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Illustration

Module: M4X01560

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task One: (Ryan's task) Observational Writing= 492 words

Task Two: (Julia's task) Manifesto Writing= 528 words

Task Three: (Jon's task) Reflective Writing= 570 words

Total word count= 1590

Task One: Semiotic Analysis (Ryan's Task)

Painting a literal and symbolic perspective of Marija Tiurina's watercolour illustration: 'Thought Slaughter' (2019).

A loud and busy painting that demonstrates a common sense of anxiousness. Using semiotics to deconstruct a seemingly pleasing image will reveal the true intentions of the artist: "intention is often rejected as a basis for aesthetic judgment" (Jacquette, 2014, p. 2). The importance of appearance may be elevated over meaning. Therefore, interpretation is essential for everyday living, emphasising the importance of the relationship between the signs and the object as it offers less obvious ways of seeing.



'Thought Slaughter', Marija Tiurina, 2019

Semiotics, the study of signs, acts to detect and decode hidden meanings within visual arts. As David Crow states, "our desires and our sense of our own identities are all molded and manipulated by the

signs which surround us"(2003, p. 9), exaggerating the significance of interpretation. It is vital to comprehend, especially when looking to understand yourself on a deeper level.

Objectively, the painting denotes several overlapping elements that compete with one-another, engulfing the viewer and ensuring they experience an immense feeling of intimidation. This helps to connote an overwhelming impression of pressure and lack of control. The piece's desaturated qualities immediately indicate darker undertones in mood. Although, the depiction of anxiety here is accurate and overwhelming, Tjurina still soothes the viewers with a soft colour palette. The pleasing watercolour medium releases tension associated with anxiety; additionally, repetitive characters reflect a comforting sense of familiarity. However, the juxtaposition of the smooth gradients with the angular inked outlines symbolises mental illness. As professor Curt John Ducasse emphasises, an artist's aim is not to create beauty but to "give adequate embodiment in words, lines, colours...to some particular and probably nameless feeling or emotion that possessed him" (1966, p. 18). Tjurina's intentions here are not to illustrate a joyful scene, but to imply symbols of anxiety and depression, showcasing their impact on an artist. The imbalance of creativity and mental stability is a stressful occurrence for many artists. The artist states, anxiety is that "nervous friend of many creative people, a friend that no one chose"(2019).

Delving deeper, professor/psychotherapist, John M. MacGregor suggests that art of unhealthy minds "emerged as artistically viable statements worthy of serious consideration, aesthetic contemplation, and systematic collections of art"(1989, p. 3). Although, in this case, Macgregor's statement is more so an exaggeration in relation to artists' with and portraying mental illnesses. However, his intentions still stand as he suggests that artists could effectively educate society on these matters through a more digestible format. Although, this purely relies on the average ability to interpret and "see differently" (Jones, 2012). In Amelia Jones' '*Seeing Differently*', she insists that difference will inevitably frighten people; however, the "most important gesture we can make personally and politically is to accept the

horror, examine it, and embrace our contingency" (2012, p. 218). Considering this, Tjurina's piece should evoke discomfort, as it is the only way to make people see and understand her intentions.

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Task Two: Manifesto (Julia's Task)

1. Always ensure to illustrate a part of my identity within every piece of work. Thus, emphasising my art's individuality as well as my own.
2. Explore and Experiment. Never be afraid of change and difference, it is often the sign of development and improvement.
3. Symbols and signs are key to engaging viewers and expanding the significance of my work. Look deeper at specific forms of symbolism in new projects going forward.
4. Incorporate more captivating and limited colour palettes into your work. Take a decent amount of time to contemplate the colour scheme instead of neglecting it.
5. There are no failures. Every piece will educate and help enable progression.
6. Create. Never be discouraged by others and never let negativity dampen innovation. Instead, channel this energy into creation.
7. Personality is important. Do not be anxious in creating anything or conveying any type of message.
8. The concept of art is forever changing and may never be accurately described and categorised. Therefore, do not stay in one place. This does not necessarily mean to create only what society deems impressive in that point in time, but to expand and not stay in my comfort zone.

