

INDIVIDUAL

APPRAISAL

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INTRO

SELFRIDGES

Selfridges is a renowned British department store, originally founded in 1909 by the American retail pioneer Harry Gordon Selfridge. Harry's vision transformed the traditional retail model by placing the customer experience at the heart of the business, challenging the conventional retail experience which was centred around merely transactions.



JOSEPH BYRNE



Harry Gordon Selfridge believed that shopping should be an enjoyable and engaging experience, bringing this philosophy to life by reimagining the department store as a destination in itself and introducing bold and artistic window displays and interiors that would capture the public's attention, turning visual merchandising into an art form, with the ability to influence sales. Inside the store, Selfridges curated a lively and inviting atmosphere through in-store events, live demonstrations and exhibitions that celebrated fashion, technology and culture, further setting the store apart from its traditional competitors. Selfridge's also pioneered customer-centric innovations such as allowing people to freely browse merchandise without pressure, creating comfortable rest areas and even offering services like restaurants and rooftop gardens to enhance the overall experience and satisfaction of customers. These elements made Selfridges more than just a store but a social and cultural hub, setting new expectations for luxury retail.





Selfridges’ iconic flagship store on London’s Oxford Street remains a landmark of British retail, celebrated for its architectural appeal and innovative approach to consumer engagement. Over the years, Selfridges has expanded to include locations in Manchester 1998 and Birmingham 2003, further cementing its presence in the UK luxury retail market.



Today, Selfridges is co-owned by Thai conglomerate Central Group and Austrian firm Signa Holding, following their acquisition of the Selfridges Group for a reported £4 billion pounds in 2022 (Euronews, 2024). Under this new ownership, the brand continues to evolve by combining its rich heritage with forward-thinking strategies, focusing on high-end fashion, beauty and lifestyle products while embracing the rising demand for sustainability and immersive retail experiences to attract modern consumers in a digitally dominative era. In an increasingly competitive landscape, Selfridges stands out against major rivals such as Harrods and Liberty, as well as digital luxury giants like Net-a-Porter and Farfetch through creating more than just transactions but memorable experiences with their customers, transforming their stores into social cultural hubs.



DRIVERS

BEHIND THE BEAT

“Behind the Beat” represents the unspoken rhythm of modern day life—the constant push and pull between ambition, expectation and personal struggle. In a world that moves at an unforgiving pace, many find themselves falling out of sync and struggling to keep up with the demands of work, society and personal-growth.

The average person makes over 35,000 decisions a day, whilst the modern attention span has shrunk to just 8.25 seconds—shorter than a goldfish’s (Psychology Today, Sam-ba Recovery, 2025). Studies show that the average person now checks their phone 58 times a day, with an average daily screen time of 4 hours and 37 minutes (1,595 hours a year, which is 66 days of constant phone usage), all whilst being exposed to 5,000–10,000 ads daily, fuelling a profit-driven cycle where businesses capitalize on this hyper-distracted, zombie-like culture—turning short attention spans into a lucrative commodity (Forbes, Exploding Topics, 2024). Additionally, social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram Reels, which prioritize short, fast-paced content, have further conditioned our brains for instant gratification, reducing our ability to focus on longer, more meaningful tasks. This constant digital stimulation rewires neural pathways, making deep concentration increasingly more difficult.



Technology, once a tool for connection, has become an escape—numbing us from reality while keeping us tethered to an endless cycle of consumption. As digital stimulation increases, so does mental fatigue, so it's no surprise that 75% of adults report feeling overwhelmed and unable to cope with daily life in modern day society (Priory, 2025).

However, being “behind the beat” isn’t always about falling short—it’s about finding your own rhythm. In music, syncopation—where beats land unexpectedly—has helped create some of the most dynamic and influential sounds of our time (Michael Jackson – “Billie Jean”, Stevie Wonder – “Superstition” and Queen – “Another One Bites the Dust”). Similarly, innovation and creativity often emerge from those who break the rhythm of society, shaping culture and their lives in new and unexpected ways.

The phrase “Behind the Beat” captures a key driver in understanding the pressures of modern day life. It symbolizes the underlying, often unnoticed struggles that people face as they try to keep up with the relentless demands of society, work and personal growth. The notion of being “behind the beat” reflects the challenge of managing one’s own rhythm in a world that never stops moving, highlighting the key driver of stress, burnout and mental fatigue in modern day life.



Looking through the lens of hindsight, insight and foresight, we see how the rapid pace of modern life and constant digital stimulation have reshaped our attention, relationships and mental health. Hindsight shows the shift from technology as a tool for connection to a constant source of distraction and escape. Insight reveals how this frantic, hyper-connected culture is driving stress, burnout and a loss of focus. Foresight suggests that as this trend continues, it will shape the Zeitgeist by defining a generation's struggle with balance, mental health and personal identity in an increasingly fast-paced world. To survive, we must adapt and find ways to reclaim our rhythm and redefine how we engage with the world, or risk being consumed by the very distractions we've created.



THE POLITICS THAT CONTROL US

In a world dictated and shaped by the 'select' few, power isn't just influence—it's control. The top 1% of the world's population owns nearly 45% of global wealth, while the bottom 50% barely scrapes by with less than 1.3% (Oxfam, The Guardian, Credit Suisse Global Wealth Report, 2024). This isn't accidental—it's engineered. The system isn't broken; it works exactly as designed, serving and maintaining those who built it.

The world's most powerful decisions aren't made in parliaments or congress halls. They're made behind closed doors, in the boardrooms of trillion-dollar companies, in secret meetings that never make the headlines. The top 10 corporations control over 75% of global trade, influencing everything from food supply chains to energy prices (Global Trade, 2019). These aren't just businesses; these are unelected global rulers.



Even social movements are often manipulated. Governments and corporations use controlled opposition—funding both sides of debates to keep the public divided and distracted to ensure no progress is made to challenge the status quo—Divide and Conquer. However, suppression has led to multiple movements over the years, seen from the likes of the Guerrilla Girls, releasing posters and online campaigns exposing the lack of diversity in exhibitions at major museums like the Metropolitan Museum of Art, MoMA and the Tate Modern, as well as, exposing modern-day gender and racial disparities in their collections. On a more extreme level institutional suppression has led to the likes of Valerie Solanas—author of the S.C.U.M Manifesto, was dismissed as “insane” rather than taken seriously as a radical feminist thinker. After attempting to assassinate Andy Warhol in 1968, she was institutionalized, and her critiques of patriarchy and capitalism were buried. The art world and media reduced her to a footnote in Andy Warhol’s story, exemplifying how institutions suppress radical voices by branding them as mad rather than engaging with their ideas.



