

IMMERSION

In this essay I will compare one of the works discussed in class with another that I found myself. Therefore, the “Infinity Mirror Room” series by Yayoi Kusama will be compared to the sculptures by Ron Mueck in the context of immersion. With immersion is meant the possibility of being overwhelmed or immersed by an art piece, and thus putting yourself in a vulnerable position. This includes interactivity between the viewer and the artwork to evoke an emotional response.

Kusama’s Infinity Mirror Rooms is a perceptual experience series of more than twenty different kaleidoscopic rooms. You enter the room by yourself and an illusion of infinite space is created, some with water at the bottom, or with lightbulbs in the dark.



Yayoi Kusama. (1965-2016). Infinity Mirror Room, installation.

Mueck’s sculptures are very realistic depictions of humans, some in a smaller and some in a bigger scale. You can freely walk around his works to view it from different angles. I experience the facial expressions of the sculptures as intense and polysemic.



Ron Mueck. (2006). A Girl, sculpture.

I think the works relate in multiple ways. Similarities I find are that both works insert you within the piece of art. In the case of the large sculptures of Mueck, the size makes you feel small, which is the same effect that Kusama’s infinity mirror rooms elicit. This sensation can make you feel immersed, because you are

humbled by the sheer size and both works can make you feel alone in this way. You enter the infinity mirror rooms by yourself, and you are overwhelmed by

Mueck's sculptures because of the intense depictions of emotion or the situation. For example, in the picture "A Girl" by Mueck, a five meter long sculpture of a girl is displayed who first sees the world after being born.

Moreover, both works make you feel like you're in that world. For the infinity mirror rooms, this is quite evident as you literally step into the installation and experience it firsthand, a very personal experience. For Mueck's works, you are taken into the world of the sculpture. You see the pain, scars, blemishes and imperfections of the people depicted in the sculpture, and you can recognize yourself in the people in the sculpture. For example, in the picture "Couple under an Umbrella", a couple is displayed with visible scars, body hair and wrinkles.

However, one of the major differences is the personal experience both works create.

Mueck shows the emotions through his own eyes, by giving the sculptures the details that he sees in them. Meanwhile, Kusama makes you use your own eyes to experience her installations. That means, in Kusama's installations you can have a very different experience than what she meant with it, while with Mueck's sculptures he might have aimed at giving the spectator a certain feeling.



Ron Mueck. (2013). Couple under an Umbrella, sculpture.

Nevertheless, a similarity is that both the works induce emotional impact, which is a major aspect of immersion. Mueck does this by creating off-scale sculptures, the attention to detail of realness of the sculptures, so much that the realistics of the sculpture are almost unnerving. Kusama's installations induce emotional impact because her installation is to be treaded by yourself and therefore you are left alone in the experience, with your own perceptions and feelings to engulf yourself in.