

# Portfolio of Writing

## Ways of thinking-first draft

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## Semiotics Analysis

Semiotics symbolises meaning behind images. In visual art this could be colours symbolising moods, symbols referencing cultural knowledge. By analysing these signs, as a viewer it allows you to uncover layers of meaning behind the artists work that they want to portray. Semiotics was theorised by Ferdinand de Saussure, Charles Sanders Pierce, and Roland Barthes. Using their conceptual lenses, I will analyse this artwork by Gustav Klimt.

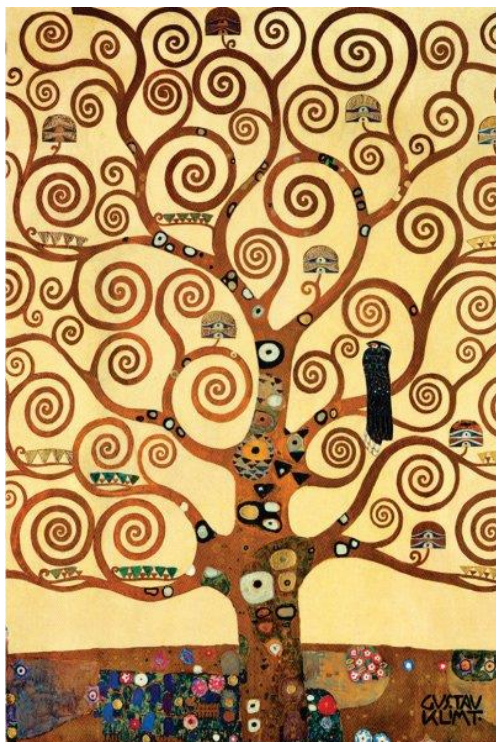


Fig 1(The tree of life)

Tree of life is an oil painting created by Gustav Klimt. It is known as a mosaic, not as painting. The swirl branches symbolise connection between the heaven, earth, and underworld. Klimt meaning behind this piece of art is highly symbolic, standing for the luminescent tree celebrates the continuity and complexity of life. (Breedlove B 2024) It could be interpreted that he is showing ongoing growth throughout generations. The way the swirls are not symmetrical could be represented that life is full of imperfections, but it is a timeline that you will grow and adapt through periods of time. On the lower branch shows a black bird, Klimt uses this to symbolise death. (Breedlove B 2024)

Gustav Klimt drawing style was heavily influenced using line 'The magic of line.' (Gustav Klimt 1981). Throughout his career he travelled through a drawing style with three dimensional and shaded figures to ethereal real language of pure line and light touch. (Klimt, G and Comini, A 1981). This is how he showed his concern with the ever-changing and inescapable steam of human existence. Again, Gustav is representing life consistently changing. This could be through emotions, cultures, relationships, identities, and environments shift continuously. This ongoing motion shows the fragility and the resilience of human nature. Gustav's way of reading human life is very poetic and he expresses his thoughts and feelings well on this subject through 'The tree of life.'

Another symbolic influence Klimt uses throughout his work is feminism. Many of his works strongly symbolises the female power, desire, and identity. This is why many of his pieces display figures of woman surrounded by golden luxurious environments. His work is based around the early 20<sup>th</sup> century feminist movement. This article goes into depths of how Klimt displays his views on how woman should be interpreted as self aware erotic objects, contrasting sharply with the prevailing norms of female chastity and purity. (M., Barkeshli, M., & Toroghi, R. M. 2024). Going back to the spiral designs on 'the tree of life', in many cultures the spiral symbols conception and life. In one of his other paintings 'The three ages of woman', the spiral is placed again to show the mother cradling her child. He uses this as a symbol to convey themes of fertility and reproduction. This piece again is showing the female figure in a decorative beautiful way using decorative golden colourful patterns around the figure.

Overall, it is clear semiotics is used throughout Gustav's work showing deeper meaning about human nature and female power. Whether it was using golden colours standing for power and wealth or line and pattern with underling meanings of human journeys and development.

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Klimt, G. and Comini, A. (1981) *Gustav Klimt*. London: Thames and Hudson.

He, M., Barkeshli, M., & Toroghi, R. M. (2024). Reinventing Women: Gustav Klimt's Explores for Female Emotion and Expression. *Herança*, 7(4), 30–50. <https://doi.org/10.52152/heranca.v7i4.946>

## Figure 1:

The Tree of Life, Stoclet Frieze, 1905 by (no date) Gustav Klimt. Available at: <https://www.gustav-klimt.com/The-Tree-Of-Life.jsp> (Accessed: 16 November 2025)

The Tree of Life. Stoclet Frieze, 1905. by Gustav Klimt [cited 2024 June 30]. <https://www.gustav-klimt.com/The-Tree-Of-Life.jsp>

## Manifesto

Our beautiful natural world.