Additionally, 72% of the world's population lives under some form of authoritarian rule (V-Dem Institute, 2023). The idea of freedom is often just a marketing tool, designed to sell a dream that rarely reflects reality.

The manipulation of both social movements and public discourse means that future generations may grow up in a world where questioning authority becomes more difficult. The controlled opposition strategy not only divides people but encourages them to remain passive—controlled, consuming whatever narrative is pushed by the most powerful corporations and governments. This will foster a future zeitgeist who is less likely to challenge the structures of power, and instead passively accept their roles as brainless consumers and voters with controlled influence.



GLIMMERS OF JOY

“Glimmers Of Joy” represents the power of small, spontaneous moments that provide comfort and motivation in a world filled with discomfort and struggle. In a society where stress and anxiety are prevalent, these brief yet meaningful experiences—like hearing your favourite song or encountering a friendly dog—help balance out the overwhelming negativity that dominates society, offering a sense of relief, happiness and connection. As the “mean world syndrome” fuels feelings of uncertainty and distress, these moments act as grounding forces, helping individuals navigate daily life with a renewed sense of optimism (WGSN, 2024).

Scientific research supports the impact of these “Glimmers Of Joy” as Positive adult experiences have been linked to lower odds of moderate-to-severe anxiety and depression, especially among those who have faced adverse childhood experiences (National Library of Medicine, 2023). Additionally, individuals who engage in acts of kindness report increased happiness and life satisfaction, with positive feelings lasting over two hours after performing/enduring such acts (The Sun, 2024).



Through the lens of hindsight, we can conclude that past societal challenges, influenced by national and Geo-Politics have heightened stress and anxiety, underscoring the need for positive experiences. Insight reveals that engaging in small, joyful moments—such as acts of kindness—can enhance mental well-being; helping strangers has remained 18% higher than pre-pandemic levels, reflecting a sustained increase in benevolent behaviours. Looking forward, businesses that integrate these “fragments of light” into their strategies stand to benefit, as 82% of consumers maintain a more positive perception of brands that prioritize experiential marketing and 91% of customers confirmed they would feel more optimistic about a brand’s product or service after actively participating in a brand activation or experience (Limelight, 2024). This trend suggests a future Zeitgeist where fostering positive experiences becomes central to both personal well-being and successful brand engagement.



OUR DYING PLANET

Our Earth is currently collapsing under the weight of human overconsumption, with the consequences set to define the future of humanity. We are currently in global ecological overshoot, consuming resources at nearly twice the planet's capacity. Deforestation, pollution and mass extinction are not just environmental issues—they are shaping a world where survival will become increasingly difficult—where those only wealthy enough will prevail. Rainforests, which produce oxygen and regulate the climate, are vanishing at a rate of 30 football fields per minute (Airbus, 2021). If this continues, by the next century, entire ecosystems will be gone, accelerating climate instability and making large regions of the world uninhabitable.

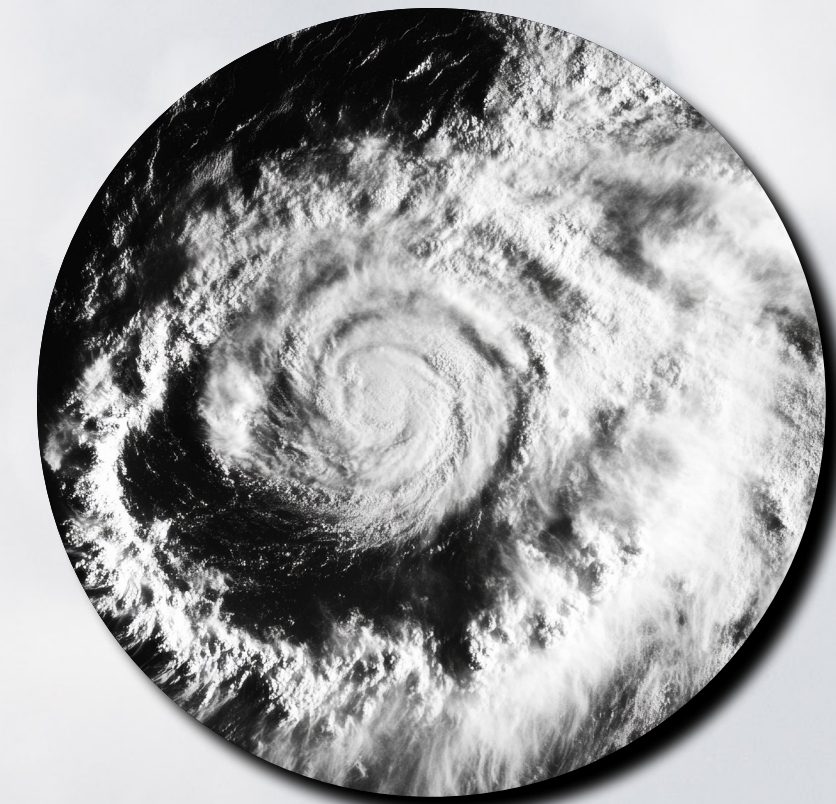
Our climate crisis is not a distant threat—it's already transforming life on Earth. The 20 warmest years on record have occurred in the past 22 years, fuelling extreme weather disasters. Wildfires are increasing, sea levels have risen by 8 inches and hurricanes are becoming stronger and more frequent. By 2030, climate change could be irreversible and by 2050, up to 200 million people could be displaced by rising seas, droughts and unlivable heat. This will create a massive refugee crisis, geopolitical instability and fuel wars on resources, reshaping society (Playground Equipment, 2025).



Meanwhile, essential resources like food and water are being wasted or depleted at unsustainable rates. One in three people globally lack access to clean drinking water, and at the current rate, the world could run out of fresh water in just 19 years. At the same time, 30–40% of the food supply is wasted in the U.S. alone, highlighting the deep inequalities in resource distribution. This will lead to increasing class divides, where only the wealthy will have access to basic necessities, while billions struggle to survive.

The collapse of Earth's ecosystems isn't just reshaping the physical world—it is rewiring the human psyche, fuelling a pervasive sense of fear, anxiety and despair. As environmental destruction accelerates, people become increasingly vulnerable to 'Mean World Syndrome'—a cognitive bias where relentless exposure to crises distorts perception, making the world seem more hostile, chaotic and beyond saving than it truly is. This psychological burden paralyzes action, stifles creativity and erodes motivation, leaving people to feel powerless in the face of looming catastrophe. Instead of mobilizing solutions, society risks slipping into apathy, fatalism and disengagement, further accelerating the cycle of destruction.





