Although Pop Art hasn't really influenced my work in the studio so far, it has been a major influence to my work as a whole (based on work I have done previously), with the reason being that I've decided to branch out and look at other similar styles of art, such as Op Art, loud maximalist visuals (similar to the psychedelic art style, although the maximalist visuals have taken inspiration from the psychedelic art style/movement) and experimental brutalism (something that John Walter does in particular, although there are probably other artists who have done similar things), as well as developing my own style along the way.


During this module (Studio Practice 1), I have mainly looked at Hattie Stewart's work as well as exploring her practice as an artist and illustrator (in this case, focusing on her style and techniques), and incorporating some of those practices into my work. Having researched Stewart's work, I've realised that she usually draws on top of pre-existing media (usually on photographs and magazine covers) and creates a contrast between what was found and her response to that found piece of media, often adding bursts of colour to what would have otherwise been an ordinary photograph or magazine cover, therefore making it seem visually interesting and intriguing; this is often known as "doodle bombing", and plays a major role in Stewart's work as a whole.

The use of contrast is very distinct in Stewart's work, since this is essentially her response to found media, especially to that of magazine covers and celebrity photographs. Additionally, the bold colours in particular take inspiration from the psychedelic art movement (mainly that of the 1960's), whereas the use of fluid and irregular shapes and lines take inspiration from the Op Art movement, especially for this promotional poster of Pharrell for the Apple iTunes Music Festival in 2016 (pictured on the right). However, these techniques are distinct in the rest of Stewart's work, along with the use of the little characters that accompany a majority of her works, which makes the work also seem friendly in way. Moreover, this piece in particular also takes inspiration from the Hippie movement of the 1960's through the use of the flowers dotted throughout the piece itself; this also links to the "Flower Power" slogan that was also used within the same era, and this piece takes inspiration from that moment in time through the use of the (not so) subtle imagery placed throughout the piece. The use of this imagery all links to similar art movements from over 50 years ago, and they

actually *complement* each other, especially with this piece in particular through the use of the imagery contrasting the piece of found media to promote a music festival that was presumably similar to that of Woodstock.
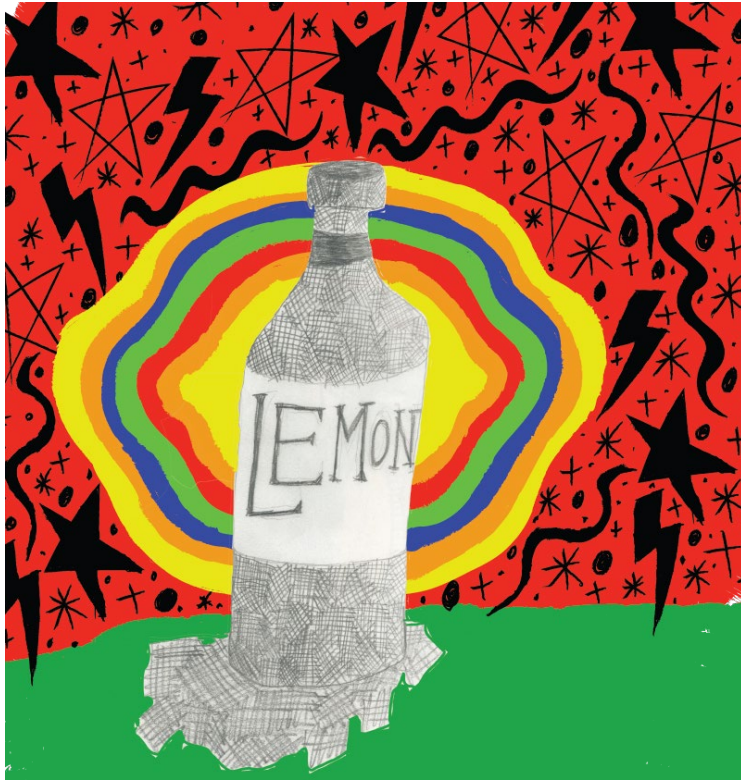
I've taken inspiration from Stewart's work through the use of colour and composition in particular, as well as adding my own twists and responses into the mix (such as creating bigger and more invasive background doodles to add that extra sense of maximalist and brutalist invasiveness). However, instead of drawing over found media with POSCA markers (this is essentially what Stewart did), I used my own drawings and drew over them digitally through using Adobe Illustrator, and the results were pretty similar, although I feel as though my responses to Stewart's work seemed more over the top maximalist and in-your-face than her actual work (which, to me, seems quiet toned down in order to appeal to a larger target audience). The reason behind this was that I wanted to actively create responses that seemed like overly exaggerated versions of the work based on the research that I've done and the artists that I've looked at, including their overall style of work, and essentially breaking it down into smaller pieces by focusing on a few aspects, such as the composition of a certain piece as well as the colour scheme that was used (although for this piece above, I've focused solely on the composition based off Stewart's *Print All Over Me* collaborative piece) in order to create a valid response that can be distinguished to the fact that I've looked at certain pieces for inspiration and have used some aspects of those pieces of work to create my own response to the work itself.

