

Portfolio 2: Studio Methods Proposal

Zach Muir

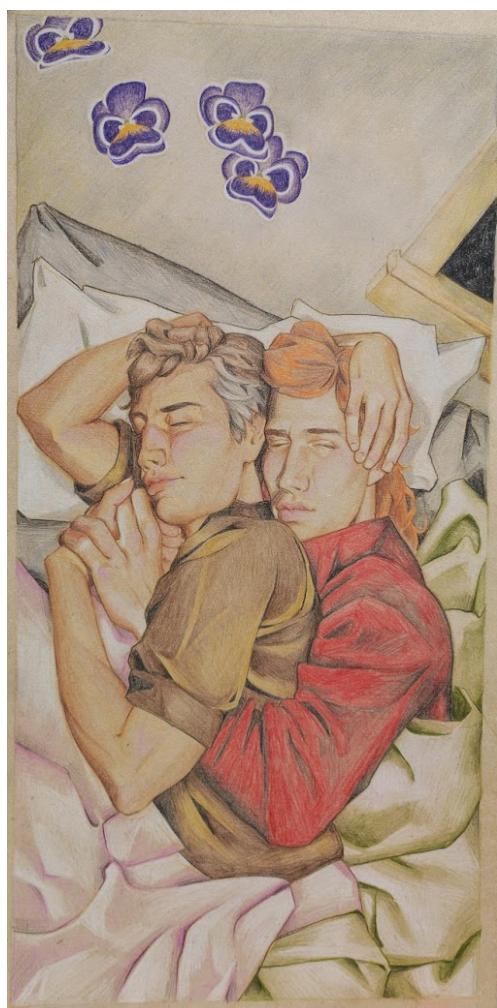
Week 7: Jim's workshop

Notes on powerpoint:

- ★ What work you chose to present affects how you approach writing it.
- ★ Semiotics- an example of a lens that may be applicable to use when talking about a work, or making one.
- ★ The describing (writing/talking) of a work can change the work's meaning/interpretation, so what lens you chose to work with is an important decision.
- ★ When writing a pitch, not every part of the potential work needs to be explained. You can present the idea of a work that can ask questions rather than saying something. You can just give a loose description. This can allow you more wiggle room for the finished work.
- ★ How you present your work has power over its meaning. The different ways galleries and artists photograph work can exemplify this. (see Karin Sander's *Kitchen Pieces* (2012) in the powerpoint). Presentation within a gallery space is different than the studio (an aesthetic, controlled space).
- ★ What you title work also has power over its meaning. It can draw the viewer's attention to different aspects of the work, as well as provide extra context. The title tells you what matters about the work (Karin Sander: *Chicken Egg, Polished, Raw, Size 0*). Titles can provoke without taking away from the action of the work.
- ★ In terms of proposals, having a plan to execute is not a bad thing. A plan, action and confirmation of the plan within the process can give a direct, fresh feeling to the work. [I do appreciate the execution of a good plan]
- ★ The narrative you spin on your work should be productive to your own practice as well as in marketing yourself.
- ★ You should be outlining what your aims are and how they're different [and better] than others'.
- ★ You can use images from others' work to give an idea/vibe/impression of what you would be producing. Everything is derivative; this just gives those reading the proposal an idea through a familiar lens. Uniqueness can come later.
- ★ It is good to have an idea who your pitch is for, and therefore you can cater the pitch to that audience.

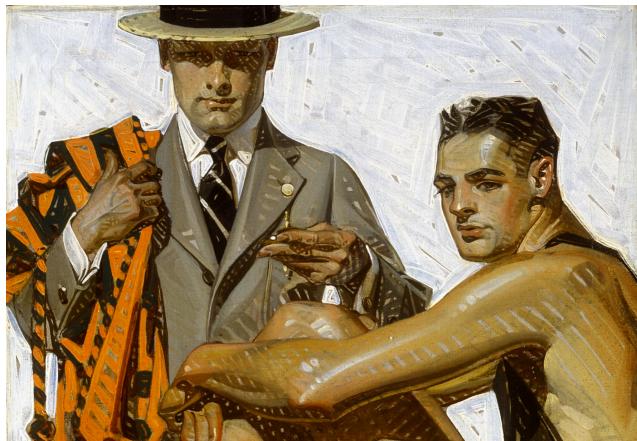
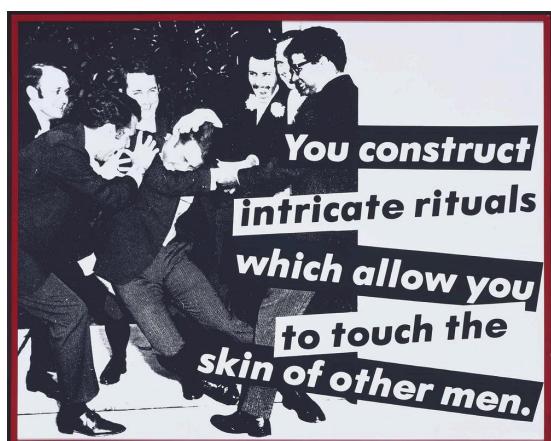
My [past practice powerpoint](#) outcome; finished outside the workshop.