Future generations will inherit a planet defined by crisis, where nature exists in fragments and survival depends on wealth and location. The illusion of endless growth and consumption will shatter, forcing humanity to reckon with a reality where comfort and stability become luxuries of the past. If no drastic action is taken, Our Earth will continue to die and with it, the foundation of human civilization itself.



THE POWER OF MUSIC

Music is one of humanity's oldest and most powerful forms of expression, with origins dating back at least 40,000 years, evidenced by bone flutes discovered in Germany (National Geographic, 2025). Music transcends cultures and time, evoking deep emotions through rhythm, melody and harmony. With the ability to trigger a 9–21% rise of dopamine in the brain, increasing feelings of pleasure and reward (BBC, 2021). Additionally, studies show that music can reduce pain perception by up to 21% and activates nearly every part of the brain, including areas linked to emotion, memory and movement, making it an extraordinary phenomenon that has the natural ability to alter our emotions and perceptions (Science Daily, 2025). Furthermore, musical therapy has been shown to aid in treating conditions like Parkinson's, Alzheimer's and depression through influencing the Limbic System to evoke emotional responses and memories, the Motor Cortex through helping establish a rhythm and tempo to help Parkinson's patients improve gait and motor function and the Prefrontal Cortex, influencing dopamine and serotonin levels, to help combat depression and anxiety (DementiaUK, 2023).

From ancient rituals to modern pop anthems, music has been a fundamental part of human expression and connection for over 40,000 years, transcending cultures and time, weaving emotion, memory, and movement into a universal language.



However, music isn't always just clever wordplay and a dopamine hit—it can aid a revolutionary force. For example, the hymn “We Shall Overcome” was greatly used in the 1940s when African Americans were systematically denied basic human rights (Georgia State University, 2013). This raw gospel became a rallying cry for freedom during the Civil Rights Movement and still to this day continues to inspire struggles for justice around the world.

The hymn's simple, repetitive lyrics and uplifting tune help cut through the brutality of segregation and systematic beatings, reinforcing an unbreakable sense of unity and collective strength among protesters, who would all sing in unison (The Kennedy Centre, 2025). Whether sung in jails, picket lines, or marches, the hymn provided a sense of comfort and resilience—transforming individual struggle into a shared battle cry for justice.



Additionally, Bob Marley's 'Get Up, Stand Up' anthem, released in 1981 acted as a militant anthem advocating for resistance against oppression and the pursuit of justice. Co-written by Bob Marley and Peter Tosh, the song's lyrics urged listeners to assert their rights and challenge systemic injustices. Its chorus, "Get up, stand up: stand up for your rights!" Becoming a universal call to action during the civil rights movements of the 1970s.

Marley's song had an impact that expanded globally, resonating with marginalized communities and movements in protest worldwide. Its use of reggae—a genre deeply rooted in the struggles and aspirations of the African diaspora—amplified its message, making it a staple in demonstrations against racism and brutality from Kingston to Harlem, London and Johannesburg.



Furthermore, more recent tracks from the likes of Public Enemy “Fight the Power”, which debuted in Spike Lee’s film ‘Do the Right Thing’ in 1989 , which opens with Rosie Perez dancing and shadow boxing to ‘Fight the Power’ in front of a row of Brooklyn brownstones with an expression midway between agony and defiance. Unusually, the song plays to the very end, when it is replaced by the strident blare of an alarm clock—symbolizing a wake up call in society to fight back to systematic racism, oppression and social injustice (BBC, 2024).



Lastly, in more recent times, more specifically this time in 2012 of music being used to raise attention to ongoing societal problems was through the song ‘Swimming Pools’ by Kendrick Lamar, highlighting addiction. In the song, Kendrick’s character is among his peers in a social gathering where alcohol is freely available. From the very outset, he paints a picture of alcohol misuse with the repetitive use of keywords: “...pass out, drank, wake up, drank, faded, drank, faded, drank”. His character describes the reasons people drink alcohol – because they like “...the way it feels”, and in order “...to kill their sorrows” or to “...fit in with the popular”.



SWIMMING POOLS
(DRANK)

In conclusion, music has long served as more than just entertainment—It has acted as a powerful aid in promoting awareness of social change and resistance, helping bring global light to societal issues, from systemic racism to general abuse. Through its emotional impact, universal reach, and ability to inspire action, music continues to be a driving force in the fight for justice and equality around the world.



RETAIL

2025

In 2024, the UK's retail sector faced a turbulent year, marked by widespread store closures and substantial job losses. A total of 13,479 stores nationally shut their doors, reflecting the pressures of rising operational costs, shifting consumer behaviors and the relentless rise of economic uncertainties. This downturn resulted in the loss of nearly 170,000 retail jobs, (a 42% jump from 2023) further highlighting the ongoing strain on the retail landscape (Centre Of Retail Research, 2025).

Growth in the UK economy remains constrained, with only a marginal improvement expected in 2025. While retail sales saw a modest 1% increase in February 2025, propelled by an increase in expenditure at clothing and household goods shops, beating expectations despite consumer confidence and overall economic growth remaining weak, indicating that spending patterns will continue to be shaped by underlying economic uncertainties (Financial Times, 2025).



Although real incomes have been rising for over 18 months, keeping in pace with inflation this has not translated to an expected boost in retail sales and consumer spending in 2025. Instead, household savings ratio has increased, from 6.6% in Quarter 2 of 2022 to 11.1% in Quarter 1 (Jan to Mar) of 2024, with households expected to save over 9% of their disposable incomes in 2025, dampening consumer expenditure, although seeing the decrease (-3%) from 12% in the final three months of 2024, which was the highest level on record outside of the pandemic, displaying the overall influence on consumer spending that economic uncertainty is having on the nation (Intel, 2025, Office For National Statistics, 2024, Financial Times, 2025).

To navigate these challenges and encourage consumer spending in times of economic uncertainty, retailers must adapt their strategies and work on enhancing the customer experience through personalized services, loyalty programs, and immersive in-store experiences to help differentiate their physical stores from online alternatives.



DEVELOPMENTS

The retail landscape is transforming from once basic transactional shopping to immersive, customer-centric experiences, beyond just a purchase. Leading brands are transforming their stores into engaging environments that go beyond just selling products, using technology, sustainability and community-driven engagement to re-shape the retail experience and provide a value unbeatable by E-commerce.



One major trend seen in 2024 was the rise of immersive brand experiences. Retailers began to design spaces that would enhance customer interaction and storytelling, as seen in Nike's House of Innovation, which integrates interactive displays to showcase athletic performance, or IKEA's way finding layouts, which guide shoppers through a curated journey, in turn adding value to the overall customer experience, through educating and engaging with potential customers on a more personal level, making them feel more 'looked after', in turn building brand trust through stronger brand connections, therefore increasing likelihood of conversions and loyalty.

