

OXFORD IB DIPLOMA PROGRAMME



# VISUAL ARTS

COURSE COMPANION

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OXFORD

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# Introduction

This guide will help you to complete the IB visual arts course successfully. It has been written to both inform and inspire students. It includes a wealth of ideas to challenge and stretch your creativity, but also plenty of suggestions to save you time and help you to work effectively. You can choose to use this book as a guide throughout the course, or simply as a reference book to reach for in a moment of panic when you need answers to your questions!

## Tip



Make sure you balance your time between the different elements appropriately.

The course has three assessed components that have different weighting for assessment:

- the comparative study worth 20%
- the process portfolio worth 40%
- the exhibition worth 40%.

And there is a key element that is not assessed: the visual arts journal.



There is no set order to follow as you complete the work necessary for the visual arts course, but your teachers will structure lessons to achieve a balance between the three assessed components. We have organized this book to reflect this flexibility. We start with an introduction to the visual arts journal as you will use this throughout all parts of the course, then there is an introduction to the formal elements of art, followed by a section on each of the assessed components: the comparative study, the process portfolio and the exhibition. There is a detailed glossary providing the subject-specific language that is essential for all areas of the course. Finally a bibliography and list of recommended reading suggest links to help you expand the ideas we introduce.

Familiarize yourself with the content of this book. Read the short section on the visual arts journal first as this is an important part of your studies in visual arts and then look at the introduction to each section so you gain a sense of the whole course. Flicking through the student examples will also help you to get a feel for how past students have produced work to meet the demands of the assessment criteria for each assessed component. Once you are familiar with the scope of the book then you will know where to look for advice that is relevant to the different demands of the course.

Your teacher will have introduced the *Visual arts guide* to you. This is the official course syllabus that tells students, teachers and examiners the required content and assessment methods for the course. It is important that you understand exactly what is required of you in choosing to study this course. The guide is essential, but this book will help you to better understand the language that has been used in the official guide. It also expands on the ideas for practical projects that really help you to meet the criteria as well as giving plenty of pictures to illustrate what is actually meant!



# 1

## The visual arts journal

### What is the visual arts journal?

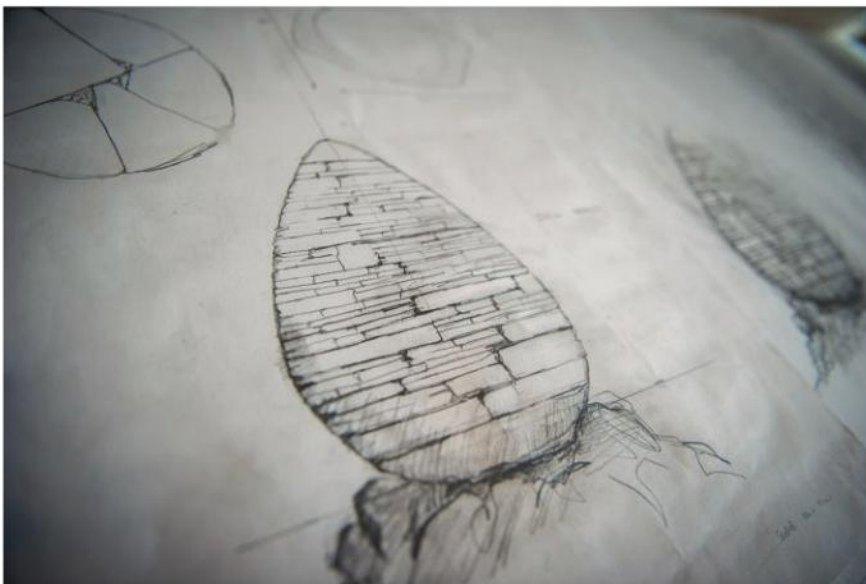
The visual arts journal is the most important learning tool for your course. In the following chapters there are plenty of suggestions of ways you can use your journal to support each component. Here you can find a more general introduction to the concept of the visual arts journal and the different forms it can take. You will use it throughout your visual arts course.

The visual arts course is studio-based. What this means is that during your time following the course, you will be adopting the work practices and habits of a working visual artist. The Diploma Programme is a university matriculation course, so you won't have all of the artistic freedoms that you might imagine artists to enjoy. After all, your work will be assessed against standardized assessment criteria, therefore, it will need to comply with a range of specific requirements and will need to be submitted in particular forms, but you will be expected to approach your art-making as a part of a discipline-based practice where you develop ideas, investigate concepts, develop skills and techniques with materials and media and, ultimately, complete a body of artworks.

Many artists, both in the past and today, use some form of visual arts journal as a part of their art-making practice. Sketchbooks, visual diaries, visual journals, notebooks, workbooks – a whole range of different terms are used to describe them, and probably even more varied is the different ways that each individual artist will use them, but what they have in common is how critical they become to the artist in their art-making practice.

#### ATL Thinking skills

“Visual” is a key word when thinking about the visual arts journal, and being visual is the key to keeping a successful journal. It is a way to make your thinking visible. Try using sketches, annotated images and diagrams, flow charts, concept webs and mind maps in different ways to communicate your processes and your art-making practice.



▲ Real artists use visual arts journals too. This shows a sketch of an art installation in progress by British artist Andy Goldsworthy at the Château de Chaumont-sur-Loire in central France. It is entitled “Egg-shaped cairn of slates”.

The journal is not formally assessed or moderated, but it is a fundamental activity in the course, and will feed into the three assessed components. It is the glue that sticks them together! For many students, the visual arts journal will be the source of most of the evidence that they will use to put together their process portfolio and all of the research for their comparative study. If used well, your visual arts journal will be a comprehensive visual and written record of your development as an artist throughout the course.

You will record:

- observations from real-life experiences through notes, drawings and photography
- your research from books and electronic media into other artists' works, visual stimuli and contextual ideas
- your interactions with your teachers and class critiques
- your references so that it is easy to add citations when you submit assessed work.

You will experiment:

- with new skills and technologies
- with new concepts and ways of working.

You will practise:

- refining your existing art-making
- writing text for your exhibition curatorial statement, for your process portfolio and for the comparative study.

You will reflect:

- on the development of your new ideas and evaluate plans for process portfolio projects and your exhibition
- on visits to museums and galleries and on artist visits and workshops
- on the challenges that you face and how to improve your art-making
- on your own development as an artist through your art-making practice.

## Making the visual arts journal a habit

Keeping your visual arts journal by your side as you work on artworks will enable you to refer back to the original ideas, sketches and source images that have been used. You can record the names of colours that you are using as well as the combinations and the ratios that you are mixing to produce the particular hues. When you encounter a problem, you can sketch various alternatives in your visual arts journal until you find a workable solution. You can also make a note of any feedback or suggestions you value from your peers and teacher. As your scheduled class time comes to an end, you can make quick notes to remind you where you got up to, and what you were going to do next. These can become the goals for your next lesson and will allow you to refocus your attention to your other areas of study until next time.

### Tip



Organize your electronic records carefully. As part of your journal you will take many photographs. Whether you use a camera or your phone, over two years it is very easy to accidentally delete or simply forget where you have stored the files. Similarly, if you upgrade your phone – or lose it – all those records are gone. So download your files to a safe folder and back everything up on one of the various cloud storage systems available. Your school will probably create a shared folder for you to put these in – if they don't do this you could suggest that they do.



The visual arts course doesn't typically generate the same level of conventional homework that some of your other subjects will, but allocate some of your home study time to review your visual arts journal and possibly follow up on some of the valuable suggestions given to you during studio time by your teacher or peers. You could undertake and record some critical investigation into an artist or artwork that your teacher suggested your work was beginning to remind them of, reflect on your progress with your current work, or start to think about ideas and images for that next piece of studio work.

## Format

There is no prescribed format for your journal. The course gives you free choice in deciding what form it should take: a collection of sketchbooks and notebooks, a single hardbound book, electronic files on your computer, records of experiments, an artist's folio, or a combination of all of these. In fact, you might find that you switch between forms of visual arts journals as you explore different art-making forms and media. You might find that using a form of electronic journal might work better for you while you are working on a screen-based art-making form, for example. The journal could be a single sketchbook or dozens of notebooks. It can be long or short, small and private, or large and public. You can write in ink with a quill pen or dictate your thoughts directly onto your phone. It might include photographs, films and recordings. It will definitely include notes, annotations and reflection. Of course there will be drawings, scribbles and mess! In other words, the visual arts journal is a general term for what is likely to be a number of different ways you record visual creative work.

You will eventually be presenting both your process portfolio and comparative study to be viewed for assessment on a horizontal screen. The most time-efficient approach is to use a sketchbook of a similar proportion for your visual arts journal, allowing you to scan complete pages – some of the examples in this chapter do this. However, use whatever works best in your art-making practice. Choose the most appropriate ways of recording the development of a body of work, as well as your own development as an artist.

Before you start, look at the examples in this section of how your journal will connect to the assessed areas, as it is in these components that the learning from your journal will be presented to be assessed.

## Using your visual arts journal as a learning tool

The core of the syllabus expects students to learn through engaging with three areas: visual arts in context (artists and why they make art), visual arts methods (ways of making art) and communicating visual arts (ways of presenting ideas). In practice this means that in your art classes your teacher will help you to engage in a wide range of different activities, all of which will feature in your visual arts journal. Below are ways in which you could use your journal as part of this learning.

### Theoretical practice: Thinking and ideas

This will include looking at other artists and considering how we make judgments. You might evaluate ideas such as feminism, colonialism or gender-based issues in relation to contemporary art as well as using

#### Tip



You are likely to want to use a wide selection of pages or extracts from pages from your visual arts journal as part of your process portfolio. It will pay dividends if you take the approach of considering every page as a potential process portfolio screen. Always be mindful of your presentation and the legibility of your work. Journal pages will need to be scanned or photographed for inclusion in the process portfolio, so it is important that there is adequate contrast between any text and the background, and that the size of the text will be legible on screen.



**ATL Creativity box**

This is a Pandora's box of ideas for when you get stuck, or need to shake up your creative work, for when your art is becoming repetitive or boring. Find or make a container – it could be an envelope, a tin, a basket, a shoe box; you might want to give it extra value by decorating it or making your container from scratch.

Then prepare a stack of cards and on each one write a word – these are going to be your inspiration triggers. Think of qualities such as rough, hard, thick, silken and so on. Think of values such as refined, tiny, large, colourful. Think of materials and substances such as string, chalk, charcoal, sharpies, oil, sugar. Think of what is important to you such as sunshine, bagels, the sea, dogs. Think of feelings such as sad, reflective, instinctive, angry, impulsive.

If you work with a friend you can add words to each other's box. In spare moments add new words. Then when your work gets dull, pull out three words and use them to change your ideas. A rough and impulsive drawing of your dog, for example!

historical frameworks for traditional art. Much of this material will be included in your comparative study. Consider how processes and techniques are used to express ideas; this will become part of your process portfolio. You can explore different ways of communicating these concepts by making notes and perhaps audio recordings for your journal, but also reflect on the most successful ways of presenting ideas in preparation for your final exhibition.

### Art-making practice: Doing stuff

You will create with new media and evaluate which materials best suit your intentions. Experiment in a meaningful way, refine your choices and select which art activity expresses your ideas – the journal will be an essential element in this process. This will develop into a body of artwork for your exhibition and it is in the journal that you will organize the connections and prepare the text to support your presentation. Most of this material will become part of your process portfolio.

### Curatorial practice: Presenting stuff

Respond to the interactions you have with other art through exhibitions, artist visits and workshops. Then evaluate what is most relevant to your own artwork. This is when you will consider the impact you would like your exhibition to have on the audience by synthesizing all your recordings in the journal into the assessed exhibition.

### Linking with the assessed components

How will material from your journal be transferred to the assessed components? You might complete your journal as clear, organized sketchbook pages that can be directly scanned into the process portfolio. If you do this, you might choose an A3 landscape format that readily matches a screenshot. Some students take this approach even for their comparative study. However, most students use the journal as a developmental step that they then reorganize for presentation. So sketches made in your journal may stay there as first trials or end up photographed or scanned in as process portfolio screens where they are combined with a photo record of studio experimentations and the development of exhibition pieces, making a coherent record of your art journey.

If you choose to keep an electronic journal, then word processed text can easily be pasted into final presentations. If you prefer to keep the personal touch of handwritten notes, then you will probably need to type them up unless you have really clear handwriting.

### Linking the journal with the comparative study

You will be keeping research notes and writing draft paragraphs just as you do when you prepare for an essay, but journal work for your comparative study should also be visual so that you are equipped to make exciting juxtapositions and graphics in the screens you submit for assessment.

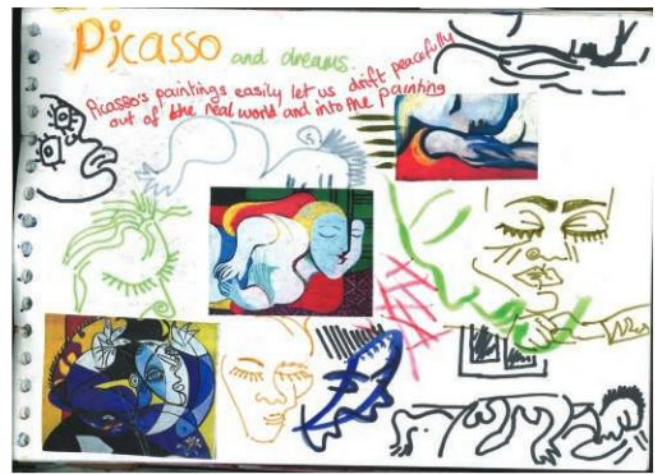


▶ Meg and Meghan are preparing topics for their comparative study. This is an example of how working on a large scale — they have spread big sheets of paper on the floor — has helped them to explore ideas in a free manner. Meg has taken books on Ukiyo-e prints and then used paint to make a visual link with Maggie Hambling's paintings of waves. Meghan knew that she wanted to write about Alexander McQueen, but was unsure how to develop connections. Her teacher has suggested themes and she is beginning to trace links by adding images and using her fashion books as inspiration. Work such as this is easily photographed on a phone to refer to later when the detailed comparative study research starts

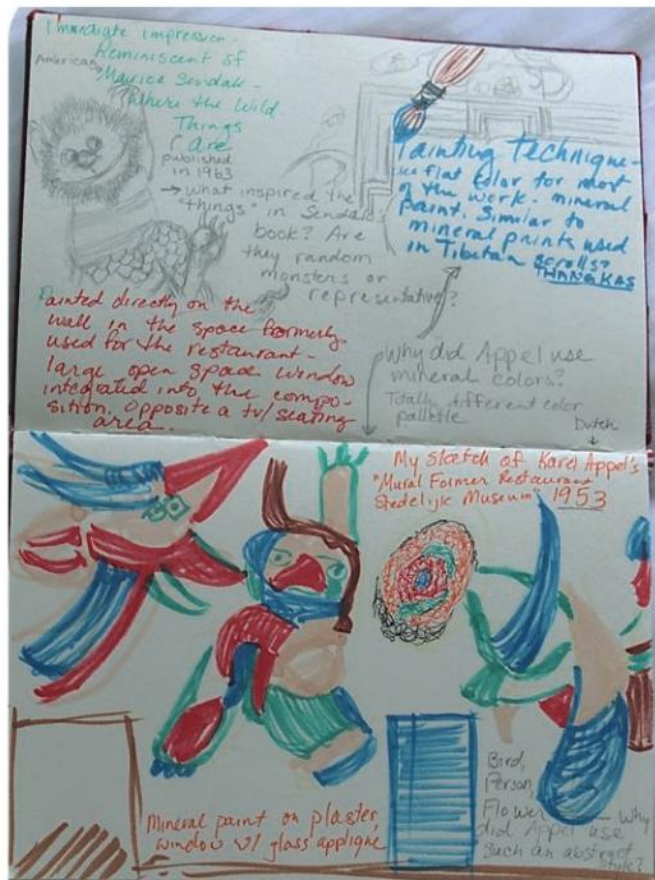
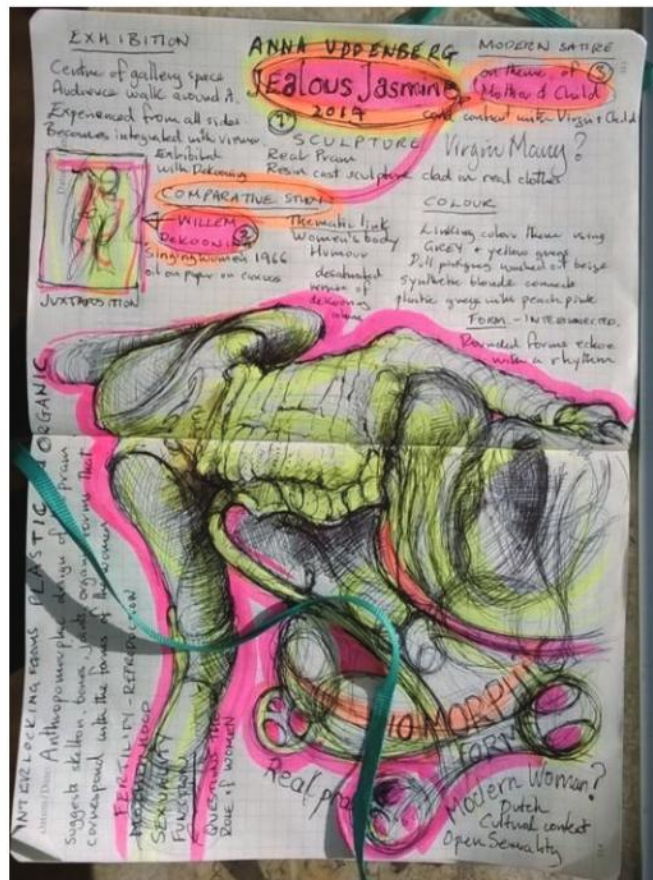


▶ This could be seen as stage two of the work that Meg and Meghan were engaged in. Anson is using collage and juxtaposition to make meaningful links with his comparative study on iconoclasm.



