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Module: ADAD4018 Ways of Thinking

Tasks in order I received them:

Task One: Manifesto Writing = 523 words

Task Two: Observational Writing = 506 words

Task Three: Practice-based Writing = 476 words

Tutors name: Julia Lockheart

Task One: Manifesto Writing

1. Believe in aesthetic. Create beauty. Disguise underlying meanings.
2. Believe in connection. Inspire people, take inspiration. Listen.
3. Believe in colour. Black and white. Vibrant and dull. Powerful and emotional.
4. Believe in expression. Do not hide from your thoughts and feelings. Be free.
5. Believe in mistakes. Take risks! Accept criticism. Allow yourself to develop and grow.
6. Believe in our world. Disconnect from technology. Embrace our surroundings. Look up, spot patterns. Feel alive.
7. Believe in yourself. Do not compare.
8. Do not believe in rules. Break perceptions, challenge stereotypes. Be bold.

Keywords and images

Aesthetic

1. Believe in aesthetic. Create beauty. Disguise underlying meanings.

The word 'aesthetic' is something "concerned with beauty or the appreciation of beauty", (OED, 2021). The purpose of aesthetic art is often based on appearance. However, 'aesthetic' art can adopt a more meaningful purpose that can distract us from the truth. We should always look beyond what we see.

The Aesthetic movement occurred in Britain during 1860-1890 went against this idea as it was purely focused on visual motivations. It was influenced by many sources such as Classical Greece and Japan in particular, according to the book '*Liberty: The History*' (Rieber, 2019)

In the book '*Writing on the Image: Reading William Morris*', William Morris, who co-founded Morris and Co in 1861, is an example of a designer who embraced this movement as he went on to design, textiles, wallpapers, tiles etc. for interiors (Latham, 2007, p.10). His designs are heavily floral and colourful which makes his designs appealing to look at and 'aesthetic'.



Fig. 1, *Strawberry Thief* 1883, William Morris

Surely, we can use the term 'aesthetic' to create art that is beautiful to look at but also distracts us from hidden meanings.

Louise Zhang focuses on using colours that are aesthetic to contrast her underlying theme of horror. Zhang makes sculptures to evoke feelings of anxiety which are juxtaposed with the colours used (About - Louise Zhang, 2021).

We must not be afraid to hide thoughts and challenge our perception through creating work that is aesthetic.



Fig. 2, *feed you pink*, 2018, Louise Zhang

Colour

3. Believe in colour. Black and white. Vibrant and dull. Powerful and emotional.



Fig. 3, Johannes Itten, *circles*, 1916

In Wassily Kandinsky's book '*Concerning the Spiritual in Art*', he quotes "Colour awakens a corresponding physical sensation, which undoubtedly works upon the soul" (Kandinsky, 1977). This is the idea of colour psychology. Johannes Itten identified colour combinations through his creation of the colour sphere (Bauhaus) and was the first to make an association between colour and our emotions (Toth, Molnar, Karpati, 2021, p.109).

The use of colour psychology can be demonstrated by Pablo Picasso and his 'blue and rose' periods. Picasso's 'blue' period may have been influenced by the suicide of his friend Carlos Casagemas (Blum, 2013, p.272). The 'blue' period consists of monochromatic cool toned paintings which creates a somber feeling. However, Picasso's 'rose' period contrasted this as more uplifting colours such as pink and orange were used. We must always consider colour as it is a powerful tool and a Universal language.



