Stage 2 Visual Arts – Art
Assessment Type 3: Visual Study
Student Response
Introduction

For my Visual Study I was required to complete an investigation to evaluate and analyse the work of different artists. I will be focusing on the theme of portraiture, specifically looking at how different artists and their use of mediums to express many personalities and differences of people, reflected in the techniques and style that each artist uses from different time periods.

Word Count: 1999 words
Leonardo Da Vinci was an Italian Renaissance artist. He is widely considered to be one of the greatest painters and diverse talents.

The sketch is titled 'Study of the Head of Leda'. It is a realistically styled sketch of a woman the main subject of a Greek mythology tale called Leda and the swan. Leda appears in the centre of the piece with an unusual hair style of braids cascading into a bun on the side of her head. The hairstyle is believed to be invented by the artist himself. Da Vinci used his sketches as the first process in creating his finished paintings; he created the sketch using parchment. This portrait study is simplistic but holds the viewers' attention. The lines are free flowing and almost nostalgic.
My own interpretation of Da Vinci’s sketch entitled me to explore and change the braids and hairstyle that Da Vinci used. I found it interesting how braids are still classified as a fashionable hairstyle after all this time. I decided to create a hairstyle that is modern, which was a tiara braid that crossed the head with the hair appearing slightly curled. I tried my best to make the woman as real as possible. Trying to use Da Vinci’s thick continuous line sketching technique was a bit difficult especially near the eyes and mouth which was where I was let down a bit, as the line and shading wasn’t as strong. Overall I think my sketch came out pretty well but would have liked to see more shadowing especially within the lines of the hair and more shaded.
Yermolai Kamezhenkov

Yermolai Kamezhenkov is a Russian artist of the 18th century. The piece that I am analysing is titled "A Portrait of a Young Lady" which was made in 1790.

The piece appears in a very traditional format of the subject matter of the portrait appearing in the middle of the acrylic painting. The lady appears in lovely traditional clothing and is looking directly towards the viewer. The painting is very realistic and the mood appears light and comfortable in the way the lady is being presented which is slightly smiling. The lighting of the piece is shown to be coming from just above looking down onto the lady with hardly any shadows on her face and top part of her hair.
When recreating this piece which is simple in the subject but complex in the painting was very difficult. I had taken a photograph of my little sister which shows her cheeky attitude. I tried to use the very realistic brush work that Karinezhkenkov used. When the painting was complete I wasn’t as happy with the results I felt like the detail could have been done better and also the tones and colouring of the painting could have been more realistic.
Edward S Curtis

American Photographer, Edward S Curtis born 1868 USA. He is well known for his photography of Native Americans.

The photograph is entitled ‘Kaviu Pima’ and is 21 x 15 inch print which appeared in his limited edition publication. The composition of the photo consists of a central focal point portrait of the main subject, an elder Native American man. The subject matter is even brought further in focus due to the plain background and mono-tonal hue of the sepia image.

Curtis's travelled to remote tribal communities and documented native peoples in traditional clothing, capturing the religious and personal traditional wear of Native American people. The subject has been designed to appear in the middle of the composition, with the man looking directly at the lens. The mood of the photo is stern and realistic. The image is very strong, emphasised by the subject's strict and severe expression. The subject appears to be a man of importance or wisdom.
When reflecting on Curtis's work I really wanted to retain that same feel, that the subjects were really raw and stern in appearance. I used my Duto (grandfather) as my subject and shot him against a plain background. I tried also to use the same expression of seriousness but my Duto is a joker and it was hard to complete. However, as time went on I achieved my shot finally and completed my photograph using a brown wash through Photoshop.
Victor Brauner

Victor Brauner is a Romanian artist born in 1903 and is a surrealist painter and sculptor. His paintings have a fascination of being dreamlike but with a wounded undertone to his creations.

It was an artistic movement in the 1920’s that changed the definition of art and combined the elements of its predecessors Dada and cubism to create a whole new idea of art to the world. Surrealism explored the sense of expressing the unconscious.

The style of this painting is a surrealist portrait. The piece is titled "E Closion 3" and is 10 x 8 inches and was created in 1960. The layout is very straightforward with the main subject appearing in the centre of the middle ground, appearing alien like symmetrical in its looks and simple feel. The materials used are oil and acrylic paints on a canvas. The processes consist of the layering from the background and the rest of the neck and shoulders is hidden by a counter or table on the bottom of the foreground.
I reflected this piece by swapping round the dimensions of the portrait and making it appear opposite to the original piece. The colours I used were created to appear just like the ones Victor used however the end result of the image came to bright compared to the subtle brightness of the piece originally. If I had to complete my own reflection of this piece again I would make the colours less bright.
Jean-Michel Basquiat

American artist, Jean-Michel Basquiat born in 1960, in New York City. Basquiat originally a street artist began his works spraying cryptic paintings on subway trains around Manhattan. He still maintained this style throughout his works long after his change of canvas. Basquiat excessive drug use later in his career impacted his work and finally resulted in his death.