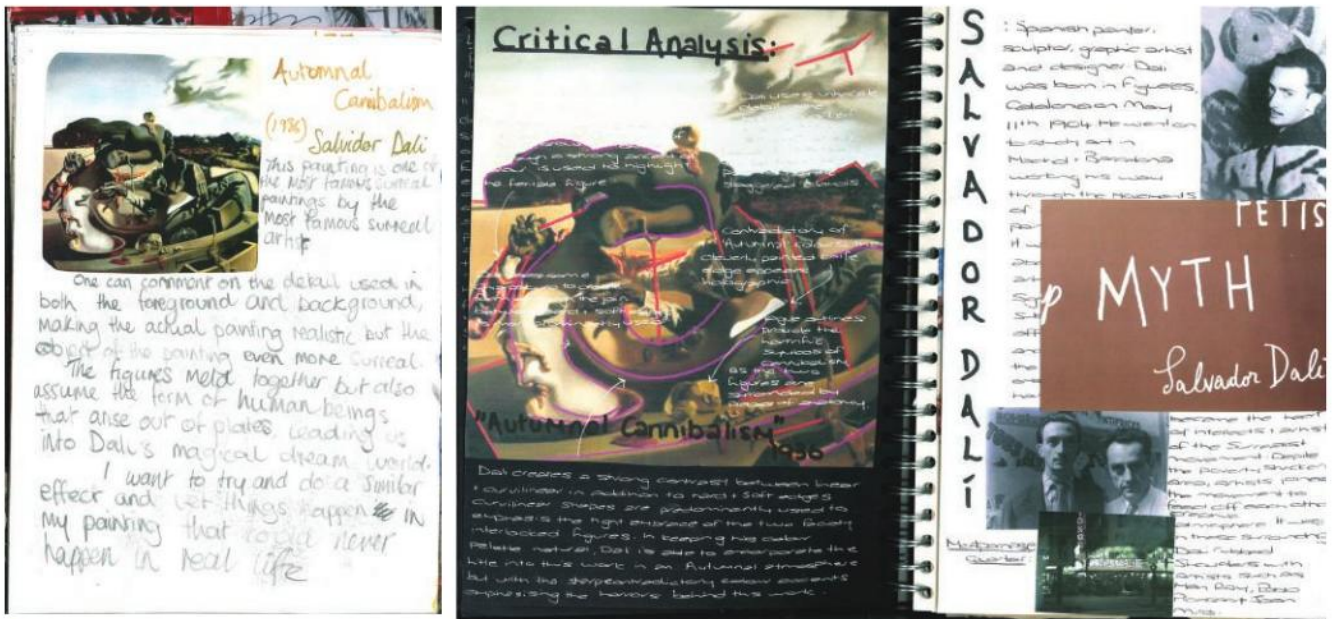


▲ On a museum visit Anthony is using his journal to record his interest in Picasso and Matisse. This is the first stage of his research on Matisse's use of colour for his comparative study. Alongside his notes he used sticky coloured paper and sharpies to respond directly to the paintings in the gallery.

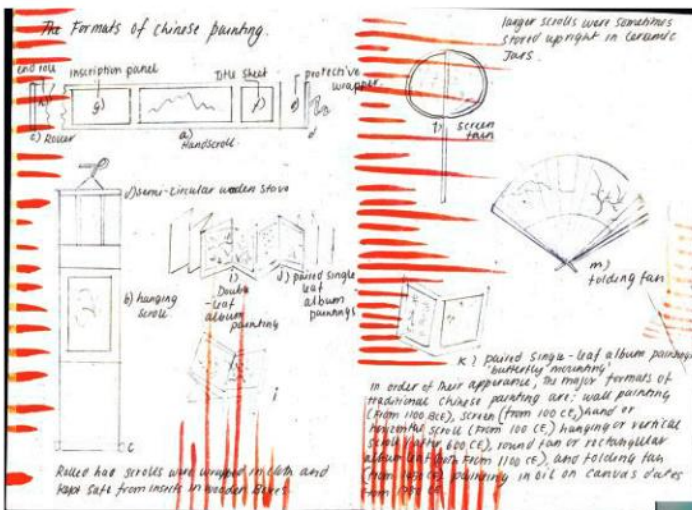


▲ Carl and Becky are sketching in the Stedelijk Museum in Amsterdam. The point of these drawings is to slow down and look carefully. The notes can be prompted by the museum labels (remember to cite these if you use this text later) and observations of formal qualities and function. Spending time sketching also allows you to consider the relationship to the gallery audience – to observe how others respond to the artworks and to think about the way the works are presented.





▲ Kierlan's work on Dali forms one of the case studies in the comparative study chapter. Here are three early pages from her journals. In the first she makes rough notes in front of the painting, in the second she develops a focused analysis of formal qualities and the third is part of her research into Dali himself.



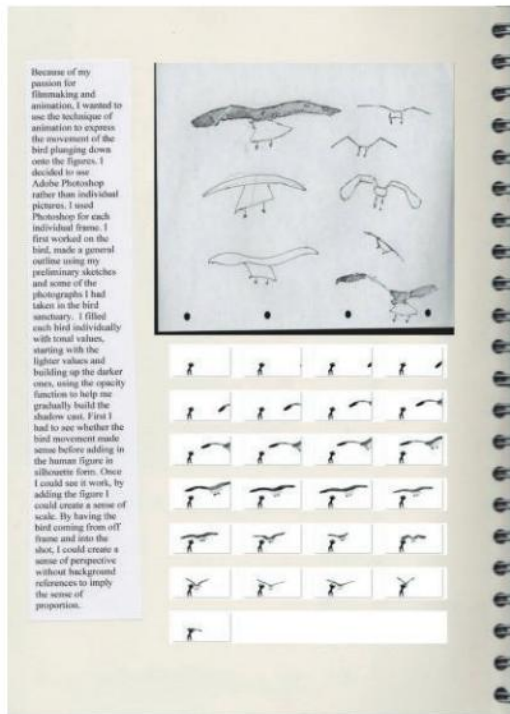
▶ Emma and Carolyn visited an exhibition of Chinese painting. Back in the studio they are experimenting with brush and ink in the Chinese fan fold sketchbooks they bought at the gallery. These practical experiments are nicely combined with research in materials and function. Some of these pages are clear enough to be directly included in either their process portfolio or their comparative study.



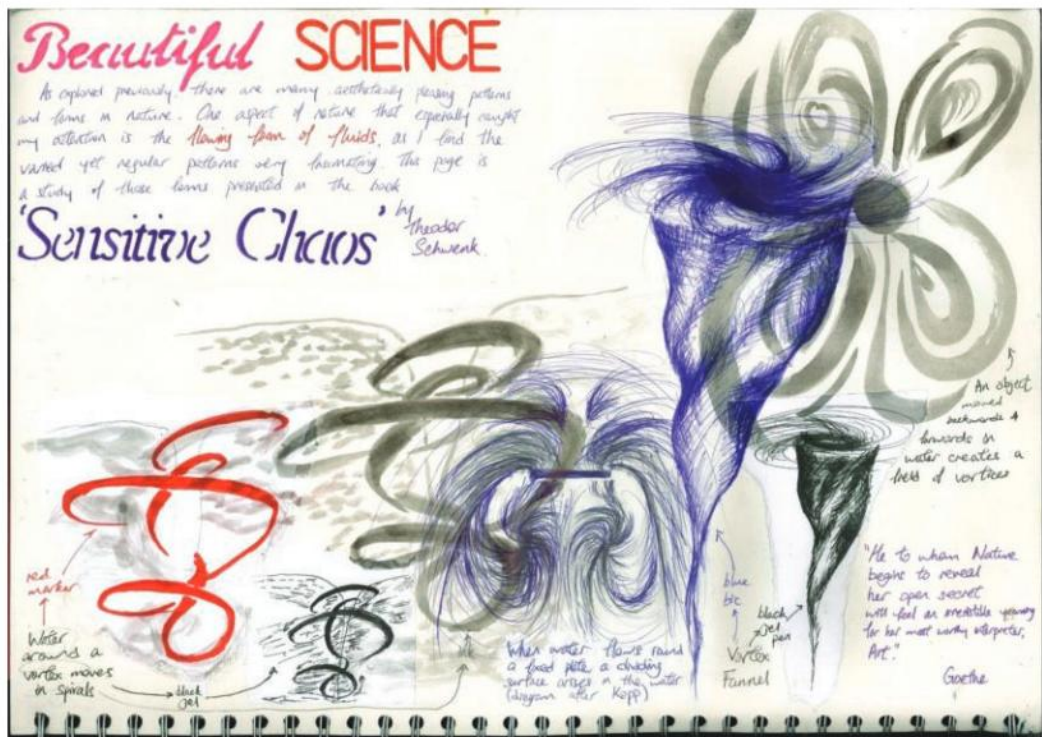


## Linking the journal with the process portfolio

As has already been said, sometimes your journal and your process portfolio are the same thing! Notice how often this is the case in these examples.

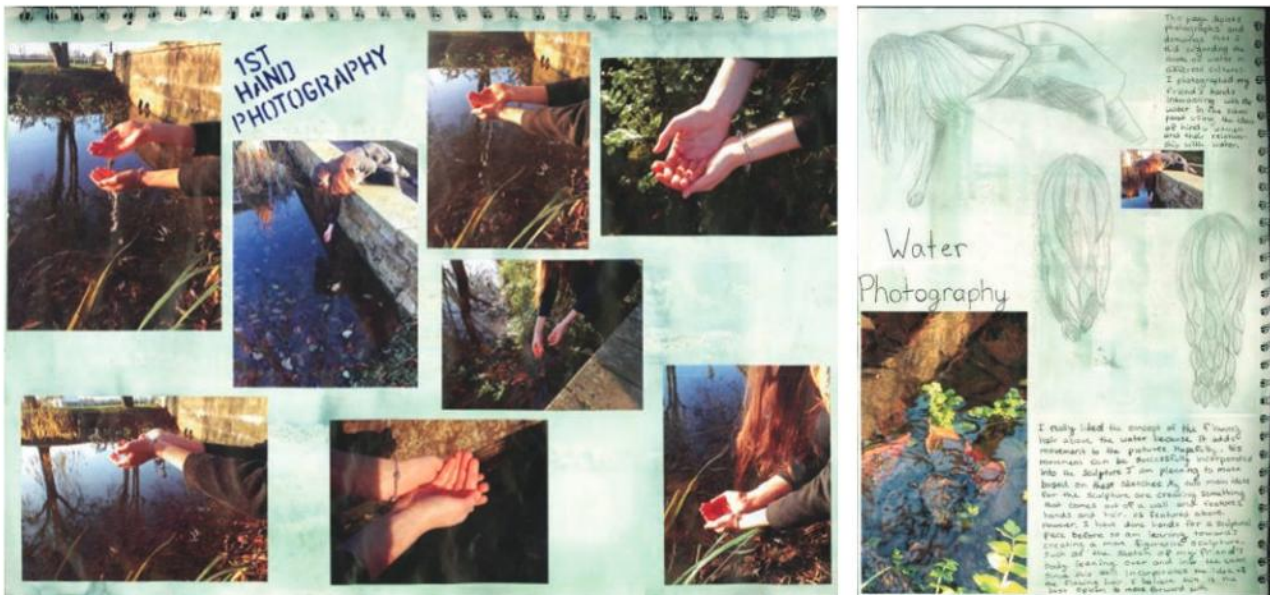


▲ This double page spread was presented for assessment as part of Jonathan's process portfolio, but it is in fact a collage from earlier journal work in several different formats: his photographs of owls, his preparatory sketches and stills from his stop animation.

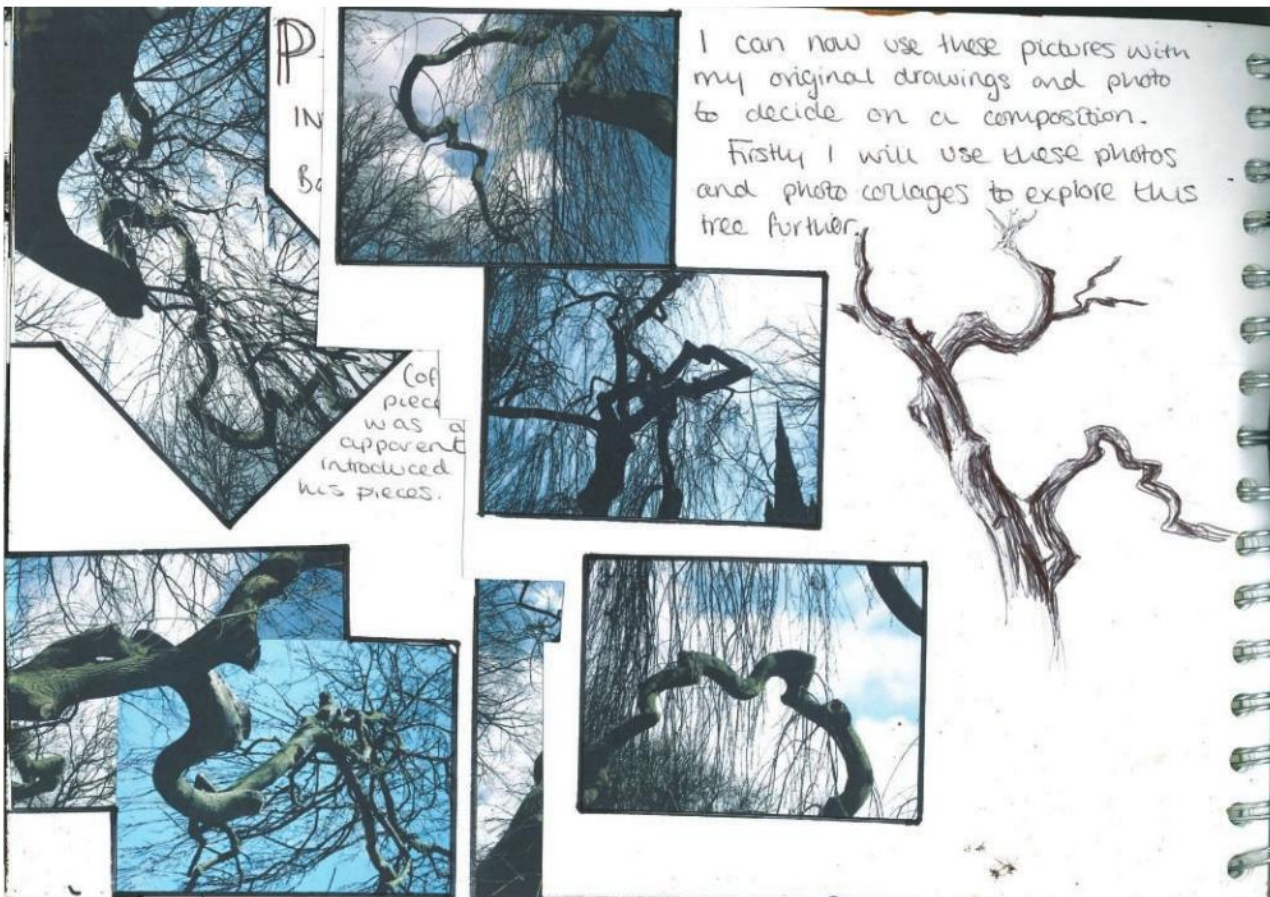


▲ This investigative journal page could easily be scanned as a complete process portfolio screen.





- ▲ Taking photographs is an important part of all artists' work. Often we leave them in files without reflecting on how they will feed into studio ideas. Selecting and presenting photos in her journal has helped Sophia to think about how to compose her exhibition sculpture piece. On the next page she begins to reflect on these ideas and make preliminary sketches.



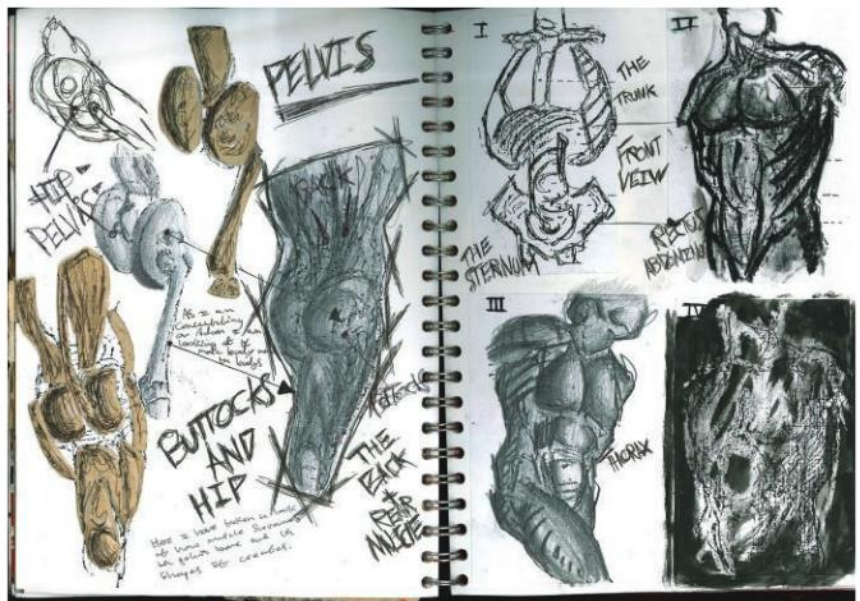
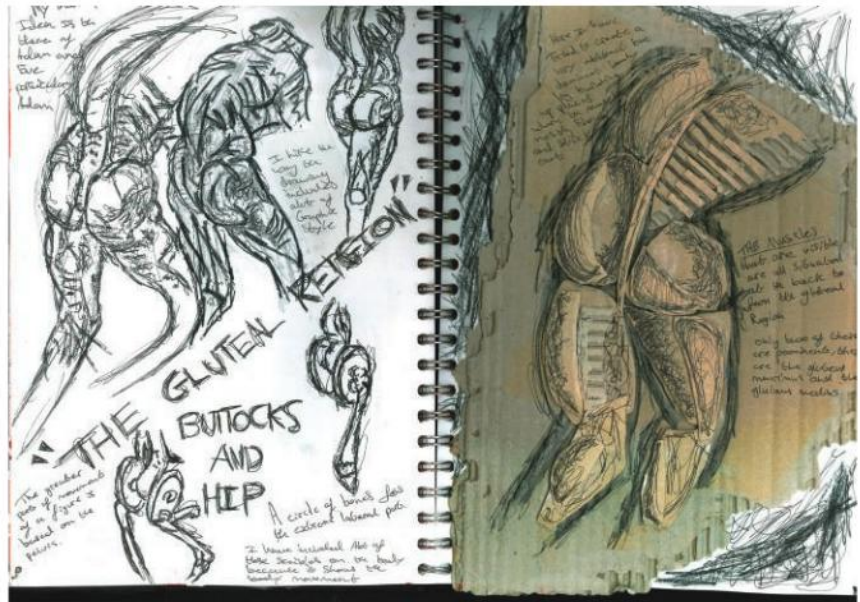
- ▲ Here is another example of evaluating photographs in a journal. Octavia had been looking at Mondrian's drawings of trees when she decided to see if she could develop abstract forms in a similar way. She has started to play with unexpected compositions. It is easy to see how with added captions this page can be scanned as part of the development of her exhibition pieces in the process portfolio.



