
http://www.openartsarchive.org/resource/open-arts-object-yinka-shonibare-nelson%E2%80%99s-ship-bottle-2010

In this film Dr Clare Taylor looks at a work made by a living artist who works in London, Yinka Shonibare. The subject, materials, and sites she talks about all encourage students to think of their own individual, national and global identity in new ways. The work also turns on its head traditional ideas of a sculpture on a plinth, which often commemorate a person well known in their own time, and reverses ideas about what such a work should be made out of, using a range of materials rather than stone or metal.

*Before watching the film*

1. What do the words ‘Nelson’, ‘message in a bottle’ and ‘Trafalgar Square’ mean to you?

2. What do you think this work represents?

3. What is it made out of? And how is it put together? Are the materials obvious at first glance?
4. What function do you think this work serves?

After watching the film

1. What effects (aesthetic, social, political etc) do you think the artist was trying to achieve in this work?

2. Has the film helped you define some of the formal elements of the work? Consider scale, subject matter, medium, and other formal elements

3. Does it have a recognisable purpose or function? Does this relate to the time period in which it was made?

4. How has this film helped your understanding of installation art?
Online Activity

1. To help contextualise the work and think about changing attitudes to gendered identity and military heroism, search for other sculptures in Trafalgar Square, which are glimpsed and mentioned in the film, not only the column itself but the reliefs around the base, the fountains and the three sculptures on the other corner plinths around the square.

2. To think about installation art and public participation, search for other examples of works conceived for the Fourth Plinth in Trafalgar Square; start with the links below.

You could walk around a public work of art, thinking about scale, colour, choice of materials and the experience of you as the viewer, using the comparison grid below as a guide. What does the piece say about local/regional/national/global identities?

You could also look at examples of earlier sculpture from a book and/or online resource and compare these with Shonibare’s work.

You can find a definition of installation art in Tate’s Art Term Glossary here: http://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms/i/installation-art

Bibliography

Rachel Kent, ed, Yinka Shonibare MBE, Prestel, 2013 edition


Resources online


National Maritime Museum:
http://www.rmg.co.uk/discover/behind-the-scenes/blog/yinka-shonibare-mbe-greenwich

Yinka Shonibare’s website:
http://www.yinkashonibarembe.com/home/

Information on Shonibare’s The Swing, After Fragonard, 2001, Tate, and further context:
http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/shonibare-the-swing-after-fragonard-t07952
https://smarthistory.org/yinka-shonibare-the-swing-after-fragonard/

Comparative analysis

Fill out the table below, considering the following elements: date, subject matter, material, location, function, formal qualities. Use the empty boxes to comment on any other formal qualities or aspects of the works you would like to note.

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