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Module: ADAD4018 - Ways of Thinking

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task 1: Semiotic Analysis (Ryan)

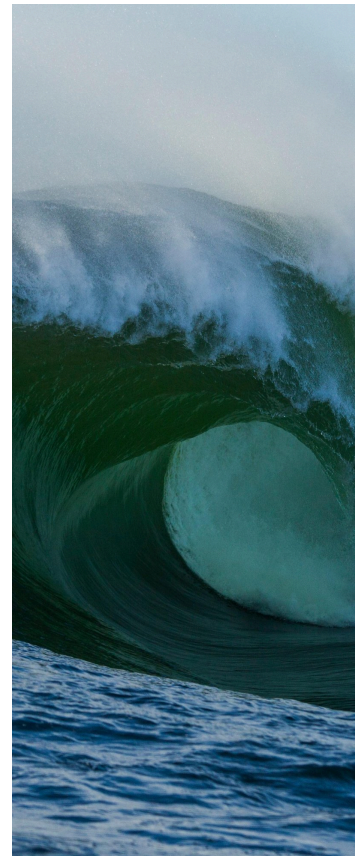
Task 2: Manifesto Writing (Julia)

Task 3: Reflective Writing (Jon)

Task 1: Semiotic Analysis (Ryan)

The video I have chosen to deconstruct advertises a *World Surfing Competition* in 2017. The trailer comprises real video footage of surfers catching a barrel wave, with audio narrative, dramatic soundtrack and the sponsor's logo ([youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com)).

The trailer's attraction is generated through the photography of real life extreme surfing which reveals an iconic and naturalistic message of danger, daring, power, energy and a challenge.



As Roland Barthes states, “*this visual imagery is both literal and symbolic - a photographic paradox*” (Barthes, 1977), where the reality of surfing is a message without a code (a natural indexical image given by the photographer) whilst the constructed video footage of different waves being caught is more symbolic of the competition - man against the sea. But in the words of renowned surfer Jeff Johnson, “*working with nature, not conquering it, tapping into a primal thing.*” (Surf Odyssey, Gestalten, 2016)

The soundtrack is a linguistic message, comprising a narrative and an orchestral score, which “relays” a complimentary relationship to the images. The dramatic words and sound reinforces the inherent dangers of this competition.

The advertisement introduces an iconic symbol of the sponsor - Red Bull. Red Bull is a brand that is synonymous with high energy, high octane adrenaline fuelled emotions and the logo comprises two red bulls facing each other which suggests a powerful indexicality of competition, challenge and aggression. The bulls are signifiers and the colour Red is a symbolic coded iconic message for danger. The background to the two red bulls is a yellow sun which is a signifier of energy and in this case adrenaline and is a good representation of the feelings inspired during the pursuit of extreme sport.



The location of this competition is introduced as a linguistic message or relay text, “Cape Fear”. These words appear below an indexical icon of a lion’s roaring mouth and teeth - this suggest that the surfers will be entering into the jaws of danger and even court death... only suitable for extreme adrenaline junkies.

The video images are polysemous in that they create a “floating chain” which communicate an objective of elite strength, determination and power of surfers pitted against the sea and the invested connotation of the naturalism of the surfers connecting in the imagery of the sea. Overall, the trailer which is designed to evoke the excitement of a surfing competition, clearly demonstrates the glamour of extreme sport (in this case surfing) and the visual image can be deconstructed into three fundamental messages: the Linguistic message (Cape Fear), the Literal Non - Coded Iconic message (sea and surfers) and the Symbolic Coded Iconic Message (Red Bull Logo), a message that is aptly described by Mark Mathews as “*scary perfection.*” (redbull.com)

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Gestalten. (2016) *Surf Odyssey: The Culture of Wave Riding*. Berlin.
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www.redbull.com/gb-en/events/red-bull-cape-fear

www.redbull.com/us-en/video-red-bull-cape-fear-2017-trailer

www.youtube.com/watch?v=OxLYqPsbkZY-RedBullCapeFear2017/TheTrailer

Task Two: Manifesto Writing (Julia)

1. Creativity evokes inner peace: I will use my dreams and imagination to inspire my work - trust my own creativity.
2. Take on the world - with eyes wide open, be inspired by what I love and see and use my art as my voice.
3. Enjoy the journey, not just the end result. **Don't** be afraid to make mistakes.
4. Anything is possible - don't be restricted by rules.
5. Be patient - things take time.
6. Try different things and see different perspectives.
7. Always challenge and question everything, my beliefs and motivations and others.

