Image source:

1. Author unknown. (2018) *title unknown*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bo_n6-sgYzG/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet> (Downloaded: 22 October 2018)
2. Chan, I. (2018) *title unknown*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/BpCdrKbH2wn/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet> (Downloaded: 22 October 2018)
3. Author unknown. (2018) *title unknown*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/Bo9ZQ9Kg4Hg/?utm_source=ig_web_button_share_sheet> (Downloaded: 22 October 2018)

Coding categories and instructions:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Location | Geographic of the taken pictures; |
| Amount of artworks in the picture | Amount of the artworks with an evident intention to be shown or introduced; |
| Amount of artists (except Marina) in the picture | Amount of the artists with an evident intention to be shown or introduced; |
| Amount of the term ‘the artist is present’ in the picture | Amount of the term shown in the pictures; |
| Presentation of the term | The methods of presenting the term including written text, slogan, poster, etc; |
| Presentation of the original work | The appearance of Marina’s 2010 work <The Artist is Present> and the methods of presenting it including archive video, written text, recording photos, etc; |
| Occasion | The event taking place shown in the picture including a general gallery visit, brand event, etc; |
| Amount of people in the picture | Amount of the people as the main focus in the picture; |
| Type of the main focus | Type of the main focus depicted, including people, objects, event, etc; |
| Amount of celebrities in the picture | Amount of the celebrities as the main focus in the picture; |
| Main action shown in the picture | The actions of the persons as the main focus shown in the pictures; |
| Gucci elements in the picture | The appearance of the elements of Gucci; |
| Sophistication of the picture | How sophisticated the pictures are, whether they are delicately taken by professionals or normal individuals; |
| Identity of the account stated | The identity of the accounts stated in the introduction; |
| Post text content summary | The main content of the text posted with the pictures; |
| Amount of ‘likes’ | How many ‘likes’ the posts got until collected; |
| Content of other hashtags | The main focuses of the other hashtags; |
| Amount of comments | How many comments the posts got until collected; |
| Preferred focus shown in the comments | The main focus shown in the comments. If the amount is too large to summarise and analyse, select the most agreed or liked ones; |
| Similar contents in recent posts | The similar related to the exhibition including the location, event, curator and holder, Gucci, celebrity, similar schedules and activities, etc; |

‘The Artist is Present’ is a public performance by Marina Abramovicat MOMA in 2010 and is used by Gucci to title their on-going exhibition in Shanghai, themed on art appropriation and imitation. However, it takes place in a modern context when exposure and celebrity are dominating, and the luxury houses are all about little more than business.

I took an approach with coding categories in four aspects: event, people, brand effect and platform. ‘Event’ refers to the depiction of the exhibition in terms of the location, artists involved, backgrounds and display, with a link back to Marina’s original piece. ‘People’ gives an emphasis on the figures photographed, especially how they positioned themselves in a response to the exhibition and the title. ‘Brand effect’ looks particularly at how the holder, Gucci, alters the term, and makes the exhibition differ from one of normal kind. Last, ‘platform’ pays special attention to how all the aspects above, shown in the pictures, are secondarily transformed by Instagram, when they are all brought together via a hashtag.

Through the coding I am expecting to look into the alteration of the term ‘the artist is present’, affected by a modern mode of exhibiting, massive exposure from luxury brands, different attitudes towards art appreciating and the context of social network, posing a contrast against its genuine essence when first produced.

Examples (3 images selected):



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Location | Yuz Museum, Shanghai |
| Amount of artworks in the picture | 0 |
| Amount of artists (except Marina) in the picture | 0 |
| Amount of the term ‘the artist is present’ in the picture | 1 |
| Presentation of the term | Poster |
| Presentation of the original work | None |
| Occasion | Brand visiting event |
| Amount of people in the picture | 1 |
| Type of the main focus | Person; exhibition poster |
| Amount of celebrities in the picture | 1 |
| Main action shown in the picture | ‘looking at the exhibition poster’ |
| Gucci elements in the picture | Celebrity in cooperation with the brand; outfit; handbag  |
| Sophistication of the picture | Event photograph |
| Identity of the account stated | Fan account of celebrity |
| Post text content summary | ‘celebrity attending the event; brand and curator highlighted’ |
| Amount of ‘likes’ | 14 |
| Content of other hashtags | Exhibition; celebrity; fashion |
| Amount of comments | 1 |
| Preferred focus shown in the comments | [irrelevant] |
| Similar contents in recent posts | Afterward: celebrity event photographs |



