

Portfolio of Writing

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Surface Pattern Design Year 1

Module: ADAD4018

Ways of Thinking: Julia Lockheart

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task 1: Observational Writing = 522 words

Task 2: Manifesto Writing = 526 words

Task 3: Practice-based Writing = 530 words

Task 1: observational Writing

'Signs do not directly evoke things' (Saussure 1916). What we see, is truly revealed through what our eyes interpret to our mind and how we deconstruct these elements to construct a new/better way of understanding. In this text I will demonstrate the use of semiotics within advertising to show how the signifier and the signified allow us to see what is and isn't present (what is denotated and what is connotated).

The study of signs and symbols is something most have grown up learning. The ability to read from pictures is something we use in our everyday life, whether its road signs or texting using emojis as some examples. Our minds are programmed to know that a red circle with a line through it means no entry, and the connotation of red immediately symbolises danger within this interpretation. Therefore, the connotation gives a better insight to the denotation. *'It is neither the thing nor the meaning alone, but the two together'* (Williamson 2010). This is the theory of semiotics.

Semiotics provides context through visual communications. The founder of this theory Ferdinand De Saussure (1916), states that language is a sign system where you need the signifier and the signified to fully understand the construct on what is being communicated. Roland Barthes develops this theory by suggesting that the signified can divide into the denotation and the connotation. Barthes in his book *Mythologies* also continues to say that connotations can create a 'myth'. Myths are assumptions we make that create stories based on our beliefs and culture to reinforce values. *'By treating "collective representations" as sign systems one might hope to transcend pious denunciation and instead account in detail for the mystification which transforms petit bourgeois culture into a universal nature'*

(Barthes 1957). 'To expand on this theory, I will deconstruct a perfume advertisement.

In 2018, The French perfume brand *Dior* created a new women's fragrance called *JOY*. What I can denote from the ad is that it stars Jennifer Lawrence. A blonde-haired actress wearing a white dress and red lipstick, sunbathing above the water in a posed position with her eyes shut (not looking into the camera). The blue water implies a sense of tranquillity and peace, we are kept in the dark of where this place is. The mystery allows viewers to see this as their own personal dreamland/fantasy. The white of her dress connotates purity and a heavenly atmosphere with a certain innocence perhaps even a cleanliness. This accentuates and even contrasts with the red lipstick giving seductive connotations. These colours imply that she is an angelic luxury, an object to please the male gaze. This is further defined through her closed eyes not looking into the camera. Her open arms feel like an invitation to look and indulge. The ad makes her appear to feel like the only girl in the world, which is how traditionally every girl wants to feel for their significant other. Therefore, by using this product you will feel as special and as angelic and Jennifer Lawrence. This is the myth. By deconstructing and analysing semiotics, we are opened up to understand further details which we did not initially see.



Figure 1, JOY (2018)

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List of Figures:

Figure 1. JOY, Dior Advertisement, (2018). Accessed from <https://www.qesd.xyz/products.aspx?cid=109&cname=face%20of%20dior%20joy> [Accessed on 3rd November 2020]

Task 2: Manifesto writing

- 1) Do not stick to the screen, go out and find/ experience your own primary research.
- 2) Never throw away work! Opportunities can arise through problem solving.
- 3) Create. Create. Create. Inspiration can come anytime from anywhere.
- 4) Getting to know the artist through the art is a true connection
- 5) Cultures and identities present themselves through the art in which they live.
- 6) Art is our way of combining/ blurring the lines of the past, present and future.
- 7) Revealing truth or lies. Creating can control or change history to display different views/ways of thinking.
- 8) Rediscover yourself, by challenging your abilities you allow yourself to discover new skills, interests and make the most of your creativity

3 areas of exploration:

Rediscover yourself: by challenging our abilities we allow ourselves to discover new skills, interests and make the most of our creativity.

