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Are some types of knowledge less open to interpretation than others?

The exhibition prompt explores how knowledge differs in terms of interpretation.

Interpretation refers to understanding methods and conclusions of knowledge. The exhibition has three items that will show varying degrees of interpretations of knowledge.

Object 1: My Bed by Tracy Emin



Figure 1: <https://images.app.goo.gl/ucVu7fDq8TNQpRTp8>

The first object I have selected for the exhibition is Tracy Emin's artwork "My Bed". It is a contemporary art installation created by Emin in 1998. The installation consisted of her unmade

bed surrounded by personal items such as empty bottles, cigarette butts, and discarded clothing. The goal was to evoke a strong emotional response and invite viewers to question the boundaries of art and the subjectivity of interpretation.

I chose this object because it shows that the interpretation of art is inherently subjective. The artwork is, therefore, ideal for showcasing the varying degrees of interpretation in the arts. Knowledge in art is subjective and open to interpretations. The installation was interpreted as art that reflects its creator's personal experiences, emotions, and struggles (Smith, 296). However, the artwork invited different interpretations from its viewers. The first debate that the installation evoked was about what can be considered artistic knowledge. People argued whether it was art or not. Some argued that the installation was not art. They argued that for anything to be considered art, it had to be intentional creation. In this case, Emin was just depressed and in bed for a few days and then represented the bed as art. However, other people argued that the installation was art because different people related to the feminist experience of depression. These multifaceted interpretations highlight the subjectivity of knowledge interpretation and the influence of individual contexts.

I included the artwork because it demonstrates the complexities of subjective perception. It is a thought-provoking centrepiece that prompts visitors to question their assumptions about artistic knowledge. As such, the installation shows how artistic knowledge is more open to interpretation compared to other areas of knowledge. This is because it is shaped by factors such as cultural context, personal subjectivity and emotions. The work challenges the notion of a

single, definitive interpretation. Instead, it presents a diversity of perspectives when it comes to art.

Object 2: Lost City of Machu Picchu



Figure 2: <https://images.app.goo.gl/8JXDnM6yRUphd2h36>

The second object for the exhibition is the 'lost' of Machu Picchu. I selected the object to show how historical knowledge is interpreted through different perspectives. The city is nestled high in the Andes Mountains of Peru. It was an ancient Incan citadel believed to have been built in the 15th century and abandoned shortly after. The city was 'discovered' by Hiram Bingham III in 1911 (Ziółkowski, 13).

Mach Picchu's inclusion is relevant to the prompt because it shows how historical knowledge is viewed by different people. On the one hand, western historians and explorers argue that Bingham introduced the city to the modern world. This is why it was recorded that he 'discovered' the city when he climbed the Andes mountains and found it. He found that the city had structures and artifacts that presented evidence of Incan civilization. On the other hand, the local population knew about the city, and it was part of their lore and culture for hundreds of years. From this perspective, no one can proclaim they discovered a city where thousands of

people knew that it existed. This shows how historical knowledge is more open to different perspectives. Still, most people do not know why the city was abandoned by those who established it. There are differing interpretations that have been offered to explain its existence. This shows that there are still gaps and uncertainties that can lead to divergent understandings when it comes to historical knowledge.

I used the object because it demonstrates the complexities of understanding a cultural artifact from the past. On the one hand, there are differing perspectives on how people understand historical knowledge and artifacts. From a Western point of view, Billingham discovered the city. People in Peru already had knowledge of the city's existence. As such, the object showcases that historical knowledge is less open to interpretation than the arts. It is more open than other areas of knowledge.