A lecture by Alain de Botton ([youtube.com](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8v3v3v3v3v3)) has influenced me profoundly. He emphasises the importance of considering “*Art as Therapy*”. In his words, “*Art is our new religion, Museums are our Cathedrals*” and in a changing modern life that makes us fractious, vulnerable and fragile, culture can revive the soul. Art can give hope by creating “*small moments of beauty*” that essentially counteracts the darkness in our lives and helps to rebalance our very being.

I want to take on the world, challenge myself physically and emotionally by pushing boundaries to create art that is a visual imagery of my beliefs and principles. By keeping my eyes wide open, I will endeavour to “experience” and really “**see**” the world around me and take inspiration from what I **love** - my local natural environment where I “live” and distant places seen when travelling, connected through sport and conservation. The powerful beauty of the natural world is awe-inspiring yet, at times, fragile: surfing in a turbulent sea is exhilarating and has a profound effect on my emotional state and therefore on my creativity and imagination. My dreams can be reflected in my art, whether it be drawing, abstract expressionist painting or simply capturing a moment in a photograph.



Mark Rothko’s artworks are inspiring (Rothko, 1952): they reflect his emotions and creates a connection with the viewer’s own suppressed feelings, giving them a power to self-heal. Likewise, Richard Serra’s sculptures symbolise the darkness and sadness that pervades our daily lives. By reminding us of these pressures, his art becomes therapy for the soul.





I also want my art to be an insight into my soul, with my unique interpretation. By engaging with life, the environment and the people around me this will shape my art, acting as my therapy, giving me a **“voice.”**

I believe anything is possible: trust your imagination and have a determination to allow creativity to shine through. It is important to challenge the boundaries of conventional movements and beliefs, but with respect. This will nurture originality and uniqueness which can be inspiring to others too. Through my art I want to challenge political and social apathy, whether it's about climate change, environmental destruction or of individual rights to have their say, to be treated equally, irrespective of colour, religion, nationality or gender. Surfers Against Sewage and inspirational environmental artists such as Banksy, Sonny, Kendra, have helped shape my artistic development so far.

Technological innovation and revolution will change how art is constructed: it will give it new meaning which should be positively embraced. It is important to search for a different artistic dimension through critical analysis, deconstruction and reconstruction. To try is to succeed, not to try will only restrict your imagination, creativity and individuality.

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Rothko, M (1952). Mark-Rothko.org

Serra, R. www.newyorker.com/culture/culture-desk/richard-serra-in-the-qatari-desert

Task Three: Reflective Writing (Jon)

A reflection of my life experiences and its influence on my art.....

Past, Present and Future.

Throughout my life I have always believed that it's good to be different and I follow the philosophy of "*being a flamingo in a flock of pigeons*" (Savannah Larsen). By reflecting on what I have done/what has happened to me and analysing my responses to various challenges gives me an insight into my vulnerabilities. But it also teaches me lessons in how to improve myself and, by following David Kolb's experiential learning cycle (Kolb,1984), I have built on experiences, learnt from them and developed my sense of "self".

A genetic chromosomal micro-deletion, has meant that I have had to overcome life challenges of speech and language issues as well as physical issues, but with a fierce determination to always push the boundaries of what I am capable of. Reflection on those experiences has taught me what my weaknesses are and, more importantly, where my strengths lie. I have learned that anything is possible if you have the self-awareness to use adversity to your own advantage and respond in a positive and creative way.

Pragmatic language is definitely not my strength but I have discovered that art is my therapy - art is a medium in which I can visually express myself, that allows me to be creative and reveals the essence of me. Art is my language. My art reflects my continued evaluation of how life experiences are changing my inner self. I "*learn by doing*", observing the world and people around me, so developing an "*action plan*" to achieve my goals, even to mask my weaknesses (Gibbs,1988). By connecting to my inner self, my art becomes a visual expression of my "*mental processes of reflection*" (Moon, 2004). My life shapes my art which has now become more abstract expressionist, revealing my emotions at a specific point in time - the art I

create can reflect euphoria if I'm happy, appear frenetic when I'm overwhelmed and anxious, or uplifting when I'm feeling inspired.

I have been influenced by many artists: a local artist (Michelle Scragg) once encouraged me to be bold and carefree with colour and form. From this, I have continued experimenting with colour, exploring different techniques and styles. More recently, I became fascinated by artworks of Vasily Kandinsky, especially his use of colour in abstraction and also by street artist Banksy who uses art to highlight social injustices - these visual experiences have influenced me greatly. I now feel less inhibited in creating images, whether in vivid colour or monochrome, abstraction or impressionist style.

I have learnt a great deal so far but there is more to learn through experience, reflection and experimentation. I will not close my mind to anything - in the words of Banksy "*a lot of people never use their initiative because no-one told them to*" which reinforces the importance of reflective thinking and experiential learning.

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