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Programme of Study: Graphic Design

Module: ADAD4018

Ways of Thinking Lecturer's Name: Martin Bush

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task 1: Observational Writing = 493 words

Task 2: Manifesto Writing = 549 words

Task 3: Practice-based Writing = 515 words

Task 1: Observational Writing

This text will deconstruct contemporary advertising campaign, my aim is to explore what semiotics is whilst making reference to theories of semiotics and advertising, in an attempt to offer new ways of seeing.

Semiotics is the study of signs (a sign being anything that can be used to represent something else) and how they are used and interpreted. Signs can be visual, aural or sonic

“From birth, we are taught how to read signs and symbols” (Berger, 1972).

It is a way of seeing the world, and of understanding how the landscape and culture in which we live has a massive impact on all of us unconsciously.

Charles Sanders Pierce defined a sign as “something which stands to somebody for something” (Pierce, 1995, p. 99). One of Pierce’s major contributions to semiotics was the categorization of signs into three main types, namely Symbol (something that resembles the object), Index (something associated with the object) and Icon (something which is related to the object by convention). These are the core principles in the understanding of semiotics in communication. (Huening, 2006)

Linguist Ferdinand de Saussure is regarded as another of the founding fathers of Semiotics. Saussure divided signs into two parts: every sign is made of sound-images or signifiers and the concepts generated by the signifier and signified. (Berger, 2014, p. 22). For example, a word is made up of its individual letters and the meaning which they collectively convey.

Below is an example of a semiotic analysis of an image in a Drive Safe marketing campaign which appeared in the Frontier Post in 2013.

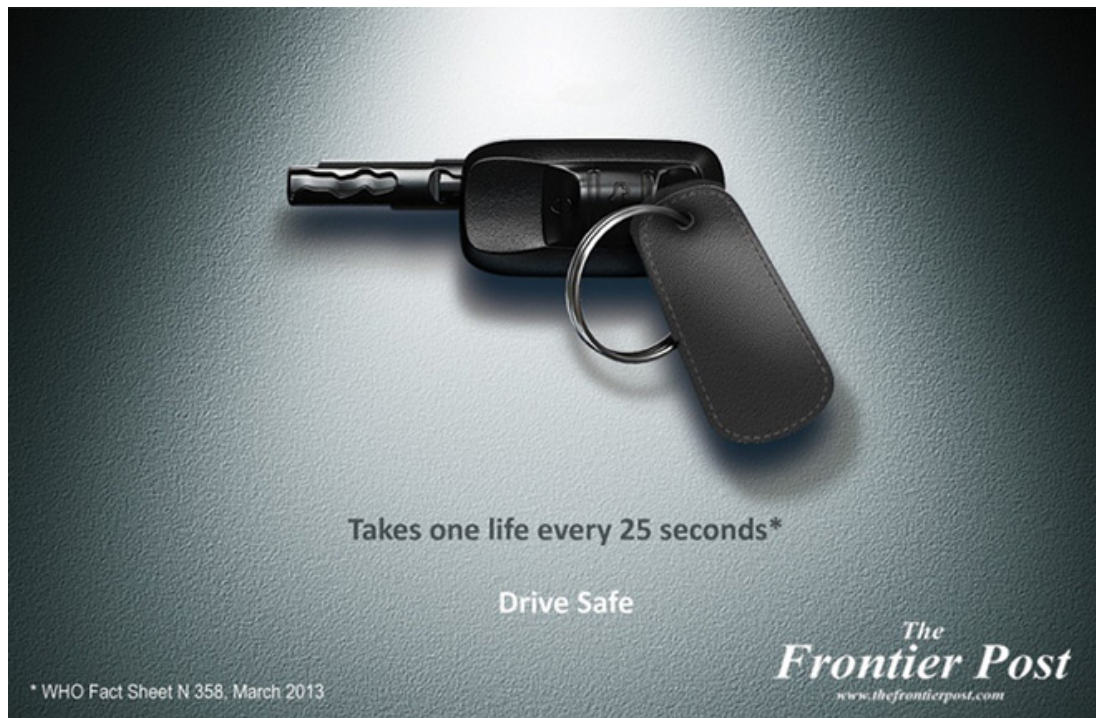


Figure 1: *Drive safe*, The Frontier Post, (2013)