Object 3: Quasicrystals

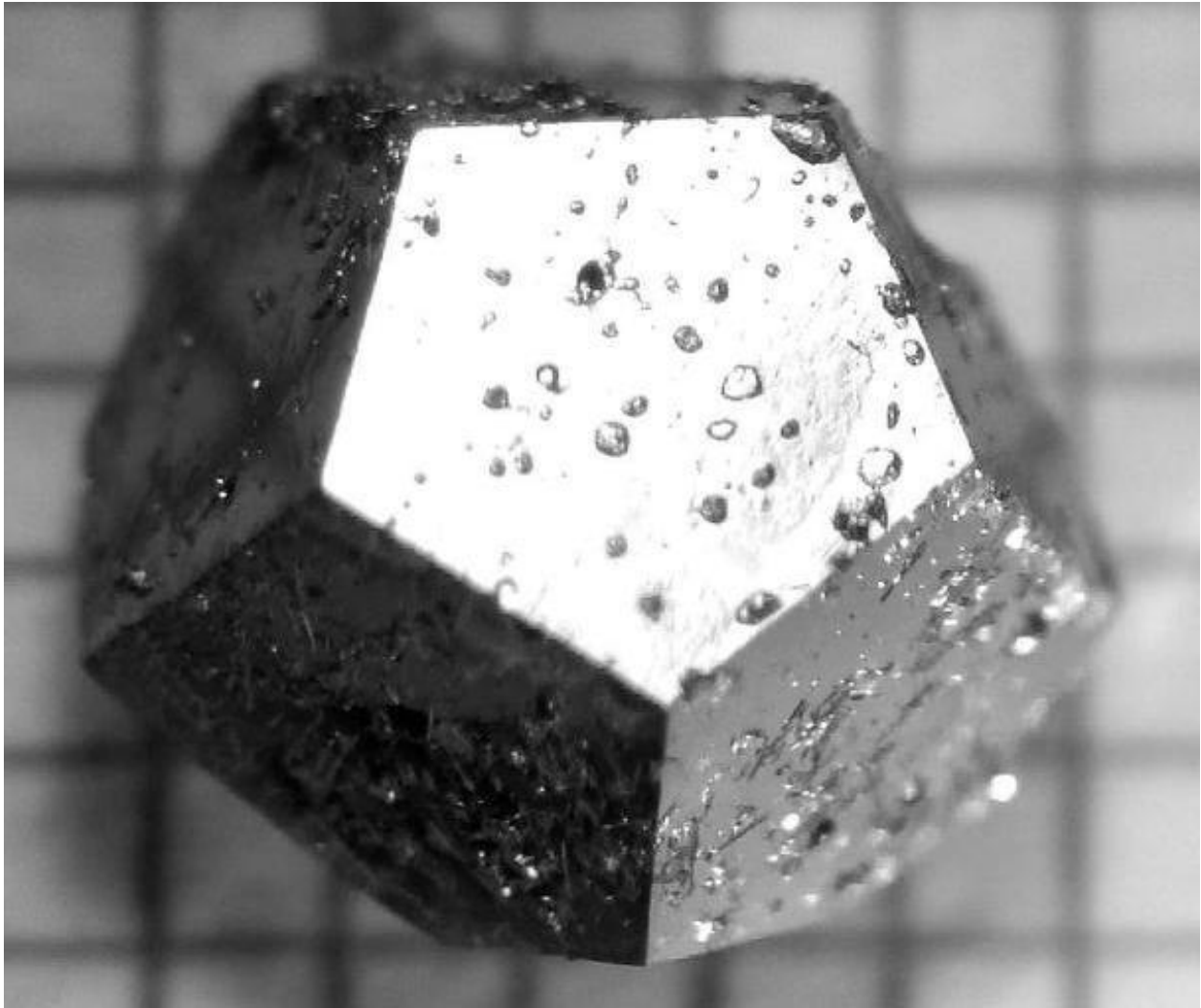


Figure 3: <https://images.app.goo.gl/rgPY9ESQmy2HkfAs7>

The third object selected is quasicrystals, discovered by Dr. Dan Shechtman in 1982. These are unique crystalline structures that challenge the conventional understanding of crystallography. They differ from regular crystals because they have ordered but non-repeating structures. The discovery of quasicrystals faced scepticism and controversy. This highlights how the interpretation of knowledge leads to complexities in accepting knowledge.

Quasicrystals show how knowledge about the natural world is less open to interpretation. This can make it difficult to accept new knowledge. For many years, there was one unified concept about the atomic structures of crystals. The atoms were formed in repeating patterns, and they were symmetrical. Quasicrystals shattered this long-held belief, leading to a paradigm shift in the field of crystallography (Steurer, 9). Scientists needed to let go of these long-held beliefs to accept Dr. Schectman's findings of quasicrystals. However, natural sciences are less open to interpretations, and as a result, most scientists disagree with these findings. It took Dr. Schectman years to prove the existence of the object. This case illustrates that interpretations can be influenced by preconceptions, conventional wisdom, and resistance to new ideas. This is because scientific knowledge is less open to interpretations.

I included this object because it shows how important interpretation is to paradigm shifts. It requires people to question long-held notions and accept new knowledge. However, this is especially difficult for sciences that are less open to interpretations. As such, quasicrystals highlight the importance of open-mindedness and a willingness to challenge established paradigms.

Works Cited

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