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Tasks in the order I received them:

Task One: Reflective (Jon Task) = 511 words

Task Two: Semiotic Analysis (Ryan task) = 516 words

Task Three: Manifesto (Julia Task) = 526 words

### Task One: Reflective (Jon Task):

A reflection on republican revolutionary artwork and the neoclassical style through Jacques-Louis David's 'Oath of the Horatii' and his other works:



Arguably one of the most well-known neo-classical artists of the late 18<sup>th</sup> Century, Jacques Louis David also holds renown for his strongly held republican beliefs before and during the French Revolution beginning in 1789. The neo-classical, strongly anti rococo style, along with the challenging depiction of loyalty to the state in his painting *Oath of the Horatii*, make David an extremely important figure of art history. The depiction of the grotesquely loyal Horatii brothers within the piece already presents a negative view upon the monarchist views of the previous centuries, and David used his place as a well-known and respected artist to present these ideas. His use of intense colours, notably red, seem to present intensity, aggression, perhaps negativity, through connoted meanings (Barthes 1977). His other paintings, particularly "The death of Marat," show similar revolutionary ideas, and the death of Marat

is in fact described by professor T.J Clark as the first modernist painting, as it shows unfiltered politics: depicting political ideas so opening into fine art – something I have always to an extent tried to accomplish. Rococo art, characterized by lightness and elegance, and using natural forms and curves within its designs, was a predominant feature within the French court and palace, so as a reactionary movement, neo-classicism was already a movement that would fit with the idea of French revolution prior to 1789. Neo-classical art, in contrast to rococo, was a return to Greek and Roman classics, to maths and science and anatomical correctness. It was based off simplicity and mathematics, rather than the abundance of vanity presented by rococo design. All of which directly contrasted the monarchy at the time. It is through this that we can see shifting viewpoints in art, republican sympathies and a rallying of ideas behind these artworks, something David's work embraced. Explained within J.L.J David's "Le peintre Louis David", " Art served only to satisfy the pride and whims of a few Sybantes gorged with gold," (1880) and paintings in this period showed a change from this, largely through the same challenging points made by David. When creating art of a similar political goal, I aim to change the viewers seat in much the same way David managed to do with his own challenging artwork. Stephen S Eisenman explains the success of a painting or sculpture is dependant partially on changing a "floating, passive crowd" to "active public opinion", and that is something Oath of the Horatii taught to me. To place ideas and messages within a narrative piece, to tell two stories at once is part of what I think makes Oath of the Horatii such an impressive piece. It shows a 'grand' and theatrical setting, whilst also presenting harsh truth within it. I use that formula, to ensure my work is enjoyable to observe, that also has deeper meaning within it and has something to say but can also be observed casually. Dramatic lighting and staging are common in neo-classical pieces, and in my

compositions, I try to include dramatic lighting to further a story or idea connoted within the piece.

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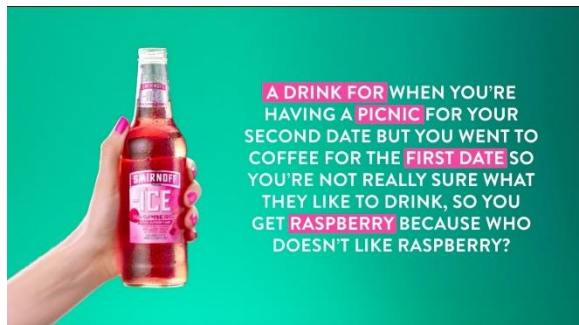
Barthes, R., 1977. Image-music-text. Fontana, London.

## **Task Two: Semiotic Analysis (Ryan task):**

With media, news and advertising constantly being pushed down our throats at all points of our life, so much so that our absorbing of the information presented to us is limited not by lack of choice, but by too much of it, it can be easy to take what is shown to us at face value, “conscious perception is selective” (principles of visual perception bloomer 1976), without fully seeing we are blind to what is being shown. This prevents us from critically acknowledging the things we see, and with misinformation so easy to come across (Kirby 2016 ), it is important to understand as much as we can about campaigns shown to us. Art and design of any form cannot exist without meaning, meaningful or otherwise, and even “isolated and uncaptioned” photography is still “invaded by language in the very moment it’s looked at” (Burgin 1986).

It is our duty as active perceivers to understand the implied meanings behind the images we are shown that subtly guide us towards different choices. We must understand both the ‘denoted’ image, what is literally shown to us, and the ‘connoted’ image, the symbolic image, what lies under the denoted. (Barthes, 1977). These are things we are taught from birth—the colour red means stop, anger, danger; green means go, good, correct; this is the basis of semiotic analysis. These underlying meanings can be used to sway an observer’s thoughts on a piece of work or a message that is trying to be portrayed. It is with this understanding that we can now look closer at how these are used in practice.