Images that I brought to class: My own past works.



I am my own saviour (2024), *Cass & Henry* (2024), *c'mere* (2024), zine selection (2025).

Images that I brought to class: Artists that inspire me.

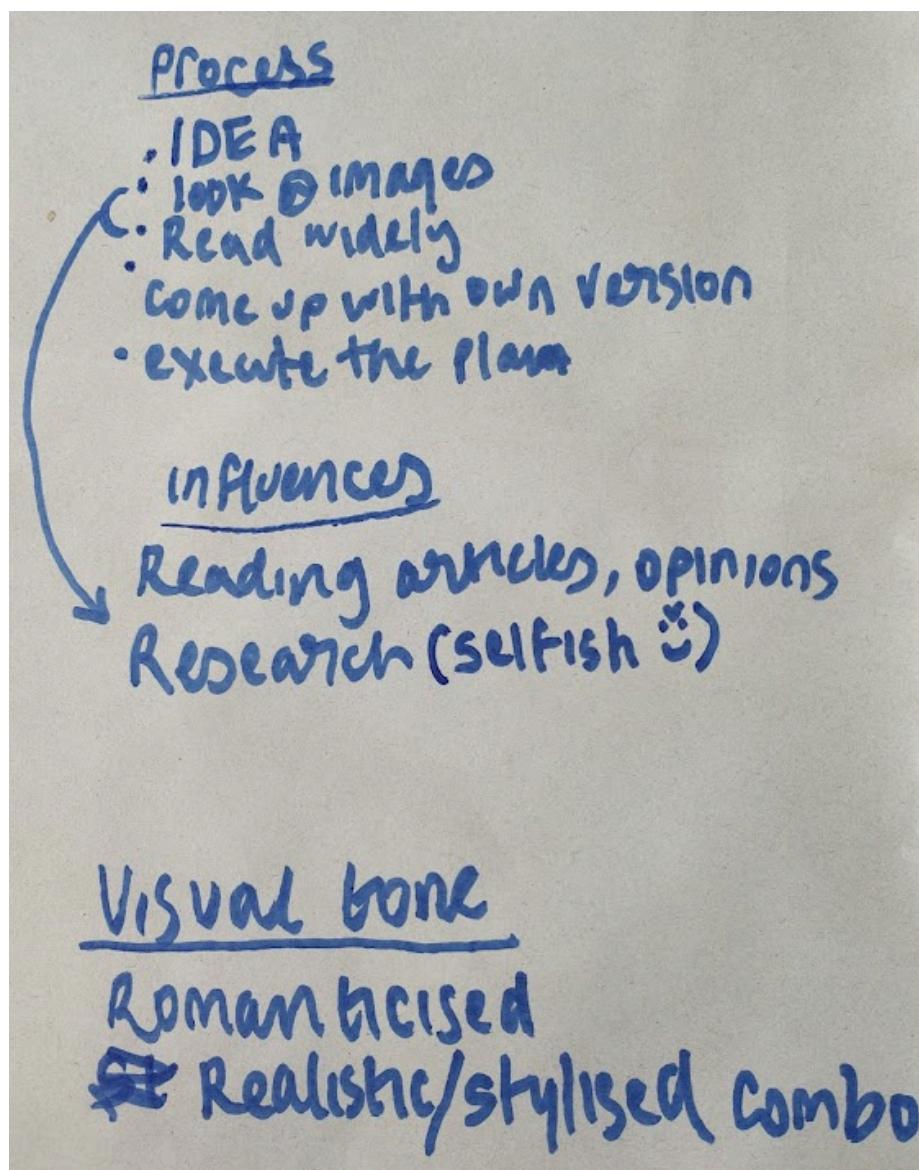


INFLAMMATORY ESSAYS 3

MONDAY, SOMEONE DIED BECAUSE HE HURT ME AND I CUT HIM WITHOUT THINKING. TUESDAY, SOME ANIMAL DIED BECAUSE HE WAS TOO DANGEROUS TO BE FREE. WEDNESDAY, A THIEF DIED SO EVERYONE WILL KNOW TO RESPECT PRIVATE PROPERTY. THURSDAY, SOME POLITICO DIED BECAUSE HIS IDEAS WERE CRAZY AND TOO CONTAGIOUS. FRIDAY, SOME RAPIST DIED BECAUSE HE LEFT HIS VICTIM WISHING SHE WAS DEAD. HE HAD TO DIE WISHING HE WAS ALIVE. SATURDAY, I KILLED A CONDEMNED MAN SO NO ONE ELSE WOULD GET BLOOD ON HIS HANDS. SUNDAY, I RESTED. MONDAY, SIX PEOPLE JUMPED ME SO I CUT THEM WITHOUT THINKING.

Hilma af Klint *The Swan* (1914-15), Guido Reni *St Sebastian* (c. 1625), Barbara Kruger *Untitled (You Construct Intricate Rituals)* (1981), JC Leyendecker Illustration for Kuppenheimer advertisement (Record Time, Cool Summer Comfort) (c. 1920), Jenny Holzer *Inflammatory Essay 3* (1979-82).

Brainstorming about my past works (see two pages prev for images).



Finishing afterwards: the questions on the powerpoint to assist in conversation.

What are the most important features of your work and why?

- ★ The human figure or the implication of it
- ★ Queer/non-normative themes
- ★ Strong colours/contrasts
- ★ Religious themes
- ★ Privileging of the handmade

How could you make these distinctive?

- ★ I go about these aspects in ways that are personally appealing to me
- ★ Using my own feelings/interpretations of these topics when making work
- ★ The combining of different elements can create something more unique

What role do the images of your work play in helping present the story of your work?

- ★ If this means the photos I've taken of the work: They are pretty straight-on, no frills photographs that demonstrate what my work looks like. I made this choice because they best show the details of the work for a quick glimpse. I have taken and used other images when demonstrating their installation, etc. I also have other close ups for proper detail viewing.
- ★ The image of the zines demonstrates that they are a collection/range. This potentially makes the audience think they are a series. While a certain combination would work as a series, this particular photo is not that.

How can your stylistic and conceptual influences shape your story?

- ★ They provide a frame that I can build my own work off, and refer to so that those I'm pitching to can understand my aims in a context that is potentially familiar to them
- ★ Reflecting on others' work as well as my own allows me to better understand the connections I've made and how my work fits into the wider context of art both historically and contemporarily.

Readings & Responses

[Documentary as Contemporary Art – A Dialogue Wang Bing](#), Dominique Chateau and José Mouré, (2020)