Eyepopping contrasting colours.

Imaginative nature inspired doodles.

Explorative colour and shapes.

Conveying movement using line and pattern.

An outburst of colour from my mind.

Thoughts and feelings captured within the page

Pattern from archetypes in the subconscious mind.

Reconfiguring modern themes in visual narratives



Fig 1, (Morris, 1876, Snakeshead)

‘Our beautiful natural world’.

My work captures the beauty within nature. Key inspiration comes from natural forms such as leaves, trees, or flowers or beach finds like shells. Usually, I will begin observational drawings of these natural landscapes from going on walks or travelling. These then become more imaginative patterns that gets turned into prints. Sometimes I print directly with natural forms like leaves through the press and other times they come from drawings. Morris states that *“everything made by man's hands has a form, which must be either beautiful or ugly; beautiful if it is in accord with Nature, and helps her; ugly if it is discordant with Nature, and thwarts her; it cannot be indifferent...”* (1882). Morris particularly focuses his work on nature as that is where he sees the true beauty. I find his work inspiring due to my having similar inspirational interests and him being a print designer. In *Hopes and Fears for Art*, Morris also questions *“How can you care about the image of a landscape, when you show by your deeds that you don't care for the landscape itself?”* (1882). This quote is passionate about respecting and caring for the environment, he is trying to highlight issues in the modern world such as not enough care for the planet. I particular like this quote and it is an area I feel passionate about. Everyone needs to see the beauty in nature to be reminded not to disrespect it.



Fig 2, The Starry Night

Conveying movement using line and pattern.

Throughout my work I like to capture movement within my drawings or prints. This tends to be through a mix of composition, line, repetition, and contrast. This helps my work show meaning and tells a story to viewers. Van Gogh (1889) spoke of how tiny things together lead to wonderful things through time. This relates to the way I work by linking different shapes and patterns together through time in developing my work. Van Gogh (1889) also talks about nature and beauty being everywhere, and this refers to movement through looking at different things, it also links to my first manifesto about nature.



Fig 2, Hicks (2019)

An outburst of colour from my mind.

Colour draws the viewer into artwork, whether it is a particular colour you like or the mood it is giving off. Colour shows emotion movement and meaning. Throughout my own work I tend to stick with the same colour palette of natural tones as well as blues and greens. I feel this links to scenic views for me such as the ocean and greenery landscapes. A particular artist that focuses on colour in an expressive way throughout their work is Sheila Hicks (2019) where she talks about how colour is important to her work.

*[My works] are not signed—there's no identification or signatures on paintings. For me, they have to live on their own. Let it live on its own—live or die. Survive, if it can.*

## Bibliography

Morris, W (2025) Goodreads Website. Available at: <https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/834469-everything-made-by-man-s-hands-has-a-form-which-must> (Accessed 27 October 2025)

Morris, W. (1882) *Hopes and Fears for Art*. Project Gutenberg.

Van Gogh, V (2025) AZ Quotes website. Available at: [https://www.azquotes.com/author/5632-Vincent\\_Van\\_Gogh](https://www.azquotes.com/author/5632-Vincent_Van_Gogh) (Accessed 27 October 2025)

Hicks, S (2019) *Wisdom: Artist Sheila Hicks on Success, Intuition, and "Not Wanting" a Legacy*. Available at: <https://www.surfacemag.com/articles/sheila-hicks-artist-on-intuition-success-legacy/> (Accessed 26 October 2025).

