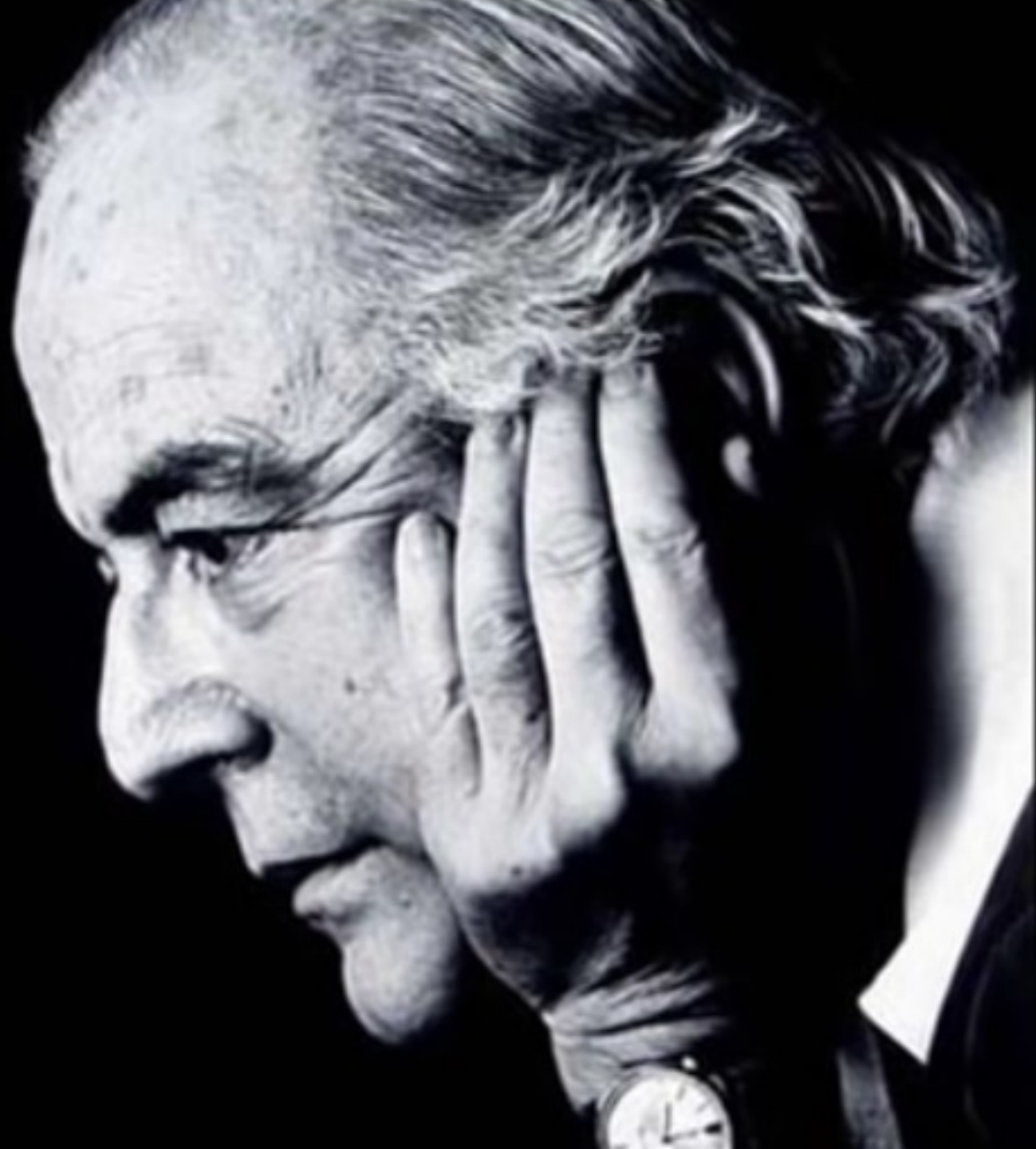




Research in Practice

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We are not that different!

Your current Research in Practice module leads into your Independent Project in the third year of study where you will:

- Undertake a self-directed piece of academic research on a topic of your choice with evidence of personal and critical evaluation
- Create a practice-based project that has been informed by your academic research
- Deliver a presentation (VIVA)

PhD: A research and practice-based proposal

Over the course of study, the research must be original and aim to create new knowledge or theories in a specialist area.

