

*Portfolio of Writing – Deadline Tuesday 4th of January, 2022
by 12:00p.m (Noon)*

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Programme of Study : Illustration

Module : Ways of thinking

Tutor: Gwenllian

Tasks in the order I received them :

Task One : Manifesto

Task Two : Semiotic Analysis/observational writing

Task Three : Practice Based Writing

Task One : Manifesto

1. Keep work simple, in order to build strong foundations before exploring new mediums.
2. Talent is not everything, practice makes the best artists.
3. Always make an effort to learn from others, so that we may constructively criticise our work.
4. Strive to make a statement about society through our work
5. Expression is key in a strong work of art.
6. Art may be used as therapy, to elicit emotional responses.
7. Understanding the importance of perseverance during the initial stages of doubt so that every piece of work is completed.
8. Do not regret the mistakes we make, learn from them. We cannot learn from succeeding.

Who Inspires Me

- Stan Lee & Kirby, Marvel Comics Artists.
- Lucian Freud for his realistic oil paintings.
- Mark Rothko for his Powerful expressive Paintings.
- Marc Taro and his Character Design and Concept art.
- Todd Macfarlane for his work on Spider-Man, Spawn and Halo.
- Marc Brunet, Worked at Blizzard as a Character Design Artist.
- Anthony Jones, Digital Painter.
- Jaime Jones, Concept Artist, Character Design and Digital Painter.
- Monet for his colour pallet and application.
- Zdzisław Beksiński and all of his work, inspired Silent Hill and the Dark Souls franchises.
- Akira Toriyama and his Dragon Ball Illustrations
- King Jung Gi, Illustrator.

Overview of beliefs :

Expressionism



Fig. 1, For the love of Reubens, Jenny Saville

5. Expression is key in a strong work of art.

Art is a powerful form of communication; through art we are able to convey how we feel in ways perhaps too personal to say out loud (Lehrer, 2012). Even simply illustrating your thoughts, or what you felt like creating that day, are forms of expression, and they are arguably a key aspect of every strong piece. The smallest use of expression can bring life and depth to work; creating connections with others on a personal level. When work is created purely from expression, they possess a form of gravitas, pulling you in, and some might even feel a wave of emotion when first viewing the work. I believe expression is key in art because it is a huge part of the artist and a reflection of their opinion; capturing their own emotions in their work.

Make a statement



Fig. 2, Ice Watch London, Olafur Eliasson

4. Strive to make a statement about society through our work.

During this modern age, the political landscape is ever changing, creating a society where it is more important than ever to propose new perspectives and statements. Art is a form of expression, integral to the process of inspiring political behaviour, where you can make this statement, grab people's attention and make them see what we as a community, and people, stand for and what we must do to help others and the world we live in (Edelman, 1966). From anti-vaccine propaganda on Facebook to racism in the media, artists must approach these topics within their work, as passivity has no place in the community.

Emotional Responses



Fig. 3, Untitled, Mark Rothko

6. Art may be used as therapy, to elicit emotional responses.

Art as therapy is a simple statement, yet it is a very important topic, as it allows for the expression of the conscious and unconscious mind (Dalley, 2008). You can use it for therapy varying from a simply stressful day, to helping you work through trauma and to help you feel reassured and comfortable with yourself again. There are many artist who have worked through their issues by painting and using art as therapy. In Mark Rothko's *Untitled*, a sense of sadness can be felt from his work, becoming darker and losing colour close to the artists eventual suicide. There seems to be a feeling of acceptance within this piece, as if this was his therapeutic process to come to terms with his death.

Reference List

Dalley, T. (2008). *Art as Therapy: An Introduction to the Use of Art as a Therapeutic Technique*. [online] *Google Books*. Routledge. Available at: https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=rWyKAgAAQBAJ&oi=fnd&pg=PP1&dq=art+as+therapy+&ots=BE5aHO8yKP&sig=3DI4PbzzKdYwk94OKczLv4oFxjY&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=art%20as%20therapy&f=false [Accessed 23 Nov. 2021].

Edelman, M. (1996). *From Art to Politics: How Artistic Creations Shape Political Conceptions*. [online] *Google Books*. University of Chicago Press. Available at: https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=4lcthzR5SNgC&oi=fnd&pg=PR7&dq=political+art&ots=FfrFYBS1Sx&sig=-QHedWT6-jCyYeAiYDXg42iGjZw&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=political%20art&f=false [Accessed 23 Nov. 2021].