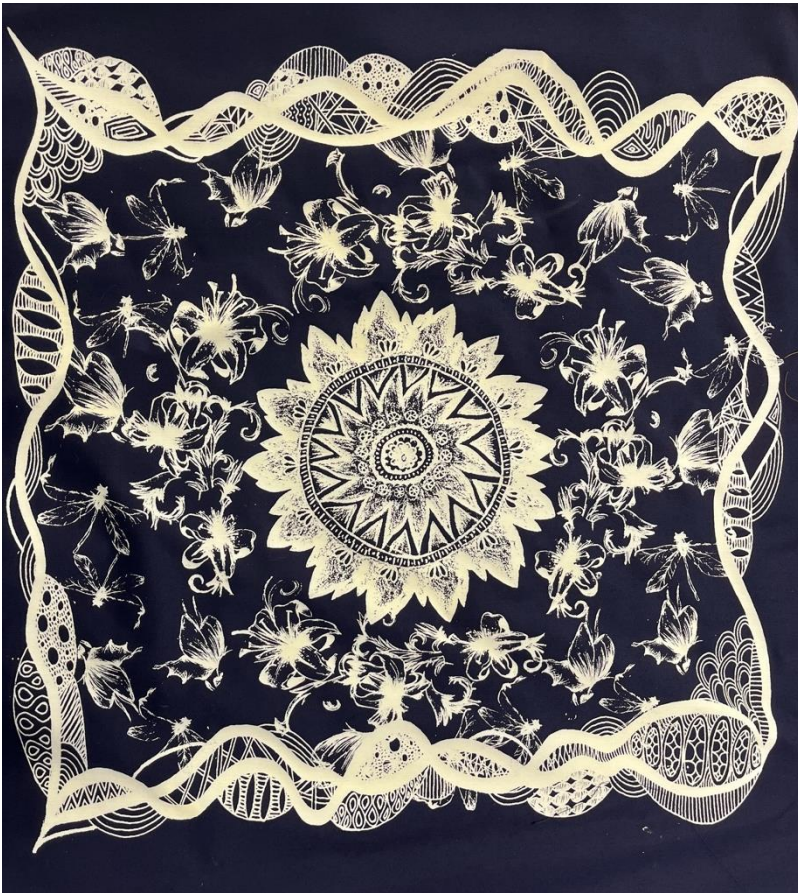
## List of Figures

Figure 1: Morris, W (1876) *Snakeshead* [printed textile]. Available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William\\_Morris](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/William_Morris) (Accessed 26 October 2025).

Figure 2: Van Gogh, V (1889) *The Starry Night*. Available at: [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincent\\_van\\_Gogh#/media/File:The\\_Starry\\_Night,\\_June\\_1889.jpg](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Vincent_van_Gogh#/media/File:The_Starry_Night,_June_1889.jpg). Museum of Modern Art, New York [cent\\_van\\_Gogh](https://www.moma.org/artists/van_gogh) (Accessed 26 October 2025).

Figure 3: Hicks, S (2019) *Wisdom: Artist Sheila Hicks on Success, Intuition, and "Not Wanting" a Legacy*. Available at: <https://www.surfacemag.com/articles/sheila-hicks-artist-on-intuition-success-legacy/> (Accessed 26 October 2025).

## Observational writing



### 1) Concrete experience

The task I was set was to produce a scarf design print for my major studies assignment. Initially what came to mind was botanical, floral, detailed designs. I wanted this to reflect on my theme of broken paths/roads filled in with mosaic, nature inspired tiles. This allows us to still see beauty in our manufactured world. I approached this task by collecting observational drawings of florals/insects and merging them with my more mosaic design patterns onto photoshop. This produced a finished design that I was able to expose on to a screen and print using disperse discharge.

### 2) Reflective Observation

My initial feelings about this outcome were positive, due to having a clean print, despite the fine lines. This relates to my skills and knowledge, due to having learnt this process before hand from technical experiments. This allowed me to produce a more complex design due to already having experience through this process, although I feel I could have used a more complex recipe relating to my colour theme better. In certain areas I am responsible for slight failures like the fine lines being to faint. To resolve this, I will either print of a bigger scale or just add more thickness and contrast the design for next time. Parts I felt were a success to me was the

border, due to it really helping the botanical florals pop out. I was also pleased with the cleanliness of the print, which I believed was helped by the opposite colour contrast.

### 3) Abstract Conceptualism

From this experience I have learnt what design styles work best on the screen like more simplistic thicker lines are easier, while more detailed finer designs are less reliable to succeed. Relating to the botanical style of my artwork, it is heavily influenced by William Morris's wallpapers in the nineteenth century. This style of artwork was born out of the human desire to learn and understand more about the surrounding world. Florals are known to promote specific memories like perhaps a human connection with nature is not just on an aesthetic level, but is a more complex, emotional relationship, Bethany Morgan (2018).

### 4) Active Experimentation

If I could do things differently, I would follow my colour palette of teal, purple and mustard. Although I saw this sample as a good practice run for my design ensuring I got a clean technical print. New ideas I plan to take further in the future is to gather more designer inspiration for artists such as Abigail Borg, Heidi Vikman etc.

## Bibliography

Bethany Morgan (2018), *Journal of Huddersfield Student Research*