By Increasing customer retention rates by just 5% businesses can increase their profits from anywhere between 25% and 95%. Additionally, 93% of customers state they are more likely to make repeat purchases with companies who offer excellent customer service (Bain and Company, HubSpot Research, 2025).



Another key trend emerging in 2024 was personalization through technology, with 51% of customers expressing interest in AI features and 71% of consumers expecting personalization in their retail experience (Pymnts, McKinsey, 2024). AI and AR are starting to revolutionize the shopping experience, enabling brands to offer more tailored solutions to individual customer needs. For example, Sephora’s AR “magic mirrors” allow customers to virtually try on products, while Levi’s smart fitting rooms provide AI-powered size recommendations, optimizing the overall experience. By merging digital tools with physical retail, brands can offer highly customized experiences that cater to individual customer preferences, potentially driving revenue by 10–15% (McKinsey, 2021).



Seamless omni-channel integration was also shown to be a crucial element in 2024, with businesses who expand 3 or more channels experiencing revenue increases of up to 495% and Research by Think with Google revealing that employing omni-channel strategies contributed to approximately 80% of customer visits to brick-and-mortar stores. (Better Commerce, Think with Google, 2024). Brands like Target and Nordstrom are examples of businesses, who in 2024 optimized their operations with real-time inventory tracking, curbside pickup, and mobile checkouts, reducing friction and enhancing convenience for customers. The ability to browse, purchase, and receive products across multiple touch-points without disruption is now a fundamental expectation in a modern retail experience.



Sustainability and ethical shopping continue to gain importance in 2024, with 88% of consumers more likely to stay loyal to a brand that supports social and environmental causes, whilst also willing to pay a 9.7% sustainability premium, even as cost-of-living and inflationary concerns weigh (Forbes, PwC 2024 Voice of the Consumer Survey, 2024). For example, Patagonia's in-store repair workshops and The Home Depot's DIY stations empower customers to make sustainable choices, learn new skills, whilst reinforcing their brand values and encouraging a circular economy. These initiatives help brands build trust and long-term loyalty among Eco-Conscious consumers, promoting customer loyalty through adding value to the overall customer experience.



Community-driven retail was another growing trend in 2024, with In-store events and experiential activations successfully attracting foot traffic and fostering deeper customer to business relationships. For example, Lululemon hosted a series of yoga classes, bringing community and movement together in an aim to boost well-being and brand image (45% of people who participate in just 30 minutes of daily activity with others say they feel a positive impact on their overall well-being. People who use physical activity to socialize with others report a 23% increase in overall well-being. 1 in 2 feel a sense of belonging when working out with others). Through creating shared experiences Lululemon was able to add value beyond transactions, fostering trust and strengthening brand loyalty and community engagement—ultimately making customers feel more connected to the brand.



In conclusion, brands are already pushing the boundaries of the traditional retail experience in 2024. Whether through personalization, sustainability, or immersive storytelling, the future of retail can be expected to be shaped by brands that prioritize experiences over transactions.

As online and offline experiences become increasingly intertwined, the most successful retailers will integrate technology in meaningful ways, design engaging physical spaces and create deeper emotional connections with their customers on all touch points. The future of retail will not just be about selling products but creating memorable experiences that drive loyalty and long-term brand engagement.



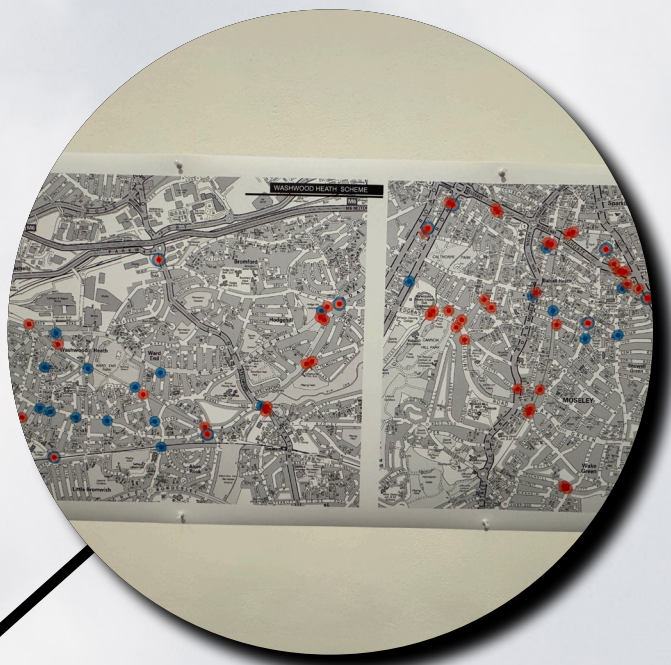
ARTISTS

MAHTAB HUSSAIN

Mahtab Hussain’s work exposes and critiques the covert surveillance imposed on predominantly South Asian neighbourhoods in Birmingham under Project ‘Champion’ in 2010. Marketed to locals as a protective measure against antisocial behaviour, vehicle crime and drug-related activity, the scheme’s true intent was far from the truth—a targeted intelligence operation tracking every movement in and out of these communities, particularly around Muslim places of worship. This context gives deeper meaning to Hussain’s title ‘What Did You Want to See?’, which challenges the nature of such surveillance (The Guardian, 2010).

Funded by a £3 million grant from the Terrorism and Allied Matters Government Fund, whilst overseen by the Association of Chief Police Officers, the scheme effectively transformed these communities and places of worship into sites of covert mass surveillance, reinforcing racial profiling under the guise of public safety. Hussain’s work confronts this stereotype, challenging the persistent scrutiny placed on Muslim communities and the deceptive narratives that justify government policing.

Hussain’s work on this subject also ties into the theme of ‘The politics that control us,’ serving as a compelling real-life example of how even government officials can distort or manipulate the truth due to unfair stereotypes.



PRIMARY RESEARCH

Themes

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Inspiration

Visually, Hussain draws inspiration from the aesthetics of surveillance itself—framing his photographs with the detached, elevated perspective of CCTV footage. This deliberate choice replicates the invasive gaze of the government, allowing viewers to experience the discomfort of being watched themselves. His muted colour palette and stark compositions evoke a sense of stillness and tension, reinforcing the themes of scrutiny and alienation that is so often experienced. By adopting the very visual language used to police these communities, Hussain turns the lens back on the viewer, prompting reflection on power, visibility and control which directly links to my Driver 'The politics that control us.