Fig. 4, *The Old Guitarist*, 1903

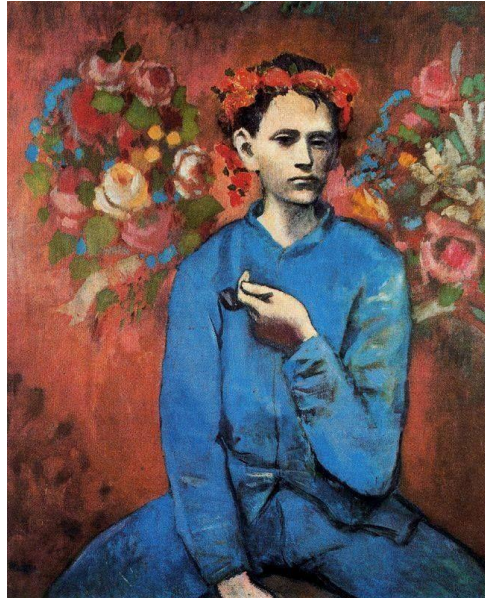


Fig. 5, *Boy with a pipe*, 1905

Rules

8. Do not believe in rules. Break perceptions, challenge stereotypes. Be bold.

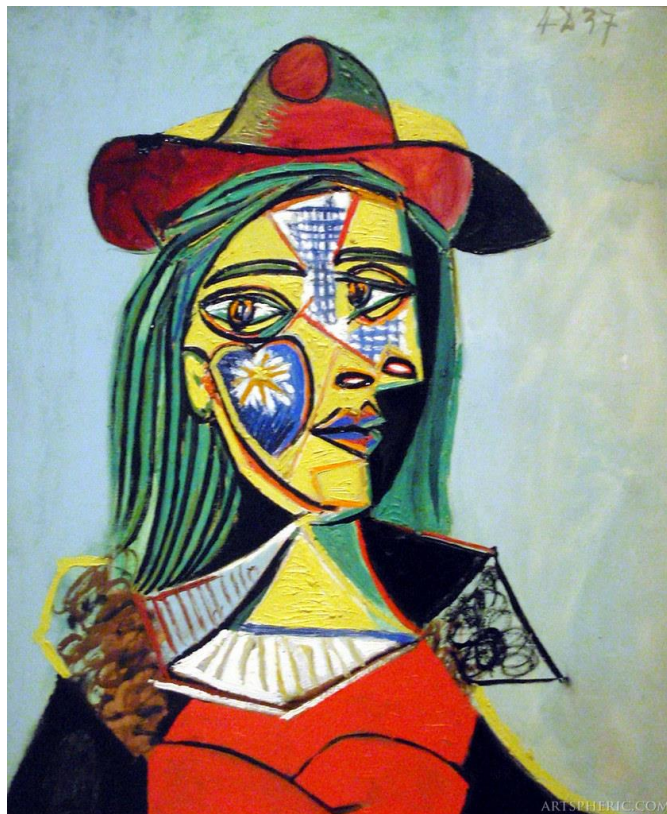


Fig. 6, *Woman in Hat and Fur Collar*, 1937, Picasso

Rules are a part of our everyday life. However, art should never be limited by rules. Helen Frankenthaler said, "There are no rules. That is how art is born, how breakthroughs happen."

Go against the rules or ignore the rules. That is what invention is about” (No Rules, 2022). Frankenthaler was not afraid to go against the rules in her abstract paintings. We should also break rules surrounding stereotypes and be more controversial in our practice to make change and highlight issues. A famous painting that acknowledged gender stereotypes is ‘*Self-portrait with cropped hair*’ by Frida Kahlo. This went against what was typically ‘feminine’ and tells us that Frida Kahlo was fearless when it came to challenging gender stereotypes and highlighting it in her paintings.

We must learn from women like Helen Frankenthaler and Frida Kahlo by re-writing the rules and challenging pre-existing perceptions, both in art and society.

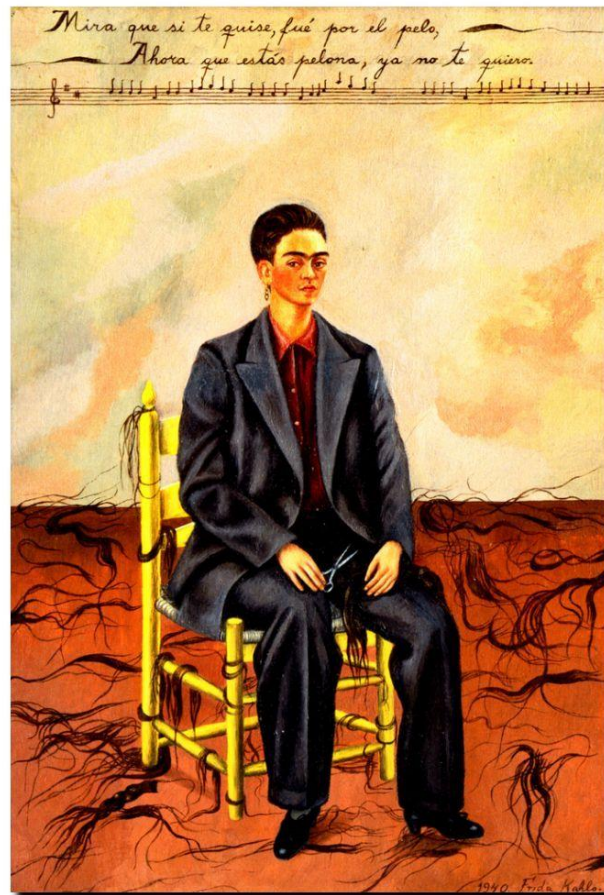


Fig. 7, *Self-portrait with cropped hair*, 1940, Frida Kahlo

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Figure 2: Louisezhang.com. 2022. *Art eats its young - Louise Zhang*. [online] Available at: <<https://www.louisezhang.com/Art-eats-its-young>> [Accessed 1 January 2022].

Figure 3: Pinterest. 2022. "*JOHANNES ITTEN, Circles, 1916, Tempera on Canvas. #johannesitten•••••#bauhaus #waltergropius #picasso #cubism #... | Bauhaus art, Geometric art, Painting.*" [online] Available at: <<https://www.pinterest.co.uk/pin/175147872995796350/>> [Accessed 1 January 2022].

