

Portfolio of Writing

Student Name: Hannah Henson

P Number: 1900942

Programme of Study: BA Fine Art

Module: ADAD4018

Ways of Thinking Lecturer's Name: Alex Duncan

Tasks in the order I received them:

Task 1: Manifesto Writing = 536 words

Task 2: Practice-based Writing = 549 words

Task 3: Observational Writing = 547 words

Task 1: Manifesto writing

My purpose as an artist is to change the perspectives of people in the world around me. The changing of an individual's opinion is crucial for society to grow. I wish to reflect the bigger picture and to highlight issues that people ignore; to reach the ignorant and persuade some form of realisation.

The beginning of each topic always begins with photography/text. This reminds me that my conceptual aim is better presented in a powerful, simplistic manner. An artist who has extensively influenced me is Sophie Calle. Her photography of other people's belongings 'The Hotel, Room 47' (Sophie, C. 2020) is intrusive and striking. She encourages the viewer to question parts of themselves



Figure 1: Calle, Sophie. 'Take Care of Yourself'. 2009

that they never considered. Calle received a break-up email from her boyfriend and decided to ask 107 artists to analyse the email individually 'A letter written in such a way that I didn't know how to answer' (Sophie, C. 2008) I admire her method of processing and her unique perception of privacy. Similarly, to photography, drawing is the foundation of my process. It allows me to visually understand an image and my opinions/thoughts, closely linking to Calle's art being her way to understand and accept.

When tackling the topic of 'capitalism' I became overwhelmed with all the different side effects of this. Eventually I realised the only way to clarify all these different elements, was to list them. I videoed myself listing all the negative side effects of capitalism which was incredibly hard hitting. This also left the audience questioning the topic, until they read the title 'capitalism' which would trigger different reactions. I gravitate towards conceptual film and sound as a means of expression. I am fascinated by how much you can portray through a clip; movement and body language can imply such depth. Through studying drama most of my life, my mind automatically gravitates towards performance and film. A performance artist who has highly inspired me is Tony Orico. His use of mark making with his entire body is unique 'I commit my attention, rationally, to the sensitivity of



Figure 2: Orico, Tony. 'Penwald: 4: Unison Symmetry Standing'. 2010

my body' (Tony, O. 2020) he is clearly persistent with his practise. My interest in drama, lighting, the body and acting itself has carried into my artistic world. I believe that creating art involving a person, instantly conjures empathy.

In a conceptual and aesthetic sense, I believe pattern and papercut is a compelling way of presenting emotion. This supported by Kara Walker, an activist artist who creates large scale historical paper

cuts 'to address cultural issues of race, gender, and power' (Sarah, S. 2006). I am drawn to this process due to the unique, elegant, and playful outcomes it can create. This medium has potential with the ability to form layers and growth. Papercut can convey the contrast between natural and urban surrounding 'Edges are magic, too; there is a kind of forbidden magic on the borders of things' (Smith, A. 2012). How trees are placed on tarmac and how a park can be surrounded by houses fascinates me. Art is a means for emotional exploration, from an intrigue or lack of understanding.

Bibliography:

1. Smith, A. (2012) Artful
2. Calle, S. (2020) *The Hotel, Room 47*. Available at <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/calle-the-hotel-room-47-p78300>
3. Calle, S. (2008) *Sophie Calle: Dumped by email*. Available at: <https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/sophie-calle-2692/sophie-calle-dumped-email>
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5. Suzuki, S. (2006) *Kara Walker African/American 1998*. Available at: <https://www.moma.org/collection/works/61470>

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- **Figure 1: Calle, Sophie. 'Take Care of Yourself'. 2009. Available at:**
<https://www.paulacoopergallery.com/exhibitions/sophie-calle-take-care-of-yourself/installation-views>
- **Figure 2: Orico, Tony. 'Penwald: 4: Unison Symmetry Standing'. 2010. Available at:**
<https://www.artistaday.com/?p=13009>

Task 2: Practice-based Writing

Semiotics is the interpretation taken from an image. A good example of this is the artist Joseph Koseph and his work, *One and Three Chairs*. He plays with the idea that one chair can be duplicated



Figure 1: Koseph, Joseph. 'One and Three Chairs'. 1965

into imagery and description, but they are not the object itself. It is important to understand that a photograph of a pillow is a representation of a pillow 'our current society has replaced all reality... with symbols' (*Baudrillard, J. 1981, P.1*) explaining the term simulacra. In the present day this is a concept that is crucial to understand, due to the amount of fake news and images that get taken out of context. It is near impossible to understand the true story from a photograph if there is such a thing as truth.

A semiotic analysis is when someone picks apart an image considering the colours, objects, body language, clothes, gestures etc to develop a narrative. Within art semiotics is important as it allows creativity to be developed and encourages people to have their own opinions on artwork 'semiotics has something to contribute to the study of art' (*Bal, M and Bryson, N. 1991, P. 174*) It is essential that we recognise how culture influences our whole lives. The colour red in Britain is stereotyped as

danger, anguish, stopping/halting, and romance. Whereas in China, Red is worn at weddings to portray piece, love, commitment

'Red is an auspicious as well as a popular color in Chinese culture. It symbolizes luck, happiness and joy.'

(Olesen, J. 2020).



