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Tasks in the order I received them:

Task One: Semiotic Analysis = 504 words

Task Two: Manifesto = 534 words

Task Three: Practice-based Writing = 481 words

Semiotic analysis



Fig 1, Judith slaying Holofernes, Artemisia Gentileschi. Uffizi, Florence

Semiotic analysis helps deepen our understanding of the world. It is used by many mediums; from luxury fashion brands to supermarkets, to connect with their audiences. There are two levels to understanding semiotics; the denotative (surface level) and the connotative (what is uncovered past the surface level). Ferdinand Saussure developed the idea that “all communication is the result of the interplay between representamen (a thing serving to represent something), interpretant (the effect of a sign on the person who encounters it), and an idea (the concept).” (Macey, 2000)

Judith slaying Holofernes has been painted by numerous artists, including Caravaggio, Gentileschi, and Klimt. By some, Judith is presented as innocent, whereas in others there is no doubt in what her role in the slaying was. Throughout advertising, media, and artwork women are rarely shown as violent. Often we accept this representation as reality and this is used to the advantage of those in power. Artemisia Gentileschi is one of the artists to show Judith without hiding the full force of her actions. The painting above depicts Judith slaying Holofernes, painted by Artemisia Gentileschi. It portrays stylised violence. Whilst portraying a gruesome act, there is a sense of calm. (Fig 1)

Gentileschi uses light and shadow to convey the emotions of the characters. The painting focuses on three people who are illuminated with a radiant light, symbolic of holy, anointed energy. Judith is illuminated, however, the shadow creeping across her face adds the sense of a conflict within her soul between duty to her people and refraining from killing someone. The yellow gown, a colour associated with sunlight, combined with Judith's expression of repulsion and the shadow across her face, convey Judith's conflict. She has been forced to do this, bringing darkness into her soul. Her face is illuminated, indicating righteousness in her actions. “Rich yellow damask, and... an exquisite bracelet” (E. Straussman-Pflanzer, 2013) connotes elegance which some argue introduces a femme fatale narrative. Although this is not the myth that Gentileschi is using. Instead, her painting portrays female rage and the power of a woman scorned. Furthermore, the warmth of the yellow dress is in direct contrast to Judith's violent actions. Gentileschi uses this to highlight how inaccurate society's gender stereotypes can be. Gillian Rose writes that in media

“men are active and rational, women are passive and emotional.” (Rose 2012). If the narrative of this painting supported this, Holofernes would be holding the sword.

The painting is set in a dark room with little detail given to the surrounding environment. The darkness and lack of a visible exit add to the sense of deceit and mystery. This dark background is polysemic, making the primary colours appear more vivid. For instance, Holofernes is draped in a red cloth. “Red dominates the colour palette” (Auvray, 2020) Often associated with blood, power, and the God of War, Mars. Despite physically being the strongest, he is in the weakest position. The maid is the only character here that is in their assigned “role”; in the shadows, assisting Judith.

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List of figures

Figure 1, Judith slaying Holofernes, Artemisia Gentileschi.
Uffizi, Florence

Available at: <https://www.uffizi.it/en/artworks/judith-beheading-holofernes>

Manifesto

1. The process of creating art is arguably more important than the result
2. Art connects us more than language ever could
3. Do not create solely to make 'stuff', create intentionally.
4. Sustainability comes in many forms and isn't necessarily the most expensive one
5. Globalisation has distanced us from art
6. Art is incredibly personal and shouldn't be shared with everyone
7. A masterpiece is only a masterpiece in the eyes of the viewer
8. Make sure to create with other people, take inspiration from outside your perspective.



Fig 1, Frank Gehry's house, Architectural Digest 2019

Key words: process and result.

1. The process of creating art is arguably more important than the result

There is this myth amongst artists that you need to create masterpieces every time you make a piece of art. Frank Gehry was one of the artists that pushed forward the change toward post-modernism. Naomi Stungo writes that there was growing "disenchantment with modernism and patrons were looking for something new". (Stungo 2000). Gehry's designs push the boundaries of what a building is. For example, Frank Gehry's house. (Fig 1). His creations often focus on the materials used and how they will interact with the finished product. "I was interested in simple materials — you didn't have to get fancy materials," Gehry explained. (Fairs 2021). This is similar to how Bauhaus viewed architecture, appreciating and showcasing the materials used. Without the influence of "the International Style" (Jordy 1965) developed by Mies Van Der Rohe, Gehry wouldn't have developed his art style. When the physical act of creating is savoured it becomes more than just a piece of art. Although eventually it will be put on display and critiqued, there remains a part of the painting that is private and known only to the creator.