Everyone is aware of the possible consequences of reckless driving. Yet the Frontier post still recognises the need for action especially amongst younger drivers. A campaign which provides some element of shock is more likely to make the most impact and demand attention. Here the usually innocent looking car keys are the signifier, arranged provocatively to mimic the shape of a dangerous gun and effectively highlighted by the use of focussed lighting. The use of dark tones adds a sinister feel to the campaign. The image stresses that in the wrong hands a vehicle is just as dangerous as a gun and should be treated with the same care and respect. The consequences of not driving safely is reiterated in the words 'takes one life every 25 seconds. Other text includes the name of a respected newspaper and the use of "WHO", both of which adds to the validity and credibility of the advert. Personally, I

think the Drive Safe text should be a little more prominent, but not so much so as to detract from the central image.

I have assumed that the advert targets reckless driving but could also be alluding to any other dangerous practice behind the wheel such as driving whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol or even using a mobile phone.

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Available at: <https://csmt.uchicago.edu/glossary2004/symbolindexicon.htm>
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List of Illustrations:

Figure 1: The Frontier Post (2013) *Drive Safe* [digital image]. Available at:
<https://i.pinimg.com/originals/e3/2d/28/e32d28306f837b638c3ccb597cd45f6f.jpg>
(Accessed: 20 November 2020)

Task 2: Manifesto Writing

1. Artists should be given equal opportunities
2. Gender pay gap
3. Wales should become independent
4. Sports can help mental health and physical health
5. Reduce use of plastic
6. More support should be given to the homeless
7. Overthinking ruins perfectionism
8. I believe in the power of visual design (feminism/ racism)

1:More support should be given to the homeless



Fig 1, *Homeless*, Rui Duarte, 2011

The UK economy is ranked fifth in the world, (Worlds Popular Review, 2020) yet shamefully homelessness is still a big issue. Families are more at risk of becoming homeless than ever in 2020 with more business closures and rising unemployment. The latest Government statistics estimate that 4266 people sleep rough on a 'typical' night. Alarming this represents a 141% increase since the 2010 figure of 2498. (Big Issue, 2020)

People who are homeless have life expectancy rates similar to those in Victorian times. The Government says that,

"people who are homeless have much shorter lives compared to the rest of the population, with an average life expectancy of 42 years of age compared with 82 years of age in the general population" (O'Sullivan, 2018, p. 100).

During the COVID 19 pandemic many councils took in rough sleepers to protect them from the virus. Evidence suggests that housing people quickly in secure accommodation is a far more cost-effective option. This demonstrates that with political will, a difference can be made. Let's be the ones to lend a helping hand.

2:Reduce use of plastic



Fig 2, *Marine plastic pollution*, Rich Carey, 2016

Plastics became popular in the 1960s and the use of disposable plastic products surged in the following decades. Although plastic is a necessary product in our lives, there is growing concern about the use of single use plastic.

Carrier bag charging in the UK has positively impacted on reducing use. However personal experience of doing beach cleans has shown me the scale of plastic waste washed up on our beaches and the effect on wildlife.

About 8 million tons of plastic waste enters our oceans annually from coastal nations.

(Parker, 2020). This equates to about 5 bin bags of rubbish on every foot of coastline around

the world.

“Marine anthropogenic litter causes harm to a wide range of marine biota. Seabirds, fish, turtles and marine mammals suffer from entanglement with and ingestion of marine litter items as illustrated by countless pictures of animals injured and strangled by discarded fishing gear in the public media.” (Bergmann, Gutow and Klages, 2015, p. x)

There is still a lot we can do, starting with doing our bit to replace single use products in our lives with reusable equivalents and dealing with waste responsibly.

