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Programme of Study: Graphic Design (BA)

Module: ADAD4018 Ways of Thinking

Tasks in the order I received them:

Tasks One: Semiotic Analysis = 538 words

Task Two: Manifesto = 464

Task Three: Practice-based writing = 523

## Task One: Semiotic Analysis

Signs are used in our everyday lives to communicate messages effectively. Semiotics is a structuralist method and is defined by founder Swiss linguist Ferdinand de Saussure as “the life of sign within society”. Saussure gave birth to the basic concepts of semiotics being that a sign has two components: the signifier and the signified. Charles Sanders Peirce was another founder of semiotics who contributed three ways signs can be categorised: an icon, an index, and a symbol (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018). This semiotic analysis will decode the messages hidden in the ‘Last Splash’ album cover which is an album from the alternative rock band ‘the Breeders’ released on the 30<sup>th</sup> of August 1993 designed by British designer Vaughan Oliver.

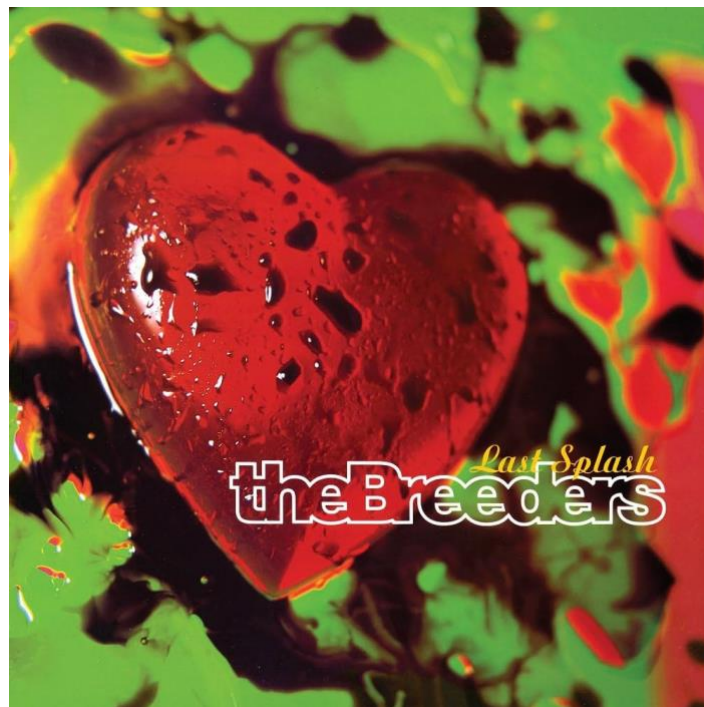


*Figure 1: The Breeders – ‘Last Splash’ Album Cover – Designed by Vaughan Oliver (1993).*

Visual imagery is used to communicate messages. When this visual imagery is presented as a piece of art it can affect the way people view it based on all their past learnt assumptions (Berger, 2008). The simplification of an anatomical heart into a shape is used at the centre of the design and by using Pierce's definition of a symbol being related to its referent only by cultural agreement (Encyclopaedia Britannica, 2018), it is seen as a culturally acquired symbol. In early twentieth century western culture, the simplification of the heart in a shape has religious connotations and was associated with suffering, sacrifice, Christian passion, and divine love (Novelli, 2017). The blood juxtaposed with the heart shape has religious connotations of divine love and sacrifice. The use of this heart visually communicates these messages to the viewer and provides them with an understanding about what the music entails before they have even listened to it.

The colour red is used predominately in the design. It is a warm colour like yellow and orange. Studies on warm colours like yellow, orange and red are found to be associated with an increase in blood pressure, respiratory rate and eye-blink frequency (Gerard, 1957, cited in Bellizzi & Hite, 1992). These types of effects on the human body all share connotations with the feelings of love and romantic feelings which compliments the visual imagery of the heart and signifies the meaning of the music.

