

Portfolio of Writing

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Tasks

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Task 1: Manifesto Writing

1. You can make mistakes in art, it's your creation.
2. Be comfortable in your abilities, you can only improve with time.
3. Art doesn't always have a meaning, you can just like the way it looks.
4. Use your art to express yourself often, it's a good outlet.
5. Your art will always be enjoyed by someone, even if they aren't your intended audience.
6. Patience is a skill you'll both learn and require in art, beauty takes time.
7. Art can build bridges to knowledge you may typically miss.
8. Be the person you feel comfortable being, be yourself, whoever that might be.

Art can build bridges to knowledge you may typically miss.

Art comes in an array of wondrous forms, many of which were born from a variety of cultures, mythologies and religions. Whether it be the theme or the technique itself, humanities past, present and future is firmly embedded, regularly influencing the outcomes. When one discovers this notion and delves deeper, much can be learned by simply following the roots. When exploring the vast artistic spectrum, one may find themselves discovering routes and bridges from art to knowledge itself. An example of this is the statues of the gods created by the Greeks, by idolising and idealising the divine, absolute devotion was put into creating said statues which in turn, emphasised the importance of religion at the time. These statues were given such detail and attention that even to this day, their very presence astonishes and gives a sense of power to the entities they depict.

“Because of the continued presence of the older, aniconic statues in Greek sanctuaries and because of their continuous involvement in Greek religious ritual, classical scholars have come to see different types of sculptural representations of the Greek gods as complementary and competing statements of Greek religious discourse concerning the nature of divinity” (Kindt, 2012)

Your art will always be enjoyed by someone, even if they aren't your intended audience

Art is appreciated across the globe and many generations. In all aspects art has a diverse audience, even the niche sections of the art world are sought-after. There have been many scenarios in which a piece of art has not reached its intended audience due to lack of outreach, however said piece has still been greatly admired. People have the wonderful ability to relate to situations involving any form of emotion and art is a spectacular outlet for said emotion, allowing great connections to be

built between a stranger and the passion of an artist. A great example of this is religious art from generations past, still conveying beautiful messages to current and new believers.

“Long before organized religion and science, art was a way to appeal to forces outside one’s control; it functioned as. Before the invention of the printing press, art instructed. Before photography, art recorded events. Art’s functions change, along with its material and intentions, in relation to the world that brings it into being” (Hendrick, 1999)

Patience is a skill you’ll both learn and require in art, beauty takes time

Art in all aspects requires time: time to plan, to develop, and to improve. Patience is an important trait, required especially to ensure the outcome meets the standard of the artist themselves.

Although the time required for a satisfactory outcome is relative from artist to artist, all agree that having the patience and allowing oneself to improve with time will always be a major benefit. In the book *Michelangelo and the Sistine Chapel*, Michelangelo is quoted as saying “I am not well and worn out with this stupendous labour and yet I am patient in order to achieve the desired end” (Graham-Dixon, 2009)

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Task 2: Observational Writing

Semiotics, a means of viewing the world around you from a more analytic standpoint, in a way, instead of evaluating the literal meaning, one must take prior knowledge and instincts into consideration, using said skills to develop a deeper understanding of what is being analysed. Typically, a person will take an image at face value, the use of semiotics aims to alter this, avoiding the obvious and altering how base details are perceived. From a young age information is imbedded into our minds, influencing the way look at our world “The way we see things is affected by what we know and what we believe” (Berger, 2008, p.8) is a great explanation as to why people derive such diverse meanings from the same image.



Fig 1. Gustav Dore, 1883

In 1883, Gustav Dore created a series of illustrations for the reproduction of Edgar Allen Poe's *The Raven* (Brandstatter, 2017). The image consists of a moon, upon it sits a cloaked figure holding an hourglass and a scythe. The sky around the subject is black with grey tones and white specks, clouds surround the moon with a raven situated just off centre. When using semiotics to further analyse this piece, a broader perspective can be derived. The dark tones of the overall image give an ominous atmosphere,

one that sets the mood of the image. Following further with the atmosphere of the piece, the figure in the cloak

creates a sinister emotional response, especially with the scythe possibly representing the Grim Reaper. Furthermore, the hourglass could represent what little time we have in life. The moon is a distance from the average person; therefore, the raven could represent a messenger between the viewer and the figure on the moon.

After evaluating the piece and reading Edgar Allen Poe's related poem,

"Deep into that darkness peering, long I stood there wondering, fearing,
Doubting, dreaming dreams no mortal ever dared to dream before;
But the silence was unbroken, and the darkness gave no token,
And the only word there spoken was the whispered word, "Lenore!"

This I whispered, and an echo murmured back the word, "Lenore!"

