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Neon Heater: Environmental Art Essay

In today's society, social distancing is a term we have all come to know within. It is upsetting to see this disease has traveled over to the United States and torn apart so many families. Not only is this virus killing our population, it's also put many of our lives on hold. No gatherings, no graduation ceremonies, no celebrations and no jobs for most. This virus has also forced a lot of non-essential business to close down, which hurts many of us who chose to support these small businesses. Some of these establishments include hair and nail salons, theaters, bowling alleys and museums.

During this crisis, many museums have halted their in-person exhibitions. Like other non-essential businesses around the world, these museums have converted to having a huge online presence. They have been reduced to using their webpages and social media to promote their upcoming shows and events. A tweet from this article about museums dealing with COVID-19 describes it best, "The museum may be closed and we all may be social distancing," read a tweet from the University of Southern California's Fisher Museum of Art. "But the beauty of technology and social media (which is not always so lovely) is that we can bring the museum both past and present into your homes," (Annie Armstrong). It is interesting to note that the

artists who would have been or are currently in these museums are showing those online how they are pursuing their artistry at home. Many of these artists are choosing to implement a sense of environment in their works; either physically or emotionally attached to it. I feel this is the best form/idea of art that is being shown during this tough time. It provides a feeling of beauty and serenity for those of us living in the chaos of COVID-19.

Environmental art has been around for centuries starting with landscape painting in the 19th century. From there we move on to the rise of conceptual art and finally earth art. This art form has taken many representations and used a lot of different natural materials over the years. Many contemporary artists use this theme to portray their own versions of what environmental art is. Artists that are being represented in the Neon Heater Exhibition that have such qualities in their work are Adam Eddy, Kellie Bornhoft, and Ron Lambert.

In Eddy's proposal, he explains this current project is focusing on rendering the Earth after human life has disappeared. How has the climate changed? How does Earth's environment look today? I have included three of his pieces from the proposal into this exhibition. Out of all of his pieces the three that were chosen seem to evoke an essence of environmental interpretation. The color and movement of his pieces makes this connection between the viewer and the environment. Bornhoft's work focuses on fossil fuels and the energy of them. She will include a video along with a man-made bench in front of the screen. She is exploring how humans interact with the ground and how that affects the climate. I feel this video will tie into her installation well and will help the viewer think about how they may be affecting the world

around them. I feel that Lambert's work has the most potential to strike a conversation between the viewer and the theme itself. He uses some natural objects to mimic parts of the Earth. He wants to display how we as humans control the environment with or without knowing it. I have chosen two out of the three pieces he has presented for his proposal. I feel they explore the theme very well and will connect with the viewer better than the others.

The theme was chosen and the artists along with it represent the calmness and serenity the world needs right now during this time of panic and chaos with the virus impacting the entire world and putting everyone's lives on hold.