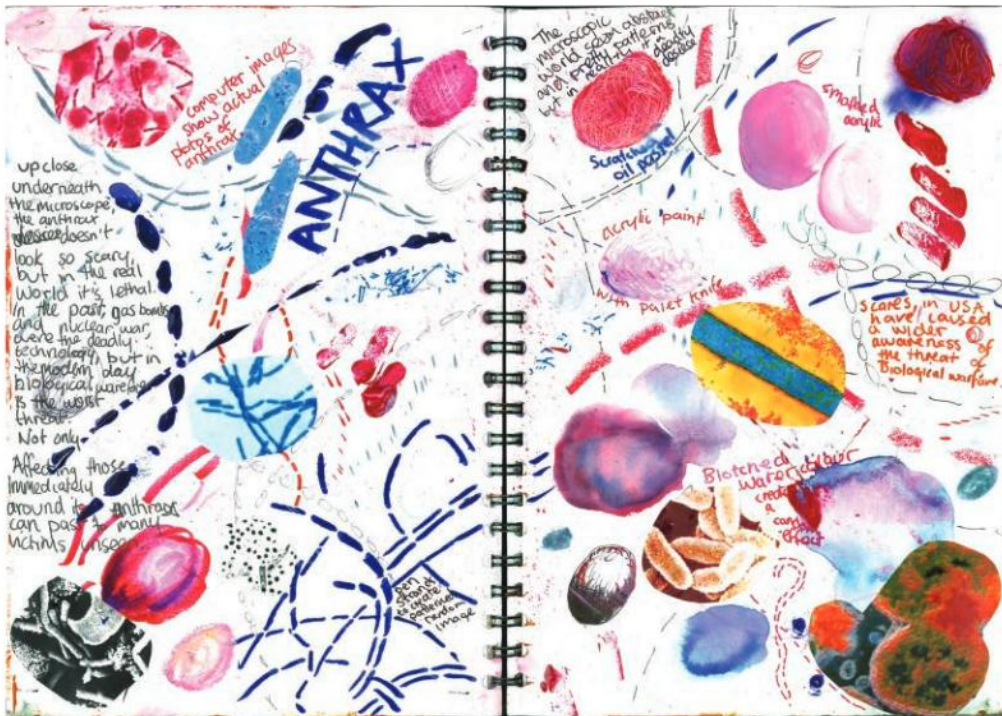
- ▶ Carolyn is planning a textiles piece based on corsets for her exhibition so in her journal she has taken photos, chosen the ribbon colour and added reflections on corsets from a feminist perspective. Katie is preparing for a still-life painting that includes a glove, by drawing with different media. Both students can easily scan these pages for inclusion as assessed process portfolio screens. Free, creative approaches like this are the great advantage of the journal – it allows you to concentrate on the art ideas in any form you wish.



- ▶ These are focused experimental pages, mixing card collage with photocopies and researched vocabulary on human anatomy. These were produced in preparation for a sculpture, but Chris can now scan these pages for his process portfolio – he will just need to type some clearer explanatory notes and make links to the development of his exhibition piece.







- ▶ Playing with materials is one of the most important activities for an artist. Not all of your pages will look as exciting as this one, but that is the point of the journal – it allows you to produce lots of material, then scan the best examples for the process portfolio. All that needs to be added is some text to contextualize this mixed media work with the development of studio ideas.



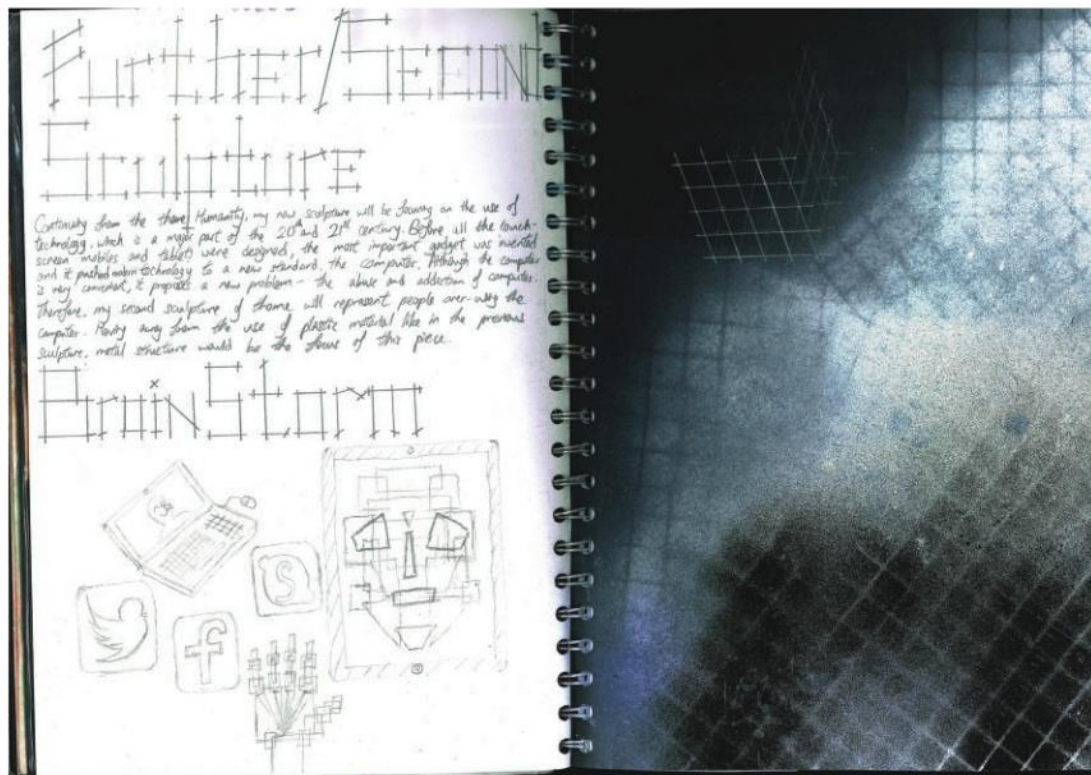
- ▶ Anthony's collage book is a studio tool, feeding his paintings and sculptures. The journal has allowed him to work free from concerns about presentation or assessment, although he has added notes so this is a resource for writing about his art later too.

## Linking the journal with the exhibition

The most obvious link between the journal and your exhibition is that in the journal you will be preparing to write your curatorial statement for the exhibition and developing your connecting ideas. To do this well you will need to record every day in the studio as well as on museum visits.

However, far more important than this is the learning that takes place through your journal which will be the foundation for resolved works.





▲ Anson is developing a second outcome from an earlier sculpture idea – his notes record this and will be useful when he explains the concepts in his curatorial statement. Below these he sketches some first ideas, while on the right he experiments with how he might use spray and stencil in this work. These journal pages are essentially exhibition preparation, but could well be part of his process portfolio.



# Gallery Spaces and Interior

## Features...

Our World Through Art! 'Our World Through Art' presents a changing selection from Leicester's permanent collection of artworks from the 15th to the 21st century. Originating in the 1880's the art collections have grown to encompass paintings, sculpture and works on paper by artists of local, national and international significance. Therefore this gallery features a wide selection of works old and new, classical and contemporary which is reflected in the interior style of the room. The style is both classical and modern. Natural light seeps from the glass roof creating an airy atmosphere but is also teamed with artificial spotlights. The ceilings are extremely high and the room large and rectangular which allows the viewer to stand in the centre of the space and look at the art of a timeline of artwork. The detailing of stairs or the ceiling around the window with bright blue and gold gridding which rejects the classic element of the gallery. An old leather purpose to the gallery.

There is a large stage and a piano which suggests a leisurely purpose to the gallery.

...the interior of the gallery is very much influenced by this collection, stairs through the clear white wash walls and wooden floors reflecting a modern atmosphere. There is a very minimalist feel to the gallery with selected artwork featured, instead of huge amounts hung close together, with some walls either dedicated to one large painting. The light is artificial with spotlights hung from the ceiling which appear checkered in a contemporary fashion. Furthermore the glass railings in the redoubtable affect the contemporary nature of the exhibition and gallery space.

↑ First Floor  
← Ground Floor

▲ Kitty has thought about the curation of an exhibition in Leicester City Art Gallery. Her photo of a group of paintings will help her to consider how she arranges the paintings in her own exhibition. The ground plan, the shots of the lighting and of the overall space are a purposeful consideration of how an audience experiences art in a public space, making this very good preparation for her curatorial statement.



◀ Remember that sometimes your journal is just a sketchbook. Antonia is preparing for her exhibition paintings of the life model and here she uses contour lines to capture the dynamism of movement. Ella has used her small notebooks to doodle – it is easy to imagine these sketches as part of a process portfolio page.



# Interiors in other artists' work

inheriting visual contrast.

↑  
Strong & vibrant use of red and green. → jarring

dominance of vertical lines but some horizontal work in foreground and character. Strong vertical lines

upheld by Japanese prints. Banks of cobble and screens.

Woman appears to be waiting as the viewer is at. She is depicted with no facial features

she sits alone, awkward as seen in background playing piano. → a nervously welcoming scene, but how would atmosphere - as if she has been waiting for us

criticizing waiting for client? celano and tension.

'Interior, The Orange Blind' 1928



'Woman in an Interior' Edward Munch (1868-1910)  
no particular technique, more subtle details against form above & wide. More subtle brushwork. = recognizable. Dark/light only used to limit atmosphere.

series of paintings also known as 'Camden Town murders' people suspect Sicker to be the famous 'Jack the Ripper' who committed several murders of prostitutes in Camden in 1888.

'Mornington Crescent model, Centre, June' 1907  
with painting's subject, lighting, viewpoint, viewpoint, Walter Sickert

dark colour palette. Still elements of red are given → seen with fields like the two other works on facing pages. has no facial features. looks as if she is unconscious. has just risen up atmosphere. from the local authority to be a client, welcome / understand when initially missing that, # much more relaxed & languid. Quiet and peaceful. But viewpoint adds element of interest.

we look down on her. the scene shows of our presence. → becomes a voyeur, sexual? or merely painting technique - very saturated colour. Bold and vibrant, thick → eye slightly compressed about where to look → focus point = her white shirt.

'Figure in an Interior' Mary Graham (1877-1900)



▲ Eleanor is developing her exhibition around her interest in interior spaces, which links to her comparative study. On these pages she has used subject-specific vocabulary prompted by the paintings of Vuillard and the Camden town group. This will be useful when she writes about her own art-making.

# 2

## Formal elements of art

### Key terms

**Subject-specific language:** words that are specific to the field of art. The use of subject-specific language is an assessed element of the course and this book includes plenty of ideas for how to develop your language to analyse art.

### What are the formal elements of art?

This chapter provides you with a structured approach to the critical analysis of **formal qualities**. This is an important skill that you will need to use in your visual arts journal when writing about your own artworks or the art of others and in the three assessed components.

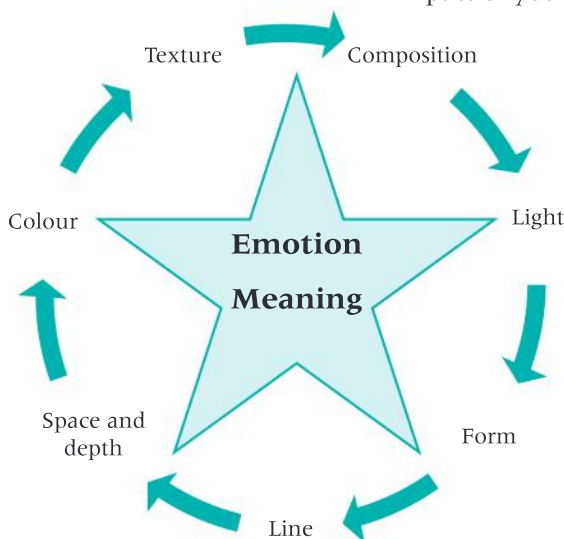
The formal elements of art are the physical qualities of an artwork and their visual effects, a separate aspect from function and meaning. A consideration of the formal elements is a way of making a focused description of an artifact and the processes through which it was made. To do this effectively you will need to use **subject-specific language**. At the back of this book is a comprehensive glossary of arts-related vocabulary to support you in this task.

There are good guides to formal analysis such as:

- *The Thames and Hudson Introduction to Art* (Thames & Hudson, 2015)
- *Thinking About Art: A Thematic Guide* by Penny Huntsman (2015)
- The Tate Gallery Website at <http://www.tate.org.uk/>
- The Metropolitan Museum Website at <http://www.metmuseum.org/>

There are many effective ways to structure formal analysis. This chapter divides the task into two related aspects: the first considers the formal elements individually, while the second develops the elements into a consideration of material, process and technique. As art takes so many wildly different forms, you will need to be flexible in your approach and consider which way is most suited to what you are examining. However you approach the analysis, you always begin by noting the emotional impact of your first impressions of the work – this will give you an insight into function and meaning that you can return to later.

You could start your analysis with the “Seven formal points” diagram. These points act as prompts to your description, but don’t follow them systematically – follow the order that seems most appropriate to the artwork. For contemporary works, such as installation, it may be appropriate to look at the eighth element: time and motion. Remember that discussing the materials, process and technique as detailed in the second part of the chapter will be an important part of your formal analysis.





## Key terms

**Golden mean:** a system to create aesthetically pleasing proportions originating in ancient Greece. The principle is that a line is divided so that the smaller section's relation to the larger section is the same as the larger section is to the whole, approximately 5:8.

**Rule of thirds:** imagine a composition divided into thirds; these lines become the most significant points at which to place key elements.

**Negative and positive space:** negative space is the area around the forms (void) and positive space is the area taken by the form. In a strong composition there will be an interesting balance between the areas, with the negative space being just as visually arresting as the positive.

**Cropping:** this is when objects are cut off by the edge of the picture, as often happens in photography. Cropping is less evident in paintings before the invention of photography. Cropping reminds the viewer that we are looking through a window or seeing a portion of a reality that continues outside of the frame.

**Scale:** the relative size of an object.

**Kinetic:** movement. Some art, such as Calder's mobiles, move and can therefore be described as kinetic, but we also move around static sculptures in a gallery so we experience them kinetically: through movement.

## Composition

**Composition** is the arrangement and structure of the elements within a painting. In sculpture it is the relationship of the forms to each other and the surrounding space.

The principals of harmony, rhythm, emphasis, proportion, variety and balance can all be evaluated in relation to composition. You might also consider theories such as the **golden mean**, or the **rule of thirds**.

When you analyse composition you could discuss:

- the format
- the arrangement of lines and shapes
- **negative and positive space**
- **cropping**
- the **scale**.

## Tip: useful vocabulary



## Useful words to use when describing composition:

arbitrary, asymmetrical, balanced, busy, calculated, chaotic, confused, cropped, cut, discordant, divided, dramatic, complex, geometric, golden mean, harmonious, informal, imbalanced, irregular, random, regular, repetition, rhythm, rule of thirds, segmented, symmetrical

When considering the scale and impact of an artwork you might ask:

- How does the human form compare to the size of the artwork?
- Do I need to stand back to see the painting?
- Do I need to go really close to engage with the artwork?
- What is the relationship between the scale and the detail?
- How has the artist drawn us into their world?
- What is our role in this scene?
- Do we need to move around the gallery to experience the work? Perhaps we experience the artwork **kinetically**?

You might ask the following questions about composition:

- Which shapes dominate? Where is the emphasis? How has the composition been used to emphasize the most important elements?
- Where is the eye led?
- Where are the major divisions? A quick sketch can help to analyse these.
- Is it arranged on a vertical/horizontal axis, or with diagonals, or perhaps with arcs and circles?
- How does the composition affect our feelings?



- Are the shapes arranged in an organized and balanced way, designed to create order? Or are the elements random and arbitrary to unsettle the spectator?
- How do our eyes read the composition? Perhaps traveling from one aspect to another? Has the artist created rhythms? Variety of interest?



◀ *The street artist Ernest Pignon has used the traditional technique of chiaroscuro to give a strong sense of form to his drawing of film director Passolini carrying his own body. He has then further enhanced the form with the outline to the figures. He needs to use strong contrast so the image will show up in the strong light on the streets of Rome where he has pasted it. He has also created effective contrasts of texture.*

## Light

The use of light will determine the mood of an image. Darkness can create an intense depth and psychological power, whereas light is uplifting and creates a sense of well-being. Soft light gives a suffused and tranquil atmosphere or a mysterious one. Strong light brings clarity and brilliance. Light **raking** across a surface will reveal the textures.

**Tone** is the intensity of light and dark. Consider tonal contrast separately from colour by printing the image in black and white. This will help you to better understand **value**. The artist might have used very strong tonal contrast or a subtle range of mid tones. This can be expressed as a wide tonal range (from black to white) or a narrow tonal range (subtle modulations of greys). How has the artist created the tone? In graphic art **cross hatching** is used to build different densities of shadow. Sometimes light glows from within the image or radiates from the light of the white paper behind a drawing.

You might ask these questions about light:

- Is the atmosphere cold or warm?
- Is the artist using artificial light? Perhaps electric, gas, neon or candlelight? Or maybe daylight? If so, is it cold, blue-tinted northern light or warm, yellow, southern sunshine?
- Where is the light source? Perhaps from within the picture? Or from outside? From which side? Are there multiple light sources?