3:Artists should be given equal opportunities

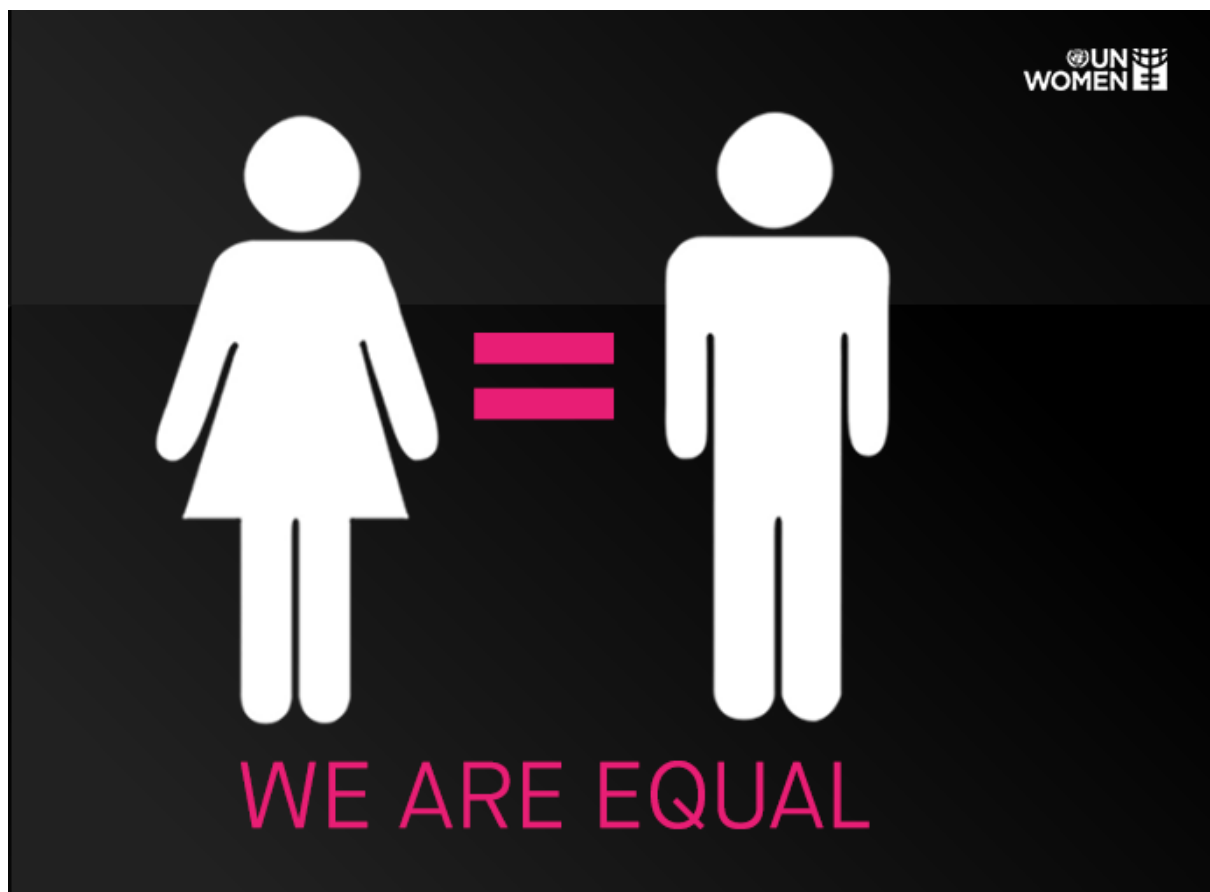


Fig 3. *We Are Equal*, UN's He For She, 2019

Second wave feminist artists worked to highlight women's issues including inequality and discrimination and helped bring about legislation such as the 1970 equal pay act and subsequent improvements.