Key Words and Images

Identity

- Always ensure to illustrate a part of my identity within every piece of work. Thus, emphasising my art's individuality as well as my own.



'The Waves Have Come', Davide Cambria, 2019

In a dense community of artists, it is an essential concept to apply individuality to each piece of work.

Gillian Rose demonstrates the idea that modern society is purely focused around visual media:

“knowledge as well as many forms of entertainment are visually constructed, and where what we see is as important, if not more so, than what we hear or read” (2001, p.1). Therefore, conveying the significance of distinction and leaving a lasting impact onto the viewer, just as Cambria establishes in *'The Waves Have Come'* (2019). Abstract strokes and sensitive shapes help to convey Cambria's personal perspective. Similarly, there is a Japanese Zen tradition called *Enso*, where the artist exemplifies their

uniqueness through expressive mark-making (Greenhalgh, 2015, p. 130). Although, it seems simplistic, it can effectively portray the individual's identity and their own perception on what matter the painting acts to tackle. Visually illustrating a sense of identity can thus enforce creativity and highlight variation in one's work compared to others.

Colour

- Incorporate more captivating and limited colour palettes into your work. Take a decent amount of time to contemplate the colour scheme instead of neglecting it.



'Roses', Vincent van Gogh, 1890

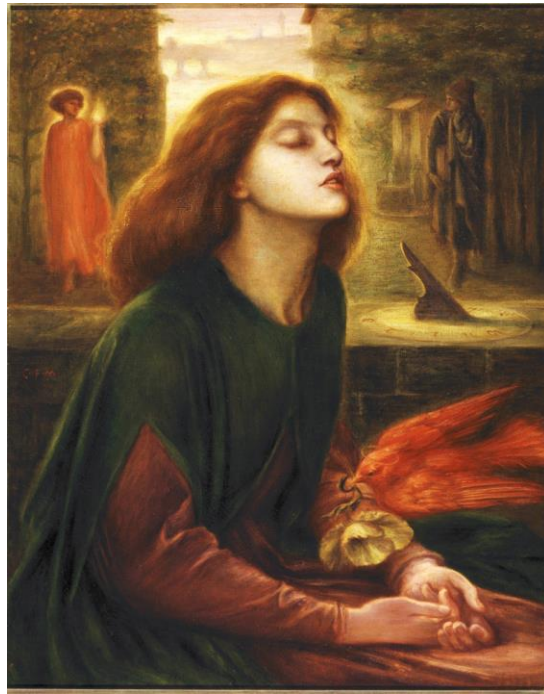
Visual culture, in its relation to the beauty of art, is imperative to comprehend (Gillian Rose, 2001).

'Roses' (1890), van Gogh's representation of enchanting colour selection is a depiction of careful colour

consideration. Visual forms like colour, presented in the comforting and natural palette found in '*Roses*', can substantially alter the overall impression of a piece of work. For example, the artist/educator, Josef Albers underlines the power of colour. Albers states that "academic conception" is inferior to personal practice: of which, acts to "demonstrate through colour deception (illusion) the relativity and instability of colour" (1963, p. 1-2). He demands all artists to experiment with different combinations of colour, saturation, contrast and many more key components that act as the foundations to a systematic and subjectively impressive outcome. A psychoanalytic approach is an additional viewpoint to visual media. Subjectivity and the unconscious are how the theory of psychoanalysis "conceptualises both the viewer of an image and the image itself" (Rose, 2001, p. 102). Therefore, colour would be an important factor in contributing towards a deeply meaningful piece of work. Whether that be detected through strong decoding methods or simple approaches to interpretation from the standard spectator with no background knowledge of the matter. On both accounts, the use of colour is a significant tool in presenting a thoughtful and captivating response as it can be understood by anyone.

Symbolism

- Symbols and signs are key to engaging viewers and expanding the significance of my work. Look deeper at specific forms of symbolism in new projects going forward.



