained glass art as a piece of work that can stand on its own as an expression of environmental issues. This is despite the fact that most works of stained glass are used only as installations in architecture, possessing limited themes.
- (2) My own recognition of environmental issues changed as a result of insights gained through the research and experience from the production process of the artwork.

It is not possible to know whether awareness was improved from only observation of the people viewing the work, which will remain as a subject of further research. As such, future research might include opportunities to conduct workshops as part of exhibitions.