Lehrer, K. (2012). *Art, Self and Knowledge*. [online] *Google Books*. Oxford University Press, USA. Available at: https://books.google.co.uk/books?hl=en&lr=&id=ojc_R1beHXUC&oi=fnd&pg=PP2&dq=lehrer+2011+art+self+and+knowledge&ots=zX3MmAHwwp&sig=A4Xsmvtjy1Q2yFShyNMIpHHulyM&redir_esc=y#v=onepage&q=lehrer%202011%20art%20self%20and%20knowledge&f=false [Accessed 23 Nov. 2021].

List of Figures:

Figure 1: Luke, Ben. “Jenny Saville: For the Love of Rubens.” *Www.standard.co.uk*, 15 Jan. 2015, www.standard.co.uk/culture/exhibitions/jenny-saville-for-the-love-of-rubens-9979500.html.

Figure 2: Telegraph.co.uk. “Artist Olafur Eliasson Installs Melting Icebergs in the Heart of London.” *The Telegraph*, 11 Dec. 2018, www.telegraph.co.uk/news/2018/12/11/artist-olafur-eliasson-installs-melting-icebergs-heart-london/.

Figure 3: “Room 9: Black on Gray | Mark Rothko, Rothko, Mark Rothko Paintings.” *Pinterest*, www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/167055467404229764/.

Task Two : Semiotic Analysis

Semiotics is a form of information that can be used for communication between people (Chandler, 1994). Arguably, the first documented use of semiotics can be seen during the Stone Ages, where cave men communicated through the use of parietal art. Semiotics have always been used as a means to convey information, some examples would be body language, sound and imagery; all of which can be seen in the 2016 John Lewis advertisement, titled *Buster the Boxer* (see Fig. 1). The most obvious use of semiotics here, would be the association that if you have a trampoline, or any product from John Lewis, you too will experience the magic portrayed in this advertisement.



Fig. 4, 2016 John Lewis Advert, Buster the Boxer

It is possible that the message behind this advert, for children at least, is to encourage them to want to get trampolines, in the hopes that they will see wildlife engage with it, and perhaps even have an opportunity to interact with both the wildlife and the trampoline together. These semiotics are cute but highly effective, as they effect children's understanding of how trampolines work. By contrast, the effect that the semiotics in this advert may have on adults would be the motivation to provide the same happiness experienced by the child in the advert, for their own children.

The study of semiology is significant, because it can help us recognise that "reality" does not have a totally objective existence, that is unaffected by human perception. It instils in us the understanding that reality is a system of signs (Berger, 1977), made evident in the advertisement by how it conveyed its meaning without relying on language. Additionally, the advertisement utilises the relationship between image and sound, an important aspect of semiology (Barthes, 1977), as a tool to sell their products. As seen through the whimsical music played whilst the family watches the animals play on the trampoline, which transports the watchers of the advert.

To summarise, the semiotics in this advert show that even the simplest act, by a dog named Buster, or even a couple of wild foxes, can instil the sense of pure joy in a child making them, and many others, believe that receiving a trampoline can really create a sense of

adventure and closeness that is very rare with animals in day to day life. This could be seen as a use of idealisation (Berger, 1977), a concept that uses glamour and magic to sell that is seen frequently throughout the advertisement. They use Buster the dog playfully jumping on the trampoline as a semiotic, by leading adults to believe that buying the products at John Lewis will create the same sense of wonder and child-like joy, seen in the advert, for their own loved ones on Christmas Day.

Reference List

Berger, J (1977) *Ways of Seeing*. London, Penguin.

Chandler, D., (1994). *Semiotics for beginners*.

Barthes, Roland. "Barthes, R.(1977). Image, music, text.(S. Heath, Ed.) The Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism (Vol. 37, p. 220). Hill and Wang. doi: 10.2307/429854Image, music, text." *Journal of Aesthetics and Art Criticism* 37, no. 2 (1977).

List of Figures

Figure 4: Lewis, S.J. (2016). John Lewis 2016 Christmas advert: meet Buster – video. The Guardian. [online] 12 Nov. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/global/video/2016/nov/10/meet-buster-the-john-lewis-2016-christmas-advert-video> [Accessed 23 Nov. 2021].

