FMP: Evaluation
Tom Mullins

The aim of my art installation was to both give people who may not have experienced a mental health condition like anxiety the chance to see what it is like as well as educating them on the statistics of just how many people suffer with mental health conditions. I feel the project had various degrees of success and in my opinion this was down to a number of factors regarding mainly the production and distribution of the project.

My very first plan for my Final Major project was to make a short comedy film but the idea broke down when my classmate became unavailable and I didn't feel that I could write good comedy on my own. I thought about my previous work over the past two years and I remembered a documentary I made on mental health in the first year and I thought about how I could expand on the idea of promoting discussions around mental health issues. Someone suggested making an art installation which I was unsure of as I had not made any sort of art project before but as I started to research the works of artists like Bruce Nauman and Nam June Paik I started to put an idea together. My plan was to get hold of seven old CRT TVs and have six of them split down into pairs of two facing each other creating a triangle that would trap the viewer in with the last TV being placed in the middle of the triangle playing relaxing music that the viewer could put headphones on and listen to to get away from the noise of the other TVs. I wanted to use old TVs as I felt inspired by the works of Bruce Nauman who often used TVs in his

works such as clown torture, I also felt it would give another layer of meaning to the project as old TVs have been around for a long time now just like mental health issues and I was helping to bring them both back to the surface of society. On the TVs that were facing each other I planned to have three different conversations all going on at the same time each featuring a couple of characters discussing a mental health issue that I have dealt with for example one of the discussions as going to be about anorexia. I was starting to get really optimistic about the idea I felt I could make a piece that could have quite an impact and change people's perspectives on people with mental health conditions and open up conversations around mental health.
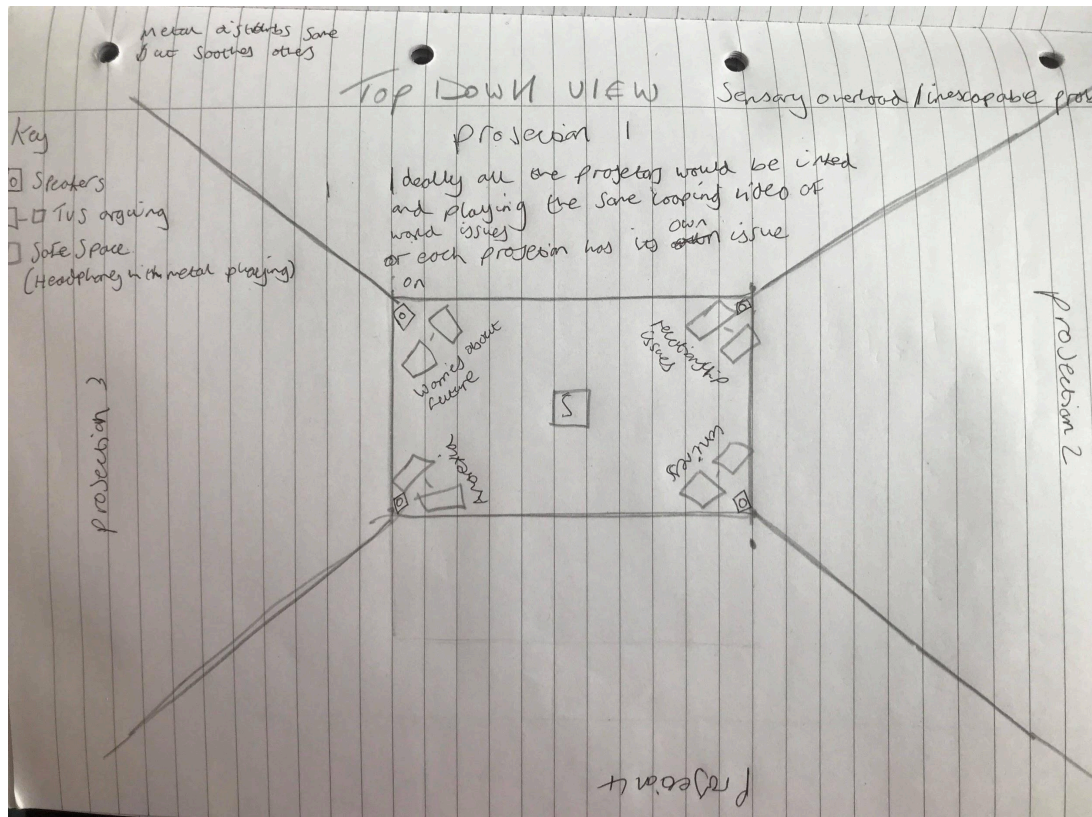
At the time however I hadn't really thought about just how bad the coronavirus pandemic was going to become and eventually uni closed and my idea had to be something I could create from my house as the country was put into lockdown. This meant my installation would have to be online only and I had to consider whether I still wanted to make an art installation as I wasn't sure it would be possible. I quickly lost a lot of the optimism I had gained for the project, I tried researching online art installations and struggled to find many professional examples so I was starting to give up on the idea but then I remembered where I got the idea to do an art installation in the first place. I remembered the conversation I had with my teacher and he showed me an online art installation he had done using looping videos to have an emotional impact on an audience and this was perfect with the theme of my piece being mental health. I asked my teacher how he made his piece and he said he used html coding which is not

