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Programme of Study: Graphic Design
Module: ADDA4022/C Ways Of Thinking

Tasks in the order I received them:
Task One: Semiotic Analysis = 502 words
Task Two: Manifesto = 470 words
Task Three: Practice-based writing = 439 words

For this assessment, I confirm that I have not used Generative AI to support me in structuring my submission, including creating a draft argument structure, identifying parts and headings. I confirm that I have not used Generative AI to create text for my submission. I confirm that I have not used Generative AI for creative materials, such as images.

Task One: Semiotic Analysis

For my first task I decided to decode the album artwork for Sophie's 2018 album 'Oil of Every Pearls Un-Insides'.



Fig 1, (Xeon, 2018, Oil of Every Pearls Un-Insides)

Oil of Every Pearls Un-Insides is an album by English musician and producer Sophie Xeon released on the 15th of June 2018. The photography was done by Charlotte Wales, Julia Wagner was the set designer, Coco Campbell and Emily Schubert designed the dress, and Sophie and Nick Harwood acted as creative directors for the artwork of the album. Seven months earlier, the first single "It's Okay to Cry" was released alongside a music video. This music video was the first time Sophie had revealed herself to the audience, it is also the only song on the album where she does the vocals. When asked by Jake Hall for Notion Magazine

why she had finally shown her face, Sophie replied that she “hadn’t felt comfortable enough in her own skin to do so previously”. Sophie was a transgender woman and the album is an exploration of her trans identity and gender. This was of course her first body of work to feature her on the cover work. Another theme that is explored through the album is transhumanism. The title “Oil of Every Pearls Un-Insides” phonetically sounds like ‘I love every person's insides’.

The cover work features Sophie sitting in the centre on a man made stone, surrounded by water; possibly a flooded world or water planet, a “Whole New World” just like one of her song titles. She is sitting in front of a purple sky, it feels other worldly, heavenly. Sophie is donned in completely synthetic, transparent materials, ‘nothingness’ is spelled out along one of her latex gloves.

I have always viewed her pose as one mimicking a doll. Her arms positioned in such an unnatural way, bent at perfect angles, her hand flat with her palm facing towards us. She is sculpted and synthetic, just like her completely custom beats that she creates. But also how she became her true self. Her latex gloves almost perfectly match her skin and smooths out the features, almost acting as her skin, furthering this idea. Her bare skin is also unnaturally smooth and her face is completely neutral. I have also felt that the cover loosely imitates ‘Birth of Venus’ by Botticelli. The themes of rebirth, new hope, femininity and the connection between the scallop and pearls.

If you look closely, you will notice that Sophie’s eyes are looking in two different directions. One is looking up, towards the sky, towards eternity or heaven. While the other is looking forward, possibly representing progression and a future. Perhaps this is Sophie signaling to a new beginning. Looking at this retrospectively brings a tragic feeling to this. On the 30th of January, Sophie’s life was tragically cut short. Though she is no longer here, her influence lives on

through many of the artists she both worked with and inspired, and ofcourse all the trans people, trans feminine people who found hope and comfort in her music.

List of Figures:

Figure one: Xeon, S. (2018) *Oil of Every Pearls Un-Insides*. Available at: <https://media.pitchfork.com/photos/648747aaaed875e699bc73ed/master/pass/Sophie.jpg> (accessed: 24 November 2024).

Task Two: Manifesto

1. Art should be available to everyone no matter their socioeconomic status
2. I will not design work used to deceive or hurt people or living creatures
3. Wherever you go, collect
4. Always experiment
5. Explore out of my comfort zones
6. Always take the environment into account
7. Don't design to exploit
8. Have fun

I am a strong believer in having art easily accessible. I would go as far as to say that keeping artwork hidden or kept for only wealthy individuals is anti-intellectual and immoral. Keith Haring has been a long time inspiration for me, especially when it came to his radical thinking and him being so outspoken on societal issues that were ignored (some still are 30-40 years on). In his journals he wrote "The public has a right to art. The public is being ignored by most contemporary artists"(Keith Haring, 1996, p13), he repeated "art is for everybody", (Keith Haring, 1996, p13) it was his mantra. It is a sentiment I have long agreed on and have benefited from. Being able to see different types of art, art I love, art I hated, art that I have related to, or have gained a new understanding from, has all had a profound effect on me and I am so fortunate to have this access to art.

