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SOCIAL MEDIA ANALYSIS

Social media is something that has become an increasingly important part of people's lives, over the past decade especially; with the percentage of adults in the US that use social media increasing 'from 5% in 2005 to 79% in 2019' (Ortiz-Ospina, 2019). Peoples' everyday activities have changed or been adjusted because of it, for example people are more likely to interact via a social media platform than send a letter or telephone one another, highlighting just how profound the effects of social media have been on society as a whole and the way individuals behave and interact. 'The function of social media is not limited to being the platform for interaction, as it has affected all aspects of human lives, including activities in the arts.' (Rusyada, 2021, pg.29), allowing artists to gain exposure for their work without the aid of a gallery, as anyone with access to social media can post their work to potentially be viewed by people from across the globe, meaning that 'with the support of technology, art is no longer an elite thing' (Rusyada, 2021, pg.30). In his book "Ways of Seeing", John Berger stated that 'adults and children sometimes have boards in their bedrooms or living rooms on which they pin pieces of paper: letters, snapshots, reproductions of drawings, post-cards. On each board all the images belong to the same language and all are more or less equal within it because they have been chosen in a highly personal way to match and express the experience of the room's inhabitant.' (1972, pg.37). Although this piece of writing outdates social media; here, Berger describes something that sounds very similar to an individual's social media page, as they are usually a representation of the individual themselves. By stating that 'these boards should replace museums' (Berger, 1972, pg.37) Berger suggests that museums and galleries can almost remove the individual from the work itself, relating to social media as it has become an alternative way to view artwork via the artists feed rather than in a gallery space, allowing work to become more personal and less selective. Galleries also aren't representative with the work that they display, 'A study published in 2019 found that in collections of eighteen major US art museums, 87 per cent of artworks were by men, and 85 per cent by white artists.' (Hessel, 2022, pg.10) this highlights how many works may often not be exhibited purely due to the gender or ethnicity of the artist. Social media combats this as it allows people to view work by any artist that wishes to share it, meaning artists that otherwise wouldn't have been able to gain recognition for their work.

For this module I decided to set up an Instagram page for my artwork (see figures 1 & 2), on which I have uploaded previous work from the past year and also began uploading current pieces.

