

Student Name: Alicia O'Connor
Student Number: 2004164
Programme of Study: BA in Fine Art
Module: ADAD5004 Research in Practice

Word Count: 2,306

Tutor Name: Paul Duerinckx

Three Keywords: Time, Change and Possibility

'Proposed question for Independent Project (Part One in Independent Project in Year Three)'

Time always moves forward; it is a part of life. Change is unpreventable, it is also a part of life. Possibility is similar to a chain reaction which is also a part of life. Both time, change and possibilities are limitless in everything including the art world. The possibilities of something big or small happening are endless. Most artists are inspired by their current surroundings. Every artist's art style represents their identity similar to a fingerprint. The art style is the artist's identity on a sculpture or painting. In their works, despite different subject matters, usually have the similar under-the-surface themes; time, change and possibility. Most of the artworks or art performances that contain these underlying themes are extremely subtle which is why we may not be able to notice it.

Time; everything we say or do becomes written as part of the past. Nobody can change the past, but we can learn from it to not repeat history in the present or the future. In my opinion, time is like a waterfall as the water falls only downwards same as how time moves in one direction which is forwards.

Change; sometimes small, big, lifechanging or not. In my opinion, change is like a river and the ripples are actions or words starting from small ripples that gets bigger the further it gets from the point it started. It could be from something simple to a person saying 'nice' constantly to other people which then could lead to the possibility of giving that person a dictionary for Christmas so they can learn synonyms of the word 'nice' to use instead.

Possibility; there are so many possibilities that we might be able to not anticipate (this is my opinion). In my opinion, possibility is like throwing different sized rocks randomly into a same river as it has different impacts once it hits the water that are sometimes big or small impacts. The small and big impacts would represent the possibility of what could or not happen. As for throwing the different sized rocks randomly without aiming for a specific part of the river, represents how possibility cannot be fully anticipated.

As the world changes, everyone else changes too. Even though it is not specific to what changes first whether it is the human race or our surroundings first. Everyone's words and actions can cause a chain-reaction no matter how small it seems at first. Same as how our surroundings can change naturally regarding 'the usual' weather (rain, sunny, cloudy, windy), decay (mould, crumbled, torn) or natural disasters (earthquake, tsunami, volcanic eruption, tornado). Taking in these factors into consideration, it can make anyone wonder if it is the human race or our surroundings that changes first. It could be that our surroundings changed first which soon led the human race to change (illnesses, death, continuous changes in mood, our outlook on any subject matter). Or it could be possible that the human race changed first which soon led our surroundings to change (global warming, cracking, man-made caused avalanches).

Marina Abramovic completed an artistic performance '*Rhythm 0*'. This ingenious art performance included 72 objects (which was a gun, blue paint, leather strings, bullet, comb, whip, pocket knife, perfume, fork, spoon, flowers, matches, rose, bell, candle, mirror, drinking glass, polaroid camera, feather, cotton, kitchen knife, hammer, saw, piece of wood, axe, stick, bone of lamb, chains, nails, safety pin, hairpin, brush, bandage, red paint, white paint, scissors, pen, book, sheet of white paper, newspaper, bread, wine, honey, salt, sugar, soap, cake, metal spear, handkerchief, lipstick, needle, box of razor blades, dish, flute, band aid, alcohol, medal, coat, shoes, chair, yarn, wire, sulphur, grapes, olive oil, water, hat, metal pipe, rosemary branch, scarf, apple and a scalpel) placed on the table along with Marina's instructions which was to use Marina Abramovic as the object and use whatever object on her as they wished. In most of Abramovic's themes, ideas, works associated with the body, perseverance, pain and the arranging of original live activity are handled in an exploratory habit, arousing a degree of private risk and pain. The objects that were involved to be used on her were specifically selected to convey two feelings of pleasure and pain (Wood, 2010). Marina's '*Rhythm 0*' performance was during the time of the 6 hours, she would accept full accountability. The artist has explained, 'the experience I drew from this work was that in your own performances you can go very far, but if you leave decisions to the public, you can be killed' (Ward, 2009). The purpose she wanted for the performance was to observe what the public would do if they were allowed to do whatever they

desired with no consequences to their actions. The result of her performance ended with the upsetting truth to how heartless the human race can be.



