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Tasks in the order I received them:

Task One: Manifesto Writing = 543 words

Task Two: Semiotic Analysis = 506 words

Task Three: Practice-Based Writing = 568

Total word count: 1617.

Task One: Manifesto

1. In a time where resources are becoming limited, don't use more than you need, use recycled materials, and be wary of the waste your art produces.
2. Use your art and design to hold systems of power accountable.
3. Don't use another's culture in your art for profit.
4. Minimalism has no place here. It is covert elitism.
5. Use Slavic folk art influences.
6. Advocate for the environment.
7. Use materials you never did before.
8. Art doesn't need to have a meaning to be valid.

Minimalism = Elitism.



Figure 1. Carl Andre, Sculpture as Place.

4. Minimalism has no place here. It is covert elitism.

Over the recent years, minimalism (as a broader term), has been used as a marker for the global elite. This can be seen through all forms of minimalism, whether that be art and design, architecture, or the less is more lifestyle. Only those with financial stability can afford the luxury of minimalism. Being wealthy gives rich people the option to buy or not.

This elitism can be seen in the world of art and design too. Wealthy people will purchase minimalist paintings and sculptures for their homes because they are the only ones that can choose to do so. This creates a huge class divide, as working class people can't afford that lifestyle or the artwork, aren't welcomed into the prestigious spaces (like galleries or auctions), and are overall completely excluded from the contemporary art world. This is a theory proposed by Bourdieu called the "cultural capital" (Acuff, J. and Evans, L., n.d.). It's essentially where those with cultural knowledge (including art) exclude those from lower social backgrounds, creating a higher gap between the classes.

Systems of Power.



Figure 2. Elizabeth Catlett, Target.

2. Use your art and design to hold systems of power accountable.

Art has always held political power. Political leaders in the past have used art as a means of manipulating the public view, restricting certain ideologies from being advertised and even to push their own ideologies forward (Petropoulos, J., 1996.). Art is being used in politics now too. This can be seen with art being a huge part of the BLM movement or the Nie Składamy Parasolek movement in Poland, which was advocating for women's abortion rights.

It has been used as a tool to convey a message, help in protests, and to bring attention to important movements. In "From Art to Politics", Edelman wrote "In a crucial sense, then, art is the fountainhead from which political discourse, beliefs about politics, and consequent actions ultimately spring." (Edelman, 1995). Art has never just been about pleasure. It is a form of media that actively shapes the ideas others have about politics and society. And it is my

personal opinion, that we should use the voice we have as artists to advocate for those that might need their voices amplified.

Cultural Appropriation.



Figure 3. Pablo Picasso, Les Femmes d'Alger (O Version).

3. Don't use another's culture in your art for profit.

Cultural appropriation in art has manifested itself into an unethical and inappropriate adaptation of another culture's customs, practices, and ideas. This has resulted in many white and European artists profiting from the cultures of marginalised groups, while also completely misrepresenting them and changing their meaning. This can be seen even with artists such as Picasso, who culturally appropriated "African" masks and his Cubism paintings (Why Primitivism

was Cultural Appropriation - How To Talk About Art History, 2016) . There is a significant difference between cultural appropriation and inspiration (Y Studios. 2020.) and this has to be taken into account by designers and makers.

Even though art and design can be seen as a form of expression and freedom, there should be a standard of ethics and morals that each artist, designer and maker should adhere to. As mentioned above, art holds power, and that power should not be used to profit from those more marginalised than we are.

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<<https://ystudios.com/insights-passion/inspiration-or-cultural-appropriation>>.

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Figure 1: Carl Andre: Sculpture as Place. Accessed:

<https://www.kcrw.com/culture/shows/art-talk/carl-andre-at-moca> (Accessed on 3rd January 2022)

Figure 2: Elizabeth Catlett, Target. Accessed:

<https://blackwomynsvisualart.tumblr.com/post/20168938038/target-1970-elizabeth-catlett-bronze-20x14x22> (Accessed on 3rd January 2022)

Figure 3: Pablo Picasso, Les Demoiselles d'Avignon. Accessed:

<https://www.pablocicasso.org/africanperiod.jsp> (Accessed on 3rd January 2022)

Task Two: Semiotic Analysis

Language can be defined as a system of signs which represent different ideas (De Saussure, 1959). The “sign” is made up of two different components: the signifier (the thing that we see), and the signified (the mental concept) (Semiotics: Sign, Signifier, Signified, n.d.). Saussure called this “semiology” (De Saussure, 1959). Since then semiology has become an important study of the ways in which we use language to communicate different ideas.

We can apply semiotic theory to different campaigns (whether they are political or simply for advertising). On a denotative level these things can just be seen as they are: for example, the colour blue is just what it is: blue. However, it isn't until we start to add the connotation to the signs that we can truly understand what is being expressed. In the case of the colour blue, that would invoke feelings of sadness (denotation and connotation, n.d.).

