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Tasks in the order I received them:

Task 1: Manifesto Writing = 484 words

Task 2: Observational Writing = 550 words

Task 3: Practice-based Writing = 498 words

Task 1: Manifesto

Always keep growing and changing

Do not over plan

We do not have to understand everything right away

Don't make art to please anyone but yourself

Deconstruct the aesthetic

Collaboration is key

Just do it

Highlight the overlooked

Areas of exploration: Collaboration, Deconstruct Aesthetics, Do not over plan

Do not over plan:

The ability to not over plan my creations and get too caught up on details is a core aspiration of mine. I enjoy the spontaneity of discovering new ideas and meaning to my work. I gain a great sense of confidence in this philosophy when researching artistic movements such as Dada.

Dada was a movement characterised by an anarchistic revolt against traditional values. It arose from the backdrop of disillusionment engineered by the First World War (Chilvers, I 2003). According to an online article written by Idalis Love for The Collector (Love, I. 2020) Many have predicted a resurgence of this movement in 2021. In the

article Love states, 'For many, life has become ambiguous, much like the people of World War I, where they saw no end to the madness, and so too do the people of 2020.'

Deconstruction of conventional Aesthetics

This aspect of my manifesto again harkens back to the Dada Movement and the closely related surrealist Movement. These art movements have been echoed in the work of many significant figures since its conception. These include Pablo Picasso, Francis Bacon and Salvador Dalí. The Surrealist Movement was defined by a "fascination with the bizarre, the incongruous and the irrational". (Chilvers, I. 2003, p. 576) Whereas its predecessor Dada sought to dismantle the aesthetic experience of popular art at the time. The movement was formed as a reaction to the turmoil and destruction of the First World War. Over 100 years later it is thought to experience a revival. (Love, I. 2020).

My desire is to create work that is bound by nothing. Not popular aesthetics or even my own conscious mind. A key example of this is Marcel Duchamp's Readymades. Most famously his infamous Fountain Urinal, which went on to inspire artists such as Joseph Beuys.



Fig 1. *Fountain* 1917, glazed ceramic replica 1964 (original lost), 36 x 48 x 61 cm

Collaboration

I have recently been fortunate to take part in my first collaborative art project for the Exquisite Cadaver Project. This has been a major turning point in my artistic career. I have been exposed to a wide range of unique and varying forms. I intend to engage in similar collaborative projects as my work continues to progress. (See Appendix 1).

Group activity was heavily prioritised over individual works in the Dada Movement. It represented a rejection of the moral bankruptcy, snobbery and traditionalism of that era. In an era defined by the division of older and younger generations, especially at the height of the COVID 19, The Black Lives Matter Movement and Brexit it is easy to identify our current way of life with the First World War and the outrage that was felt at that time (Love, I. 2020) . It begs the question of whether our generation needs a resurgence of Dada to shock the masses out of the corruption and complacency it finds itself in yet again. (Chilvers, I. 2003)

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Figure 1: Duchamp, M *Fountain* 1917, glazed ceramic replica 1964. Available at <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/marcel-duchamp-1036> (Accessed: December 31 2020).

Appendix

I have undertaken a series of collaboration pieces with several third year students for the Exquisite Cadaver Project. I have included below an image of the Projects Dadaist Manifesto.



Figure 2. Norman, K. (2020) *Manifesto*. Available at: <https://www.instagram.com/p/CHltds3D8Ao/> (Accessed: December 31 2020).

Task 2: Observational Writing

Roland Barthes seminal publication, *Image, Music, Text*. London (1977) Barthes proposes that arts such as drawings, paintings, cinema, theatre comprise of two messages: a denoted message, which is the literal meaning of the work itself and a connoted message which is the manner in which the society to a certain extent communicates its own implied meaning of the art. (*The Photographic Message* 1977, pp 17) This text will deconstruct Francis Bacon's most popular contemporary painting: *Study After Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X*.

2020 has experienced a noticeable shift in society's perception of significant historical figures. Those who were once glorified and revered are now being re-examined for more than their admirable traits and actions. Depictions of such authoritarian leaders greatly inspired artist Francis Bacon and had influenced many of his paintings. (Acevedo B. 2011)



Fig 3 1953, oil on canvas, 153x 118 cm

This Portrait is a reinvention of Velázquez's painting so that it could be accessible to a 20th century audience. (AG Dixon, 2008) Upon first glance the viewer is confronted with the concept of naturalism, a term coined by Barthes. Naturalism refers to the relationship shared between a product and its audience. (1977 p.67) We, as an audience, are immediately able to connect with the subject's human qualities despite Bacon's efforts to not explicitly define any aspects of the painting. (AG Dixon, 2008) This painting might gauge an intense emotional response from viewers to the subject's

tortured expression which shines through the hazy smears of paint. (Butler, A. 1994 p 23).

