

Portfolio of Writing

BA Honours Graphic Design

1. Manifesto Writing (548)

2. Practise Based Writing (493)

3. Observational Writing (550)

Manifesto Writing (548)

My 8 Statements:

- **Anti-elitism:** Art in all its forms are subjective in its value. There is no room in art and creativity for those who denounce certain styles and artforms that they do not personally approve of or enjoy.
- **Death of self expression:** offense or negative feelings caused by experiencing a piece of art (depending on the context or the piece itself) are the issue of the viewer/audience. Censorship is one of the killers of self expression and the overzealousness of 'cancel culture' will dilute and dumb down art to the point of a bland, tasteless homogeny.
- **Digital or physical art:** With the advent of digital art software a subset of people who believe creating using digital, as opposed to physical tools is less valid, possibly due to the ease of working digitally as opposed to physical. I feel however, given the omnipotence of the internet and the closure of public spaces due to recent events, digitally experiencing the arts seems to be the prime method of consumption. With this in mind it shouldn't matter the means of creation.
- **Education on animal agriculture:** I stopped eating meat and then dairy roughly 2 years ago. This was after educating myself on animal agriculture. For such a damaging and immoral industry it is remarkably sheltered. I had no idea of the environmental damage it causes until I did my geography A level, let alone the moral implications. I believe that the truths of animal agriculture should be taught at a comprehensive school level. Whether the students act on the knowledge is their own decision, but the masking of the dark side of the animal agricultural industry creates a disconnect for the consumer between the produce and the source. To me it borders on coercion.
- **Control over ones own life:** In the UK euthanasia is illegal for humans. I believe that people have control over their own lives and if they want to end them or not. For the terminally ill, they are given no way out other than to slowly deteriorate. While that is just one example, I feel there should be a safe, peaceful and legal method of euthanasia or suicide available to the public, as opposed to using dangerous, potentially ineffective methods.
- **The Arts ARE essential:** Throughout my time in both comprehensive school and college I experienced underfunded and under supplied arts departments. While I always had enough equipment to learn and utilise I feel like more options could have been explored with better support. Given the fact that artists, designers, editors are behind pretty much everything man-made we see or hear, you'd think the importance of such a career path would be reflected in the resources available to the teachers.

- **Hypocrisy/ 'virtue signalling':** Social media is a popular avenue for 'Virtue' signalling. Carrying out hollow, virtual gestures in order to create a positive outward appearance and make one feel better about oneself without enacting any substantial personal change or belief. The same people that share posts advocating against animal cruelty such as the treatment of dogs in certain asian traditions would still happily tuck into a Big Mac.
- **What Does it Mean to live?:** The notion of spending the prime of your life in compulsory education to then spend the rest of it working just feels unnatural to me. Life is such a precious phenomena, if you spend the majority of it working you might as well not live at all.

Analysis/ Explanation

The Arts Are Essential

I have always found the stereotype of pursuing a creative subject as 'not a proper career' contemptible. While I was encouraged to pursue whatever subject I enjoyed I know many people personally that have been discouraged from pursuing a creative subject for something more academically safe. According to a survey sighted in a 2018 issue of design week "24% of parents would "prevent" children taking creative jobs" Sarah D. *"Young people want creative jobs but schools don't support them, survey shows"*. Design Week. 2018. I feel like this is down to a lack of education on the part of the parents because if they realised how integral the arts are to the modern world and the huge variety of potential careers available they'd soon change their line of thinking.

Death of self expression

I do not aim to smear either political leaning in this statement. Rather it is a general trend I have noticed in recent times. The public has a demographic of people who are hypersensitive to certain content being broadcasted, shared or displayed. One notable instance from this year was when diversity performed a dance in support of Black Lives Matter on Britain's Got Talent. "Britain Got Talent has been cleared of any breach of broadcasting rules after 24,500 people complained about a Black Lives Matter-inspired performance on the **ITV** talent show." Jim J. *Ofcom dismisses complaints over BLM dance on Britain's Got Talent*. The Guardian. UK Edition. The fact people were so distraught over what was a performance to inspire unity and solidarity after recent events in the USA proves that people are too willing to try and

dismiss or shut down something they do not understand or align themselves with. The Diversity instance should have been easy to support given the nature of the message they were trying to portray.

