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Tasks in the order I received them:

Task 1: Manifesto Writing = 548 words

Task 2: Observational Writing = 548 words

Task 3: Practice-based Writing = 543 words

Task 1: Manifesto Writing

1. my feelings will forever be the centre of my art;
2. i don't speak for my art and my art doesn't speak for me, but it speaks for the viewer and the viewer can speak for it, too, if they choose to do so;
3. my art is my experience, but i will never let it truly define me;
4. i will use my hands to create, to destroy, to strangle, to pinch and to break my ideas;
5. i will never limit myself to what i know in the present, because i know nothing at all;
6. if there is love, i will find it and use it in my art; if there is sadness, i will find it and store it in a jar;
7. i will create art that's considered ugly and beautiful and sensitive and dull and most importantly, i will always create something;
8. i will never break myself from what i create.

The three statements from my manifesto that this paper is based on are:

1. my feelings will forever be the centre of my art;
2. i will create art that is considered ugly and beautiful and sensitive and dull and most importantly, i will always create something;
3. if there is love, i will find it and use it in my art; if there is sadness, i will find it and store it in a jar.

From a young age, what drove me to create was that what I felt seemed too much for my little brain to handle. I am a very, very feelings-driven person; what I do isn't always thought through, because I don't need to think much when I can connect with what I feel. While reading John Berger's "Ways of Seeing" (1972), I found a part that I am going to mention here: "[...] a kind of stereotype of 'the great artist' has emerged. This great artist is a man whose life-time is consumed by struggle: partly against material circumstances, partly against incomprehension, partly against himself." Finding that the great masters were influenced by their feelings towards their own condition was liberating. Some artists don't let their feelings dictate their approach because they think it makes them seem too emotional or hard to relate to, but art is not strictly about that. From my point of view, it is about being seen then, eventually, being understood. And that *understanding* will never be the same for each person.

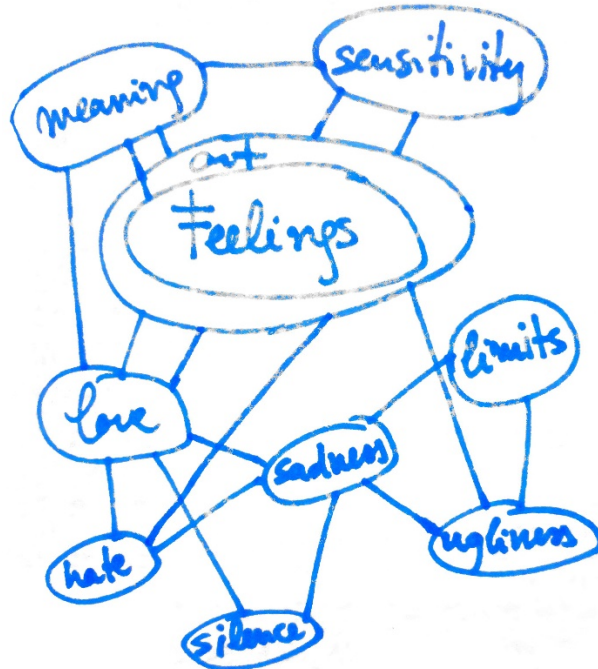


Figure 1. Hand-drawn mind map

In relation to what I said previously, I quote Mary Anne Staniszewski in "Believing Is Seeing" (1995): "When an artist creates a work of art it has no intrinsic use or value; but when this artwork circulates within the systems of Art [...] it acquires a depth of meaning,

a breadth of importance, and an increase in value that is greater proportionately than perhaps anything else in the modern world." What I find strange is how we sometimes crave validation from museums or curators; as artists, we may feel that without their exposure and positiveness, we are not deemed successful. I don't entertain the idea of art always being this serious, world-shattering, perspective-changing type of process. *"The art, in many cases, is over there in the bushes."* Said Seth Siegelaub in an interview with Patricia Norvell for her 2001's book, *"Recording Conceptual Art"*. That is an example of how we should create *everything* that comes to our mind. I know that I don't exist on this earth to always put out complex and complicated art, and that I am here to show what resides inside my mind, even if it may be dull or philosophical or even horrendous.

Lastly, I remember that I didn't learn about what made artists happy in school, but I became so accustomed to their emotional turmoil that I thought it was mine for some time. *"This is believed to be van Gogh's last painting before he shot himself,"* said my teacher without much thought one day, but his words stuck with me. In *"Expressionism, a German intuition"* (1980), the author, Joachim Neugroschel, writes *"[...] such expressive behaviour emerged more vehemently in times of spiritual agitation than in calmer periods."* Now, this quote makes me wonder why we are led to believe that negative experiences should be appreciated more in art; do sadness and tragedy give more meaning to a work? I always perceived art as something that should bring me solace, not make me delve deep into my darkest thoughts. For me, the *concept* of love, of having a full heart, means a lot, and I don't want sadness to be present in my art. I only need the reminder that it simply exists, just as I do.

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Figure 1. *Hand-drawn mind map, 2021*

Task 2: Observational writing

We live in an era of electronic legacy, false appearances and hopeless dreams. While we evolved as humans, the need of creating, finding and giving meaning grew within us, but how are we supposed to interpret what we see, hear, touch or feel without actually giving those actions meaning? (Un)fortunately, that is quite impossible because, even if our goal isn't to analyse an object or action in-depth, we tend to notice more than we intend to.