'Beata Beatrix', Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1870

Symbolism is a form of “philosophical idealism in revolt against positivist, scientific attitude”, as the art historian, Robert Goldwater states (1979, p. 1). In which, he insists it offers a sense of objectivity in relation to the common notion of subjectivity. Goldwater continues by highlighting symbolists’ ability to “induce a reflective mood” through “overtones that go beyond the subjects represented”. Symbolism opens the piece of work up to ambiguous and endless interpretation; therefore, encouraging universal engagement through countless different types of viewers.

When observing Rossetti’s *Beata Beatrix*, symbolism is heavily featured and a clear component towards the construction of meaning. Religious imagery is conveyed through the dove’s subtle halo, implying a connection with god. Reinforced by the dove’s white poppy, symbolising both death and purity. Thus, the viewer can gather a concoction of concepts just using visual means.

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Task Three (Reflective Writing): Jon's Task

A passionate reflection of Dante Gabriel Rossetti's '*Proserpine*', 1874.



'Proserpine', Dante Gabriel Rossetti, 1874.

To thoroughly comprehend the implications of this piece, it is important to consider the contextual information surrounding the period of its creation.

Rossetti, alongside W. H. Hunt and J.E. Millais, founded the Pre-Raphaelite Brotherhood in late 1848 (TATE, 2019). This, as Professor Cruise states, “marked a significant departure in British art” (2011, p. 12). Cruise continues by detailing the infamous qualities of this style of painting, one that neglects the

“nature” and “truth” of the former vision of art, represented by the Royal Academy (2011, p. 13). This period of art is what Williams’ theory of art describes as “a process of rapid and dramatic transformation” (2004, p. 119). Thus, the effects of this art movement were some to develop society and improve conventional viewpoints on what was considered art. It challenged certain expectations and idealisms of proportions, compositions and shading; encouraging a new sense of innovation within expression. The paintings and the literature within this period truly motivate my work; I am fascinated by these artists’ abilities to reinvent their period’s viewpoint of art and illustrate social issues and unmentionable topics. In addition to participating in the following phase of symbolism: a quality I highly admire within illustration.

Although Rossetti’s drawing skills were questioned and his “anatomy and perspective were imperfect...they were less important to him than meaning and expression” (Treuhertz, Prettejohn & Becker, 2003, p. 12). This devotion to symbolism and purposeful rejection of the flawlessness approved by the period’s ideals of art, is what I believe ensured a level of distinction within the artist’s work. This desire to illustrate powerful and personal topics helps to narrate a part of Rossetti’s identity within each painting; his work is often interpreted as “representations of events in his life” (Treuhertz, Prettejohn & Becker, 2003, p. 91). It is this overwhelming depiction of individuality and personal connection that fuels each piece, in my opinion. Rossetti challenges me to dedicate my work to personal portrayals of experience and meaningful details, just as he passionately conveys. Whether that be purposelessly or not, nonetheless it tremendously stimulates my practice.

In relation to ‘*Proserpine*’ specifically, ambiguous meanings are suggested. It is possible the figure is meant to replicate Eve with the forbidden fruit; however, she is more likely to represent the Empress of Hades: “confined there with her husband...because she tasted one of the fruits of the Underworld, a pomegranate” (Ash, 1995, plate. 32). Rossetti illustrates concepts he is personally enthused by, while

also signifying a similar and personal connection to his relationship with the model, Jane Morris.

Fascinating symbols in this painting include the pomegranate: illustrating captivity and marriage (TATE, 2019). However, my favourite aspect is the overall darkness of the piece that attempts to consume the figure but fails due to her pale complexion. The shadows, symbolising the Underworld, and the figure evoking purity establishes an ironic sense of hope and warmth. Reinforced by the sole warm colour in the piece: the pomegranate.



A sketch study of Rossetti's '*Proserpine*' (1874)

I have recreated a segment from Rossetti's painting in order to correctly engage with my interpretation and perception of it. I decided to also concentrate more so on the meaning behind my marks rather than the proportions of the bust, just as the artist did. Instead I used a limited and hostile colour palette to reinforce the concept of the Underworld and the feeling of entrapment.

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