‘Cabeza’ 1982, 169.5 x 152.4 in dimension, is a mixed media piece. It is an abstract neo-expressionism portrait piece constructed on a stretched canvas. He used acrylic paints and crayon to create the piece. The construction appears to be frantic, although the subject matter has been placed in the centre with the process of layering used over the background to create texture and add depth.

The artwork has been designed to appear naïve and childish as well as appearing rough in its looks. Brush strokes appear to be very careless which achieves its childlike graffiti manner. The influence to create this piece by the artist was cultural as well as historical. It is a personal piece as it touches social of his cultural background and how his grown up and racial meanings that the stereotype that black people aren’t good artists is broken because of him.
Just like Basquait I have used inspiration from my own personal life. I used my mother as my subject and the wildness of her personality (and hair – a family trait) and how she’s always a happy and smiley personality no matter what situation. Her looks are portrayed in the hair the wild untamed curls cascading out of her hair in every which direction as she hardly ever brushes the wild mane. I expressed her personality in my piece by using the love heart I have drawn on the portrait which signifies the love and happiness that my mum has in her personality towards her friends and family. Her personality also was expressed in the colours, as she loves purple. I loved how this piece came out, it was one of my favourites. If I had to do this again I would make it even bigger and consider making it a bit more naïve looking like Basquait’s.
Patrick John Mills born 1972 in Canada is both a poet and artist. He specialises in creating abstract paintings which have been exhibited in all over the world in Europe and America.

The piece known as One Night #28 is an abstract portrait which uses acrylic paints on heavy cartridge paper and is 8.5 x 11 inches and was made in 2004. The composition of this piece consists of the portrait straight in the centre. He uses thick brush strokes as well as being very abstracted styled with rough workings signifying deep emotional pain with the way the painting is created but also the dull colours and shades used.

This piece and series were created in England. This piece was heavily influenced by the emotion of the artist and has personal feeling of tiredness and stress; he really showed the depressing undertones of this piece.
When recreating this piece I really wanted to keep this emotion of the subject in the painting but change slightly the shapes in the piece. The end result was pleasing however it was difficult to achieve the thick brush strokes and naivety that Patrick does so well.
Annie Leibovitz was born in Connecticut in 1949. Annie is a photographer that specialises in portraiture; she works mostly with well-known public figures like politicians, musicians, and athletes and was once the chief photographer for the Rolling Stones Magazine.

Through clientele, Leibovitz has explored the idea of old fairy-tale’s and specifically placing a modern twist on the images. Annie’s clientele has been both Disney with Annie creating images of old Disney stories with celebrities dressed as them. She has also explored this fairy tale theme in magazine articles.

The prints measurements are 38.7 x 58.4 cm and is titled “Alice in Wonderland, Donatella Versace and Rupert Everett" shot in 2003 in Paris. She photographed Alice in many fashion styles and then photographed them with the designers as to promote their fashion but also their personalities. The middle foreground consists of the subject’s matters of Alice and the two fashion designers Donatella and Rupert. The image is well balanced with the subject matter of the people appearing either side of the image. The image is very clean cut in the colours and textures but also has Alice appearing as the main focal point with the two designers appearing across from her to the side.
I really loved this idea so I wanted to express my modern interpretation of old stories with the help of my sister I dressed her as one of my favourite Alice.
The picture I choose turned out to be a lovely expression of Alice sitting and enjoying a tea party. I like the most how the contrast between the neatness of Alice and her tea party between the dirtiness of the surrounding scrub turned out.
Conclusion

Through this visual study I have learnt many things about portraiture and how different artists use their mediums to express ideas and personality. But the most important is how far the art world has come in portraiture and how there are a wide range of ways to expressing someone’s personality. It’s not just expressed in sketch or a traditional portrait painting like Da Vinci’s sketch or Kamezhenkov painting. Portrait art can now be expressed as graffiti on the back of office walls like Basquiat does or a vivid shot like Leibovitz. There are so many ways of creating a portrait using a whole range of mediums. This is why I find portraiture so fascinating its wide spread in mediums and so many techniques of implementing the artists and subject matters personalities and helps express what makes them unique as people.
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Assessment Comments
This Visual Study is a C grade.