### Key terms

**Value:** degrees of tonal variation.

**Cross hatching:** hatching is the use of parallel lines to create tone; when these are overlaid in different directions (cross hatching) successively darker tones are created.

### Tip



“Capture” is a useful word, as in, “The artist has captured the mood of the scene”. For example, “I have attempted to capture the effect of water on skin” is better than “I have attempted to get the effect of water on the skin.”



**Tip: useful vocabulary** ✓**Useful words to describe light and tone:**

atmospheric, back lit, blinding, bright, chiaroscuro, contrasting, contrejour, crisp, dark, darkness, deep, floodlit, glaring, graduated, gradual, half light, harmonizing, harsh, highlights, illuminated, light, medium, mid tone, monochrome, obscurity, ominous, reflected, rendered, romantic, sharp, shade, shadow, soft, spot-lit, suffused, tint, void

**Tip: useful vocabulary** ✓**Useful words to analyse form:**

abstract, amorphous, biomorphic, circular, closed, concave, convex, distorted, enclosed, erotic, flat, free-form, geometric, geomorphic, heavy, light, massive, monumental, modelled, modulated, nebulous, open, organic, planar, palpable, realistic, rendered, seductive, sensual, solid, vague, volumetric

**Key terms**

**Metaphor:** in art an image that suggests or symbolizes a different idea or feeling is metaphorical. For example, Van Gogh's sunflowers can be seen as a metaphor for idyllic rural life in the south of France.

**Plinth:** the base of a sculpture. A useful synonym is "socle", which is more often used to describe the base for classical sculptures.

**Void:** nothingness, or the empty space that is the opposite of mass, substance and form.

- Is the light clear, as if the scene is on a stage in the theatre? Alternatively, is it cinematic, as in a film still? Perhaps the scene appears to be spot-lit? Consider the relationship to shadow, obscurity and darkness. Maybe the light appears to filter through the gloom. How is the light used to create emphasis?
- Does the light have a symbolic or **metaphorical** meaning in the context of the artwork?

**Form**

Form has a specific meaning in art: it refers to the three-dimensional aspect of objects. In images form makes objects appear to be realistic solids, even though they are in fact two-dimensional. Draw a circle. Now shade one side rendering from light to dark, then make it cast a shadow. You have used chiaroscuro to give an illusion of form – transforming a two-dimensional shape into an illusion of three-dimensional form.

Sculptors deal with real form rather than the illusion of form. Sculpture is the relationship between form and space. Forms in sculpture can be considered in relation to the surrounding space or void and in relation to the space that they contain. Sometimes the volume of the form expands outwards as if it will fill the surrounding space. Conversely the space can weigh in on the forms, seeming to crush them.

Form can also be used in the sense of "giving form" to ideas; in other words, making concepts concrete.

You might ask these questions about form:

- How has the illusion of form been given in two dimensions?
- Do the lines follow the forms? Perhaps curving and flowing lines are used to emphasize them?
- How do the forms relate to the surrounding space? Has the artist fragmented them? Perhaps to create the effect of movement and space? Or alternatively has the artist emphasized the density and weight of the objects?
- How has light been used to help describe the forms?

Of three-dimensional artwork you might ask:

- Is the form of this sculpture expanding or contracting?
- Is this space open or closed? How do the forms relate to the surrounding spaces? To the **plinth**? To the ground? To the human form?

**Space and depth**

**Space** is the three-dimensional expanse in which objects are located. In images artists sometimes attempt to give an illusion of space on a two-dimensional surface. **Depth** is how far back the image appears from the surface of the picture (the picture plane).

In sculpture and architecture space or **voids** can usefully be related to **mass** or density.



The principal ways of creating an illusion of depth are:

- overlapping and intersecting planes
- linear perspective, when a scene is viewed from a single viewpoint with objects shown diminishing in size as they become more distant
- atmospheric perspective, when forms are out of focus in the distance and crisper in the foreground to give the effect of depth
- aerial perspective, when colour values are used to create an illusion of depth
- isometric perspective, a system to describe space where uniform objects remain the same size
- tonal contrast.

Depth can be shown without perspective as in many of the eastern traditions, for example, in Indian, Islamic, Chinese and Japanese works. Chinese landscape painting uses the concept of high, level and deep. These multiple **viewpoints** create a floating sensation for the viewer.

When considering space and depth it is essential to ask where we, the viewers, are in relation to the artwork; in other words, what is the viewpoint? This can determine the effect of the image. Viewpoint also defines the way we read depth and the sense of space in an image. It can be used to establish a hierarchy between spectator and image. A high viewpoint gives power to the spectator. A low viewpoint makes it seem that we are less important than the figures in the scene; this is often the case with religious subjects. Sometimes we are positioned as voyeurs, suggesting that we are secret witnesses or spying on the scene. Sometimes there is a protagonist who invites us into the scene by catching our eye or by gesturing.

If the picture is in strict linear perspective, there will be one fixed viewpoint. Often artists combine several viewpoints, even though the picture appears to be from one. You will need to consider the cultural context when writing about perspective, for example, non-western art and the Cubists use multiple viewpoints and very few artists follow the rules of perspective completely.

You might ask these questions about space and depth:

- How has the artist created the illusion of depth?
- Why did the artist show the space in this way?
- Do the forms come forward from the **picture plane**, or do they recede, as if we are looking through a window?
- Has the artist used **foreshortening** to create drama and to draw us into the scene?
- How have colour and atmosphere been used to give an illusion of space and depth?

You might ask these questions about viewpoint:

- Are we looked down upon from above to make us feel small? This is often the case with monumental sculpture.

### TOK

Can form exist without space?  
Can space exist without form?  
Is a balloon defined by what it contains or by what surrounds it?

Start by asking these questions in front of a sculpture, or the trash can! Then apply the same questions to metaphysics and the universe.

### Key terms

**Mass:** the body of matter. In sculpture you might refer to the physical mass of the forms; in architecture the sense of weight, solidity and force, such as in the ancient pyramids.

**Picture plane:** the surface of a two-dimensional work of art.

**Foreshortening:** this is the illusion in perspective when a form, such as an outreached arm, leads into the space.

### Tip: useful vocabulary

#### Useful words to describe space and depth:

Ambiguous, aerial perspective, atmospheric perspective, background, deep, depth of field, diminishing, distance, expanse, faceted planes, focus, foreground, flat, illusionary, isometric, perspective, linear perspective, middleground, negative, open, overlapping, positive, receding, repousoir, shallow spatial, vast





- ▲ *Ancient Greek vase painting in black over red ceramic. Line can effectively describe form. In this vase painting notice how we read the volumes of the figures, yet there is no chiaroscuro.*

### Key terms

**Contour:** a line which connects points of equal value, such as the contour lines on a map showing points of equal height. The same principle is used in drawing when lines follow the boundaries of a form or points of equal tone.

### Tip: useful vocabulary



#### Useful words to describe line:

Angular, blurred, broken, bold, confident, controlled, contoured, cross hatched, curved, crisp, delicate, descriptive, dragged, edged, engraved, etched, faint, fine, flowing, freehand, geometric, gentle, gestural, graceful, granular, harsh, incised, heavy, hesitant, loose, meandering, organic, outlined, ragged, ruled, sensitive, sinuous, sharp, sketched, smudged, soft, subtle, streaked, tentative, thick, thin, wide

- Are we raised up, perhaps even floating above the scene to make us more powerful?
- Do we confront the scene directly as equals as in a television or stage drama?
- Does the artist want to draw us into the scene or to stand apart?
- At what height did the painter intend the work to be hung? If it is a religious work of art the intention may be that we view from a kneeling position looking up.

## Line

**Lines** describe the edges of forms, where solid meets space. They define boundaries between light and dark or they follow contours. Paul Klee famously said that “A drawing is simply a line going for a walk” and “A line is a dot that went for a walk”.

You might ask these questions about line:

- Do the lines follow the **contours** of the forms?
- What does the character of the lines tell us about how the artwork was made? Are they fast and expressive capturing the dynamic movement of the artist’s hand – or arm – gestures? Or are they slow and careful, conveying precision and accuracy? Or even hesitant and sketchy, showing doubt, change and uncertainty?

Lines also have expressive qualities and can be used to reveal texture. When an artist draws a line they leave a trace or mark of their action.

**Mark-making** when drawing depends on implements, such as fingers, pen, brush, spray-can, pencil, charcoal, and the surfaces worked on, such as paper, canvas or plaster. There are many useful words to describe the effects of this mark-making. Try to express this variety when you write by using words such as: blot, bleed, blotch, drag, drip, erase, etch, inscribe, score, scratch, scumble, splatter, smear, smudge, spot, spray, stain.

## Colour

**Colour** is the visual sensation of **hue** (red, for example), **saturation** (how strong the red is) and brightness (how light or dark the red is).

We can see up to five million colours but colour is very difficult to describe in words so be imaginative and make up your own colour vocabulary. Use the names on paint tubes to help. Or refer to the many colour name websites to spark your imagination.

White, black and grey are not always considered true colours as they do not occur in the spectrum, however, they are very important when you are analysing colour. Black will always intensify the colour values of its neighbours and grey will deplete the power of colours. Grey can also be used to create liaisons, helping to harmonize colours that would not normally link. White adds light and purity to surrounding colours.

Colour can also be analysed in relation to function and meaning. For example, depending on the context it may have cultural symbolism or expressive values. It might have been chosen to evoke feelings, associations, memories and for psychological effect. Some artists are



more concerned with the phenomenological aspects of colour – the sensations of light. Painters such as Cézanne have attempted to resolve the conflict between our perception of **local colour** and reflected light.

You might ask these questions about colour:

- How have colour contrasts and harmonies been used? Is the composition constructed around **analogous colours**?
- How has the artist used colour to create a mood?
- Are the colour contrasts and harmonies related to white or to black?
- What would be lost if this artwork was in black and white? Test this by making a tonal version.
- How would the meaning of this painting be altered if it was executed in a different colour range? Has the artist created colour rhythms? Given variety? Created discord?

The three basic **colour contrasts** are:

- contrast of hue, for example, yellow against red
- contrast of saturation, the contrast of pure pigments with diluted pigments, for example, a pure, strongly pigmented, yellow sun against bleached, pale yellow reflections, hence you can refer to saturated colours or de-saturated colours
- contrast of brightness (tonal contrast), for example, a contrast between light blue water lilies in the sunlight with those in shadow.

Four other colour contrasts are:

- active and passive contrast, we sense reds, oranges and yellows as busy, moving hues, while greens, browns and blues tend to feel quieter
- contrast of temperature, colours can be labelled as hot or cold hues in a temperature contrast. Although blue is generally regarded as cool, some blues are warmer than others. Colours such as yellow can have quite different temperature effects according to their context
- **complementary** contrast, this term describes the three pairs of opposites on the colour circle, that is, red against green, orange against blue and yellow against violet. When placed against each other they enhance their hue. When red is placed against green, the red seems redder and the green seems greener. (Do not get confused with the spellings of complimentary and complementary which have different meanings as in “He *complimented* me on my blue dress with its *complementary* orange pattern”.)
- contrast of colour key, as with notes in music, colours can be described as on a scale with yellow at the top being high key and indigo blue at the bottom being low key.

When you describe the effects of colour it can be helpful to consider colour harmonies and the colour contrasts. Colours that are close on the colour circle will harmonize (these are also called analogous colours) while those that are far apart will contrast. Often artists will build a

### Key terms

**Local colour:** the actual colour of an object when unaffected by reflecting light.

**Analogous colours:** colours which sit next to each other in the colour circle, such as yellow and green.

### Tip: useful vocabulary

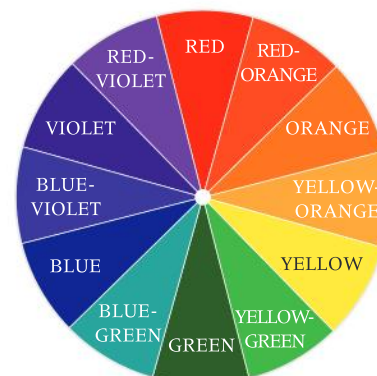


#### Useful words to describe colour:

Analogous, brash, bright, brilliant, bleached, calm, clear, contrasting, cool, dull, exciting, garish, glowing, glazed, harmonious, hue, iridescent, faded, fluorescent, monochromatic, muted, neutral, pale, pastel, polychrome, primary, pure, opaque, secondary, subdued, tertiary, tint, translucent, warm

### Key terms

**Colour contrast:** colour is usually described in terms of contrasts as the effect of colour is always dependent on its neighbours.







▲ *Early Spring 1072 by Guo Xi. When analysing space and depth you will need to consider the conventions of different cultures. Guo Xi describes a totally believable spatial world, yet much of his picture is empty. He also reminds us that this landscape is an illusion by emphasizing the picture plane with his use of calligraphy.*

### Tip: useful vocabulary



#### Useful words to describe texture:

Actual, abrasive, bumpy, brittle, cold, coarse, corrugated, dense, delicate, dry, ephemeral, feathery, flat, furry, fragile, gooey, glossy, granular, hairy, layered, leathery, oily, open, pimply, pitted, plastic, prickly, refined, repulsive, rough, sandy, satiny, scaly, seductive, sharp, shiny, slick, smooth, soft, sticky, tacky, touchy-feely, translucent, tactile, velvety, waxy, wet

### TOK

Colour is a phenomenon. We each perceive colour differently. Consequently, philosophers have mistrusted colour because of its subjective nature.

- Can colour be considered as a useful area of knowledge if we each experience it differently?
- Is colour necessary to our understanding of the world? Is colour blindness a limitation?

“Scientists are not concerned with colour but with radiant stimuli in light, or with the physiological processing of those stimuli by the eye. Whereas colour is in the mind which apprehends it.” (John Gage, 2000)

- Do you agree with Gage’s statement? Where does that place art?

“Blue is always different from yellow, for example; depressed [‘the blues’], where yellow is gay, loyal [‘true-blue’] where yellow is cowardly, and the like. Yellow has the same meaning as blue once in a blue moon.” (Ludwig Wittgenstein, 1953)

- Is language inadequate as a tool to describe colour sensation?
- Do you agree with Wittgenstein’s colour mood associations?

theme around colours that are adjacent adding a strongly contrasting colour to activate the composition.

In your practical art, planning colour schemes around harmonies and contrasts is effective. Build a harmony from colours that are adjacent on the colour circle to act as a foil to a colour that is opposite on the colour circle so that it “pops” out.

### Texture

**Textures** are the tactile qualities of surfaces, in other words the qualities of touch. Art often represents one texture with an equivalent in a different medium. Your description of texture will be linked to that of media, as these are generally used to imitate the surfaces of objects, for example, in representational painting when oil paint is used to mimic the surface of silk, fur, stone or flesh. In non-representational art texture can evoke a mood or act as a metaphor. The detail in a painting can be read as a texture. Sometimes artworks include real textures that can be felt.

In painting and in textiles the support that is used will contribute to the texture: canvas, linen, board, wood, metal, silk, hessian and so on.

In sculpture the surface of the material will be crucial to the effect:

- plaster is dry, absorbent, inert
- stone can be rough, abrasive, granulated, veined, polished or smooth
- bronze is **patinated**, shiny, reflective
- wax is soft, greasy, malleable.



Pattern and decoration can be considered as elements of texture. In textiles the physical structure of the cloth, the warp and weft of weaving or the relief of embroidery, for example, build pattern through repetition, through a tracery of lines, through lattice work and through grids. Similarly appliqué, embroidery and quilting are techniques which combine texture with decoration, achieving surfaces that have variety. In ceramics pattern is often inscribed into a surface or built up in relief, creating both decoration and a real, tangible, physical texture.

Street artists **appropriate** the textures of the real world to dramatic effect when they spray on brick, rendered walls, concrete or corrugated iron. The smooth, enamelled quality of spray paint contrasts to the weathered roughness of the walls they work on.

You might ask these questions about texture:

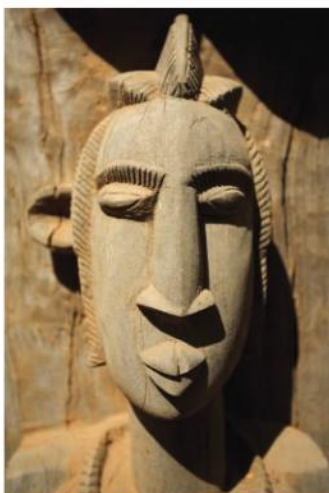
- What would these surfaces feel like to touch?
- How was this surface created? Are there layers of different materials? Is it **embossed**? Is it in relief? Has the surface been distressed? Polished? Abraded? Weathered?

## Time and motion

All art exists in time and space although contemporary practice has increasingly challenged the fixed nature of artifacts preserved in a museum. Installation art, land art, performance, video and film share many of the formal qualities described above, but it can be helpful to apply additional vocabulary and questions when analysing them.

You might ask:

- How does this work engage with time and space?
- How has lighting been used?
- How long does it take the audience to experience this work? Is this a transient experience?
- How has technology been adapted?
- How has the artist arranged the space to create atmosphere?
- What other senses are involved? Perhaps the artist has used smell, touch or sound?



◀ African Dogon head from Mali made in wood. Notice how this head combines form, line and decoration to dramatic effect. The sculptor makes use of crisp edges to ensure that the features are drawn with the shadows cast by the strong sunlight.

## Key terms

**Patina:** this is the sheen or colouration on an object's surface produced naturally by age or deliberately by the artist.

**Appropriation:** when an image or an idea is taken from its original context to be recycled by an artist in order to create new meanings, or to subvert its conventional meaning.

**Emboss:** to emboss is to create a relief surface. In printmaking this is achieved by pressing into soft paper, in leather work by using stamps, in sculpture by carving, in ceramics by pushing into the soft clay etc.

## Tip: useful vocabulary



### Useful words to describe time and motion-based art:

Anti-aesthetic, contemplative, challenging, disorientating, disturbing, distasteful, ephemeral, engaging, evocative, kinetic, multimedia, mesmerizing, participatory, physical, psychedelic, pseudo scientific, repellant, sensory, shocking, tangible, transient, sublime, unconventional, unsettling



**Tip**



When you write about art you will need to refer to the artwork repeatedly. You can avoid repetition by the way you structure your writing. You can also find varied ways of referring to the artwork by using alternative nouns such as creation, picture, image, sculpture, installation, textile, canvas or composition.