From an early age, our parents or relatives try to influence the way we perceive what is in front of us; when we are little, we see the world through both our and their eyes. Our grandmothers tell us that when we hiccup, someone is thinking about us. Our uncles tell us how orange is a colour for both boys and girls to wear. In the introduction of "Elements of Semiology" (1964), Roland Barthes writes "*Semiology [...] aims to take in any system of signs, whatever their substance and limits*". We are surrounded by signs and symbols, but through semiotic analysis, we can truly see what is behind art pieces, certain gestures, colours and concepts etc. Signs and symbols are everywhere, but without our input, they will never reach their highest meaning.

To show the importance of acknowledging both the denoted and connoted meanings of any object or act, in this paper I will introduce one of Grete Stern's "Dreams". In one interview, Stern stated that "*I made people see what I saw in a face*" and that has a connoted meaning in itself.



Figure 1. Grete Stern's "Sueño nº 17: ¿quién será? (Dream No. 17: Who Could It Be?)" (1949)

The photomontage I chose is titled "*Sueño nº 17: ¿quién será?*" (1949), which means "*Dream No. 17: Who Could It Be?*" In "*Skirting the Issue: Essays in Literary Theory*" (1995), Mary Lydon writes: "*Thus, whoever would speak of woman, her ideal, her essence, her image, should simultaneously invoke the legend 'This is not a woman', borrowing the strategy of Magritte's 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe'.*" This particular quote always made me think of Stern's work, since she focuses on self-exploration, identity and feminism in a surreal way. At first glance, this work seems to portray a woman, a mirror and part of a coathanger. The woman is looking into the mirror with a shocked expression. Now, if we dive deeper into the connoted message this work might have, we can find multiple new meanings: not only this photo montage might depict a place in a dream, but it might also hint at the fact that the woman is suffering from a schizoaffective disorder. But that is not all! This work might be about the way one person has multiple "faces", never being true to themselves. The connotations are endless.

"Man has, as it were, become a kind of prosthetic God. [...] Future ages will bring him new and probably unimaginably great advances" wrote Sigmund Freud in his 1930's book, "*Civilization and Its Discontents*", and candidly, the man of the 21st century can now see and attribute new meanings to anything. What is unequivocal, in the end, is the fact that anything that resides on this earth is capable of having a denoted and connoted meaning, as long as there will be people to search for it.

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Figure 1. *Grete Stern's "Sueño nº 17: ¿quién será? (Dream No. 17: Who Could It Be?)"* (1949). Available from: <https://www.newyorker.com/culture/photo-booth/grete-sterns-interpretation-of-dreams>

Task 3: Practice-based writing

From where I come from, there is a saying which roughly translates to "*the first impression something leaves on you might not be the one that sums up your true feelings about it*"; I felt this way about a lot of things that crossed my way until now, including exhibitions and what they stand for. It is easy to form a negative opinion about them in their entirety, especially when you haven't visited a lot of them and don't consume art as much as you should.

In my formative years, I found exhibitions boring, sleep-inducing even. Then, in high school, I got the chance of visiting (and even help with organising) some, and that is when I finally realised that I didn't hate them at all, I just found the way they work strange and sometimes unjust. Marcel Duchamp states in "The Creative Act" (1957), that "*the artist may shout from all the rooftops that he is a genius: he will have to wait for the verdict of the spectator in order that his declarations take a social value*" and that sums up the way I feel about them, whether I like what is presented or not.

I will never forget the first exhibition that made me truly think about myself in depth. It was back in 2016 when I randomly stumbled upon an advertisement for it when I was walking back home and decided that I should just go visit. From my first steps in that room, I felt lighter, because the setting was airy and relaxed. A big sign with the words "Anonymous Exhibition" on it shone brightly at the entrance and that made me more curious; not knowing who is the artist behind what you are seeing brings a new type of intimacy between a person and an artwork, in my opinion. There were various types of images and paintings on the walls, full of energy and feeling, and they made me wonder about the stories that they carried behind; were they extensions of their creators' experiences or just recreations of passing moments, not infused with deep feelings?



Figure 1. Photo from an exhibition, 2019

In his 1974 book, "The Production of Space", Henry Lefebvre asks "*Could space be nothing more than the passive locus of social relations [...]?*" and he kindly answers his own question with a "*The answer must be no.*" This is, indeed, true, especially when we're thinking about exhibitions. There are many details that contribute to what makes an exhibition memorable, and for me, it was this anonymity that I found there. It was like nothing I saw before, with low lights and sweet silence, with mysterious artworks with equally mysterious meanings behind. It made my head spin with questions about myself, my art, my practices, and I felt like a part from Lawrence Weiner's "Statements" (1969), the one where he says "*My own art never gives directions*" since I always thought that art is something which we can instantly connect with, thanks to its powerful presence.

In the end, I am sure that exhibitions can represent a big influence on one's way of thinking and perceiving the world and, as David Hopkins says in "After Modern Art", "*Give the image a couple of seconds, and something reveals itself among the abstract brushstrokes*".

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Figure 1. *Photo from an exhibition, 2019, Personal archive*