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BA course title: Illustration
Programme: Historical and Contextual Studies (Contextual Practices)
Module: Ways of Thinking
Module code: ADAD4018
Lecturer: Jonathan Pugh
Assignment Title: Portfolio of Writing

Observational Writing: 498 words

Manifesto Writing: 527 words

Practice-based Writing: 475 words

Total word count: 1,500

Task 1: Observational Writing

Signs are everywhere we look, everywhere we turn. A sign can have a shared concept or idea or it can be personal and subjective, different for every individual (Lomas, 2019). However, it is important to see the whole picture, what surrounds it helps us to put it into context (Berger, 1972). I will be using a fifteenth century painting and deconstructing it in a way that allows us to identify and distinguish the signifier from the signified, allowing us to piece parts together to create a whole, through semiotic analysis.

Charles Sanders Pierce's semiotic theory was made up of three components: the sign itself; the object- what it means to us; and the interpretant- what we deem to believe. An article by Tim Lomas (Lomas, 2019) identifies the importance of the interpretant and how we as viewers observe a sign based on our attitudes and ideology (Lund, 2015). Roland Barthes' semiotic theory was made up of five codes: Hermeneutic- mystery; Proairetic- anticipation, leading up to something; Symbolic- used for representation; Semantic- hidden meaning; and Cultural. I learned that cultures can interpret the meaning of signs differently- they can have multiple meanings (The Media Insider, 2019), (Lomas, 2019), (Barthes video, 2019).

Whilst reading up about Prose fiction, I learned that narratology is related to semiotics in terms of structuralism. "Narratives are made of material signs (words, images, etc) which stand for meanings that need to be interpreted by the receiver" and they "connect at least two events in a common structure or organised whole- a beginning, middle and end". "Structuralism uses the order of semiotics to help us define meaning" (Ribo, 2019).



This painting titled 'Saint Jerome in the Desert' by Bernardino Pinturicchio (1475-1480) shows a man (St Jerome) kneeling down, like he's begging. He is in the Syrian Desert, living as a hermit, penitent, cardinal and humanist. This is evident from his body language and facial expression; his left hand is directing us towards a red book, which, based on the context, could be the bible. In his other hand, he is holding a rock close to his chest which I found is a sign of determination and penance (Da, L, 2014). St Jerome is also wearing a piece of clothing, wrapped around his waist- "Gray Tunic, the colour of humility" (Louvre, 2011). Other signs include: the dead tree next to the subject being a symbol of the sinful soul (Louvre, 2011); a lion, slightly hidden in the foreground being the subject's loyal companion; and a man on the cross in the background, believed to be Jesus. The first thing I noticed were his daunting eyes, full of fear and desperation, also indicated by the rest of his face and his skin "stretched to the bone from fasting" (Da,L, 2014). All in all, all the signs within the painting create it's overall meaning and add to the narrative of St Jerome. This image also contains multiple signs and may be different for others based on cultural differences.

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Figure 1: Wikipedia Contributors (2019). Jerome. [online] Wikipedia. Available at: <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Jerome> [Accessed 4 Dec. 2019].

Task 2: Manifesto Writing Task

1. A world without Aesthetic is a world without “beauty and magic”- (Hogh-Olesen, 2019)
2. Everything the eye is drawn to is valid in a piece of artwork as it is what we think is important and our eye becomes “the centre of the visible world”- (Berger, 1972).
3. When we are drawn to something we need to recognise what surrounds it and that helps us to put it into context.
4. Colour and shape are important. Anything else is an extension of knowledge using the basic principles of design and what you want to come across in your work- Bauhaus manifesto
5. Artwork can be informative but it must also trigger an emotional response. The way we feel about the work in front of us can help us to want to understand and read more.
6. Art allows the viewer to explore something that they may have initially looked past.
7. Art is personal to everyone and can only be interpreted by those who experience it.
8. Art and Science co exist- “There is no science without fancy, and no art without facts” (Earnshaw, 2020).

3 areas of exploration:

Aesthetic: a world without aesthetic is a world without “beauty and magic”



“Why do we decorate ourselves, our surroundings, make music, dance, art, etc....?” We do this because it comes naturally to us humans and is inbuilt so we are able to survive, thrive and reproduce. It has also helped us to solve problems throughout history and is what brings us closer as a nation, giving us that language to communicate and express (Hogh-Olesen, 2018).

Interpretation: Art is personal to everyone and can only be interpreted by those who experience it.