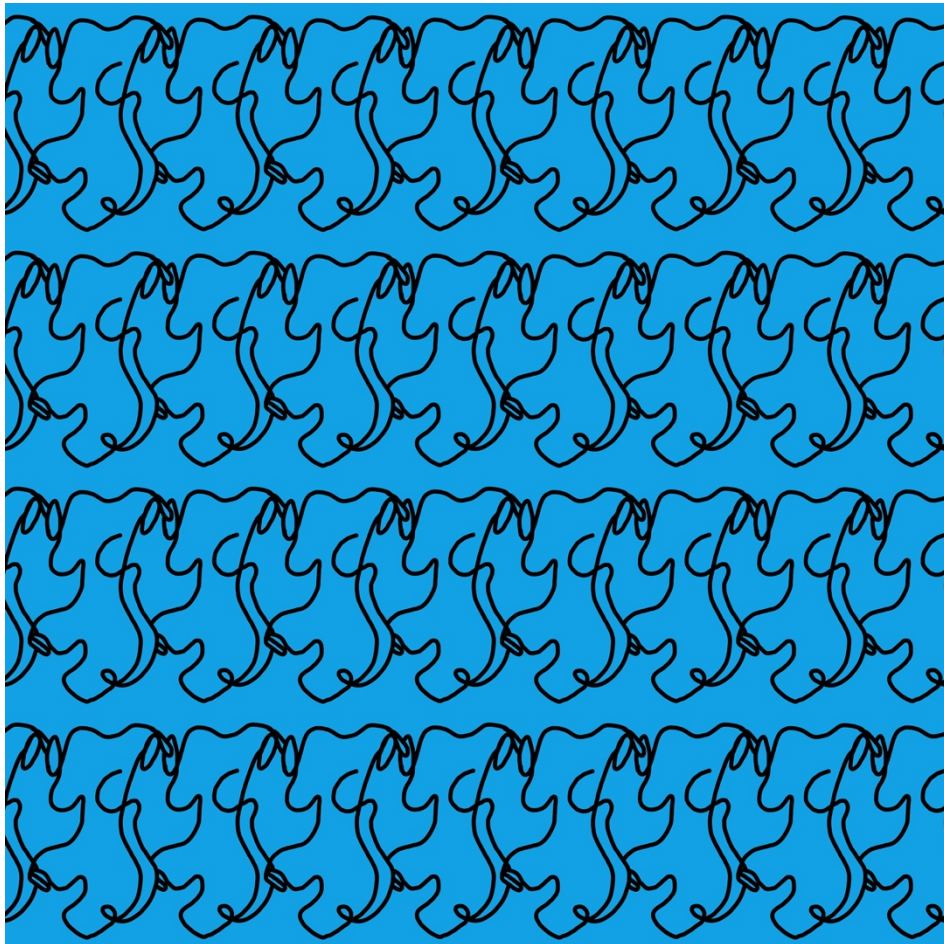


Fig 1. Abstract invert, 2020.

In order to rediscover our creativity, we need to make room for new ways of learning. To do this we may have to unlearn certain skills that we value less important, this is called learning

agility. By challenging ourselves to develop and use new skills we can unlearn old strategies to make room for new ones. Improving our learning agility means that we can grow as people and learn how to adapt our mindset for the benefit of that growth. The process of unlearning is discussed In the Mariana P's article, *The Power of Unlearning* (2020) '*Our most authentic selves can't bloom if we don't make space.*' Adapting our mindsets to develop with our ever-progressing identity we can accept and become our true selves.

Do not stick to the screen: Go outside and experience/ find your own primary research.



Figure 2. Plantasia, 2020



Figure 3. Plantasia, 2020

Primary sources contain first-hand and personal accounts of your own research. It's the foundation for the development of all progressing work and gives an insight into the creator's chosen direction. Primary research allows a unique and individual outcome of work, making the process feel 100% genuine, as opposed to secondary research which is discussed in an online article *Primary and Secondary Sources* (2020) to be '*anything that*

refers to a primary source, such as a review of an artwork'. Conducting your own research allows you to have a more valid opinion on works as you have taken the time to get your own results. Whilst secondary research is important to learn from others' work, taking the time to step away from other influences can direct you into a more personalised mindset.