In our modern world, there are many examples of business profiting on the exploitation or harm of people. Diet culture, food and agriculture, and fast fashion are major examples where exploitation is used for profit. The weapons industry exists to hurt and destroy living people and creatures while promising security. As a designer, I want to contribute my work to make the

place more accessible and more friendly to those who live here. I want to design to benefit the community, in a world so hostile. I will research and make conscious decisions before designing for someone or a company so that I know who I work for will align with my own beliefs and ethics. I don't want to design to mislead or harm anyone and I don't want my work to contribute to the exploitation of people around the world.

Wherever I go, I will always come back with odd pieces of anything. From things such as tickets, packaging, receipts and newspapers to photographs of design examples such as posters, architecture and signs. This way I have my own catalogue of design and reference images I can look at for inspiration or to use in pieces of art. I always love being aware of the surroundings of where I go. Design is everywhere, typography, pictograms, and form, and they are amazing resources to learn from.



Fig 1,(LDN Collage, own image, 2021)

The best way to learn is to get out of your comfort zone, perhaps design using or inspired by a style you wouldn't usually, or for something you aren't usually interested in. I, like many people, have a stubborn habit of sticking to what I know, whether it is in daily life or while designing something or creating art. It is a skill I am slowly trying to improve on, something I will always need to improve on.

Bibliography

Haring, K, Thompson, R.F, Hockney, D. (1996) *Keith Haring Journals*. New York : Viking Press

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Figure one: *LDN Collage*, own image, 2021

Task Three: Practice Based Writing



Fig 1, (20060304,own image, 2023)

When tasked to explore the theme 'Trace' for my Final Major Project, many ideas quickly formed, however I quickly found myself exploring memory and how over time they can distort or fragment in the mind. From here my piece "20060304" was born. Using footage from a home movie filmed by my mother that primarily has me as the subject, playing in the snow on a crisp March day in 2006. It is a day I do remember, though there's only a few vivid visual memories of that day that I have. The works of Jorge Lizalde, 'Weirdcore', and Nam June Paik all heavily influenced this piece.

Taking parts of the film, I heavily manipulated the data by using software not designed to edit video, to the point where the video displays almost a mess of colour, with figures sometimes barely visible amongst the sea of pixels and the distortion becomes heavier as the film continues. This process is known as databending, where I converted the video file into an audio

file and edited it using Audacity, using its different sound filters to change the data. I also used Avidmux to datamosh the footage. This is another video editing technique done by manipulating the video's data, hoping not to corrupt it in the process. I chose a CRT television to display the piece and burned the piece onto a dvd, to further disrupt the image. This was done to mimic the way memories distort as time goes on, or even become unreliable.



Fig 2, (20060304,own image,2023)

It has been nearly two years since I created this piece and had it displayed at an exhibition and a gallery. I was at the time quite nervous about submitting it, not only was it my first video piece, but it also felt quite out of place among some work, especially at the gallery that it was displayed in. However I had received many positive comments on it. There are definitely things I would change or add in future pieces that explore this medium. I had thought about adding audio, perhaps something inspired by the work of James Leyland Kirby, more specifically his project The Caretaker, which explores the gradual deterioration of memory and the progression of dementia. A disease that has been personally present in my life for over a decade now. Perhaps

sampling scratched up or warped records, recording all its skips and distortion. Or recording it on vhs and endlessly rewinding and playing, deteriorating it with each loop. I would have liked to possibly experiment with magnets too, Inspired by some of Nam June Paik's work and even maybe having multiple screens for the installation.

List of Figures

Figure one: 20060304,own image, 2023

Figure two: 20060304,own image, 2023