

Assignment 5 – Tutors Notes



An etching by William Hogarth inspired my work. It portrays a man so engrossed in his study that he does not realise the candle is setting fire to his hat. The etching is;

The Politician

“A politician should (as I have read)
Be furnish’d in the first place with a head.”

I thought how Hogarth might portray a politician from the 2015 election. Political appearances were set pieces, designed to look good in the media, with promises made and claims that these were often broken. This is the story I wanted to convey.

I sketched some ideas about background and props and the images on the following page show how my thinking developed and how I made the backdrop. I experimented with different studio lighting set ups to get the effect I wanted.

Posing the politician in front of a backdrop newspaper cuttings symbolises his obsession with the media and insulation from the general public. I produced placards displaying political promises that later turned out to be false. These were from the (then) three main political parties as my message was that this applied to all politicians. The dustbin is symbolic of them being dumped.

The fire basket contains symbols of promises and services ‘going up in smoke’. The books symbolise education, the globe is a symbol of the environment, the broken walking stick of social care and the stethoscope stands for the health service.

I had seen from my previous assignment (Karen Knorr) how effective the combination of text, title and image can be and wanted to include relevant text to go with my image. I looked at some contemporary poetry but in the end chose two lines from the same poem that Hogarth had used¹.

“Wrap up your Poison well, nor fear to say
What was a Lie last Night is Truth to Day;”

¹ ‘The Art of Politicks’ by James Bramston

