

Title: (Question 5) Choose a theme, movement, or selection of artists or designers that relate to your practice or interests and construct a 2,500-word essay. Critically assess and consider primary themes, key writers, and relevant practitioners.

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Question 5: *Choose a theme, movement, or selection of artists or designers that relate to your practice or interests and construct a 2,500-word essay. Critically assess and consider primary themes, key writers, and relevant practitioners.*

A tutorial with two of my tutors one day led me fumbling for an answer to the question 'If you (me) were to go back to your studio right now, what art piece would you create?' To which I replied that I had no idea as I had come to a creative block. As I sit here right now and write this essay, I still have no idea what I would create or explore. I'd like to use this time wisely whilst constructing this essay to look at artists that interest me and relate to my practice so that if I were ever to be asked that question again, I would have an idea and answer of what I would create.

At this unusual time in our lives with the Coronavirus restrictions we were placed in a worldwide lockdown for what was meant to be a couple of weeks which meant a short effect on going to see artwork and artist pieces in person, this couple of weeks that we was restricted for led to almost a year stuck inside, this meant that I needed to find other ways to research and take inspiration for my art pieces, this is when I would regularly turn to social media such as Instagram and Pinterest to look at new works of art. This is unfortunately because galleries and museums have been closed. Due to galleries and museums having to shut their doors to the public at this time I feel as though it has had a major effect on my creative intuition and my work ethic, this has lead me to feel as if I have lost out and not been able to express and explore freely within my environment at home or learn about as many new artists and art pieces as I would've liked to this year. However I have found so many new artists and art techniques through social media, I feel it has been

disappointing that I haven't come across any historic pieces to study about, as I usually would. By not viewing artworks in real life, I feel I am not seeing the full depth, effect and impact that the artwork might create. I feel as though this may be a simple factor such as the texture or size of the work. Through using Instagram, I have discovered some new and contemporary artists. This includes Polina Bright (@polina.bright), I have been inspired by Bright's artwork due to the fierce and bold ways in which she represents women. Phil Maltz (@maltzcreative) who sketches architecture around London, whose artwork inspired me due to my love of drawing buildings, Sophie Tea (@sophieteaart) who boldly paints the human figure which I enjoy viewing as she doesn't paint any unrealistic paintings of a woman's body and shows that all body figures are worth studying. Although I see these artists' work regularly on my news feed, I'd like to take the time to look at their works in more depth and detail to gather a greater understanding of why and how they create their works of art.

Australian artist Polina Bright is a strong believer that "there's an unconditional bond between women and nature". Through her watercolour artwork Bright conveys the "love, beauty, strength, power and many other traits" shared between a woman's inner world and wildlife, which can be seen in her work through her illustrative drawings of flowers, wild birds and wild cats that attach themselves as an inseparable part of the women drawn.



Figure 1.

Figure 1 above titled 'Independence' is a monochromatic watercolour painting depicting a young woman with a black panther peering over her shoulder. "Black panther symbolism is inevitably linked to a protector, a guardian, or a saviour" (Clifford, G) which I believe is represented in this painting from the stance of the black panther emerging behind the woman, as if in stability and security. Much like the panther the woman gives off the impression of being strong, powerful, unafraid and fearless. The woman and panther both gaze deeply into the viewers eyes with a piercing look with both their eyes being level with one another. It gives you the impression that they are leaders. The dark shades used gives off a haunting aura as the darkness could represent the power of the unknown. Bright's work with the finely lined details and layers of watercolours interests me greatly as this is a way of working that I have used before when looking at different subject matter such as architecture. Portraits are something that I continually avoid when creating work as it is a subject I am not particularly good at. I am also put off by the need to make the portraits come to life and look realistic. Through viewing Bright's work on a regular basis on social

media I find myself wanting to have a go at creating work in her style as through following her journey on Instagram I can see that mistakes are always made but you learn from them if you keep trying. What I enjoy about getting to see Bright's work all in one place on Instagram is that I can visually see her getting better and better at what she does from some of the first times she posted a few years ago and so it gives me inspiration that if I were to start drawing portraits I would gradually get better over time and be up to Bright's standard. I find her work inspiring to see as it shows all artists that you shouldn't be afraid to display the pieces that you have made mistakes on, mistakes to us could be another person's favourite art piece, seeing her work has given me the confidence to post some of my artwork on social media, both the pieces that I love and the pieces that are a work in process.