Part time:

6 years (with 2 years unsupervised writing up)

Practice based:

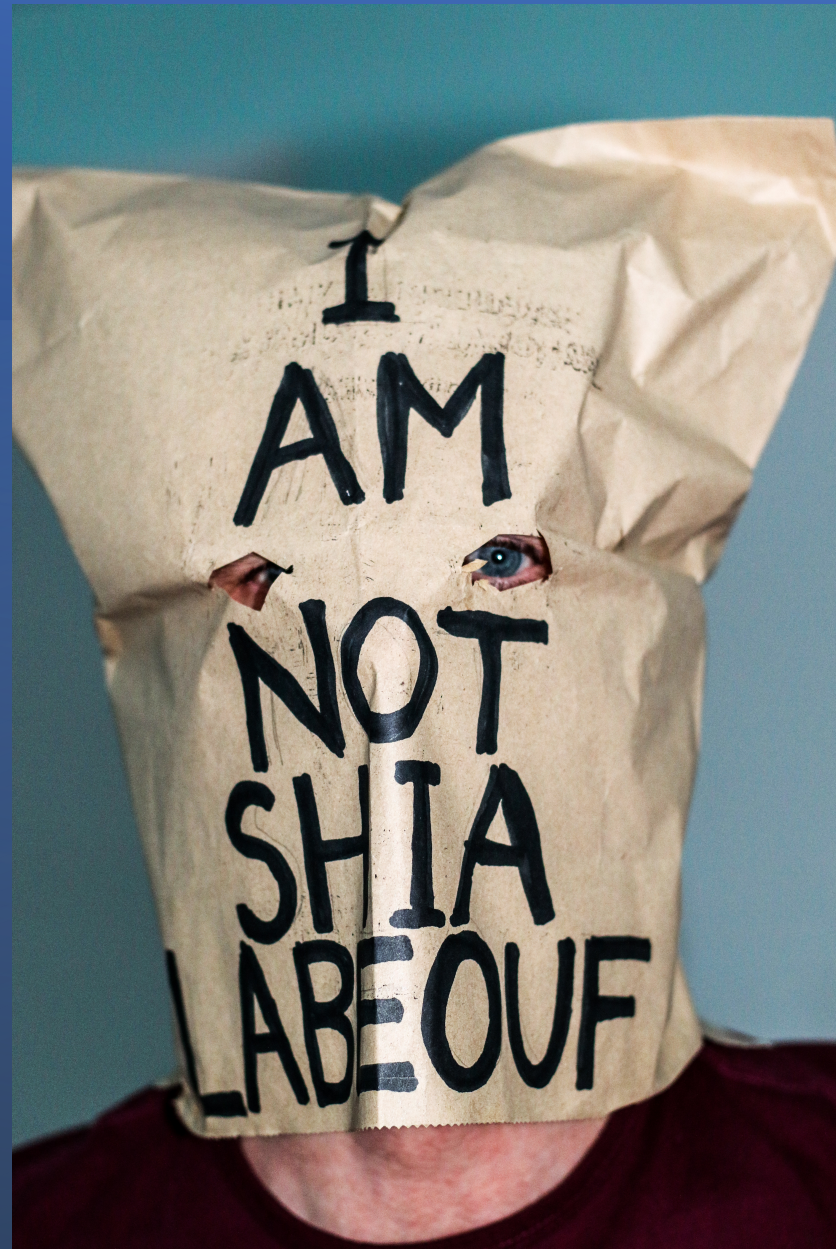
20-50,000 words and a significant body of practice to include an exhibition.

Why would I choose to do this?

I question everything ...

universal truths, grand narratives, authority, experts, ideals, structures, language, reality, assumptions, the truth, boundaries, constructs, strategies, ceremony, attitudes, morals, philosophies, ...

... and because I am not Shia Labeouf



**Can *affect* authentically be acculturated through digital transformation,
in both the creation, and our engagement with art?**

The proposal explained

This research proposal considers the audience and makers' relationship with creative forms and objects.

The contemporary zeitgeist has seen digital technology alter our relationship with art.

It has modified the way we consume it, evolved the techniques and materials by which we make it, and changed the way we engage with it, both critically and empirically (by observation or experience).

Now, on the brink of a fourth industrial/technological revolution, this proposal is considered timely.

Three keywords

Affect

The experience gained through the disruptive force of an encounter.

Acculturation

The process of assimilating one thing into another, most notably cultures and social structures.

Digital

The use of digital tools, techniques and platforms for making, engaging and sharing art and design. (4th industrial revolution, Web 3.0, Metaverse, IoT, AR, VR, MR, AI, NFTs, gene editing, advanced robotics, 3D printing, decentralisation, etc.)

Affect Theory

The theory of affect is aligned to Brian Massumi's translation of Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari's seminal text *A Thousand Plateaus, Capitalism and Schizophrenia* (1980), which notably references Baruch Spinoza's affectus:

“*L'affect* (Spinoza's affectus) is an ability to affect and be affected. It is a prepersonal intensity corresponding to the passage from one experiential state of the body to another and implying an augmentation or diminution in that body's capacity to act. *L'affection* (Spinoza's affection) is each such state considered as an encounter between the affected body and a second, affecting, body”

(Massumi, 1980: xvi).