Similarly, this piece takes inspiration from the promotional poster (featuring Pharrell) for the Apple iTunes Music Festival, and although it doesn't necessarily look similar to it all, I've taken some aspects of the poster (such as the starry night sky, the use of the borders surrounding the main object from the piece of found media, the use of the swirls that weave around the main object itself as well as the

sneaky incorporation of a character) to create my own response based on the piece that I've looked at. Again, the original piece that I've looked at doesn't seem jarring at all, compared to the outcome that

I've produced, which has a brutalist and maximalist in-your-face look and feel to it. However, I believe that these outcomes were effective since I've managed to research an artist thoroughly and have therefore created some effective responses based on their work, using certain aspects of the pieces that I've looked at in order to create something similar as well as having the opportunity to add my own twist to it rather than copying a certain piece word for word (or rather, mark for mark), which therefore makes my responses to those researched pieces look and feel original in their own right, with the main source of inspiration being right there if one knows where and how to look for it.

So, in a way, I've technically researched those movements/styles (Op Art, Pop Art, Hippie/Psychedelic and maximalist) whilst not actively researching those movements in depth at all, but rather looking at them at a glance and realising that those particular movements not only inspire me with my work, but also with the artists that I've researched.

Additionally, for the second half of this module (Environment and Context), I've focused on coming out of the confines of a standard sketchbook and have started to create work in physical spaces rather than digitally or drawing in a traditional manner. With this brief in particular, I've focused on creating site specific work and seeing how installations and sculptures work within a certain space and how they adapt to certain environments, as well as how other people interact with the work itself. I've taken inspiration from both the abstract expressionist movement as well as artists who create hanging sculptures (in this case, I've been inspired by Jackson Pollock and Val Britton), so as a result, I have essentially combined abstract expressionism with the use of physical spaces and using different mediums and techniques to create installations (as well as creating paintings and illustrations as a result of the main installation itself).

Although Pollock didn't necessarily work in the way that Stewart currently does, there's some overlap between both Pollock's and Stewart's work, given that they both use bright and bold colours, even though they use them in totally different ways. Whilst Stewart's work seems a little bit more realistic and graphic in this sense (i.e. it's easier to distinguish all the different visual elements from each other as well as having a graphic designer look and feel to it), it still has a sense of abstraction to it, mainly through the use of fluid lines and shapes that closely resemble the psychedelic art style that was popular throughout the 1960's. However, Pollock's work is essentially the opposite of Stewart's work, given that Pollock had a stronger abstract expressionist approach and didn't think or plan out his work; he made it as he went along, and focused on expressing himself (as cliché and as cheesy as that sounds) rather than working for various clients and essentially creating the work based on how the client wants it, which is essentially what Stewart does, which is why it doesn't really seem that abstract, and therefore has a more refined look and feel to it.

