

# Advanced Portfolio

## Critical Reflection

Name: Leon Simon

1. How do your products represent social groups or issues?
2. How do the elements of your production work together to create a sense of 'branding'?
3. How do your products engage with the audience?
4. How did your research inform your products and the way they use or challenge conventions?

## How do your products represent social groups or issues?

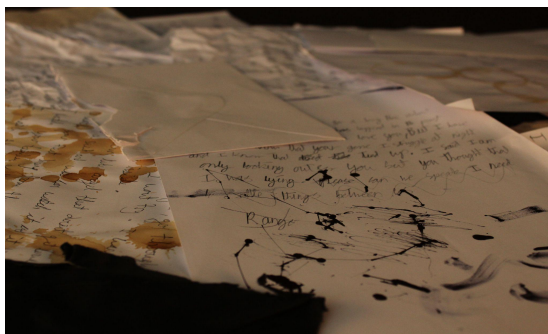
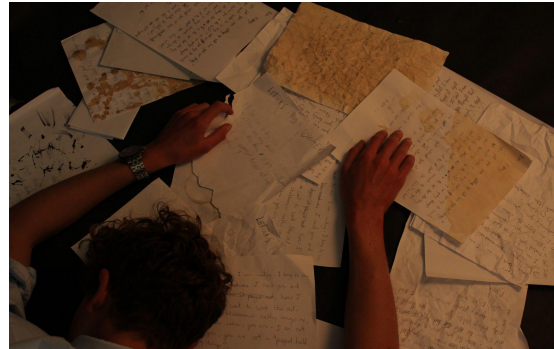
From the start, when the group first decided what song we would use, we decided how we would represent the star to our audience.

We think that our star is active with the audience, making him seem ordinary to the audience. The group decided that by having a youthful fanbase, we could capitalise and make our star active in the media; this would mean that the audience may feel a sense of relation to the star. Dyer suggests that stars can be both ordinary and extraordinary; we decided that our star would be ordinary on a

day-to-day basis, however he has hints of extraordinary to become the star. For example, when designing our digipak, only one image featured our star in. The image was taken of the star lying down with his head down, this suggests that the image was not taken to make him look extraordinary and a cover star. The image was ambient, and portrayed focus on the letters surrounding his body. By doing this it represents the star as an intrinsic character, who does believe that he is an ordinary person. Barthes would suggest that,

with the star turned away from the camera, lying scattered letters, with ambient lighting, it is hard for the audience to read the text that they have been conveyed.

By using cultural codes, the audience may read that the star is not as outgoing as they are, as he is lying in the dark room, meanwhile they are out enjoying their younger years.



## How do the elements of your production work together to create a sense of 'branding'?

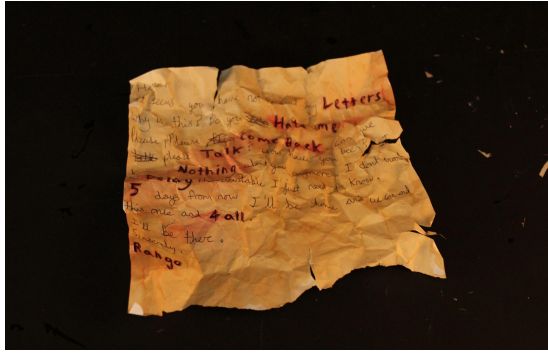
*The Mission Statement: Turning Tides has one goal and that is to create music for our ever growing fan base and audience. Turning Tides considers our songs to be musical journeys which tell a story. Our music is an experience which can be interpreted in many ways allowing it to be a different journey for every listener. This is shown through music videos that go alongside the song we have released to the public.*

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The group discussed how we needed to ensure our three products were coherent and could be sold as a package. We thought it would be best to come up with a mission statement for our band, this included the group represented as performers and storytellers. It was important that we replicated this all the way through the project. We understand that the audience uses genres for predictable pleasure (as Altman suggests), therefore by doing research before we start we will be able to replicate what our target audience wants to view.

Firstly in the music video, we ensured that the narrative told a story similar to the lyrics being sung by the band. By using editing in post production, it meant that we were able to add a filter to our footage and turn it black and white. This gave off a sombre feel to the audience, which helped us tell the story that we wanted.