Expanding outside of your computer screen and finding your own research, can allow you to channel what you like and what you don't like. This can then lead to developing your own personal style.

Cultures and identities present themselves through the art in which they live.



Figure 4. *48 Portraits*, 1971-98

Cultural identity within art creates a sense of personality and explores the characteristics between the artist, the art and the audience. An essay from the Tate called *Cultural identity* (2020) states how artists '*question stereotypes and*

conventions while exploring attributes such as gender, sexuality, race, nationality and heritage'. Art allows us to reconsider ideas on our own identities and perhaps view the progression of widened cultures within art. On the contrary, the figure above conveys a very westernised society of portraits of western civilised men. The Tate refers to this '*they do prompt the question of which cultural figures are used to compose history.*' Art can show a great bias within culture in the way it chooses to represent itself, and by understanding this we allow ourselves to appreciate the culture within all art. Galleries and museums are themselves in a sense very westernised by the way they present art from different cultures. The white cube gallery aesthetic frames art through colour and light that emits a sense of purity. This kind of space shows off westernised art like the figure above. Non-westernised art is seen to be shown in darker, less defining spaces. Usually with lights that create heavy shadows onto the subjects. One example of this is the '*Venus of Willendorf*' statue. Educating ourselves on cultural studies allows us to have a better interpretation of our own art and the art of others.

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List of figures:

Figure 1. Abstract invert, (2020) [Created on the 19th of December]

Figure 2-3. Plantasia, (2020) Taken from: Plantasia, Swansea [Accessed on 30th November 2020]

Figure 4. *48 Portraits*, (1971-98) Accessed from <https://www.tate.org.uk/artist-rooms/collection/themes/cultural-identity> [Accessed from 27th December 2020]

Task 3: Practice-based Writing: A practical reflection on the link between rings and sentimentality

This writing is intended for a jewellery enthusiast. The reader has an appreciation for the history of rings and their sentimental value. It is this that connects my relationship as the writer with the reader.

Traced back to Rome, the history of rings suggests that the ancient Egyptians found that the fourth finger has a nerve that links to the heart. From then on it seems that the ring has the symbol of love and courtship or even mourning in the 19th century. Rings with portraits of a lost loved one would be given as a ‘token of remembrance’. In the renaissance period, the Fede ring was used as a sign of trust. Many of these values still hold today with the message of affection. Rings are commonly made from metals like titanium and steel, this makes them durable, as a symbol of love should last forever. For me, rings are extremely sentimental. They’re something which lasts, meaning they’re easy to reminisce about

and associate with loving memories. Mainly given as a gift, receiving a ring immediately brings a connection to the giver and the receiver. A ring forms a bond between you and your significant other. An example of this is the first ring I ever received from my own significant other, it has sentimental value by being the first gift I was given by them. From the context, I have determined that rings have sentimental value based on the love connection they are associated with. The bond, like the ring is designed to last forever and to be worn through one's life. It's a token of trust and devotion. The ring itself holds all of these emotions and memories of a loved one/ significant other.

Rings are made to last, on average 20-30 years Using wire work and metals, these techniques are not far off from the ones I use in my own design practice. Welding metals together myself, I know that the creation of long-lasting rings has a very hands-on/ personal touch. You can tell that time and effort has gone into these creations. To combine and weld different elements together as a process, reflects that of the wearers (as rings are commonly used to bring people together). As an artist I've learned that everything I make has an aspect of sentimentality to me. Whether it's because I'm reminded of a certain process I like, or because it's a work that I'm not particularly fond of but has allowed me to problem solve and progress. My own opinion and my design practice intertwine with one another through the personal process of rings and their sentimentality.

The sentimentality of rings is all about the connection of affection. The idea of the ring is to bring people together in a sort of unity. From the research, I've gathered that since the ancient Egyptian times, rings have been associated with love. The wedding ring finger connects to the heart therefore its insinuated that when married, through the rings your hearts are connected. I see the use of the ring as a symbol for being joined with someone.

