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## The Limit – Generator of Expression Forms in Painting

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### *Abstract*

The fast pace at which the forms of expression developed in the art of the 20<sup>th</sup> century mirrors the evolution of society and hence the ideologies underlying it. The problematization of the concept of “limit”, a leitmotif serving as a landmark around and beyond which new postulations or contestations of foreshadowing forms/concepts ventured, may be a novel point of view on the evolution through time of morphology and stylistics in art and a good means for performing a radiography of the “symptoms”/“figurations” of the present. What is our current position on the concept of “limit” in art?

*Keywords:* limit, painting, visual art, stylistics, morphology.

### 1. Introduction

The issue of style in painting, as legitimation of new forms of expression, was considered by Heinrich Wollflin in 1911 as being split between purely formal concepts, which focus only on the optical ways of representation belonging to a certain epoch, and the content concepts, which indicate the manner in which these ways of representation come to express a feeling, an idea or a concept, due to the different relationships that the eye and the soul/reason has with the world, respectively (Wollflin, 1968). In his turn, Erwin Panofsky gave his opinion on this in 1915, when he stated that the relationship the eye has with the world is a rapport of the soul with the eye’s world (Panofsky, 1980): the object that is “visited” by eyesight only takes shape through the soul, feeling and reason, therefore it cannot be separated from the psychology of its age.

In addition, he considers that the general moment of a particular style - the way of expression that is typical for a certain epoch – expresses the super-individual thinking of an entire epoch, as the feeling of an individual is absorbed into the general feeling. Therefore, art is not defined merely by a certain contemplation of the world, but by a certain conception of the world, which places individual works into a “spirit of the age”, determined by an unconscious force that updates and distributes the same potential essence to different degrees (Panofsky, 1980).

Panofsky shows that culture is not only a “common code” for particular ideas, but rather a set of previously assimilated particular ideas that serve as the starting point for the creation of an infinity of particular schemes that can be applied to particular situations. So we are talking about a “program of the artist with the world” (Bourdieu, 1967), which does not have to be expressed intentionally and consciously, because it can express itself without expressing a conscious will of individual expression.

Freedom, which has been at the heart of all revolutions, all time-specific ideological reformulations, is also in art the essential cell for the artist's convention with the world and with the possibilities of self-expression. Freedom gains meaning only under the threat of it becoming limited, but this can also become manifest as a will for limitation. The ontological ambiguity or the seemingly antagonistic relation between the meanings gives birth to problematizations that go beyond the immediate duality of meanings, gaining complexity and subtle nuances.

In the semantic analysis of "limit", from Greek – the noun *péras* (which means: limit, margin, extremity, end - timewise), built from the root *per-*, Gabriel Liiceanu discovered four semantic lines, meaning: the limit, overcoming the limit, the journey between limits, and especially experimenting with the limit (Liiceanu, 2005).

Keeping this guideline revealed above, the problematization of the "limit", for the purpose of facilitating the visualization of diverse approaches to it in the context of the art of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, can only start with the immediate, positive, formational meaning – of "limiting" the form.

## 2. The limit as delimitation – the first condition for the appearance of form

I associate this moment of "form Genesis" with art's preoccupation for abstractization at the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, when the process of gradual simplification of the form, already begun – through flattening or blurring, with Courbet or Manet, with Impressionists, Neo-Impressionists, Post-Impressionists and continued by the avant-garde movements through various procedures of changing the figure for the purpose of revealing it as more profound, more intense or more complex (Fauves, Cubists) – reaches its maximum freedom from it (from the object) through the practices and theories of artists such as Kandinsky, Klee, Mondrian, Malevich, etc.

It is worth noting, nevertheless, that this phenomenon – essentialization / synthesization / simplification of forms at the level of figural representations, has always existed. We find it in the first attempts people made to capture the image of the elements of the surrounding world, going through all stages of history until our age, with few exceptions, such as is the case with Mannerism and Academism.

The existence of a cultural conceptual substrate, whether religious, scientific or social, made the ways of expression in art "obey" them, become their reflections or (*pre-*)*figure* them; thus, the priority was not the virtuosity of execution or depiction, but rather the anchoring to other planes of existence, the transcendence beyond "pure visuality", crossing the border/limit of forms, even if this was not deliberate but implied.

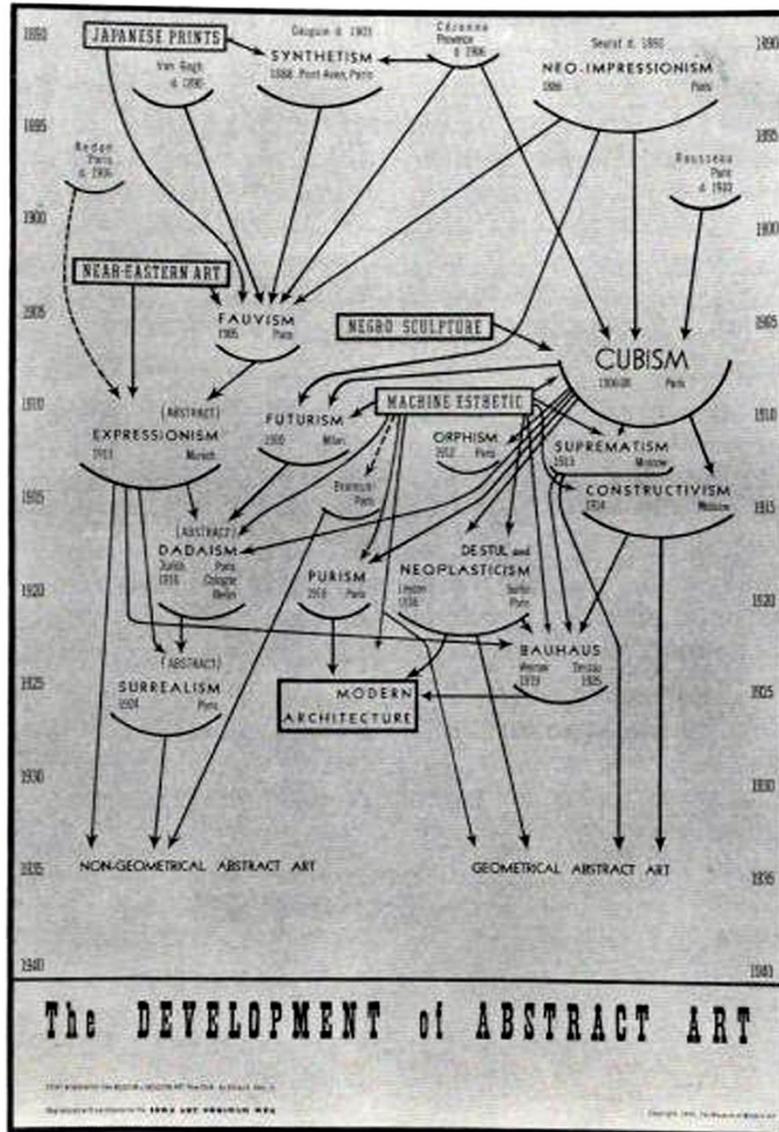
Instead of copying nature, primitive man drew a face in a few simple forms; the Egyptians represented things as they knew them, not as they saw them; the Greeks and the Romans introduced the idea of synthesizing volumes; the Medieval people emphasized their expression in order to facilitate the passing beyond them, and for the Asian culture the final aim of forms was found in the essence of their contemplation.

