

Portfolio of writing

Tasks in order I have arranged them:

Manifesto – 497 words

Observational writing – 501 words

Practice-based writing – 505 words

Total word count – 1503 words

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Course - Illustration

Ways of Thinking (ADAD4018)

Course tutor – Jonathan Pugh

Manifesto

- 1) Art must be accessible to all. Nothing else matters other than the universality of the artwork to the audience in which it is intended for.
- 2) We must learn to understand the power of art and all the implications an artwork can bring.
- 3) We shouldn't let a gallery determine the worth of an artwork or its worthiness to be displayed.
- 4) Female artists must strive to continue making a message of femininity in their artwork. The work is far from over in the fight for equality.
- 5) Art doesn't have to be an artist's best work, merely art.
- 6) Artwork should be expressive; it should not be limited in any manner.
- 7) There is more to life than a phone screen. We cannot allow ourselves or our artwork be determined by the overwhelming pressures of social media within our modern age.
- 8) Art should make a stand against the issues that have made themselves so apparent in our current climate. Art has the capability to change the world, we just have to create it.

Statement 4 – Female artists must strive to continue making a message of femininity in their artwork. The work is far from over in the fight for equality.

The Feminist Art Movement is said to have begun in the 1970s when art historian Linda Nochlin (1971) released her essay titled *Why Have There Been No Great Women Artists?*, criticising the lack of female presence in the art world, and the

perceived greatness of the male artist. Indeed, to this day, it is difficult to reference female artists with the same ease as male. This movement was further propelled by the release of John Berger's *Ways of Seeing* documentary only a year later, where he criticised the use of the female nude in the art world (Fulleylove, 2018). Progress has, undoubtedly, been made and women now have a much better standing in the art world. Artists such as Barbara Krueger and the Guerrilla Girls were crucial in breaking the stigma that existed in the art world, with their infamous artworks criticising the art world. It is very easy to argue that females now have the same standing as men, though the lack of female representation throughout art history is perhaps the only counter argument required. This only reveals that female artists, and male, must continue the fight for equality, as we are far from achieving the equal greatness our world so desperately craves.

Statement 7 – There is more to life than a phone screen. We cannot allow ourselves or our artwork be determined by the overwhelming pressures of social media within our modern age.

The development of technology has been of an incredible influence in progressing art in recent years, especially in professions of Illustration and Graphic Design. Nevertheless, technology and particularly social media has started to inhibit our abilities to think creatively and hence, act as so. Lanier (2018, pg. 19) suggests that creativity has been limited by behaviourist psychology, whilst the digital world indeed attracts this very manner of thinking. Social media has limited every aspect of human life, consuming everyone it has come into contact with, even without realisation. The same creators of social media living in the Silicon Valley are now demanding we

refrain from using it. We must break from these limitations and realise the world that surrounds us. We are required to expand our creativity by fracturing the technological manner of thinking. We must not submit to algorithms, nor the creative strain that has become much more apparent.

Statement 8 - Art should make a stand against the issues that have made themselves so apparent in our current climate. Art has the capability to change the world, we just have to create it.

The world surrounding us seems to be as unpredictable as ever before. Division is appearing at exceeding rates, and it looks as though a stand must be made. Indeed, some believe that now, more than ever, we need to make art that questions, “the need for politically engaged art has rarely been more urgent.” (Adams, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/artanddesign/2016/sep/11/protest-art-miro-elmgreen-dragset-isaac-julien-sarah-sze-doug-aitken-interview>) Artists possess the ability to question, change and challenge the events that are occurring. Art has the capability to force people to interrogate themselves and the world around them. Not all art created has to enforce this responsibility, but artists must accept the overwhelming need to enlighten people on what is transpiring around them. Whilst words may struggle, art can assume the role of a universal language. We must consider the universality of our artwork, and the influence we could have as artists on the population.