Barthes defines Aestheticism as one of many Connotation Procedures. This refers to the 'composition of a visual subject being treated with deliberation in its very material texture'. (1977 p.24) This becomes very apparent when viewing the intricate details of the painting. For example, the transparency created by Bacon's use of the dry brush strokes to create the illusion of a "ghost-like apparition". (Dixon, A 2008 p 565)

In addition to the vigorous energy of the brush strokes the paint is carelessly smeared and spattered onto the canvas "Much like the subject they scream out at the viewer"(AG Dixon, p. 565) Bacon's deliberate choice of the colours, yellow and purple further compounds this notion of aestheticism. These complimentary colours in addition to the stark use of black and white immediately catches the viewer's attention. (Dixon ,A. 2008)

Posing is considered yet another Connotation Procedure according to Barthes. "the- very pose of the subject which prepares the reading of the signifieds of connotation" (1977 p. 22) The Pope sits on his throne with clenched fists screaming in pure terror.

Demonstrating to the audience a sense of panic and desperation. (Dixon, A. 2008) The position of the figure, combined with Bacon's composition of diagonal and aggressive yellow brush strokes illustrates something of a "tubular construction" (Butler,A. 1994 p. 23). Almost resembling prison bars. A far cry from Velázquez's composed and dominating 1650 counterpart.

In conclusion, this basic semiotic analysis has greatly enhanced my understanding and appreciation of this devastating artwork. It has allowed me to deconstruct and analyse the connotative procedures that went into making this artwork into an incredible depiction of existential angst. Which serves to visualise the gradual transfiguration and distortion of contemporary depictions of power. (Acevedo B. 2011)

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Figure 3. Study After Study after Velázquez's Portrait of Pope Innocent X, Francis Bacon (1953) Accessed from: <https://www.francis-bacon.com/news/iconic-study-after-velazquezs-portrait-pope-innocent-x-1953-display> [Accessed on January 3rd]

Task 3: Practise-based writing: A practical reflection of The International Surrealism Exhibition in the Tate Modern

According to The Oxford Concise Dictionary of Art and Artists, Surrealism is characterised by a “fascination with the bizarre, the incongruous and the irrational.” Much of my own art style specialises in Surrealism and Dada which weld similar principles. It is only fitting to dedicate this portion of my portfolio discussing such works.

I remember being absolutely bewildered by the Tate Modern’s International Surrealism Exhibition in 2019. The unconventional nature of the curation It was so inspiring to me. According to the Tate website the works in the curation of the room itself is deliberately made to mirror the inner workings of a surrealist and their own personal approach to an exhibition. The organisation is said to be inspired by the international Surrealist Exhibition introduced in London during the 1930s. In which contrasting artworks were purposely set against one another. (Tate 2020).

A highlight of this exhibition was to view my very first Picasso Painting *The Three Dancers*. This provided a heightened emotional response from me. It was such a thrilling experience to view a real life painting from an artist I have admired for years. I really

enjoy the intensity of emotion of the Dancers faces. Particularly the one on the left. I was surprised to later discover this painting served as a reflection of Picasso's own turmoil in his failing marriage. (I. Chilvers 2003).



Fig 4. Oil on Canvas, 1925, 215x142cm

It is also interesting to reflect on this exhibition now. I am finding myself drawn to pieces I hadn't previously considered. My artistic tastes have shifted significantly towards portraiture in the past year. I am extremely drawn to the works of Francis Picabia and his 'The Handsome Pork Butcher'.



Fig. 5 1924, Oil Paint, 4 Plastic Combs and Bone Comb on Canvas

I feel very connected to the subject that has been painted. I find a lot of similarities to this piece and many of my own works. Particularly my series of oil pastel portraits. Particularly the minor details such as the large eyes, crooked nose and outlined hands. Upon further research I have discovered that Picabia was a driving figure in the anti-art, anti-reason movement. I was amazed to discover in his early years he and Marcel Duchamp formed a Dadaist group in the USA. His most notable piece being the Amorous Parade. (Butler, A. 1994). However I find his later turn to Surrealism far more engaging.

Overall, I found this exhibition to be an enthralling, albeit brief experience. I feel like this is a very fitting introduction to the subject of Surrealism if viewers much like me were unaware of the concept at the time. I also feel like it provides a very interesting jumping off point for those who are interested in the subject and wish to view a diverse range of influential figures of the art form. Ranging from Cairo, Prague, Mexico City, Tokyo, Brussels and many more. (Tate, 2019). The works I engaged with during and after this exhibition have reverberated in my art forms over a year after visiting the Tate and I trust they will continue to do so.

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Figure 4. The Three Dancers, Pablo Picasso 1925, Accessed From: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/picasso-the-three-dancers-t00729> [Accessed on January 3rd 2021]

Figure 5. The Handsome Pork-Butcher, Francis Picabia 1924, Accessed From: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/picabia-the-handsome-pork-butcher-t07108> [Accessed on January 3rd 2021]