

DISCIPLINE SPECIFIC WRITING



Our practical work requires us to continuously come up with innovative ideas. This is easier said than done. When stuck, prewriting exercises such as brainstorming, free writing or word association, can be helpful. Changing the format of an idea from 'thought' to 'written' to 'visual' can spark off new ideas. Move out of your comfort zone.

Brain Storming:

This is a form of listing ideas and sub ideas, often in a spider diagram format.

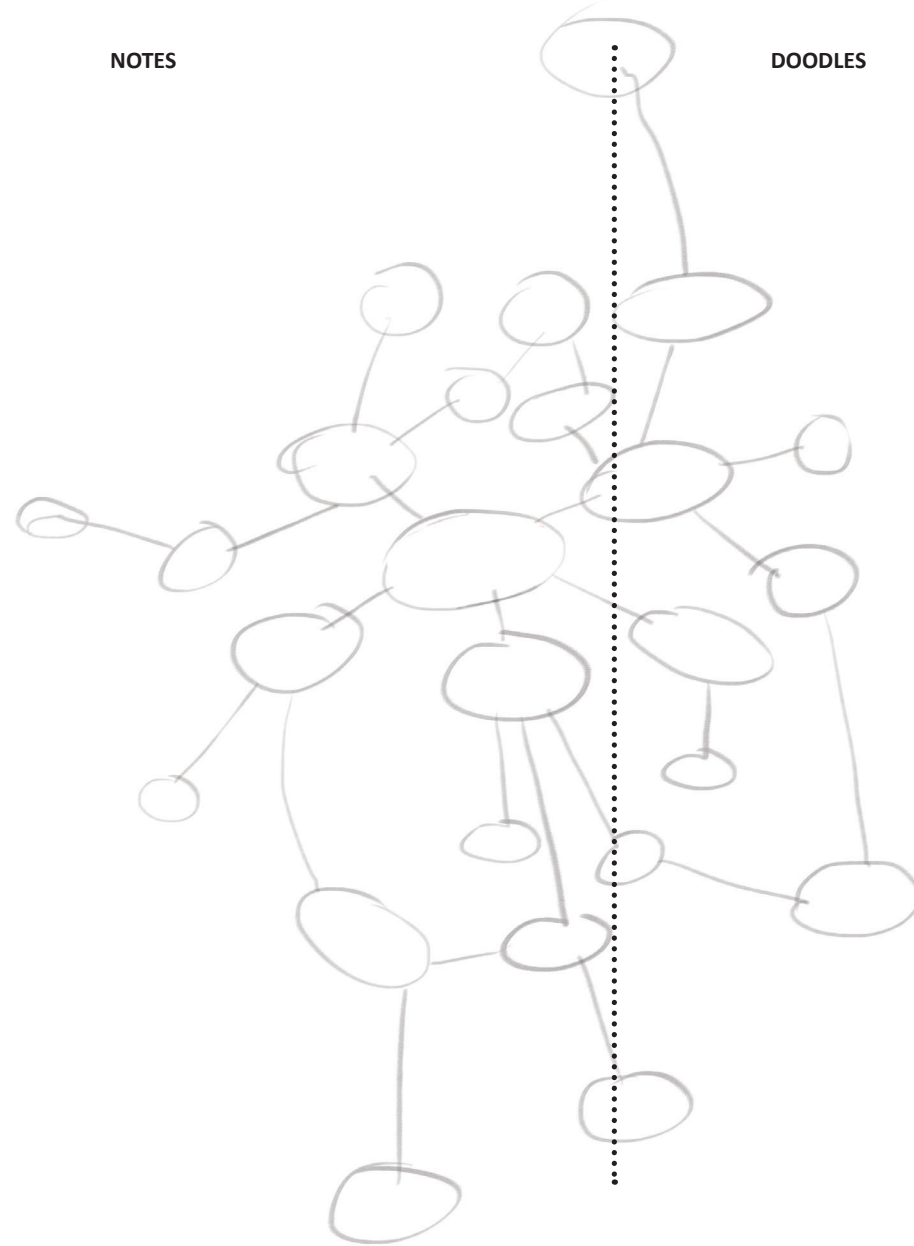
1. Start with one main idea or question (your topic).
2. Think of as many ideas or words that relate to the topic. Don't worry about whether it will be useful or not, write down everything.
3. Each idea should generate a new idea. Write down emotions about the topic as well.
4. Once you feel you cannot think of any more ideas, stop and reread what you have written. Circle the interesting ideas. These could be a great start to new artworks.