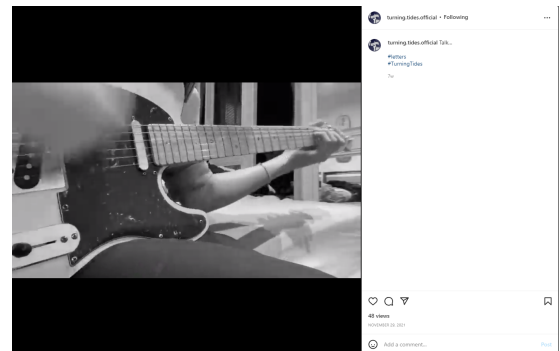




After that we started to create our digipak, it was important to carry on telling the story that we wanted throughout the album release. Therefore we ensured that the digipak also had a dismal feel when viewed by the audience. We did this by using props, the group decided to use tea bags to stain the

letters to give it a rustic feel. The group thought that these letters told a story, however there was no answer so it left the audience uncertain.

Our final product was the social media page, we realised that we needed to represent the performers in the same way as we did in our music video and digipak. We had noticed that our band had been represented as both ordinary and extraordinary in the media which is usual within our chosen genre. We decided to represent our band as ordinary people, by posting short clips of our guitarists playing his guitar in his bedroom.



Simultaneously we also posted tour dates, suggesting we are extraordinary and stars (theorised by Richard Dyer).

## How do your products engage with the audience?

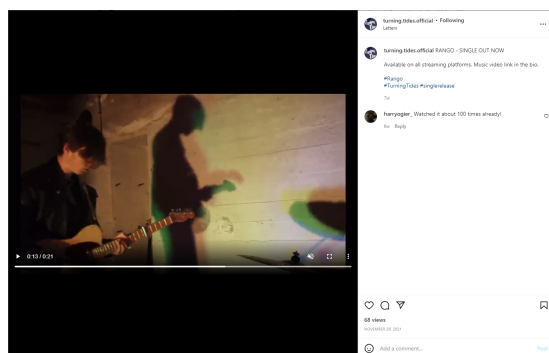
The group understood that before creating our products, we needed to understand our audience's profile, this included demographics and psychographics. We know that our target audience are males between 18-24, who do not always enjoy happy and upbeat music. By acknowledging this we know a bit more about how we can engage with our audience, especially by the use of social media.

It was important to use AIDA (attention, interest, desire, action), to attract our audience to the page. We will upload our tour dates on our social media page, this will excite the audience and hopefully make them active on our social media. This is because it will give the audience a topic to talk about and relate with other audience members with similar interests.



Blumler and Katz suggest that the audience are not passive, and will link products to social groups which best suit them. By knowing this, we were able to post content that we thought best entertained the audience we were hoping to reach. For example we posted a 30 second snippet from our music video on the release day, to really attract our target audience's attention. We hoped that this would make the consumers feel something, as we know that people use the media to feel emotions.

The group also made sure that we were interactive with the audience. We did this by using the Instagram polls feature. This allowed the audience to feel like they were relating to us, meanwhile we were also able to gather information/some ideas.



## How did your research inform your products and the way they use or challenge conventions?

To begin with we researched artists within our genre (Indie Rock), to discover the typical conventions of their music videos. Altman conveys the idea that a producer of media will use blueprint, to gain a better understanding of what is popular within the genre at the current time. Therefore we focused our research on Catfish and the Bottlemen and Arctic Monkeys, by doing this we quickly learnt that the videos were edited in a similar pattern. Nick Lacey, suggests that each piece of media within a specific genre will have clear-cut ingredients of what the target audience will want to see; these are known as the repertoire of elements. The music videos were generally focused on the performance of the band and not so much a narrative, however one was still included.



This led us to make the decision to use both narrative and performance, we decided that the group should follow the blueprint and focus on performance, however we added a narrative that portrayed a slight idea of what the song was about. We also quickly learnt about the conventional mise-en-scene patterns, for example most costumes

included: minimalistic clothing, simple jewellery, dark flannel shirts and ordinary hairstyles. As a group we thought that it would be best to use these typical conventions, as it would make the music video most recognisable, using iconography. Another thing that we discovered was a typical convention is dark lighting, in both narrative and performance shots. The group decided that we would follow this convention within the narrative, however we wanted to challenge the dark lighting when shooting our performance and have bright colourful lights shining onto the band. This will make sure that the audience is aware of the genre, and does not get confused by the gothic feel of a dark music video.