

Portfolio of Writing

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Fine Art, BA Hons

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Ways of Thinking Lecturer's Name: **Julia Lockheart, Ryan Moule, Jonathan Pugh, Gwen Beynon, Rob Jones, Martin Bush, Alex Duncan**

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task 1: Observational Writing = 516 words

Task 2: Manifesto Writing = 512 words

Task 3: Practice-based Writing = 540 words

Task 1: Observational Writing.

“The ‘healthy’ sign, for Barthes, is one which draws attention to its own arbitrariness — which does not try to palm itself off as ‘natural’ but which, in the very moment of conveying a meaning, communicates something of its own relative, artificial status as well.”

(Eagleton, T. 1987)

We are all surrounded in different kind of signs – most are very useful as they tell us what to do and how to behave. On the other hand, some are created to manipulated our decisions and our minds. Saussure indicate that signs are splitting for two parts- one is named a signifier – things that give meaning (word, image) and a signified – what is evoked in the mind (mental concept). He also proposes: “The relation that exists between the signifier and the signified is arbitrary, based on convention, or, to use the technical term, unmotivated.” Because of this fact, we develop and use codes to help us learn what some signs mean. For instance, the apple is a sign – it has colour, texture, it’s smells and suggest the ideas. Furthermore, the apple represented knowledge, as in the biblical history of Adam and Eve but in addition, it is a kind of fruit reachable for most people. This fact has been used coded in logo for the most recognisable brand in the world. According to Peirce; “A sign is something which stands to somebody for something in some respect or capacity”

(1977, p. 27)

People use the signs in primitive paintings in caves to connect to others and show their surroundings. As a child we express what we see in a drawing, using just very simple images – kind of symbols. In this way we showing our thoughts and how we read our reality.

‘The word symbol has been used to designate the linguistic sign, or more specifically, what is here called the signifier’ (Saussure, 1966, p.7)

Through the times lots of well-known artists start to formulating their own conclusions about the meaning of their work. On a base of Jacek Malczewski painting “*Thanatos*” I wish to deconstruct the image to find the meaning of the coded symbols presented by artist.

In accordance with the spirit of symbolism, Jacek Malczewski created a whole collection of paintings devoted to the subject of death. After all, death has always been a mystery to humanity. The woman with the scythe from *Thanatos* image is also mysterious, turned to the viewer with her back but at the same time real. The presence of a scythe in the hands of a woman and the title of the image become clear.

As befits the father of symbolism, Malczewski speaks to our subconscious with images and colours. The red robe symbolizes life, energy, passion. The flowering garden and the carnality of women refer to fertility or vital forces. Death becomes the embodiment of life, a cycle of changes taking place in nature, new births. Through symbolism, he sends a secret message to the viewer. Life is dual, it is inextricably linked to death. Death is inscribed in life.