Similar to what Pollock did, I took an abstract expressionist approach towards my practice as a whole, and have therefore made it a part of my practice for the first time, given that I've never focused on creating abstract art before. The


thought process behind this piece was spontaneous, and essentially a happening rather than something that had been planned beforehand; I personally enjoyed the process of creating this piece (although only a part of it has been shown here), and didn't really worry about the outcome of the piece as a whole since I went with the flow and threw paint at a large piece of plastic to see what would happen and how it would land, as well as the marks that it left.

I expanded this happening by creating an installation of inflated rubber gloves hanging from metal wires and string, with the gloves hanging at various heights so that they'd actually come into the space rather than being bystanders looking down from above; this meant that the installation could essentially interact with other people since people of different heights could feel the gentle caress of latex fingers running through their hair if they wanted to. I created the link between the first abstract expressionist piece that I did by throwing paint onto the installation itself and using the same colour scheme that I used for the first installation (the large piece of plastic); the outcomes for this particular happening seemed a lot more interesting since some of the paint dripped from one glove to another, and the use of gravity meant that the paint dripped and mixed with the other colours to create interesting secondary colours, sort of getting away from the primary colour scheme a little. Although it wasn't easy (since I also had to consider the space around me as well as other people's work), I enjoyed the process of throwing paint from slightly different angles (mainly from above), as well as seeing how the paint would land on the surface, and how both the gloves and the paint would react with each other, including how the different colours of paint would work and react with each other.

I also put some paper down as I threw paint at the gloves, to capture the dripping paint, and to see what kind of picture it would paint; as a result, it created a painting that I didn't actively paint (i.e. I threw the paint at the gloves, and the paint dripped from them, which then fell onto the paper, creating splashes and splatters that added to the whole abstract expressionist look and feel that I was creating in slightly unconventional ways), which therefore adds to the installation itself, and quiet literally expands into another medium overall, carrying on the overall look and feel of the other pieces within the series as a whole; it also creates a sense of similarity and familiarity for the other pieces, and creates a distinct connection between the other pieces, so that they're collectively a larger piece as well as being able to act as a piece of work on its own as well as within a group.
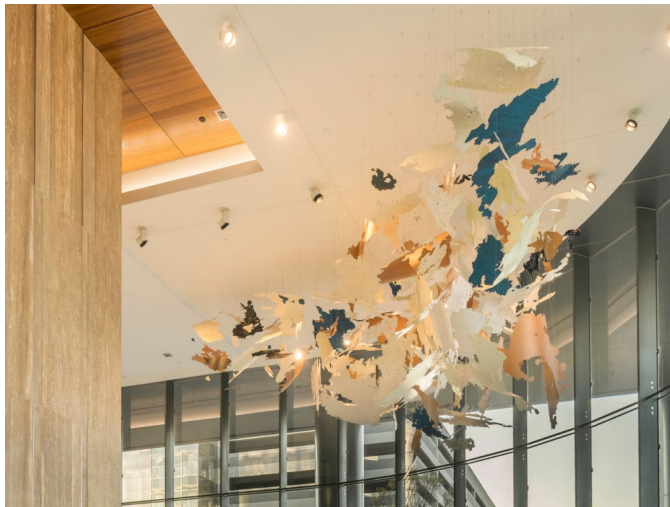

Similar to using Pollock's abstract expressionist techniques of throwing paint in order to create a painting, I've also been inspired by Val Britton's sculptural work in particular, since she focuses on creating hanging installations, such as *Continental Collision* (2016), which is a permanent site-specific installation at the Houston Energy Center Building 5. I've used the main aspect of this piece as a source of inspiration for my glove installation and focusing on hanging the gloves at different heights, similar to what Britton has done with this piece (although from the angle of where the photo was taken, it doesn't really show the individual pieces being hung at different heights), in order to make the sculpture interact with the environment rather than it just passively hang on the ceiling, almost blending into the background like a light fitting; the use of hanging different elements of the sculpture itself at different lengths creates a sense of intrigue, and makes some passers-by (if not all) stop and look to see how the sculpture was made and how it interacts with the space that it's in, as well as how the sculpture changes the space as a whole.