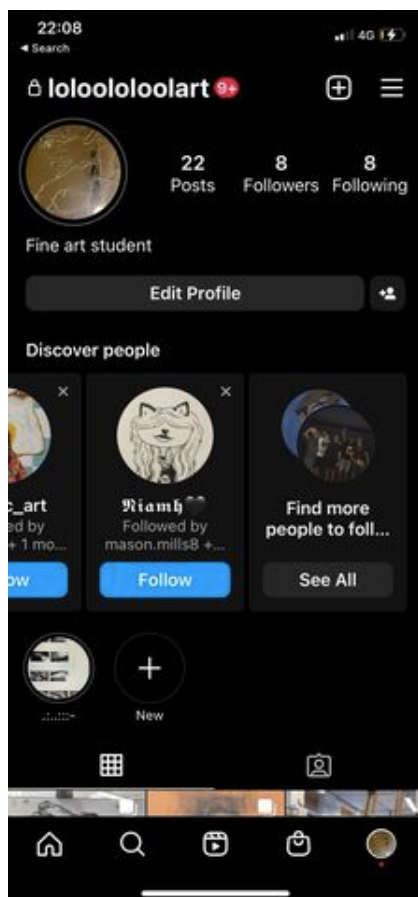


Figure. 1

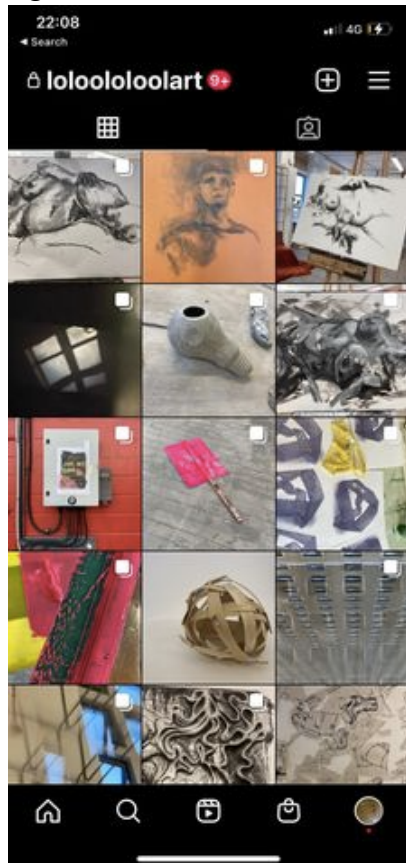


Figure. 2

I chose Instagram as it is a platform that I am familiar with as I have had a personal account for several years, it is also one of the most popular apps today which means your work can potentially reach a lot of people. Instagram also caters for many different art forms, firstly as images in your feed which can display photography, paintings and many other pieces of work, they also have reels which allow people to upload video work, the introduction of live streams allow for people to stream things such as performances in real time to an online audience and the story feature allows for a less permanent image or video to be posted, usually being used for less formal aspects of an artist's practise. There is also a feature that allows you to turn your account into a professional account (see figure.3) which allows the user to track statistics, such as how many people your account reaches and how many times your profile was viewed in a certain time, which gives the artist an insight into who their followers are meaning they are able to cater their work towards a certain audience.

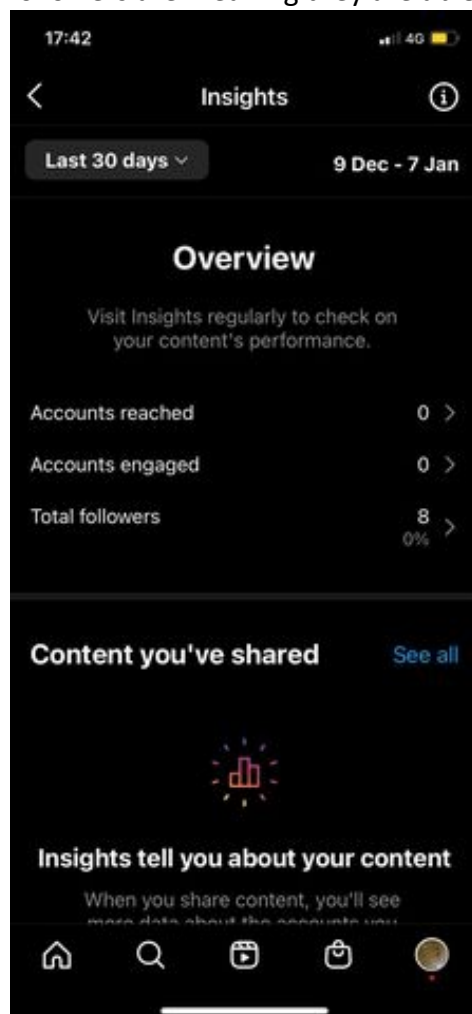


Figure. 3

However, despite its many positives, Instagram is a very saturated app with many artists using it daily to post their work making it hard to get recognised and easy to get lost within the masses.

Another app I use is Pinterest, which is an image-based app that allows users to upload images and pin others to different boards depending on their interests or needs, the app then adjusts what images it shows the user based on what they have previously liked. I use

Pinterest solely to gain inspiration for my work and not as a way to post my own art, as I find it really easy to source and store images in a very organised manner.

One of the main negatives I find when viewing art via social media is the impact of trends on the work that people put out. With the rise of apps such as Tiktok and Instagram, at any given time a certain aesthetic, type of clothing or style becomes popular and trendy; this has an impact on artists and their work as they begin to create art based on what people want and what is in fashion at the moment rather than what they would actually like to do. Social media has therefore led artists to take 'a more commercial approach and follow the interest of the social media market' (Rusyada, 2021, pg.29). Overall, I have found the process of putting my work onto social media a daunting experience, however it has allowed me to view my work almost as if I am an outsider gaining more perspective on it as a whole. However, I am not sure if I would be inclined to create any other social media profiles for my art as I wouldn't want to fall into the habit of creating work for the purpose of satisfying viewers rather than for myself.