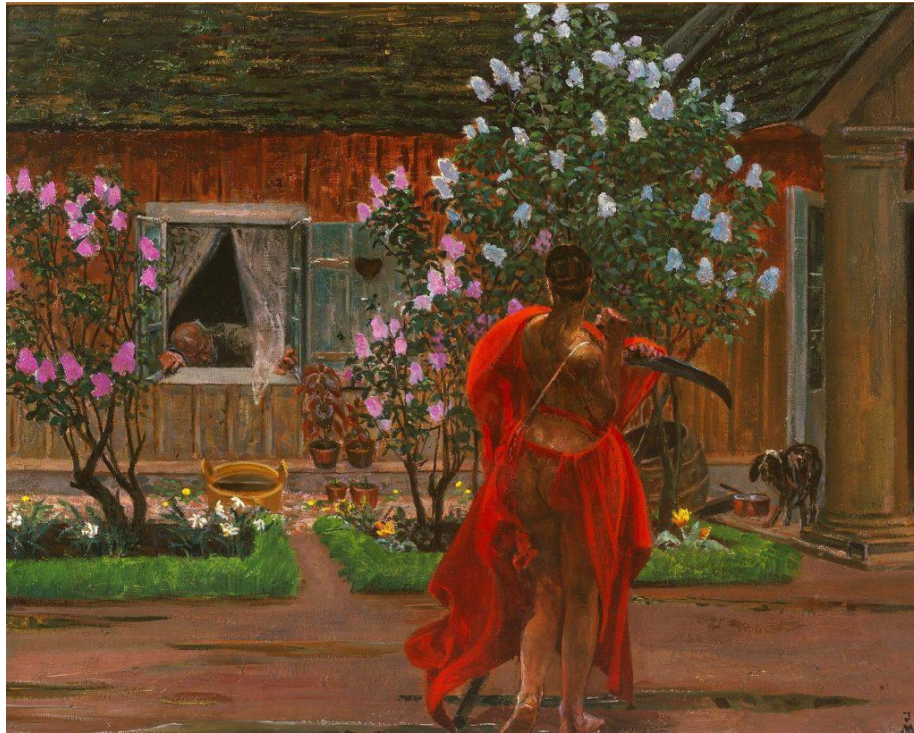


Fig 1. Jacek Malczewski, *Thanatos*, 1899, National Museum in Warsaw

Bibliography:

Eagleton, T. (1983) *Literary Theory: An Introduction*,
<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/semiotics>

Peirce, C. S. (1977) *Semiotic and Significs: The Correspondence between C. S. Peirce and Victoria Lady Welby* (2nd edition 2001),

De Saussure, F. (1966) *Course in general linguistic*. New York.

<http://www.dartmouth.edu/~engl5vr/Berger.html>

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Figure 1. Jacek Malczewski, *Thanatos*, 1899, National Museum in Warsaw Accessed from:
<https://www.dailyartmagazine.com/malczewski-and-death/> [Accessed on 22nd October 2020]

Task 2. Manifesto Writing

- To practise my art every day and treat it as a medicine for my own fears and to build up my confidence.
- To show the importance of expressing the emotions hidden inside of us.
- Always be aware that making art can deal with some consequences.
- Persuade the people to search for, and find their voice and act upon it.
Help the people transform their lives through creating art communities.
- To help people understand their mental issues and find the best way to heal them by making art.
- To help people it makes them more valuable than they think by discovering their personal strengths and starting to act.
- To help parents understand their children and help them with different mental issues by being involved in different kind of art activities.

In the past couple weeks, I have been encouraged to start thinking on my own, trying to open my mind to so many different aspects of life. All those tasks have been very challenging because of my past experience and also the language issues.

Always being interested in people's feelings and emotions, we are all expressing in a natural way but also in times when people are suffering from all kinds of mental issues, addictions or even feel rejected by society. How these issues can then influence their ways of thinking and expressing their feelings? Being involved in making art, have a voice and acting those people can find their own way of recovery. As Alain de Botton points out of his book, *Art as*

Therapy (2013) “Art would look to commemorate, give a hope, echo and dignify suffering, rebalance and guide, assist self-knowledge and communication, expand horizons and inspire appreciation.” (De Bottom, 2013, p.69)

In some circumstances, I understand art is also about introspection, looking at my own position in the world. I tried to find different solutions to help me too. I found that painting by using inks and air is a great way to fight with my fears and inhibition. By getting a surprising creation of movement, flow and a play of the vibrant colours in diverse style can be very healing for my mind.

At this point, I try to take another step and find out how I am able to help others with the issues they are suffering from. Through the intensive research I found the amazing, well known in all on the world activist - Tania Bruguera. She is Cuban installation and performance artist, who has worked with many worldwide events, performances, community projects and exhibitions. The way she confronts the repressive governments and societal system. As she said that “Create the art is to create own progress and changes”. I agree, that we are all responsible for our development but in addition we are responsible for supporting our communities and helping them to have a voice in changing out our society. Tania Bruguera also creates the new path called ‘Useful Art’ where she changes the art function from just a space for ‘signalling’ problems; but the place from which to create the proposal and implementation of possible solutions. She marked that the practise that kind of art can deal with consequences we should be aware of.