The type that is provided communicates enough information to the viewer for them to form an idea about the meaning behind the music. 'Last Splash' is made up of the words 'Last' meaning, "Following all others in a series, succession, order, set, or enumeration; subsequent to all others in occurrence, existence, etc." (Oxford dictionary of English, 2014) and 'Splash' meaning, "a sound made by something striking or falling into liquid" (Oxford

dictionary of English, 1914). The use of the phrase acts as an anchorage text when used against the visuals of the heart shape and the blood. It creates connotations of experiencing love for the last time and the idea of a last splash into love.

As I conclude my semiotic analysis, I see the cover no longer as just an image for visual aesthetics but for a deeper understanding of the thought process behind the work and how shape, colour and type is used to communicate meaning. I have also gained a basic understanding of semiotics, allowing me to make my own work more meaningful and successful at communicating.

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## **Task Two: Manifesto**

1. Curiosity should be considered one of the most important desires, so we can learn, grow, and discover more about our lives and this world.
2. Design needs to regain its rebelliousness; design has become too simple.
3. Every designer and artist should be open to the use of new technologies to expand on their knowledge and to keep evolving their work.
3. Document the experiences throughout your life to not only to look back on in the future but to help clear the mind.
4. Creatives must make time to reconnect with their inner child.
5. Be open-minded when it comes to other people and break down barriers that divide us in society.
6. Listen to every emotion you feel and don't repress them.
7. Don't be afraid to say "no".

3. “Every designer and artist should be open to the use of new technologies to expand on their knowledge and to keep evolving their work”.



*Figure 1: Jason Allen Théâtre D'opéra Spatial (2022) – AI generated artwork*

With the significant rise in the popularity of image generative ai, it has made many designers and artists question whether they will lose out on future career opportunities due to this growing technology, “Generative AI, able to create content indistinguishable from human work” (Vallance, 2023). However, designers should embrace the endless possibilities that come with this type of technology using it to come up with new creative ideas and provide new techniques to boost creative thinking (Kantosalo and Tovionen, n.d., p. 77-78). For example, graphic designers with limited knowledge on design theory can use AI software like Designscape which is a generative layout designer aimed at helping the designer create visually engaging layouts for publications and aiding in the design process (Karaata, 2018,

quoted in Hashemieh, n.d., p. 5). Designers and artists should take hold of this technology instead of fearing it.

**5. “Creatives must make time to reconnect with their inner child”.**



*Figure 2 - Edward Hopper, Little Boy Looking at the Sea (1891).*

As we grow up and go through the challenges that everyday life throws at us, we often forget about the curiosity and untapped creativity of the inner child within us. The inner child is seen to make up one part of our complex personality, a part of us that's innocent buried underneath the worries, experiences and struggles of adult life (Capacchione, 1991, cited in Mancewicz, 2013 p.2-3). Artists and designers are told to reconnect with this part of

themselves to unlock the untamed creativity, carefree nature, and self-expression of a child. To reconnect with this part of yourself you must create an environment that promotes play and curiosity, a space where there is no judgement of yourself or your abilities, only then will you find satisfaction within yourself and be able to enter a state of child-like creative flow more easily (Mancewicz, 2013 p.32).

4. **“Document the experiences throughout your life to not only to look back on in the future but to help clear the mind”.**



*Figure 3 – Lewis W. Hine, Lunch atop a skyscraper (1932)*

Over the last 10 years, the popularity of platforms like Instagram and Facebook have led more and more people to document and share parts of their life. It has become easier now than ever for people to capture moments in their lives at any second with the use of cameras on mobile devices. You can look back and trigger a memory, feeling the emotions again through visualisation (Kuriyama, 2012). Writing is another way that people can document their lives. Expressive writing is a good way to clear the mind and can produce many long-term impacts on an individual's health and well-being such as, reduced blood pressure, improved immune system function, improved mood, and many more (Baikie and Wilhelm, 2018).

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### Task Three: Practice-Based Writing

This piece of work comes from a collection of nine pieces I created for the 2023 Art & Design Foundation exhibition titled 'Neostalgia', which is a combination of the words 'neo' and 'nostalgia'. The collection of work titled 'Recollections' focuses on my journey as a creative individual from childhood to now and the journey of reconnecting with my inner child. I have chosen this particular piece from the collection because it communicates my idea the best out of all the other pieces of work.

