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Task 1: Manifesto Writing

1. The day I stop creating is the day I die.
2. Some create to live, I live to create.
3. Art is fluid, it is selfish, as long as it is created, the person does not matter.
4. There is misfortune for those who do not create, for creating is seeing. If you do not create, you are blind.
5. A painting is the puzzle, knowledge is the key.
6. Art is just an extension of a person's limb.
7. Art expresses what words cannot
8. Look at the art, like you are seeing a person for the first time.

3 areas of exploration:

Art Is Just an Extension of a Person's limb: Art for many has been a life saver, a way to express their inner most demons. But for some it has been the purpose of life.



Fig 1. Frida Kahlo painting in bed. Undated Photo

In the instance of Frida Kahlo, as discussed in the book *Frida Kahlo: endurance and art* (Prasad, A. 2018) she endured 9 months of convalescence after contracting poliomyelitis, the muscles of her leg lost function, resulting in the limb becoming atrophied. Leading to stunted growth, resulting in an imbalance in her pelvis and a curvature of the spine. In 1925, she was involved in a car collision. A iron handrail impaled her body, entering through the left hip, exiting from her pelvic floor. Sustaining these wounds, while hospitalised she sustained infections that were fatal. Kahlo's dream of continuing her studies to become both a doctor an mother came to

an abrupt end. Immobilised for months, she sought alternative means to keep herself occupied, painting. She adapted a collapsible wooden easel, and put a mirror attached to the canopy above her bed. "I am broken. But I am happy to be alive as long as I can paint". Art is not only an extension of one's limb, but an extension of a good life.

Art expresses what words cannot: The written word and imagery has lived parallel with each other. Aiding us to see beyond the written word.



Fig 2. Art master: Quentin Blake in his studio in west London (David Sandison) 2012.

As Christina Desai points out in the book *Weaving Words And Pictures* (Desai, 2004), "art and text are inextricably linked to create meaning that could not be created in any other way". Illustrations were first used to illuminate manuscripts, with gold flourishes on the typography. They became more illustrative drawings which

enhanced the text. The importance of illustrations alongside text, is highlighted in children's picture books, which enable the young readers to gain context from the book, relying more so on the imagery opposed to the text. In the book *Ways of Seeing* (Berger, 1972, page 10), it further supports the above evidence. "Images were first made to conjure up the appearances of something that was absent". It further comments on how images are recognised by a child before it can speak, visual stimulation comes before one understands words.

Sir Quentin Blake, illustrator, states (Christie's, 2018) his illustrations do things a writer can't do, they capture the split second something that often people may dismiss. However, in these books unlike a moving film these magical stills are sometimes the most important part of the book.

A painting is the puzzle, knowledge is the key: one's past experiences informs them on how a painting is perceived.

Art is subjective, the way in which we perceive art is dependent on our various factors, which inform us of how we gauge everything. From literature we read to our upbringing to societal expectations. As people, we like making correlations between things that fit into our pragmatic reasoning schemas, Schema Theory was first established by Psychologist Fredric Bartlett in 1932 (Pappas, 2014). In the journal regarding schema theory, it suggests "The model assumes that a person receives information which is less than perfect in terms of its completeness, its accuracy, and

its reliability" (Axlerod, 1973). Henceforth, the context of the painting may be unambiguous, but to the viewer it may be complex. Art is subjective, one's view does not out-value another, for the more ways a piece denotes, the more people it can reach. Therefore, the understanding of a painting to an individual is infinite.

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Task 2: Observational Writing



Fig 1. *Kanagawa-oki nami-ura* 神奈川沖浪裏 (*Under the Wave off Kanagawa*) by Katsushika Hokusai (葛飾北斎) (1831)

It is imperative to consider Eurocentric ideologies when viewing a painting from a different culture. As it is indicative that the context of the painting can drastically change between the two, creating an opposing semiotic analysis. As a Westerner, there are opposing views that need to be observed. According to the *Oxford Learner's Dictionaries* (page 1.), the definition of Eurocentric "is focusing on European culture or history and regarding it as more important than the culture or history of other regions". This text will deconstruct the popular image from Hokusai, from both perspectives of Eurocentric and non-Eurocentric views.

Charles Peirce and Ferdinand de Saussure are two leading scholars on the perspective of semiotic analysis (Mohd and Totu, 2014). Saussure, a Swiss linguist who called his work 'semiology', the science of the signs in society, explained that the relationship between the signifier and the signified as being unpredictable in nature, he proposed the science that studies the life signs within both society, within the social and general psychology.

Peirce was an American Philosopher, mathematician and scientist who called his work 'semiotics'. Pierce's influential work on the topic of semiotics was strongly affixed in pragmatism and logic, where "something which stands for something else". The three areas of sign that were categorised by Pierce were, the icon; the most obvious, the index; what is associated with it and the symbol; related only by convention. (semiotics | Definition, Theory, Examples, & Facts, 2020).

Another major theorist that heavily influenced the study of semiotics was Roland Barthes, proposing that a sign in its situ refers to something which conveys meaning, as illustrated in "a written, or spoken word, a symbol or myth". (Robinson, 2011).

In the painting, *Under the Wave off Kanagawa*, also known as *The Great Wave* by Katsushika Hokusai (1831) (The Met, 2020), I have identified how the painting is analysed from a Eurocentric and a non-Eurocentric point of view, thus influencing the semiotic analysis.

Analysing the painting from a westernised, Eurocentric standpoint, the meaning of it alternates in comparison to a non-Eurocentric standpoint. Thus, two points can be drawn semiotically from it. The denotation from a Eurocentric stance, is that the fisherman are heading away from the wave, so it does not pose much threat.

