

Me trying to write

I don't consider myself a writer, but at some point in my teenage years, I did aspire to write as a career but I eventually struggled to enjoy the process of writing. It became tedious and unenjoyable, like struggling to walk through thick, neck deep mud in the cold. My brain wanted to rush through it, but my body wouldn't cooperate and words would stay stuck in my head without ever making it to the page. I resigned to the idea and decided that I preferred visual art and went down that path instead.

What I struggle with when it comes to writing is that it stays stuck in my head. I am constantly overthinking, meaning that I put words on the page and then quickly resort to deleting it. I spend more time thinking about what to write than actually writing words down on the page. When I looked at my peers around me getting on with it seemingly writing at 70 words per minute, I was barely managing putting any words down at all. Also, the agony of handing in a piece of writing for the teacher/lecturer to mark i.e. (in my view) judge me. This meant I didn't enjoy the process and I found it painful. This stayed with me until my final year of university, where I chose an essay based subject. I am clearly a masochist. I felt relief the moment I handed in my dissertation because I thought I'd never have to write another long piece of prose ever again.

But no, here I am putting myself through what I have come to consider as agony, writing this piece. In all honesty, I'm doing it partly for the check, and as a struggling artist, you've got to take what's given.

It also aligns with the current phase in my life and my art practice, of trying new things and continuing with old things that I never finished. That learning something new takes practice, patience and dedication. As a child I was stubborn and struggled to continue with hobbies that I wasn't good at. You might be able to tell I'm a Capricorn sun. I didn't attend swimming lessons at school because I was embarrassed to be one of the few who couldn't swim. I never learned to ride a bike for similar reasons, and I quit chess club because I was the worst in the club.

My childhood mantra of giving up before allowing myself to go through the hard work and patience of learning something new and expecting to be good at something straight away reflects the culture of wider society. The fast-paced attention economy that we currently reside in doesn't encourage taking life slowly, and the patience required to learn something new. It requires us to rush through things, buy stuff online and receive it the next day, to constantly be bombarded with polished, beautiful material images items and not stop for a minute to consider the gruelling work that goes into creating a piece of work from scratch

Enter Ebum Sodipo's writing workshop at Camden Art Centre as part of *the One in the Other* programme. I met Ebum a handful of times last year when we temporarily shared studio space. She exuded this warm, inviting, confident energy and I enjoyed being in her presence so when I saw that she was doing a workshop at my place of work I had to attend.

In the workshop Ebum encouraged participants to be themselves while also fostering a sense of community. I felt I had room to 'overthink', to pour a stream of consciousness on to the page but not to shame it. To allow my feelings to run free in written form. During the initial free write task Ebum set, I kept writing, I couldn't stop. The workshop helped facilitate me to feel comfortable to be my true self, to allow the words to flow out. I don't recall ever feeling like this when creating a piece of writing. At the end of the workshop I thought, I do actually consider myself a writer.