It becomes less about appearance but more about the meaning.

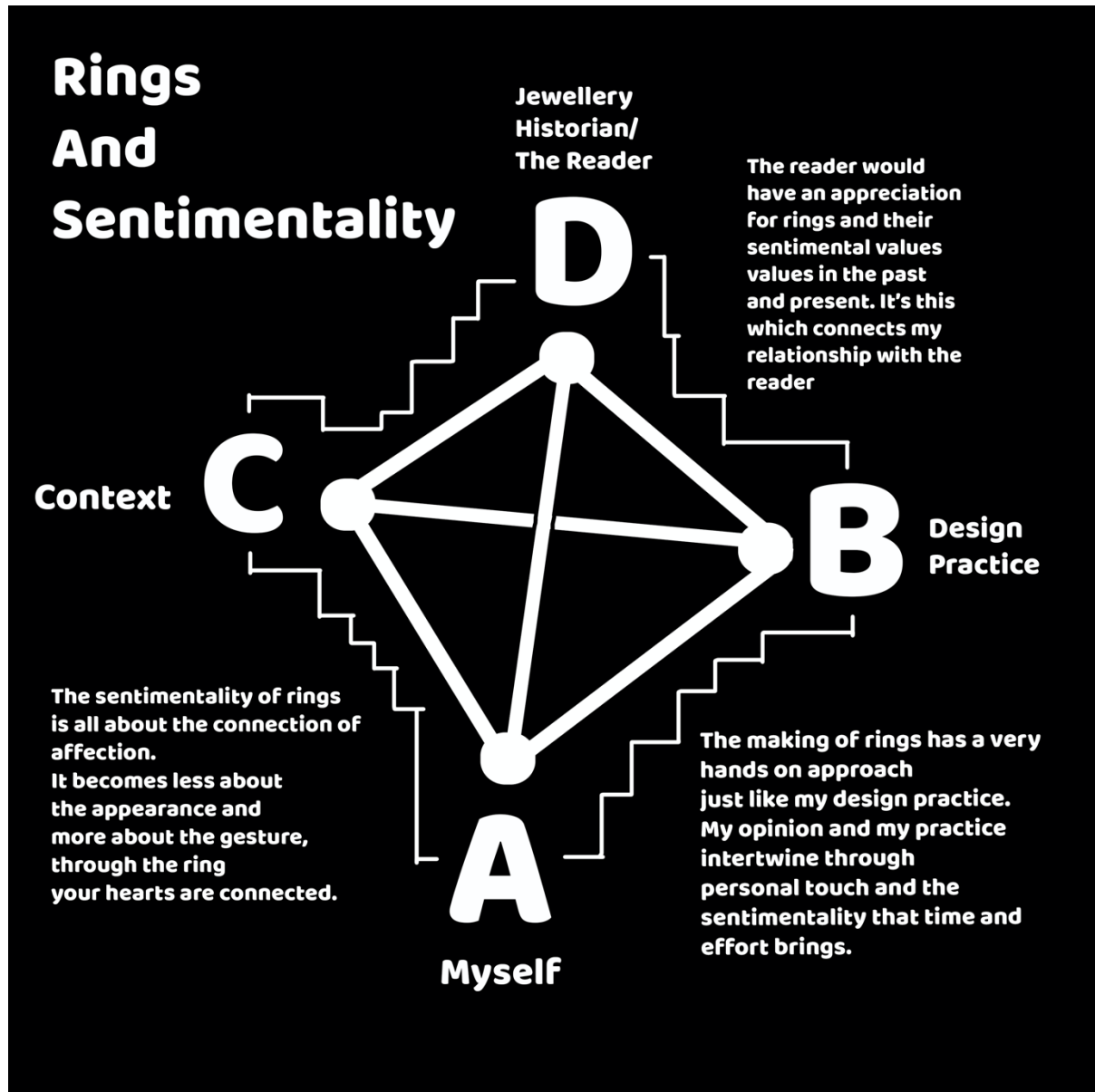


Figure 1 Rings and sentimentality

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