Figure 1

In my opinion, Marina's art performance *Rhythm 0* was a clever experiment to successfully understand and publicly reveal the results of human nature. Many of the audience's actions can lead to the public debate of the responses caused by nature or nurture. *Nature verses nurture* is a psychology term about the two factors that can determine fate:

- Nature is what we think of as pre-wiring and is influenced by genetic inheritance and other biological factors.
- Nurture is generally taken as the influence of external factors after conception, e.g., the product of exposure, life experiences and learning on an individual

(Mcleod, 2018)

In my opinion, the term *nature verses nurture* is truly a mystery as everyone is different and has different lives which leads me to think that people's minds work differently too. Same as how I think that everyone has different definitions of right and wrong. I believe that there are no grey areas, there is either right or wrong and no in-between. This would fit into the morals (which could be different for everyone) and of course it would be easy saying 'I would never do this or that' but it is the actions of a person when placed in a situation to see if they would do the right or wrong decision. This has been subtly shown by Marina's well-thought art performance by taking responsibility in the 6 hours she gave people passing by an opportunity to test out if they would do the right or wrong thing. Also, as Marina is a female, the history of females has been not easy such as no equal pay, being treated as sex objects, some countries didn't allow abortions ... etc. You would think

that 2009 (the year of Marina's artistic performance) that people would be more sympathetic and helpful towards her, not just as a female but a human being, during her performance although the results showed differently (Women's History Milestones: A Timeline, 2019).

To sum up, Marina's performance was similar to *Schrödinger's Cat* situation (the theory is that a cat is in a box and there is a possibility that the cat is either dead or alive. However, the cat is considered both dead and alive as nobody would know the status) with the not knowing how the audience would react, there were chances of all the audiences choosing the good or bad (as each object were specifically chosen for this) of their own free will as nobody including Marina probably knew how the audience would respond (Patil, 2022).

However, not all artworks focus mainly on the negative areas of life and the human race. Marc Chagall drew on the fairy tales, folk art and Jewish life of his Russian homeland. One of Marc Chagall's artworks *Life* which was an oil on canvas 296 x 406 cm painting that contains a joyful but also profound elements to show both the good and the bad things that can happen in life (Köster, T & Röper, L. 2006). This can be marriage, dancing, spending time with loved ones, birth and death. Chagall knew about the bad things that can happen in a person's life all too well; the loss of his painting works, the loss of the woman he first loved who was called Bella. And he always knew how to begin again, reinventing his world. Marc Chagall's Jewish identity was important to him throughout his life, and much of his work can be described as an attempt to reconcile old Jewish traditions with styles of modernist art. However, he also occasionally drew on Christian themes, which appealed to his taste for narrative and allegory. I personally find this interesting as there doesn't seem to any artworks by modern artists inspired by old Jewish traditions. And also due to the fact that there are still anti-semitic cases in the present that don't get reported most of the time, it can make you wonder if the lack of knowledge and awareness of Judaism in general led to why there are so many antisemitic cases (lack of awareness could lead to anti-semitism being somehow normalised in today's society).

