

Portfolio of writing

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Programme of Study: Illustration

Module: ADAD4018 Ways of Thinking

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Task 1: Manifesto = 616 words

Task 2: Observational writing = 421 words

Task 3: Practice Based Writing = 443 words

Task One: Manifesto Writing

(Justification + Critique)

8 Short Statements:

1. Always note the work of others that inspire you.
2. Create to share what you're too uncomfortable to state.
3. There's no such thing as 'bad art'
4. Self-Critique is important for improvement, after reaching a professional level in the future you will still be a student as there will always be new things to learn and improve.
5. Take inspiration and learn from historic periods, the old can help you transform the new.
6. Taking breaks is part of the artistic process, we need time to observe.
7. Find strength in your weaknesses
8. Having a different meaning to the artists intentions is fine, all emotional responses are valid.

Keywords and Images:

'Bad Art'

There's No such Thing as Bad Art.



Fig 1: *Angry Dog*, (1938-43).

1. Our world is populated by artists that create mass amounts of work that would be denied in museums and galleries but hold a large following on social media. Work that's subjected to harsh criticism in the world of fine art may hold a place of popularity in today's meme culture, meaning that the work these artists share is still making an impact whether it be deemed good or bad as they fail to follow the rules of art but still shake the observer into an emotional response.

To talk about bad art is to highlight the importance of aesthetics. 'Aesthetics demanded that the viewer have sufficient disinterest or detachment between feelings provoked by a paintings subject matter.' (Stephen Little, 2004) When someone says a piece of art is bad, or that they're bad at painting or drawing it's normally to highlight their skill but I personally believe that the level of skill has nothing to do with what makes a piece of art good or bad as it's the emotional response that's what's more important. If the art's done at an unflattering low-skill measured outcome and still pleases an audience, that means that the aesthetics of that piece has succeeded.

The art piece demonstrated above was described as ‘childlike’ and ‘unflattering’ critiqued in an article titled “Nine times History's Greatest artists made Bad Artworks” (Rachel Gould, 2019) I’d argue that Angry Dog made an impression on me, and that’s what art should strive to do whether they decide to leave out the rules of aesthetics or not.

Keyword: 'Observe'

Taking breaks is part of the art process we need time to observe.



Fig 2: Danni Gowdy, (????)

2. Artists need for wandering, exploring and settling curious urges are part of the creative process. In order to feel engaged and passionate about our work we need outside sources of information, and we need to observe the world around us, we need breaks. In today’s hustle and bustle and the need to strive for consistency and success we forget about the world around us, which is why taking breaks are so important for the artistic process.

With the rise in popularity of grind culture it is easy to fall into a streak of workaholism, pouring more hours into your craft and forgetting about the day-to-day life with an end goal in mind is easy and although there is a hint of escapism that plays a part in this habit it’s not great, it leads to artistic burn out, less sleep and less of a connection to friends and family. “it affects the quality of the work you do” Samantha Radocchia, 2020. For an artist's work to improve one must study smart, train the eye to observe and take in different forms of media as you take it easy and enjoy. Time is a crucial element to life and slaving away at a desk is no way to live.

Keyword: ‘Create to share’

Create to share what you’re too uncomfortable to state.



Fig 3: The great wave of Kanagawa, (1831)

- I. Nowadays people of all social backgrounds can enjoy and consume art, but it hasn't always been like this, in history art was only owned and shared amongst those of the higher class. It wasn't until countries started to industrialize that art was being consumed on a bigger scale by all social classes. An example of this is during the Edo period where we saw an influx of woodblock prints being sold. Prints of celebrities and landscapes shared and collected amongst all social classes like post cards, one of which was the Great Wave of Kanagawa by Hokusai.

Today we have so many opportunities to view and collect art at our fingertips as we gaze upon endless content on our phones and on our computer screens. It makes it all worthwhile for us artists to share our views, beliefs and imaginations visually for others to see as it inspires others and pleases observers.

Bibliography

Little, S (2004). ...isms Understanding Art.

Radocchia, S (2019). Stop The Grind: A Realistic Solution to Halt Hustle Culture: (article)
<https://www.forbes.com/sites/samantharadocchia/2019/03/01/stop-the-grind-a-realistic-solution-to-halt-hustle-culture/?sh=4f06187243c4>

List of figures

Figure 1: *Edvard Munch, Angry Dog (1938-43)*

https://dynaimage.cdn.cnn.com/cnn/q_auto,w_727,c_fit/http%3A%2F%2Fcdn.cnn.com%2Fcontent%2Fdam%2Fassets%2F181218153453-artists-bad-artworks-edvard-munch-artsy.jpg