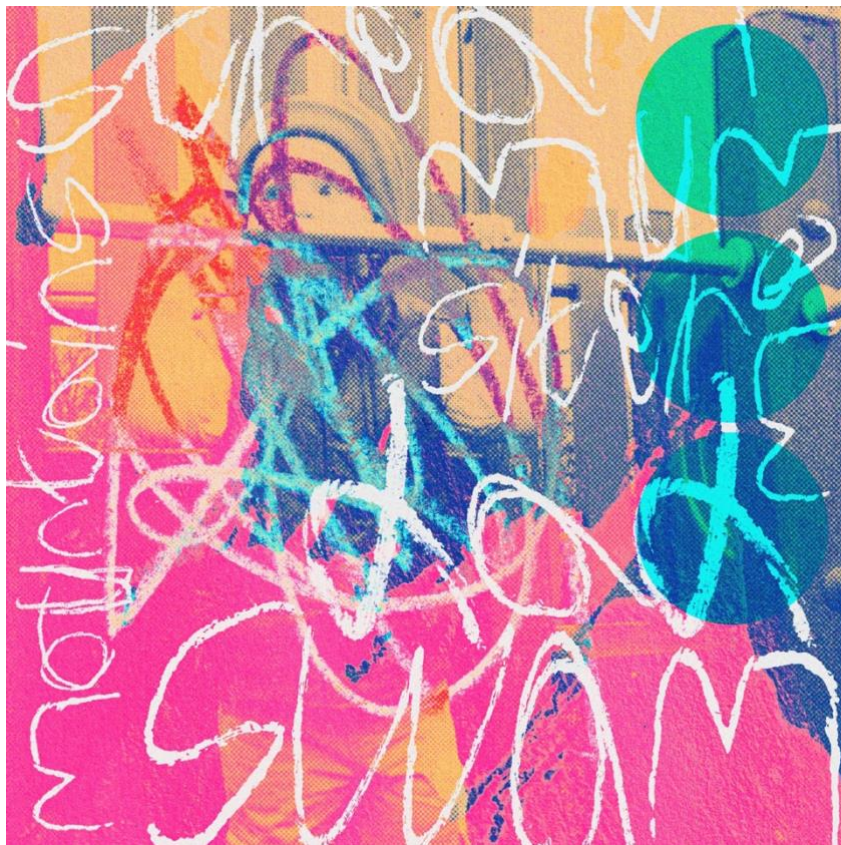


Figure 1 – One piece from a collection of work titled Recollections (2023)

During the creation of this piece, I was coming to the end of the course, and I was at a place when I needed to apply everything to my work that I had learnt from the course. One thing that stuck in my mind throughout the course was something one of my tutors said to me at the start of the course

which was, one of the aims for us when coming to art school is to help us revert back to the creative freedom of our child self, "Inside every adult, there is a child crying, 'let me out'" (Capacchione, 1991). It's something that I still try to apply to my work now and formed the basis of this piece of work. Another reason I decided to go with the theme of childhood self was because it's something that people associated with nostalgia and using it would allow viewers to have an emotional connection with my work (Sedikides et al., 2008).

I felt at the time of the exhibition, the piece successfully communicated the message in a way that was unique and retains both essence from my child self and present self. However, seeing the work after leaving the course, I feel as though the overall message of the piece may have been slightly lost when viewed by others due to some of my design choices. I left some of the work up to interpretation by the viewer which I think was the wrong approach. For example, I incorporated scribbles to represent the carefree nature of a child's creativity, Instead I could have incorporated more childlike drawing of characters or places etc which would have been easier to relate to childhood. A designer that has mastered the art of listening to his inner child is Stanley donwood who incorporates child-like drawings into his designs which has contributed to his success (Yalcinkaya, 2019).

As a graphic design my job is to communicate messages effectively to the viewer. I feel I should have gathered the interpretations of my peers and others during the making of the piece to see if the message was clear, I could then take these critiques and applied them to make the message clearer. I think in my future work I need to adopt a new learning style, one thats values working in a group to improve my thinking and the outcome of my work (Kurt, 2020). A way I could do this would be through group critiques. They will help me improve my own work and form better collaborative and communication skills to also help improve the work of my peers (Hwang & Mauge-Lewis 2013).

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