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Tasks in the order I received them:

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Observational writing

How we view art differs from one person to the other depending on your background, culture, life experiences, age and gender. You will have a particular reaction to art which won't be the same as everyone no matter what demographic you hold, how you see it depends on the context of your own life (Berger 1972) The presence of subcultures is increasingly evident in mainstream media; this leaves people with imagery they're not familiar with. How does this result in our ability to read imagery? Can we see past our own labels and read imagery in the context of other people's lives? In this body of text, I will attempt to deconstruct an advert for a popular skate brand to present a new way of seeing through semiotic analysis.

We are able to infer from smoke the presence of a fire, from a wet spot the fall of a raindrop (Eco, 1979, p.17) We make inferential connections like these from a young age, we apply the same process of thinking to signs and symbols. Due to semiology, we have a shared understanding of how we read imagery and artwork. Roland Barthes breaks down how we read art into two messages, the 'denoted' and the 'connoted'. A denoted message is the analogon itself, and a connoted message, which is the manner in which the society to a certain extent communicates what it thinks of it (Barthes, p.17, 1977)

Semiotics is constantly changing in contemporary culture. Culture's visually transmitted ideological and electronic messages easily cross borders that, in the past, were tightly controlled by geographical location, financial wealth and language (Smith-Shank, 2004) I think visuals from subcultures are crossing borders, leaving people with imagery they're unfamiliar with but still subconsciously apply semiotic analysis. For example, graffiti and street art is a product of subculture, usually these visuals can be seen on the street, but they can now be viewed online.

Now I will semiotically analyse the advert by *Enjoi Skateboards*, a teaser for their new video. First, 'denotation', we have 3 skaters, someone attempting a trick which would be deemed unrealistic whilst the filmer is pushed along in a shopping cart. With the addition of humorous text and bright colours. The common perception of skateboarders is deviant, criminal and even considered scary to many people; this would be the 'connotation' from someone who is unfamiliar with skate culture. A skater using a shopping cart signifies their deviance if they took the cart from its original place. The shopping cart can either represent consumerism and middle-class influence or represent poverty and homelessness, depending whether it's at the supermarket or abandoned. I think the purpose of this is to show rebellion from corporations rather than possibly taking from the poor, they're showing their creativity and rebelliousness at the same time by finding a new purpose for an item stolen from a corporation. Therefore, the vision of this advert is to show creative talent, originality, innovativeness and rebellion. These

are often values that translate across all sub cultures and they're becoming accepted and admired in mainstream media.

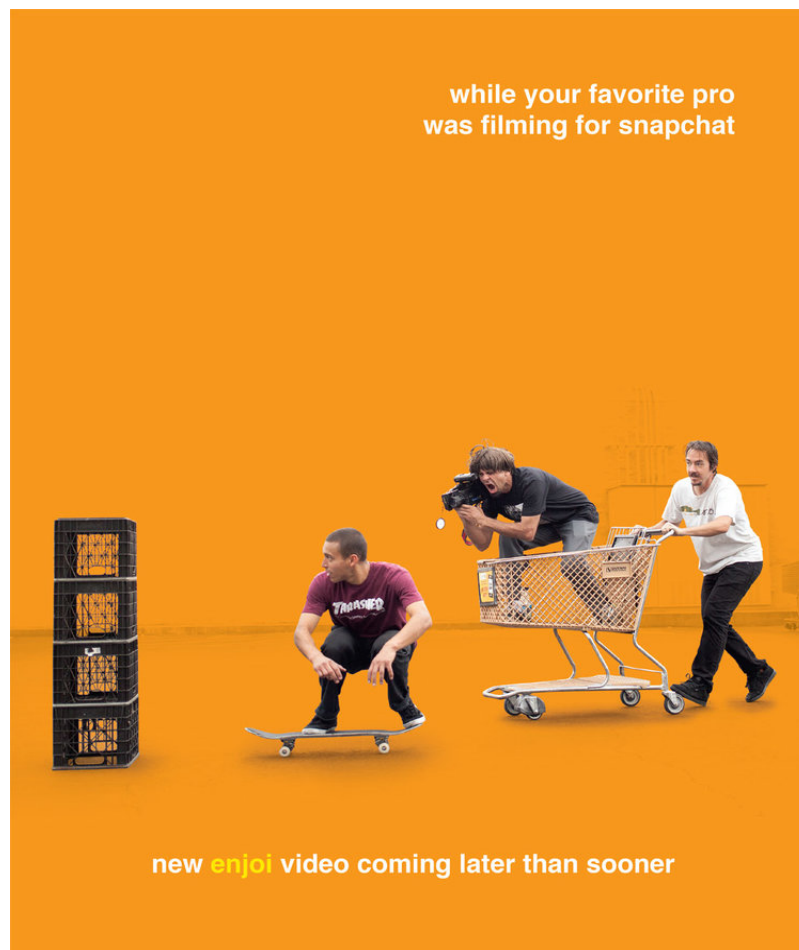


Figure 1, Enjo skateboards advert

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Figures

Figure 1. Enjoi skateboards advert. Available at: <https://www.christopherbywater.com/-enjoi-print-ads/g8php0p3o7m0ogwfb0xiwzpxyucjef> (Accessed: 22nd December 2020)

Manifesto Statements

1. We must be aware of corporations and governments turning our beliefs and desires as a society into a trend and something we can consume. We can't be fooled into thinking they are supporting our best interests.
2. Always question the beliefs of a majority and do not follow a trend.
3. Learn about other cultures, ethnicities and societies.
4. Make the effort to be aware of current injustices.
5. Veganism won't save the planet.
6. Get obsessed with your creative ideas and make sure they don't remain as just ideas.
7. Be prepared to break relations and make new relations.
8. Show people beauty that is overlooked.