Affect Theory in simple terms

In literary theory *affect* works in opposition to representation and is the spontaneous, internal and personal transformation that can take place **when we experience an encounter** - that could be with a piece of art or design, or it could be any other experience that changes us. The encounter works outside of representation and is: 'something in the world [that] forces us to think' (O'Sullivan, 2006:1).

Outside of socially constructed feelings or emotional responses, it describes the visceral, nonrational evocation that is stirred.

It has been written about extensively by Brian Massumi in *Parables for the Virtual: Movement, Affect, Sensation*. (Massumi, 2000)

What is an encounter?

Simon O' Sullivan, a theorist and artist working at the intersection of contemporary art practice, performance and philosophy, explains :

“An object of an **encounter** is fundamentally different from an object of **recognition**. With the latter our knowledge, beliefs and values are reconfirmed.”

“With a genuine **encounter** however the contrary is the case, our typical ways of being in the world are challenged, our systems of knowledge disrupted. We are forced to thought.

The encounter ushers in the creative moment that transports us from a dependency on the comforts of a habitual past, into the multiple possibilities of the future.”

(O'Sullivan, 2005: 1)



Triptych May-June.
Francis Bacon, 1973.



Three Studies for Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion.
Francis Bacon, 1944.

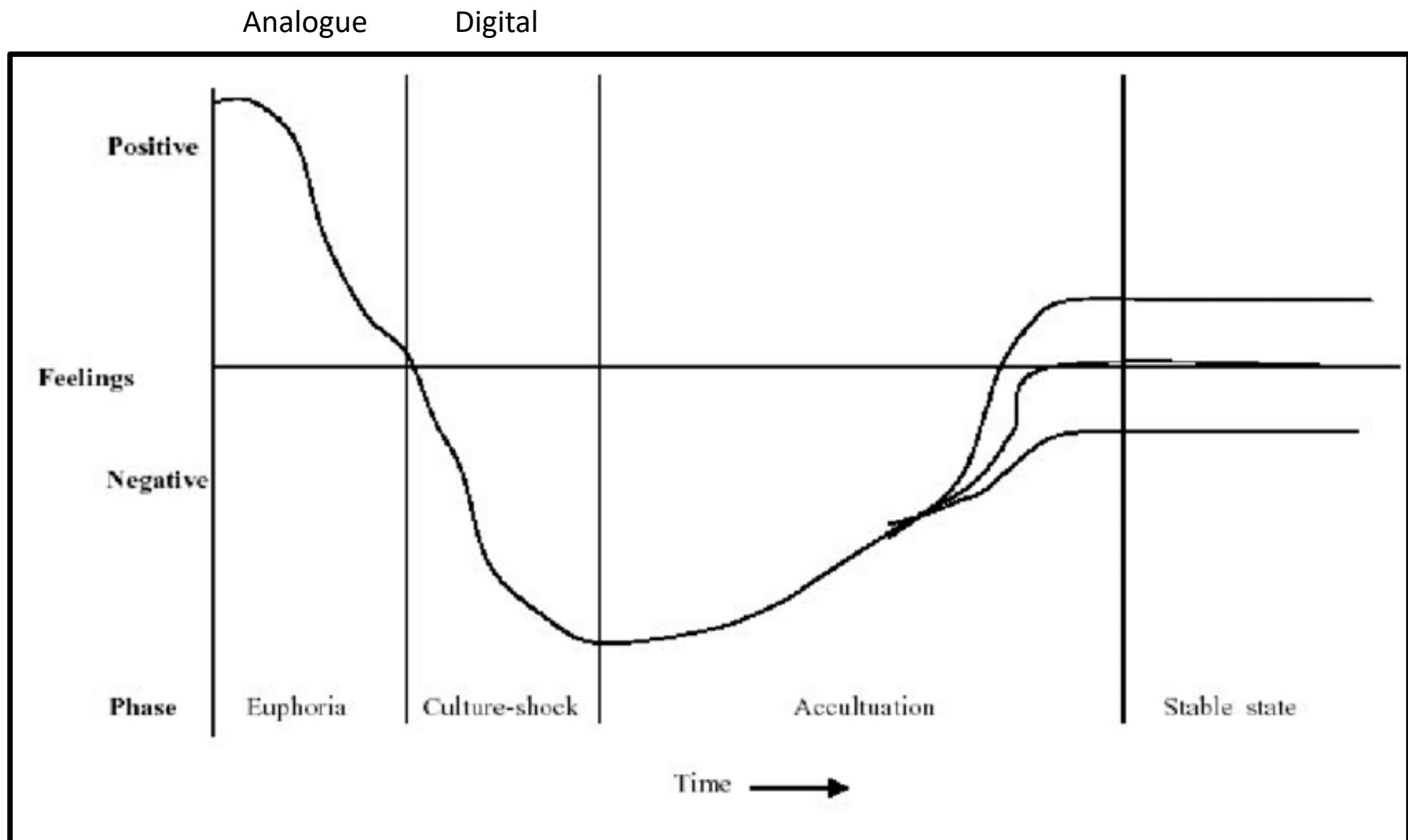
Francis Bacon said
of his paintings:
'It's an attempt to
bring the figurative
thing up to the
nervous system
more violently and
more poignantly.'