Education On Animal Agriculture

When I turned vegetarian and then vegan I had a number of reasons for it. None of which I had been formally educated on. Whilst in my geography A level I had spent some time learning about deforestation and desertification and how animal agriculture was a contributor but I had no idea of the extent at which the industry was damaging the planet. "Animal agriculture is responsible for 14% of global CO2 emissions. If 10% of the population switched to plant-based alternatives 176 million tonnes of CO2 emissions could be avoided, according to a study conducted by Blue Horizon and PwC" Pippa N. *Animal agriculture is responsible for 14% of global CO2 emissions*. Environmental Journal. That is one of the many environmental factors caused by the industry, when researching I found the moral implications just as shocking. "The majority of cattle in the UK are stunned with a captive-bolt pistol. Alternatively cattle are stunned using electricity or stunned and killed using electricity" *Humane Slaughter Association*. Hsa.org.uk. FAQ page. I strongly believe the phrase 'Humane Slaughter' is an oxymoron and the use of phrases like this aids in creating the disconnect that consumers experience between the animals and the produce. I feel these hard truths should be taught at a comprehensive education level where the students are old enough to learn about these mature matters and act on them accordingly, should they wish to.

Bibliography

1. Sarah D. "Young people want creative jobs but schools don't support them, survey shows". Design Week. 2018.
2. Jim J. *Ofcom dismisses complaints over BLM dance on Britain's Got Talent*. The Guardian. UK Edition.
3. Pippa N. *Animal agriculture is responsible for 14% of global CO2 emissions*. Environmental Journal.
4. *Humane Slaughter Association*. Hsa.org.uk. FAQ page.
<https://www.hsa.org.uk/faqs/general>

Practise Based Writing (493)



Philosopher Donald Schon surmised a method of self reflection that focuses on thoughts and experiences before, during and after a learning experience. This is the process I will use to analyse my own piece of work. “Instead, they ‘reflect-in-action,’ and in the languages specific to their practices. Even when they do stop to reflect on action, they think in the language of practice, not the language of science” Leonard J. W. *Donald Schon’s Philosophy of Design and Design Education*. International Journal of Technology and Design Education. Kluwer Academic Publishers.

Before the Experience

The piece I have chosen to analyse is the final outcome for my Eye Magazine typography task.

I was given a font at random to research then use it’s connotations to influence my design. The font I was given was Akzidenz-Grotesk. A quintessential modernist font and a precursor to Helvetica. “The Haas Foundry in Switzerland based a new typeface on Akzidenz. Neue Haas Grotesk (Max Miedinger, 1957) was renamed Helvetica when taken over by the German foundry Stempel in 1960”. Phil B. Andrew H. *Type & Typography*. Laurence King. With this heritage in mind I took to researching and analysing the European/Swiss Style.

During the Experience

During the creative process I found myself struggling with layout and composition. This is down to the simplicity inherent within modernism and design. I found myself overcrowding the pages with excess information and shape which goes against the whole ethos of modernism and it's minimalist sensibilities. Given the application of modernist fonts and design I found myself using quite stark and bold colours for my revised concepts that harkened to street and public signage. Notably yellow and black. I thought using the colours of an informational sign would be quite a clever use of semiotics as the article, much like the public signs are meant to be informative. After coming up with the rough outcome of my final draft I found myself at a block creatively, I knew that my design could be improved but was struggling to do little more than add clutter or just slightly shift and skew existing elements on the page. However, after a one-to-one session with my lecturer it was like a cloud had shifted from my vision. "The more non redundant components of information to which an individual is exposed, The more likely he or she can recombine existing information and associate seemingly disconnected ideas or information bits to create something new" Mark S. G. *The Strength of Weak Ties*. The University of Chicago Press.