Figure 2: Lipton, Laurie. 'ON'. 2009

I firstly noticed from looking at this image, that a lady is flicking a switch and wearing old fashioned gender stereotyped housewife clothing. Consisting of a sleeveless dress, apron, and black court shoes. The lady is next to very large machinery, nothing recognisable. The machinery is almost futuristic which contrasts to the outdated clothing.

From these facts I can speculate that perhaps the lady is a robot from her plastic forced smile, which indicates naivety. Or she could be working as a robot within her gender roles as many women did in the 50s/60s. Her smile may be out of frustration to find a man, *129 ways to get a husband: truly terrible tips from the 1950's* (Click Americana, 2011-2020). Her face looks rather flat hinting plastic surgery. She seems unaware of the extent and size of the technology. I would expect more fear, which makes me wonder if maybe she has been around this apparatus for some time. Or perhaps the scene is set in the future and this would be her norm. The technology looks so vast and has so many wires maybe an explosion will happen.

Another viewpoint is that she has been kidnapped and forced to wear these types of clothes to maintain a housewife role. Maybe even forced to smile, explaining why she looks very uncomfortable.

Even though this image is a drawing we can also gather that the black and white colour scheme may be linked to the time it is set. She could be a part of advertisement, or on television in general. This scene could easily be a game show platform. Filmed in the time of black and white television '(1936-1967)' (Iain, B. 2014).

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2. Baudrillard, J. (1981) *Simulacra and Simulation*. Published: France: By Éditions Galilée
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[Video] Available at: <https://clickamericana.com/topics/love-marriage/129-ways-to-get-a-husband-truly-terrible-tips-from-the-1950s>
4. Iain, B. (2014) *THE BEGINNING OF THE END OF BLACK AND WHITE TELEVISION*. Available at: <https://blog.scienceandmediamuseum.org.uk/the-decline-of-black-and-white-tv/#:~:text=For%2030%20years%20of%20its,in%20the%20first%20TV%20sets.>

5. Olesen, J. (2020) *Color Symbolism in Chinese Culture: What do Traditional Chinese Colors Mean?* Available at: <https://www.color-meanings.com/color-symbolism-in-chinese-culture-what-do-traditional-chinese-colors-mean/>

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- Figure 1: Koseph, Joseph. 'One and Three Chairs'. 1965. Available at: https://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/joseph-kosuth-one-and-three-chairs-1965/
- Figure 2: Lipton, Laurie. 'ON'. 2009. Available at: <https://www.saatchiart.com/art/Drawing-ON/20558/790688/view>

Task 3: Observational Writing

An exhibition which changed my perception of the possibilities of a space is 'Coral Reef' by Mike Nelson, which was shown to me through extensive videos and photographs from previous lecturers who had visited. The 'Coral Reef' was first created in 1999 and exhibited in 2000 at Matt's Gallery in London. The work re-opened 'almost exactly ten years later' *Mike Nelson discusses Coral Reef, 2000* (Nelson, M. 2011). The installation consists of 'fifteen interconnecting rooms, and constructed over a period of three months' (Cullinan, N. 2008, P.763). Nelson worked closely with the gallery to ensure that his work would leave the viewer constantly questioning

'The Tate has deliberately hidden the structure behind an ordinary plain white door and the attendant allows only ten people in at one time'

(Jane, J. 2011).

This exhibition could have been permanent as it was installed into a building rather than taking place outside; however, the artist took the work down after both exhibitions.



Figure 1: Nelson, Mike. 'Coral Reef'. 2011.

The first room is a faked reception of an art gallery. The second and last room was an Islamic mini cab office, which is duplicated to confuse the viewer. This room had a working fan that slightly makes the pages of the book on the table lift. There is also a fenced off area behind the desk, making the viewer aware that this would be an employee to customer situation. The lightbulb through the fenced section has no lamp and poorly lights the room. There is an old-fashioned wired phone next to the fan which suggests an institutionalised call centre atmosphere. There is also a calendar to the right of the fenced off section, reminding the viewer that they are witnessing behind the scenes of an operating cab office. The exhibition looks astonishingly realistic, you are left to your own understanding of touch and investigation. This creates a sense of hard truth along with a deserted abandoned tone. I believe Nelson used this room to remind the viewer of the poverty in which capitalism creates.

There is then a series of rooms which present different themes within capitalism. A room for America, heroin, dope, mechanics. The next room is a representation of a utility cupboard which makes the viewer think they have gone the wrong way; this room represents emptiness and meaninglessness. Nelson curated his piece right down to the tiny details, even using his own belongings. Constructing a sense of humanity.



Figure 2: Nelson, Mike. 'Coral Reef'. 2000

The work depicts the fear resonated in the world in the 2000's, elements of terrorism and war depicted through violent objects 'machine gun and mask' (Jones, J. 2010). Nelson seemed to pick up on the glooming atmosphere of an event not yet arisen – 9/11. I am drawn to this work because it strangely forms a grasp of unity. The rooms are all under the same coral Reef no matter how segregated they are. This work can be described as almost horror themed; I do not think it is. I believe that Nelson has held up a mirror to capitalism, society, selfishness and the hurt, trauma and addiction people suffer every day. Those who choose to ignore it are the ones who would think this exhibition is more horrifying than the world itself.

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- **Figure 1: Nelson, Mike. 'Coral Reef'. 2011. Available at:**
<https://mostlyfilm.com/2011/06/28/coral-reefwelcome-to-the-kingdom/>
- **Figure 2: Nelson, Mike. 'Coral Reef'. 2000. Available at:**
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/nelson-the-coral-reef-t12859>