Acculturation

These are the processes and changes that take place when two or more cultures come into contact. It is often used to describe and analyse the socialization process of foreign-born individuals and their ability to blend in with the values, customs, norms, cultural attitudes and behaviours of the host culture.

For the purpose of this study, we can identify two cultural environments:
the analogue (prevailing/host/traditional)
and the digital (new/foreign/current).



Acculturation (researchgate.net)

Digital (transformation)

With the emergence of the third industrial/digital revolution in 1967 Marshall McLuhan 1911 – 1980, a Canadian philosopher and media theorist, observed that:

“Our time is a time for crossing barriers, for erasing old categories – for probing around. When two seemingly disparate elements are imaginatively poised, put in apposition in new and unique ways, startling discoveries often result.”
(McLuhan, 1967: 10).

McLuhan was discussing the digital revolution of the late 1960s.

We are now entering the the fourth industrial revolution. This moment in history is identified by data exchange in manufacturing, automation, Industry 4.0, cyber-physical systems, IoT and artificial intelligence.

The historical and cultural context for the study

Historically, technological progress has had a significant influence on modes of production and consumption of artworks: from Gutenberg's printing press circa 1448, Louis Daguerre's daguerreotype announced in 1839, Edouard-Leon Scott de Martinville's first voice recording in 1860, the Lumière brothers cinématographe motion picture system first screened in 1895, and more recently the modern conception of the internet by Tim Berners-Lee in 1990.

With the development of photography, the motion picture (film) and sound, Paul Valery states in the preface to Walter Benjamin's text *The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction* (1935):

“We must expect great innovations to transform the entire technique of the arts, thereby affecting artistic invention itself and perhaps even bringing about an amazing change in our very notion of art.”

(Benjamin, 1935: np)

This is my area of research that will now take place in a contemporary art and media landscape.

Methodology for the practice-led research

The practice-based component of this research will use a range of digital modes of practice that hold potential to generate an affective response in the viewing subject, such as immersive, multi-sensory soundscapes and projections.

Digital interfaces, and the context of these, offer areas of exploration, as does the non-conventional application of digital tools in unexpected scenarios.

The study will investigate the intervention of digital automation, machine learning and/or artificial intelligence in the generative process. Digital processing techniques, and the subversion of these, will be applied to drive affectual outcomes.

All research is contextually situated

All research and creative work exists in context; everything is connected, as is my area of study.

Through this postmodernist and poststructuralist period of expeditious digital transformation, this study will contribute to the emerging knowledge relating to the impact that new technology has had, is having, and will have, on the human psyche regarding the production and consumption of works of art.

It will consider how the digital may transfer into the visceral, and how technological agents are used to influence cognition when utilised in the production of art.

My practice

This is the beginning of the creative and research journey.

It is not conclusive.

It is often intentionally abstract, and affectually driven.

It is an intentional deviation from my advertising practice, as it offers opportunities for new knowledge, new understanding, new research and new creative work, which is unlike anything imagined by myself previously.

Preview

A compilation film of recent creative work, that has been created through digital, lens-based media and sound.

Unfinished – a digital photographic triptych shot through time-lapse

Atrophy – a video installation created with photographic stills

Transfiguration – a video an installation of a deconstructed film portrait

Key thinkers

Baruch Spinoza (1632 – 1677)

Friedrich Nietzsche (1844 – 1900)

Walter Benjamin (1892 – 1940)

Marshall McLuhan (1911 – 1980)

Gilles Deleuze (1925 – 1995) and Félix Guattari (1930 – 1992)

Brian Massumi (1956)

Simon O' Sullivan (1967)

Key artists/inspiration

Francis Bacon (painter)

David Lynch (director)

Antoine D'Agata (photographer)

Nick Knight (photographer)

Alexander McQueen (fashion designer)

Chris Cunningham (director)

This may help

- Choose something that really interests you
- Read broadly – research is key
- Have a plan – it helps you identify what to research and write about
- Make a note of your sources – if you don't, you'll forget and regret!
- Embrace uncertainty – things change
- Write drafts – each one will improve your writing
- Download the Harvard referencing document – an academic 'must-have'
- Complete before the deadline – this removes anxiety
- ALWAYS ask for help

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