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STATEMENT

I have always had a fascination for the human form; growing up dancing I was able to gain a great insight into how the body moves and the beautiful shapes it can create which is something that I have enjoyed translating into my artwork. Often keeping a sketchbook to hand; I also enjoy observing people in the quieter moments, catching small gestures or interactions between individuals then quickly translating these onto the page. Over the past few years, I have enjoyed using a range of materials, such as oil paint and spray paints, to create portraits, again trying to capture small expressions within different faces. Elements of my work also draw upon interactions which I have been a part of myself, often relating to gender and aspects such as the male gaze and authority within gender roles, from this I have created several figurative paintings involving text that reflect upon and express my thoughts on these issues. Exploring similar themes of femininity has led me to expand my practise from primarily using acrylic and oil paints to exploring more three-dimensional methods. A recent project on lace has sparked an interest on the meaning behind certain materials and their worth within society, research on the connotations of the fabric itself and how its value has changed through time has led me to draw the connection between lace and cage-like forms; both being used to conceal yet reveal simultaneously. From this I have begun to use wire within my work to mirror the metal used in cages, I have used the wire to create my own handmade barbed wire, mimicking the recognisable shape. With the wire I have also been manipulating it to form the intricate patterns found within lace fabrics, creating a juxtaposition between the delicate shapes and the metal material. My work tends to explore the intricacies of different elements of life, whether that be materials or human interaction, it is the small details in conversations or movement that I tend to notice and then present through my art.

CV AND EVALUATION

Summary

I am a young artist studying for BA in Fine Art at the University of Wales Trinity St David. My work is based primarily around human interactions, whether that be with other people or objects and materials. Using a wide variety of materials in my work I have created both paintings and more recently three-dimensional pieces, drawing upon my own experiences to create these.

Experience

Mural commission for Bartella's Coffee House in Northampton

In the summer of 2021, I was asked to create a mural on the outside wall of a coffee shop in my hometown, which involved me consulting with the owner, drawing up several designs to fit the brief and then the process of painting the wall. For this I used an array of spray paints and wall paint to create the design which I then covered over with. A gloss sealant.

Throughout this job I was able to communicate well with the client, listening to their vision and ideas, engage and interact in a friendly manner with members of the public who showed an interest in the work I was doing, I also was able to budget the job taking into consideration my time and the materials used.

University of Northampton School Art and Design Competition 2019

In 2019 I entered one of my paintings into this competition with my sixth form at the time. Unfortunately, I didn't win any of the prizes, however my work was still exhibited in the university for a period of time which was a great experience.

UWTSD 1st Year End of Year Exhibition

I handed in several pieces to be exhibited here at the university for the end of year exhibition last summer. We all helped prep the space and mount our work, voicing our opinions on curation and where things should be. Overall it was a great experience to help out and see my work in an exhibition space.

Skills

- Working well with potential and current clients to come up with a clear vision
- Ability to use a variety of materials
- Ability to work on a large scale
- Budgeting
- Efficient time management
- Interacting with members of the public in a friendly manner when creating work in a public setting

Education

- BA Fine Art: Studio, Site and Context (Ongoing – 2nd year)
University of Wales Trinity Saint David
- A-level Art (A)
Northampton School for Boys
- GCSE Art (9)
Malcolm Arnold Academy

Evaluation

To go about improving my CV I should begin to enter art competitions and gallery entries as these will both be beneficial to my practise and will help me gain experience with working with galleries and contacting different people in the industry. Having work in galleries will also help gain exposure for my work expanding opportunities and getting my work out into the public space. Another thing that will help me gain more skills is doing more curation as it is an important part of exhibiting work. Overall, I just need to get my work out there more to expand the opportunities that I have available.