HTIENM LIN

Htein Lin is a multidisciplinary artist from Myanmar whose art powerfully reflects themes of resilience, resistance and his lived experience of political imprisonment. Best known for his 000235 series, which was created on prison uniforms during his incarceration while he was a political prisoner from 1998 to 2004. Htein Lin also makes new artworks with residents of HMP Grendon, Buckinghamshire, exploring prison art in Britain and Myanmar. Through deeply personal yet politically charged art, Htein Lin explores the universal struggle for freedom and human dignity.



PRIMARY RESEARCH

Themes

Htein Lin's work powerfully explores themes of political imprisonment, resilience and the enduring human spirit, deeply rooted in his own experience as a political prisoner from 1998 to 2004. Using prison materials such as uniforms, found textiles and everyday objects, he transforms constraint into creativity, highlighting art as both a form of resistance and survival. His practice reflects on the emotional and psychological toll of incarceration. In recent works like *Fiery Hell* (2024), he broadens his focus to the suffering of Myanmar's rural, ethnic and religious communities caught in ongoing civil conflict to this present day. Through painting, sculpture, video, and collaboration, Htein Lin challenges systems of control, while affirming identity, solidarity and the vital role of self-expression in the face of oppression.



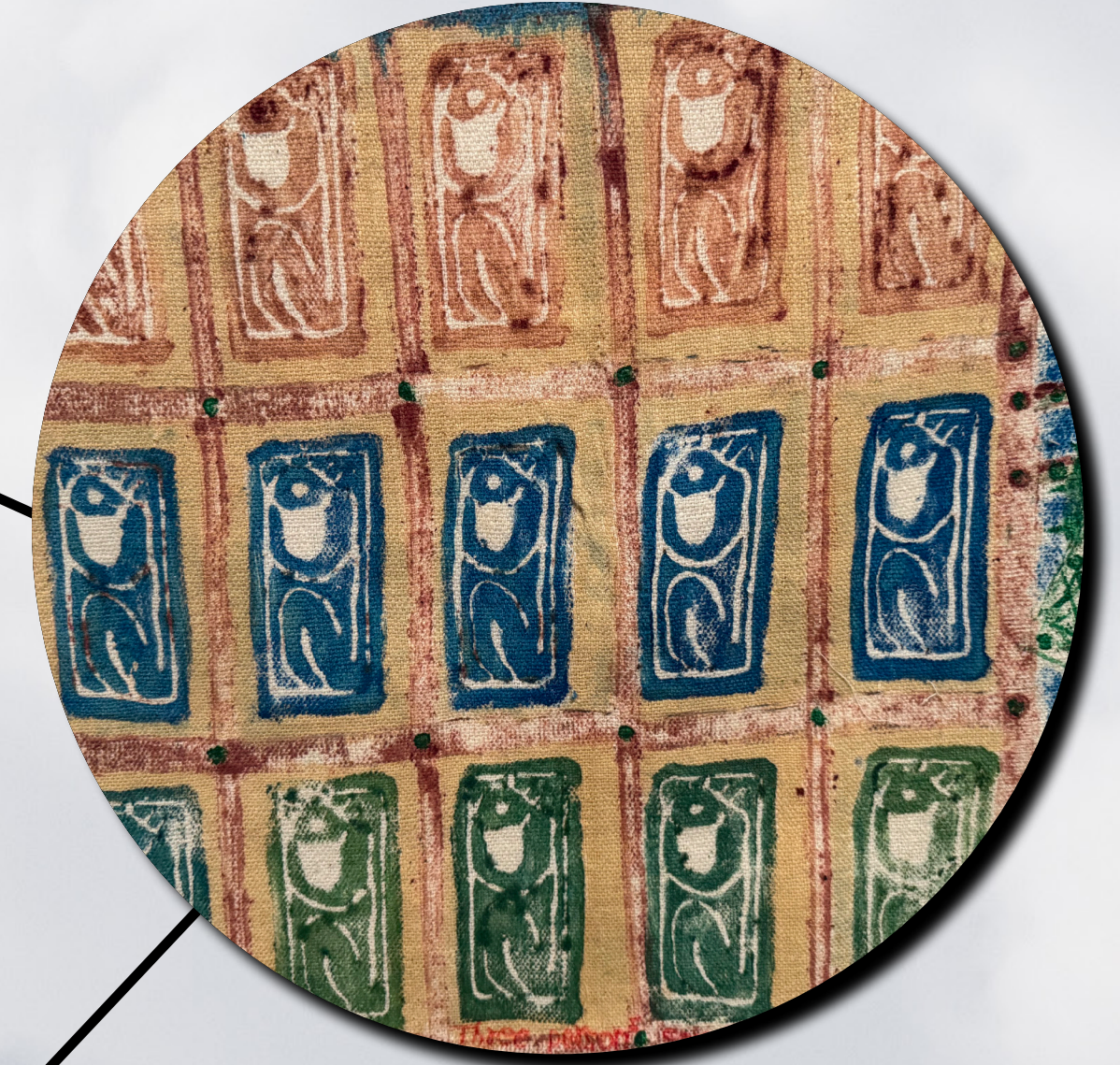
Drivers

The driving forces behind Htein Lin's art are rooted in lived experience, political resistance and a profound belief in the power of art. His time as a political prisoner deeply informs his work, pushing him to document the injustices and psychological toll of authoritarian rule and torture. Lin's art represents a coping mechanism and a form of protest, which allowed him to reclaim agency within a system designed to silence dissent. His pieces are driven by a desire to connect individual suffering with broader social and political struggles, bridging personal narrative with collective resistance to help raise awareness of social injustice.



Inspiration

Visually, Htein Lin's work is shaped by the limitations and textures of his confinement, only allowing him to produce his art with found materials like prison uniforms, soap and discarded fabric as both canvas and symbol. His bold, expressive brushwork and raw, tactile surfaces evoke urgency and emotion, while recurring motifs like hands and faces serve as powerful markers of identity and resistance, blending storytelling with symbolism, creating a unique form of art that is as emotionally charged as politically resonant.



GUERRILLA GIRLS

The Guerrilla Girls are an anonymous collective of feminist artists, founded in New York City in 1985, dedicated to exposing sexism and racism in the art world and beyond. Known for their bold, confrontational tactics and trademark gorilla masks, the group uses posters, public interventions and satirical campaigns to challenge inequality and institutional bias within the world. By adopting pseudonyms of historic, deceased female figures such as Frida Kahlo, Käthe Kollwitz, and Alice Neel, as well as writers and activists, such as Gertrude Stein and Harriet Tubman, to help shift focus from individual identity to collective activism, using humour and hard-hitting facts to provoke change and ignite critical conversations.