Phil Maltz is an English artist and illustrator who "takes command over brickwork with his quirky and playful illustrations of the streets of London" (Cass Art). Maltz main media to work with is pens, pencils and watercolours. Maltz states that he's interested in architecture and how "many parts work together to create a unified form". His work content is predominately aimed at an online audience on Instagram as Maltz feels the audience and followers' 'hunger' for more work, is the push that is used to explore and create new works of art.



Figure 2.

Figure 2 above illustrates a terraced house titled 'Roupell Street House'. It is an architectural sketch with realistic qualities. The artist creates the work using fine liners and watercolours, paying close attention to the detail and tones of the buildings. Maltz first sketches out his building in pencil, then goes over the lines with a fine liner, before adding his watercolours and pen on top again. You can view his work and how he makes it/ the process on his Instagram account (@maltzcreative). I found the process of the artist creating his work to be quite fascinating and so I decided to give the process a go myself.



Figure 3.

Above I have included a photograph of a sketch I created of my Nans house, just an average stone terraced house. I took inspiration from Maltz in the way of his process, media and style. I think by adding this photograph of my own work I can compare it against Maltz's work and help to criticize and look for improvements to make. The biggest difference that stands out to me straight the way is the brickwork. I ended up using pastel pencils to create my brickwork on the house whereas Maltz uses watercolours. I will use watercolours for bricks if I work in this style again as I think it makes the bricks appear much more realistic and adds a depth to the piece. Put next to Maltz work, I don't think the pastel pencils was a good decision to make as I feel it makes the house look quite flat without the rough looking texture Maltz has created in his own work. From studying some more videos of Maltz creating his work I now understand that he layers up the watercolours to build up the successful brickwork shown. The different coloured bricks painted also helps to add shadows and highlights to make the building appear more life-like. If I were to recreate this piece again, I would take the time to layer up the watercolours to add texture to the brickwork. I would also make

the colours less saturated and instead more prominent as they are a little watered down at the moment. Overall, I think my piece has some good qualities such as the line work and the subject matter drawn accurately, I just feel the need to work on my addition of adding colour to make it pop and look less dull and flat.

English artist Sophie Tea works with mixed medias and covers many subjects including animals, abstracts, nudes and hearts. Tea uses Instagram to power her business and “an original Sophie Tea sells out within seconds” (Back, G) on the platform in which she uses to sell her artwork. Tea “prides herself on breaking the traditional gallery route” with making her name independently on social media.

