



Open  
College  
of the Arts

## Formative feedback

Student name	<b>Adrian Eaton</b>	Student number	<b>510434</b>
Course/Unit	<b>Drawing 2</b>	Assignment number	<b>5</b>
Type of tutorial	(eg video/audio/written)		<b>Written</b>

### Overall Comments

Thank for sending the latest batch of work. It's a typically ambitious submission that is full of ideas and difficulty. I have said this before, but it's worth mentioning again: you approach this course with the mindset of an artist who is pushing at the course requirements and re-writing it for your own purposes. This is really interesting and you are producing a varied and complex body of work.

You keep mentioning entropy and semiotics as key themes, but I think they are masks for something much more interesting. Entropy might be about a descent (?) into chaos or disorder, but there's a strong sense of control and authorship in all your work that has nothing to do with entropy. White the reverse. In your log you constantly guide the viewer to see the work in a particular way. Natural processes are eschewed in favour of conceptual strategies. None of this is bad and it sets up an interesting tension, but it's worth thinking about.

Semiotics is more tricky. It's not my area of expertise, but it is about signification and referents. These might be complex (and endlessly deferred) but they are not disordered.

### Feedback on exercises and assignment

#### **Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Quality of Outcome, Demonstration of Creativity**

A Changing Scene: In the notes for this work you take about the influences that led you to making the work, but no reflection on what making the work meant. Was it a success? I like the idea and the execution and would have like to see dozens of these drawings over a month or so. The link to **Duchamp's *Nude Descending a Staircase*** is clear but I think as a project it could have been pushed further. It's here that entropy could REALLY have played a part. By drawing obsessively over and over again you would have ended - or at least generated - a solid, scored, field of ink with he figure lost in repeated lines. As it is you've arrested it at quite an early stage resulting in a quickly portrait. I like the resulting drawings though (they remind me of some of Hockney's ink drawings). It might be interesting to re-make this with drawings in acetate of tracing paper overlays.

An Artist's Book: It interesting that you've used video for the presentation of these works as well as sending the books. I would be interested to read about the decision that led to this as they feel like performance pieces - the first (the Entropy one) is like a strange version of Jackanory in which you've embedded a commentary on the work. The commentary is

ambitious and more complex than the work itself and perhaps over-burdens it. You appear to disallow the viewer any agency in reading the work and maintain a deliberate and rigid control over how the work can be seen. However, I am intrigued by this work as a film. You seem to be parodying art criticism and certain types of art practice.

You mention in the commentary that, being primarily conceptual, the work need not be polished. (I'm paraphrasing). Be careful of this. A lot of conceptual work is EXTREMELY slick for exactly that reason. Shoddy or badly made work actually places a lot of stuff between the viewer and the idea. For instance, is the coffee ring on the front of the book significant (semiotics)? Does it mean you have disdain for the object you've made and have used it as a coaster? Making the work beautiful (whatever that means) might get the reader / viewer closer to the idea.

The second film / book is also interesting as the status of the film as the work and not just the documentation of a work is clearer. Was this your intention? Do think about making clear your opinion of how these works will be presented for assessment. The book is fine (and I think the 'scrapbook' approach is more appropriate here as a form) but the commentary introduces a second voice that enriches it no end.

A Finer Focus. Facial Expressions: This is a strong and interesting work. It's a shame that it has become a bit scuffed. You might want address this before assessment. The overlaid images are individually strong and the compound work adds an intensity to them. The hands at either end of the composition work well, acting as novel framing devices.

The other work - the cartoony social gathering - is very different. However the intensity is still present. This two works and the final piece put me in mind of **James Ensor's** theatrical and disturbing works. Worth investigating.



Time and the Viewer: I think the idea of this works better than the finished piece. It's a very graphic rendition of movement and the medium you've used doesn't show that off as well as it could. For me, there ought to be a tension between the rhythmic pattern and the flatness of the rendition. The felt tip introduces texture that seems at odds with the design, and it does seem more like a designed work (like a **Bridget Riley**, for instance), than a drawn one.

Final Piece: October News: This is dense and detailed composition. It functions well as an overview of news items and there are some interesting juxtapositions. The placing of sports next to refugees and the play of scale all contribute to a convincing work. It wears its photographs sources on its sleeve which reinforces its relationship with journalism. Technically I like the scratching back into the pencil crayon as it generates a more visceral

and less photographic image. All in all this is an ambitious piece - conceptually and technically - and I think on the whole it works.

## **Sketchbooks**

### **Demonstration of technical and Visual Skills, Demonstration of Creativity**

Thanks for sending two sketchbooks. They show me that you're always on the look out for things to play with, whether views or materials. Your restlessness is really useful as it brings so much creativity to bear on the project work. Like your blog they are rich sites of collision that allow ideas and images to clash and influence each other. Keep it up.

When preparing your work for assessment you might want to re-compile the work in your notebooks according to themes. This might involve making scrapbooks that rationalise your practice a little. At the moment there are blank pages between works and sometimes works are marooned in the middle of other studies. None of this is bad in terms of a practice, but it does make navigating a complex portfolio more complex.

## **Learning Log**

### **Context**

Once again there is a real sense of engagement with the wider subject that continues to inform your practice. It's a dense and rich document full of ideas and references. Well done.

You are consciously working towards at the Level Three Painting courses and laying the ground for that study and as such the work is ambitious and self-aware. Occasionally there is a sense of you carrying out work according to a plan and not letting the work determine your next move. It's not a big deal as you bring so much energy and variety to your practice, but be prepared to listen to the work more and to respond to where it needs to go. You are working very quickly and there's a sense of impatience; an anxiety to get the course out of the way quickly as the real learning will be coming up later. Not so. This may change as you proceed onto the next courses, but don't lose the chance to properly reflect on your work. This might involve letting works gestate over months. Rushed work is often less interesting than work that matures.

## **Parallel Project Material**

The drawings you have sent me that belong in the parallel project are all competent and slick. They are a little dry when compared to the energy you display elsewhere, though. The life drawings are compositionally interesting. I like the black box motif and its position on the white paper. The blond figure with crossed legs is probably the best of the works here. There's a strong sense of personality and structure. The delicate marks are sympathetic and contribute to the overall effect. I like the hair, too. It's ragged but controlled.

The next submission will be concerned with the Parallel Project and the Critical Review and I will cover your submission in more depth then. If you would like me to see a version of the Critical Review before then, please let me know.

## Suggested reading/viewing

### Context

You're looking at lots of artists and I wouldn't want to overburden you with more suggestions. You do tend to write little discrete summaries of works rather than competing them with one another. I suggested last time that you test works against one another using compare and contrast strategies, and I still think there should be more of this.

## Pointers for the next assignment

Although you're interested in lots of aspects of art and your practice can go in lots of directions, do think about how you might be able to focus it a little as you close in on the assessment. This will help you and help assessors. I understand your resistance to being pigeon-holed but spreading yourself across all of art history will mean that your work is always flirting with a kind of visual tourism and you won't give yourself the chance to settle in and find out something new.

I look forward to seeing the Parallel Project and Critical Review next time.

Tutor name	Bryan Eccleshall
Date	19th December 2015
Next assignment due	January 2016?