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Task 1- Manifesto Writing – 500 words.

Task 2- Observational Writing – 503 words.

Task 3 – Practice-Based Writing – 503 words

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Statements

1. An artist's work serves them best when it helps them to enhance their visibility.
2. Art itself need serve no other purpose than existing for its own sake.
3. A society that does not value the arts and culture is doomed to fail.
4. The arts and culture are a worldwide commodity, and therefore should be available to all and not be hoarded.
5. The freedom to create, uninhibited and uncensored is paramount to the results being authentic.
6. The emotions invoked by the arts and culture transcend the importance of cultural barriers and religious doctrine.
7. Personal freedom of expression and the ability to live in the manner of one's own choosing is inherently a reflection of culture and therefore art.
8. An open mind is necessary in making any positive change or progress in oneself or society.

Manifesto Writing

2. Art itself need serve no other purpose than existing for its own sake.

"We Can Forgive a man for making a useful thing as long as he does not admire it. The only excuse for making a useless thing is that one admires it intensely.

All Art is quite useless."

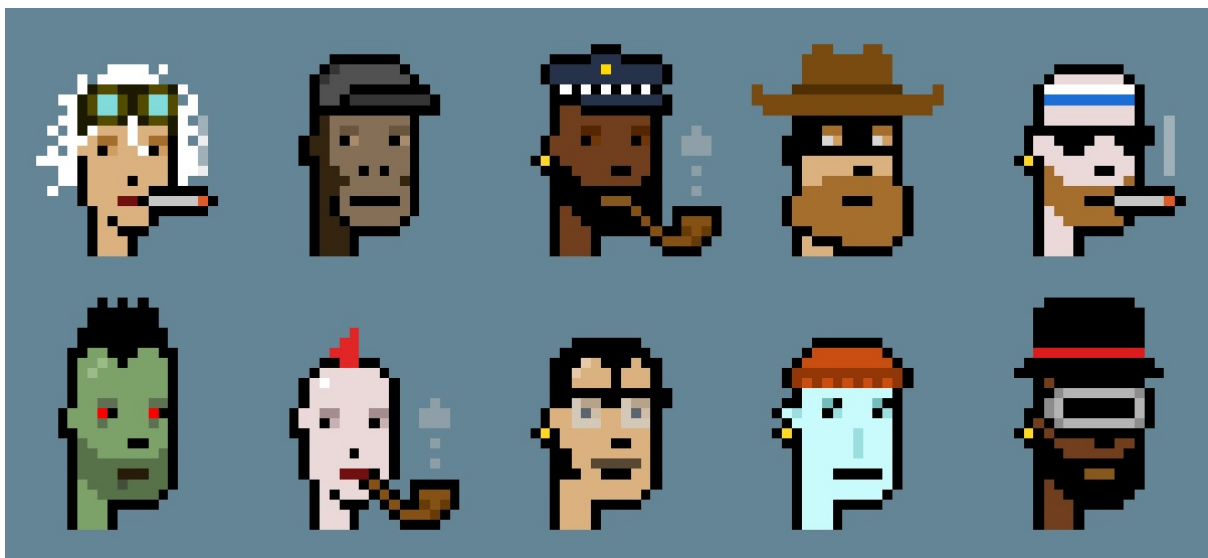
(Wilde, 1891, pp. 6.)

In my opinion, art is not for artists. A painter may look at a painting and see the complex brush strokes and expert technique behind it, a musician will listen to music and hear the individual chords and possibly see the complexity in the mathematics behind its structure. By doing this, those of us who are artists deconstruct and look through what the authors of these things intended to be perceived- the finished product.

4. Art is a worldwide commodity.

In 2015, some of the earliest NFTs (or non-fungible tokens) were minted by the cryptocurrency developers of the Ethereum blockchain. Many of these tokens would go unsold, sitting in a limbo of obscurity until a renewed spike in interest in March of 2021 (Matney 2021). This recent boom in popularity for NFTs hasn't come without its fair share of controversy, with many criticising the vastly high transactions now being paid for shares in the ownership of often simple pieces of 'collectable' digital art.

NFTs are not only limited to visual artwork though, with the Kings of Leon making a recent album available as an NFT, and the recent debut as an NFT of the feature length film *Zero Contact* (2021) starring Anthony Hopkins.



Cryptopunks, (Larva Labs, 2017).

What this new and innovative format means for the future of the art world is a question that needs to be asked. The convenience and temptation of quick sales and possible high revenue could lead to many creatives migrating to this medium of sales, potentially creating a metaphorical culture ceiling where their work is only made available to those with the means to access it at high cost.

This can be likened to the wealth of art and culture in the hands of private collectors, with assets amounting to a worth of over £8 Billion. (Andrey, 2018)

8. An open mind is necessary in making any positive change or progress in oneself or society.

In 1992, Terrence McKenna first coined the term of the "stoned ape" in his 1992 book, *Food of the Gods*. This theory proposes that through the consumption of various mind altering and hallucinogenic plant substances found whilst foraging, our early ancestors gained an advanced state of consciousness. This in turn improved their social structure, explorations in culture and success

whilst hunting. I would argue that our ancestor's willingness to experience and try new things, not exclusive to narcotics, is a driving force for change and progress. Examples from history of risk taking with new and unknown food substances and materials, much of which must have eschewed tradition at the time support this (Gibbons 2014) (Williams and Hill 2017).