However, as the painting is Japanese the directionality in which it was intended to read is from right to left opposed to left to right: sinistrodextral. Alternating the denotation, the fisherman are going towards the wave which is more of a threat. The latter denotation could connote a sign of death, or in the Latin phrase *memento mori*. Another point which is an indexical sign is that the wave is about to strike the boats, which is speculated to represent a monster which is further indexical of the irresistible force of nature and the weakness of human beings. *The Wave* from the series of *Thirty-six Views of Mount Fuji*, is distinct in which Mount Fuji is not the focal point of the painting nor in the foreground, one may mistake it as another wave in the series. Mount Fuji in the background has differing connotations, the first representing the unpredictability of life and alternatively it signifies stillness and eternity. In Japan, it is a sacred object of worship, and holds a significant place in Japanese beliefs (Nirei, 2017).

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Task 3: Practice-based Writing: A reflection on my personal practice

Within my practice, I have a routine I have when creating any piece of work. I decide when the process needs to begin; I like to complete my work well before a deadline if it is for work, so I can have time if I want to change any elements, or for personal practice I start in my own time. The first step I take is researching into the subject I

am basing my work off, for example I recently created a tone and composition piece, I researched how other artists approached it, and what techniques and methods they used. I have my key set of artists that inspire me, and then I branch off into the area that I am studying and look into artists that are more subject-specific. My favourite artists are Quentin Blake, Hope Gangloff, Howard Tangye and Ronald Searle; these are my main artists that I go to for inspiration. A quote in which I refer to often by Quentin Blake is "With my pictures, what I hope is that it encourages the reader to imagine more pictures of his own" (Blake, n.d.).

I create rough notes on all the ideas I have, just to narrow down on the medium I want to use and subject for example. Moreover, looking for inspiration I turn to Pinterest and Instagram to get inspired, I prefer to get reference images that are first hand, so my own photography. But in instances where this is not feasible, I go to stock photos that aren't copyrighted.

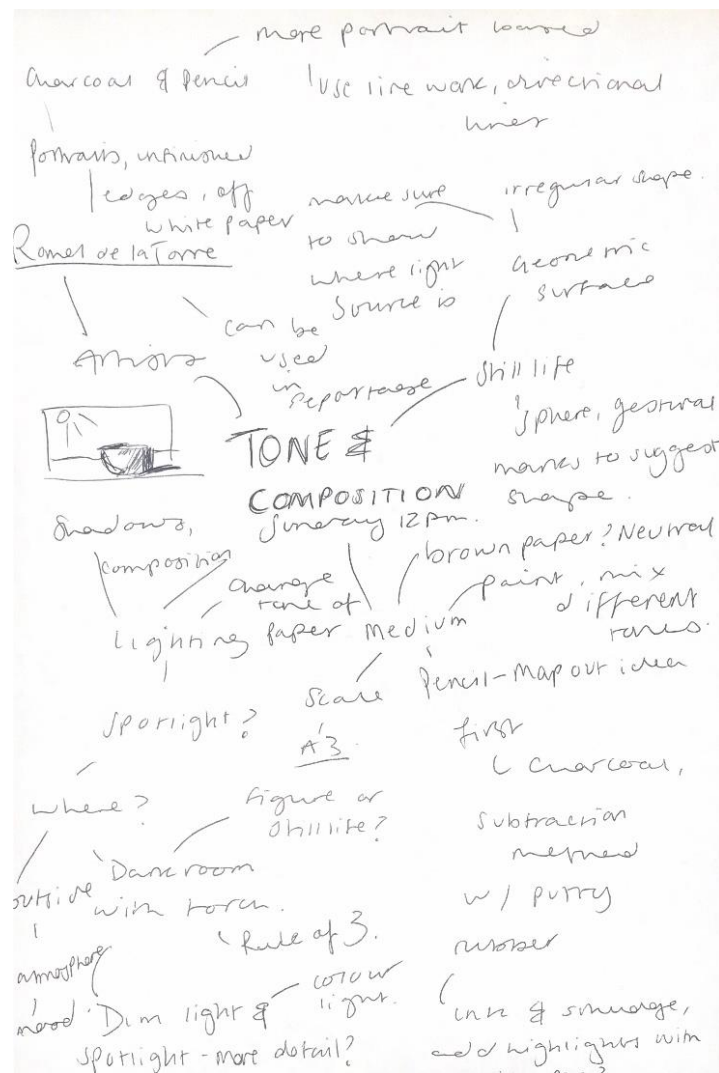


Fig 1. Mind map of ideas. 2020. Isabella Coombs

Sometimes it is hard to know when a piece is done, but my method is to step away from it for a day or so once I feel like I am close to completion. Then go back and review if I need to change it, this avoids me hastily changing things or getting frustrated with it. I put my everything into my work, so I judge it quite harshly, a way I have developed to overcome this, is by thinking would I be happy putting it in my home? would I give the piece to someone as a gift? If the answer is no, that is okay; sometimes art doesn't fit into those categories, I reflect on my work asking various

questions. What would I change? Maybe I should have tried an alternative medium.

From these questions I can improve for future work, learning from mistakes or adopting methods I have learnt or a combination of past methods and new ways.

I look at Holly Warburton for inspiration, she works similarly to myself, developing a pencil sketch then working on it digitally (Warburton, n.d.).

This method works for me, as I feel it is more natural to draw with traditional mediums first, it is ingrained opposed to starting off digitally first. Even if I start off digitally first, I do a quick preliminary sketch to get the concept. Scanning it digitally, means I can utilise all the creative tools on my tablet, creating effects and using brushes that cannot be done with traditional mediums.



Fig 2. 'Sisters' by Holly Warburton (2019)

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