GENERATING IDEAS FOR PRACTICALS



NOTES

DOODLES



Free writing:

Free writing is a writing exercise that forces you to record ideas that are in your head, without editing, analysis or judgment.

1. Think of a topic, phrase or question that you want to explore.
2. With a pen and paper, for 3-5 min, without stopping or lifting up your pen, write whatever you know or comes to mind about the topic. If you run out of ideas repeat a phrase like "I don't know" over and over until another idea comes to mind. Don't worry about spelling, grammar or clarity.
3. When the time is up reread what you have written. A lot of the writing may be unusable but you might find some good ideas you may not have otherwise thought of.

GENERATING IDEAS FOR PRACTICALS

NOTES

DOODLES

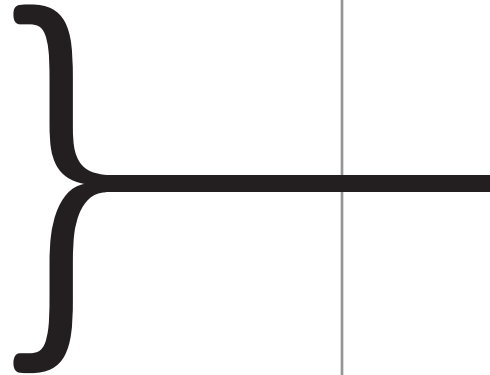


How to generate ideas for a concept

Ask yourself the following questions:

- What was the most amazing artwork you have ever seen in person /in a book/ on the Internet? Describe it.
- What was the work about (conceptually)?
- Why did you love the artwork?
- What is the most interesting non-traditional use of a traditional medium you have seen? Describe the artwork/ object.
- What project/ part of a project have you enjoyed the most during your studies thus far? Why?
- What is your favorite thing to do with any material/ medium?
- If you could make anything you wanted, what would it be and why?

GENERATING IDEAS FOR PRACTICALS



“An idea is our visual reaction to something seen - in real life, in our memory, in our imagination, in our dreams.” (Audette 1993:42)

Three main ideas

With the above quote in mind, write down 3 topics/ subjects that you feel passionate about/ interested in that are worth visually reacting to.

Word association

Write down as many words that you can think of/ associate with the above topics.

Thesaurus

Pick three words from your word association that resonate with you.

*resonate means: “to evoke images, memories, and emotions.”

Use a thesaurus to generate new meanings and ideas for the chosen words. Write them down.

Free writing

With your three words in mind ‘free write’ a passage for three minutes about your chosen topic. Think about:

Anything you know about the topic.

Why it’s important to you.

What type of objects you would like to make and why?

*It does not have to link at this stage. Just keep your pen moving on your page.

GENERATING IDEAS FOR PRACTICALS

Remember to keep the quote in mind

THREE MAIN IDEAS

WORD ASSOCIATION

THESAURUS

FREE WRITING

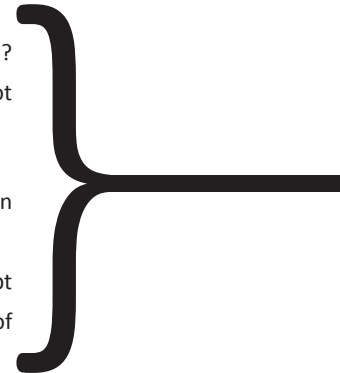
4Ws and an H

With everything you have written from the above five points, use the '4Ws and an H', seen below, to write a paragraph about the possible concept you would like to explore in 3rd year.