## Materials, process and technique

Your description of formal qualities will have already involved an analysis of the making of the artwork if you have been using the vocabulary above, but you will want to think further about the how and why of the medium and process.

You might consider the artist’s choice of materials in particular. It might be a question of value, of economics, of skill or of tradition. Considering why netsuke are carved from ivory and bone will lead you to not only think about the technical properties of carving the material, but also what they were made for (their function), as fastenings for clothing.

Sometimes materials are chosen because they have special symbolic significance. In other words, they connect with the artwork’s function and meaning, for example, the use of lapis lazuli blue in the Renaissance or Joseph Beuys’s choice of felt and fat for his installations. The artist might want the viewer to be particularly aware of the materials. At other times artists seek to use materials to imitate, as is often the case in oil painting.

A further idea is that suggested by John Ruskin of “truth to materials”, that an artist should reflect the distinctive nature of his medium in the way it is used and then be honest in expressing those distinctive properties. Think of Jackson Pollock dripping paint or an African sculptor carving wood: neither artist attempts to hide the expressive qualities of their media, they are true to their materials.

Here are some ideas for describing materials, technique and process for painting, sculpture, textiles, photography and print.

### Painting

Paint can be **opaque**, that is, solid, impermeable to light, white, or it can be **translucent**, that is allowing light to shine through a layer of colour, as in a stained glass window. Consider the relationship between the consistency of the media (fluid or viscous) and the effects of the **brushwork** (flowing or heavy).

**Paint** is pigment (the colour) + glue (that binds the pigment) + medium (which makes the paint flow when it is applied). There are various types available each with its own characteristics.

### Key terms

**Brushwork:** the way an artist has applied the paint. Fast and textured (loose brushwork) or careful and controlled (tight brushwork).

Type of paint	Composition	Characteristics
<b>Watercolours</b>	pigment + gum arabic (a natural resin) + water	light, bright, fluid, spontaneous, delicate, transitory, pure
<b>Acrylics</b>	pigment + polyvinyl acetate + water	bright, intense, artificial, plastic, smooth, both opaque and translucent
<b>Oil</b>	pigment + oil and wax	translucent or opaque, fluid, shiny or dull, rich, varied, impasto, sensual, natural
<b>Fresco</b>	pigment + water applied onto wet plaster that acts as the binding medium	dry, flat, cool, pure, fresh, bright, light
<b>Tempera</b>	pigment + egg yolk	opaque, chalky, flat, pure, dry, even, smooth, cool, inexpressive



The **support** is the surface that has been painted on. Different surfaces create different effects:

- Wooden panel or board tends to lead to a smoother and more detailed painting.
- Metal is used for smooth and intricate detail.
- Canvas or linen is used for a freer, more textured surface with looser brushstrokes and dry brushwork so one colour is fragmented over the under painting.

If oil paint is put on an unsealed surface the colours will fade and become dull as the oil soaks away so usually the surface is sealed, traditionally with a glue size, although modern artists use an acrylic sealant on the surface before they paint.

About the artist's choice of media you might ask:

- Why acrylic paint not oils?
- Why modelled in clay and not carved from stone?
- Why embroidered on silk and not printed onto cotton?
- Has the artist used the materials to imitate reality?
- Has the artist been truthful to the properties of the materials?
- Is there special symbolic or economic value to the choice of materials?

## Textiles

First ask, "what is it made from?" At a basic level the raw materials might be wool (sheep, camel), cotton, or silk, but most textile artists use multiple materials and processes such as synthetic fibres, paper, hair, or the artist recycles materials.

You might ask:

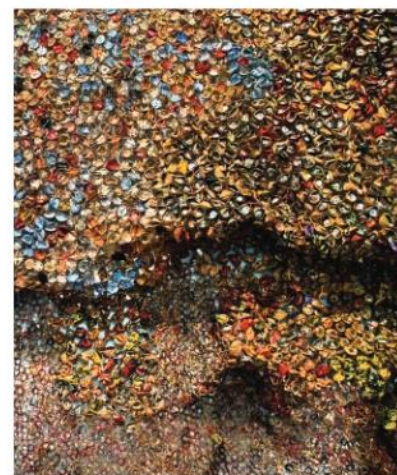
- What were the original processes that the materials went through before being transformed by the artist?
- How has the raw material been prepared? Refined, bleached, spun?
- Has it been coloured before being used? Dyed, stained, aged or distressed?
- Has the artist then added other colours and materials?
- How has the artist made the piece? Describe the techniques, structure and form of the work.

### Tip: useful vocabulary



#### Useful words to describe textiles:

Adorn, construct, deconstruct, distress, emboss, ephemeral, embellish, entwine, fragile, frayed, interweave, knit, layer, loop, pattern, pleat, sculpt, sumptuous, sew, spin, stencil, starch, tattered, tufted, warp, weft, weave, yarn



▲ *Dusasa II 2007 by El Anatsui. When analysing the formal qualities of textiles many elements will contribute to your description. However, the tactile surfaces can be crucial to the effect, as in the magnificent pieces by El Anatsui with their recycled materials.*



## Key terms

**Assemblage:** when objects (often found from everyday life) are put together to create a sculpture – think of a three-dimensional collage.

**Readymade:** a term developed by Marcel Duchamp to describe manufactured items that were removed from their original context by the artist to become art.

**Armature:** the structure that supports a sculpture, usually underneath the modelled material such as wax, clay or plaster. It is often constructed from wire, wood or welded steel.

## Sculpture

Sculpture is:

- constructed from wood, plastics or metal (steel or iron)
- modelled from clay or plaster
- carved from wood, plaster or stone.

The artist might have used natural found materials such as branches or pre-manufactured materials such as scrap metal to make an **assemblage** of forms or even a **readymade**.

Traditional sculpting processes can be described as **additive**, you start with a void and add bits, or **subtractive**, you start with a mass of material and take stuff away. Michaelangelo famously said, “I saw the angel in the marble and I set him free”.

You might ask these questions about sculpture:

- Did the sculptor start with a block and carve it?
- Was it shaped from a soft material and then cast?
- The surface will give you clues: you might find traces of the artist’s finger marks or evidence of his chisel. Did the artist work over an **armature** to support the clay?

The sculptor will treat the surface textures as is appropriate to the meaning and function of the work and in relation to the chosen material. Stone might be left coloured and textured according to the original stone such as hard and smooth marble or grittier granite, or it could be painted naturalistically as classical sculpture was originally. Wood can be left rough, polished smooth or even painted. Can you tell what species of tree it is from? Steel can be shiny or rusty.

## Tip: useful vocabulary



Abraded, armature, bronze, carved, cast, constructed, chiselled, ceramic, clay, framework, hewn, hacked, modelled, moulded, maquette, man-made, malleable, marble, model, natural, objets trouvés, organic, patinated, plaster, plastic, polished, raw, relief, smoothed, stone, structure, synthetic, wax, readymade, unprocessed, weathered, welded



- ▲ *The relationship between form and space is always an essential element when analysing sculpture; even when colour and decoration grab our attention, as in this piece of eye candy by Yayoi Kusama. Notice how the mass is emphasized by the placement of the pumpkin on the sand and against the sky.*

The term **cast** sculpture is used when the sculptor started with clay, plaster or wax. Once the sculptor has moulded the forms of the original, they cast it by creating a mould into which a molten metal is poured (usually bronze which is a mixture of copper and iron) to form a permanent version of their original. (Research “lost wax technique” for more information on this.) Because metal is expensive, cast sculptures are usually hollow – you can tap the sculpture to find out if you are outside, but not if you are in the gallery! Casting allows the artist to make several copies of their original – an **edition**. Bronze sculptures can be polished to a reflective shine or left to oxidize, becoming green or brown. The surface finish is called the patina.



## Photography

Photography has a wide technical vocabulary and you will need to refer to a specialist source for these terms. When analysing photography, you can use the seven formal points as you would with a painting. There are, however, some questions that are of particular relevance.

The <b>gaze</b>	Why is the photographer looking at this person? Why are they looking back at us?  The gaze of the photographer and of the subject is often private and intimate. However, when an image is displayed in public this personal moment is shared with strangers from a different time and space (hence the public gaze). How does this make the viewer feel?
Cropping	Why has the photographer chosen this section of the view?
Depth of field	Why is this part of the photograph in focus and why is the other area out of focus?
Time	A photograph is of a split second so you could ask, "Why has the photographer chosen this precise moment?"  The French photographer Henri Cartier Bresson titled his book <i>The Decisive Moment</i> (1952) because he considered it the photographer's art to choose the moment that captured the essence of a subject.

## Printmaking

Printmaking, like photography, has a rich specialist vocabulary. Here and in the glossary there is a very brief overview of the principal terms. You will need to refer to specialist books to enrich your subject-specific language when writing about prints.

When looking at a print, the first question to ask is, "which process has been used?" The caption should help you answer this. If it does not, it can be difficult to judge so ask your teacher to help.

A print is usually one of a series or edition of identical prints, except for **monoprinting** and **monotype**.

The print processes used in **fine art** are often technologies that were originally used for commercial reproduction, but have since been superseded by more efficient processes. For example, the wood cuts of the middle ages were replaced by engraving, just as lithographic printing of the 20th century has been replaced by digital print technologies. However, these old methods are still used by contemporary artists for their distinctive creative properties.

Fine art print can be divided into two main categories: relief printmaking and intaglio.

### Tip: useful vocabulary



#### Useful words to describe photographs:

Blurred, candid, captured, crisp, depth of field, decisive, documentary, dramatic, fake, fleeting, focused, grainy, historic, iconic, in focus, intimate, objective, posed, snapped, factual, momentary, objective, out of focus, private, public, propagandist, reportage, sepia, shaky, social realist, subjective, split second, transient, tinted, truthful, voyeuristic

### Key terms

**Gaze:** this is the word art historians use to refer to how we look at a figurative image, particularly the spectator's gaze, that is, the gaze of the viewer at an image of a person. It can also be used to describe the way the figures within the composition look out at us or between each other.

**Monoprint:** one of a series of prints, each with individual variations.

**Monotype:** a unique print made by working freely with inks or paints on a smooth surface (metal, plastic or glass). Sometimes the paper is laid over the inky surface and the artist draws on the back to produce a granulated line. Alternatively, the paper is pressed onto the inked surface and a print is pulled.

**Fine art:** a generic term for the creative disciplines that do not have a practical application. For example, painting, printmaking and sculpture.



In relief printmaking (or block printing) a surface is cut away so that when ink is rolled over the top areas they print as positive, while the removed areas remain white. These include:

- **woodcut printmaking** in which the side grain of wood is cut into to create a relief surface, which is then inked and printed
- **collograph** when a material such as card is both cut into and/or built up with textures to create a surface that can be inked
- **wood engraving** in which the hard end grain of wood is cut into to create a relief surface, which is then inked and printed
- **lino printing** which uses linoleum, a floor covering made from cork and oil, as a cheap and grain-free alternative to wood for relief printing.

Intaglio processes are when the surface is incised so that when put through a press the ink is pulled out from incised lines as a positive mark. These include:

- **engraving** in which copper or zinc plate is incised with metal implements, ink is applied to the plate, the top surfaces are wiped clean and under the pressure of a press the dark ink is lifted out, making positive marks on the white paper
- **dry point** in which metal (copper or zinc) or plastic (usually acetate sheet) is inscribed to create a burr, this edge then holds ink creating a line which can be both light and delicate or heavy and expressive
- **mezzotint** in which a finely grooved surface of burred lines is created on copper plate by systematically rocking it with a hard steel edge; this surface prints as black, but the artist burnishes and scrapes the surface to create the design in lighter tones
- **etching** in which a wax ground is used to protect a metal plate which is then drawn into so that the exposed metal can be etched by acid; the resulting grooves are filled with ink and the top surfaces are wiped clean then under the pressure of a printing press, paper is forced into the lines pulling the ink out to make a positive mark.

**Tip: useful vocabulary**



You may find the mark-making words in the “Line” section useful when writing about prints.

The other principal fine art print processes are **lithography** which works on the principle of water being grease resist and **screenprinting** in which inks are drawn through a mesh.

Printmaking results in a rich variety of surface textures, tonal subtleties and colour.

# 3

## The comparative study

### What is the comparative study?

The comparative study is a critical and contextual investigation of other artists' works. It is worth 20% of the marks you receive for your visual arts course. You will choose art and/or artifacts by different artists and from different cultures to analyse and compare. If you are taking the subject at higher level (HL) you will also show how these artists have influenced your art. Standard level (SL) students do not do this last part.

Through the comparative study you investigate the meanings and practices of art from different times and cultures. This will develop your analytical skills so that you can better understand the connections between making art and experiencing art. It will also develop your communication skills so that you can articulate your art ideas and intentions more clearly. You will move from description to interpretation.

The comparative study is uploaded for assessment as a PDF document. SL students submit 10–15 **screens** that examine and compare a minimum of three artworks, objects or artifacts, at least two of which need to be by different artists. The works selected for comparison and analysis should come from different cultural contexts. In addition to this requirement, HL students submit 3–5 screens that analyse the extent to which their work and practices have been influenced by the artworks examined.

There is no word limit – this is not an essay, although it might contain sections of more extended writing. You may well prefer annotation and visual presentations to communicate your ideas.

### So what do I need to do?

1. Choose art from different cultural contexts that excites you and that is relevant to your creative practice.
2. Discuss with your teacher your choices and the timetable for completion.
3. Make a formal analysis of these works.
4. Conduct research.
  - Try to arrange to see at least one of these works in its original state.
  - Pose meaningful research questions.
  - Use a range of sources to answer these questions.
5. Analyse the content and context of the works, that is, their function and meaning.
6. Compare and contrast the works.
7. Present your ideas in a visually appropriate and engaging format.
8. Add a separate screen with your sources.
9. Upload your presentation for assessment.

#### Key terms

**Screens:** the term “screens” is used as a constant reminder that the final product for assessment is a digitally uploaded file that will be viewed on a computer monitor as a series of screens. “Screens” is used instead of “pages”, which would imply that the original format was in book form, or “slides”, which suggests an electronic presentation using software such as Microsoft's® PowerPoint® or Apple's® Keynote®. While all of these are valid tools for generating potential screens for the process portfolio or comparative study submission, they are not, in any way, prescribed.

#### Tip



If you are also writing an extended essay in visual arts, make sure you choose a different topic. You must not use the same material as in the comparative study.



## Case study

In this section you can follow Kierlan as she prepares her comparative study. This is her introduction screen with a title that gives us a sense of what she will be exploring, as well as a connection to her own art at the end. The three illustrations help us to make visual links. She explains that she has seen the Chapman Brothers' sculptures and made her own copy of the Dali. She also introduces some of her ideas about the works.



TANZANIA East Africa Makonde ebony or ebonised wooden sculpture  
Image from Alamy.com

LONDON S EAST END-JAKE AND DINOS CHAPMAN AT WORK  
IN THEIR STUDIO Image from Alamy.com



## Distortion of the human form

On the right is my copy of Salvador Dalí's 'Soft Construction with Boiled Beans; Premonition of Civil War' 1936, which was the starting point for this study. Because I am fascinated by Surrealism I wanted to copy the painting really carefully. I then saw Jake and Dinos Chapman's sculptures at The Saatchi Gallery in London and realised that although they are made for different reasons they also distort the figure in a grotesque way to shock us. In this study I will compare the formal qualities of these western art works and the Makondi carvings from Tanzania. They all have different meanings, the Makondi style abstracts figures to represent Shetani spirits while the Chapman Brothers and Dali use modern art to reveal our unconscious fears. All of the artists were influenced by their circumstances; Dali's painting shows the disruption of the war in his home country; the Chapman Brothers were part of the YBA movement and Makondi art was a reaction to Portuguese colonialists. At the end of my study I show how I have used distortion in my ceramic sculptures.

## Making choices

During the course your interests and understanding of art will develop and change. You will investigate a broad range of artworks first and then narrow down your interests as you see how looking at art can help to support and influence creative studio work. Build your knowledge by visiting museums and galleries, browsing the art shelves in a library, looking at art blogs, pin boards and artist websites. Discuss your interests with your teacher as they have the experience to suggest how to develop meaningful connections from what you like. Then review your interests to select what to investigate for the comparative study.

As you make your choice remember that:

- You should try to experience at least one of the works first-hand.
- They should come from different cultural contexts.
- If you are an HL student, the artworks should connect with your practical art work.

### Tip



Think local. Even if you don't have a museum within reach, we are all surrounded by cultural artifacts worthy of study, such as textiles or architecture, and we live among the people who make them. There are many artists who are pleased to show their work to students. This will take more effort than downloading images by famous artists, but will lead to a more personal and original comparative study. Things that you have seen and experienced are also easier to write well about.

Exhibitions are often curated thematically. These can provide interesting juxtapositions of art from different cultures. Think of using these as starting points for your comparative study.

Thought boxes can be a helpful way to make decisions. Draw a three by three box and write ideas in the spaces. Don't reflect, just write down artists you like. Then draw another thought box. This time put into the centre the idea from the first set that most interests you, then fill the surrounding spaces with related ideas. Through this process you can narrow your choices.

### Tip



Students often include extra works in the study; this is very successful when it enhances the contextualization of the principal works. However, students that present a sequence of unconnected works all analysed at the same level fail to achieve depth. It is strongly advisable to concentrate on three clearly defined and meaningfully linked artworks.

