
This article talks about how social movements, specifically the Vicaria de la Solidaridad (Vicariate of Solidarity) in Chile used art called arpilleras, which are a form of poster made of a number of potential materials like cloth and beads that depict images of the poor social conditions that they wish to make the wider population aware of. They are a group of mostly women under the Allende government who had lost their jobs or whose university qualifications were no longer considered valid (Adams, 30). Adams talks about how this movement used this art form to frame their movement and mobilize resources to contribute to their cause. These arpilleras diagnose the problem, propose a solution and make calls to action. Most importantly for my work, this article shows a form of resistance to a dominant ethos using art to call attention to issues and foster a new collective of people all fighting for similar rights that otherwise would not have been associated. Adams talks about how this group uses their art strategically to arouse emotions in people and she gives examples of how the arpilleras inspire the telling of stories of plight when they are put up for sale and customers ask about the images (33). This connects nicely with the course themes of the local and situated knowledges.


This article is authored by four academics from the UK in The School of The Built Environment at The University of Salford. It is the report of a study they conducted to see “if there is any evidence for demonstrable impacts of school building design on the learning rates of pupils in primary schools” (Barrett, Peter et al., 678). The methods
that they used were observation, measurement, and interviews to gather their information. They come to the conclusion that there are specific environmental factors that have an impact on the pupils’ learning. I would like to discuss the environment of our classroom and of York’s campus in general and give my opinion on how the architecture, lighting, air quality, and access to nature have an impact on learning.


This article deals with the idea of museum exhibit design and how the environment has an impact on the visitor’s experience and learning. The authors refer to someone named Bitgood who theorized this idea of simulated immersion which means the degree to which an exhibit effectively involves, absorbs, engrosses, or creates for visitors the experience of a particular time and place (Bell et al., 602). Bitgood names four factors to the immersion experience including physical space, environmental feedback, multisensory stimulation, and object realism. This article includes the findings of two studies conducted by the authors, the first was an observation of visitor behaviour before and after a renovation was done on a museum exhibit in the Denver Museum of Natural History in which they found that there were increased stops at dioramas, increased reading frequency by visitors, and an increase in average time spent in the hall post-renovation. The second study was a survey to determine which exhibit design features encourage psychological flow and immersion and they found that interactive components, multisensory stimulation, and dynamic displays were the most effective (Bell et al., 620). Three out of the four authors of this article are psychology professors,
and the fourth is an in-house evaluator at the Denver Museum in Colorado. I believe that this article is important for my research because it further emphasizes that certain design features foster positive learning and it will help my argument that certain environments can foster inspiration for social change.


This article is a report on a study that was done by the authors to see if there is a connection between the interior design elements of a home have an affect on psychological health and well-being. They especially focus on an element they call depth which simply means, “the number of spaces one must pass through in order to get from one point in a structure to one or more specific termini” (Evans, Gary W, Stephen J. Lepore, and Alex Schroeder, 42). They believe that the greater depth a home has, the more opportunities there are for a person to use cognitive strategies to reduce unwanted social interaction and therefore lead to less psychological stress. These writers are professors at various universities in the United States of subjects like psychology, law and design, and this research contributed to The National Science Foundation. It is likely an academic audience that they are writing for but towards the end of the article they say that there is much more that has yet to be researched in other aspects of design and that their purpose is to “enjoin social scientists and designers to study the role of environmental design elements as they directly and interactively relate to human well-being” (Evans, Gary W, Stephen J. Lepore, and Alex Schroeder, 45). They conducted a study with 212 college students as their subjects who had been living in off-campus housing for at least 8 months and measured their experiences on a 25-item symptom check list (Evans, Gary W., Stephen J. Lepore, and Alex Schroeder, 42). I am
considering this material because they found in their research that those students living in housing that had more depth and more places of separation between roommates were experiencing less psychological stress than those living in more open concept homes. This supports my thesis because I make the argument that our environment has a direct impact on our morale.


This article by Jeremy Gilbert gives the reader an origin for the posters with the slogan “Keep Calm, Carry On” and he dates them to 1939 with the purpose of being used if the Nazi’s had invaded the UK (2). I will be using this article as one of my examples for how art and images have been thought to inspire an attitude or morale. Winston Churchill imagined that these posters would steady the national nerves should trying circumstances arise (Gilbert, 2). The UK did not end up needing to use these posters as they were not invaded but it is interesting that they have now come to the surface again as the West has entered an economic recession. Gilbert takes a non-supportive position for these posters because he believes they inspire passivity in times where there needs to be action. He also notes that this slogan was thought of by Churchill in an early phase of the war before he asserted his leadership with a different rhetoric like “we shall fight them” and “blood, sweat and tears” (Gilbert, 4). The web site openDemocracy is a place where academics and activists can come together and share ideas. They call themselves a public service and not a web magazine where they can speak openly about the issues they have with current world systems. They say,
“openDemocracy is a small and effective organisation, and our largest contributors are the thousands of established and new writers worldwide who contribute their time and expertise, the vast majority without payment. They do this because we offer an open-minded platform, a good audience and a conducive, quality environment not available elsewhere. Their volunteer work makes it possible to publish so much original quality content on our very modest budget” (openDemocracy.net,)

I am considering this material because I believe it connects to the larger idea of the group that I am working with. We would like to establish methods that will contribute to larger social change and I believe that by changing our environment with art like posters as an example people will get inspired to act in a positive way.