

**Student Name: Oscar Owain Fox**

**Student Number: 1902209**

**Programme of Study: Illustration**

**Module: ADAD4018**

**Tutor: Jonathan Pugh**

**Word count**

**Task 1 – Observational writing = 493**

**Task 2 – Manifesto writing = 570**

**Task 3 – Practice-based writing = 485**

**Total = 1,548**

**Observational Writing**



Image taken from neworleans.me

Clarence John Laughlin was an American photographer renowned for his surrealist photographs. He was born in 1905 and died in 1985 and is now immortalised by the plethora of books and around 17,000 photographs he left behind. He utilised models, costumes and props to the fullest extent I think he possibly could have and was able to create many fascinating images during his time. In an article it is stated that he “considered himself a writer first and a photographer second, and saw image making as a form of visual poetry.” (LENSCRATCH, 2019) and I believe he truly lived by those words, his works still being very impactful today - using strong compositions and expert lighting to express how his love for poetry and image-making were intrinsically linked. He focused mostly on architectural decay, sometimes adding in people or other objects to create a more emotional reaction from the viewer – more often than not, feelings of melancholy or provoking thoughts of what happens after life, or if there is an afterlife at all.

“Laughlin emphasized a connection between the visual and verbal in his work, and he accompanied each image with a poetic caption. These captions reflect his abiding literary interests and his belief that the written word augments the visual image.” (mocp.org, n.d.). Many of the titles he named his works were often just as enigmatic and mysterious as the images themselves. Through just the title and image, he was able to tell a story.



"A Memory of Undine", 1948. Image taken from Artsy.net

"Laughlin's photography sought to capture the eternal soul of the structures he chose. He had a remarkable ability to capture a haunting moment, freezing that thought-provoking stillness for posterity. His feeling was, you don't go out to find the photograph — you go out so the photograph can find you." (Preservation Resource Center of New Orleans, 2014). I like the sentiment of how he felt about "the photograph finding you," it feels like everywhere he went beauty found him, and he found beauty in the things that sought out him. I love the slightly creepy aspect of his works, often having strikingly ghost like qualities and many references to ghosts and the afterlife in them. He took many photos of ruined and rickety buildings, graveyards and sometimes added in a sad figure amidst the wreck and decay to give a more forlorn feeling to it.

It is obvious to see that he had a very artistic frame of mind, portraying feelings of loneliness and isolation in his work, slight romanticism and a disregard for societal norms when producing his photographs, not doing what is usually done within the boundaries of photography. Some people argue that he was the true creator of surrealism photography, being dubbed "The Father of American Surrealism," by the High Museum of Art (2019), and due to my large interest in his work I think that I would agree to some extent. His play with negatives and the haunting effect it produced is beautifully symbolic.

## **Bibliography**

### **Online sources**

- LENS CRATCH. (2019). *Strange Light: The Photography of Clarence John Laughlin at the High Museum*. [online] Available at: <http://lenscratch.com/2019/11/strange-light-the-photography-of-clarence-john-laughlin-at-the-high-museum/> [Accessed 20 Dec. 2020].
- [www.neworleans.me](http://www.neworleans.me). (2014). *Life After Life: The Spirit Photography of Clarence John Loughlin | NewOrleans.Me*. [online] Available at: <https://www.neworleans.me/journal/detail/742/Life-After-Life-The-Spirit-Photography-of-Clarence-John-Loughlin> [Accessed 20 Dec. 2020].
- High Museum of Art. (2019). *Strange Light: The Photography of Clarence John Laughlin*. [online] Available at: <https://high.org/exhibition/strange-light-the-photography-of-clarence-john-laughlin/> [Accessed 21 Dec. 2020].
- [www.mocp.org](http://www.mocp.org). (n.d.). *Museum of Contemporary Photography*. [online] Available at: <https://www.mocp.org/detail.php?t=objects&type=browse&f=maker&s=Laughlin%2C+Clarence+John&record=0> [Accessed 21 Dec. 2020].

### **Image sources**

- [www.neworleans.me](http://www.neworleans.me). (2014). *Life After Life: The Spirit Photography of Clarence John Loughlin* | *NewOrleans.Me*. [online] Available at: <https://www.neworleans.me/journal/detail/742/Life-After-Life-The-Spirit-Photography-of-Clarence-John-Loughlin> [Accessed 20 Dec. 2020].
- [www.artsy.net](http://www.artsy.net). (n.d.). *Clarence John Laughlin | A Memory of Undine (1945/1979) | Available for Sale* | *Artsy*. [online] Available at: <https://www.artsy.net/artwork/clarence-john-laughlin-a-memory-of-undine-1> [Accessed 20 Dec. 2020].

## **Manifesto Writing**

1. Art should be engaging.
2. Art should not be made to harm those who are suffering.
3. Art should only be made if you feel like making it.
4. Art should not be censored.
5. Art references should be used when necessary.
6. Art is more than the final piece.
7. Art should be criticised respectfully.
8. Art is subjective.