By taking inspiration from two very different practitioners who have worked in different disciplines and in different periods of time, I feel that my response to my research has been effective since I have been able to combine both the sculptural practice of Val Britton as well as the abstract expressionist painterly practice of Jackson Pollock into one installation that essentially goes from one pillar to another, with some of the gloves hanging so low that they actually touch the top of people's heads (and again, I've hung some of the gloves so that people, no matter how tall or short they are, can either embrace the fact that they're getting stroked with a glove splattered in paint or be disturbed by the fact that's happening and quickly duck in order to get to the other side), so in a way, the sculpture interacts with the environment in such a way that it's in the way, but not in the way at the same time, therefore demanding attention whilst avoiding it through the use of lengths and colours.

I Am Searching For Field Character - Joseph Beuys

documenta 7   1982 Kassel   Joseph Beuys – 7000 Eichen
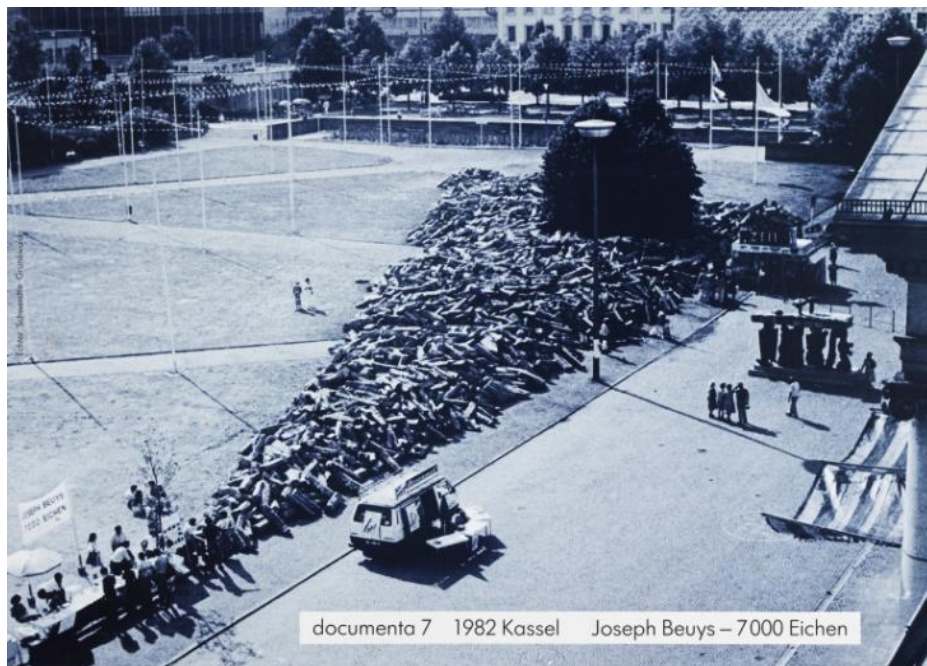
I've chosen to look at Beuys's essay (I Am Searching For Field character) since he focuses on the act of creating sculptures, and how they can essentially create a revolution through the use of "evolutionary-revolutionary power" *(Beuys,* 1977). Moreover, the use of this evolutionary-revolutionary power is something so distinct within the sculptural discipline, given that sculptures themselves can essentially create a revolution through the use of disrupting a certain space, sometimes causing people to wonder why it's there, and how it came to be; this depends on the type of sculpture, and the environment that it's been placed in, as well as how both the environment and the sculpture react with each other, whether it's a positive or negative reaction, or sometimes even both. Additionally, Beuys's *7000 Oaks* sparked a revolution from its inception in 1982, essentially raising awareness for the climate (as well as climate change overall) through the use of creating a social sculpture and getting everyone involved with this act, to help

change the climate for the better, essentially by creating a positive impact for the climate in cities in particular (especially through the use of the trees themselves absorbing carbon dioxide and essentially combatting one aspect of pollution overall by improving the quality of the air within the city of Kassel); the use of combatting climate change and reducing carbon footprints have become more relevant over time, especially in this day and age, where the climate is changing for the worse, and will inevitably become worse if it isn't acted upon, although environmental movements such as *Extinction Rebellion* are rising up and are trying to combat climate change through the act of protesting, as well as activists and environmental influencers inspiring individuals to lower their carbon footprints and take up more sustainable lifestyles.