The interest in "seeing" appeared in Renaissance, when the use of scientific methods such as the use of perspective, rendering volumes in *trompe l'oeil*, the use of *sfumato*, the interest for depicting expressions and movements, settled at the level of methods/knowledge in the most accurate representation of what could be observed (Gombrich, 2007).

That is why the deliberate reference to the "limit" as to a pole which has to be repositioned constantly according to the various connotations it has repeatedly been assigned, starts to take shape with the process of expressing the form detached from the figure, up to pushing the latter to the *limit* of the most purified representation, which allows a statement such as

“something exists in so far as it has a boundary, a margin” be understood in its most literal sense – the way in which a dot, a line, a surface stands out from the background.

Questions such as “What is art?”, “What is the aim of art?”, “How far does art go?” (Ruhrberg, Schneckenburger, Fricke & Honnef, 2005), which revealed the deeply experimental character of the preoccupations linked to its configuration, investigated the nature of art and the human experience in relation to it.



Picture 1. Alfred H. Barr, *The Development of Abstract Art* (1936); chart prepared for the exhibition *Cubism and Abstract Art* catalog, Museum of Modern Art, New York (Fernie, 2008).

The art of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had this role of experimenting with different possibilities of “formation”, of finding their identity in relation to their own *boundary*. It was the moment when artists became aware of the notion of style and began their experiments, each new movement flying the flag of the new <-ism> (Gombrich, 2007).

It is no surprise that artists turned their attention to the models of expressivity and simplicity transmitted by African or Oriental art. What had been lost because of the interest in technique and virtuosity was found here in the intensity of expression, the clarity of structure, the technical simplicity (Gombrich, 2007).

Artists are forced to look for originality in the expression of forms, as in the well-known examples such as Van Gogh, Cézanne or Gauguin, in order to be able to express themselves in a more powerful, deeper or truer manner, noticing more than reality reveals at first glance: going beyond the limits of the physiological functions of the eye, we are taught to “see” more, differently, really. The shapes and colours are a kind of stimuli for some effects, sensations, psychological reactions and seem to perpetuate beyond them, beyond the visible. In time, in the following decades, they gradually replaced the *subject* and eventually the *object*, although at the time of the three artists mentioned above and in their case the form is not abolished but rather *trans(-)formed*.

Van Gogh introduced the taste for an art that was less refined but more direct in shapes and colours; Gauguin, Matisse and the Fauves built figures with very simple elements, flattening the figure until it became a decorative element; Cézanne introduced the way of perceiving nature through cubes, cones and cylinders, with the perception of the most characteristic aspects of the object – this interest was developed to their simultaneous perception in the case of cubists (de Micheli, 1968).

Still, it may seem surprising that, beyond what seems obvious “at first glance”, beyond the immediate meaning of the word, through “limit”, i.e. *delimitation*, *boundary*, *margin*, the closer we get to a higher purification of forms, the less we understand the periphery of the form, its visual expression, in relation to the margin, and more to what is defined from the inside out. Brâncuși was fully convinced by that when he stated - what is real is not the external form, but the essence of things. Starting from this truth, it is impossible for anyone to express something essentially real by imitating its exterior surface (Brâncuși, 1926).

Form is the expression of the inner content, colour has its own possibilities of “giving form”, in itself, and it can have a taste, a perfume, sonority, as concluded through Kandinsky’s creations and theories.

The switch to the involvement of other sensory organs in the expression through painting and in its perception played a key role in substantiating abstraction, but also in the evolution of the media for expression in visual art. Thus, to many artists, sound became a possibility to get access deeper, more to the *inside* (Pintilie, 2002).

Kandinsky frees colour from under the drawing, making it *vibrate* in accordance with the sonorous vibration in music, obtaining autonomy through itself. Klee expands these possibilities to the line, which gets force of expression in itself (many times with reference to music – see the “conductor’s baton”). The representatives of Orphism based their program exclusively on the relation to music, Mondrian expressed the fast pace of New York through the jerky rhythm of jazz music, Duchamp proved that using the content of colour tubes was the same as using them as objects (ready-made), both already manufactured (Osborne, 2010), which led to building sonorous objects, literally, for example in the object “With hidden sound”.

But to still remain within the “limits” of pictorial form, we must cast a last glance on the end point of the form purification process to which art was more and more oriented, through the attempt to completely eliminate the suggestion of three-dimensionality in Mondrian’s painting, and even more so, through the way in which Malevich gave up the representation of objects to record the sensitivity released by any allusion to the visible world, in his “Black square on a white background”.

There are no strictly flat bi-dimensional images, despite Malevich's or Mondrian's best efforts: the distinction between the objects and the empty space around them still remains; the limit (in the sense of dismissing the form) was not overcome. On the contrary, the sensation of spatiality is created: the geometric figurations give structure to space beyond the limits of the painting (in Malevich's work) or they float through an indeterminate space (in Mondrian's art), announcing the painting's exit from the bi-dimensional and its crossing over to the "real" space.

### 3. Overcoming the limit: The postulated limit and the contested limit

Joining forces with the senses of hearing, smell and taste, the artist's eye expanded to becoming a question mark regarding the origin and foundation of art, and took the next step forward, losing some of its concreteness and figureness, instead gaining some *reality*, in the laboratory of matter and in the time of protohistory.

The will to delineate, as a possibility for forms and their specificity to appear, is no longer a necessity; now, the eye placed on the "surface" of things, on the phenomenon, is in "pre-transition", touching the layer of primordial elements – especially the *liquid* element – in their non-determination and in the abstract potential of infinite germination, before effectively passing into the reality of the physical space.

The process of legitimizing the various approaches in painting continues after the Second World War, through the postulation of the full and unencumbered freedom of "choice" (Mercioiu, 2013) as an act that depends solely on the artist's intention towards the materials used and the methods employed in their manipulation – idea already professed by Duchamp.

Subsequently transferred into New York's buzzing atmosphere, this freedom becomes apparent in painting through a succession of "manifesto gestures" that seem to target only the boundaries to which one can push the relation between painting and the limits of "its specific character" – flatness, according to Greenberg's theories (Mercioiu, 2013). Paradoxically, the postulation of these limits also led to a separation from these in certain cases. On the one hand, the conservation of painting's specificity is predicated; on the other hand, the liberties taken at this time, such as discarding the key tools for painting, such as the brush and the palette, pave the way for fusion/dispersion of things.

The colour becomes a fluid/amorphous/vibrant substance which is the main reason for its placement inside the painting, through variable procedures which are valuable in themselves (as impulses that express, whether in a conscious or an unconscious manner, some moods). In the case of Abstract Expressionism, these procedures are the ones in which colour is laid, layered, dripped, let flow, trickle, etc. What happens on the canvas is no longer an image, but rather the consequence of an action, of a gesture through which artists work together with the accidental.