WHAT, WHERE, WHY, WHO & HOW

- **What** is your concept?
- **Where** is it in the context of South Africa? Durban? Is it a universal issue? (If this is not relevant leave it out)
- **Why** does it interest you?
- **Who** else has dealt with this issue (find an artist)?
- **How** do you plan on executing this concept in your art making (subject matter/types of artwork etc.)?

GENERATING IDEAS FOR PRACTICALS



This section is partially adapted from:

Brainstorming(online) 2014. Available at: <http://writingcenter.tamu.edu/Students/Handouts-Guides/Handouts-%28Get-It-Written%29/Brainstorming-> (Accessed 20 October 2014)

References

Audette, A. H. 1993. *The Blank Canvas*. Boston: Shambhala Publication. (page 42)

<http://www.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/english/resonate?searchDictCode=all>

What is an artist statement for?

An artist statement creates a bridge between the viewer and the artist. It is about the relationship the artist has with their work and process. It helps the viewer establish: What inspired this artist? How did he/she work? It also gives the artist the opportunity to find the common threads through their body of work.

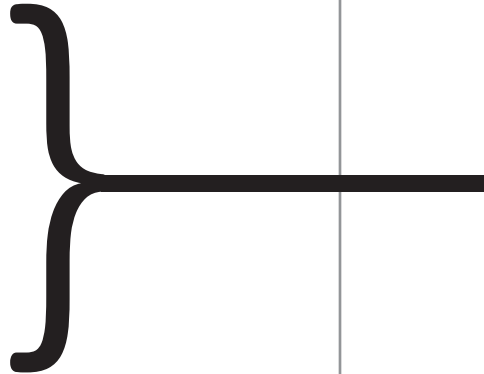
What can you use an artist statement for?

Galleries (exhibitions you participate in) / Press releases / Media articles / Applying for grants / Applying for some teaching positions / Applying for artist-in-residence.

Ask yourself the following questions to get you started:

1. What is your concept?
 - a) Why do you do what you do?
 - b) Why did you choose the topic / theme?
 - c) How did you get into this topic / theme?
2. Why did you choose this set of images?
3. What techniques did you use? Why?
4. What materials did you use? Why? How?
5. What reoccurring elements emerge in your work? Is there a pattern in the way you select materials? In the way you use color, texture or light?
6. What artists influence you? How?

ARTIST STATEMENT



Now let's put it into paragraphs:

ARTIST STATEMENT

Always remember to use the present tense ("I am," not "I was," "I do," not "I did.") Be brave! Select your own order of these paragraphs:

Tell the reader what your concept is, and then include a simple statement of why you do the work you do.

Tell the reader how you make decisions in the course of your work. How and why do you select materials, techniques, themes, images etc.? Keep it simple. Link these to your influences, this creates context.

Tell the reader a little more about your current work. How it grew out of prior work or life experiences. What are you exploring, attempting or challenging by doing this work.

This section is partially adapted from:

Gordon, M. 2007. Writing your Artist's Statement (online). Available: <http://www.mollygordon.com/resources/marketingresources/artstatem/> (Accessed 18 November 2013)
Goodwin, A. 2012. Writing the Artist Statement. USA: Infinity Publishing.

You will be asked to analyse artworks continuously throughout your studies, whether it is analysing an artwork you select for an exhibition review, analysing an artwork for an essay, your journals or analysing your own artwork.

What is Artwork Analysis?

Artwork analysis is examining what the artwork looks like and what the artwork says/does. In other words you are looking at both the aesthetics and concept of the artwork.

Why do we Analyse Artworks?