Practical Application

PA1 Conceptualisation, development, and resolution of imaginative or personally relevant visual ideas.
There is considered conceptualisation and development of personally relevant ideas in response to the analysis of a range of portrait studies using a variety of media and styles including drawing, painting and photography.

PA3 Documentation of creative visual thinking and/or problem solving processes.
The creative visual thinking in response to the style and techniques of each practitioner analysed has been documented and organised in a chronological, sequential order.

Analysis and Synthesis

AS1 Critical analysis and interpretation of works of art or design from different contexts.
There is evidence of informed critical analysis and interpretation of each portrait referenced in the study to indicate how practitioners use specific mediums, visual elements and styles to express people’s personalities. The works are chosen from a cross section of ideas and stylistic approaches from historical to contemporary contexts.

AS2 Use of visual arts language to interpret, respond to, and synthesise thoughts on visual arts, including issues and/or questions.
Visual arts language is used competently to interpret and synthesise thoughts on style, compositional structures, manipulation of the visual arts elements and principles and ideas specific to each portrait analysed.

AS4 Evaluation of, and conclusions about, visual arts learning.
Competent and appropriate evaluation of, and conclusions about visual arts learning are made throughout the study in response to each work studied including personal and imaginative practical applications.

Inquiry and Exploration

IE1 Use of research skills and understanding of inquiry methods to locate and acknowledge sources, explore, experiment, and develop insights into aspects of the visual arts.
There is evidence of competent research skills and acknowledgment of sources in a comprehensive bibliography. Some insights have been articulated into different aspects of portraiture across a broad timeline and stylistic interpretations through drawing, painting and photographic media.

IE2 Exploration and self-analysis in development of a personal aesthetic through the visual arts.
There is evidence of a development of a personal aesthetic through some considered exploration of media and personal authentic sources for inspiration and resolution.
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<tr>
<th>Practical Application</th>
<th>Knowledge and Understanding</th>
<th>Analysis and Synthesis</th>
<th>Inquiry and Exploration</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A Initiation of complex or challenging and well-planned conceptualisation, development, and resolution of innovative, imaginative, or personally relevant visual ideas.</td>
<td>In-depth knowledge of selected visual arts concepts, forms, styles, and conventions, and a clear understanding of their practical application.</td>
<td>Highly perceptive critical analysis and interpretation of a variety of works of art or design from different contexts.</td>
<td>Productive and thorough use of research skills and a clear understanding of inquiry methods to locate and appropriately acknowledge sources, explore, experiment, and develop perceptive and clear insights into a range of aspects of the visual arts.</td>
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<td>B Thoughtful and well-planned conceptualisation, development, and resolution of imaginative or personally relevant visual ideas.</td>
<td>Some depth of knowledge of selected visual arts concepts, forms, styles, and conventions and a sound understanding of their practical application.</td>
<td>Well-informed and well-considered critical analysis and interpretation of several works of art or design from different contexts.</td>
<td>Systematic use of research skills and a sound understanding of inquiry methods to locate and appropriately acknowledge sources, explore, experiment, and develop mostly clear insights into different aspects of the visual arts.</td>
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<td>Thoughtful exploration and self-analysis in development of a personal aesthetic through the visual arts.</td>
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<tr>
<td>C Considered conceptualisation, development, and resolution of imaginative or personally relevant visual ideas.</td>
<td>Competent application of technical skills and elements of sensitivity in the use of media, materials, technologies, and processes to communicate visual ideas in a work or works of art or design.</td>
<td>Informed and considered critical analysis and interpretation of two or more works of art or design from different contexts.</td>
<td>Competent use of research skills and considered understanding of inquiry methods to locate and appropriately acknowledge sources, explore, experiment, and develop some insights into different aspects of the visual arts.</td>
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<td>D Elements of conceptualisation and some development and resolution of visual ideas.</td>
<td>Competent application of technical skills and elements of sensitivity in the use of media, materials, technologies, and processes to communicate visual ideas in a work or works of art or design.</td>
<td>Some basic consideration and interpretation of at least one work of art or design with superficial reference to the context.</td>
<td>Some use of basic research skills and awareness of inquiry methods to locate one or more sources (with attempted acknowledgment), explore, and experiment.</td>
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<td>Superficial recognition of the role of visual arts in personal development.</td>
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<tr>
<td>E Emerging skills in the conceptualisation, development, and resolution of visual ideas.</td>
<td>Attempted exploration of technical skills, using media, materials, or technologies.</td>
<td>Emerging awareness of connections between at least one work of art or design and the context.</td>
<td>Attempted engagement in a directed research process.</td>
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