Merely this and nothing more"(Poe, 2013)

I believe there are many meanings behind this image. I believe the figure is indeed a representation of the Grim Reaper, sitting lonely, patiently, ever present and inevitable. The hourglass within their hand depicts that death is always waiting, watching, until the sands of time run still. The scythe is a sign that the figure is prepared and willing to take the souls that are due, as death will always take in the end. The figure sits upon the moon, looking directly at the viewer, this connotes a figurative distance between the viewer and the departed, depicting how it feels to be so far from someone who has passed. Furthermore, I believe the raven symbolises a form of messenger between the living and the dead, an idea that the living can speak to the raven and rest easy believing their message will be delivered. In conclusion I see this image as being a metaphor for the emotions and ideas humans have about death, the very stigma related to the ending of life, especially that of a loved one.

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Fig. 1, *The Raven*, Gustave Dore, (1884). Available from:

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Task 3: Practice-Based Writing



Fig 1, *Burden* Bradfield, M. (2021)

The personal art piece I have chosen to analyse is *Burden* Bradfield, M. (2021) which was initially created to test and demonstrate my understanding of expressive ink art. I used a variety of techniques to ensure that the meaning I was trying to convey was successfully represented, whilst also allowing enough room for alternative interpretation by the viewer themselves. Using semiotics, the viewer can analyse the characteristics of the piece to extract and form a deeper meaning behind said piece “we only see what we look at. To look is an act of choice” (2008, p.8). I created the piece using black ink and expressionism. I used the ink to create deep tone differences between the subjects’ face and the rest of the image. Furthermore, using the expressionism technique I was able to successfully portray the subject’s emotion, allowing for deeper interpretation. My intention was for my piece to express a form of sadness, an emotion related to the idea of possibly feeling trapped. Using expressionism, I gave the subjects face a blur, in an attempt to make a statement about lack of individuality, whilst also allowing the piece to be more relatable by the viewer, in hopes the view would be able to see themselves in the piece.

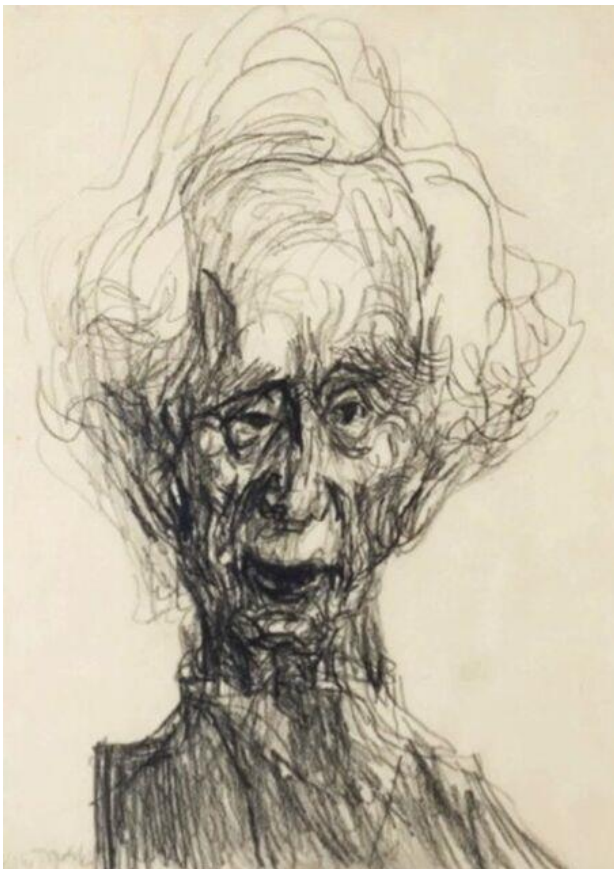


Fig 2, *Portrait of Bertrand Russell*
Topolski, F (1957)

Artist Feliks Topolski's *Portrait of Bertrand Russell* (1957) is an expressionist piece depicting a face, constructed of various messy lines and dark tones. Topolski's piece depicts the subject's emotion successfully by using the expressive lines in a way that seemingly tells the story of the subject. The dark lines used in the facial features make prominent the wrinkles on a face that has aged and experienced much. The lighter lines for the hair depict a possible lack thereof, typically due to stress and age. Using said symbols one can derive an understanding that the subject is weathered, changed by time and rather wise.

Both pieces share many similarities, such as, both pieces use expressionism to give a deeper emotion to their subjects. This technique allows the viewer to relate to subject depicted more, as typically faces seen in person are constantly in motion and the use of expressionism portrays the life like movement. Furthermore, both pieces use varying light and dark tones to create a more powerful atmosphere, one that can be interpreted as melancholy and sorrowful.

Overall, I believe that both pieces successfully portray their intentions and deeper meaning whilst still being open to interpretation by the observer. Whilst Topolski's piece may not need improvement, I believe I have much to improve upon in areas such as the tones and shades, as well as the proportions of my subject.

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