Stoned Ape Hypothesis (Cassell, 2021).

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Observational Writing



Nighthawks (Hopper, 1942)

Edward Hoppers *Night Hawks* (1942) is considered by most to be his most popular work. It is a painting that tells a solemn tale of a lonely night in a city I could assume to be Hoppers native New York, amidst a time of wartime concerns.

The immediate mise-en-scene is made apparent by the icon of a diner, and the lighting giving the index of night. In a busy of New York, we see that the streets are empty. The people within the diner are

emotionless, and do not interact with one another. This signifies loneliness in a painting containing multiple characters. We also see that while there is a door depicted within the scene, the lack of a window and the solid nature of it signifies that it may not necessarily lead outside. This gives the diner a likeness almost akin to a fish tank and cements the idea that the viewer is an outside entity looking into an inaccessible place. This further signifies the loneliness and isolation of the characters within. Hopper has been referred to as 'The Visual bard of American solitude' (Schjeldahl, 2020) and we see these themes to be prevalent in much of his work. Oftentimes he depicts images of physically distant characters in apparently unhappy relationships, such as seen in his work *Room in New York* (1932).

The use of light depicted in the picture is notable, as what we see is an indoor space lit entirely by artificial electronic (we could assume neon) lighting that spills out and illuminates the empty streets around. This may have been used by the artist to enforce impersonal, disconnected emotions in the painting.

While the colours we see are predominantly warm yellows and reds, the contrasting tones and overall mood of the image detract from this, signifying a scene that while a diner at night would normally be a safe inviting space, offers little comfort to those within.

While maybe not relevant at the time it was painted, the modern viewer can gain new semiotic analyses from the image in the form of the nostalgic feel that the passage of time has given it. We know immediately from this image that it takes place in a romanticised time before our own, of a premodern America. The uniform of the server, the chrome machines in the rear, the sharp suits of the men, and the femme fatale look of the woman all conjure up a feel of the noir films of the time.

It has been claimed that Hopper's inspiration for this painting were from various works by Ernest Hemingway, most notably *The Killers* (1927), *Cat in the Rain* (1925), and *A Clean, Well-Lighted Place* (1933) (Tucan, 2018). I would agree with the analogies drawn between the artist and author in the absent sentimentality, little exposition and simple yet powerful messages conveyed by both of their works. The works of both are for me, signifiers of the concept of Americana, which I feel is portrayed in their works.

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Practice Based Writing



Compiet, Iris. 2011

The image of the 'Green Man' of British and predominantly Celtic and pagan folklore is one I have found since my discovery of it in my mid-twenties to be a very evocative one. The mysticism and primality of the image and its associated beliefs, and how I can relate to it through my heritage and avid interest in folklore and fantasy has always drawn me to it, whether it be through the numerous

sculptures or images it is depicted in. We see these images in the art and culture of the ancient peoples of Britain, and later depicted in the sculptures and iconography of the churches, abbeys, and cathedrals of the country. Its not just within Britain that we see this evocative image, with depictions being found within sculpture in France, Italy and Spain for example (Mastin, 2011).

Within his fantasy horror story, *The Great God Pan* (1984), the Welsh novelist Arthur Machen features The Green Man as a subject of revulsion and fear for several characters, and dark reminder of the savage past of the early peoples of Britain. When I later discovered after reading this story that the ancient woods I had been walking in and the adjacent town I lived a stone's throw away from were the old stomping grounds of the author, and likely an inspiration, I was elated. This further cemented my feeling of ancestral relation to this mysterious and enigmatic figure of myth and folklore, who both inspires, and unsettles me.

My practice and love for illustration stems from an appreciation of the ability it has given me to convey and communicate the images evoked by the fantasy and science fiction novels and media consumed in my youth. Much of the work I have produced though my life and improved my skills by producing has been strongly tied to these themes. Many of the artists who inspire me are the illustrators of the late 19th and early 20th century, such as N.C. Wyeth, Howard Pyle and Arthur Rackham. These artists produced images of Arthurian like legends, swashbuckling heroes, and epic battle scenes.

This interest has led to much of the work I produce being heavily influenced by themes of romanticism, adventure, horror, and folklore. A vast amount of what I have explored and illustrated have been images with characters who are well thought out and with depth and personality. I have learned to shake the bounds of what is realistic and allowed this freedom to enhance my creative journey and explore and develop skills in depicting that which is far beyond the bounds of the mundane world. Through creating works with these ideas in mind I have explored the rich depth and variety in several different mediums, and the vibrancy of colours and textures that can be found in watercolours, oils, and inks.

I would like to conclude with acknowledging that much of the success I have with becoming a better illustrator and artist stems strongly from immersing myself within communities of like-minded individuals.

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