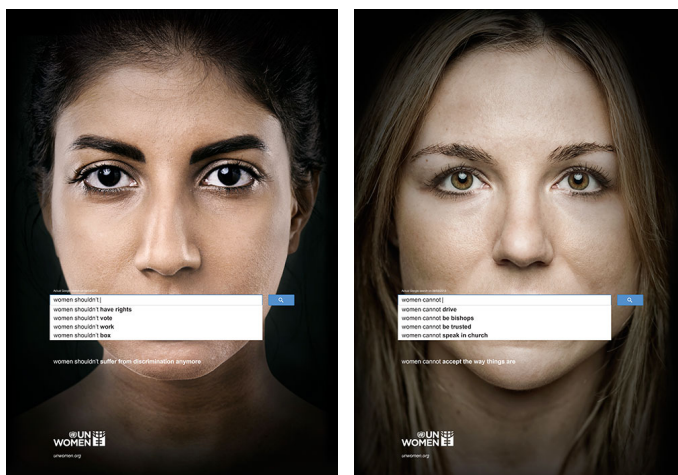




Figure 1. Mamac Ogilvy & Mather Dubai: Autocomplete Truth.

To show how important connotations are, we will look at the campaign shown in Figure 1 is The Autocomplete Truth by UN Women (UN Women ad series reveals widespread sexism, 2013). This campaign was made in 2013 and shows Google autocomplete searches that reflect on the views that society holds about women. The Google search is placed over the mouths of the models as if to represent the idea that women are being silenced, while the black background and clothing reinforces the notion that this topic is not only sad but also serious (Ferreira, 2019). Black can also be associated with endings and new beginnings (St Clair, 2016) which can imply that the idea of the campaign is to contribute to the end of women's oppression and discrimination. As well as this, the models shown in this campaign are of different ethnicities and religions, which shows that discrimination happens to all types of women and that no type of woman should be left out of the conversation surrounding sexism. Underneath the Google searches is also a statement in small font which had the complete opposite view of women to what the google searches showed. This smaller font could indicate that those positive views of women are much less common than the negative views.

To explain why these sexist views of women are being held in modern society, we can apply Barthes' theory of the myth (Barthes, 1972). In *Mythologies*, Barthes gives an example of how the bourgeois, through their power and influence, have the ability to influence societal views. Knowing that men have been in social power throughout history and now (Ananthaswamy and Douglas, 2018), it can be seen that they have been pushing forward a patriarchal society.

To conclude, semiotics and the different theories within it, do in fact shape our understanding of language and imagery and the way in which we use it. It is especially important in political and activist spaces where strong symbolism is needed to convey a message, as things like the colour, the models, and word placement will have a subconscious effect on the way we perceive a campaign.

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Task 3: Practice-Based Writing

Key word: Equality

Object: Money

The mesopotamian shekel is the first known form of currency, nearly 5,000 years old. These silver and gold coins were used to pay armies. Other forms of wealth, such as cattle, weren't easy to transport and weren't available to all, so it slowly died out as a type of currency or acceptable exchange (Kusimba, n.d.). In modern society money is used in essentially the same way; as payment for goods and services and repayment of debt (McCumiskey, n.d.). However, the idea of money as a physical object is slowly fading, as more people pay for things digitally (Bignell, 2021), rather than with cash. Yet still, money has a hold on all humans and we are reliant on it (Davies, 1994).



Figure 1: Image of money.

Equality is about ensuring that all people are treated in the same way, and given the same life opportunities (Understanding equality | Equality and Human Rights Commission, 2018). This

might include giving some people special treatment to ensure they get identical treatment (Capaldi, n.d.). In the context of money, it refers to economic equality. Which can be defined as every individual having the same access to wealth (Economic Equality – Think Big/Start Small, n.d.).

When looking at equality and money, we have to look at the growing class income gap. Each year, even during the COVID-19 pandemic, the richest 10% have just been getting richer (Elliott, 2021), while the poorest have been getting poorer. The class divide has never been so big. Knowing that, it is no surprise that the rich get more opportunities in life and have far more creative freedom as they don't have to constantly worry about their finances. For example, they can focus on their art more, rather than whether they can afford the materials to express their art. Having that stability is something working-class people don't have. This upper-class privilege is passed down through family and elite schooling (Howard and Gaztambide-Fernández, 2010), which, again, working-class people don't have access to and therefore, have a lesser chance of being socially mobile. The system has been set up in a way to keep the rich at the top and the poor at the bottom, with no chance of changing it.

The pay gap isn't just based on class, but on gender too (Boll and Lagemann, 2014). Women are still being impacted by this today and by being left behind economically, women now have to catch up to men without any extra support, while men are still going forward. This has resulted in men having more direct opportunities in art circles, leaving women out (Solly, 2019). This was greatly brought to surface by the Guerrilla Girls, who are feminist activists. They stated that only 5% of works in New York's Metropolitan Museum of Art was made by female artists (The gender imbalance of art with nudity has these female artists taking a stand for change, 2017).

The discussion around money and equality go hand in hand. In the current economic climate, it is very hard to have a discussion about equality without the topic of money coming up. In the context of art and design, very few can actually fully enjoy it, whether that's for financial reasons directly, or inequalities caused by economic disadvantage. Therefore, we need to make art spaces more accessible, and representative of everyone, by providing those who might be at a disadvantage with the right resources and opportunities.

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Figure 1: Image of money. Accessed: <https://www.wsj.com/articles/BL-263B-2491> (Accessed on 3rd January 2022)

(I am aware that I have used contractions throughout my essay, even though I was advised not to. However, given that we only had 1500 words to complete 3 tasks and that I am already approx. 8% over the word count, I didn't want to risk it).