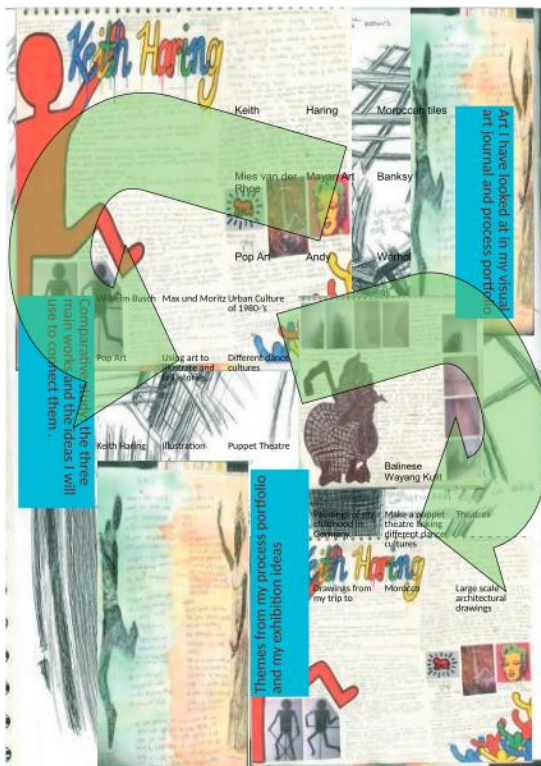
First thoughts:

Pop Art	Roy Lichtenstein	Damien Hirst
Jeff Koons	Graffiti	Guy Denning
Manga	M.C.Escher	Street Art

More focused thoughts:

Banksy	Jazi	NYSF Crew
Keith Haring	Street Art	Guy Denning
Blek le Rat (Xavier Prou)	Ernst Pignon Ernst	Jon Matos

Comparative study  
first artist choice  
**Blek le Rat**



- Antonia has used three thought boxes: the first lists the artists she likes; the second the themes from her process portfolio and potential ideas for her final exhibition; for the third box she has extracted the three artists for her comparative study and some associated themes. Because she is an HL student it is important that she makes connections between her work and the artists that she studies. At SL you don't need to worry about this. Antonia then completed a study that compared three contrasting ways of showing movement: the hip hop-style paintings of Keith Haring, the Balinese shadow puppets of Wayang Kulit and the illustrations of Max Busch. She made a puppet theatre as part of her final exhibition so there were plenty of links to discuss in her connections screens.



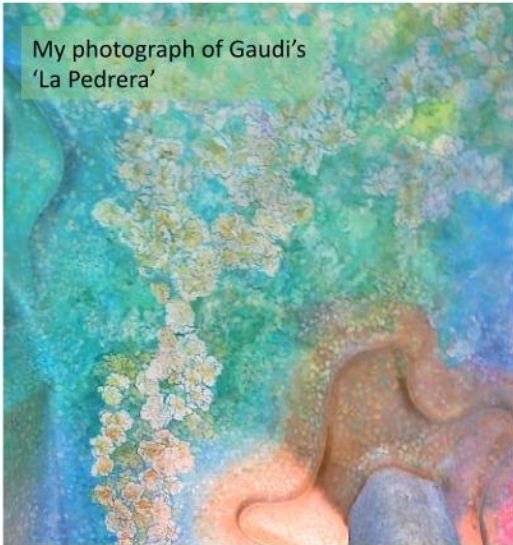
Below are some examples of comparative study topics. These are all personal choices put here to suggest the range of ideas possible– not to copy!

As you make your choices remember that the main aim is to compare the artworks so ensure that the three works will lead to meaningful links, perhaps through sharing themes or subjects as with the topics suggested in the table. If they are completely unrelated then you are heading for trouble!

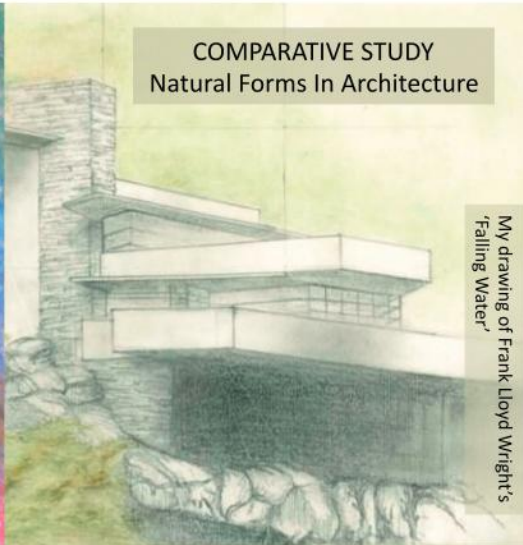
<p><b>Connecting theme: Natural forms in architecture</b></p>	<p>A visit to Barcelona prompted this student’s interest in Gaudi’s use of organic forms in architecture and Art Nouveau. This led to research into the development of modernism in America, then the contemporary use of organic form in Hadid’s computer-designed structures.</p>
<p>Fallingwater by Frank Lloyd Wright (1939), Bear Run, Pennsylvania, USA</p>	
<p>La Casa Milà known as ‘La Pedrera’ by Antonia Gaudi (1906–10), Barcelona, Spain</p>	

Burnham Pavilion by Zaha Hadid (2009), Chicago, Illinois, USA

HL connections to studio work: her exhibition explored organic and man-made structures through abstract sculpture and painting of natural forms.



My photograph of Gaudi’s ‘La Pedrera’



COMPARATIVE STUDY  
Natural Forms In Architecture

My drawing of Frank Lloyd Wright’s ‘Falling Water’

In this study I will compare two art; Art Nouveau and Modernism. Within these styles I will concentrate on how they are both inspired by natural form, in order to do so I will firstly look at Gaudi’s Art Nouveau work; how it was inspired by Baroque and Gothic architecture and then I will look specifically at the building La Pedrera. To show the relationship to natural form I will investigate the forms used in La Pedrera by comparing the organic shapes. Then I will introduce modernism, its characteristics and how the movement started, I will concentrate on the house the falling water in specific and relate its forms to nature, equally showing that both houses, despite the difference in styles, are influenced by natural form. Then I will compare both to the contemporary building ‘The Burnham Pavilion’ by Zaha Hadid

<p><b>Connecting theme: Cultural signs and patterns</b></p>	<p>An interest in tattoos led this student to trace the significance of designs in three traditional cultures.</p>
<p>Tā moko examples of indigenous Maori tattoos</p>	
<p>“Nakamura Shikan as Kurikara Denshichi” by Toyokuni (1861) as an example of Irezumi, traditional Japanese tattooing</p>	

Circus tattoos by Maud Wagner (1877–1961)



<b>Connecting theme: Monuments</b>	Visiting the Iwo Jima monument started an interest in the nature of memorials. This student contrasted this with the anti-war sentiment of Kienholz's assemblage and then the political optimism of Tatlin's tower.
Portable War Memorial by Ed Kienholz (1968)	
Iwo Jima memorial (1954), Arlington, Virginia, USA	
Monument to the Third International by Vladimir Tatlin (1919)	
HL connections to his studio work: his exhibition included Pop Art-inspired assemblages and constructed forms partly suggested by these modernist approaches.	

<b>Connecting theme: Photographs of children</b>	This student compared three very different visions of childhood. She started with two American photographers, one documentary and one contemporary, then contrasted these with romantic images of children in Victorian photography.
"Virginia at Four" by Sally Mann (1989)	
"Migrant Mother" by Dorothea Lange (1936), MET New York	
"Hosanna" by Julia Margaret Cameron (1865), albumen print, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK	

<b>Connecting theme: Textiles and cultural signs</b>	This student started with photographs from her parents' wedding of ceremonial head scarves. She explored their tradition and meaning. She then looked at two examples of Japanese kimono design, one an actual kimono and one portrayed in a print.
Ichafu, south-east Nigerian head scarves	
Kimono, Japan, 1870–80, crepe silk (chirimen), paste-resist decoration (yuzen) and embroidery, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK	
"Bijin Playing a Biwa" by Gakutei, Ukiyo-e print, Victoria and Albert Museum, London, UK	

<b>Connecting theme: The grotesque</b>	An exhibition of work by Paul McCarthy prompted the student to explore the use of shock in art. The post-First World War satire of Grosz and the disturbing images of Bosch provided an interesting precedent.
"Suicide" by George Grosz (1916), Tate, London, UK	
"Train, Mechanical" by Paul McCarthy (2003–09)	
"The Garden of Earthly Delights" by Hieronymus Bosch, Prado, Madrid, Spain	
HL connections to studio work: he developed political and social satire through a series of caricature drawings and then a short animation.	

<b>Connecting theme: The American land</b>	An exhibition of Pollock's drip painting suggested to the student a comparative study about responses to the American landscape, from the symbolic art of the Navahos through the 19th century sublime to late 20th century land art.
Navaho sand art	
"Niagara" by Frederick E Church (1857)	
"Lavender Mist" by Jackson Pollock (1950)	
"The Lightning Field" by Walter De Maria (1977)	



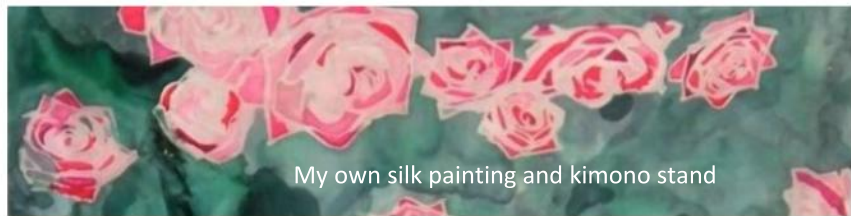
## What do we mean by culture?

The *Visual arts guide* defines **culture** as:

*“learned and shared beliefs, values, interests, attitudes, products and all patterns of behaviour created by society. This view of culture includes an organised system of symbols, ideas, explanations, beliefs and material production that humans create and manipulate in their daily lives.”*

So all the artworks you will be looking at in your comparative study are expressions of culture. Your task is to explain this cultural context.

Everyone who writes about art does so from the viewpoint of their cultural identity. Until relatively recently the history of art was seen as a progression, or unfolding story, told from the perspective of western European civilization. *The Story of Art* (Gombrich, 1950) is a very good introduction to this way of seeing art.



My own silk painting and kimono stand

### Orientalism Cultural links to my Art



I used a traditional kimono stand design to link with the orientalism of Whistler and Tissot.

I then painted the lower part with the interior 'oriental' scene from Tissot's painting.

The artificial roses represent my English culture, but also act as symbols for the prostitutes.

I wanted to recreate the exotic aesthetic of the nineteenth century painters but to use modern symbolism to subvert their colonialist use of culture.

- ▶ Evelyn has used her comparative study to explore the cultural issues of colonialism and gender evident in the orientalism of the 19th century. As she is an HL student she has then made connections to her exhibition work.

Edward Said, a post colonialist literary critic, said that *'orientalism remains inextricably tied to the imperialist societies that produced it, which makes much of their work inherently political, servile to power and therefore intellectually suspect'* (Edward Said, 2013)

'Rose and Silver: The Princess from the Land of Porcelain' (1863-4) by James Abbott McNeil Whistler (see right) clearly shows nineteenth century western fascination with Asian culture. The title of the painting portrays the East as a fantastical, mythical 'Land of Porcelain', while the female model is transformed into a Japanese princess, thereby exemplifying Western painters belittling orientalism.



[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The\\_Princess\\_from\\_the\\_Land\\_of\\_Porcelain#/](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Princess_from_the_Land_of_Porcelain#/)



Although western artists have always taken ideas from other cultures, Picasso's "Les Femmes d'Alger" in 1907 marked the birth of a new questioning of the relationship between art, cultures and power. Picasso subverted the established western order, opening the way not just for the explosion of modern art, but also for the different readings of art history that exist today. Through reading an artwork we gain insights into the ideas of the time in which it was made, but we also reveal our own values. It can be useful to consider these four themes in relation to art criticism:

- colonialism
- nationality
- gender
- ethnicity.

Culture can be used to exert power. The gathering together of conquered peoples' cultural artifacts in national museums is an example of this. Gramsci described the idea of cultural hegemony, the use of culture to dominate over another group. This is evident through racism, colonialism and sexism. It is an area that has been explored by many contemporary visual artists and is an important theme in modern art criticism.

## How to research

So far we have been analysing formal qualities of artworks by looking carefully at them. However, in order to be able to consider function, purpose and cultural significance you will need some background knowledge. This section is about how to find out that information.

### Asking meaningful research questions

It is a mistake to consider research simply as gathering information. It is much better to think of it as finding answers to questions. What do you need to know? Discuss this with your teacher. Look at the function and meaning section in this chapter for suggestions of the questions you need to ask, as well as the advice below. Then write a list in your visual arts journal before you start your research.

Imagine that you are writing a comparative study that compares landscapes by Edvard Munch, Caspar David Friedrich and Vincent van Gogh. The task is not to find biographical information but to answer the following questions.

- Why did Munch use non-naturalistic colours?
- Why is Munch called an Expressionist artist?
- How did Munch use the landscape to express feeling?
- How was Munch influenced by Van Gogh?

Your teacher will help you to formulate meaningful questions for research. You may also find it useful to look at Bloom's thinking questions (1956). These will help you move beyond just repeating information when you research.

#### Tip



Make your task simpler by choosing artworks that are from obviously different cultural contexts. This will make the contrasts easier to explain.

If the works are close in time you will have to consider the nature of the differences very carefully. For example, Edward Degas and Jean Renoir were both French 19th century artists associated with Impressionism. One was from a rich bourgeois background, the other poor and working class. These different cultural contexts did affect their art, but in a subtle way, which is difficult to explain. This can be resolved by choosing a third work that is obviously from a different culture, but linked thematically: perhaps a genre scene such as Japanese Ukiyo-e prints?

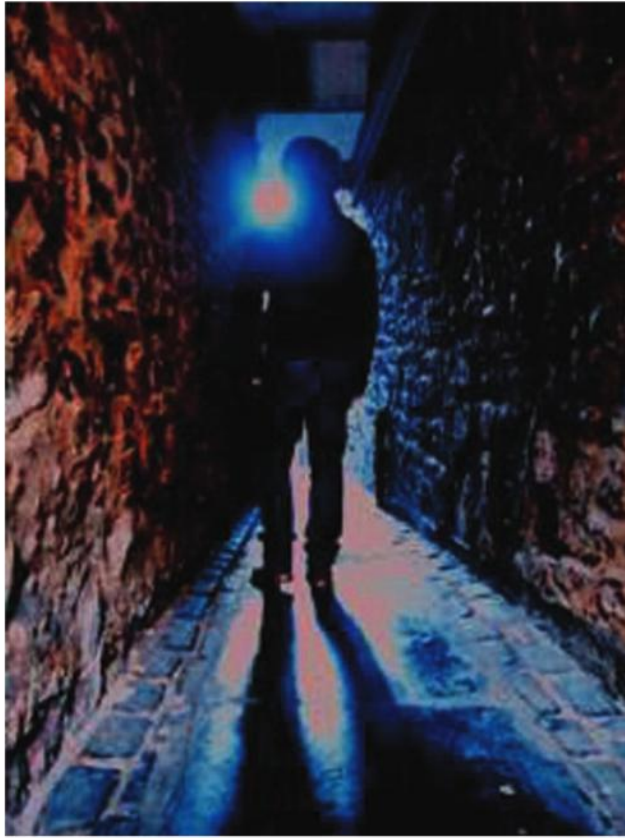
#### Tip



#### Why should I spend time asking questions?

Because spending a little time planning will save you a lot of wasted time looking up information that is not relevant. Filling your comparative study with research is not the aim of this task; you want to use selected knowledge to inform your investigation.





- ▲ Rory has applied his understanding of Munch's style when taking photographs of his brother in Edinburgh. This is a practical way of answering research questions. It helps him to appreciate the relationship between figure and surroundings, which he has then developed by using Expressionist colour in his painted study.

Below is a table with Bloom's categories of questions and examples of how you might apply them to the landscape assignment.

Category	Question words	Example
Evaluation	Judge, appraise, evaluate, assess	How effective is Munch's use of colour to express his feelings?
Synthesis	Compose, construct, design, predict	Make a colour study in Munch's style.
Analysis	Compare, contrast, examine, analyse	Contrast Edvard Munch's use of colour to that of Van Gogh and Caspar David Friedrich.
Application	Interpret, apply, use, demonstrate	Take a series of photographs influenced by Edvard Munch's compositions.
Comprehension	Restate, discuss, describe, explain	Describe the differences between Friedrich's and Munch's use of colour.
Knowledge	Who, what, when? Define, recall, list	List five key aspects of Edvard Munch's style.

### Case study

Remember Kierlan's introduction page on "Distortion of the Human Form"? She now has three different areas to research so that she can write about function and meaning. She has discussed these with her art teacher who has helped her to write these research questions:

1. Salvador Dali
  - What makes this painting a Surrealist work?
  - Why has Dali distorted the human form?
  - How does this painting reflect the Spanish Civil War?
2. The Chapman Brothers
  - Why have they made grotesque distortions of children?
  - Why did they choose moulded plastics for the sculptures?
  - Who are the audience for these artworks?
3. Makonde sculpture
  - Who made these sculptures?
  - What were they used for?
  - Why do they include distorted figures?

Now she is ready to start her research.

### ATL Research skills

Research is a skill. Learning where to find information and assessing the usefulness and accuracy of what you research is difficult. Ask your school librarian which online resources your school subscribes to. Then ask your teacher to help you devise a focused research question. Use the online resources to gather material for your answer, carefully citing each source.

### How to find good research material

One of the difficulties when reading about art is that text is often written in a complex language that is very difficult to understand unless you already have background knowledge. If you don't understand what you are reading then it is useless, so start simple! An online encyclopaedia such as Encyclopaedia Britannica will give clear and easily understood information. Other good starting points are the major museum websites such as The Metropolitan Museum or The Tate Gallery. These have short, clearly written pieces of information and provide links to glossaries to explain specialist terms.

Once you have gained a foundation of understanding you will be better equipped to tackle journal, magazine and newspaper articles. Be a detective and follow the trail! For example, books on artists will have bibliographies leading you to other books and articles. Artist websites often have a list of reviews in the "Press" section. Websites such as Wikipedia have bibliographies at the end of their entries; follow these links to the original sources of the information. Blogs will lead you to exhibitions of contemporary artists; then you can check out the venue website or news reviews for more reliable information on that exhibition.

Try Google Scholar, Google books and The Google Art Project. Many newspapers have free online databases of past reviews, but your school librarian will help you find these and much more. They may also have access to subscription databases that contain thousands of specialist articles such as JSTOR and EBSCO Advanced Placement Source. If not then try your local library.

### Tip



If you are researching a contemporary artist try sending them or their gallery an email; they might be willing to answer your questions directly! Museum and gallery curators are often pleased to help when approached directly by students so consider emailing the education department with your questions.



## Case study

How is Kierlan going to answer her research questions on Dali?

