

Research Notes

Introduction and Problem Statement

The House of Our Gods was created as a physical representation of the research I conducted during my time in London, England. Rather than designing a piece during my research process, I formulated my sculpture based on the final results of my studies. After conducting a thorough examination of how graffiti and vandalism in London reflect the spiritual need of the people, I aimed to produce a work that best visually represented the information I collected. The resulting sculpture is a three-dimensional model that speaks of spiritual emptiness hidden within a beautiful exterior.

Communication Objective

The challenging task of my research and subsequent art piece was to measure something nearly immeasurable: the condition of the heart. Faith is something unseen; likewise, lack of faith is also an intangible concept. In order to elaborate on my problem statement in an effective, easily-understood manner, I conducted research using three methods: autoethnography, data observation, and biblical studies. Through these methods, I was able to demonstrate the correlation between the uptake in vandalism and the decrease of the church population in London. The goal of my sculpture is to communicate my findings in a visually exciting and thought-provoking manner.

Visual Solution

The House of Our Gods is representational of both the physical church buildings in London and the people of London. The outer shell of the piece is inspired by the neo-Gothic churches that are kept as beautiful architectural landmarks of the city. Spires, stone walls, and

pointed arches are all key elements of neo-Gothic architecture. The inner walls are plastered with photographs of vandalism that I took during my time in London. Aside from the photographs, the inside of the church remains empty. Outer beauty and luxury are juxtaposed with inner emptiness and indecency. London churches are maintained to look beautiful yet remain empty of true believers. London people flaunt wealth, sexuality, and status, but their souls are unsatisfied. The entire piece illustrates how graffiti speaks of spiritual needs hidden under materialism.

Production

In order to create the structure of the church, I used a Hobby Lobby birdhouse as the base. First, I sawed into the back wall and removed it to make the inside visible. Next, I used various pieces of wood to add height, spires, and slats to the roof. On the top spire, I placed a cross to further solidify the church imagery. I covered the outer walls in clay which I carved to resemble bricks, and to turn regular windows in the birdhouse into neo-Gothic arches. After applying each clay element, I coated the sculpture in a layer of Mod Podge to secure it. When the clay was sealed, I painted the walls to have a weathered stone effect and the roof with an aged green. Finally, I printed photos of graffiti I had taken throughout my six weeks in London and wallpapered them inside the open space. I sealed everything with a few more layers of Mod Podge, and my project was complete.