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Contemporary Arts Practice and Outer Space: A Multi-Disciplinary Approach (3)

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MOTHERING GROTESQUE & THE WHITE CUBE: DIALECTICS OF ART SPACE AND SPACE
ART

Abstract

The etymological origin of “*grotesque*” is the Italian word *grotta* which was originally coined by the Romans to describe an underground “*cave*” or “*tunnel*” or “*grotto*”. In this paper the authors/artists use the concept of a grotto or grotesque space as an alternative art space, either as museum or habitat in deep space, to the contemporary conventional form of the White Cube. The term *White Cube* was coined in 1967 by Brian O’Doherty and has been a trope for writers on art ever since. It describes a space that is a construct that is the norm for modern museum and exhibiting spaces: one that is particularly context free and indifferent. The substitute of a grotesque space that gives womblike shelter as a repository of art (and humans) is posited as a more organic, comforting and less isolating space. These qualities, it will be argued by the authors to constitute a panacea to some of the psychological and behavioural problems of humans and artists of the future in an enclosed sheltering environment against hostile deep space. The paper draws on concepts of a nurturing environment that could have uncanny references to home and art memories of planet Earth.

The primary author is a sculptor who combines art with space technology, using the space era nano-material silica aerogel into works called “aer()sculptures” The co-author is a painter and installation artist, PhD candidate at CDU, having research interests in the grotesque and the installation space.