- What makes this painting a Surrealist work?
- Why has Dali distorted the human form?
- How does this painting reflect the Spanish Civil War?

First she looks up Surrealism and the Spanish Civil war on Encyclopaedia Britannica. Then she reads more about Surrealism from the Tate Gallery website. She finds that “Soft Construction with Boiled Beans” is in the Philadelphia Museum. Not only do they have a good article on the painting, they also have a teacher’s pack with all her answers.

Now the more difficult research.

How is she going to answer the questions on Makonde sculpture?

- Who made these sculptures?
- What were they used for?
- Why do they include distorted figures?

There is nothing much in the Encyclopaedia Britannica and the article on the MET museum website is very brief. The article on Wikipedia is confusing, but the bibliography mentions an exhibition in Paris in 1989 and at the Saatchi gallery in 1992. Searching for these gives her some information, but then she tries Google Books and finds part of *A Host of Devils: The History and Context of the Making of Makonde Spirit Figures* by Zachary Kingdon has been uploaded. This is very detailed and she learns all she needs to know about who the Makonde are and the history of their carvings.

### Are your sources reliable?

The easiest way to find information is from websites, but anyone can write a web page so how do you evaluate if the information is accurate? When you look at a website consider the following questions.

#### 1. Who is the audience?

Look at the style of language. Is it written for children or for an adult reader? Is the grammar and spelling correct? Often art comment is written by keen bloggers with little knowledge. It is better to seek out museum or academic websites for your research. The domain name (URL) can help. If the URL ends .ac.uk then it is written by a UK university; if it ends .edu then by an American university.

#### 2. Who is the author?

This should be evident. Paste their name into a new tab to see what else they have written. It is always helpful to know whether they are objective in their comments. If you can’t find out who wrote it then you might wonder why they did not want to add their name. Alternatively it might be a corporate author – this is often the case for museum websites.

#### 3. Is it objective and accurate?

Is the website promoting a particular set of beliefs? This might distort the accuracy of the information.



## Van Gogh's ear

Did Van Gogh cut off his ear? This episode has become an art legend and is an example of how you might find varied answers to the same question on the internet. It is often presented to exaggerate the wilder aspects of Van Gogh's character and to emphasize his instability. Although most of the accounts correctly include the few known facts, such as the dispute with Gauguin who was staying and painting with him in Arles, writers then fill in what might have happened with colourful details often suggesting that he removed his entire ear.

*"As the pair approached a bordello, their row intensified, and Gauguin cut off Van Gogh's left earlobe with his sword – either in anger or self-defence.*

*He then threw the weapon in the Rhône. Van Gogh delivered the ear to the prostitute and staggered home, where police discovered him the following day, the new account claims."* (Samuel, 2009)

*"Vincent van Gogh didn't actually cut off his entire left ear, just a little piece. This happened when temperatures flared with Paul Gauguin, the artist with whom he had been working for a while in Arles. Van Gogh's illness revealed itself: he began to hallucinate and suffered attacks in which he lost consciousness. During one of these attacks, he used the knife. He could later recall nothing about the event."* (The Van Gogh Museum, 2015)

None of the stories are false; they are just presented differently. The Van Gogh Museum is an academic institution and so is the most likely to have accurate information about Van Gogh.



## How to reference your research

The *Visual arts guide* states:

*"Every image used within the comparative study must be appropriately referenced to acknowledge the title, artist, date (when this information is known) and the source".*

The same applies when you include your own artwork.

A citation is a way of telling the reader that your information has come from elsewhere. A reference is the detail of who wrote this original information, when they wrote it and where it came from. The sources screen is a list of all the references from your comparative study.

As you research you will need to keep a list of references so that you will be able to cite them in the study and then compile your sources screen. Look at the case study to see how to do this.

## Assessment criteria for the comparative study

Part 1: Comparative study		Marks	Total
A	Analysis of formal qualities	6	30
B	Interpretation of function and purpose	6	
C	Evaluation of cultural significance	6	
D	Making comparisons and connections	6	
E	Presentation and subject-specific language	6	
F	(HL only) Making connections to own art-making practice	12	42



## Tip



Properly citing your sources shows that you have researched thoroughly and that you know how to distinguish between other people's ideas and your own original comment. If you don't do this, then you are committing plagiarism (copying). The IB can disqualify your work and remove your certificate or diploma. Simply listing your references on the sources screen does not mean that you can then copy the words freely into your study. You must still use quotations and citation at the point of use as described in this section.



▲ "Soft Construction with Boiled Beans (Premonition of Civil War)", Salvador Dalí (1936)

## Case study

Kierlan has found good information from the Philadelphia Museum website about the Dalí painting that is in their collection. Here is part of the museum text.

*"Though it is likely that Dalí changed the title after the military coup to add to the seemingly prophetic power of his unconscious mind, a volatile climate of social and political struggle had existed in the country for years. Dalí began his studies for Soft Construction with Boiled Beans in 1935, sketching the hideously deformed anatomy of the colossal creature."*

Kierlan makes these notes in her visual arts journal:

- He prepared for the painting in 1935, before the civil war.
- He changed the title so that it would seem that he had anticipated the war.
- Spain was in a state of social and political struggle.

And she records where she read this: Education: Philadelphia Museum of Art <http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51315.html>.

This is new knowledge to her and however she decides to use this information she must tell the reader where it came from. This is what she writes on her comparative study screen.

*"Dalí began the painting in 1935 by sketching the deformed figure, but he changed the title to make it seem as if he knew there was going to be a civil war. (Education: Philadelphia Museum of Art) However, I think that even though he did this the painting still reflects the suffering of the Spanish people at this time."*

She has put in a reference so we know where the ideas came from and then made a personal response to the information. She will also put this reference onto her sources screen.



## Introducing quotations

Simply adding quotations to your screens will not show that you have understood their relevance to your study. Instead introduce them and then respond by expanding or explaining the ideas.

### Case study

Kierlan finds Dali's description of "Soft Construction with Boiled Beans" on the Philadelphia Museum website. She can make a direct quote:

*"Dali described this painting as being 'a vast human body breaking out into monstrous excrescences of arms and legs tearing at one another in a delirium of auto strangulation.' (Education Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2015) We can see this from the way the limbs transform from soft flesh to gnarled stone like forms in the feet and hands creating a nightmare surrealist vision."*

Or she can paraphrase:

*"The monstrous human forms according to Dali break out into a delirium of auto strangulation. (Education Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2015), which is typical of his 'paranoiac critical' method."*

In both cases she has linked and developed Dali's words to other ideas with her own comment.

<p>[Kasfi] [Kingdon]</p> <p><b>Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent Johannesburg Art Gallery</b></p> <p>Education: Philadelphia Museum of Art  <a href="http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51315.html">http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51315.html</a></p> <p>[Education]</p> <p>[Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent Johannesburg Art Gallery]</p> <p>Britannica School</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Salvador Dalí. [2016]. In Encyclopædia Britannica. Retrieved from <a href="http://school.eb.co.uk/levels/intermediate/article/273904">http://school.eb.co.uk/levels/intermediate/article/273904</a></li> <li>• MAKONDE CARVINGS UNDER THREAT. [2001]. <i>African Business</i>, [271], 38.</li> <li>• Stock Photo - SPANISH CIVIL WAR (1936-1939) Anarchist fighters from the National Confederation of Labour in Barcelona in July 1936</li> <li>• Stock Photo - Makonde carvers with ebony carving in Dar es Salaam Tanzania</li> <li>• Fiona Bradley. "Dalí, Salvador." <i>Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online</i>. Oxford University Press. Web. 22 Mar. 2016. &lt;<a href="http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T021196">http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T021196</a>&gt;.</li> </ul> <p><i>Twentieth Century Painting and Sculpture in the Philadelphia Museum of Art (2000)</i>, p. 76. Look up proper details</p> <p>Note:</p> <p>1) Salvador Dalí, <i>The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí</i>, translated by Haakon M. Chevalier (New York: Dial Press, 1942), p. 357.</p> <p>[Chevalier, 1942]</p>	<p>List of Sources.</p> <p><b>Bibliography</b></p> <p><i>Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent Johannesburg Art Gallery</i>. [n.d.]. Johannesburg.</p> <p>Chevalier, H. M. [1942]. <i>The Secret Life of Salvador Dalí</i>. New York: Dial Press.</p> <p><i>Education</i>. [n.d.]. Retrieved December 25, 2015, from Philadelphia Museum of Art: <a href="http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51315.html">http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51315.html</a></p> <p>Kasfi, S. L. [n.d.]. <i>Makonde</i>. Retrieved March 2016, from Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online. Oxford University Press.: &lt;<a href="http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T053338">http://www.oxfordartonline.com/subscriber/article/grove/art/T053338</a>&gt;.</p> <p>Kingdon, Z. [n.d.]. <i>A Host of Devils: The History and Context of the Making of Makonde Spirit Carvings</i>. Retrieved from Google Books: <a href="https://books.google.co.uk/">https://books.google.co.uk/</a></p>
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▲ This is Kierlan's list of sources which she will upload with her completed comparative study. She used the citation tool in Microsoft Word to compile her references as she went along. This helps to ensure academic consistency in her list. Remember to cite the illustrations too.



## Using the visual arts journal to record research

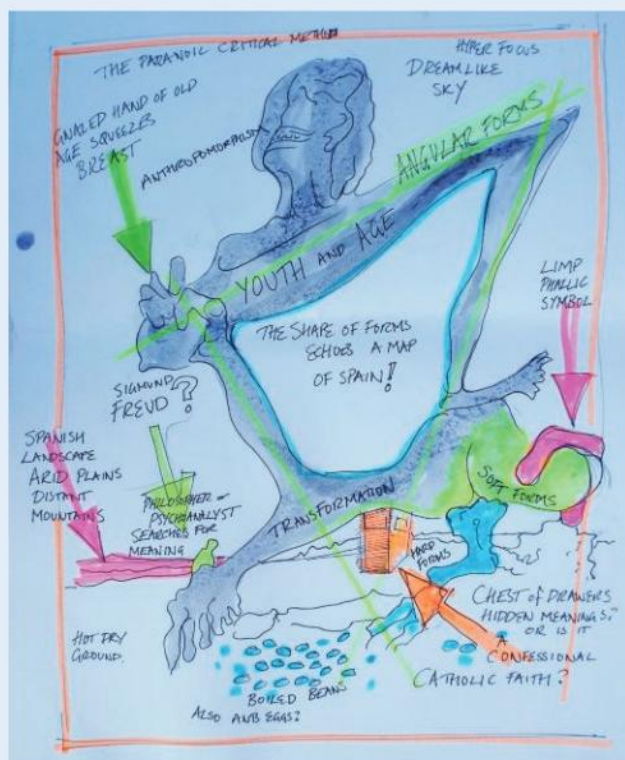
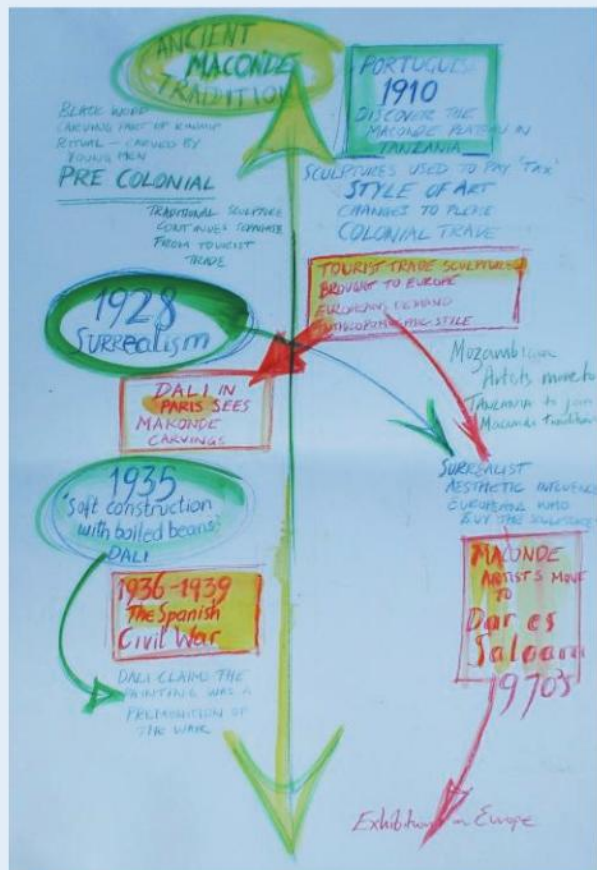
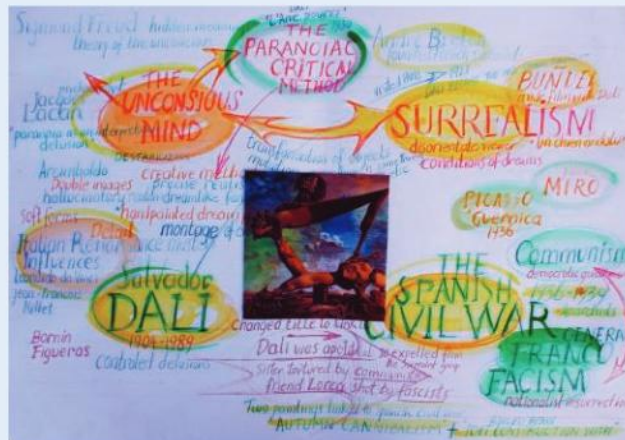
Presenting information in different ways in your journal will help you to assimilate ideas and make important connections. You could try:

- mind maps
- timelines
- flow charts
- annotated sketches.

### Case study

Kierlan has mapped out ideas related to the Dali painting she has been studying. She placed the image in the centre of a sheet and then added the main related contextual concepts, then the important ideas of the time and links with the artist's life. This helped her to assess the interrelationship of the events.

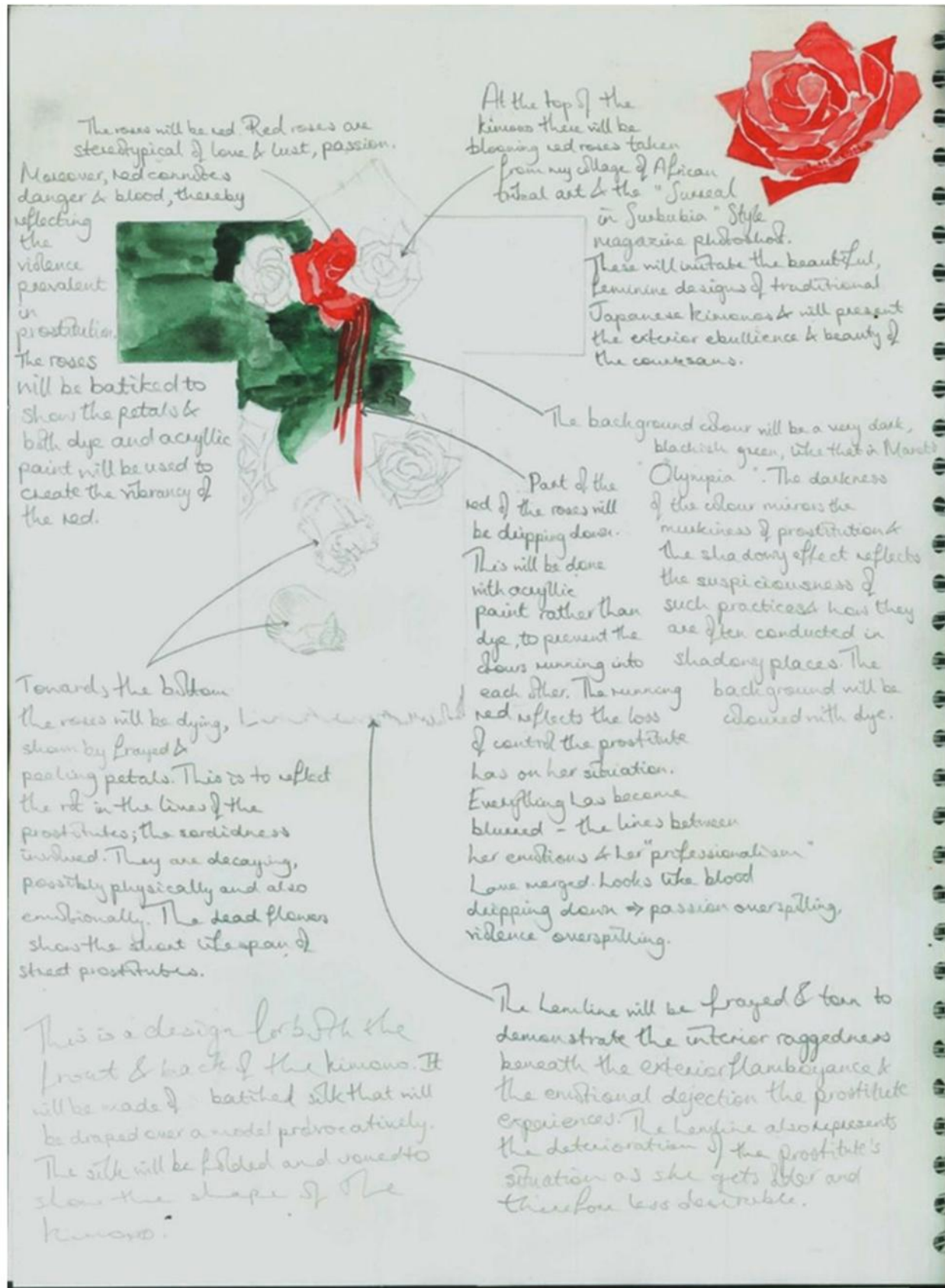
Kierlan realizes that there is a very close relationship between Dali's work and the history of the 20th century. She decides to record this in a timeline so she can relate it to the Makonde carving.



▲ Kierlan uses a simple line drawing of the painting to link her research ideas to evidence so that when she writes in her comparative study she will be able to relate the context of the painting to specific detail such as the man in the background that might represent Sigmund Freud.







▲ This student has made careful annotation on her watercolour drawing of a Kimono.





## Visiting museums, exhibitions and galleries

We understand a work of art in real life differently from a reproduction. The unfamiliar context of a museum or gallery makes us look at objects differently, in a more focused way, and we tend to give them a different value than we would if placed elsewhere.