Themes

Their work centres on themes of gender and racial inequality, particularly within the art world and cultural institutions, challenging the dominance of white, male narratives by exposing the under-representation of women and artists of colour in galleries, museums and major exhibitions. Through satire, statistics and bold visuals, their work boldly critiques systems of power, corruption and elitism. Their art is rooted in activism, aiming to spark dialogue, raise awareness, and demand lasting change in the way that art and culture are produced, curated and valued.



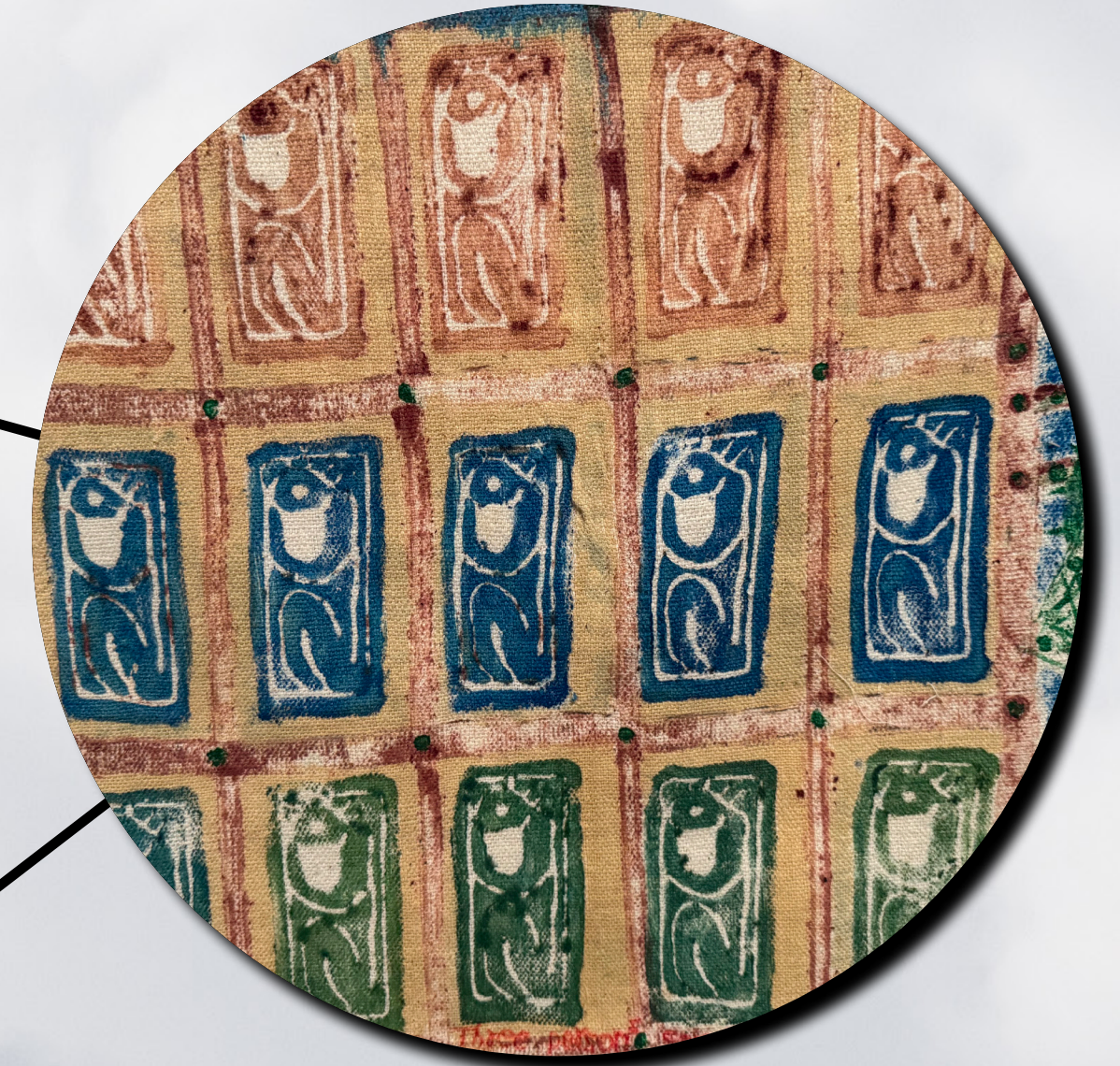
Drivers

The Guerrilla Girls are driven by a commitment to social justice, equality, and institutional reform within the art world. Their work responds to the systemic exclusion of women and artists of colour, using data, protest and public intervention to hold powerful institutions accountable. By remaining anonymous, they emphasize the urgency of their message over individual fame, making the fight against discrimination their central driver.



Inspiration

The visual style of the Guerrilla Girls is bold, graphic and unmistakably confrontational, drawing inspiration from advertising, protest posters and pop culture, using bright colours, striking typography and satirical imagery to help grab attention, stand-out and deliver hard-hitting messages. Their aesthetic mimics the visual language of mass media, drawing visual inspiration from billboards, flyers and magazine ads, allowing them to subvert familiar advertising formats and turn them into tools for activism.



TRACY EMIN

Tracey Emin is a renowned British artist known for her raw, autobiographical work that includes drawing, sculpture, installations, neon, embroidery and painting. Emerging as part of the Young British Artists (YBAs) in the 1990s, Emin rose to fame with her deeply personal pieces such as ‘My Bed’ (1998), which earned her a nomination for the Turner Prize in 1999. Drawing from her own life and touching on themes of sexuality, trauma, love and identity—her work is confessional and confrontational, yet emotionally resonant. Emin has received numerous honors, including being appointed a Royal Academician in 2007, a Commander of the Order of the British Empire (CBE) in 2013 and a Member of the Order of the Companions of Honour (CH) in 2023. Through her intensely personal visual language, Emin continues to challenge conventions and redefine what it means to produce art from lived experience.



Themes

Emin's work is deeply rooted in personal experience, exploring themes such as trauma, sexuality, vulnerability, love and female identity. Her iconic piece 'My Bed' (1998) confronts mental health and emotional breakdown through the installation of her unmade bed surrounded by personal items, turning private pain into public art. Works like 'Everyone I Have Ever Slept With' 1963–1995 (1995) and her erotic drawings further examine intimacy, memory and the complexities of the female body. Across all media, Emin uses confessional storytelling to confront taboos and give voice to emotional truth.



