

Heidi Lucca-Redcliffe

2103287

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Proposal

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Paul Duerinckx

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The aim for this proposal is to deconstruct the three chosen keywords by analysing and considering practitioners and theories to develop a thorough research proposal, to assemble a structure that will support and lead into the dissertation. The keywords were decided by questioning and evaluating the core of my practise by focusing on current and gradually growing ideas. The keywords discussed and researched are: **The Self**, **Sight** and **Touch**.

The Self

Individuals in society construct a perspective of their surroundings from their self-concept, “the way that a person sees himself or herself” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). Reflecting on one’s identity, the self is formed from how the “individual internalizes a sense of the world” (Brinthaupt and Scheier, 2022). This is created by the individuals’ experiences of their life, “cumulatively accreting one moment to the next in an effort to secure the interface between an individual’s past activities and their future desires” (Brinthaupt and Scheier, 2022). Therefore, the self is a continuous developing identity from how the individual interacts and reflects from previous events and awaiting to respond to the future.

During the 1950s, Psychologist Carl Rogers created a theory of personality, that was formed from investigating the self. The self-concept according to Rogers was divided into two concepts: “the ideal self and the real self” (OpenStax and Learning, n.d.). Further on, these concepts were defined as, the *Ideal Self*, how the individual would like to be perceived, compared to the *Real Self* as an authentic and a true perception of the self. If these two concepts’ personalities of the individual’s perception contrasted, the perspective of the self would be incongruence, “when the ideal self does not align with the real self” (Study.com, 2019). This false perception of the self occurs when the individual has a low self-esteem.

Additionally, the emotions of an individual create another dimension of how the self perceives themselves and what is around them. Emotions affect how one perceives, therefore, if the emotions were positive, their perception would be optimistic. On the other hand, negative emotions produce a negative perspective of the self. Furthermore, “those emotions not only involve consciousness of the self; they are – to use the language of intentionality - about the self” (Kristjánsson, K. 2010. Pg.77). The self is aware of their emotions and their perception is created from the response from the individuals’ senses. Within self-portraiture, the artist is reflecting from their visual perception as well as an emotional perspective, they are creating a piece that reflects their mind. A painting by Lucian Freud will be analysed to identify how his self-portrait was created by both his visual perception and his perspective of his internal self.



Figure 1: Lucian Freud (1985) *Reflection* (Self-Portrait) [Oil on canvas]

His painting depicts a self-portrait, concentrating mainly on his portrait and how he perceives his reflection. Using sight, he captured a time of presence in his life, by understanding the values of his colour palette and a resemblance of the artist, however, through the expression of the painting, reveals a deeper perspective of the artist, his self. "The work of Lucian Freud continues to live in his canvases, and therefore immortal" (Helen, 2020). His painting is a visual embodiment of how he perceives himself through his visual reflection and internal, because, as he is the subject, he is expressing his internal emotions and painting his self-concept, his real and ideal self. The focus is completely on him, his portrait captures the emotions on his face, his reaction, compared to the one-toned background.

The thickness and technique of how he applied the paint, textured patches of tones. This is supported by (Finger, B, 2020), who expressed that Freud felt uncomfortable while painting his self-portraits and the emotions, the internal thoughts of being vulnerable are hidden from the viewer due to the thickly layered paint. Comparing to his previous portraits of his subjects, the internal analysis of the self is apparent in his self-portrait, because even though there is a resemblance of himself, there is a concentration and awareness in his portrait, compared to his portraits of his models where majority of the time, they did not make eye contact or don't appear as aware of being painted. "His portraits turn inside out a man's soul, revealing not only his body but also his carnal nature" (Helen, 2020). The difference between painting the self and painting a model is the relationship. Freud would be painting from his own perspective, and could go between the ideal or real self, depending on his emotions during that painting. Whereas, painting a model is how Freud interprets the environment and figure and the relationship between himself and the model.

Sight

From analysing the self, this essay leads into the next keyword, sight. Sight is a responsive sense to how the viewer visually absorbs and analyses their surroundings. Similarly, this connects to the self, because individuals will locate and notice specific details, such as signs and symbols, that they are interested by. Sight is defined as, “the ability to see” (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). Sight is an important sense as that allows the viewer to absorb visual imagery. Visuals and images are a widely used tool to communicate with people to present an image that can be absorbed and deconstructed, depending on how the image is perceived. However, sight is apart of the five key senses, and appears to be the most important and relied on sense. But the eyes sometimes have difficulty absorbing all the information and some visual information may not completely present the truth of an image or object. “It takes time for information from our eyes to reach our brain, where it is processed, analysed and ultimately integrated into consciousness” (Hogendoorn, 2020). Individuals are processing multiple images and visuals throughout their day, and it becomes challenging to thoroughly absorb all the information. Therefore, the viewers perception is influenced by specific details and collecting images that suit their preference and what they can connect to. A method of deconstructing and contextualising an image is by using semiotic analysis. Semiotic analysis is by initially viewing the image visually and locating signs and symbols that are present, to investigate and create a meaning. Considering Charles Sanders Peirce semiotic analysis, this analysis will support and identify a deeper context of Frank Bowling’s painting. “Peirce’s semiotics expressly engages with visual as well as linguistic signs” (Manghani. S, 2013, pg. 5) While observing the entire painting, there is a consideration to evaluate text and consider the context of how it was assembled.