These practices have often been associated with Formalism (a Russian theoretical school of the 1915s – 1930s), the belief of which was that the *form gives the content*, but which was also attributed the idea of *form devoid of content*. However, irrespective of how these artists chose to express themselves, they experimented with their ideas through the way in which they chose to produce the object; the line of thought was formed with the acquisition of a practice, thus the object was a participant in the dialectics.

Minimalism seems to eliminate everything: painting with no subject, no forms, no movement, and no subjectivity. Only colour/matter reduced to essential structures – line, point, square, rectangle, all of them firmly articulated. Matte or shiny surfaces produce different vibrations, providing the painting with its own lighting system.

Frank Stella uses other forms for the canvas – circular or polygonal, which, together with the disposition of the colour bands, give the suggestion of three-dimensionality that eventually has a concrete spatial deployment, although the artist still calls them paintings. So, the painting surpassed the limits of the bidimensional support, by eliminating the distinction between bi-dimensional and spatial, blending the attributes of genres and illustrating the reaction to Greenberg's theories.

At the same time, in Europe, the same transition from painting to the raw physical reality is taking place! Cancelling the distinction between what is and what is no longer art/form, leads to a prolongation/incorporation of the actual reality in art, as in Dubuffet's *Texturologies* series, in which the artist wants to display the raw presence of matter, of the soil, borrowing work techniques from bricklayers in order to texture the newly-plastered walls which could evoke all sorts of indeterminate textures, but also galaxies or nebulae, depending on the viewer's interpretation capabilities.

Laying aside any kind of cultural and intellectual pretensions, he opts for an art that is spontaneous, raw, torn as materiality from the real/physical context. Now animated, matter itself lives more purely, yet again, in the world of idea and sentiment. The difference between what is and what is not art is rendered by the "result of an intention" (Eco, 2002).

Fontana punches holes in his canvases, so that the eye can literally see through them and go into the physical/spatial reality beyond them. For him, the "spatial era" must find a correspondent in "spatial art" (Little, 2005).

Pierre Soulages animates matter through the "immaterial", while giving colour to non-colour – to the amorphous matter of the black, which still remains, physically speaking, the most sensitive to light. Thus, he paints with light, reducing the artistic gesture to the concrete physical reaction.

With Ives Kline, the painting materializes through the manipulation of elements of nature, turning into a substance that can be applied with the help of "living brushes". The artist becomes a conductor/choreographer of the other's involvement (co-participants, public, etc.), eventually transforming it into a liquid substance that can be literally consumed in the empty space of an art gallery.

Now art can be created collectively, it can be experimented through all the possibilities of the body, both as a manifestation and as a reception, it is, as Georges Maciunas defines it, "the state of flux in which all arts melt together" (Fride-Carrassat & Marcade, 2007). Or better yet, we witness the appearance of a new art, non-art: the non-production of paintings and objects, anti-music, anti-poetry in favour of actual fragments of reality, life as raw matter. Art=Life (existence).

In my opinion, the last attempt to go beyond the limit in reference to painting belongs to the *Support-Surface* group, which, towards the end of the 70s, brings into discussion the systematic elimination of all subjective practices, taking as reference the canvas and the frame (separately) to reflect on the conventions of the painting, on its materiality, deconstructing it and dispersing it into space, until reaching the *allusion* to traditional pictorial means and of the support itself. Through these approaches to what we might call "reminiscences of painting", they make reference to the practice behind the painting: the subject will remain evacuated and therefore the "painting" remains neutral.

This direction seems to be the last in an evolutionary chain of the issue of painting vs. the work surface, when the "canvas" is still taken as reference (be it only in a conceptual sense). The constituent materials and the technical processuality behind the paintings are also getting closer to an end point: pushing the borders towards new territories has got to the point of their dispersion.

Pop Art (starting with 1965) brought forms belonging to mass culture (comics, advertisements, etc.) into art, through the new artistic practices that had already been prefigured. Thus, artists created serigraphic transpositions, combine-paintings and collages, and the process of integrating life into art, of owning the “real”, was realized together with the New Realism, taking the shape of the compressed cars in the case of César or of leftovers abandoned on a table in the case of Spoerry (Gombrich, 2007).

The ‘70s were also marked by what we could call “reportages” of urban everyday life, a sort of painting based on pictorial transpositions of photographic projections, images with reference to cinematographic framing or propaganda posters, usually in matte acrylic colours. *Narrative figuration* (1964-1965, France), *Hyperrealism* (1965, The U.S.), *the New Subjectivity* (towards the end of the ‘60s, in England, France and the U.S.) did not alleviate the need to return to painting.

The processuality of the evolution of forms that used to be “internal”, which had continued in a sort of inertia up to the *dispersion* of the painting through Support-Surface, beyond the threshold considered the pre(-)figuration of Postmodernism – Pop Art, would enter under the influence of what would be felt as an “outside threat” from social forces such as “the power” as a factor of molding individual and cultural identities through the economic and social forces exercised. The undermining of social values hierarchies and cultural meanings, the refusal to develop concrete theories on social progress (proven illusory), would lead to a permanent sensation of insecurity, a lack of landmarks and of perspectives.

#### 4. The journey between limits

In regard to painting, due to its total destructuring, its rebirth became possible, but only in a retroactive sense (in the sense of “starting over from the beginning”) in which the focus is not on crossing the limits but on the journey between certain limits understood as a series of meanings, without a definition of what is certain (Perry & Wood, 2004).

In the late ‘70s, international trans-avant-gardes: The new Fauves / German Neo-Expressionists (Germany), the Italian Transavantguardia (Italy) and Bad Painting (the USA) brought the idea of returning to individual values, to affirming the painter’s individuality, where the main objective was to reconnect with primary instincts, amending the good taste and intellectualism. The main themes in this period were: violence in big cities, the stigma of recent history, consciousness, homosexuality, as well as mythological, religious, narrative and metaphorical representations.

Stylistically speaking, artists were oriented to expressionist gestures, the brush was used brutally through pulp painting and visible brush strokes; figures are fragmented, fractured. Many times, the colours are also raw, applied directly from the tube, vivid and aggressive, *fauves*.

Although contemporary art generally does not adhere to the disciplines and the values of progress, it represents the survival of archaisms that could not be eliminated by progress.

At the same time, it is noted that Anselm Kiefer’s art for instance managed to have such public success not only by returning to culture, history and literature, but by assimilating the avant-garde “lesson” as well, by widening its range of manifestation, by using photos and manufacturing books, besides the conceptual practices.

If the ‘70s illustrated the age of “-isms”, the ‘80s saw the development of “neo-“ styles (Neo-Mannerism, Neo-Fauvism, Neo-Expressionism, etc.). Millet (2017: 53) explains that “If this new painting made reference to the past, then it revisited especially those modern current which had been neglected, set away from the dominant axis. Thus, German painters stated that they were descendants of the expressionism from the beginning of the century, while the Italians in

Transavantgarde followed the example set by De Chirico and Novocento art, of mixing tradition and modernity in an ambiguous manner. Moreover, it was quickly noticed that this *return to painting* did not prevent the appearance of other tendencies, such as Simulationism, which refused to set avant-gardes aside and retied the links between minimalism and conceptual art or continued to explore the resources of the ready-made object”.