Relevant quotes:

- ★ From the moment you take a camera to interfere with the universe of the characters you have decided to lm, with their lives, there is an attraction that puts you on track of how the lm will be made.
- ★ Film is like putting truth sequences end to end; once they have been placed end to end, they will tell a story ... The purpose of organizing these images is to enable the viewer to exercise his or her subjectivity during his or her reading of them.
- ★ everything that came into the frame had an incredible attraction. If your eyes are not fixed like that by what you encounter, you will not decide to film. [this is my approach to photography as a hobby]
- ★ Audio-visual images are different from cinema ... Just because we are talking about moving images does not necessarily mean that we are talking about cinema

Having read this interview, how can you identify a transformative effect technology has had within your practice as an artist?

The internet has had a transformative effect on my practice in the past couple of years in terms of both coming across others' art that inspires my own, as well as finding academic articles and images that I can use in the creation of my own work.

Having a phone with a good camera at different times has also affected my practice. I am less likely to take photos at night now because it brightens them so, which is not what i'm trying to capture. My old Iphone was much better in this regard, and was very easy to point and shoot nice images as I came across them.

Despite these technologies, I often use more traditional materials. The internet still has a great effect on what I use as drawing references, etc. though.

[Artistic Self-Exposure: Is the activity of artists overshadowing their art? Boris Groys,](#)

Features, Frieze Magazine, (2011)

Relevant quotes:

- ★ What is artistic activity?, or in other words, What is the difference between the artistic and non-artistic use of things and spaces?
- ★ the subject of this action signals from the beginning that he or she intends self-exposure rather than the self-concealment that is usual and even necessary in professional politics. Such self-exposure is bad politics but good art; herein lies the difference between artistic and non-artistic types of activity.
- ★ The artist is primarily a specialist in exposure and self-exposure. Thus, if everybody else may be an involuntary subject (controlled by power and the system), the artist is, as it were, a professional subject.
- ★ we are interested in retaining privacy, in the reduction of surveillance, in the obscurity of our bodies and desires, but at the same time we aspire to radicalized exposure, exposure beyond the limits of social control.
- ★ self-exposure presupposes at least a certain degree of sovereignty over one's own process of subjectivation.
- ★ the private becomes public without any external pressure and/or enhanced surveillance.

