

Portfolio of Writing

Task 1 – Manifesto Writing

Task 2 – Semiotics Writing

Task 3 – Practise Based Writing

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Task 1 – Manifesto Writing (494 words)

“Manifesto’s don’t listen. They proclaim!” (Obrist, 2017)

A Manifesto is generally a statement or declaration, from a group or individual and is described by Danchev (2017) as a document that sets out what they stand for, what they like, what they dislike and where they hope to go in the future. The Manifesto can be written in many forms from long and complex articles like that of The Futurists (1909), to simple lists like “The Ten Commandments” of Gilbert & George (2007). These lists can take the form of recommendations, or rules, like “The Immaculate Heart Art Department Rules” by Sister Corita Kent (1965).

The ‘list’ of rules and recommendations is by far the more approachable type of Manifesto. It can be read quickly, and you can choose to take on board all, or some, of the ‘rules’ or not. A Manifesto is, after all, a personal statement of opinion, and rules are made to be broken – particularly in Art.

TONYS MANIFESTO

BE BOLD

BE BRAZEN

BE SERIOUS

BE FUN

BE REFLECTIVE

BE COLOURFUL

BE MONOCHROMATIC

BE NOT AFRAID OF TECHNOLOGY

BE BOLD



“Boldness has Genius, power and magic in it” (Goethe, 1808)

Boldness translates to fearlessness, a supreme self confidence and a forward driving force. By being bold there is a momentum to excel and a desire to search for new ideas and inspiration.

Was the Disney Pixar character Merida 'Brave', not really. She was not afraid, certainly. Essentially she was fearless and bold. So let's follow 'willo the wisps' into the forest and carve out our own destinies!

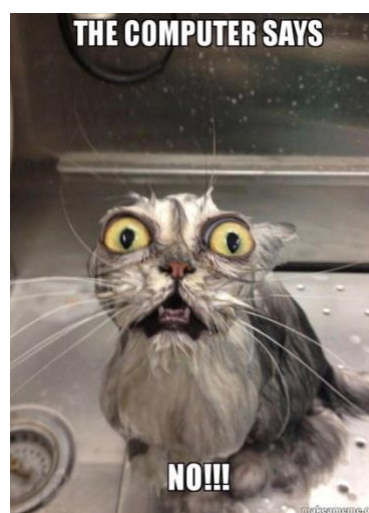
BE COLOURFUL



"Throw a paint pot in the public's face and they will catch it" (Jarman (1995), p9)

Colour is a powerful medium. It can be uplifting, mood altering, and affects everybody in different ways. It can unlock memories and literally brighten someone's day. You can use colour to trick the eye, as it can be utilised to create depth, warmth, coolness and even energy. Colour is reactionary – people will either love it or loathe it. But, that's people in general! So, embrace colour and use it extravagantly, freely, on every scale and every surface.

BE NOT AFRAID OF TECHNOLOGY



"It's understandable that sometimes we forget technology should be the handmaiden of our creativity" (Hegarty (2014), p47)

Digital Technology is a tool, and should be utilised to make our lives easier, and better. As a practising Artist, getting to grips with digital technology is vital. You will need to have at least a Website to promote yourself and your work, and even to sell from. Then there are all the programmes and online tools for creating Artwork – the possibilities are endless. “Technology brings the World to you” (Rogers, 2021), so use it to spread your Artwork globally. Also, save yourself the tears, stress and grey hairs – if Technology goes wrong, employ an expert to sort it for you, whilst you concentrate on the things that you can do well.

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Task 2 – Semiotics Writing (549 words)

Ferdinand de Saussure (1857-1913) is widely credited with popularising Semiotics, and his method was “based on a Dyad of the Signified (mental concept), and the Signifier (material concept)”, (Cobley (1999), p9-12).

Around the same time Charles Sanders Pierce (1839-1914) was using Semiotics “proposed on a Triad of Sign – Object – Interpretant” (Cobley (1999), p21). This method has a broader interpretation of the different categories, as there can be more than one ‘object’, and more than one ‘Interpretant’.

Roland Barthes (1915-1980) then brings Semiotics into the 20th Century, as he expands Saussure’s theory to “include all sign systems, including images, texts, gestures and melodic sounds” (Macey (2000), p347)

Barthes introduces us to the concept of the ‘denotation’ (what is there and obvious), and the ‘connotation’ (what is being communicated). The author also introduces the ‘Iconic Image’. The Iconic sign is anything that can be traced back in time. In “Ways of Seeing”, John Berger says “what has been learnt in school in the way of History, Mythology, Poetry, can be used in the manufacturing of glamour” (1972, p140). Advertising is all about glamour and the iconic image – it makes us want to possess the product and be part of the illusion it inspires.