In the ‘90s, the phenomenon that was Young British Artist practically described the state of affairs of art in that particular context when even the idea of a group or a program seemed to lose contour. Gathered, promoted and authenticated by the will of a single person (by collecting their works, so according to commercial factors more than anything else), beyond the stylistic features and the media used (extremely varied), they were characterized by an ironic attitude, detachment and the will to succeed and to attract attention through any means necessary. Although the artists were influenced by conceptualism, painting remained one of their preoccupations, together with ready-made objects and images taken from media and advertising.

All possible subjects were depicted in painting, in all their forms, in all media and with all known or innovative techniques. The artists used the figurative (Saville, Hume), the geometric (Hume) or both combined (Hume); minimalism, geometric and gestural abstraction, successively or at the same time (Davenport); the abstract and/or hyperrealism (Patterson, Brown); lyrical abstraction was combined with the decorative (Rae); lettrism with the optical (Davies); Pop Art influences, Expressionist influences, Superrealist influences, kitsch, etc. were recontextualized. Oils, acrylic paints, industrial varnishes were used on all types of formats (Fride-Carrassat & Marcade, 2007).

The formal possibilities of contemporary art “grow as fast as Fibonacci’s sequence” (Millet, 2006). If the most radical Modernists considered that the newly-invented forms and techniques made the traditional ones become old-fashioned, this is no longer the case: new technologies can stay next to marble sculptures, video installations next to figurative or abstract paintings.

This “fluidity” of means of expression, facilitated by the process of limit dispersion which made any stylistic *fusion* and any media possible, illustrates on a deeper level what is happening in society generally. Zygmunt Bauman believes that the concept of “liquid modernity” or “liquid society”, which starts to gain shape together with Postmodernism, marking “the end of the great narratives” that aimed to attach a model of order to the world, brings with it the “crisis of the state” as freedom of autonomous national decision as opposed to the power of supra-national entities (Bauman, 1999). Together with the crisis of the state, there comes another crisis: that of ideologies – the impossibility to appeal to that community of values that takes the individuals’ necessities into account and allows them to feel part of a whole, of a community. Erasing all limits equals losing all anchor points.

##### 5. Experimenting with the limit – “trial”, “test”

Up to this moment, we have witnessed the ever-greater degrees of freedom that forms of expression have had over the course of time in relation to what could be based on a “limit” – what was to be amended, detoured or abolished, going so far as to lose trust in even the possibility for evolution/finding a solution/orientation (absolute fluidity), because once amended, even the intention to find a solution met a crisis, by “transforming utopian criticism in the criticism of utopia”, utilizing the words of de Duve (2003: 326).

When we look at a larger cultural and social context, we find much wider *symptoms* of what was mentioned above. Umberto Eco observed that “together with the crisis of the concept of community, an unstoppable individualism appears, in which nobody is anybody’s travel companion” (2016: 7). Although *fluidization* (globalization) gave birth to a hybrid culture, it will

create a rather homogenous world which, paradoxically, divides more than unites, creates separations instead of offering openings, eventually leading to progressive spatial segregation, separation, and exclusion. One often mentioned example from the art world is that in all art museums everywhere on the globe there are the same types of works belonging to the same artists, despite the desire to overcome social and geographic boundaries.

Nevertheless, one must not forget the historical conditions that determined the appearance of *fluidity* at a social level, imposed by the need to counter the rigidity of totalitarian ideological schemes which were meant to impose an ideal human and social model on reality; those schemes did not prove to be a success.

Thus, the question of de Duve “Can artistic activity maintain its critical function if separated from the object of emancipation?” (2003: 327) is still asked – situating contemporary art into what one might call “a blockage”, “going around in circles” or “position between limits”, and this is paradoxically happening at a time which boasts “the elimination of limits”, as, from a philosophical point of view, freedom cannot be experienced in the absence of limits/anchor points, which in fact equates with the loss of freedom, which is subject to recurrent “trials”, “tests”, even “suspension”.

Pushed by the desire to transcribe the world as it is, with its inhabitants and their instincts, Millet consider that modern art is “tended towards the dissolution of its own specificity in order to better blend with the world” (2006: 80), for the purpose of revealing certain truths about it. Yet, a very simple rule of man’s capacity to perceive things says that people cannot really observe a problem when they are involved in it, so without distancing themselves from it to a certain degree. It is also what Catherine Millet remarked, saying that when the rule of breaking the boundaries between art and life is applied *ad litteram*, the limits of art become the rational, moral and political limits set by society. In her own words: “Caught in the world’s reality, the artwork bounces against the limits this imposes on it” (2006: 99).

To keep the freedom gained in the modern era, without necessarily going back to its principles, art would need to take a minimal distance from it, by assuming a symbolic function in relation to it, instead of “melting into it”. One of the functions of contemporary art is to discover and move that core of humanity that religion no longer takes care of and which science cannot take into consideration (Millet, 2006).

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## Artistic Responses to Gender-based Violence

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### *Abstract*

This article will present the findings of an ongoing project linked to the intersection of art, public space and social justice issues. The goal of this paper is to evaluate the teaching project by assessing the creative process of a group of 52 first year fine art students at the University of Cape Town. This paper will review the choices the students made when challenged to develop responses in the form of textual, visual and temporary public interventions to the subject of gender-based violence. The project has been running for 7 years, but this paper will primarily focus on one assignment linked to the topic of gender based violence in 2018.

*Keywords:* humanities, art, socially responsive projects, gender-based violence, public art.

### 1. Introduction

The article will review the creative process of a group of 52 first year fine art students at the University of Cape Town. This paper will examine the choices the students made when challenged to develop responses to the topic of gender-based violence in the form of textual, visual and temporary public artistic interventions. The primary focus of this text will be the written work submitted by the students, although reference will be made to the overall collaborative art project.

The project was initially developed by Lucina Reddy, Sianne Alves and Fabian Saptouw as part of a strategy to create intersections between social justice issues and the fine art curriculum in 2012. The goal was to develop a project that enabled students to tackle socially relevant issues in a way that is meaningful for them on an academic and a personal level. The link between the concepts taught in the classroom and the increase in students' capacity to engage complex topics was important to the teaching team. The project has been running for seven consecutive years and featured in conferences, journal articles and the UCT paper<sup>1</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> The last article is accessible at <https://www.news.uct.ac.za/article/-2018-10-22-spotlight-on-gender-based-violence>.

As the years progressed various changes were made to the structure of the project and the contributions made by the students. One of the changes is the submissions that form the primary focus of this paper. The data analysed in this paper are the individual responses to a specific assignment related to gender-based violence.