Fig 2, Stella McCartney Frayme bag, stellamccartney.com

4. Sustainability comes in many forms and isn't necessarily the most expensive one

Key words:
Sustainability

With rising sea levels and a warming climate, we should all be focused on having a more sustainable lifestyle. Many innovative products are appearing as a result of this shift towards sustainability. I.e., "brand of faux leather handbags" (A leberg, 2015) by Stella McCartney. (Fig 2). Although innovative, a handbag priced at £1425 isn't a practical solution to global warming. According to the IEP, "Over one billion people live in 31 countries where the country's resilience is unlikely to sufficiently withstand the impact of ecological events by 2050, contributing to mass population displacement." (Institute for Economics and Peace, 2020). It is too little, too late and these innovative ideas and resources need to be redirected into areas where help is needed the most. Sustainability doesn't have to be a luxury trend that is only accessible to the people who can afford "sustainable products". It can be as simple as buying vegetables not wrapped in plastic and ultimately stopping making "stuff".



Fig 3, The Kiss, Gustav Klimt, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere

2. Art communicates better than words ever could

Key words:

Communicates

In a world of social media, we have been conditioned to think that whoever is loudest is the one who deserves to be heard; but art communicates primarily by creating an emotional connection. Art is created from the emotion of the artist and engages the viewer to create a connection. Gustav Klimt in his painting, 'The Kiss', (fig 3) which is global in its reach, is one of a number of his works that speaks out about taboo subjects. Kao notes, "His many other portraits of women evoked strong images of eroticism, sexuality, and love" (A Kao, 2000). Klimt's paintings were a rebellion against traditional Vienna society. Society started to become intimidated by women's increasing liberty. Klimt used his painting, which is romantic and poetic, to express his underlying commentary on the control and dominance of man. Whitford identified this in Klimt's work noting, "Klimt's ambivalent view of woman as an idol on the one hand and as deadly predator on the other was widespread." (Whitford F. 1990) There is more than meets the eye in this painting and 'The Kiss' illustrates this well by juxtaposing women's liberty with man's dominance.

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List of figures

Figure 1, Frank Gehry’s house, Architectural Digest

Available at: <https://www.architecturaldigest.com/story/frank-gehry-santa-monica-home>

Fig 2, Stella McCartney Frayme bag, stellamccartney.com

Available at: <https://www.stellamccartney.com/us/en/women/frayme-bag/frayme-mylo™-shoulder-bag-7B0027WP00151000.html>

Fig 3, Fig 3, The Kiss, Gustav Klimt, Österreichische Galerie Belvedere

Available at : <https://mymodernmet.com/the-kiss-gustav-klimt/>

Design writing



Le Chiquito, Jacquemus 2022

Expression is defined as “the action of expressing thoughts or feelings.” Vivienne Westwood used fashion to show her “insatiable appetite for anarchic outrageousness” (Vermorel, 1996). Luxury fashion is about taking things to the extreme and pushing the boundaries of what is wearable and what is art. eg The Chiquito by Jacquemus, a bag measuring 12x 9cm. (Fig 1, Jacquemus 2022). The micro bag was not designed to be a bag that functions outside the world of paparazzi and pageantry. It has been created as a way to promote and boost the Jacquemus brand. Being a relatively young brand, this is a smart move as the trend of making a bag that is purely for show fits perfectly into the influencer culture we see today.

It is important to consider that there is more than meets the eye with this trend. Society has become obsessed with having the “complete wardrobe”. Porte is questioning whether we need to carry so much with us, rather than living in the moment and appreciating the fashion and pieces that make up our unique wardrobes. “this is as good a time as ever to start decluttering once and for all.” (Jackson, 2022). As sustainability becomes ever trendier, this trend further expresses the minimalist nature that disagrees with our consumerist society.

The client, in this case, is probably a young professional who needs a bag that can carry all the essentials for their day ie a card, phone, and keys. They want to have the status of owning a luxury handbag, however, it isn’t practical to pay £400 for a bag that doesn’t meet their needs. The exaggeration needs to become less exaggerated for this trend to appeal to the masses. As well as this, maintaining the core expression of the micro bag trend is crucial; we have become too obsessed with our possessions, and owning a little less is never wrong.

Marie kondo says that ‘to banish clutter. Start by discarding’ (Kondo, 2014). Jacquemus is a brand that is very in line with this way of thinking, often debuting styles that are minimalistic and

highlight the simple classics. I believe that society needs creation and expression to function. Therefore, creating a bag that has functionality as well as being a means of self-expression will appeal to both minimalists and fashion enthusiasts alike.

One way to fix the issue is to make a larger bag, however, the issue with creating a large bag is that it moves too far away from the original trend. There needs to be a balance between practicality and expression. With “82 percent of consumers say[ing] they need fashion and luxury brands to assist in expressing their true self”. (Vogue business, 2021). Keeping original aspects of the design that such as the top handle and quality leather, whilst changing the size from micro to mini will appeal to a wider group of people.

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List of figures

Figure 1, ‘The Chiquito’ Jacquemus 2022

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