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Observational writing

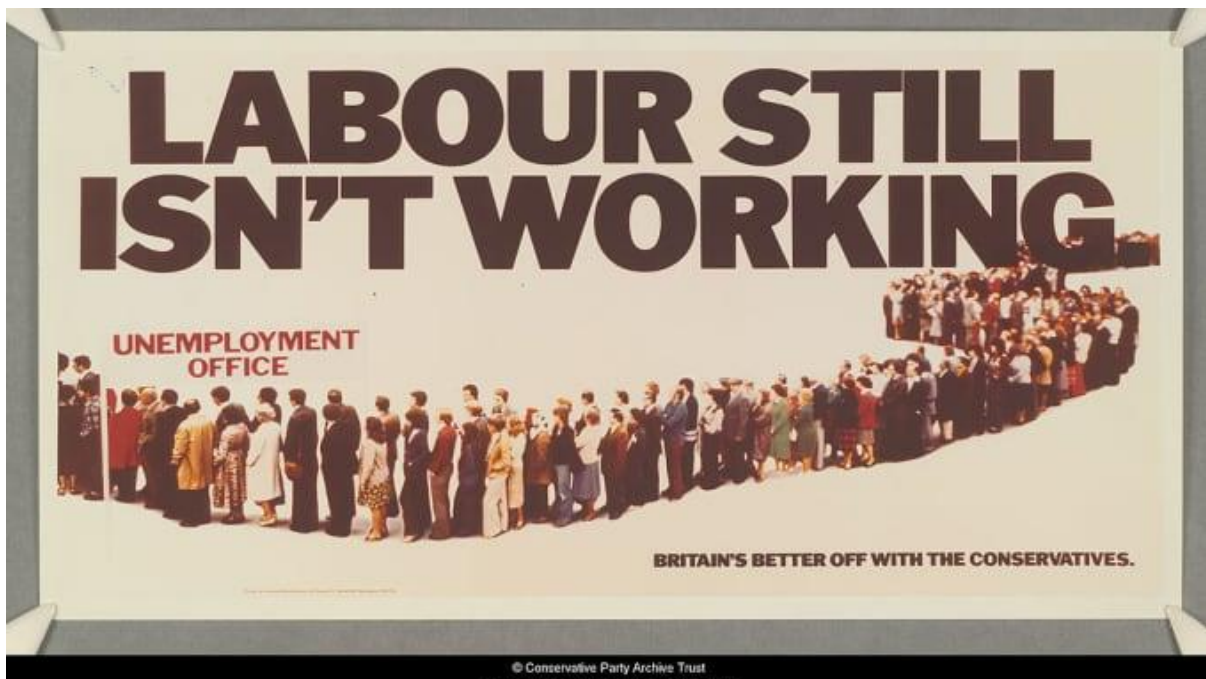
How humanity considers and interprets images has changed drastically within its existence. However, one constant has been the production of said images, which can be traced back to cavemen who drew images on the walls of their homes.

According to John Berger (1972), “seeing comes before words.” (Berger, 1972, p. 5)

The viewer of an image breaks it through their own interpretation of said image.

Ferdinand de Saussure (1916) was one of the first to break down the study of such interpretation by defining the “signs” we see in everything we encounter. Saussure argues signs are made of two components: a ‘signifier’ and a ‘signified.’ Though many other academics have discussed the theories of Saussure, the elements of the sign have appeared to remain consistent components. A signifier is the form of the sign whereas the signified is the concept that the sign represents. The signified was later built upon to be of two elements, a denotation, the literal meaning, or a connotation, the idea or feeling provoked, by Roland Barthes. (1997)

In order to break down an image, we must consider the signifier and signified. A comprehensive overview of the denotation, or connotation, must be provided to understand an image. Applying a basic understanding of semiotics allows us to break down any image we encounter, a necessary skill for the 21st Century where we are surrounded by constant image production and manipulation.



This poster was produced as part of the successful Conservative and Thatcher election campaign in 1979. At first glance, the poster seems to advise the public on the failings of a Labour government, in manufacturing a long line of unemployed individuals. The words 'LABOUR STILL ISN'T WORKING' could imply to the viewer that the Labour party does not have the capabilities to run the country. This sentence in conjunction with the line 'BRITAIN'S BETTER OFF WITH THE CONSERVATIVES' signifies to the viewer how better equipped the Conservatives are, in comparison to Labour. Considering the long line of people stood at the 'UNEMPLOYMENT OFFICE' would suggest to the viewer that unemployment levels are at an extreme level and this could lead to the direct association of the problem to the Labour party. Upon closer inspection of the queue of people, it is clear to see how the people repeat throughout the queue. Indeed, Martyn Walsh, the designer of the ad admitted to the repeated photography of the same 20 volunteers to manipulate the line. (BBC News, 2001) Upon discovering this fact, the viewer may

question the connotations that the poster initially suggested. This very fact may provide a different connotation of manipulation by the creators. It could even lead to a direct association of manipulation with the Conservatives.