- Socially responsive art projects encourage students to creatively engage complex social justice issues.
- Students are encouraged to engage in self-reflexive practices and discuss their conclusions with their peers and lecturers.
- Allowing students a space to articulate their perception of the topic and challenging them to analyze those perceptions are crucial to the learning process.
- The project grants students the opportunity to apply lessons from the class room in their written submissions.

This paper will provide information about the assignment, the evaluation process and the project's value as a teaching tool. A detailed discussion of the actual content of the student submissions will be detailed in the discussion section, as well as an indication of the overall results of the process. Through these points an argument will be made regarding the value of the project and what we can glean from student submissions.

One of the primary goals in this paper is to emphasize the value of students engaging the topics by virtue of the rationale they are presenting for their submissions. This positions students as active participants in the learning process, and enables them to express individual views as well as work collaboratively with their peers. This dual process is presented as a strength embedded in this teaching model for the intersection of art and social responsiveness.

## 2. Method

The project was assigned to a group of first year students in the BA Fine Art degree at the Michaelis School of Fine Art, University of Cape Town. There were 59 students in the class, and 52 students submitted the assignment. The reasons 7 students did not submit assignment included deregistering from the course, applying for a leave of absence and not meeting the deadline.

The assignment forms part of the coursework for Fine Art Foundation Course (Fin1005W). This compulsory course is only open to students registered for the BA(FA) and emphasizes critical thinking and visual literacy. The course provides training to facilitate the students capacity enter the realm of cultural production. A wide range of issues in relation to representation and display is tackled throughout the year. The course is taught over 24 weeks and includes lectures, readings, tutorials written assignments and gallery visits. The combination of these five elements provide students with a broad understanding of contemporary art, and grant them the opportunity to gain more knowledge about artistic practices in the South African context. Students submit multiple assignments which challenge them to examine the links between the lecture content and readings discussed in tutorials. The assignments counts for 70% of the final mark and a written exam counts for 30% of the mark.

This particular project is part of a set of three assignments linked to the topic of gender-based violence.

Each part of the assignment focuses on slightly different areas and is linked to the development of different core competencies. Listed below are the three assignments presented to the students.

**Foundation Course - Week 13**  
**Michaelis - OIC Collaborative Art project**  
**HIV/AIDS and Gender-based Violence Project**

Readings:

Bennett and Banyard (2016). Do friends really help friends? The effect of relational factors and perceived severity on bystander perception of sexual violence.

World Health Organization (2013). *16 Ideas for addressing violence against women in the context of the HIV epidemic: A programming tool.*

Jewkes et al. (2007). *Evaluation of Stepping Stones: A gender transformative HIV prevention intervention.* Retrieved 16 August 2016, from [www.mrc.ac.za/policybriefs/steppingstones.pdf](http://www.mrc.ac.za/policybriefs/steppingstones.pdf).

**Week 13 - PROJECT 1**

Working in groups make a proposal for two possible installation/interventions on UCT upper campus (or off campus if more appropriate for your concept) in response to the ideas discussed in the lecture and readings. EACH project must include either a public intervention or a performative element that requires viewer participation. This general group project description should be copied and pasted into all group members' red books. Research one of the following artworks and adapt it to make it relevant for a contemporary South African audience:

- LiseBjørneLinnert, *Desconocida*, Unknown, (2006 - ONGOING)
- Linda Stupart, *WANTED* (1999-2008), (2008)
- ThulileGamedze, *On Cat-Calling in Cape Town* (2013)
- Elsie Chiwa, *Comfort Doll* (2017)
- Amnesty International Sweden Campaign, *Rose Petals* (2009)
- Yoko Inoue, *Untitled* (2007)
- Kiki Smith, *Rapture* (2002)
- Yoko Ono, *Cut Piece* (1964-5)
- Belinda Blynnaut - *8345223Jhb Biennale* (1995)
- Kara Walker – *The Battle of Atlanta... The End of Uncle Tom* (1995)
- Clitoria, *Claimyourspace* (2017)

Keep the following points in mind when planning your intervention.

- Each group will be assigned one specific material for their project via lucky draw
- Any additional materials will have to be purchased by individual group members
- The aims of Office for Inclusivity and Change (**OIC**) - The OIC provides institutional responses to transformation, sexual and gender-based violence, disability and cultural change. Some of the operational areas of the office include facilitating cultural shifts (staff–student engagement or staff–staff engagement), disability support services, prevention programmes, education, sexual assault, harassment and discrimination.
- How the artwork relates to the UCT community.
- How the differences between your installation and the original artwork changes the meaning/value of the work.
- You are responsible for providing high quality photographic images of each project. Appoint a specific group member to take responsibility for this part of the project and We transfer ALL your images to Fabian.
- Please note that a photographer will be assigned to document the project, but we appreciate the class providing additional images when possible.

You **must** use the following template for your project descriptions:

<b>Michaelis School of Fine Art and OIC Collaborative Art project FIN1005W – Foundation Course &amp; FIN1008W Foundations Of Visual Literacy</b>	
<b>Original Art work:</b>	
<b>Group members:</b>	
<b>Group contact person- Cell &amp; email</b>	
<b>Concept 1:</b>	
<b>Concept 2:</b>	
<b>Project Materials:</b>	
<b>Additional Group Materials:</b>	
<b>Any specific exhibition requirements:</b>	

(1) Each group **must** email Fabian ([f.saptouw@uct.ac.za](mailto:f.saptouw@uct.ac.za)) and Sianne Alves ([sianne.alves@uct.ac.za](mailto:sianne.alves@uct.ac.za)) your proposals by **MONDAY 31 JULY by 12:00. Please arrange amongst yourselves who will take responsibility for this task.** We encourage everyone to consider that is a collaborative process and be open to discussing alternative methods to manifest the ideas you are proposing. Quite often the first proposal is very didactic and confrontation and changes need to be made after the proposal. We need to have your projects approved by UCT’s Properties and Services before we can install them on Upper campus.

(2) Do a personal analysis of your group project. Argue for the link between the projects and the above stated requirements.

**Please note:**

The class has been divided into 8 groups. Your group will not be your mentor groups anymore

Use your tutorial to discuss the artwork you intend to re-invent and the site you will be installing in, as well logistics relating to your project.

