

PORTFOLIO OF WRITING

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Task 1: Manifesto – Word Count 499 words

Task 2: Observational Writing – Word Count 501 words

Task 3: Reflective Writing – Word Count 501 words

MANIFESTO

Task 1

1. Keep God first
2. Don't live in the shadows
3. Think, don't think, but definitely don't overthink
4. Stay playful
5. Words are art
6. Walk – nature – breathe
7. Keep learning
8. Have adventures

1.KEEP GOD FIRST

As Christians, believing we are created by the triune God, we must attribute all talents as gifts from God. Follow God's will for our lives, keeping Him first, which will keep our paths straight. "Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men." (Colossians 3:23)

Leaving behind worldly thoughts and ways frees us to trust the Holy Spirit – this is where we get the word, 'inspiration'. Do we believe what we say we believe? Trust, obedience and repentance are our guidelines. He only wants what is best for us.

"All trace of his suffering is gone, and worship of his centuries-old authority is seen as a path of hope amid the traumatic events of the present day. Belief in him, so Chagall says, can move the mountains of despair." (*Walther I.F./Metzger R. 2012*)



Fig 1. *White Crucifixion* Marc Chagall 1938

What do we do when we fail? We can turn to the cross. Chagall, a Jew, could see the hope in this perfect sacrifice and this hope should fill us with joy.

3.THINK, DON'T THINK, BUT DEFINITELY DON'T OVERTHINK

Thinking is good. Plan, imagine, do. Pursue flow, be enjoyably challenged.

We must not deprive ourselves of the pleasure of flow, the wonder of becoming lost in a task, of looking up at the clock to find that hours have flown by. This is good for our well-being. (*Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi 1997*)

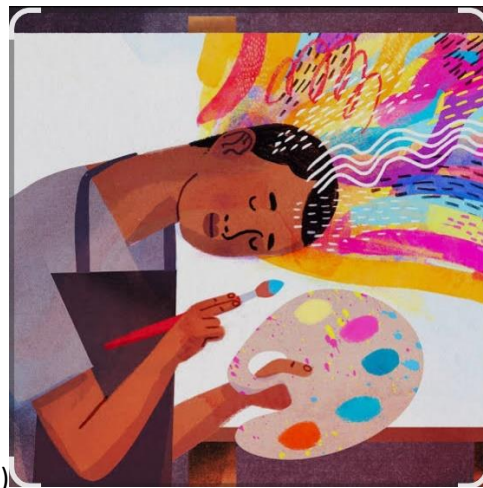


Fig 2. Keith Negley (title unknown)

Maintain a healthy relationship with the way we think. “Overthinking isn’t the same as healthy problem-solving. Problem-solving consists of thinking about a difficult situation when necessary. Overthinking on the other hand, involves dwelling on the problem.” (*Amy Morin 2020*)

Be mindful about what we think about and recognise the signs of falling down unhelpful rabbit holes. We can become lost, disorientated, scared and overwhelmed. When we see that this is happening, use helpful coping strategies. Change tack and focus on something positive. (Philippians 4:8) This takes practice, but it is achievable. Stay in the present, do not get embroiled in the past or the future. One day is enough to get on with. (Matthew 6:34)

8.HAVE ADVENTURES

Step out into the world and be brave! Experience new, exciting and sometimes scary things.

See new cultures, taste new food, smell the aromas of markets. Immerse yourself in the unknown, stay safe and have fun. Gather stories of adventure to tell your grandchildren.

“The adventure may begin as a blunder, as did that of the princess in the fairy tale; or still again, one may be only casually strolling, when some passing phenomenon catches the wandering eye and lures one away from the frequented paths of man.” (*Joseph Campbell* 2008)

When we answer the ‘call to adventure’, wonderful things happen. Our comfort zones expand; the world is illuminated and our knowledge increases.

We can be encouraged by the likes of Paul Gauguin and Henri Matisse, whose adventures influenced so much of their work. Let’s soak up adventure and turn it into wonderful things. Say YES, to invitations, live beyond your familiar bubble, so that when you return, you are changed for the better.

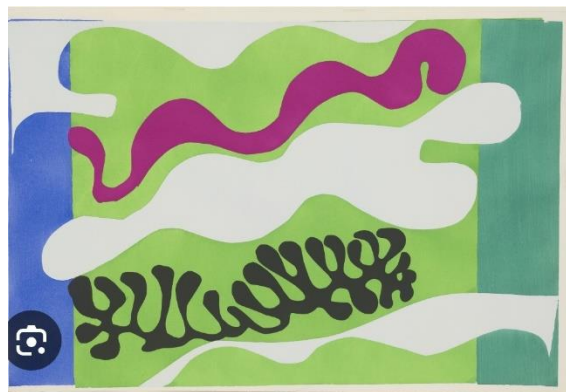


Fig 3. *The Lagoon* Henri Matisse 1944

OBSERVATIONAL WRITING

Task 2

BLACK SUN, DAMIEN HIRST, 2004

Black sun, is a large, circular piece created by Damien Hirst. His installation, *A THOUSAND YEARS*, 1990, produces large quantities of flies, which go through all stages of life, from larvae to death by bug zapper.



Fig 4. *A thousand years* Damien Hirst 1990

Hirst took this byproduct and set them in resin, which were then glued to the round canvas.

On an elementary level, this is reusing or recycling, taking an abundance of something worthless and turning it into something with meaning and a substantial price tag, no doubt. (There is no recorded worth for Black Sun).