Do you believe Art has distinctive qualities compared to other human activities? If you do, how do these distinctive qualities play a role in the way you describe your practice as an artist?

I think many human activities are/can be art. There is both a very fine distinction and a massive grey space between 'an art' and 'Art' as the general social consciousness understands it. I think about my practice more about 'making things' from a crafting perspective than 'creating' art. This stems from my history making art as a hobby-something taken generally less seriously than 'proper' art. It's also a bit of modesty and acknowledging my place as a newcomer; can I really call myself an artist if I've only done one show? The answer is yes but it's more difficult to claim and embody that.

There is definitely a difference in intention between art I make for myself and art I make for uni. I put more effort into the conceptual side for uni art rather than simply drawing to draw, or painting an actor whose work I enjoy. To an extent, intention is what makes it 'Art', though that is also a title others can bestow upon things they think particularly deserving.

Week 8: classwork

Concepts & aims task

Conceptual premise of the works

- ★ The works investigate concepts of labour and therefore also class & power.
- ★ The first work does this through the symbolism of the clocks, and the time, places and people that they represent.
- ★ The second work does this by comparing different women's experiences in the same place and time via spoken word, quite literally giving them a voice. It also uses the idea of looking (with images of the moon, doors) as evoking the responsibility of one to observe the traces of others'.

Aims that underpin that premise

- ★ To bring a voice back to women who were forgotten/pushed aside by history, and by doing so, prompt discussion about women, recording history, and the treatment of people historically and contemporarily.
- ★ Interrogating how history is made. Traces of voice- usually upper & middle class. How to look for/be receptive to the traces of those who are subjugated. Ethics of looking at & for the traces of others.
- ★ Not giving a voice, remaining in own subjective space as it's not her place. The using the imagination to give this voice would be Critical Fabulation (see below)
- ★ An attempt to reconnect with her ancestry & cultural history. Discussing what role colonialism has played in that history (indentured labour, the clocks as western ideas of time, etc)
- ★ Solidarity with the vulnerable & allowing them agency