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**Foundation Course - Week 13**  
**Michaelis- OIC Collaborative Art project**  
**HIV/AIDS and Gender-based Violence Project**

**Week 13 - PROJECT 2**

<p>(3) Select <b>one object and one image</b> that you feel represents gender-based violence. Scan or photograph the objects at a high resolution (minimum 300Dpi - A4 size). Ideally we need to be able to print these images as an A3 or larger. <b>Remember to include a brief motivation for your choices. A box will be placed in the lecture theatre and outside Fabian's office (Room 3.07, top floor, Old Medical School Building) closer to the deadline for you to donate your object, please ensure that you label your object with an identification tag.</b></p> <p>When you make your selection, please ensure that you do not choose an image closely associated with any existing awareness campaigns. Try to avoid explicit or graphic images that merely illustrate the issue or reinforce existing stereotypes and problematic representations of gender. Try to select images that relate to your perspective on the issue and its prevalence in the contemporary moment.</p> <p>(50-150 words)</p> <p><i>Please note that the objects may not be returned to you depending on wear/tear and exhibition presentation. If its an object that has a high level of personal value consider submitting a substitute.</i></p>
<p><i>Answer <b>one object</b>:</i></p>
<p><i>Answer – Motivation:</i></p>
<p><i>Answer <b>one image</b>:</i></p>
<p><i>Answer – Motivation:</i></p>
<p>(4) Select a colour that you feel represents your relationship to gender based violence. Ensure that you provide the name, a colour sample and a brief motivation for your choice.</p> <p>(50 words)</p>
<p><i>Answer - Colour sample:</i></p>

**DEADLINE – Monday 6 August**

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The three outcomes of this assignment are the following submissions:

- *Project 1 – Part A* – A temporary public intervention produced in collaboration with their peers.
- *Project 1 – Part B* - A personal reflection of the group work project allowing each student to voice their opinions about the nature of public art and social responsiveness.
- *Project 2* - Students select a colour, an object and an image that represents gender-based violence and draft a text that provides a motivation for their selection.

These responses to the brief are submitted after an extended process of engagement with the staff members teaching the project. The first step in this process is a lecture that sensitizes students to gender-based violence and how it is represented in the popular media, academic texts and artistic production. During the lecture various examples of awareness campaigns are discussed as well as a critique of the manner these campaigns communicate with the audience.

One of the primary issues emphasised during the lecture is the fact that didactic poster-driven campaigns often alienate the viewer and close down opportunities for discussion instead of creating safe spaces for engagement. Creating a platform for public engagement through art is the primary motivation for retaining this project as part of the fine art curriculum since 2012. It is a vital part of the curriculum that challenges students to think about the role that art can play in public discourse. This alerts students to the value of producing art for consumption outside of the traditional gallery space, and develops their capacity to create communicative gestures that engage socially relevant issues.

Specific art-historical references are discussed that engage the issue and allow the audience a space of empathy and participation. This strategy creates avenues for exploring these issues through communication and understanding and not by reinforcing binary dynamics related to problematic stereotypes and misrepresentations.

Listed below are the deadlines linked to the development of this project:

**Project 1 - Deadlines**

First proposals VIA EMAIL: **Monday - 30 July by 12:00**

– f.saptouw@uct.ac.za and sianne.alves@uct.ac.za

Feedback sessions: **Wednesday - 1 August by 12:00-14:00**

– More details to follow (Check VULA and First year notice board)

Finalized proposals: **Wednesday - 22 August by 13:00**

– f.saptouw@uct.ac.za and sianne.alves@uct.ac.za

**MATERIAL HANDOVER - Wednesday - 5 September in Foundation**

**Lecture**

Installation week: **Week of 18-22 September – Wednesday 19 September -**

**Installation event**

Final Write up (Red Book work) **Monday - 1 October**

**Project 2 - Deadline – Monday 6 August by 12:00**

Based on the deadlines listed above it should be clear that students have the opportunity to consult their lecturers and tutors for a 6-7 week period to develop the public intervention for Project 1. The materials assigned to the project groups included toothpicks, paper plates, wax wrap, cling film, sticky notes, A4 paper and clear tape. These mundane items were selected because they could be easily found in many homes and have very clear functions to fulfill in a domestic space. Another motivation was to shift the students' attention away from traditional art mediums and encourage them to be aware of the material possibilities that surround them during their everyday routines.

The submission of Project 2, the main focus of this paper, is a week after their first proposals and feedback sessions take place. During these sessions each group engages in conversations with their lecturers to review their project proposals. This provides students with ample time to revise the initial proposal to accommodate any critique received from the teaching staff. These conversations, related to the intersection of art, public space and gender-based violence are also intended to make students more aware of the value of socially responsive art. Based on these elements students should have the relevant knowledge base and confidence in their own capacity to provide more individual responses to the issues as outlined in Assignments Project 1 – Part B (self-reflexive evaluation) and Project 2 – Colour, object and image analysis.

Students submit the assignments in hard copy and online using VULA. This web portal is used for the dissemination of all course related information like assignments, course outlines, readings, lectures and course evaluations. It is also used to communicate with the entire class by sending announcements directly to their official UCT student email address. Each course has its

own VULA site and is accessible to all the students, administrators, lecturers and tutors involved in the course.

It is important to note that all three assignments are evaluated by the tutors and the course convenor as part of an academic course at the institution, and that the marks are presented to an external examiner at the end of each academic year. The marks for these assignments count proportionally more than the other individual course assignments submitted by the students during the rest of the year.

### 3. Results

Students have to consider the capacity of artistic practice to provide an access point for viewer engagement with the topic of gender-based violence. This is done with all three submissions, but each requires slightly different strategies of articulation. In the context of this particular assignment the following three primary themes have become apparent during the review process.

The first is the notion of the body as the primary site for discourse related to gender-based violence. There was a very clear articulation of how disempowering certain social narratives are regarding the body. Ideas related to authority, power and claiming a position on how one is perceived was an important sub-theme in the submissions. This was both in relation to the body as a potential site of trauma and the body as a vehicle through which we can process that trauma and experience a healing process.

The second point was an engagement with the notion of home, as a constructed space linked to myriad cultural narratives. Many of these narratives featured a critique of the power dynamics within domestic spaces, as well as an interrogation of the images published in the popular media. Students reflected on their own development up to this point in their lives as a crucial marker for how they were encouraged to accept socially constructed ideas. Depending on the individual's background, this was also a fertile space for interrogating previously held assumptions and beliefs.

The last theme was the importance of the context and perspective we, as viewers and participants, bring to a situation, especially when it requires individualised responses. Overall, the class was very sensitive to the ambiguity of certain objects, images and statements that could be used both to heal and to harm. The submissions reflected a keen awareness of their own subjectivity, but also a concerted effort to critique the social bias that is evident in heteronormative ideas regarding gender, violence and identity.

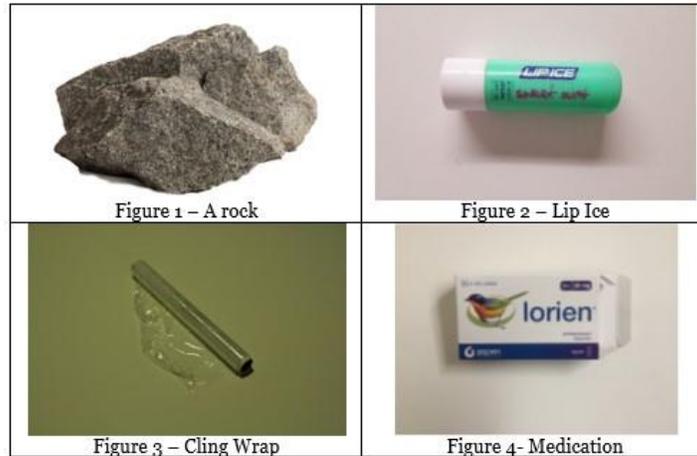
The overall goal of the project was not to identify how this group of students define gender-based violence through objects and colours, but to gain a clearer understanding of the students' ability to synthesise complex data presented in the classroom and use it as a foundation for articulating their own ideas. In this project we see evidence that the students have the capacity to engage extremely difficult subject matter by using the aforementioned items as intermediaries to represent their analytical process. Through this process the students shifted from being passive consumers of information in the classroom and became active participants in the learning process. This shift is crucial in allowing the students to actively engage the learning process and gain a clearer understanding of the subject matter through that critical engagement.

