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**History of Design Essay**

**Question 2 - Curate a collective exhibition of works from Graphic, Product, and Interactive Design history. Select at least 1 piece of work from each design history and provide visual references. Describe your selection criteria—design qualities, tenets, and/or rationale. Give a name(theme) to the exhibition. Provide an exhibition statement with your intent. Explain how the selected works fall within the context of the exhibition.**

The title of this exhibition is "The Wonders of Immersion". The works curated aim to bring the viewer through a string of immersive encounters featuring a multitude of mediums. The exhibition's purpose is to be immersive in the sense whereby the artworks do not focus fully on form itself, but moreso the experience the viewer has with the art.

In line with the theme, the selected works to be exhibited are: a sculpture called *Bird in Space* by Constantin Brancusi, a diorama of *The Battle of Hastings* by Otto Gottstein, a painting called *The Marriage of Reason and Squalor II* by Frank Stella, and the *Sensorama Simulator* by Morton Heilig.



*Figure 1: Bird in Space by Constantin Brancusi*

The first piece, *Bird in Space* (refer to Fig. 1), 1932, by Constantin Brancusi, is a marble sculpture meant to capture the movement of a bird mid-flight. Through the shadows reflected, Brancusi uses light and absence of things to showcase the "birdness" instead of focusing on using any moving suggestions of biography. The viewer is compelled to confront the arrangement and scale of the form due to the emphasis placed on the physical space, caused by the sculpture's extremely simplified form.

Viewers would be led to experience attributes of agility, gravity, height and weight, evoking a visual and physical response. It was selected for this exhibition due to its ability to get the viewers to think beyond its appearance and contemplate its meaning.


*Figure 2: Diorama of The Battle of Hastings by Otto Gottstein*

The second piece to be featured is a diorama of *The Battle of Hastings* (refer to Fig. 2) by Otto Gottstein, a wealthy furrier who ardently collected and designed flat figures (Redley). This diorama is a form of photomontage presented in the format of a three-dimensional model, showcasing the historical event.

This piece was selected for the exhibition as it includes a variety of many happenings throughout the artwork, encouraging the viewer to scrutinise the little details. Coupled with the fact that the photomontage is set up in a three-dimensional space, it makes the viewing an experience in itself -  as though the viewer were travelling through the scene as they look at the groups or individual soldiers.



*Figure 3: The Marriage of Reason and Squalor II by Frank Stella*

The third piece is *The Marriage of Reason and Squalor II* (refer to Fig. 3), 1959, an enamel painting by Frank Stella. According to the Museum of Modern Art (MoMA), the slivers of white lines were not painted on; they are actually spaces in between the painted black strips in which the exposed parts of the canvas can be seen. The method Stella used to paint gave it an overall composition that discerned the canvas as having a flat surface but also being three-dimensional at the same time.

As the piece is from the Minimalist art movement, there appears to be very little to see at first glance, driving the viewers to look closely and carefully at the painting. At the right distance, when observed long enough and when the viewer has lost point of focal view, the total composition with the thin lines vibrating becomes a three-dimensional, visible depth of field painting - an immersive experience that ceases to be two-dimensional in execution. (Johnson) This artwork was chosen for the exhibition as it is a good representation of how a painting can become an experience rather than just an idea.

*Figure 4: Sensorama Simulator by Morton Heilig*

The last work would be the *Sensorama Simulator* (refer to Fig. 4), 1962, by Morton Heilig. The *Sensorama* is a machine designed to immerse an individual viewer in a simulation of reality using an interactive, multi-sensory display environment (Fisher). A user would be able to view a 3D film and hear sound, smell aromas and feel wind all at the same time.

While the artwork does not focus solely on its form to convey its intent, its form helps in increasing the believability of the user's experience. Hence, this artwork was chosen due to its highly immersive quality, in the sense that the user gets to experience entering a simulation.

Word Count: 690

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