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Task 2: Observational writing

Semiotics is the 'study of signs, symbols and their use/interpretation' (OED 2021). In advertisements it is often the connotations that connect with people and "persuade us to help purchase" (Ways of Seeing, Berger, 1972), often portrayed in a positive light. In the book '*Decoding Advertisements*' by Judith Williamson, this links to the idea of ideology. As stated by Williamson, "We feel a need to belong, to have a social 'place' it can be hard to

find. Instead, we may be given an imaginary one.” (Williamson, 1978, P.22). Therefore, adverts often create a false narrative which we can unfold. An example of this can be seen by looking at a Jack Daniels advertisement from 2014 (see Fig.1).



Fig. 1, *Backyard*, 2014, Jack Daniels

According to Roland Barthes in his book *'Mythologies'*, semiotics has a denotation which is what we literally see and a connotation, the deeper meaning (Barthes, 1972). The denotation of this Jack Daniels advert is a bottle of Jack Daniel's's Honey on a table outside with a cluster of small people on one half of the bottle. At first glance, the people look like a swarm of bees. There is also a garden in the background which is blurred. The linguistic sign in the bottom right corner says, 'draws a crowd'.

There are many connotations (Barthes, 1972) that can be drawn upon this image. Firstly, honey has connotations of sweet, sticky, and golden and the people look like they are almost

stuck to the bottle. The golden colour of honey is also illustrated by the colours used in the bottle and background which are warm tones. This creates feelings of warmth, luxury, and comfort. The sunset in the background also creates warmth and is reminiscent of summer nights and relaxation.

Furthermore, the people on the table look like they are running towards the bottle. This can signify urgency and hurry, like they are desperate and do not want to miss out. Looking closer at the people on the bottle, there are people having a BBQ, lying on sun loungers and there is also a washing line, trees, and birds. This has connotations of a summer party and good times which is often what alcohol is associated with. Furthermore, the blurred background is empty which suggests that everyone from the real world (the garden behind) has been drawn into this world on the bottle. This suggests that Jack Daniels is consuming and appealing to people, which may not be positive advertising as too much alcohol can have negative consequences. This is also portrayed by the glass next to the bottle which looks very refreshing and appealing to drink.

Therefore, in the words of Ferdinand De Saussure '*Course in general linguistics*', the signifier (sound-image) of alcohol in this advert, is portrayed to be a positive thing to bring people together even though we know that alcohol is not always positive and can be signified (conceptualized) to have damaging outcomes such as violence (Saussure et al, 1983, p.67).

Knowledge of semiotics can allow us to think about signs more deeply and question their meaning.

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Task 3: Practice based writing

Research into the connection between the object 'candle' and keyword 'colour'.



Fig. 1, (All About the Different Types of Handmade Candles, 2022)

These days, candles are often used for decorative purposes in our homes and can take on many different shapes and colours. However, to find a connection between the word 'colour' and object 'candle', I need to research and understand the history of candles and what the word 'colour' really means.

Johannes Itten describes colour in the book *'Elements of colour'* as "Colour is life. For a world without colour appears to us dead... colour are the children of light, and light of their mother" (Itten, 1970, p.8). The definition of colour from the dictionary is that colours "result from the way in which they reflect light" (OED, 2022). From looking at these, Johannes Itten gives a more psychological definition. For example, the quote takes on a more emotional response and acknowledges colour psychology. Itten taught about colour during his time at Bauhaus (1919-1922) (*Learning about colour*, Toth, Molnar, Karpati, 2021, p.109). However, the literal definition of colour is more accurate, that colour is a result of light.

Colour is an important tool for me when designing and creating ideas in my practice as it allows me to make designs harmonious and visually appealing, as well as having an impact on people's emotions. A study into colour emotions in interiors concluded that different colours in an interior space can impact how we feel, "spaces become more user friendly, and they reduce the possible stress levels of users" (Gunes, 2019).

Candles are similar in a way. We often use candles these days to create a feeling in a space e.g., romantic, cosy, connection with religion. Therefore, both colour and candles can change how we feel, emotionally and physically and they also have different associations. I researched into the history of candles and how candles were once made. In the book *'Fireflies, honey and silk'* it explains how candles used to be made from bees wax and that

the candles may be yellow or black, depending on how dark the wax from the hive is, “candles of black wax are occasionally lighted at funerals of adults” (Nardi and Waldbauer, 2009, p.84). This is interesting because we make an association between the colour black and funerals to this day which proves that we have perceptions of colours embedded in our thoughts. For example, from a young age we often associate the colour pink with girls and blue for boys. However, associations and perceptions can change, especially when it comes to gender. In the book ‘*The Truth About Girls and Boys*’ it mentions a quote from Paul Grobstein (professor of neurobiology) which says, “hold open to individuals the possibility and the opportunity of becoming different from what they are” (Barnett, Rivers, 2011, p.196). In a similar way that candles change shape, we can also change too and challenge perceptions of colour.

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