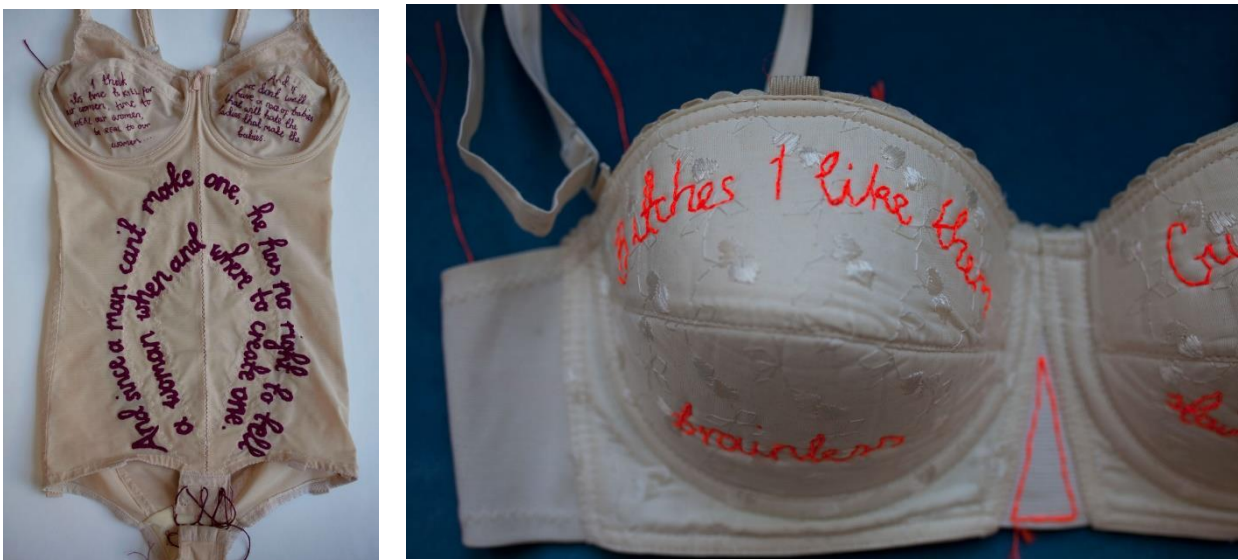
A semiotic analysis of images provides opportunity to discover the manipulation of images and is particularly useful in uncovering a motivation behind its production. A basic understanding of semiotics seems only more crucial in our current times, where image manipulation has become incredibly easy for much of the population to access.

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Practice-based writing

Zoë Buckman, a London-born artist, discussed the role of her work as “to start discussion, to provoke debate and, ultimately, to raise consciousness or challenge the status quo.” (Biswas, 2017) Artists have the capability, and influence, to challenge the prominent issues that exist in the world. Artists such as Buckman, Banksy and Pawel Kuczynski have heavily influenced my work as I have developed as an artist, through the continued use of their platforms to convey the messages our society so desperately needs to understand.