After the Process

To reflect on the task in post I'd say I am quite satisfied with both the process and the final outcome. I feel that my work is somewhat comparable to the professional work I was trying to emulate. The nature of the brief being to create a fictional magazine for a real publication means it was hard for me to not compare my work to that of Eye Magazine's genuine releases.

Bibliography

1. Leonard J. W. *Donald Schon's Philosophy of Design and Design Education*. International Journal of Technology and Design Education. Kluwer Academic Publishers.
2. Phil B. Andrew H. *Type & Typography*. Laurence King. With this heritage in mind I took to researching and analysing the European/Swiss Style.
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Observational Writing (550)



The piece I have chosen is a recent advert for Fender's new line of guitars; The American Professional 2.

Anchorage

I have chosen to analyse the anchorage in this piece as I feel there is a lot I can draw from the use of typography. The Hierarchy of the type draws the reader's eye to the slogan "The One For All". The size and weight of the type makes it stand out much more than the rest of the text. The fact it is a serif font gives an air of traditionalism to the piece. This feeling is furthered by the inclusion of the classic Fender logo. The cursive font harkens back to the early days of the brand in a bid to appeal to musical traditionalists or those fans of vintage Fender guitars.

According to 'Semiotics: The Basics' "Roland Barthes introduced the concept of anchorage". Stating that "Linguistic Elements can serve to 'anchor' the preferred readings of an image". Daniel C. *Semiotics: The Basics*. 2nd ed. Taylor and Francis.

Symbolic (Arbitrary) Signs

Fender as a brand is deeply imbued with a rich cultural heritage. In particular the guitar being advertised in this piece: The 'Stratocaster'. This Stratocaster was crucial to the formation of rock and roll. Wielded by Jimi Hendrix, Eric Clapton, George Harrison etc. Such a high profile list of users means that by selling the same model of guitar to the public, buyers may find that level of skill or success accessible to them. Given the era these musicians all hail from (60's and 70's), the choice of serif fonts and the classic Fender logo seem even more poignant in trying to engender an air of nostalgia or traditionalism in the piece.

A paper by Sonia Mucznik on the significance of music and musical instruments in historic art pieces found that the imagery of instruments in artwork carried meaning beyond their physical representation stating "These magic qualities of music were transferred both to musicians and to their musical instruments." Sonia M. *Musicians and Musical Instruments in Roman and Early Byzantine Mosaics of the Land of Israel: Sources, Precursors and Significance*. Tel Aviv University. 2011
While I'd like to think the beliefs of contemporary musicians are a bit more grounded than those held by ancient Romans, this paper does give credence to the perceived symbolic value of musical instruments in art, and more recently digital media.

Polysemic Imagery

In recent years large companies have altered their advertising and branding to be more diverse and culturally inclusive. This has been a big issue for rock music as a genre as despite having notable examples to the contrary (i.e. Jimi Hendrix) the industry has been dominated by straight white men. However with the inclusion of less well known but more diverse artists like Steve Lacy Fender are clearly trying to give rock and alternative music a more progressive face.

"The mass media play a key role in this dynamic process by defining, preserving, or weakening ethnic identities" Stephen H R. *Ethnic Minority Media. An International Perspective*. Sage Publications. With this quote to back up my previous point I feel it is evident that Fender is working hard to level the playing field in terms of diversity of it's artist roster, breeding a new, more progressive group of musical icons.

Bibliography

1. Daniel C. *Semiotics: The Basics*. 2nd ed. Taylor and Francis.
2. Sonia M. *Musicians and Musical Instruments in Roman and Early Byzantine Mosaics of the Land of Israel: Sources, Precursors and Significance*. Tel Aviv University.
3. Stephen H R. *Ethnic Minority Media. An International Perspective*. Sage Publications.