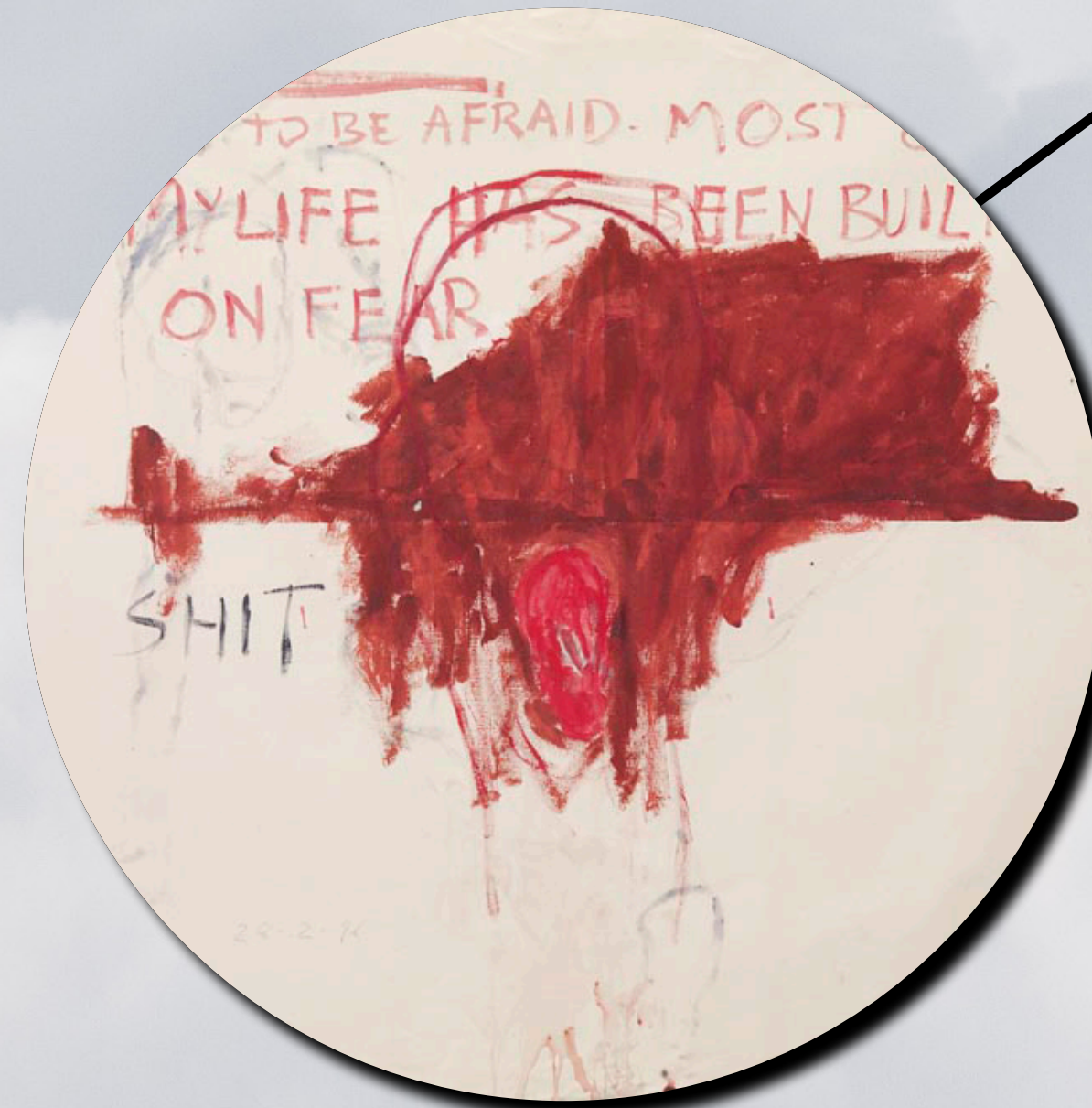
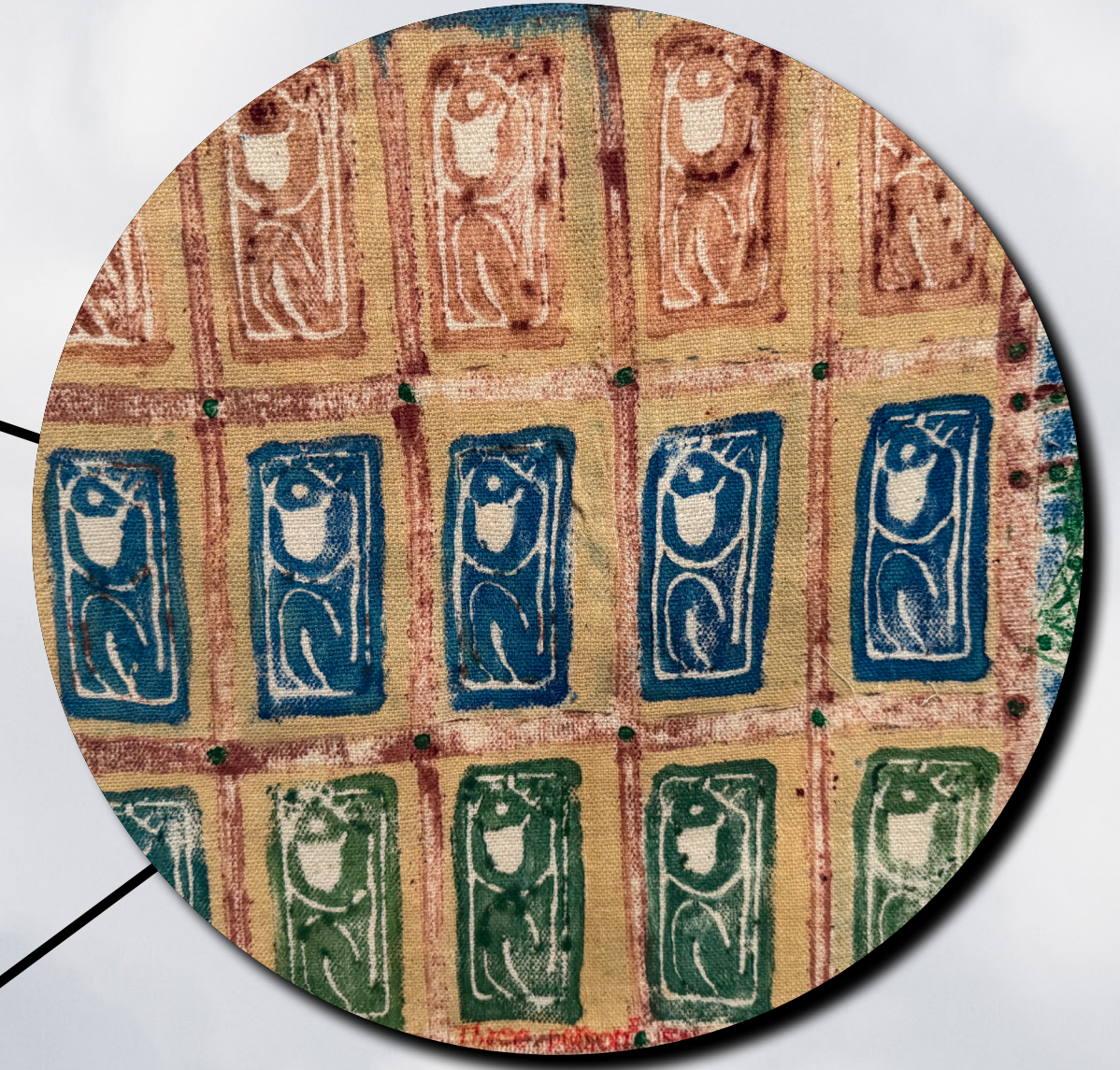
Drivers