### **4. Art should not be censored.**

The idea that art containing heavy themes (violence, nudity, etc) should be censored goes against the whole reason people make art. People make art to express themselves, to express things they've been through, to show how they feel. "The ideas of expressing yourself through art and censorship do not always get along. There has been a long history of galleries, libraries and other public places being shut down because they have showcased "inappropriate" art. This essentially tells the artist that their feelings are not worthy of showing and that what they feel is wrong." (Hunakaistudio.org, 2015). One of the most common arguments for censorship is that such art should be censored just in case children may happen to see it. To that, I would ask why children are being allowed to view such things, especially in galleries made to showcase art of that nature. Censoring someone's story through their art invalidates the time, the materials, and the emotion they put into their work.



### **5. Art references should be used when necessary.**

As an artist who happens to have aphantasia, a condition in which I cannot visualize imagery in my mind, using references for my art is essential in order for me to understand the way in which my art goes. This greatly impacts my art in a way I don't believe artists without aphantasia would understand but using references to draw from helps immensely not only to complete the piece I'm working on, such as getting anatomy and composition the way I want, but also to improve my art in the long run. In general, I believe all artists should use references if they're not producing something abstract. "When remembering what we saw in the past, we are pulling from our imperfect, limited visual memory ... it is very likely that you don't know all the relevant details needed to recreate it," (CG Cookie, 2019). This quote perfectly summarises my thoughts on the topic, our memories are never completely accurate unless we spend a substantial amount of time studying a certain subject.

### **7. Art should be criticised respectfully.**

Throughout my time on the internet, I've seen many people attempt to critique other people's art, more often than not without the prompt to give feedback or without permission from the artist. I feel like this is an incredibly insensitive thing to do as, if there is no information given about the artwork then I feel it should be up to the viewers interpretation of it and should not be critiqued as the artist likely made it look a specific way to evoke a certain

reaction. I feel critique on someone's work should only be given if explicitly asked for – even if there is a glaring “mistake”, I think it should be up to the artist whether or not they did it on purpose, or if they should choose to change it. “It always sounds like an open invitation to have someone be mean to your work. And, by extension, that means being mean to *you* ... if you're someone who also has a rather-too-vocal inner critic, receiving a “critique”, or deciding to give yourself one, can be a recipe for shoving the paints back in the cupboard and leaving them there.” (Mason, 2020). It's very important to be careful what you say about a person's art as you never know how they may react, and I know that personally I would feel discourage if people felt the need to critique my work without asking first.

## **Bibliography**

### **Online sources**

- Hunakaistudio.org. (2015). *Should Art Be Censored? | Hunakai Studio*. [online] Available at: <https://www.hunakaistudio.org/blog/should-art-be-censored/>. [Accessed 23 Dec. 2020].
- CG Cookie. (2019). *Why Digital Artists Need to Use Reference Images*. [online] Available at: <https://cgcookie.com/articles/the-importance-of-reference>. [Accessed 23 Dec. 2020].
- Mason, A. (2020). *How to “critique” a painting (the useful way)*. [online] Anna Mason Art. Available at: <https://www.annamasonart.com/critique-a-painting/> [Accessed 23 Dec. 2020].

### **Image sources**

- Hunakaistudio.org. (2015). *Should Art Be Censored? | Hunakai Studio*. [online] Available at: <https://www.hunakaistudio.org/blog/should-art-be-censored/>. [Accessed 23 Dec. 2020].