As an artist we put a lot of thought into both, coming up with a concept and every step along the way in the making process. Everything affects the success of an artwork; the decisions made with the marks you make, the subject matter, the concept, that is why these are all carefully considered by the artist. Analysing artworks allows us to interrogate the artist's intentions as well as how successful the artwork is. This shows the lecturer that you have an understanding of art terms and are thinking critically about all aspects of the artwork. The more we analyse other artworks the more we consider and reflect when making our own artworks.

ARTWORK ANALYSIS



There are four things to consider when analysing an artwork:

- 1) Describe the artwork (content)
- 2) Look at the form (formal elements)
- 3) Look at the context of the artwork
- 4) Interpretation

You must always include an image of the artwork you are analysing and all the artwork information.

Describing an artwork

Describing an artwork is stating exactly what you see in the artwork (the content of the artwork). Meaning and emotions are not included in this section. You will include the subject matter you see and where it is positioned in the artwork. Here you will also mention what format the artwork takes i.e. portrait or landscape. Imagine you are describing the artwork to a blind person. You are recreating the artwork in words.

ARTWORK ANALYSIS

ARTWORK ANALYSIS

Formal Elements

It is important to describe how the artist has used the formal elements, these include:

- 1) What type of lines does the artist use?
Jagged/flowing...
- 2) What tone (light) did the artist use?
Where is the light source? Are mainly dark or light tones used?
Is there high contrast?
Is the tone high or low key?
- 3) What colours have the artist used?
What could these colours symbolise?
- 4) What texture does the artwork have?
How is the texture created?
Is it physical texture or is it visual texture created by mark making?
- 5) How has space been used?
Has the artist created depth, an illusion of or physical space, or is it completely two-dimensional?
How has the artist created depth?
Is it created through relational size or detail, has the artist used perspective or are objects overlapping?
- 6) How has the artist used positive and negative shape? Are the shapes geometric or organic?
- 7) How has the artist used composition?
Is there a focal point?
- 8) What technique and medium has the artist used?
- 9) Is the work abstract, realistic, stylized, simplified or distorted?

Context

It is important to consider the context of the artwork, in an attempt to truly understand it. This could include:

- When the work was made?
- Where it was made?
- What was happening at that time?
- What the artist was going through when making the work?
- Who the artist is?
- Who commissioned the artist to make the work (if applicable)?
- If there is a person featured in the artwork, who is the person?

Interpretation

You must consider the artist's conceptual intentions, usually found in artist statements, but as art is subjective, your interpretation and emotional response is just as valid.

- What is the artist's conceptual intention?
- What emotional response do you have to this work and why?
- How does the use of each of the formal elements and subject matter make you feel?
- How do you interpret the work?

This section was partially adapted from:
How to Analyse an Artist's work (online) 2014. Available: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/schools/gcsebitesize/art/practicalities/analysingartistwork1.shtml> (Accessed 21 October 2014)

John Wagoner. 2013. Art 206: Analysis of an artwork (video online) Available: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ckh_G0mkdx4 (Accessed 22 October 2014)

EXHIBITION REVIEWS



What Is an Exhibition Review?

An exhibition review is an academic piece of writing that describes, analyses and interprets a chosen exhibition. A good review should deepen the readers understanding of both the exhibition and art history, as well as enrich their experience of viewing artworks.

Art Galleries

You find art exhibitions at art galleries. Exhibitions will usually stay up between 1-3 weeks. Visit an exhibition. Viewing images online does not give an accurate reflection. You can choose from one of many galleries in Durban.

Things to take when visiting an exhibition:

- Notebook • Pencil / Pen • Camera • Measuring tape, in case the dimensions aren't provided.

Gathering Information

Find all the information you can on the exhibition: Reviews online and in newspapers, interview the artist or curator, the artist's web page and the 'walk about'. You will need all of this. Make sure you reference!