In recent years likely due to increased cynicism around untruthful ads or idealised ideas, advertisements have placed more of a focus on 'relatable' ads, rather than 'inspiring' ads, using what Barthes refers to as 'Naturalism' (1977). Rather than showing you what life could



be like, more of a focus is placed upon realistic and broad scenarios to which a broad number of people can see themselves in. The 2017 'drink for summer' Smirnoff ice campaign presents the message: this drink is for the regular person, showing different scenarios to enjoy.

The plain, bright background of each picture in the campaign displays not only happiness-the promise of a good time from this beverage, but simplicity, almost indicting that it's just simple, why would you chose anything else when the simplest and best answer is right here. The text in the image is plain, kept all the same size and font in a text box next to the image, with only a few words highlighted in bright pink. This simplicity is so effective in the message Smirnoff is trying to present, as it is almost like a text conversation with a friend. It is informal, as if someone was telling you an awkward or otherwise situation they had been in, and simply mentioning what drink they had at that time. It isn't glamorising the drinking of Smirnoff ice,

but rather it is grounding it in normal situations and experiences people might have, making it more attainable to the everyday person.

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### **Task Three: Manifesto (Julia Task):**

1. Previous methods of illustration should never be replaced, but should be adapted
2. Never stop learning new mediums
3. Classical techniques of illustration should not be replaced
4. Your work will always have meaning, and that meaning will always fluctuate and change
5. The challenge isn't being original, it's to avoid being disingenuous
6. Illustration is a global language, of which no one is fluent
7. Art is too broad to remain as just an illustrator.
8. Understanding the truth can be difficult, especially when there is so much to unpick and wade through, however we must strive to educate

**Keyword:** Understanding

Your work will always have a purpose and a meaning to you, and different interpretations and understanding by others, of which both can and will fluctuate and change:

Regardless of under what context you create a piece of work be it a political cartoon, a comic narrative or a commissioned advertisement, your work will always have a connoted meaning underneath it. It is impossible to create a piece that holds no meaning. If you yourself created the piece for aesthetics, that is its meaning. However, the meaning you project onto your

work is not what everyone will see: everyone has their own individual thoughts, opinions and beliefs, shaped by uncountable factors within their life and experiences. Understanding is individual. It is important to understand that regardless of intent, the meaning other people interpret is still important. As an illustrator, you willingly open your work up to further interpretation by others, who may see something that you had not intended which can open your eyes to possibilities you hadn't encountered previously. It is important to question yourself before, during, and after the creation of work.

**Keyword:** The Truth

Understanding the truth can be difficult, especially when there is so much to unpick and wade through, however we must strive to educate

Visual images are the only form of language that can be understood from anywhere, by people who understand any different language. That understanding may vary from place to place, however that is still understanding. Art is in every culture and can be appreciated and viewed regardless of any connection or understanding to the culture. In an increasingly hostile environment, conceptions of the truth rise to draw our attention away from the truth. Take for example Donald Trump in the election polls in September 2019, who referred to a poll that showed his own defeat as a "phony suppression poll, meant to build up their Democrat partners." (USA today). Thomas Hawk explains in a psychiatry article that 'untruths aren't always lies' (the conversation), which is interesting when considering the false information presented frequently. Not everyone who repeats falsified ideas are lying, instead telling 'falsehoods', due to ignorance or a lack of research. We should strive to educate, to diminish

these lies so that less falsehoods are spread, and art can and should be used as a rallying point of ideas, to present the truth rather than fiction.

**Keyword:** Adaptation

Previous methods of art should never be abandoned, but instead adapted.

Too frequently, I believe, are we told where the future of art lies. It lies apparently all in new technology, in advancements, however some things cannot be replaced, cannot be remade in an easier way. There will always be a charm and character to traditional mediums that cannot be captured otherwise, and even early homo-sapiens used art to develop symbolic cognition (Zaidel, 2018). Artists should not be told what to create, else they become disingenuous, as art tells the artists truth, and art is so intensely personal, that movements aiming to change pure styles can seem conformist, even when ground-breaking. Adapting old methods or ideas to create new ones allows industries to change and improve without losing too much individuality. Take Yuko Shimuzu, an illustrator who uses traditional Japanese ink techniques to create her pieces: whilst she colours her work digitally, the textures and expression shown within her work are not able to be accurately mimicked without going back to the traditional mediums. It is also tied to her connection of her Japanese heritage. cultural mediums are diverse and exciting, and cannot be replaced.

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