Not only were the participants able to negotiate the complex social issues but they presented the ability to empathise with the pain of others. In a few cases the assignment was a trigger for specific individual experiences; attempting to accommodate this by the way the questions are phrased is something that will be included in future manifestations of the project. Finding ways to engage such a deeply personal trauma was challenging to these students, but the

responses indicated an extremely high level of self-awareness and careful consideration of how to engage that trauma in the context of an assignment at a tertiary academic institution.

#### 4. Discussion

##### 4.1 Discussion - Object selection



The majority of the class, 60%, elected to work with items that were related to the human body. These items could be worn, applied, ingested or used for a predetermined function. 25% of these body-related objects were specifically designed for the female body with student selections made in the areas of hygiene, beauty and medicine. These items included: sanitary pads, cosmetic products, razors, oral contraceptives and deodorant. There were also body-related items which could be used by both male and females; like Lip Ice, belts, gloves and aprons. These objects transformed or augmented the body – by masking it, protecting it, covering blemishes or removing unwanted items from it. Often these transformations were required to complete a task, prepare for an event, or conform to socially reinforced ideals of beauty.

12% of these objects were domestic items like porcelain plates, pegs, batteries, tea bags and gloves - these objects were broadly linked to the notion of 'home' by the students. The motivation behind the object choices presented a very gendered interpretation of the domestic space and were often linked to positive and negative childhood experiences. The text accompanying the selection of these objects indicated a turning point in the candidate's perception of the past events and a re-evaluation of previously held beliefs.

12% of the class submitted items that were broken or damaged. These examples ranged from a cup that was damaged by accident, a toy that was discarded by a child to a glass that was smashed intentionally by an angry parent. In all cases there was an issue around the value of the items being subject to the passage of time, and in rare cases - malicious intent. When one considers these as a group of linked gestures, you could postulate that this particular selection of objects are a representation of the vulnerability of the body, especially given the poignant manner in which the students articulated their concerns.

12% of the objects were linked to the category of access or protection; these included locks, keys, nets and other barriers that restrict entry into an area. In the narration of their concerns the students expressed an awareness of how an item like a lock can be used to keep an area secure, to lock your valuables away or to imprison someone. This awareness of the ambiguity of these objects was an interesting set of observations. This interpretive position was also extended to items that we may be more comfortable with – like cling wrap, a broom, masks and even paper

planes. In each of these cases the students were able to draw out specific associations that made the objects an important symbol in their personal narrative.

On a personal level, I found these narratives particularly effective when the candidates reflected on both the predetermined functional value of the object as well as their personal associations. The ability to support the dual reading of the object in such a short text was very impressive. Quite a few students discussed how their own understanding of the world and the construction of gendered boundaries have affected their choices in life. There were 6% of submissions that explicitly stated this as a self-analysis, but in actuality it is embedded in virtually all the projects submitted by the class.

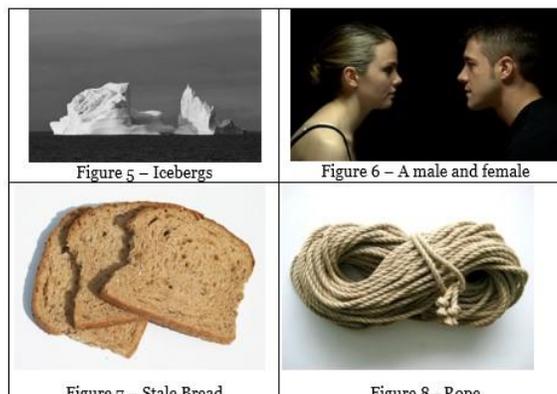
Only 15% of the objects were directly linked to violence; examples included physical abuse, intimate partner violence, female genital mutilation and child abuse. 8% of submissions related to the abuse of alcohol and drugs, which echoed some of the problematic visual language of the awareness campaigns mentioned earlier. These explicit examples are an indication that some members of the class felt strongly that explicit images and objects remain central in conveying the message. This selection was slightly problematic given the time invested in prompting the students to develop a broader understanding of the topic and how to visualize this information.

One submission that was very memorable was bubble wrap crafted from sanitary pads, in this instance the student crafted an item that clearly embodied the intention of the project. The object is not only linked to the function of the bubble wrap as a protective barrier in the real world, but also links it to the complex issue of representation of the gendered body. By merging the issue of protection, value and menstruation the student created a point of discussion that was a very effective way to claim a public space for an often ignored issue.

There was also one candidate who approached their cousins with a request to contribute toys as part of their submission for the project. The tenderness of the moment of approaching someone much younger to discuss such a difficult topic stood out as a very valuable humane moment of consideration. These kinds of encounters echo the primary reason for originally developing the project, because there is great importance attached to the attempt to create spaces of dialogue around complex social issues.

In this case more than the ensuing two sections the students were focusing on their personal associations with the objects and trying to narrate the way these mundane items that surround us have been transformed by virtue of the knowledge they have gained through this project. In this case ubiquitous items like a wooden peg, a Bic lighter and yellow rubber gloves are imbued with significance far beyond their material value, and starts to metaphorically link with issues of power, politics, gender and identity.

#### 4.2 Discussion – Image selection



50% of the class submitted images that included people and the rest elected to focus on objects or environments. What is clear is that the students generally link the topic of gender-based violence to the human body – present physically, presented as evidence of trauma or implied by traces in the landscape. There was a split in the submissions between students trying to provide evidence of the issues and being aware of the ability of the image to transcend that immediate set of references.

27% of the class selected images that were either linked to awareness campaigns or confronted the viewer with examples or traces of gender-based violence. These included bruised bodies, injuries and images that represented child abuse. These submissions relied on established symbols and associations that were already circulating in the popular imagination. The one example that was included in this grouping but moved beyond it, was an information graphic advocating the use of colour correcting make-up. This was paired with a design similar to a lifestyle magazine and indicated how to choose your cosmetic colours based on the bruising you wish to conceal and how the colour combinations needed to change based on the time since the initial injury.

17% were images taken in a domestic space, 25% were not in a built environment and the rest of the images did not provide enough contextual information to clearly situate it. Based on the comments provided by the students, there seems to be the sentiment that this could happen in nearly any environment.