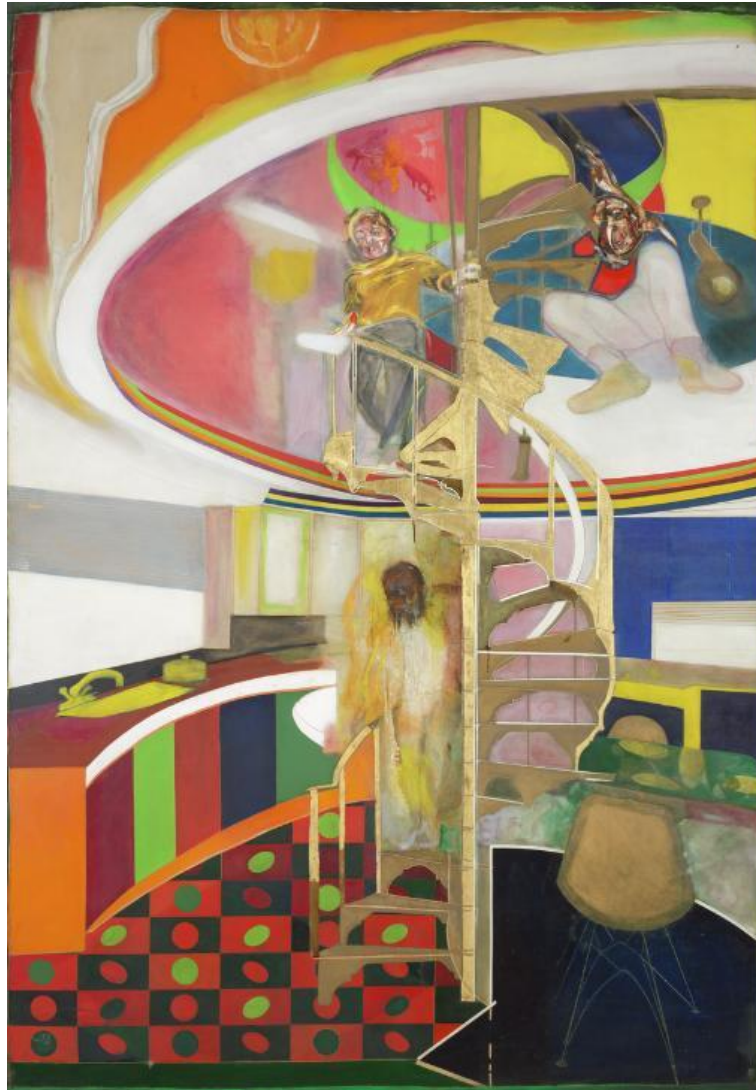


Figure 2: Frank Bowling (1964-66) *Mirror* [Acrylic on canvas]

Bowling's painting presents a burst of colour, an arrangement of distorted figures assembled onto this structured staircase. The staircase is centred and brings the subjects and the surroundings all come together. "Image studies can be understood to evoke a structural, comparative account of, and critical enquiry" (Manghani. S, 2013. Pg. 8). Bowling during the preparation of this painting considered the style of the staircase and was inspired by Jay Hambidge and the logarithmic diagrams. The essence of creating balance and symmetry from a spiral, growing and constructing a rhythm within the painting. The staircase highlights consideration of the diagrams against the constructing movement of chaos through the

colour palette and presentation. A quote that supports the previous point regarding precision and inspiration of Hambidge, “Mirror was constructed with these diagrams in mind, and with precise regard to their symbolic and analogical potential” (Gooding, M. 2011. Pg.48).

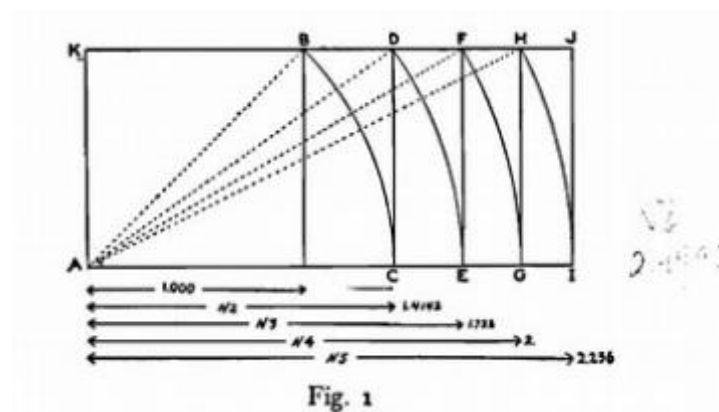


Figure 3: Jay Hambidge (1967) “The Elements of Dynamic Symmetry”.