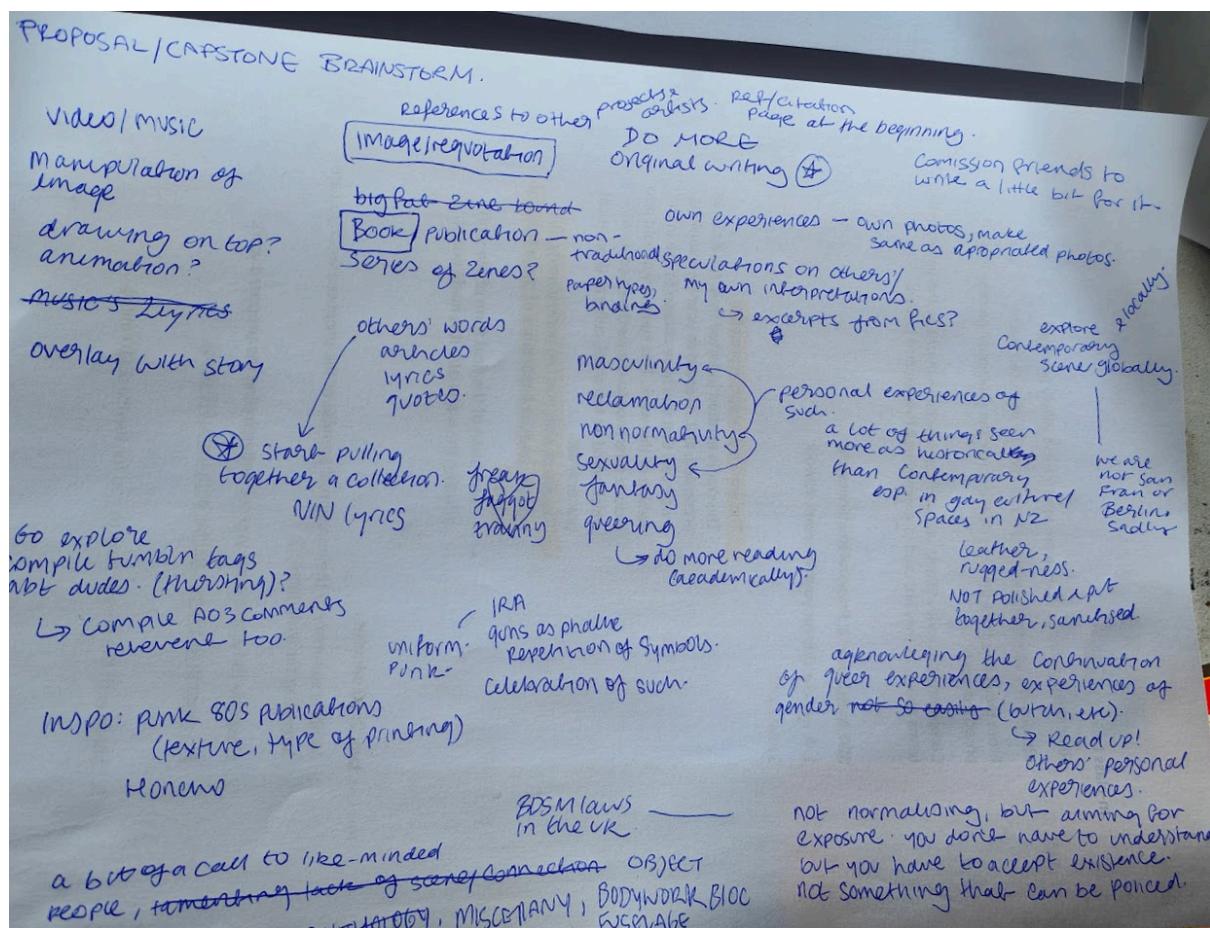
Critical Fabulation - Saidiya Hartman

“exploring “what might have been,” starting with a single invented detail” “History pledges to be faithful to the limits of fact, evidence, and archive, I wanted to write a romance that exceeded the fictions of history.” ([source](#))

Ghostly Matters - Avery Gordon

Everyone is complex; more than class, gender, culture, time & space. [I would argue everyone is a combination of those things rather than above them.]

Proposal topic/potential capstone idea brainstorming



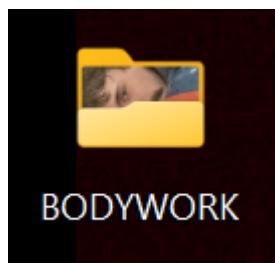
Outcomes from brainstorm

(even if I don't make this for capstone, I will likely still make the work)

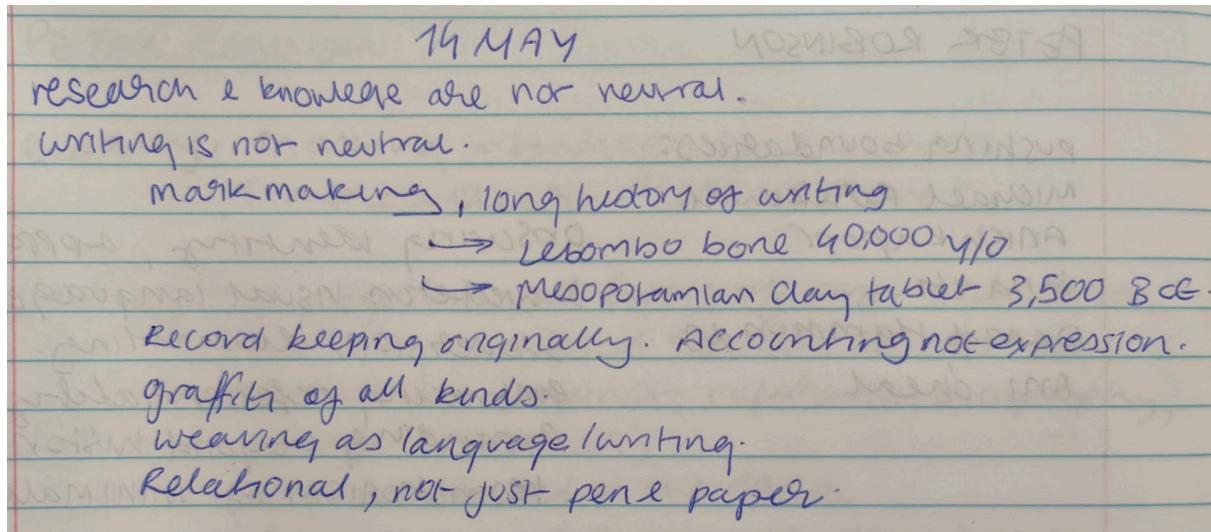
Things to start doing:

- ★ Begin collecting relevant quotes, articles (academic & other), lyrics, tags, comments, images, excerpts from past writing/projects, others' art/projects
- ★ Do more reading around others' personal experiences & perspectives
- ★ Research relevant UK law ([example](#)); does this translate into NZ law?
- ★ Research other similar publications (in subject matter or aesthetics)
- ★ Research local scene/events/etc. again (write it down this time)
- ★ Speak to friends about potential contributions
- ★ Make plans for own original writing

Non-normative: not relating to what is considered the usual or normal way for people to look, act, or behave (Cambridge Dictionary)



Week 9 Classwork:



Writing task:

Writing exists through relationships:

Write directly to an audience member you imagine of your artwork, ask them questions about the experience of encountering your work.