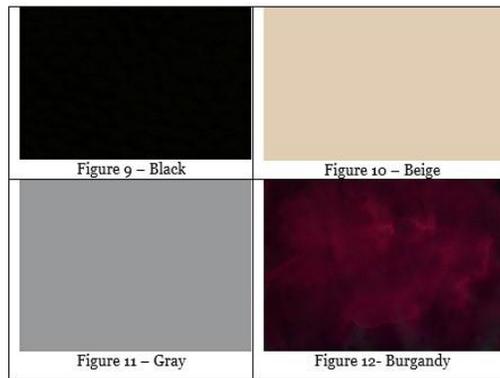
There was a group of students who elected to focus on artists and artworks as their chosen image. The artists selected for this portion of the project were quite fascinating because they work in very different media and subject matter. The list of artists included Man Ray, Pablo Picasso, Jenny Saville, Luxloop, John Everett Millais, Edvard Munch, Christina Migliorini, Pippa Moolman and Heitor Magno. Out of the 25% of artworks submitted in the image category only 6% were produced by female artists. It is interesting to note that the students did not select any of the artists that were discussed in the lectures or readings, but instead sought their own set of references.

The choice of artworks as their image, particularly the Picasso or the Munch, has a clear art-historical sense of value. The inclusion of artworks that have become canonical in various art history courses within this grouping is a creative way to reinvent the link between the canon and the subtle messages embedded in these artworks.

Only 5 % of the class selected images that utilised abstraction as a primary visual language. This was regarded as a missed opportunity given the breadth of associations with abstract art as an established trajectory in artistic production. Given the nuance of the answers presented in the colour assignment in the next section, I anticipated more reference to the symbolism of colour and how that can act as an interpretive framework for experiencing the world. This was not something the students capitalized on in their responses to the project.

The majority of the responses related to the notion of gender-based violence on a somatic level. This shifted between a generalized account of the issues which attempted to be inclusive of all parties and more personal accounts narrating their motivation for selecting specific images. Overall, there was a concerted effort to generate empathetic responses to the topic and opening spaces of consideration for all parties involved.

### 4.3 Discussion – Colour selection



It is important to note that the evaluation of the colour choice project is complicated by the subjectivity linked to individual colour preferences as well as the contradictory cultural associations of specific colours. In addition it is important to note that the value of the answer is not based on the pre-defined meaning of these colours, but rather how the students were able to link colours to the topic of gender-based violence. The most popular colours were red (21%), black (13%) and purple (19%). The rest of the colours include orange, silver, teal, gray, green, pink, beige, brown, yellow and blue. 27% of the class chose primary colours, 44% secondary colours, 4% tertiary colours and the remaining students all selected white, black and gray.

The motivations for the selection of the colours were as important to the assessment exercise as the colours themselves. For example, the selection of red was often related to blood, passion, violence, injuries and other intense emotional experiences. The text that accompanied these selections linked to established representations in the popular media and existing literature. Based on that information the majority of the red submissions could be regarded as quite generic associations and possibly reflected too much of a reliance on pre-existing associations. Only a few of this group of submissions provided inventive links by presenting red as the colour of resistance, empowerment and in one case even linking it with The Total Shutdown: Intersectional Women's March Against Gender-Based Violence held in South Africa.

Motivation for the selection of black included the representation of the colour as a void, or darkness which could cloud human experiences after an incident of trauma. It is important to acknowledge that the majority of these associations were negative and often included words like horror, depression, oppression, trauma, hurt, pain, evil and death. These examples were quite literal in its framing of gender-based violence and the impact it had on survivors. In addition, the students also referred to the absence of light, and other colours as an indication of an emotive state.

The first set of associations for the colour purple was also unfortunately linked to the colour as evidence of domestic violence and injury. This selection was slightly problematic given the time invested in prompting the students to develop a broader understanding of the topic and how to visualize this information. This focus on bruises and the body could have been developed significantly further given the input provided. This was however a subsection of the motivation for students selecting purple as the colour representing the issue of gender-based violence.

A more nuanced motivation was provided by the students who regarded purple as important because of the fact that is a secondary colour created by mixing the primary colours blue and red. Or, as students often presented it - the pink and blue associated with heteronormative ascriptions of gendered identity during childhood. This choice indicates an awareness of the way biological sex, gender and sexuality are often conflated on a social level. In

addition it highlights the fact that both men and women are afflicted by the scourge of gender-based violence, a fact that is often not discussed openly in society.

An interesting phenomenon was the handful of students who didn't select colours primarily on their association with some kind of trauma, but rather through the evocation or the impressions of the colour. One candidate specifically selected a 'sickly teal' to represent the inability they felt in expressing their distaste at the way women are often treated by men in public spaces. In this case the student was not discussing the meaning of the colour, but rather connecting the colour with a visceral sensation in response to the issue.

Another student selected Shamrock green as a gender-neutral colour-space which was regarded to be more welcoming to non-binary gendered individuals. Light panzer was another choice that stood out due to the candidate's ability to argue for the occurrence of rust as an environmental hazard linked to the interaction of materials. The potential of rust occurring through the oxidization of metal was linked to the frequency of gender-based violence in the world.

There were also candidates who elected to engage their own experiences, and found ways to negotiate their past by selecting colours because of the way it framed their sense of self. These selections were extremely powerful as they not only spoke to the privacy of the experience but also about the immense difficulty of coming to terms with the trauma.

The majority of the class didn't rely on the established meanings often attributed to the range of colours selected. The submissions reflect an earnest attempt to develop individual definitions of the issue by careful examination of the interpretive link between the colour and its ascribed meaning. Developing this level of individual response to the issue of representation is a crucial component of their training as cultural producers in the contemporary moment.

## 5. Conclusion

Through these assignments we can see that students in this group have a clear understanding of gender-based violence. Their success in this regard should be celebrated due to the challenging nature of the creation of visual and linguistic responses to an issue of such magnitude. In each section there is evidence that the students engaged in careful deliberations of the complexity of the issue. Choosing a colour, an image and an object challenges each student to critically re-evaluate their associations and lived experiences to try and find an appropriate response to the prompt. The challenge not to duplicate the trauma or reinforce negative mainstream messaging requires that students have to find creative ways of approaching the issue of representation.

This is also the point at which we can see how the lessons in the class room translates into their ability to source information, commit to a specific symbolic gesture and draft a supporting document for their project. Overall, the students found inventive ways to refer to the experience of gender-based violence. Students who presented the most nuanced assignment were the candidates who have engaged the three topics in an inter-connected manner that allows for a more complex symbolic register to develop.

There is a marked difference in the range of associations drawn in this project, and the way the students worked with the materials in the temporary public artistic intervention. In the group work project there is much more collaboration, whereas in this project students are challenged to develop an individual response. There is great value in understanding these submissions as a database to gain a broader understanding of how students related to the subject matter. At a first year level this is one of the few situations in which students are engaging socially responsive art projects, and it is an import skill to develop in each cohort of new recruits. It is also

a useful project to keep monitoring in future to see how the students are making connections and developing interpretive frameworks to analyse complex social problems.

The value of the project is the fact that it is an effective way to measure student engagement and can be adapted to suit various topics or control groups. The core of the project is to challenge participants to develop responses linked to their primary research interest or field of expertise. Variations of this project can be easily developed to accommodate cognate disciplines or even be applied in a workshop format in its current formulation. The primary goal was to create spaces for the development of dialogues centred on complex subjects like the intersection of art, public space and social justice issues.

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