

WEEK 12: Rational Consideration and Exhibition Case

Overview

In the twelfth week of the research, I was considering how to enrich the issue of exhibition rationality. Therefore, I attempted to start from literature research and exhibition cases, seeking some content that could be referenced and learned from. From the perspective of literature, I supplemented *The Black Atlantic* and *The Practice of Diaspora*, exploring rationality through the transnational system and translation; from the perspective of exhibition cases, I discussed *Lubaina Himid: Make Do and Mend* (2024) and *Decolonising the Outdoors: Places That Built Us* (2025) for the reflection on diaspora. I tried to provide some ideas for my script and critical reflection.

Theory Perspective

Gilroy, P. *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*, 1993

p. 14

Ship as method → workshop = production space

p. 15

diaspora as transnational system → exhibition ≠ national narrative

p. 19-20

routes not roots → diaspora = process

Edwards, B.H. *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*, 2003

p. 20

translation is a “social practice” that creates relations across difference

p. 20

décalage(misaligned) → diaspora = inconsistent, not unified

p. 19-20

detour → diaspora is formed through indirect movement

Image by: Tianshun Zhao

- Drawing on Paul Gilroy, diaspora is not rooted in origin but shaped through movement, “routes rather than roots” (p.19). He redefines the Atlantic as a transnational cultural system (p.15), challenging nation-based frameworks. The ship, as a mobile space (p.14), becomes a key site where identities are produced through circulation rather than fixed belonging.
- Drawing on Edwards, diaspora is not a unified identity but a process of translation that produces relations across difference (p.20). This process is structured by inevitable gaps, or “décalage,” meaning cultural exchange is always partial and uneven (p.20). Moreover, diaspora unfolds through detours rather than return (p.23–24), emphasizing indirect, non-linear movements of identity and meaning.

Exhibition Case



Installation view of Lubaina Himid: Make Do and Mend at The FLAG Art Foundation, 2024

Photography by Steven Probert

Exhibition as problem solving

The exhibition presents characters discussing problems around the table through “Strategy Paintings”, simulating the decision-making and thinking process.

Material as memory

The wooden board work of “Aunties” draws on the form of East African funeral objects and points to historical and cultural memory.

Collective identity construction

In the exhibition, the group characters discuss global issues (care, war, land, etc.) together, emphasising the collective rather than the individual.

The exhibition shifts focus from representation to process, using material, collective interaction, and problem-solving structures to construct meaning.



Decolonising The Outdoors, Aillen Lees, 2025, Edinburgh's Radical Bookshop, Source: <https://statuesque-figolla-ae8704.netlify.app/decolonisingtheoutdoors/>

Decolonising knowledge production

Through discussion, reading and participatory activities (workshop), knowledge is no longer output by the institution in one direction, but generated in collective interaction.

Workshop as decolonial space

The workshop transforms the audience into participants, enabling them to engage in the process of expression,

discussion and negotiation.

Situated belonging

In the cross-border context, through collective discussion and experience sharing, the sense of belonging is reconstructed in the situated context.

The project operates as a decolonial platform where knowledge is co-produced through workshops, transforming exhibition into a participatory space in which belonging and meaning are collectively constructed.

Reference List

Edwards, B. H. (2003) *The Practice of Diaspora: Literature, Translation, and the Rise of Black Internationalism*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Gilroy, P. (1993) *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.