Beuys was essentially an environmental activist in this manner since he created a movement, which was to inspire people (and especially individuals in society in particular) to take action to look after the environment that they're in, as well as improving the overall quality of that environment and preserving it for the future generations to come. Moreover, the use of citizens planting the trees, paired with a basalt stone, not only inspired, motivated and convinced those individuals to plant more trees, but also to get rid of the pile of basalt stones; the use of pairing the trees with the basalt stones also meant that it was easier to keep a record of all the trees that were planted as part of this movement, which was essentially a social sculpture within itself, to also show people the impact of creating a revolution and the impact that individuals have when they collectively work towards one thing, either for the greater good, or sometimes for the demise and also for the worst, essentially ruining something that didn't need to be ruined, such as the climate as a whole.

This sculpture is also naturally an evolutionary piece since it grows over time, meaning that it is both evolutionary and revolutionary, so the piece itself is never complete, nor should it ever be complete; it's constantly incomplete, a constant work in progress, quietly doing its bit for the environment, positively impacting the quality of both life and the environment for the individuals within that city. Additionally, the evolutionary nature of the piece itself means that it easily has room to grow,

both literally and figuratively; it is also seen as a peaceful revolution as well as a peaceful protest, and doesn't interfere with the environment, but rather enhances it. This is also essentially an unconventional sculpture since it's seen as an act of voluntary community work paired with taking part in an uprising as well as it being a gentle, peaceful protest in the background that is ongoing and will naturally begin to have a larger impact gradually over time. Unlike a majority of other sculptures or installations, which are usually static and often stay in one place, this "installation" grows over time, essentially becoming at one with nature itself; no one would really think it would be a sculpture since they'd think that it's just trees and that's what trees do: stay rooted in one place, yet continue to grow and positively impact the environment whilst it stands still, gently embracing the breeze as well as all of the natural elements that come with it, often at different times throughout the year.

Additionally, this sculptural installation can also be deemed as an anonymous sculpture since it doesn't seem to have one sculptor, but rather one organiser who organised and planned all of this, and seemingly countless contributors who have essentially placed their mark on the world, although that mark will go vastly unnoticed in the grand scheme of things. This project also has an underlying mysterious and cryptic element about it, making people wonder why there are basalt stones paired with trees, which almost gives the project itself an otherworldly feel to it and essentially entices people to come closer, to give up living in a society and to escape to the woods in order to more or less be at one with the natural world. This mysterious and cryptic aura also adds that element of curiousity to the piece/project itself, making future generations in particular wonder what the meaning behind pairing basalt stones with trees is, and this mysteriously cryptic and abstract nature of the project can also potentially lead way to some new and original folklore about how the basalt stones came to be and how they paired up with trees in order to improve the overall quality of life as well as destroying the negative elements of nature.

Going back to what Beuys said, this project has essentially dismantled an old and restrictive social system through the use of organised efforts and a lot of convincing to individuals that their contribution is indeed for a greater good. Also, according to Beuys, "only art is capable of dismantling the repressive effects of a senile social system that continues to totter along the deathline", meaning that the *7000 Oaks* project is essentially a work of art within itself since the project has essentially dismantled those repressive effects of an old and outdated social system. Whilst the project itself hasn't necessarily single-handedly destroyed this old and outdated social system, it has contributed largely to the dismantling of the restrictive and senile social system, creating a dent within the system in order to make way for a new type of social system that is compatible with the 21st century and works with how society works in this day and age, evolving as time goes on, focusing on the younger generations since they have the power to shape it, although that isn't necessarily always the case since old conservatives try to prise that power out of their hands. This project can be seen as a multi-generational effort, with people from different walks of life trying to save the planet with one tree at a time, also inspiring others to follow their lead and do the same to further improve the impact of revolution itself, as well as keeping the revolution alive and passing the baton to the future generations to carry on the human race. Without this effort, and without the constant push to save the climate (given that it's now more urgent than it has ever been), people will begin to lose interest and not seem to care about it, however, this project states otherwise, destroying that old restrictive social system with grace in order to make way for the latest version of the social system which has new ideologies, agendas and other various aspects that are compatible with the needs of contemporary society.

