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Tasks in the order I received them:

Task 1: Observational Writing = 485 words

Task 2: Practice-based Writing = 466 words

Task 3: Manifesto Writing = 470 words

Task 1: Observational Writing

Alexander Huang's *Kiss of the Rabbit God* – connection between colour opposites and semiotics

Oppositions are a part of our daily lives. Media feed us manufactured reality, a portrayal of life that fits a set narrative - left versus right, war versus peace. Oppositions create tension, drama, conflict, they keep people engaged by imposing one's dominance over another (Yu, 2018). The concept of binary oppositions is especially useful when explaining semiotics because it explores signs connoting meaning in an easy and accessible way. After all, differentiating between black, good and evil is perhaps the most fundamental skills that humans possess.

To focus on one of semiotics' biggest parts, signs is what keeps art alive. Signs can be broken down into what's signified – the idea behind, and signifier – what helps to convey the idea in a physical way. For example the colour red, which is a signifier, conveys the idea of love and passion by stimulating our nervous system. There is also the connotation, how the sign is perceived by the lens of culture the viewer's from. Colour stimuli play a big role in how we understand and feel our environments (Wilms, 2018), and reactions, so psychology, can be translated into signs and their respective meanings. These fields are strongly connected and coexisting.



Fig 1 – *Kiss of the Rabbit God*, Huang Alexander, 2019

In Andrew Huang's short film *Kiss of the Rabbit God*, opposites are present everywhere. In the film we follow a story of an everyday man, Matt, who falls in love with the Rabbit God, Shen. Matt is bound to reality by working at a restaurant, he wishes for peace and freedom, whereas Shen travels through the times as a god of forbidden, gay lovers. Matt is a closeted gay man, whilst Shen is confident in his expression. The viewer enters the world of binary opposite traits, but the most prominent opposite are colours – blue and red. Red is that of gods.

When approaching meaning of *Kiss of the Rabbit God*, we are unable to separate personality of the characters with colours. Shen bears red, a colour that has strong, culturally universal connotations with passion, luck and energy, and uses it as a tool to make Matt aware of his own qualities and wants. Because Matt is timid, he is surrounded by blue, a colour of self-reflection and melancholy. By linking the colour and its' meaning to a character, we are able to work out what will happen before the movie even shows us.

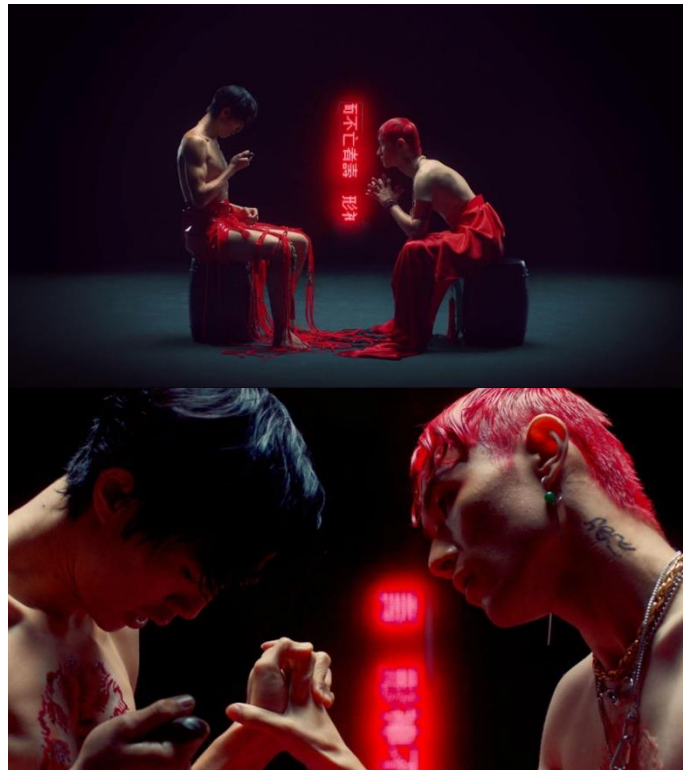


Fig 2 and 3 - *Kiss of the Rabbit God*, Huang Alexander, 2019

In the carving scene, we are not only presented with merging of the opposites (Parmentier, 2015) – characters no longer act as separate, but rather in a *one mind, two bodies* dynamic – but also with a concept of a symbolic sign. Matt is now carving a sign on his chest, one Shen was bearing on his the entire time. This sign symbolizes love and luck, and acts as a connection between the two characters.

Signs are a part of everything we know, and likely, everything can be deconstructed, even colours and their relations to emotions and cultures.

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Task 2: Practice-based Writing

Kim Seoungyoung – *Reflections* (2016) at Savina Museum of Contemporary Art, Seoul.

The Savina Museum of Contemporary Art is an art gallery in Seoul, South Korea. Established in 1996, it used to serve as an educational centre as well. Located in the Jongno District, it was quick to become one of the leading private galleries in South Korea. Savina Museum is known for its large collection of Virtual exhibitions, one of which is Kim Seoungyoung's *Reflections* (2016) exhibition.