Task 3 : Practice based writing

A reflection on DESIGNING CREATURES & CHARACTERS BY MARC TARO HOLMES

In order to design a creature or character there are set rules in place, guidelines that industry professionals follow to secure the desired outcome, in the most time efficient manner.

The traditional order of creating an illustration is not used by concepts artist, who instead rely on digital software and principles proposed by the likes of Marc Holmes, in order to produce work that keeps up with the increasing demand for quick and effective visuals. As suggested in the book, *Designing Creatures and Characters*, where Marc Holmes advises that concept artists “really only need three layers: base tone, line art and opaque retouching” (Holmes, 2016, p.29).

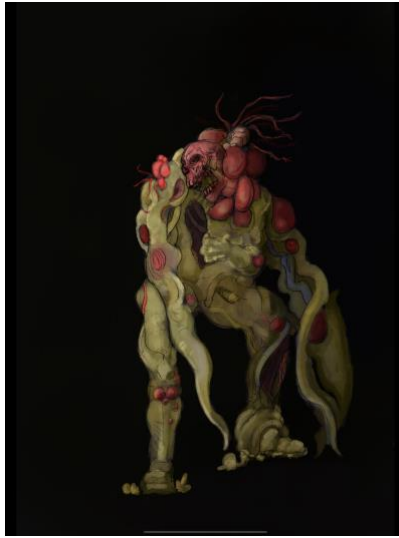
Marc Holmes is a Canadian artist who has been as a conceptual designer for over 20 years, working on projects such as *Age of Empires*, *Lord of The Rings Online* and *Halo Universe*. One of his most notable projects was working in feature animation at Disney. However, he has recently focused his attention on advancing his fine art career full-time (Marc Taro Holmes, n.d.).

Although I researched the work of Marc Holmes, and read his books, I felt the only way to properly engage with his guidance was to create my own piece which explores the guidance provided by Holmes to creating fully illustrated concepts.

Marc Holmes suggests that “your first goal is to discover the widest range of unique ideas in the shortest amount of time” (Holmes, 2016, p.26). Therefore, I explored a wide range of ideas varying in height, size and appearance which helped me to visualise my concept. Once I had my sketch completed I created a second layer, placed it beneath the sketch and began under painting. Initially I began with using a purple undertone, later opting for yellow, green and red tones to convey the feeling of rotten and infected flesh in the illustration. Lastly I refined areas through creating additional highlights and shadows on a third layer to help make the character feel more grounded.

During the ideation of this character, I had taken reference from octopi, open wounds and deformed skeletons. I had done this following Marc Holmes’s words stating “weird characters and happy accidents often result from combining real sources in new ways” which inspired me to create a slimy, tentacle ridden parasite, resulting in a strong character concept. I had furthered this work through the texture I gave to the character. Through using the Gouache brush I was able to create a tight and swollen appearance to the skin and the tentacles surrounding the host. Using the texture of the Gouache brush really helped to refine the character and improved the piece greatly. With enough time I believe that

through the use of these techniques I could have fully rendered the work to a professional standard.



To further my work, I decided to explore the advice given by Paul Richards in the book, *Concept Art Best Practices for the Video Game Industry and Classic Illustration Techniques*, in order to manipulate and play with my work. This step revealed that I can alter my finished work through the use of certain digital tools. Doing this allowed me to warp my illustration, creating a more decrepit and twisted figure than what it previously was, “potentially discovering something more interesting than originally intended” (Smith and Farrell, 2014).

Through brainstorming ideas the ideas proposed by Marc Holmes and Paul Richards, exploring different methods of narrowing down a concept and creating a rendered final outcome, I was able to be confident in the work I produced.

Reference list

Marc Taro Holmes (2016). *Designing creatures & characters : how to build an artist's portfolio for video games, film, animation, and more*. Cincinnati, Ohio: Impact Books.

Marc Taro Holmes. (n.d.). *Marc Taro Holmes*. [online] Available at: <https://www.marctaroholmes.com/> [Accessed 3 Jan. 2022].

Smith, V.R. and Farrell, J. (2014). *Concept Art Best Practices for the Video Game Industry and Classic Illustration Techniques*. [online] Available at: http://www.victoriarehfeldsmith.com/uploads/2/9/4/7/29470353/smithv_thesis_final.pdf.