“Art is a possibility of thinking about everything differently (...) because of that, art has an educative and therapeutic, comforting and enlightening exploratory and speculative function – it is not just existential pleasure, but utopia.” O’Sullivan

Gerhard Richter in Art serves to establish community. It links us with others and with the things around us in a shared vision and effort.

Focused on Recoverist Manifesto we should “(...)start the conversation with each other’s, moving beyond being passive individuals – to claim a voice- LOUD VOICE and think of ourselves as an ACTIVISTS - not numbers of statistics, not disease or pathology but human beings, apparently born equal in this world.”



Original (png, 7.3M) 
IMAGE VI- Tatlin's Whisper #5
Year: 2008
Medium: Decontextualization of an action.
Materials: Mounted police, crowd control techniques, audience.
Dimensions: Variable
Photo: Sheila Burnett. Courtesy Tate Modern and Estudio Bruguera.
Location: Turbine Hall, Tate Modern, London, United Kingdom.

Fig. 1 Bruguera, T. *Tatlin's Whisper #5*, 2008

Bibliography:

De Botton, A. (2013) *Art as Therapy*, London, Phaidon.

O'Sullivan, S. (2005) *Art Encounters Deleuze and Guattari: Thought Beyond Representation*, Palgrave Macmillan.

Richter, G. *Notes 1966-1990*, Tate Publishing

<https://art21.org/artist/tania-bruguera/> [Accessed 15th October 2020]

<https://youtu.be/C38sPtBj4uo/> [Accessed 15th October 2020]

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Figure 1. Bruguera, T. *Tatlin's Whisper #5*, 2008 <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/bruguera-tatlins-whisper-5-t12989> [Accessed 15th October 2020]

Task 3. Practice-base Writing: Reflection about the importance of a group art exhibitions.
Open 2019, Glynn Vivian Gallery.

“Group exhibitions are of particular importance to show the difference in the artist's individual profiles and to revalue their distinct position and concept” said Saud al Hunaini.

Human nature is collecting found objects which, in some point, deserve our attention because the colour, texture or they just call our memories from the past. But why are we actually doing it?

As Berger wrote: “We never look at just one thing we are always looking at the relation between things and ourselves.” (Berger, J p.9) Also, in my opinion, our concentration on the chosen piece would not be possible if we cannot experience the space between us and our ‘found object’. This SPACE lets us to breath, contemplate and focusing our minds on important aspects of our emotional functioning. Unfortunately, the amount of works on a display makes the visitors overthrow and upset. A more demanding and advantageous setting would be to present them in order with the interest of our souls. This can bring together those objects which, conduct the concerned fields of our presence, despite of their ancestry in time and space. (De Botton, p.84)

On the other hand, the groups exhibitions had a significant role in selecting a great artist. In late 1980s the British Art have changed the relative indifference to contemporary art. The challenging circumstances become a growing opportunity for 16 students from Goldsmiths College of Art. Damien Hirst was a leading member of the Young British Artists, curated their first show *Freeze* in 1988 by putting the exhibition in the warehouse spaces. Now it remains

one of the most ambitious and controversial collection of artists in contemporary art history. (Hopkin 2004, p.220) The era is marked by a complete openness towards the materials and process with which art can be made, and the form that it can take. “It was a revolution... It really taught me something about the vision. Ambition. Desire and also attitude.” - says former director of Serpentine Gallery – Julia Peyton-Jones.



Fig. 1 *Freeze*. London, 1988.

I had unforgettable experience after my work have been displaying in Glynn Vivian Gallery upon the *Swansea Open 2019*. There was an amazing collection of the works of artists from the Swansea area. I decided to take a part in this venue as in this time it become a great opportunity for me to show my story, feelings, experiences, struggles, emotion and also, my coded message to the people. There were almost 200 works as paintings, photography, drawings, printmaking, films and sculptures. Despite of amount of work and diversity,

viewing them was a great pleasure and the exhibition was a significant opportunity to show a great artists from communities and theirs beautiful works who are normally hidden in their houses and unknown for anybody. The main role in presenting our work was played the curator of Glynn Vivian Gallery – Karen MacKinnon. Her great connection to the local residents and previous very successful experience in Artes Mundi has been strongly seen and felt during the exhibition.

