

Digital craft

Fantastic Forgeries

In the Boijmans I encountered a work by Salvador Dali: *Vénus de Milo aux Tiroirs*. It was not only the work, but especially the presentation. The statue had a glass conversion. This is intended for protection, but also should be noticed as little as possible. The space next to Dali's work also had a showcase around it. From there on I only started paying attention to this during my visit to the museum. The Boijmans is full of them. At the design department of the museum is almost everything behind the glass. I decided to focus on this and started doing research.

Research

FedEx — Walead Besthy

In the FedEx series Walead Beshty creates glass vitrines that mirror the exact size and shape of standard shipping boxes and sends them out to his gallery, exhibiting the damaged constructions alongside their containers upon arrival. Likewise his Copper Surrogates (polished slabs of copper that clearly display the marks of their transportation and use) rely on external forces to shape the final work of art.



The Pavilion — Michel François

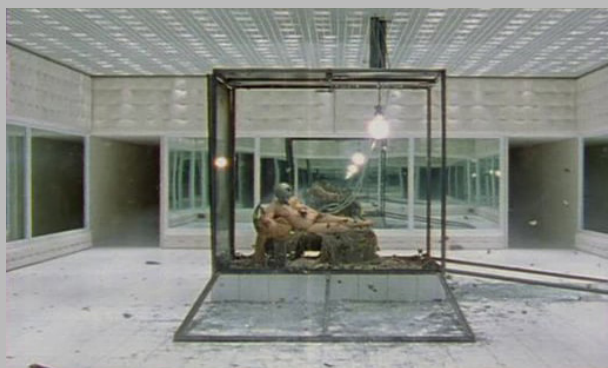
The Pavilion is a large cubic glass box created by Michel François. It becomes the stage of a private performance by the artist; what the audience sees in the gallery is the consequence of his actions. A cuboid of multi-colored plasticine modeling clay sits in the center of the box and prior to the opening François archeologically reveals sliced layers of it on the glass walls.



VOSS — Alexander McQueen

Another work is by Alexander McQueen's. VOSS was a dramatic catwalk show for the spring/summer 2001 collection. The centerpiece was a huge glass box that no one could see inside because the lights were on in the room surrounded the box and not within so it appeared to be just a mirror, so the seated audience saw only their own reflection. After one hour when the show began the lights from inside the box came on to reveal the interior to be filled with moths and at the center was a naked model (Michelle Olley) on a chaise lounge with her head obscured by an alien like gas mask. The glass then fell away and smashed to the ground.

McQueen's aim for the show was to "turn people's faces towards themselves" (hence the reflective glass box acting as a mirror in the middle of the room)"[he] wanted to turn it around and make them think, am I actually as good as what I'm looking at?"



Invited Visitors – Antony Gormley

In *Invited Visitors* people could wander through a steam-filled glass container at the Hayward Gallery. According to the sculptor, *Blind Light*, as the installation was called, undermined what architecture ought to do: "Architecture is supposed to be the location of security and certainty about where you are. It is supposed to protect you from the weather, from darkness, from uncertainty." So, instead of that, one wandered lonely in a cloud, occasionally bumping into strangers – for Londoners, it was like a reminder of what the city's pea soupers were like before the Clean Air Act. For Gormley, it meant that each visitor could become "the immersed figure in an endless ground, literally the subject of the work".



Ceci n'est pas... – Dries Verhoeven

Over a period of ten days, ten persons occupy a glass box where they are being presented as rare relics or works of art. Like a revival of the exhibitions during the colonial period featuring weird people on markets. These ten characters set out to challenge the norm. They are the exceptions we're not used to come face to face with. Every day will feature a new scene, a new taboo in the glass box in the city. And public space once again becomes a place for exchange and debate.



Copy

Somehow a showcase is a strange object. If you just want to keep something as safe as possible you just put it in a safe. If you want people to be able to see the work at its best you don't put an box around it. You want it both, so you have to meet in the middle. Simple and effective solution to put an glass box around it. But still It's a big contradistinction. Would there be another way to bring those two closer together?

Copy 1 – handcuffs



Maybe a bit dramatic way, but in addition to being effective, it could also provide an interesting experience. It puts the works on a figuratively higher plinth as the beholder in this form is subservient to the artwork.

Copy 2 – unclimbable wall

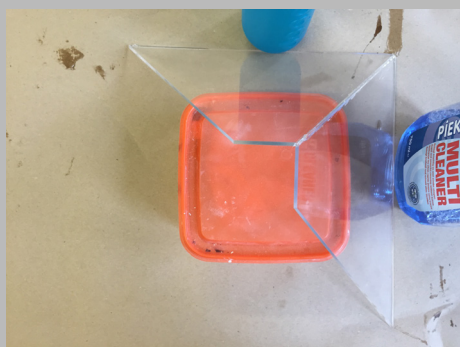


Rounding the walls of the plinth makes it impossible for the visitors to get too close to the work.

Transformation

The showcase copies wouldn't bring the spectator and the artwork closer in positive way. For the transformation I wanted to apply new techniques and by that creating new possibilities for the presentation of the work.

I went to the material station to create the possible showcase of the future. A while ago I had seen a video in which a hologram was made with an plastic CD cover. Of course I wanted to develop this in a more professional way and I got some plexiglas which was then cut to size by the laser cutter. The pieces were attached to each other with transparent sealant.



A showcase needs to have a pedestal. This was made of 3mm plywood which was also cut to size by the laser cutter. Then this was glued to a solid box.

The projection had to appear from a screen, in this case an iPad. It was important to me that it would stand out as little as possible and thus become one with the hologram showcase. To make this happen, three sheets of plywood were cut out again and then glued together, which ensured that the tablet was sunk into the plinth.

To make the whole one and also to meet the most important condition; as little as possible to stand out. Is the complete molds sprayed.



The physical object was created. It was now time to create the digital representation of the works. For this I had photographed the images around, removed their background, this then designed on a black background and these images loaded onto the iPad.



The hologram display was ready to be exhibited.

7 research questions

1. **What is the theme I am investigating?** protecting art.
2. **What is my research question?** Could there be another way to maintain the safety of the art piece, but on the other hand create a deeper connection with the spectator
3. **How am I structuring my research?** Defining which safety is needed for the art piece and what makes people feel connected with an work.
4. **What tools or methods can I/could I use to conduct my research?** Especially the internet, but also a visit to the museum.
5. **What is the foreseen result?** - Glass is a good material for security, but also connectivity between the work and it's spectator. However new techniques could bring art and it's spectator closer together.
6. **What is the difference between my foreseen result and the result which came through the process.** Today's techniques can not yet bring the extra dimension which makes you feel more connected, as was intended.
7. **Is it relevant?** Bringing art and the spectator closer together, but also maintain a important principle; safety, in this specific form of showing art is really important, I think.

Statement

Showing and in the same time protecting something for it's spectator is a huge and interesting contrast. In the case of art, bringing them as close as possible to each other creates a deeper connection. An old and obvious method is the showcase made out of glass which is still used nowadays. Making the glass thinner could strengthen the connection but weaken the safety of the work. Making it thicker, the other way around. Today's techniques could bring a change into that. By taking a piece to the virtual reality world makes it more safe because, of course, it's not the real thing. Also it can increase it's connection with the audience. But something is missing there. That's the material. The artist didn't made the piece to put in a digital world. It's material has a purpose, a story, a feeling which is missing when it's copied into a digital representation. Showing work in a way like that can be informative, but can never replace the artwork itself. Unless the creator has created it in that form.