The theory of ‘Dynamic Symmetry’ was created by Jay Hambidge in 1919-20, where he investigated how a design can replicate and imitate the rhythm and flow, therefore, Bowling used this theory to help support his perception of how the staircase should be painted to create a growing and geometrically accurate staircase.

The importance of perfecting the staircase is identified due to its central point and pigment, gold. The gold colour symbolises importance and power and shows the growth and success of Frank Bowling. “It is a golden staircase that presents the very image of dynamic growth” (Gooding, M. 2011. Pg.49). A staircase in business is symbolised according to business terms as, “The staircase signifies sequential growth, while the steps are the skills, capabilities experiences, and opportunities taken to bring the company to its peak” (Chris, 2023). With the use of semiotic analysis and the sense of sight to visualise and contextualise this image, a development of understanding artwork clearer as well as analysing and identifying signs

and symbols pushes the consideration of how an individual may perceive the artwork, because all perspectives are different, and individuals will notice specific symbols and signs that they are interested with.

Touch

From considering sight as a perspective of analysing, the sense of touch is a way for an individual to conduct a deeper investigation using interaction by touching and observing with their tactile senses. Online dictionary defines the term 'Touch' as "To put your hand on something" (Cambridge Dictionary, 2023). The connection between using the hands to observe an object, the sense of touch compared to sight, creates a more immersive and engaging interaction, because using vision will not completely produce an accurate opinion of an object.

For individuals analysing artwork, they have an opportunity to physically connect and explore the tactile surface which creates a new perspective of deconstructing the artwork, as they would be exploring a variety of senses and not relying on the visual presentation, creating a personal response and perspective through touch. "It is an important aspect of the art experience, as it allows the viewer to engage with the artwork on a deeper level" (Sarah, 2023). Interaction through the sense of touch allows the audience to question the surface of materials, the construction and process, therefore, the consideration would be expanded. "The current dilemma facing our tactile sense is either to let it atrophy, as has happened during our evolution as humans" (Švankmajer, Dalby and Vasseleu, 2014). The use of touch before did decrease, as many relied on their objective senses, sound and vision, however, since the publishing of this book, there has been a gradual growth of exploring artwork with the use of touch. "The instinctive experiences of tactile perception, will always

throw us back to the deepest layers of our unconscious” (Švankmajer, Dalby and Vasseleu, 2014). Interaction and touch allow the individual to discover a perspective that is beneath the conscious mindset.

The Iceberg Theory by Sigmund Freud supports how the mind has deeper layers while observing. Observing and acknowledging “Our feelings, motives and decision are actually powerfully influenced by our past experiences, and stored in the unconscious” (Mcleod, 2023). Interacting with visuals reminds the brain and focuses on connecting previous memories, whereas, compared to physically touching an object or person, creates an opening to searching for the tactile similarities, analysing how one interacts and behaves once they touch the surface and further investigating the feeling, the closer connection due to the intimate interaction. Artist Lygia Clark created a piece that revolves around the use of touch and interaction of two individuals.



Figure 4: Lygia Clark (1967) *O eu e o tu (The I and the you)*. Performance

The two figures main focus was to interact with each other by communicating through the sense of touch. These suits covered their entire body, but revealed their hands, therefore, contact between each other regularly happened with their uncovered hands, allowing tactile sensation. Their eyes were covered, therefore, removing the sense of sight and relying on the sense of touch to communicate and create their own imaginary view. The meaning behind this interactive piece, was to observe how they interacted with each other by their hands touching. Their pockets were filled with mediums, and they could feel and interact with what was inside of theirs as well as their partners. The people inside of these suits were a woman and man, however, there was an opportunity for their interaction to forget and lose their identity and gender, they themselves are to become a sensory interaction, becoming a body of material. This links with the definition of haptics, removing communication and solely relying on the sense of touch and movement to interact and communicate with each other. With the additional tube that connects both subjects together, it created a visual presentation of the two figures coming together to form into one. Additionally, due to the masks covering the eyes, this could affect the sense of being vulnerable and heightening sensitivity especially when contact of touch is used. In conclusion, the sense of touch creates another perspective of understanding and observing an object to an environment. The subconscious interprets an idea of how an object may feel from a visual perspective by linking it to memories and experiences, however, there is evidence that if an individual were to interact with it physically through the sense of touch, it would become an immersive experience and can formulate a better and more accurate observation of materiality.

To conclude, this dissertation proposal has explored the three keywords of **The Self**, **Sight** and **Touch**, by understanding their definitions, researching theories that have developed

ideas and created an analysis of chosen artworks that connect to the keywords. A key theme that has followed throughout this proposal was perception and how individuals perceive their surroundings and themselves. It has been a personal investigation that has been supported with research. Therefore, leading into my dissertation question:

“How does one perceive the physical and internal embodiment of themselves through the use of their senses?”.

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