Peggy Phelan defines feminism as *"the conviction that gender has been and continues to be, a fundamental category for the organisation of culture. Moreover, the pattern of that organisation usually favours men over women"* (Reckitt and Phelan, 2001, p. 18)

Decades of campaigning for equal treatment for women should mean all genders have similar opportunities. Despite legislation, female artists still battle discrimination.

According to The National Museum of Women in the Arts in London 78 % of galleries still represent more men than women. (Sedghi, 2013). Some men believe that a radical approach is needed as the percentages are so unequal. The director of Baltimore Museum decided in 2020 to only buy works by female artists *"in order to 'rectify centuries of imbalance'.* (Kinsella, 2019)

This solution is not fair either, but working to give women's art exposure in major galleries would be a small step in the right direction.

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List of illustrations:

Figure 1: Duarte, R. (2011) *Homeless*. Available at: <https://www.sciencemag.org/news/2016/08/bit-cash-can-keep-someone-streets-2-years-or-more> (Accessed: 24 November 2020).

Figure 2: Carey, R. (2016) *Marine plastic pollution*. Available at: <https://www.nrdc.org/stories/10-ways-reduce-plastic-pollution> (Accessed: 24 November 2020).

Figure 3: UN's HeForShe. (2019) *Homeless*. Available at: <https://belatina.com/report-sees-progress-toward-gender-equality/> (Accessed: 24 November 2020).

Task 3: Practice – based Writing:



Figure 1: *Lens ball series 1*, Cara Edwards, (2020)

The aim of my project was to challenge myself to gain proper technical knowledge and experiment creatively with Abstract Photography, showing photographs as more than records of reality. Personal choice of lens, exposure, angle and contrast can produce radically different results. (Walden, 2010, p. 116)

Abstract Photography could give me freedom for artistic expression and experimentation with something new is exciting.

I find looking at websites useful for tips, particularly helped with advice on lighting, angle of view and adding mystery (Adorama, 2020) and specifically related to abstract work. Dyslexia means I learn and remember better by doing and experimenting. I researched learning styles and recognised myself as a visual learner. (Boneva and Mihova, 2011, pp. 6-16)

My goal was to produce artistic and creative abstract photographs. This required good understanding of my camera and effective photo editing skills to produce work to meet my exacting standards.

I undertook some web-based research. André Kertész inspired me. His use of glass ornaments containing images within images intrigued me. I also looked at 'The complete photographer' by Tom Ang. Although not specifically on Abstract Photography, it provided valuable advice on tricking the eye and space. I liked the idea "What they see in your image leads them to reconstruct the area of the landscape in their mind but guided by you" (Ang, 2010, p. 58)

Shooting outdoors required planning. The weather and lighting could change quickly and affect outcomes. I wanted to use manual settings to learn about the camera. The experimentation process and re-setting the camera required time and patience. This frustrated me, but I needed to expand my skills. Choosing a sunny day for strong colour contrast and good lighting caused some problems. One was that more people were out, so I had to reset props for shots to allow people to pass.

I feel I increased my technical skills by experimenting with Abstract Photography. I believe I created successful images through exploration of a new style. Good results were achieved by varying the angle of working to create unusual perspectives. I noticed that using glass and water produced a blurring effect, fusing one element with another. I manipulated this to well. Learning more about editing software allowed me to increase/ decrease emphasis on aspects I wished to highlight or diminish.

I planned carefully yet didn't consider the intensifying effect of the sun on glass. This caused problems for the hand model and with grass/wood surfaces as smoke was produced. I adapted but shot more in indirect sunlight than planned. I feel I learned well through trial and error achieving good quality abstract images. I'm excited about this subject and believe there is still options to push the abstract theme further e.g. experimentation with artificial lights indoors; using a wider range of vibrant natural or artificial lights and more unusual locations like abandoned industrial settings. I feel learning not to be afraid to experiment and make mistakes will help me to be even more open minded and creative with future projects.

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Figure 1: Edwards, C. (2020) *Lens ball series 1*.