EXHIBITION REVIEWS

A selection of Durban's art galleries

African Art Centre

(94 Florida Road, Morningside)

ArtSpace Durban

(3 Miller Rd, Greyville - off Umgeni Rd)

Bat Centre

(45 MaritimePlace, Small Craft Harbour, Victoria Embankment)

Durban Art Gallery

(2nd Floor City Hall, 480 Anton lebede/Smith Street, City Centre)

DUT Art Gallery

(51 Steve Biko Road, Steve Biko Campus Above the Library)

KZNSA

(166 Bulwer Road, Glenwood)

How to Write an Exhibition Review:

Title:

On the top of your page write as a heading: Title of Exhibition by Artist at Name of Gallery and the starting and ending dates of the exhibition.

Artist Bio:

The first paragraph can be about the artist that you are looking at (Write the artist's name in full). A short biography, giving the reader insight into who this artist is. Only use information that is relevant to understanding the exhibition. Use the information you found, and reference.

The Exhibition as a whole:

The second paragraph could be about the exhibition as a whole, start with a broad view. You could use your interviews here to back this up (reference). Here you can include some of the artist's statement (reference your quote or paraphrase), what was the exhibition about. Tell the reader your experience of seeing the exhibition. Ask yourself the following questions:

- How did it make you feel?
- What were your feelings about the way the artworks were laid out?
- How did the public react to the work, if you were at the opening?
- How did the works relate to each other, is there a common thread?

EXHIBITION REVIEWS

An Artwork:

Narrow your focus. Pick an artwork. You need a good quality image of the artwork and all the artwork information. When taking photos in galleries you must always ask permission first. **Artist, Title, Date, Medium, Size.** Include the image and the artwork information here.

Third paragraph, tell the reader what artwork you are going to discuss and why you chose that specific artwork. Here you will analyse the artwork using the formal elements. Tell the reader exactly what you see in the work. Interpret the work using both your own interpretation and the sources you gathered as a guide. Ask yourself:

- What materials and techniques has the artist used? What effects have these made?
- Why do you think the artist has chosen to use these materials?
- How have the formal elements been used? (Line, shape, colour, tone, texture, composition etc.).
- How have the formal elements influenced your interpretation?
- What qualities do the formal elements have? (E.g. energetic, strong).
- How has the artist used design qualities? (E.g. repetition, focal point, harmony, variety and contrast).
- What artist does this work remind you of? Name the artist and artwork. Provide an image and the artwork information (reference).

EXHIBITION REVIEWS

EXHIBITION REVIEWS

- Is the subject matter naturalistic, distorted, stylised, exaggerated etc.?
- What could this suggest conceptually?
- What meaning (concept) does this artwork convey?

Use the sources you have researched to back up the above answers with quotes or paraphrased quotes (reference!).

Conclusion:

Sum up the exhibition. Was it successful or not and why? Do you suggest others see it? How could it have been better? Does it have any impact on the Durban art scene? If so, how?

References:

On a new page, include a reference list, which lists all the references you have used in your review. You also need to reference the photo of the artwork you have taken in your reference list. This is done by following the referencing guide for artworks and then add: 'image by: your surname, initial. (Year you took the photo). Place: gallery'.

Appendix:

Attach any reviews you used and referenced to the back of your review.

This section is partially adapted from:

Feldman, E. 2008. Feldman's method of judgement (online). Available: <http://zeckdikalajingga.blogspot.com/2008/04/feldmans-meth-od-of-judgement.html> (Accessed 12 June 2012)

Radul, J. 2000. Notes on Writing an Exhibition Review (online). Available: <http://www.sfu.ca/~jaradul/reviews.html> (Accessed 20 November 2013)

Barnet, S. 2005. Writing a Review of an Exhibition, 8th ed. New Jersey: Prentice Hall.

