

Technology & Creating Works

“I’m convinced that technology and art go together, and always have for centuries.”

- David Hockney

Think about this quote from Hockney. What is the relationship between art and technology to you? Has the power of technology helped you in creating art at all (for instance, attending these virtual sessions) or is technology not something you particularly embrace? In our current world, how has technology influenced your creating? Is art and technology something that can co-exist, or even go hand in hand with each other?

Write a short piece thinking about this quote and the responses to it.

You have **5 minutes**.

The technological world has had an effect on all forms of art.

The George Orwell novel 'Nineteen Eighty-Four' is a critique of growing technological advances, such as surveillance, tracking and monitoring devices. It aims to warn of the dangers that can come from governments being able to closely monitor and watch the public – something that is common place today.

The Alan Ayckbourn play 'Henceforward' plays with the idea of artificial intelligence (robots). In it, artificial house servants exist to make the lives of humans easier – we are meant to sympathise with the 'Nan' character, a robot whose overwhelming amount of jobs exceed her capabilities, and root against the human character who continues to modify and change her. It's an exploration into what it means to be alive and the human identity.

Creating pieces based around technology and the virtual will normally have a message – either pro-technology or anti-technology. Humans naturally fear change, and the image of the robots one day uprising is one common in our media and culture (I, Robot).

Societal values are informed by the art and literature we consume. Which side of this argument comes down on is not only informed by the generational divide, but also the opinions of the artists and writers whose works an individual consumes.

Technological advancements are seen by some as mans reach exceeding his grasp, and by others as the natural progression of the human race.

Using your own opinions on technology, both current and advancing, we're going to write some short pieces.

You have two options here.

- 1) The more sci-fi route used by Orwell and Ayckbourn. Write a piece about the dangers of either technology or human folly. You can explore ideas of artificial intelligence, government surveillance, or take any of our current technological advancements and magnify it to write a piece that is either pro or anti technology.
- 2) Write a piece using any technological appliance as the foundation of your poem. This could be your computer, your phone, even something simple like your fridge or microwave. This poem doesn't need to be purely about this appliance, but can serve as an inspiration, starting point, or just have some involvement in the poem.

You have **7 minutes**.

With the current pandemic, we have all had the opportunity to participate in, watch, and experience virtual performance. An example of this is the zoom poetry showcases run by Core.

However, the idea of virtual art, or virtual performance is not a new concept for 2020/21. With the invention of VR, creators like Stuart Campbell have utilised modern technology in order to create incredible worlds that can be experienced from the comfort of ones own living room.

<https://www.dw.com/en/is-virtual-reality-the-future-of-art/a-37942941>

By creating work virtually, meaning works that are written, then filmed, edited, and put together in a virtual format, has given rise to what we call the 'Visual Poem'.

A Visual Poem is poetry that is accompanied by moving images, music, and sound in order to not only make the poem more engaging and accessible, but to enhance the meaning of the poem.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-hJmH6vRy_s&t=43s

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=c8pvKyKPxA4&ab_channel=DoyenArtists

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bYKZ6lnb894&ab_channel=WilleMMartinot

The beauty of poetry like this is that it allows for poems to be told in a way that is more vivid than reading words off a page.

The argument against poetry like this is that it strips the watcher of pathos – there is no need to use your imagination to create the images of the poem in your head if the images are presented for you, or much room for your own interpretation of the words.

Poetry like this has more in common with theatre and film – in the same way that a writer and director collaborate to create a stage or screen production that has a clear vision, these poems are meant to be viewed more as stories.

These forms of poetry are also more accessible. Accessibility is an issue amongst many forms of art, such as theatres, screenings and poetry events not being able to cater to disabled audience members and performers.

Let's try our own hand at 'Virtual Poetry'.

In the following time, you can do one of two things:

- 1) Find one of your own poems you've written before that you think you can apply to a virtual poetry setting.
- 2) Write an entirely new poem for the pure purpose of being used in a virtual poetry setting.

In this time, think about how you would bring this poem to life through virtual means – what images, music, and sound you would have accompany the poem. What is the story you're trying to tell? What is the feeling you want your audiences to have when watching? Would you read the poem yourself or get a third party to do so for you?

Feel free to go online or into your own repertoire to find elements you would use.

You have **10 minutes**.