3 areas of exploration

We must be aware of corporations and governments turning our beliefs and desires as a society into a trend and something we can consume. We can't be fooled into thinking they are supporting our best interests.

It's easy to look back and notice how capitalism has filled the vacuum of society's needs and desires. Not really tackling the problem itself but instead creating new products which make the consumer feel satisfied that the government has taken action to address the issue. A perfect example of this happening in previous years was when Edward Bernays, in 1929, set out on a marketing campaign to get more women to smoke. Bernays specialised in public relations and was asked by tobacco companies to persuade more women to smoke. Cigarettes were marketed to women as 'torches of freedom' and if a woman smoked it would make them seem more powerful and independent, this is something women desired at this period of time as men had more power over women. Bernays realised that "it was possible to persuade people to behave irrationally if you link products to their emotional desires and feelings" (Curtis 2002)



Figure 1, smoking propaganda

Learn about other cultures, ethnicities and societies.

In the UK we still have a problem with ethnic and racial divisions. It's starkly evident that major ethnic and racial inequalities persist in employment, housing and the justice system (Heath & Richards 2020) There is a lack of understanding in the UK for other cultures, societies and places, people who are poorly educated tend to hold more prejudice. Education is thought to have a profoundly liberalising effect on beliefs about racial inequality (Apostle et al. 1983 cited Wodtke 2018) The media can narrow someone's understanding of their outside world, in recent years tabloid newspapers such as the Daily Express have influenced people to believe migrants and ethnicities are a threat to the UK. Headlines such as 'MIGRANTS ROB YOUNG BRITONS OF JOBS' (Daily Express) and '40% SURGE IN ETHNIC NUMBERS' (Daily Express) influence people to think negatively of migration and a multicultural society. We must inform and educate ourselves to see past this bias and misleading news.



Figure 2, Headlines attacking migrants

Veganism won't save the planet

Veganism suggests that a plant-based diet will save the planet and we need to intensively farm arable however this won't work. The suggestion to reduce meat consumption in favour of cereal crops isn't the best solution for the environment and may only prove to delay impending environmental crises (Pendergrass 2016) Constantly ploughing land leads to more carbon being released into the atmosphere as soil is a body of carbon storage. Intensively planting crops in the same ground leads to soil desertification or soil degeneration. Desertification is when the quality of soil declines over time due to the heavy usage of arable farming resulting in the land turning into desert. Grazing livestock means carbon is put back into the soil and replenishes soil health, which is vital for our climate and the environment. Cattle play an important part in the carbon cycle. If cattle can be used to regenerate the soil, then this will reduce greenhouse gases. Using livestock to reverse desertification is totally scalable to about 2/3 of the world's land (Savory 2020)



Figure 3, Effect of meat and dairy production on the environment

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Figure 1. Smoking Propaganda, (2012) Accessed from: <https://thesocietypages.org/socimages/2012/02/27/torches-of-freedom-women-and-smoking-propaganda/> (Accessed: 23rd December 2020)

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Figure 3. Effect of meat and dairy production effect on the environment, Matt Kenyon (2018) Accessed from: <https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2018/aug/25/veganism-intensively-farmed-meat-dairy-soya-maize> (Accessed: 23rd December)

Practice based writing: Reflecting on a video I made as part of my final exhibition for a university module.

The title of this module was 'In Real Life' I had to create a body of work surrounding this subject including a final exhibition. The motive was to capture my perception of real life by researching artists, getting inspiration and exploring different processes to create conceptual artwork.

My thought process was to jot down words that came to mind when I thought about real life, the most relevant to me were economy, society, war, politics and recession. These are hot topics present in the media, so I decided to base my work around present news and media. I found this subject gave plenty of ideas to work with, it's open to wide interpretation and there's many paths I could've gone down.

I was inspired by an artist, John Hartfield, who used images from the Nazi media, cut them out then formed new images by pasting them together which created a new meaning, usually an anti-fascist message. This style of art is known as 'Photomontage' you can fool anyone with photos by putting wrong titles or captions under them (Hartfield) I found his simple processes with political messages inspiring and lead me to experiment with photomontage, it changed the way I viewed photos in the media and lead me to think deeply about their context.

The concept of my final exhibition came about after looking through Kennard's *Doomsday Book*, I was particularly inspired by a set of photographic portraits, printed on top of them was financial data from tabloid newspapers. The faces were of old, tired working-class people, it was an interesting contrast, data from big corporations placed over poor and concerning people. This made me think about how economic uncertainty during Covid-19 affects the average working person.

After dwelling on this train of thought I started to piece my video together. Originally it was going to be still image but combined both photomontage and video montage after being by the video montage in Adam Curtis's *HyperNormalisation*. The photomontage consisted of a stencil portrait printed over financial times articles. I used imagery of doctors, fire and money with titles such as 'don't lose your mind' and 'jobless' these. I feel this was relevant as people did lose their minds because of their financial situation due to Covid. I used news footage of protests, people losing their jobs and crying which overlapped each other creating an overwhelming feeling, I felt this was metaphoric of how people felt at the time. I also used the sounds from the videos and overlapped

them to create a similar feeling, with a sound of a ticking time bomb in the background it leads up to a clip of an explosion at the end of the video.

I felt my video conveyed a strong message and provokes a lot of feeling, however I thought I overcomplicated it. When I think back to Heartfield's work his photomontage is simple and has a clear strong meaning, which something I wish to work towards in the future.

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