The driving forces behind Tracy's work stem from a deep need for self-expression, emotional catharsis and a desire to challenge societal norms around vulnerability, gender and trauma. Her art is driven by her own lived experience of childhood hardship, sexual abuse, abortion, heartbreak and identity, in-which she transforms into creative material. Emin's practice is rooted in the belief that personal truth holds universal power, using art to confront what is often left unsaid. Her raw, confessional style is also driven by a rejection of traditional artistic detachment, insisting that the artist's life and emotions are not only valid subjects, but essential to understanding the art itself.



Inspiration

Tracey Emin's work is raw, intimate and emotionally charged by drawing inspiration from her own personal experience, confessional art, and punk aesthetics, making her work relatable and stand-out. Her pieces often feature handwritten text, rough sketches and neon signs, embracing imperfection and vulnerability to evoke a deep sense of honesty—something lacking in the world. Emin's visual language is stripped back yet powerful, using a variety of mixed media and expressive mark-making to blur the boundaries between art and autobiography. Her deeply personal aesthetic invites viewers into her inner world, turning emotional exposure into a visual act of defiance, connection and relatability.



COLLAGE

FOR 'CONTROL'



1

I began by cutting out random images that i thought related to my driver, with no intention or idea of what i really wanted to create.

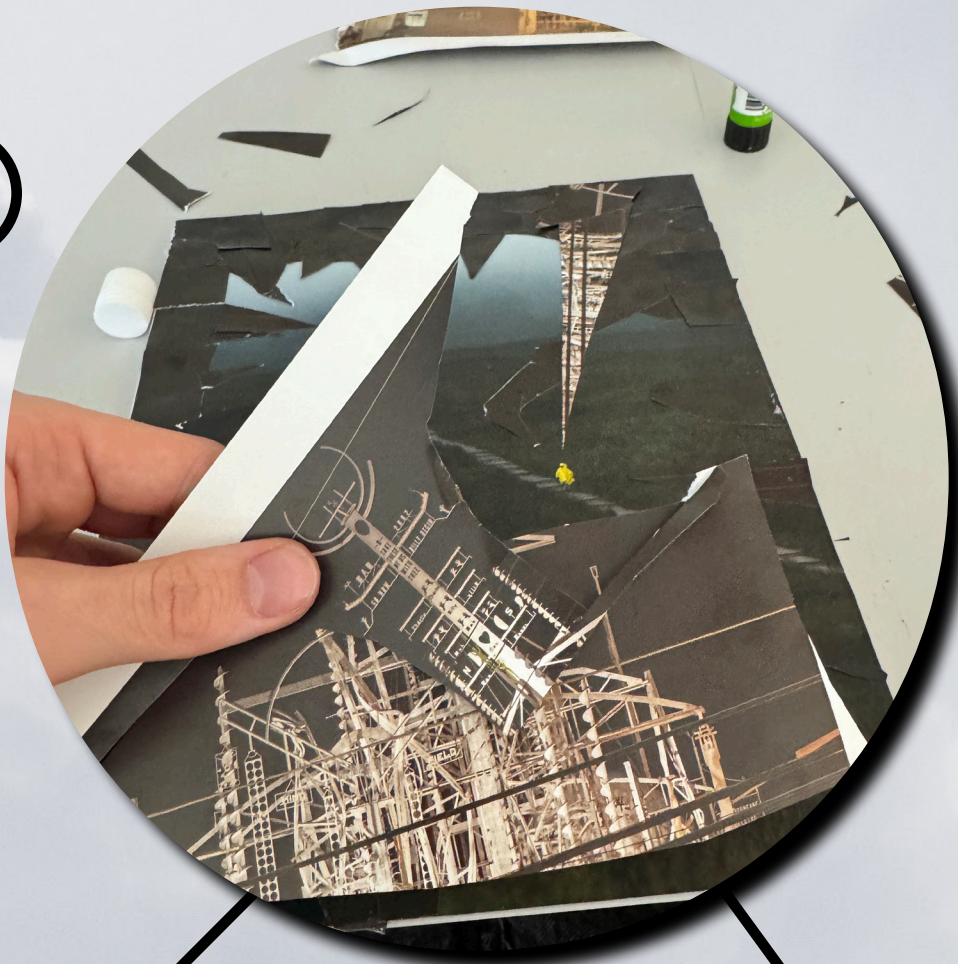


2

I then found this image of an electricity tower which i though would be a great way to represet technology and its power.

3

I started cutting up the image into sharp spiked lines to represent how media injects itself into people



5

Finally, I used sciscors to mark 'x's to symbolzie targets and how people are targeted by by meida



4

I then cut up text randomly and re-ranged it to represent how narratives can be manipulated and made up with such ease.



VIDEO

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=l_1ghcWgmVE

CONCLUSION

Throughout this project, sharing responsibility and relying on others proved to be one of my biggest challenges. As someone who tends to gravitate towards independent work, I found myself struggling to delegate tasks and trust others to complete tasks to a universal standard, which ultimately created an overwhelming sense of pressure and stress. However, by consciously working on relationships within the team and prioritizing clear, stable and efficient communication throughout our WhatsApp group we were able foster trust and overcome challenges through transparent communication.

This taught me the importance of emotional intelligence, especially empathy as it was important to care and provide support to my team whenever they were struggling. By understanding the emotional needs of my teammates and being more attentive to their perspectives, we were able to foster a more harmonious and collaborative working environment, improving our workflow. While initially, it was a struggle to balance the team dynamics, over time, we developed a healthier approach to teamwork, which led to smoother communication and more productive sessions in lessons.

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