Reflection

Reflective writing is used in both journal writing and reflective reports. As creative people it is vital that we stop and take a step back to look, engage and reflect on our creative process and the artifact we have made. This in written form allows for a learning process that does not always happen during the act of making. This gives us the opportunity to really engage with what we have done. Art making is not a linear experience, there is no real wrong and right way. Reflection allows us time to both fine tune our work conceptually and practically as well as record problems we may have had to ensure we can repeat the process in a more productive way if need be. Recording our emotions during the making process in the form of reflection is also important. Making art is an extremely personal journey, and our emotions are very influential in our art making, whether intended or not. Recording these emotions can make you see your work in a new light or spark off ideas for new work. This allows for personal growth.

The three basics of reflection:

Describe

Analyse

Reflect

REFLECTIVE REPORTS & JOURNALS



Reflective report

(This may vary depending on the lecturer's requirements for the particular module)

1st and 2nd Year

- Introduction: In one sentence explain what the module was about. Then explain how the report is going to be laid out.
 - 1) The module as a whole
 - 2) research on the topic
 - 3) the artwork you will be reflecting on.(Write this in full sentences)
- Describe the module: (what was expected of you)
PARAGRAPH 1.
- Include general research on the given topic. Reference.
PARAGRAPH 2
- Carefully select a few artworks you made during the module.
- Provide an image of the artwork, with the artwork information.
PARAGRAPH 3
- Describe: the making process of your artwork.
PARAGRAPH 3
- Analyse: Explain why you made it like that and why you chose that subject matter. Explain your use of the formal elements: line, shape, tone, texture, composition.
PARAGRAPH 4

REFLECTIVE REPORTS & JOURNALS

- Was the work you made influenced by another work? Include an image of that work and all artwork information. Compare and contrast your work to the other artist's work.
PARAGRAPH 5
- Reflect: How do you feel about this artwork? What did you enjoy? What didn't you enjoy? What was said about it in the crit? How can you improve it? Where to from here?
PARAGRAPH 6
- Repeat paragraph 3-6 for each artwork you wish to discuss.
- Conclusion: Explain how you felt about the module as a whole, and recap the main issues you faced and learnt from. Explain how you plan to apply what you have learnt to the next module.
- Reference list

3rd and 4th Year

This is exactly the same as 1st and 2nd year reflective reports, except you replace Paragraph 1 with your artist statement.

Journal Writing

It is expected of you to keep a journal for each subject throughout your studies, but what is an artist's journal? An artist's journal is similar to a journal or diary you may or may not have kept as a child. It is a space to put down a compilation of ideas, sketches, processes, research, visual references (like images, something you picked up off the floor, photos) and most importantly, reflection. This journal allows lecturers to see how engaged you have been with the project. It allows a glimpse into your mind.

This is the most informal type of writing you will do in this course. It is however important to remember that your lecturers will read it so try to leave out slang, or information that isn't relevant to your art making (like your boyfriend/ girlfriend). If research is included you still have to reference it. But how the research/ writing is presented is completely up to you, as long as it can be read. The more creative your journal is the better. You will also need to include explanations about why you have included an image/object/sweet wrapper, so the reader can follow your train of thought. REFLECT. The most important thing to include in your journal is reflection. After/ during every day or module depending on the lecturer, describe, analyse and reflect about what you have made/ are making.

REFLECTIVE REPORTS & JOURNALS

Journal Checklist

- Describe (the module/process/artwork in a summarised format. Do not give an hourly or day by day report).
- Brainstorm: create a visually interesting brainstorm.
- Include sketches.
- Include interesting found objects, images, reference & artworks.
- Include a brief explanations for each thing you have included.
- Include paraphrased research with references.
- Reflection.
- Be Creative: Don't be afraid, use different media (pen, ink, collage, paint, print).

(A journal must have as much visual imagery as writing)

Your journal is a space for you to put down ideas and feelings; it's a great starting point for generating ideas for new artworks. Make your journal as exciting and creative as possible.

REFLECTIVE REPORTS & JOURNALS

**A boring
journal.
=
Boring
ideas.**