(Discussing my proposed work at the end of this PDF.)

- ★ How does the work feel as an object?
- ★ What's your first impression?
- ★ Can you get past that to interrogate the work on its own merit or is the first impression what frames your experience of it?
- ★ What made you want to pick it up?
- ★ What were you expecting? Does it meet these expectations?
- ★ Does it remind you of any other works? How does this affect your reading of it?
- ★ Does it feel contemporary? If not, what era does it remind you of?
- ★ Does it provoke an emotional response, if yes, what emotion?
- ★ Does it make you want to do anything? Eg. make a work in response, engage with community, put the thing down and leave, etc.
- ★ Do you think you will reflect on the work later?
- ★ Can you relate to any of the words or images presented?
- ★ Is it art? Is it design? Is it an object? Why would it fit the category selected?
- ★ Do you think its form is appropriate? If not, what is appropriate in your opinion.

This exercise feels like preparing questions to ask an audience at a critique to get the most relevant feedback. It is a good way to gauge how you want your audience to experience your work and allows you to think about how that would best be achieved. It would definitely be more helpful to know the answers from people before even starting/after making a prototype.

Engaging scale and duration:

Increase the length spaces of your writing – make your sentences many times their usual length, let them run on and on like marathon sentences, or inexhaustible-conversation sentences. Write to pull all the words out in a running flow, as though you write forever, without concern for clarity organisation or structure.

It's raining; he's walking through the city with the rain coming down harder and harder by the minute, there's nothing he can do about it of course except pull up his hood -the inside of it's already sodden, christ- and walk with pace with speed, dodging around the sluggish sheepish masses. He worms his way through them waiting for the crossing, stands at the edge as the bus turns the corner a little too tight, he can feel the pull of it in the wind as it passes, urging him out onto the street. He fumbles a step forward but the crossing goes green so he keeps putting one foot in front of the other downhill, it's easy easy easy, stomp stomp stomp, dodge, pass, etc etc fluid rhythmic until he's caught behind a group of four walking abreast. Steps change from strides to mousey little measures, but then blessed be, there's a dip in the wall of shops, the entrance to an arcade and he speeds up stepping around them hurriedly but trying not to look like he's trying too hard, just natural like, until he's past them and has to force himself not to look back to see what idiots walk on a city path like that. He keeps going.

I already enjoy doing this sort of thing in my personal writing, however forcing it for every sentence was a challenge. But it does definitely create a greater sense of flow. I think this could work better for an internal monologue type thing, which I would do if I had to rewrite this.

Style can give life:

Describe the music of your practice. What kind of music is your work? How does the film soundtrack of your practice sound?

I would think the work of my practice would reflect the music I already enjoy. This is definitely true for my zine-making practice, however probably less so for my writing, painting and drawing practice, thinking back to things I made last year.

Zine-making is metal, european techno; something more hardcore, difficult to engage with for the average person. Writing, painting and drawing would be more emo/indie soft emotional music. These designations mostly relate to the themes I've used with these mediums as of late, and have every possibility to change in the future.

The film soundtrack of my practice is a whole different thing. Scoring a movie is different to curating a playlist or selecting relevant music. It's done to emphasise moments, moods, and tell an overarching story. There would be a mix of songs from the above genres, but I feel overall it would be more atmospheric like certain parts of Ethel Cain's most recent album, *Perverts*. Humming, moody, a little scary and a little comforting.

Music is a big part of my life and has both a direct and indirect influence on my work, so this is nice to reflect on. I could go into more detail as to what songs go with what artwork, but that would be too much for this task.