Hirst's work focuses on all phases of the life cycle, but especially death. Casting the flies in resin delays the next step, the rotting/ decomposing. They are now a symbol of death, on show for the world to see and be reminded.



Fig 5. *Black Sun* Damien Hirst 2004

In 2012, *Black Sun*, was included in Hirst's exhibition at Tate Modern, London, situated in Room 12. (Which I fortunately saw.)

From a distance, it appears as an odious presence. Hirst describes it like this:- "From a distance, it just looks like tar or paint or something. Then really, it's not until you get to about here, you realise it's flies and when you're that close and realise it's flies, it's pretty scary, because you think, 'that's a lot of death'"

Black Sun, evokes the visceral. You are on a journey:

Curiosity – What is this large, black disk? What does it mean/symbolise?

Noticing – It's not just black, but brown and red too. It's not flat but textured.

Realisation – It's flies! Feeling repulsed at the mass of germ-riddled, dirty, annoying pests.

Fascination – Compulsion to touch – is it crunchy or soft? Fighting that urge.

"These works, 'open up a space for the signification of the ineffable', as the critic Michael Corris has observed."

Butterflies have also been a constant motif in Damien Hirst's work, referring to them as a 'universal trigger'.

They're used in his pieces to symbolise love, beauty and fragility of life." (Guy Hepner)

Black Sun, is juxtaposed to the spots and butterfly works. It is a giant spot, after all and while the flies are repulsive, the dead butterflies are beautiful, their colour displayed as mandalas or cathedral windows. But there is sadness too, they are, just the same, dead.

Damien Hirst's work, while appearing circular, also feels circular, evolving from or returning to previous ideas.

My conclusion is that Damien Hirst wants to make the viewer feel something deeply, to be taken on a journey and think about what they are experiencing, especially in the moment.

Hirst continues to work in the same manner, e.g. his Cherry Blossom series has grown from his Veil Paintings and makes a nod to impressionism and pointillism.

The way Hirst works is, in my opinion, an artwork in itself. Revolving, recycling, spiralling too, creating patterns unseen to the eye, which link all his works together. Black Sun may look like a giant full-stop, but is actually a link in a very long chain.

REFLECTIVE WRITING

Task 3

One of the very first tasks we were given this year was to take an image, cut it up to create a collage. I was given a pelican.

The collage itself became more fish-like in appearance, but it was the negative space left from the cut-out which fascinated me more.

Although the shape of the pelican still remained, a new form manifested when it was stuck to the white page, A white rabbit.



Fig 6. Zöe Baillieu Pelican/White Rabbit 2025

We did the task during the 'Mad Hatter's tea party', day and the significance wasn't lost on me.

I took the shape and made it smaller, then repeated it and made a template for a ceramic plate. I have yet to make the plate, maybe I never will, but the idea is there. It could lead to something else.

Whilst researching Damien Hirst's work, I can see that revisiting and revising past ideas, works, thoughts can be part of a journey; a different facet, a new angle on an already existing notion.

During an interview with Stephen Fry, Hirst had this to say about his 'Currency', series. "In the very beginning of my spot painting career, I made some messy spots, then I perfected them into perfect dots, and then for 25 years I made perfect dots and at the end, I went back to the first ones, and made 2 or 3, and thought, I'm just going to make these messy ones again and it's like, I really like them."

I like the concept that things, musings etc... aren't necessarily finished or over. I can revisit and create again, building on that first incarnation, or the second, third and so on.

"The white rabbit is seen as a spiritual guide, nudging individuals toward new beginnings and urging them to take leaps of faith." (Monica Binkman 2025)

I have lived shyly and quietly in the shadows of others, holding back my own abilities. I am shaking this off now and following the white rabbit, which appeared to me during that first week of university.

"Often in actual life, and not infrequently in the myths and popular tales, we encounter the dull case of the call unanswered; for it is always possible to turn the ear to other interests. Refusal of the summons converts the adventure into its negative. Walled in boredom, hard work, or "culture", the subject loses the power of significant affirmative action and becomes a victim to be saved." (Joseph Campbell 1949)

I have answered my 'call to adventure', and about time too! Will I return to my white rabbit? Maybe, maybe not, but it's there if I need it.

What have I learned about myself? I am determined and I turn up. I am capable in my own right and want to do well. I know my faults and learn from them. I don't dwell on the past, but it's okay to draw from past experience.

I have accepted the adventure and will complete it, through my faith, family and friends...and a little white rabbit.

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Figures

Fig 1. White Crucifixion Marc Chagall, 1938 <https://www.artic.edu/artworks/59426/white-crucifixion>

Fig 2. Keith Negley 2023 <https://www.theispot.com/whatsnew/2023/5/keith-negley-for-the-new-york-times.htm>

Fig 3. The Lagoon Henri Matisse, 1944. Maquette for plate XVIII from the illustrated book Jazz (1947). Gouache on paper, cut and mounted on canvas.

Fig 4. A Thousand Years Damien Hirst, 1990 <https://www.dacs.org.uk/artwork/a-thousand-years-1990-7179>

Fig 5. Black Sun Damien Hirst, 2004

https://www.reddit.com/r/ATBGE/comments/14ggcr8/this_art_installation_made_of_1000s_of_dead_flies/?rdt=50830

Fig 6. Pelican/White Rabbit Zöe Baillieu, 2025 UWTSD sketchbook reference.

(Accessed 29th December 2025)