Beuys's project was essentially just the beginning of looking out for future generations and making sure that their quality of life was as good as theirs, if not better, and essentially making waves for others to do the same. As a result, this has essentially positively impacted the environment through the use of planting the trees throughout the city in order to both raise awareness about the environment in a subtle way as well as lowering the city's overall carbon footprint through the use of planting these trees (in addition to other pre-existing trees that were already there before this project happened).

However, documenting a site-specific installation through the use of photography in particular can essentially take away the experience of seeing the installation in person, and produces biased perspectives, meaning that it can only be seen from that angle unless other photos of the installation exist, but it doesn't depict the whole thing, but parts of it, so that it becomes like a puzzle that must be pieced together in order to get the whole picture. Similarly, Walter Benjamin stated that photography was seen as "the central problematic [of photography]" (Gronlund, 2017, p.23), and how it's seen as problematic since Benjamin believes that two types of photography exist - the "original/copy" theory - which means that none of the photos are actually true at all. Additionally, another theory that Gronlund points out is the "object/image" theory, which states that the image of the object essentially distorts the object itself since it's been depicted from one perspective, and therefore hides a lot underneath; the use of imagery also flattens the object and reduces it to just something in a photo rather than an actual tangible object that can be held and felt. I have tried to document my site-specific

installation by taking photos, but I feel like I haven't been able to capture the true essence of the installation itself, as well as the overall atmosphere of where the installation has been placed, despite taking lots of photos of it from different perspectives; whilst photography can document the sculpture itself from various different angles, it can be misinterpreted since it strips the experience of seeing the sculpture in person, and can also give a misconception of size (i.e. a photo of the sculpture might imply that it's small whereas in reality, the sculpture's a lot bigger and can sometimes seem a bit overwhelming).

Similarly, "the image alone says nothing" (Gronlund, 2017, p.26) implies that images are basically pointless without context, and offer little to no value since it's just another image in age where images are practically everywhere, however, if there's some context behind the image, people can understand why that image exists and what purpose it serves as well as the message that it's trying to communicate. Again, linking back to the sculptural discipline, this could also suggest that photos can only offer one perspective on the sculpture itself and can give people an unintentionally biased view of the sculpture, especially if it's the only photo of the sculpture that they'll see; lots of photos have to be taken in order to try to capture the essence of the sculpture, however, it doesn't capture it all, but does put all the pieces together to at least try and capture that essence.

Moving on from the act of trying to photograph a site-specific installation as much as possible to the point where people can almost feel the experience of seeing it in person (although this is basically impossible unless the installation is actually viewed in person and not through images taken from the lens of a camera from someone who was actually there in order to see it in person), the overall Abstract Expressionist movement and aesthetic has a similar perspective since a piece needs to be viewed in person in order to fully experience the atmosphere of the space that the piece has been placed in, since photos won't always do it justice and will essentially flatten the subtle textures that the piece has. Linking back to Gronlund's statement where "the image alone says nothing", Abstract Expressionism (as a whole) needs the context behind it in order for the pieces to be understood, as well as explaining the reason why the piece was created to begin with, and what the artist's thought process was, although it isn't always clear about how and why they've done certain things in certain ways.

So, my practice as an artist and illustrator has essentially taken a U-turn, since I've gone from working digitally and trying to define my practice solely as an illustrator, to becoming more in touch with my artistic side and focusing on thinking like an abstract artist in particular, creating a good balance between being both an artist and an illustrator. The accidental introduction of creating site specific installations and combining it with creating abstract art was a result of creating a social sculpture, and linking back to Beuys's practice (especially through the creation of the *7000 Oaks* project), I believe that the act of creating social sculptures does have an impact and gives new sources of inspiration that haven't been explored before.

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