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Location | Yuz Museum, Shanghai |
| Amount of artworks in the picture | 0 |
| Amount of artists (except Marina) in the picture | 0 |
| Amount of the term ‘the artist is present’ in the picture | 0 |
| Presentation of the term | None |
| Presentation of the original work | None |
| Occasion | General visit |
| Amount of people in the picture | 1 |
| Type of the main focus | Person |
| Amount of celebrities in the picture | 0 |
| Main action shown in the picture | Selfie  |
| Gucci elements in the picture | None  |
| Sophistication of the picture | Normal  |
| Identity of the account stated | Personal account |
| Post text content summary | None  |
| Amount of ‘likes’ | 1  |
| Content of other hashtags | None  |
| Amount of comments | None |
| Preferred focus shown in the comments | Inapplicable |
| Similar contents in recent posts | Video recording the visit |



|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Location | Milan, Italy  |
| Amount of artworks in the picture | 0 |
| Amount of artists (except Marina) in the picture | 0 |
| Amount of the term ‘the artist is present’ in the picture | 1 |
| Presentation of the term | Street poster |
| Presentation of the original work | None |
| Occasion | Street encounter |
| Amount of people in the picture | Plenty |
| Type of the main focus | Exhibition poster on the wall |
| Amount of celebrities in the picture | 0 |
| Main action shown in the picture | Normal actions on the street |
| Gucci elements in the picture | Exhibition holder  |
| Sophistication of the picture | Normal  |
| Identity of the account stated | Personal account; visual arts |
| Post text content summary | ‘The artist is present.’ |
| Amount of ‘likes’ | 48 |
| Content of other hashtags | Exhibition; brand; artist; ‘imitation’; art |
| Amount of comments | 2 |
| Preferred focus shown in the comments | Praise for the picture |
| Similar contents in recent posts | None  |

Quantitative summary:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Location | Shanghai: 21 other: 6  |
| Amount of artworks in the picture | 1: 14 0: 15 |
| Amount of artists (except Marina) in the picture | 0: 29 |
| Amount of the term ‘the artist is present’ in the picture | 1: 4 0: 25 |
| Presentation of the term | Poster: 4 slogan: 1 |
| Presentation of the original work | Video: 1 |
| Occasion | Brand event: 3Relevant working: 1Visit in Shanghai: 16Visit in other places: 3On the street in Shanghai: 1On the street in other places: 2 |
| Amount of people in the picture | 4: 12: 11: 130: 14 |
| Type of the main focus | Person: 15Artwork: 9Exhibition: 2Poster: 3 |
| Amount of celebrities in the picture | 1: 30: 26 |
| Main action shown in the picture | Posing: 10Selfie: 2Other: 2 |
| Gucci elements in the picture | Outfit and accessory: 2 |
| Sophistication of the picture | Professional: 4Normal: 25 |
| Identity of the account stated | Fan account of celebrities: 3Gucci related: 1Public (art related): 7Personal: 18 |
| Post text content summary | Celebrity related: 3Artwork related: 8Exhibition related: 3 |
| Amount of ‘likes’ | [unable to be listed separately] |
| Content of other hashtags | Exhibition related: 12Celebrity related: 2Fashion and brand related: 7Artwork and artist related: 9Marina related: 2Concept of ‘fake and imitation’ related: 2 |
| Amount of comments | [unable to be listed separately] |
| Preferred focus shown in the comments | Towards the account itself: 8Art focused: 3Irrelevant: 4 |
| Similar contents in recent posts | Celebrity related: 3Fashion and brand related: 6Art related: 11Irrelevant: 10 |

To summarize with, the analysis results from thirty samples is within expectation yet surprising, especially in the aspect of brand and celebrity. With the high exposure and under an influencing global brand it is reasonable that the term was used mainly for the exhibition. However, there are still four referring back to other artworks from Marina, the original owner of the term.

Unlike what I supposed, only three were used for posts following celebrities. Behind them are fans or fan clubs, whose accounts contain little more than the famous figures. Moreover, the image of Gucci only appears in outfits or accessories, along with two of the celebrity posts. This is unexpected, with a dominating force of fashion brands in all the relevant contents on Instagram, which itself is based on the media attention.

However, the result does accord with my assumption of a high proportion of self-concerned content. Half of the posts focus on people, who, in a way, are irrelevant, with only one exception of one woman working for the exhibition. Among them, twelve people are posing or taking selfies, making the exhibition only a background to add additional ambience. Nevertheless, among the accompanying hashtags, two of them respectively point out ‘imitation’ and ‘fake’. The core concept behind, no matter clearly revealed or not, still get noticed and paid attention to in a small scale.

Overall, accounts, personal though, specialising in certain fields have accumulated more ‘likes’ and comments. But those responses are no difference to the less-responded other. A very majority of them are plain praises or greetings with nothing extra linking back to the post or associated topics.

Conclusions drawn:

The on-going exhibition is generating active responses from the public on Instagram. But the exposure and media attention it asks for has to some extent altered the context of an exhibition, and further re-write what ‘the artist is present’ stands for. The situation worsens in that though looking enthusiastic, most of the visitors cared far more about themselves, questioning the value of public art appreciating in modern time.