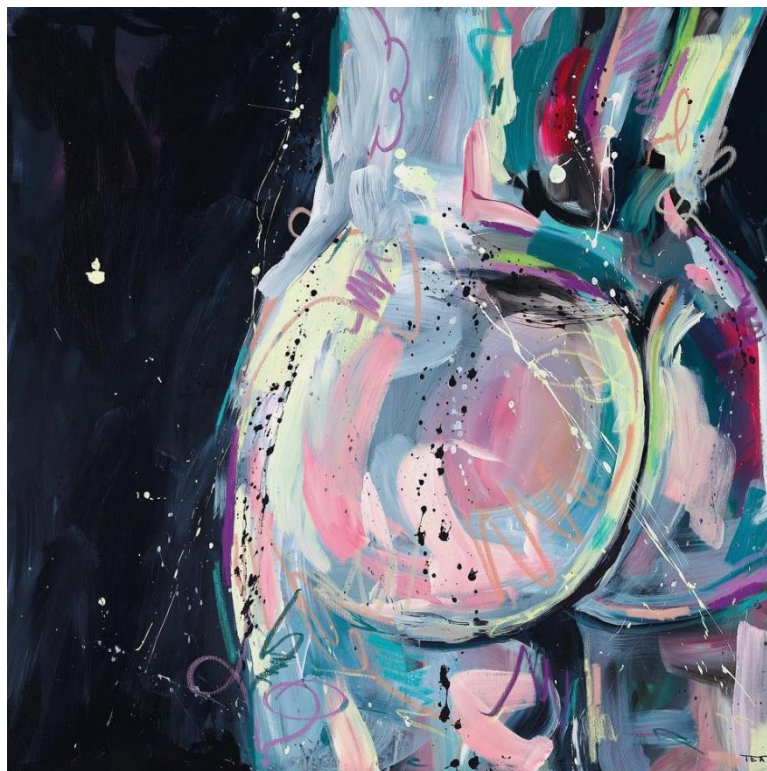


Figure 4.

Figure 4, above, is an abstract life drawing titled “Bum Day” by artist Sophie Tea. Tea uses acrylic paint and pastels for her nudes. I would describe her paint strokes as quite loose and uncontrolled. I

think the artist must just let her hand lead the way around the canvas and let the paint follow behind, After the paint has dried it seems that Tea goes in with a smaller brush to redefine detail and then uses the pastels in the same manner as the acrylic paint before splattering a final layer of paint on, at the end, on top of everything. The unrealistic colour palette used would help to make the painting stand out I believe. Although it does look like the artist has still considered the highlights and shadows within her work by using a white to make some areas of colour brighter and black to make the shadows darker. When looking at this artwork and the different directions of the lines and marks it makes me wonder if the artist has intentionally painted in this way to show that all bodies have marks and lumps and bumps and that its fine and normal and this is how it's meant to be. Nobody is perfect and everybody has flaws. I feel that Tea creates work that could be described as mood boosting due to the wonderful, bright colours that draws your eyes into the work and the range of bodies that she paints, showing that all sizes matter.

In this essay I have written about a selection of three artists that I have found on Instagram, during lockdown. I have followed their artistic journeys through the unstable time and taken inspiration from them when I've been uncertain about what to create myself. In this essay I have tried to critically analyse a piece of each artist's work. Trying to gather a greater understanding of why and how they create their artworks. My intentions for this essay were to research artists that interests me as I felt like I'd come to a little block in my work from the earlier question asked by my two art tutors of, *'If you (me) were to go back to your studio right now, what would you create?'* which I had failed to answer. After admiring the three artists' work over the past year, but properly looking at their work over the past few weeks I would like to say that I would be able to answer that question right now. Firstly, I'd state that I would want to create a large piece of work. I feel that I don't appreciate my studio space as much as I should and so I would like to take the opportunity to create large pieces of work now that I have the space to do so. I have not really explored or made

artwork bigger than A2 sized and so I would put myself out of my comfort zone and take the opportunity to give it a try. Architecture has been the main focus throughout most of my artistic education and I have never fully focused upon any different themes or subjects. As I have focused on two artists in this essay that look at the human form, I think I would want to push my boundaries and take what I've learnt from my life drawing lessons to start focusing on the human form. I think the move from architecture to the human body has a positive relationship as I would already have an understanding of finding the dimensions and proper placements. I would think that Sophie Tea would play a big part in the inspiration of the work I create as I thoroughly love the way she applies the paint to her work. Although I would want to have my own spin on it somehow so that it doesn't turn into a copy of the artists' work, but my own creation and ideas.

Figures

Fig 1: Bright, P. (2019) *Independence* [Watercolour] Available at <https://www.polinabright.com> (Accessed on December 1st, 2020).

Fig 2: Maltz, P. *Roupell Street House* [Ink and Watercolour Sketch] Available at <https://www.etsy.com/uk/listing/886234532/roupell-street-house-ink-watercolour?ref=related-3&frs=1> (Accessed on December 2nd, 2020)

Fig 3: A piece of my own work from a sketchbook.

Fig 4: Tea, S. (2020) *Bum Day* Available at <https://www.sophieteaart.com> (Accessed on December 3rd, 2020)

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Clifford, G. (2020) "Black Panther Symbolism & Meaning" Available at <https://www.worldbirds.org/black/panther/symbolism> (Accessed on December 1st, 2020).