something I knew about at the time. I had some one-on- one sessions with him learning how to code and gradually started learning more and more about coding until I had my own code which I could just add the urls of my videos to. I was feeling optimistic at this point that I had made the right decision by sticking with making an art installation. I placed the code into a blog post so my piece could be distributed and I added a survey with it so that people could give feedback on the piece. At this point I was feeling confident that my piece could still be a success despite now being exclusively online.

I was now ready to distribute my piece and I decided to show my class what I had done so far to see if there were any small issues that needed fixing. The only major issue I found by doing this test was that the piece didn't work on phones and this was an issue because this was how most people were going to view the piece. Bearing in mind that my target audience were only likely to watch the piece on their phones I had to think of a new way to distribute the piece. As I mentioned before I had planned to have the piece on a blog post and share that post however the post could not be loaded up on phones so I then thought about how I could put my grid of videos into its own website as I thought that may be more accessible. I found a free website builder which allowed me to copy and paste the urls of the videos I had made into it, I then put the videos into the 3x3 grid shape again. The project however still didn't work on phones and at this point I had all but given up on the piece being able to watch on phones but then my teacher had the idea of me putting the nine videos down into one by doing a multicam edit. This worked and I was then able to distribute the project on youtube as the issue I was

having was that on phones you can only watch one video at a time. It was frustrating that I had to make several versions of the project before it worked on phones but I am glad I did as my video has mainly been watched via youtube. As well as this it also means my project has been distributed in several places so it can now reach more people and people have a range of different ways they can access the piece should one way go down for any reason.

Despite the piece now being available in multiple different online locations I still feel like my installation was a bit of a failure and this is because of a couple of things. The first is that I think I tried to stay too true to my original ideas when making the online only piece. My original ideas were made to be a physical installation and it just doesn't work as well as an online only piece. I think this was because of the loss of the interactivity as well as the atmosphere you feel when you walk into a physical art installation. The other reason I feel the piece wasn't successful was because I don't feel I did enough to make sure people filled out the surveys after watching the piece which means I have no way of telling if the piece had an impact or not. This was my first time trying to create an art installation and with the setbacks due to the virus some of the issues couldn't be helped. I do feel I could have done more to promote my project though and if I was to do a piece like this again I would spend more of my planning time thinking about the distribution of the project rather than just the creation of it.

metal disturbs some
but soothes others

TOP DOWN VIEW   Sensory overload / inescapable prob

Key
◻ Speakers
▯▢ TVs arguing
◻ Safe Space
(Headphones with metal playing)

Projection 1

Ideally all the projectors would be linked
and playing the same looping video of
world issues
or each projection has its own issue
on

worried about
future

relationships
issues

anger

S

carings

projection 3

projection 2

Projection 4

Original plan top down view