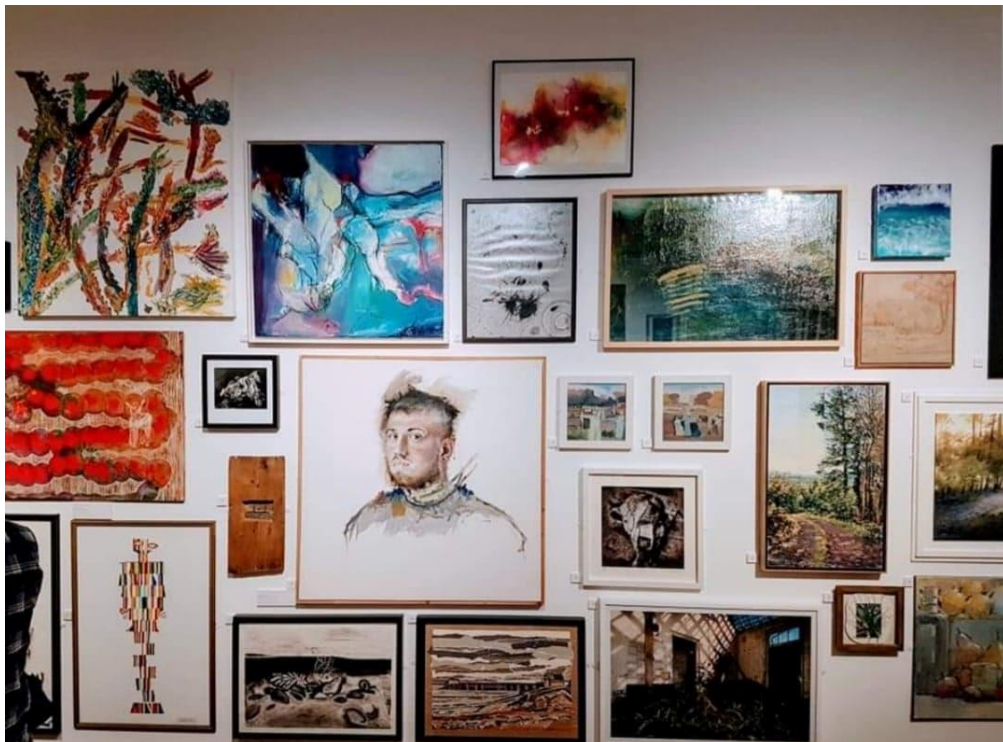


Fig 1. Glynn Vivian Gallery, Swansea Open 2019.

“Some shows have been selected for their innovative installation, others for the impact they had on the reception of contemporary art either globally or in a given country, and yet others for the role they played in advancing significant trends in recent art.” (Bruce, 2019).

Bibliography:

Berger, J (1972) *Ways of Seeing*. London, Penguin.

Hopkins, D (2018) *After Modern Art 1945-2017*. Oxford, Oxford University Press.

De Botton, A (2013) *Art as Therapy*, Phaidon.

Altshuler, B (*Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions That Made Art History: 1962-2002*), Phaidon.

Fullerton, 2016 *How Britain's shocking art movement got its start*

<https://www.bbc.com/culture/article/20160419-freeze-how-britains-shocking-art-movement-began>

[Accessed on 12/12/2020]

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Fig 1. Glynn Vivian Gallery, *Swansea Open 2019*. Accessed from own library.

Fig 2. Freeze, London, 1988. From *Biennials and Beyond: Exhibitions That Made Art History: 1962-2002* Accessed from: <https://www.phaidon.com/agenda/art/articles/2020/april/06/phaidons-15-minute-art-lesson-how-freeze-introduced-the-ybas-to-the-world-by-bruce-altshuler/> [Accessed on 12/12/2020]