Research on guest presenters next week:

Anoushka Akel (Artist)

<https://michaellett.com/artist/anoushka-akel/>

- ★ 2010 graduated Elam with a Master of Fine Arts
- ★ Works across painting and printmaking
- ★ Focuses on embodied knowledge, cognitive psychology, and aesthetics and philosophies of care.
- ★ 2013 residency at Künstlerhäuser Worpswede, Bremen, Germany
- ★ 2018 received the C Art Trust Award
- ★ 2024 residency at Parehuia Colin McCahon House

Hannah Davis Gray (Dangerous Goods Jewellery)

<https://www.dangerousgoodsjewellery.com/about>

<https://www.stuff.co.nz/business/prosper/128149695/what-ive-learned-prioritise-your-values>

- ★ Self-taught jeweller, with a focus on experimentation & excitement in her work
- ★ Sustainability & ethically focused
- ★ Inspired by found objects
- ★ 2018 graduated Elam with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (Honors)
- ★ 2021 focused on jewelry-making full time after doing it alongside being a paralegal & doing arts programming

Robbie Handcock

<https://www.satellites.co.nz/archive/people/robbie-handcock>

<https://jhanamillers.com/exhibitions/40-caitlin-devoy-and-robbie-handcock-switch/>

- ★ Artist and Curator
- ★ 2023 joined Artspace Aotearoa
- ★ 2021 moved to AKL and worked at Gus Fisher Gallery
- ★ 2019-2021 facilitator at play_station team in Te Whanganui-a-Tara
- ★ 2019-2021 hosted the CIRCUIT podcast *Popular Glory: Contemporary Queerness and the Moving Image*
- ★ 2016 graduated Massey University with a Master of Fine Arts
- ★ Work plays on the absurdity of sexuality via sculpture & drawing
- ★ “Previous works of Handcock’s have dealt with representations of queer sexual undergrounds, both historic and contemporary.”

Week 9 Reading:

Māori Writing: Speaking with Two Mouths ([pdf](#))

By Tina Makereti

Quotes:

- ★ Te Kore may be known in Western terms as the Void or the Chaos, but it is also known to us as the place of pure potentiality. ... This, for me, is where creativity comes from, and so to whakapapa or link myself back to there is the most powerful thing I can do as a creative person.
- ★ our understanding of culture, stories, history and ancestors is transformed by the moment we find ourselves in.
- ★ English literature has always been set up to privilege only one kind of seeing
- ★ Selective tradition is built in [to the English/NZ writing canon]
- ★ This is what all literature does, of course. The ordinary lives of ordinary people. But then, what is ordinary in one community cannot be assumed to be ordinary in another, and if we select only one version of things as our national literature, and if we select only one way to interpret our literatures, we're all at risk of missing the point.
- ★ The making of a society is the finding of common meanings and directions, and its growth is an active debate and amendment, under the pressures of experience, contact, and discovery, writing themselves into the land.

Response (no guiding question):

An interesting insight about how one's intersectionality affects the work they make, and how other people usually fail to take this into account with their reactions to said work. The ending takes a very anthropological approach in how society can be understood, which I believe is important to keep in mind for everyone when making work.

Week 10 Class Notes:

WEEK 10 GUEST LECTURERS : LIFE AFTER BFA.

Dangerous goods (hannah).

local markets, organise your own, meet other makers
studios!

Samoa house library basically replaced the Elam library.
has residences studios, free programmes.
funding.

* McCabon house trust internship, printer!
residencies, teaching programmes.

* art fair booth

the business: phones, webdesign, taxes, marketing, etc.

set values, return to them. What allowed
intentions.

open studios with friends

change? savings?

teaching workshops: education!

hobbies?

opportunities for collaboration

Take breaks for creativity to recharge.

(netherlands: lots of art overseas)

Continue relationships with friends & mentors.

Robbie

→ one slot a year to do your own show, only payment.

Playstation in Wellington as well as full time job.

Creative communities grant from council

fundraising = events @ pub, door fees.

→ for 'spectacular' plane fly, working w/others.

ministry of health assistant: full time job, printer!

Hobart Genral: for artist run spaces across Aus/NZ
eB gallery Wellington

flatmates who are also artists — the one resource you
keep
Gus Fischer: learning on the job, events, programmes,
enabling engagement for all audiences.

WEEK 10: GUEST LECTURERS: (1) TE TUHI OR 1976

Robbie, Cont.

Te Tuhi emerging curator role. Set up experience.
Artspace Aotearoa! 2024 New Commissions exhibition.
Mentorship programme. Inter-generational connection.

Anoushka

Other research while studying.

Cinema usher. ~~2000~~ kids - Harry Clark
Student health & clinics. ~~2000~~ museum tour guide

Popular for grads to go to melbourne \rightarrow Education!

Italian Renaissance studio system

Gallery assistant @ dealer gallery, then in London as
a studio assistant to Tim McGuire. 9-5 artist study job
 \hookrightarrow studio assistant culture in London.

Anthony Gormley: Collaborative work.

The Triumph of Painting - different scene from NZ.

Internship @ Peggy Guggenheim in Venice. 7-8 months.