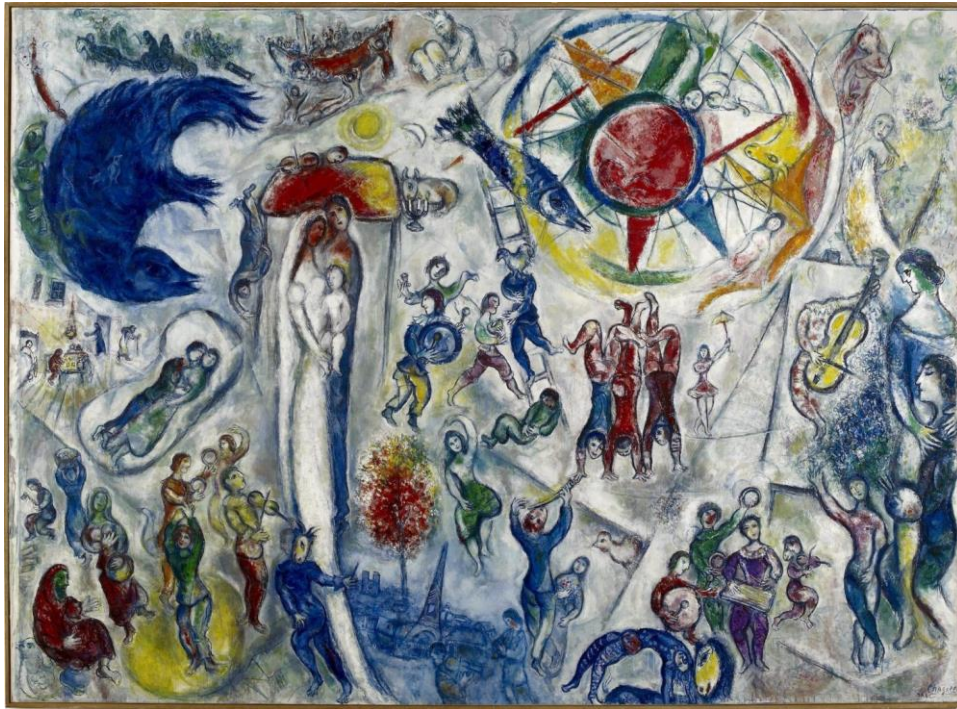


Figure 2

Chagall was claimed as a kindred spirit by the emerging Surrealists, and although he borrowed from them, he ultimately rejected their more conceptual subject matter, during the 1920s. Nevertheless, a dream-like quality is characteristic of almost all of Chagall's work; Chagall's work was described as "supernatural" by the poet and critic Guillaume Apollinaire (Marc Chagall Paintings, Bio, Ideas, n.d.).

It is also necessary to admire the ceiling of the Garnier Opera and to understand that Chagall is a painter narrator, a man who told that we all live during a life, the happiness and the misfortune, the births and the bereavements, love and loss of love... And that he put all this in colours in a bright and universal allegory (Marc Chagall Fine Art Print : La vie, 1964, n.d.).

His colours, although occasionally thin, were beginning to show the characteristic complexity and resonance he would eventually achieve. The often-whimsical figurative elements, frequently upside down, are distributed on the canvas in an arbitrary fashion, producing an effect that sometimes resembles a film montage and suggests the inner space of a reverie. The general atmosphere of these works can imply a Yiddish joke, a Russian fairy tale, or a vaudeville turn. Often the principal character is the romantically handsome, curly-haired young painter himself. Memories of childhood and of Vitebsk were major sources of imagery for Chagall during this period (McMullen, 2022).

Personally, I think that despite the tragedy he has known in his life, the fact that he focuses on both the good and bad says so much about him as a person in terms of his outlook of life. Perhaps in this painting, Marc Chagall was sharing how he sees the world and life in his eyes. Or, there is a small possibility that he is showing what

he thinks life should be (suggested by there being more positive parts than the bad considering Marc Chagall's life). Or everything in the painting could be one whole combination of his memories including both the good and the bad (this was suggested by the lady lying on the ground with what appears to be a huge stomach wound, representing a sudden death, and the married couple could have been him with his first love). This painting successfully shows time (the beginning of life, suggested by the baby in the married couple's arms, and the end, suggested by the lady with the stomach wound), change (so many things that happens in a person's life) and lastly possibility (showing the life that a person could have had or dreams of having but might never will).

Banksy created an artwork *Show Me The Monet* which is a modified version of Monet's painting *The Japanese Bridge* in the present. The traffic cone and the shopping trolley conveys how society ignores serious environmental issues. Banksy made this to raise awareness but some of the people today have ignored this and some of the people all around the world still litter, cut down more trees (unnecessarily) and pollute. It is both sad and ironic that the point to raise awareness was not as effective as it should have been. This painting, created to make a positively healthy change for the environment (our surroundings), human population and the future. Banksy's version of Monet's painting is similar to a before and after photo to make it easy to compare the similarities and differences. Banksy's modified version also shows the version of how the world thinks of environmental issues (disregarding them and doesn't think of how much of a problem it is) verses Monet's painting showing the original version of how it should be and could have been if every person cared about the environment.