“Semiology – laying bare the prejudices beneath the smooth surface of the beautiful” (Rose (2007),p74)

As Rose implies above the hidden ‘prejudices’ are not usually very positive ones – particularly when it comes to Fashion. Therefore, for my Semiotic Analysis I have chosen a relatively ‘safe’ subject matter.



The denotation of the advertisement is a Woodburning stove, with a lit fire in it, positioned in what looks to be like a woodland clearing with a natural stone 'cliff face' behind, with a black Labrador dog in the foreground level with the fire.

The connotations are the overriding green colours, and the natural setting, which build on the company's 'green credentials'. The Bluebells in the foreground enforce the woodland connection, and the company's commitment to the Environment. The Labrador Dog can be seen as an 'indexical image', it "represents a meaning without actually having to say it" (Yang Alcocer, 2018) – in this case loyalty and home.

The Iconic Sign is Fire, it represents heat, food and life.

The company is well known for its use of this imagery. The wood burners are always photographed in a beautiful countryside setting, and always with the Labrador. These shoots always place the wood burners in the last place you would expect to find one. The company is proud of its eco credentials, and is committed to reducing emissions.

In many ways we all carry out our own semiotic analysis during our day to day existence, often without realising it. In some retail, "assistants are trained to judge a woman walking into the shop by her hair rather than her clothes. Immaculately coiffured with threadbare clothes = eccentric aristocrat. Just threadbare clothes = bag lady" (Thwaites (2016), p1). This is a form of semiotics, because you are looking beyond the surface, for hidden meanings. Of course the 'bag lady' could be a very eccentric billionaire. But that to me is the danger of semiotics, reading things that are not necessarily there. Everyone sees things differently, and will see things you cannot. You can only give your interpretation, and hope everyone else agrees.

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Figure

- Country Living Magazine (November 2021) (Back Cover)

Task 3 – Practice Based Writing (529 words)



“Wool – the soft wavy or curly usually thick coat of various hairy mammals and especially sheep”
(Merriam-Webster, 2021)

“Economics – social science concerned with the production and consumption of goods and services”
(Thomson (2016), p88)

Sheep’s wool and economics have been intertwined for as long as the history of humankind and sheep. Throughout the ages wool has been a important resource and commodity used as currency, and to make clothing, housing and furnishings. From the 12th Century the reigning Monarchs of the UK saw the lucrative financial gains of taxing a booming wool trade. The wealth yielded from wool has played a pivotal role in building and defining communities such as The Cotswolds of England, however it has also been responsible for the destruction of entire communities, most notably in The Highland Clearances of Scotland (1750-1850), (Johnson, 2016). The Industrial Revolution saw a change in the fortunes of wool, from a time when it “dominated textiles” (Hencken Elasser (2005),p35) to it slowly being replaced by Cotton. The decline in wools fortune has continued up until the current day. In an article by Claire Taylor, NFU Scotland President Martin Kennedy recalls “that 40 to 50 years ago, the wool cheque would pay the rent for the farm for the whole year, but now it doesn’t pay to get the wool off the sheep’s back”(2020).

So how have we come to the point where wool is seen as worthless? Many say that the current woes can be traced back to the formation of British Wool Marketing Board in the 1950’s, which has meant that textile manufacturers have “lost their connection with local wool growers” (Jenkins (1969), p5).

Wool still has a lot to offer “it is a natural material, it is fire resistant, a good insulator, it absorbs water without feeling wet and it dyes well” (Thompson (2013),p86). Wool also has the advantage in “it is one of the few fibres that can still be grown, scoured, spun and woven within the shores of the UK” (Fletcher (2008), p149). I believe the future of wool lies in its heritage, and in the rare breeds of sheep and the wool traits each breed possesses, and the story they can tell. Many farmers now process their fleeces from shearing to finished product, selling from the farm, and thus adding value.

Other new and novel uses of wool include House Insulation and Specialty Compost. A more surprising development was created by a couple who wanted “to take the unwanted and make it beautiful” (Floyd, 2021). Using rare breed wool as a reinforcement and bio resin as a binder, they have created a unique composite material called “Solidwool”. The demand for Wool is still there.



As an Artist I will be using found fleece, and wool in mixed media pieces, to give the work a sense of place, and to evoke a feel and a memory, I want my Art to tell a tale, to resonate with the viewer.

Wool will forever be entwined with economics, it is a commodity after all. However wool has another almost magical quality, a quiet power all of its own, that money just cannot buy.

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