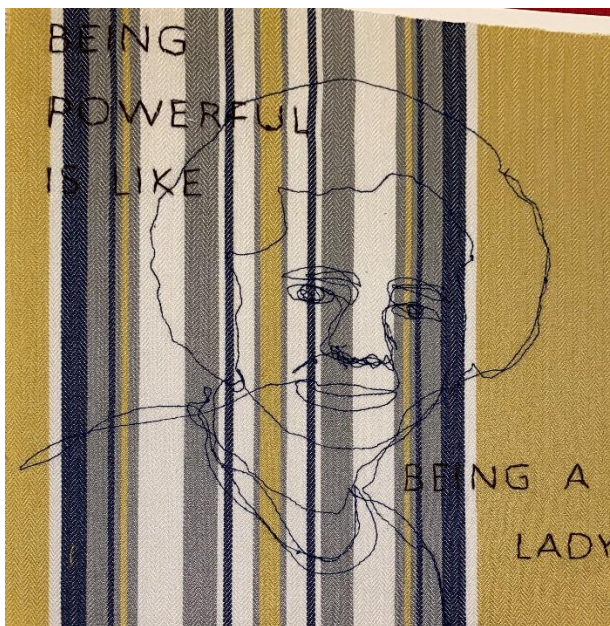
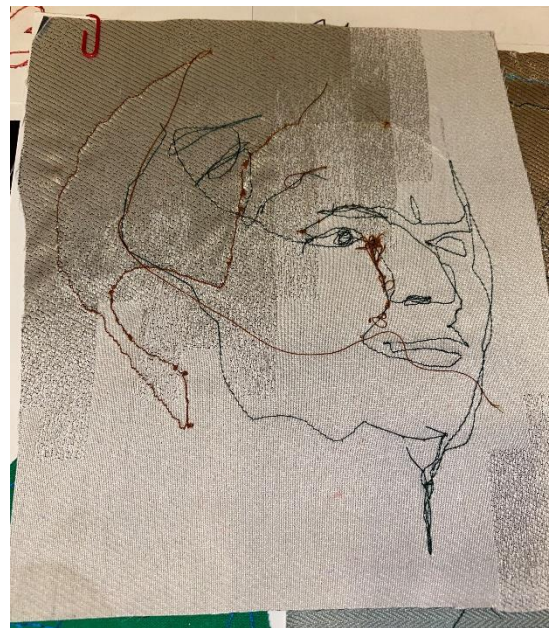
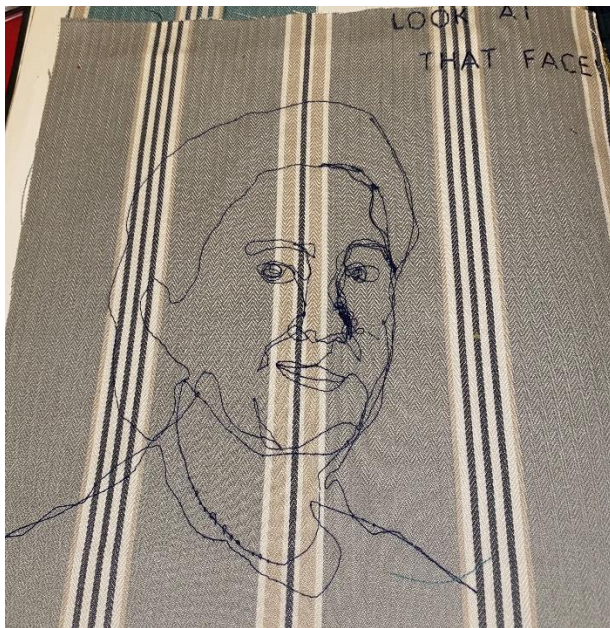


In Buckman's installation '*Every curve*', she investigates her love of hip-hop music, her feminist beliefs, and the subsequent relationship that this may invoke. She uses garments and embroidery to represent the history of women and feminism.

(Buckman, 2017) Buckman makes a very clear message of feminism through her artwork, and it forces us question the contradictions that we may be engaging in every day. Buckman (2017) argues we can consider the contradictions differently, in a way that enhances a complimentary relationship. Hip-hop was very much the music of African American men of the 1990s, and to dismiss it would diminish their expression of the time.

This installation inspired me to investigate my own beliefs and discover a way to represent these. I am particularly interested in politics and feminism, particularly how the two are intertwined. This led me to investigate the lack of female representation in politics, all across the world. As of 2019, only 24.3% of parliamentary representatives were women. (UN Women, 2019) This fact is made incredibly clear by the absence of female political leaders. Conducting research prior to a project is vital for me to ensure I am portraying a strong viewpoint, which can be argued effectively.

I like to experiment with different mediums as much as possible, and Buckman's use of garments and embroidery inspired me to use stitching. Identifying powerful women in politics, I stitched their faces on materials that struck me as similar to those of their infamous female 'power' suit adopted by many female politicians. Using my research, I stitched facts, or quotes, over their faces to show either the complimentary, or contradictory relationship of the words being used.



Reflecting upon this project allowed me to identify the way I work best. I enjoy portraying issues that are deep-rooted in our society and find that making a message through my artwork truly allows for expression. In providing a message, I believe I could be influencing the smallest of changes in our society. By employing the reflective cycle of Graham Gibbs (1988), it encourages utilising the project as an experience to reflect upon and hence learn from. The project revealed a strength of

working in a linear manner, allowing me to observe portraiture in a unique fashion.

Whilst completing the project, I found that portraying such issues often triggered strong emotions of passion and anger within myself. In allowing myself to consider my emotions, it contributed to what I produced. Allowing myself to understand my emotions and beliefs have permitted me to enhance my artwork.

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