Fig.1 – Outside of the Savina Museum, Park Hyunkoo, 2020

Kim Seoungyoung is a well-established artist who works with installation art. According to him, *Reflections* is meant to explore human memory, passage of time, and healing. The reds and warm whites of walls create a feeling of time slowing down. Combined with dim overhead lighting and low ceilings, it's only natural to enter the meditative state of mind whilst viewing the exhibition.

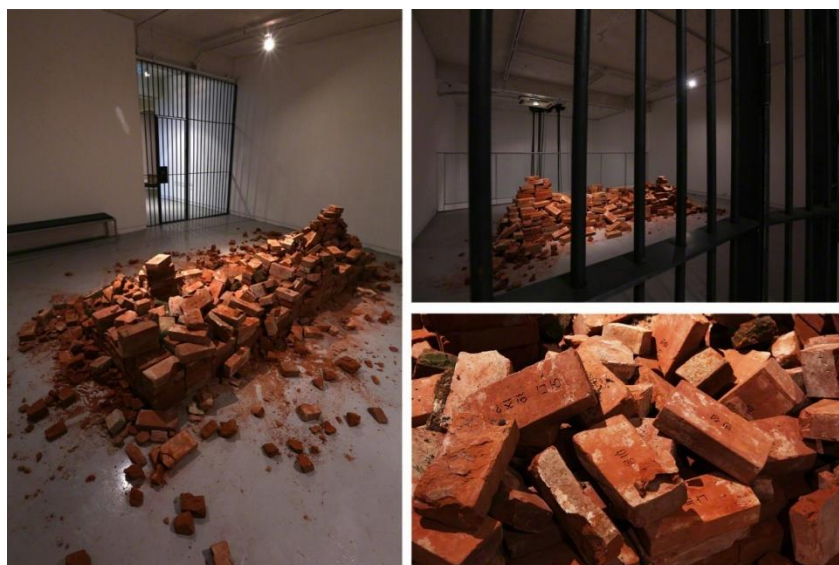


Fig 2 – *Reflection*, (second floor), Kim Seoungyoung, 2016



Fig 3 – *Reflection* (ground floor), Kim Seoungyoung, 2016

My personal favourites among the installations are *Reflection* and *Sweep* respectively. *Reflection* is a two part installation consisting of a shallow well on the ground level, and a destroyed brick wall on the upper floor. The black glass surface of the well allow the viewer to see themselves, both up close and looking from above. This only adds to the notion of self-discovery and reflecting on one's life, personality, emotions.

Second floor installation portrays a broken wall, on which Kim carved words and sentences on the individual bricks, "where are you?" being one most visible. I can only think of an artist breaking his metaphorical walls that stopped him from discovering himself, what drives him, and getting to know himself. Himself, who he can see from up above, staring into the black waters of the well.

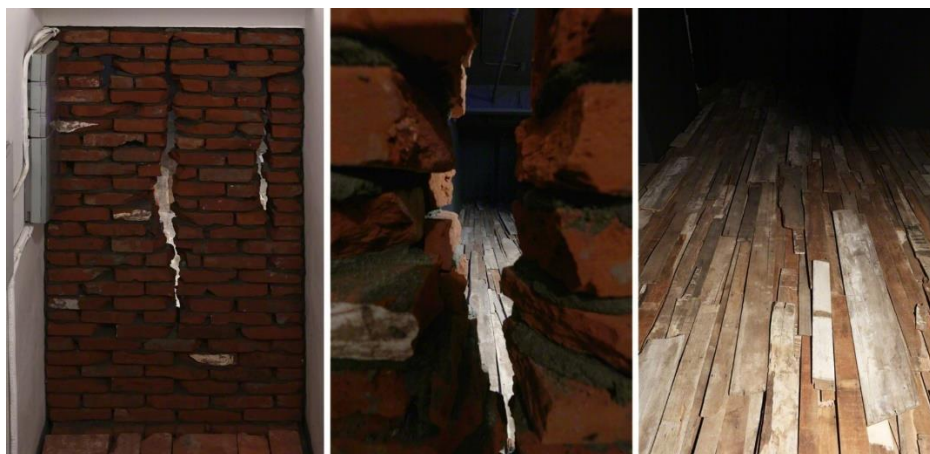


Fig 4 – *Sweep*, Kim Seoungyoung, 2016

Sweep is a brick wall that stands on an unused staircase. Through the cracks, the viewer can see raw wooden floor leading to darkness. This installation is a perfect introduction to *Reflection*, as it shows the beginning of the process of self-discovery – the wall starts to crack, and one can look into their own soul and the deep darkness surrounding it.

Despite the digitalization of the show, emotions conveyed through the artworks are just as true as if one were to experience the exhibition in person. By using cameras to capture the image, instead of creating a virtual reality exhibition, *Reflections* feels grounded and closer to an organic experience.