Figure 3

In 2005, Banksy announced (according to Sotheby's), "The real damage done to our environment is not done by graffiti writers and drunken teenagers, but by big business" and "exactly the people who put gold-framed pictures of landscapes on their walls and try to tell the rest of us how to behave" (Holmes, 2020).

Many artists have shown time, change and possibility in both our surroundings and the human population. Most of these artists have raised awareness of human nature and surroundings. Over the time showing the world the reality to show the truth to help the human race see it as it truly is without being optimistic or pessimistic and being realistic instead. If the rest of humanity starts to care about the environment, there could be a chance to change for the better. Although, if our surroundings get worse in other ways, then there is a small possibility of the environment caused by natural causes that affects the rest of humanity meaning that the change in the human race or surroundings is not entirely caused by the rest of humanity. Finally leading up to the question; is it the human race or our surroundings that changes first?

Bibliography

Wood, C. (2010). *'Rhythm 0', Marina Abramovic*. [online] Tate. Available at: <<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/abramovic-rhythm-0-t14875>> [Accessed 19 April 2022].

Ward, F. (2009) 'Marina Abramovic: Approaching Zero', in Anna Dezeuze (ed.), *The 'Do-it-Yourself' Artwork: Participation from Fluxus to New Media*, Manchester 2009, pp.132–44.

Mcleod, S. (2018). *Nature Nurture in Psychology | Simply Psychology*. [online] Simplypsychology.org. Available at: <<https://www.simplypsychology.org/naturevsnurture.html#:~:text=Nature%20i>>

s%20what%20we%20think,and%20learning%20on%20an%20individual.>
[Accessed 20 April 2022].

HISTORY. (2019). *Women's History Milestones: A Timeline*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.history.com/topics/womens-history/womens-history-us-timeline>> [Accessed 23 April 2022].

Patil, V. (2022). *What's The Deal With Schrödinger's Cat?*. [online] Science ABC. Available at: <<https://www.scienceabc.com/pure-sciences/schrodingers-cat-dead-alive.html>> [Accessed 20 April 2022].

Köster, T & Röper, L. (2006). *50 Artists You Should Know*, Munich; London: Prestel, page 133.

The Art Story. n.d. *Marc Chagall Paintings, Bio, Ideas*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.theartstory.org/artist/chagall-marc/>> [Accessed 30 April 2022].

Passion-estampes.com. n.d. *Marc Chagall Fine Art Print : La vie, 1964*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.passion-estampes.com/deco/chagalllavie-eng.html>> [Accessed 29 April 2022].

McMullen, R. (2022). *Marc Chagall | Biography, Art, & Facts*. [online] Encyclopedia Britannica. Available at: <<https://www.britannica.com/biography/Marc-Chagall>> [Accessed 29 April 2022].

Holmes, H. (2020). *Banksy Was Trying to Make a Political Statement With 'Show Me the Monet.' No One Cared..* [online] Observer. Available at: <<https://observer.com/2020/10/banksy-show-me-the-monet-meaning/>> [Accessed 27 April 2022].

List of figures

1. Kaldorartprojects.org.au. n.d. [online] Available at: <<https://kaldorartprojects.org.au/wp->

content/uploads/2021/03/ma_edkit_15june15_rgb_web1.pdf>
[Accessed 27 April 2022].

2. Fondation Maeght. n.d. *La vie, Marc Chagall - Fondation Maeght*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.fondation-maeght.com/la-vie-marc-chagall/>> [Accessed 30 April 2022].
3. Sothebys.com. n.d. *Banksy, Show Me The Monet*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.sothebys.com/en/buy/auction/2020/contemporary-art-evening-auction-2/banksy-show-me-the-monet>> [Accessed 29 April 2022].