We all have ideas about what a good piece of artwork is. This is why art is subjective and not just by walking into a gallery, but anywhere and anything you can visualise and observe. “We have the power to make meaning” from what we see in front of us and it can help us to develop skills that will encourage us to be curious, analyse and articulate, to make sense of the world in which we live (WHYY Education, 2014), (Doan, 2017). “Eyes trained to look” can help us with job occupations, such as a criminal investigator when we need to be able to investigate or interrogate, and look for what’s beneath the surface. These skills are also useful for our ever changing, digital world (digital literacies) and to help us break down problems and look for solutions. It is all about how you make connections. We can easily pick up these skills without realising as “understanding art is as simple as looking” (David Salle, PBS Newshour, 2016). A video titled ‘Interpreting Art in Your Own Way | 2014 WHYY After School’ allowed me to observe different interpretations of what Art means to the public, with a mixture of artists and non artists. I agreed with the majority who believed that art was about the “context of the time and period it was made” and as long as it was able to convey meaning it was considered valid. From having read a book titled ‘Philosophical Perspectives on Art’ by Stephen Davies, I began to understand how the world we live in today is very different from that of a decade ago, let alone a century or two ago, which is why “being socially embedded in the present, we are incapable of understanding how those who lived formerly viewed their world” given the change in ideas “discoveries and theories” (Davies, 2010).

Colour and shape are important. Anything else is an extension of knowledge using the basic principles of design and what you want to come across in your work- Bauhaus manifesto



The Bauhaus was an Art and Design school in Germany, founded by Walter Gropius. The school was to combine science and art- “mathematical principles and engineering were applied to fine art, craft and architecture”. This is also an example of one of my eight statements that was ‘Art and Science co exist’. The building was part of the aesthetic and belief system- “intended for mass production” and everything that was inside made up the composition or added to the overall concept. Geometric forms were important to the aesthetic as Gropius believed that the architecture “must reflect the psychological and sensory impact of shape, texture and colour”. Other practices came into play, such as the introduction of colour theory, “motion, time and space” and discovering “light-sensitive paper”. Science would be used to influence art practices, for example, professor Wassily Kandinsky used images of microbes, embryos and insects that inspired his ideas for abstraction (Weber, 2019).

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Figure 1: Cole's Classroom. (2020). What is Aesthetic Photography? Understanding the Basics. [online] Available at: <https://www.colesclassroom.com/what-is-aesthetic-photography/>.

Figure 2: Anon, (n.d.). Art and Interpretation | Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy. [online] Available at: <https://iep.utm.edu/artinter/>.

Task 3: Practice based writing

Figure 3: Xie, J. (2019). 100 years of Bauhaus: The short-lived school that changed design forever. [online] Curbed. Available at: <https://archive.curbed.com/2019/4/9/18296923/bauhaus-100-design-legacy-art-furniture-craft>.

Task 3: Practice-based writing

Artefact: Merchant Seaman's Memorial sculpture

Brian Fell is a sculptor whose work centres around abstraction and figuration, drifting between each practice. Fell believes they both feed into each other, each bringing distinct but related challenges. You can see what his sculptures are but sometimes you need to look a little deeper. A ship's hull has been formed into a sleeping face, buried into the ground, resting on a circular mosaic design by artists Louise Shenstone and Adrian Butler (rcahmw.gov.uk), reminding us of those who lost their lives during the First World War (coflein.gov.uk). The rather large size of the head makes the context of the work more powerful and significant.



My practice and in relation to Artefact

I'm very interested in collage, working traditionally and hands on without thinking too much. I love thinking about patterns and colour combinations, as well as the composition layout and I tend to focus on a character. I like to experiment with different ideas and practices when making a small collage piece that could be developed as the narrative continues. I mainly like to focus on shape and form and figuration, but elements of abstraction can come into play (similar to Brian Fell). When working with ready made photographs, I will sometimes use photo cut outs of figurative sculptures or add elements of surrealism. My work keeps changing but I like the simplicity and using space to give the subject context, which is what Fell thought about before exhibiting his work.

I start my practice by sketching out a few ideas and if any of the sketches stand out to me I will then work on those sketches or one in particular and develop it, using one medium, which I will then build on by experimenting further with composition, layout and colour- "leading the viewer through an act full of emotion and feeling" (Adams, 2018). I prefer working in a sketchbook compared to working on a final piece as I am much more interested in the development of ideas or a journal to document thoughts. The aesthetic of a

sketchbook, creative journal, or a small book is an expression of your thought process- “Art is a statement of who we are and what we have experienced”, “Collage is layering and uncovering ideas, a continuum of thoughts” (Santiago, 2010). Through further reading and video observation, I have thought more about composition- “If a few elements can be united harmoniously, a step has been taken toward further creation” (Dow, 2007). I’ve realised how important it is to think about how you place components in a composition, the space and depth, and how it adds to the overall concept. I also enjoy experimenting with different textures, especially patterns. I usually find these patterns from magazines, using them as cut outs. Other illustrators also work in a similar way, using collage and mixed media i.e. ‘Niky Roehreke’ and ‘Clover Robin’.



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