\rightarrow Lee Krasner, Siren 1965

Gallery manager, Gow Langsford. 2007

Identifying with artists - skill from art school
helped with a biennale installation

Masters & teaching. Relationships made are important!

Femisphere publication

Relationship to staff, rather than passing function

2013 Residency in Germany

C Art Trust award \$50,000

Bending Blue @ NAG. (2015)

one opportunity will lead to another.

Samon house library studio. Site specificity: place, resource

2019 'learners' show. Invited to dealer galleries.

McCaughan House Residency.

WEEK 10: GUEST LECTURERS. DISCUSSION/QUESTIONS.

- * Read, make notes, fail.
- * ^{seek} /take opportunities, keep relationships.
- * Always keep going. keep applying over again.

(ask for feedback too)

have to advocate for your practice if you want any ~~to reflect~~
ethical/values to why you practice

always have a plan B & keep
in dialogue with those you're
working with.

→ overseas residencies
are different to
NZ - often have to pay

keep realistic about what you can achieve. take time for
yourself so your practice stays enjoyable. Be selfish!!!

learn to be comfortable with uncertainty

OR get a day job you don't care about & focus all your
energy on your practice.

OR Teach or learn a skill.

success in applications:

stand out so you're not in competition with others.

unique goals & communicating them CLEARLY.

convince them that it's realistic you can achieve the goals.

make sure to cover the basics (medium, etc)

* Wellington City Council, proposal writing resource

give examples. e.g. your markets, projects, etc.

portfolio of experience.

Start small. get feedback from people who've done it before.

AND
many

Week 10 Research for Proposal:

The Death of the Author by Roland Barthes ([source](#))

[A key text to the Pictures Generation, who are important to the history of quotation as a methodology]

Relevant quotes:

- ★ "literature is that neuter, that composite, that oblique into which every subject escapes, the trap where all identity is lost, beginning with the very identity of the body that writes."
- ★ "" The author is a modern figure, produced no doubt by our society insofar as, at the end of the middle ages, with English empiricism, French rationalism and the personal faith of the Reformation, it discovered the prestige of the individual, or, to put it more nobly, of the "human person""
- ★ "the text is a tissue of citations, resulting from the thousand sources of culture"
- ★ "there is one place where this multiplicity is collected, united, and this place is ... the reader"

Response:

This text provides a rationale for using other people's work within one's own. From what I understand, it argues that there is no such thing as an author in the sole genius sense (like what we would call in Media Studies the Auteur), just someone that brings together many different ideas, images, words, etc. to create a text. While I agree with this, I would also argue that there is work in that bringing together, work that an author must do. In this way I believe that a text one writes/creates is 'their' work. This is the idea on which my proposal is founded.

I also believe that there should be little distinction between author and reader. In order to bring all those other bits together, one must have found them somewhere, and in writing, is not most of the work reading it back? In this way I can't completely agree with the text's argument, but I understand what they're trying to say.

Week 11 Research for Proposal:

NZ copyright law.

In NZ we have 'fair dealing', not 'fair use'. According to [Copyright Licensing New Zealand](#), fair dealing "permits a party to use your copyrighted material, without your permission, for the purposes of research, private study, criticism, review and news reporting."

Copyright Licensing NZ also makes a distinction between [derivative or transformative](#). "You can be accused of copyright infringement if your new work is substantially similar to the work that either inspired you, and if you've used identifiable elements from that work." A work must be different enough from the original to create a different story/message in order to be transformative. "Has value been added by creating new information, aesthetics, insights and understandings?" If yes, then it's transformative, and gets its own copyright protections. They explicitly state on this page that this is how collage artists can operate; using other peoples images to say something different.

Week 12 Research for proposal:

Selection of my current collection as of week 12 for BODYWORK, including images, screenshots of quotes, PDFs of texts to read, a document of my own notes on relevant topics. There is more stuff I have collected in a notebook that hasn't made it into this digital collection yet, too.

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Readings I've selected quotes from:

- ★ Facing Sameness: Reconsidering the Radically of Tom of Finland by Hunter Scott
- ★ Tom of Finland (Touko Laaksonen) (1920-1991) by by Ken Gonzales-Day
- ★ Stone Butch Blues by Leslie Feinberg (only partially read)

Readings I have yet to read:

- ★ BOUND TOGETHER: BEING-WITH GAY AND LESBIAN LEATHER COMMUNITIES AND VISUAL CULTURES, 1966-1984 by Andrew Raymond Campbell, B.A.; M.A.
- ★ 'We Play Men' Masculinity, Shame and Precariousness within Gay Leather Performances by Ioannis Pavlopoulos
- ★ A History of Leather At Pride 1965–1995 by Kyle Kingsbury