Figure 2: *Danni Gowdy, Sketchbook (????)*

<https://payload.cargocollective.com/1/15/482745/8179977/Scan-27.jpeg>

Figure 3: *The Great Wave of Kanagawa (1831)*

[https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a5/Tsunami by hokusai 19th century.jpg](https://upload.wikimedia.org/wikipedia/commons/a/a5/Tsunami_by_hokusai_19th_century.jpg)

Task 2: Observational Writing

(deconstruction + critique)

Semiotic Analysis



*Rene Magritte,
Golconda, 1953*

In Renee Magritte's surrealist painting we see a plethora of businessmen standing in thin air floating around a housing estate, they're pointing in different directions and stood sparingly throughout the old-style painted canvas, there's dead pan caricature featured in the

silhouettes and an oddly shaped neighbourhood. The whimsical mix of blues in the men's attire and sky, juxtaposed with the red roof potentially suggests feelings of dread and leads a gruesome observation as a result. The semiotics behind any Magritte or surrealist painting would be hard to decipher, for example, the men in the picture appear to be either 'floating upwards or 'raining down' (Mathew Collings, 1999) which I found to be an interesting observation as the expressive silhouettes lined up in the background do seem to share a resemblance to rain but there's no indication of motion inside the painting which I find intriguing, it's almost as if these men are stuck. The pattern of the carefully placed businessmen forms a grid-like pattern, which could potentially point towards feelings of the consistent patterns of the 9-5 work life. The message that peoples like to think that Rene Magritte was trying to convey in this painting was that there was an 'invitation to contemplate the endless depths of ordinary things' (Mike Mckiernan, 2014). Although Rene has even stated himself 'people look for symbolism in my work, there is none' (David Sylvester, 1993) which I don't find very surprising from a surrealist painting as they all depict illusionist work that are often hard to describe and dissect which is what I love about these paintings. The idea that everyone can hold their own interpretation and meaning in these pieces and hold their own symbolisms is interesting. I could argue that the businessmen are a symbolisation of our economy and our growing need to climb up the work ladder as they 'float Upwards' and succeed, whereas someone else would see the painting and argue that they're stuck in a corporate loop hovering like depressive drones in the sky, totally detached.

Our different views on these pieces defies the premise of semiotics as it challenges societies universal icons, index' and symbols, through our personal experiences we attach meaning to things just for the artist to say it isn't as deep as we think it is, we're pressured to feel and apply meaning to art that looks radical and dreamlike by society and maybe that's the symbolic pressure of it too. That the businessmen are sheep and we're not moving together but floating apart.

Bibliography

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McKiernan, M. (2014). *Occupational Medicine*, Volume 64, Issue 2, March 2014, Pages 76–77,

Sylvester, D. (1993). *Rene Magritte: Oil Paintings, Objects and Sculptures, 1949-67 v. 3: Catalogue Raisonne*

Task 3: Practice-Based writing

Object/Artifact



I decided to opt for the write about an object/artifact strand, here I'll be exploring my object of a fairy. This pale curious looking fae is hidden amongst leaves and flowers sat happily gazing off into the distance. I love the continuity of the colours in this little statue, it uses blues, pinks and purples that complement each other. I have a keen interest in fairies I think they're very mystical and I love how they're almost like a naturistic representee of the human form. I can't remember where or when I got this object, it was a while ago because I've had it for so long.

The object itself is in poor condition, the wings broke off in my bag and I have yet to glue them back on, on top of this the object is dusty and she's also accompanied by cobwebs, which has made an interesting filler in an otherwise blank space.



Because of my interest in fairies, I often feel inclined to look at artists who've experimented with putting fairies into their work. I recently came across an art piece by Swedish painter August Malmström that I found breath-taking. The painting 'Dancing Fairies' (1866) demonstrates fairies dancing in the moonlight above water, the tones used in this piece are beautiful as the luminescent lights of the fairies shine through the dark landscape giving a feeling of hope and joy in a dark and otherwise spooky place.



Inspired by the object of the fairy and the paintings of August Malmstrom I'd like to experiment with creating an illustration, I'd like to include the interesting web texture that's found in the gap between the leaf and the fairy's torso in my sketches too. I started off with a small sketch of the object, observing the detail in person and admiring the expression on the fae and I also drew her wings back on.



A quick sketch representing the fairy object including subtle lines and the same poised position as the object is depicting. I'd like to upscale this sketch and make certain aspects of the object more prominent, for example the flowers and the leaves. I followed this sketch up with a few others, I really liked exploring with this object and using its elements to create my own composition. In the piece below I used the object as a point of reference and created an illustration of a girl with

cobwebs, foliage and flowers surrounding her, If I were to experiment with the object further and create more illustrations inspired by it, I'd love to add colours similar to the one on the object and I'd also experiment with ink.



Bibliography

Figure 1: August Malmstrom, Dancing Fairies (1866):

<https://images.fineartamerica.com/images-medium-large-5/-dancing-fairies-august-malmstrom.jpg>