We cannot overlook the fact that there are many limitations to digitalizing exhibitions, such as a change of perspectives or unwanted digital shifts of the lighting, however it is worth noting that it's an only way of capturing a fleeing memory, just like photography does. The Director of Savina Museum expressed that she wants to make art more accessible to the general public, be it Korean or international. If it hadn't been for the Internet and virtual exhibitions, I would never get to discover various kinds of Asian art styles, techniques and artists.

The exhibition can be viewed at Savina Museum's website

http://www.savinamuseum.com/upload/vr_data/z161226_savina/vr/

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Figure 1 - Park Hyunkoo, 2020 [Available at]

<http://www.koreaherald.com/view.php?ud=20200427000865> Accessed on 28 December 2020

Figures 2,3 and 4 - *Reflections* Kim Seoungyoung, 2016 [Available at]

<https://www.artsy.net/artwork/kim-seung-young-reflections> Accessed on 3 January 2020

Task 3: Manifesto Writing

MANIFESTO by Karina Dierzuk

- I. **Respect where you came from.**
- II. **Use your art as a safe space.**
- III. **Go beyond your original medium.**
- IV. **Allow things to be temporary.**
- V. **Make room for mediocrity.**
- VI. **Express yourself outside binaries.**
- VII. **Don't force being political.**
- VIII. **Question yourself.**

Confident art is disposable art

Chasing perfection is a concept that every artist has come across with. I used to think that anything I was working on at the time had to be of the best quality, otherwise it wouldn't be worth of sharing. As I reached a low in my confidence as an artist, I decided to adapt a philosophy of "disposable art" (Perry, 2019) - something I would perfect as little as possible, sometimes with an intention of destroying it immediately after editing. Soon, my art brought me pleasure again, and I felt a new sense of purpose.

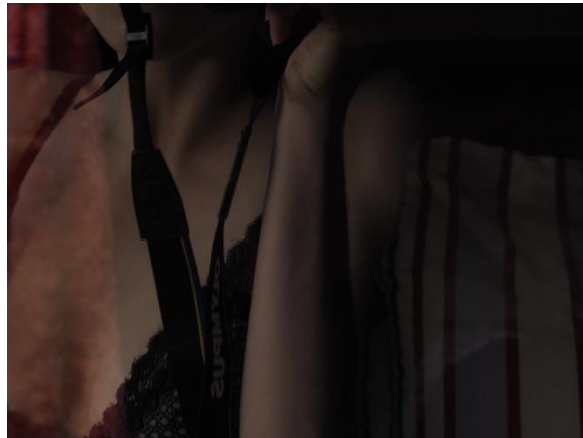


Fig 1. *Memories of sunken places (unfinished)*, Dierzuk, 2019

"Good artists create. They keep moving forward" (Perry, 2019). By letting go of my old creations and making space for new ones, I was able to explore new styles of photography and most importantly speed up the editing process. Perry's philosophy of creating disposable photography is worth adapting as it leads to actual learning from the creative process, applying learning outcomes into future practice, and most of all, lets one move forward with confidence.

Expression outside the binary as means of discovery

Photography still remains a very cis-male dominated field. We need to change that – it is unacceptable that only 11% of artists in museums are women. Not only do we need even more women in art, we need to go beyond the gender binary representation.



Fig 2. *Valerie – Documenting Dysphoria*, Wissmath, 2019

There is a world of trans and non-binary artists whose perspectives on art and the human psyche would bring richness to the table. As a non-binary artist myself, I want to express myself outside the binary of not only male versus female, neurotypical versus neurodivergent, heterosexual versus queer. There is a vast grey area that remains unexplored. Gender diversity leads to betterment of our understanding of life and other people's views (Nielsen, 2017) emotions, and would allow us to perform better in society. I stand with people who exist outside various binaries, and will continue to portray them in my art, giving them platforms to express themselves.

Creation outside one's original medium

It's rare for artists to stay within one artistic medium throughout their lives. Many respected figures in art, such as Edward Steichen or Hans Breder, have worked in all media, often creating *intermedium* pieces of art. According to Breder, intermedia are not driven by a set of rules or styles, which only allows for exposition to various arts and freedom in experimentation (Breder and Rapaport, 2011).



Fig 3. *Ireel*, Borsi, 2014

Years of painting in art studios expanded my skillset, but made me realize that I want to keep moving forward and keep trying out new things, simultaneously expanding my knowledge and understanding of my area of interest. Experimentation only stimulates my creativity and pushes me to create more art that's outside of my comfort zone, which I believe to be the ultimate goal of an artist.

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Figure 1 - *Memories of sunken places*, Karina Dierzuk, 2019. Personal collection.

Figure 2 - *Valerie - Documenting Dysphoria*, Salgu Wissmath, 2019. [Available from] <https://www.salguwissmath.com/index/G0000CPBJaz1gxPU> Accessed on 29 December 2020.

Figure 3 - *Ireel*, Flora Borsi, 2014. [Available from] <https://floraborsi.com/ireel>. Accessed on 29 December 2020.