## **Practice-based Writing**

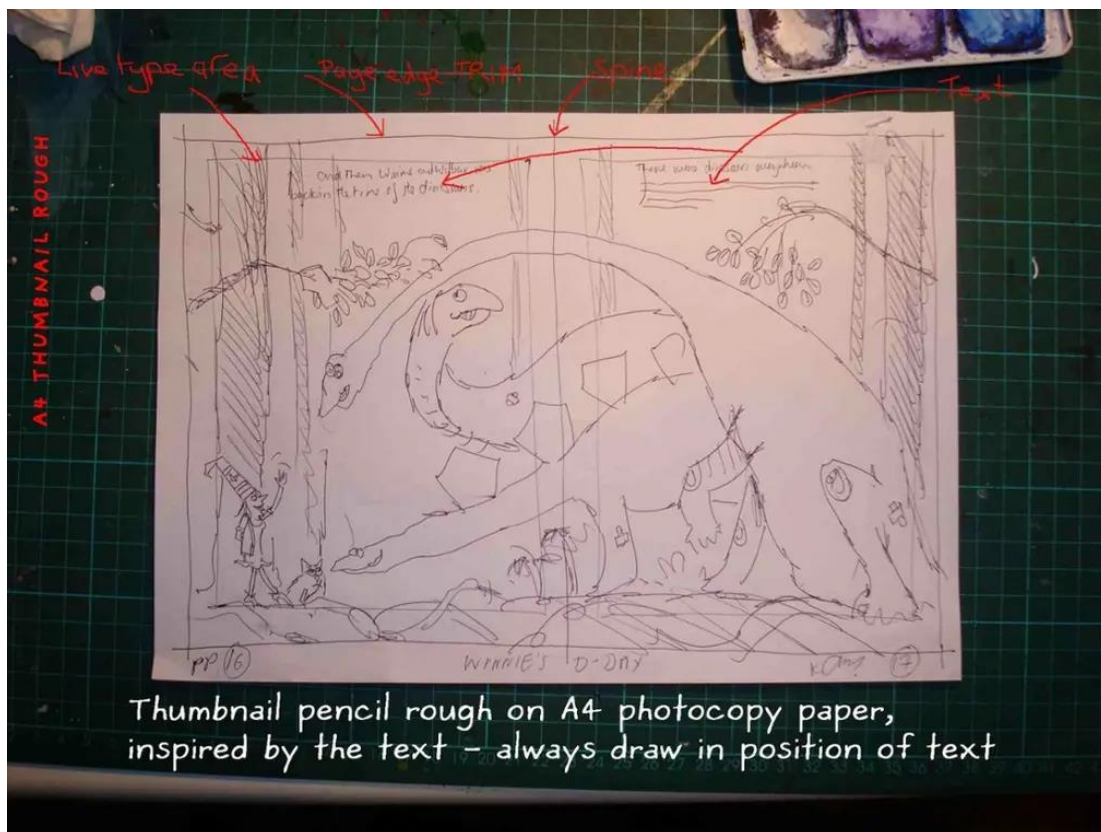
Korky Paul is a British illustrator, one of which I admired greatly as a child. He is the illustrator of the Winnie the Witch books, of which I still own a set of just to look through every now and then, as the illustration in them is so greatly detailed. I could probably spend hours looking at each page and find something new every single time. I really love how detailed his drawings are despite still being cartoony in style, and the colour palettes he uses are always intriguing to look at and work well together. Paul uses pen, pencil, watercolour paints, as well as ink. This seems to be to go-to process for illustrators in the early 2000s as it works to create really effective illustrations.



Illustration of Winnie the Witch by Korky Paul

Character design is something I've always been interested in and the way Paul does it is so inspiring to me. He so easily shows a character's personality through their design which is something I'm always working towards being able to do. Winnie and Wilbur's (the cat's) designs complement each other so well, it almost being portrayed as a relationship in which Wilbur is the smarter, more logical character and Winnie being a character of chaos and impulse.

In a 2015 interview with the Scottish Book Trust, he talks about his process of drawing Winnie – how he conveys movement and emotion as well as showing how he deals with “mistakes” in his drawings. He accidentally spills a drop of ink onto his drawing, which he decides to make a spider out of. I really like how calm he is about it and doesn't worry about it at all, just going with the flow and seeing where his drawing goes. It's inspiring to me as I'm very particular about my art and I get stressed out if it's not quite how I imagined it to be, but I feel like I can learn from him to just accept mistakes along the way and turn them into something to be proud of.



Photograph: Korky Paul

In another 2015 interview Korky Paul shows a step-by-step guide for how he readies his illustrations to be printed into books, taking into account the spine of the book as well as the page borders. In the interview he states, “When you’re illustrating a book, especially when somebody else writes the words, it’s really important to draw the position of the text! You don’t want to make a beautiful drawing and then find there’s no room for the words... the authors don’t like that very much.” (Paul, 2015). I find this to be incredibly useful as usually when I’m drawing my own illustrations, I’m so focused on how it looks, I often forget to leave enough space if I want to include text which always poses the problem of having to rearrange certain aspects of my drawing I may not want to change, such as canvas size or composition.

## **Bibliography**

### **Online sources**

- Scottish Book Trust (2015). *Korky Paul’s Top Tips for Bringing Your Characters to Life*. YouTube. Available at: [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnpmlmbnS5c&ab\\_channel=ScottishBookTrust](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=gnpmlmbnS5c&ab_channel=ScottishBookTrust) [Accessed 21 Dec. 2020].
- Paul, K. (2015). *Korky Paul: how to illustrate books – in pictures*. *The Guardian*. [online] 24 Mar. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/gallery/2015/mar/24/korky-paul-how-to-illustrate-books> [Accessed 21 Dec. 2020].

### **Image sources**

- Paul, K. (2015). *Korky Paul heads to Scottish Schools*. Available at: <https://www.list.co.uk/article/69226-illustrator-korky-paul-heads-for-scottish-schools/> [Accessed 21 Dec. 2020].
- Paul, K. (2015). *Korky Paul: how to illustrate books – in pictures*. Available at: <https://www.theguardian.com/childrens-books-site/gallery/2015/mar/24/korky-paul-how-to-illustrate-books> [Accessed 21 Dec. 2020].