Experiencing in real time and space at least one of the works for your comparative study is important. This might be through a school museum or gallery visit, or perhaps seeing an artwork displayed in a public space. You could organize this visit yourself, or make it part of a holiday trip. Or you might be lucky enough to visit an artist's studio.

Wherever and however you see art it is important to record your experiences carefully. It is possible to see a lot of art in a short time by wandering through a museum, but if you are going to leave with really useful material for your comparative study it is important to slow down. An hour of focused first-hand observations in front of one work of art will provide invaluable material for you to use later.

### Prepare your visit

Arrive with an objective. Scan the museum/gallery website to make a selection of works that you think you want to see. Check that the work is on display! Then download information and make some preliminary notes in your visual arts journal. You might change your mind when you arrive if you are inspired by something new, but this preliminary research will still have been useful.

### Record your observations

Your visual arts journal will be vital for recording your experiences when seeing original artworks in context. Most museums allow photography (except for special exhibitions) so use your camera to record the way the artwork is displayed, to give a sense of scale and to note the details on the exhibit label. If the work is three-dimensional record the kinetic experience of moving around the work.

It is tempting to rely on just your electronic record to refer to later, but in order to properly understand artworks you will need to slow down so that you achieve an in-depth response. Change the pace of your looking by doing one or more of the following:

- a **schematic** drawing with annotations
- a written description
- a focused drawing.

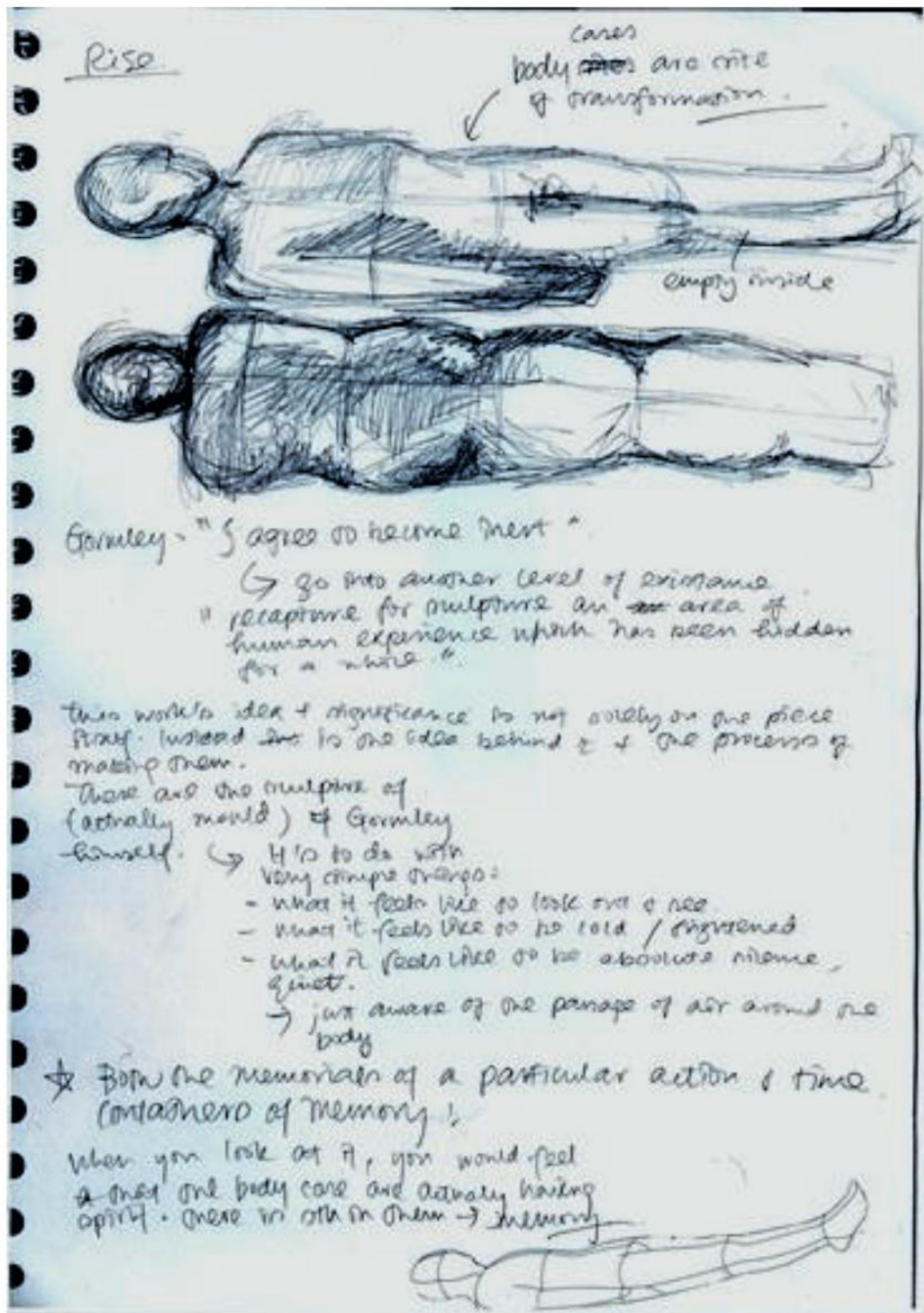
In the example on the next page, a student has used their visual arts journal to make careful notes during a visit to an exhibition of sculptures by Anthony Gormley. Notice the clear drawing style, which has helped to record the shapes and distinctive features of the sculptures. The journal page shows quick and effective note taking.



▲ *We become accustomed to viewing artworks as reproductions. However, the experience of seeing the original artwork in a museum, such as this painting by Chuck Close, is quite different. We can properly understand the impact of scale or the handling of media.*

### Key terms

**Schematic:** as in a diagram, like the simplified figures of a man or woman on the doors of bathrooms in public places or the characters in the television show *South Park*.



▲ Clear line drawings and notes make this a really effective record of looking at Antony Gormley's sculptures.





## Consider the cultural and architectural context of the work

We look at objects differently in an art gallery because we arrive with the expectation of a new experience. The surroundings help to create this special atmosphere. In a modern gallery the neutral white space is evenly lit and devoid of distractions. The audience is sometimes subdued and visitors tend to show the same respect that you might expect of those visiting a shrine or place of worship. They are full of expectation and heightened sensibility. Even if you put everyday objects in this context we see them differently.

In a traditional gallery, the rich surroundings, ornate frames, gold and expensive wall coverings help to create a sense of value.

## How to make formal analysis of art in a gallery

Describe the formal qualities using the seven formal points from earlier in this guide.

**Materials and technique:** Consider how the work was made. How did the artist start? Another way of answering this is to ask: How would I make a copy of this work? Where would I start? What materials would I need? Take a really close look at the surfaces. Usually you can see the underpainting and raw surfaces that the artist has worked on by examining the edges of a painting. With sculptures and artifacts you will need to consider the combination of processes of construction or reduction, modelling or casting and so on.

**Curation:** How is the work exhibited? Consider the architecture and decoration of the room. (And of the museum.) Consider the decisions made by the curator. Why here? Why with the other works of art in the gallery? Is there a deliberate dialogue between the exhibits? Ask how it could be displayed differently. Would this change the meaning? These are factors that you will want to consider in relation to your exhibition component in time too.

**Presentation:** The framing or lack of it; the pedestal or lack of one for a sculpture. How might you present it differently? Who made these choices and why? Not necessarily the artist, but perhaps a gallerist or previous owner. Or perhaps it is in the original frame designed by the artist.

**Provenance:** What is its **provenance**? In other words, how and why did it come to be exhibited here and in this way? Answering this question will help consider the contextual meaning.

### Key terms

**Provenance:** this is the term used to describe the history of who has owned an artifact or work of art.

### Tip



You will find information about the provenance of an artwork on the museum label or on its website. For example, the provenance for Dali's "Soft Construction with Boiled Beans" is given as:

"With Julien Levy Gallery, New York, by 1937 (on consignment from Peter Watson?); Stendahl Art Galleries, Los Angeles, purchased from the artist, November 4, 1937; sold to Louise and Walter C. Arensberg, Los Angeles, 1937; gift to PMA, 1950." [Education Philadelphia Museum of Art, 2015]

# Sculpture I- William Pye


The 'Offspring I' was the sculpture at The Yorkshire Sculpture Park which I liked looking at the most and wished to look into further. The sculpture was placed in front of a matte, light brown stone background, which created a contrast with the reflective, silver stainless-steel sculpture. The placement of the sculpture portrays the idea of a garden, which is natural and contains earthy colours and materials (like rock, plants and flowers) and an unnatural man-made substance and peculiar shaped object being thrust into the middle of the nature. In some way though, both materials compliment each other, particularly because the sculpture has water running down it in a way that is known as the roll-wave concept. This is when water flows over a smooth surface to create a pattern where a thin film of falling water is pulled by surface tension into rhythmical wave patterns. The movement is subtle and often appears to dissolve the substance of the sculpture behind it, leaving it looking translucent. The movement of the water can even be seen from afar.

The sculpture has kinetic properties because it makes the audience interact with it as it changes in relation to our movement around it. It is also viewed as experiential, as we the audience make the sculpture and it will be different for each person viewing it. It can be said that a sculpture is truer and more real because we can touch it, and it is 3-Dimensional, whereas a painting is just a picture or representation of something.

Pye says that the sculpture is "a member of a family of pieces which... (were) inspired by a photograph by Edward Weston. This is of a section through a nautilus shell and suggested to me the idea for a vertical sculpture that was a direct development of my ongoing roll-wave series."

From an early age Pye had a fascination with water and all the different forms which it took. Movement, reflection and the use of light in his earlier sculptures first led him to consider using water as a material for his artistic expression. He also used the natural world as a source of inspiration, which can be seen through the natural forms that his sculptures take. He believes that the natural world is interpreted through metal and water, with such simple concepts becoming objects of great sophistication and beauty.

Pye uses water with his sculptures in a variety of ways, which includes the coanda concept, the brimming bowl concept, the deflection concept, hydrostatics, jets, reflection, the role-wave concept, spouts, the starburst concept, transparency concept and vortexes. Each different concept can completely change the look of a sculpture, giving it a whole new meaning.



<http://www.williampye.com/work/offspring-I>  
<http://www.williampye.com/sources-of-inspiration>  
<http://www.jsp.co.uk/whats-on/open-air/william-pye>

- ▲ This student was excited by William Pye's fountain during a visit to the Yorkshire Sculpture Park. She used this experience as a starting point for her comparative study that compared modern with Baroque fountains. Notice how the first two paragraphs are entirely based on her personal experience of the work in context. This is reinforced by her photographs and gives an authenticity to her later comments on Pye's intentions.

## TOK

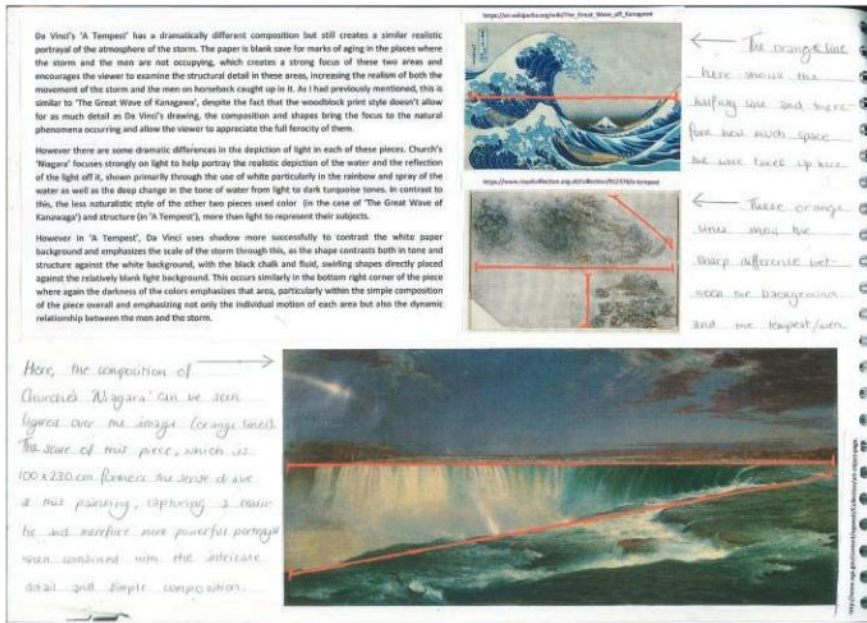


Consider these questions in relation to a museum experience:

- Why are some objects treated as art?
- Why do we put artifacts into museums?
- How does an object's function and significance change when it is exhibited in a special place?
- How does the cultural value change?
- How is cultural power exerted by the museums of past empires, such as the Louvre in Paris or the British Museum in London?
- Do ethnographic museums preserve past cultures or destroy them by taking artifacts away from their true context?

Duchamp believed that the urinal became a work of art because it was presented as such by the artist. It is more accurate to suggest, however, that the urinal becomes a work of art when it is successfully exhibited in an art gallery/museum.





- ▶ Sophie has thought very carefully before placing the lines which analyse composition onto the images. Read her text as a fine example of formal analysis and comparison. Her choice of images with their linking theme of the sea makes this especially meaningful.

In order to move beyond simple expressions of taste, the “I know what I like” approach, you will need to apply thinking skills to write about the artworks that you have selected. Analysing art can be divided between the how and the why. Firstly, describing what we can see and understanding how it was made is the critical analysis of the formal qualities. Secondly, analysing why it was made is the contextual function and purpose. A good approach is to consider artworks first for their form, then for their content, and finally for their context, although of course these things are always interrelated.

The formal elements of art section gave you the tools to make a formal analysis, as they are needed for both your process portfolio and the comparative study. You will now need to apply this analysis to the works you have selected for your comparative study.



- ▲ This is a really effective practical exploration of the formal qualities in architecture. Even without the text we have a clear understanding of how cantilevers, mass and space are evident in modernist building. Think about creative practical ways of showing formal qualities in the works you are exploring.



- ▲ Jessica was excited by Alexander McQueen's culture collaging in fashion. On this screen she explores how Nick Knight has photographed one of McQueen's creations to emphasize the negative and positive shapes. She has cleverly used collage to juxtapose Ukiyo-e prints. This effectively meets the 'creative' descriptor for presentation too.



**Discobolus. Attic red-figure drinking cup by Painter Cleomelos 510-500 BC, Athens. Louvre Museum, Paris, France.**

**Composition:** carefully designed with the figure fitting into a circular format to create a sense of movement. There is a balance between the negative and positive areas.

**Line:** the lines describe the edges of the forms to give a sense of 3D. The bulges and flow of the muscles are very realistic.

**Form:** the Greek artist is more interested in the rhythm of shapes than in showing realistic forms.

**Space:** the image is flat, there is no depth, but the artist has created the illusion of space in the negative black areas surrounding the athlete.

**Light:** Cleomelos is not interested in showing the effects of light.

**Colour:** the rich black glaze acts as a foil to the warm terracotta tone. This glows with energy even in the fine lines.

**Texture:** the smooth surface of the ceramic suits the precision of the flowing painted lines

**Composition:** the circular forms of the woman and the tub are contained by the cropped edges. The inclusion of the shelf makes our viewpoint from above very clear.

**Line:** like the Greek cup there is also a clear use of line to define objects.

**Form:** as well as line Degas has used chiaroscuro with the light striking the model's back to give a realistic sense of form.

**Space:** there is a convincing illusion of depth created by the light and shadow as well as through perspective.

**Light:** Degas has used pastels to render the subtle modulation of light.

**Colour:** he has used desaturated oranges and grey blues to create a subtle complementary contrast. The warm/cold theme is also repeated across the image.

**Texture:** he is interested in the different textures of the metal tub, the reflecting glaze of the porcelain and especially the waxy quality with which flesh absorbs light.

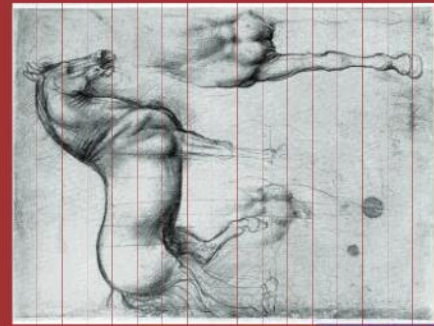
**Edgar Degas (1834-1917) The Tub (1886). Orsay Museum. Paris. France**



## Comparing Formal Qualities

▲ This example screen compares formal qualities using the 'Seven Formal Points'. Observations are successfully identified and presented. Note that by showing the similarities and differences between the two works of art we better understand how the images were made.





Leonardo Da Vinci "Two Horses", c1490, <https://www.britannica.com/artist/leonardo-da-vinci>

**Leonardo Da Vinci Materials:** Pen and ink and wash with red chalk.

**Technique:** The smooth paper has allowed him to make fluid marks with the chalk. He has combined crisp fine lines with more soft focus and smudged marks.

**Process:** He has combined contour drawing with gesture. He has shown the outlines of the horses anatomy. Because Leonardo dissected animals he had an accurate knowledge of the forms, which he has been able to capture in movement. His corrections and changes—pentimenti—are a record of the process of making the drawing, they record the movement of the artists hand in time.

**Comparison:** His attempt to capture movement through the drawing process is a scientific recording approach that anticipates Muybridge's photographing approach.

## How three artists have made images of horses?

Researched from: The Thames and Hudson Introduction to Art (2015)

Eadweard Muybridge

**Materials:** He has used photography which was invented in the 19th century and relies on light sensitive material to record an image.

**Process:** He set up cameras in a line with cables stretched so that when the horse galloped past it tripped each camera in turn taking a sequence of still photographs. This proved that when a horse gallops all its legs are off the ground at the same time. Because the human eye can't see movement that fast previously horses were portrayed differently before he took these images.

**Technique:** This was called chronophotography and relied on using time lapse photography to create the illusion of movement. This was the first step in the development of motion pictures and then of film.

**Comparison:** Muybridge was a scientist, not an artist. He is using visual means to better understand how the world works. However, this is similar to Leonardo's intentions. This new way of seeing was an important influence on modern art



Photographer Eadweard Muybridge's study of a horse at full gallop



Bronze horse - Han dynasty, China - 206 B.C image from Alamy stock photos.

**Materials:** Cast bronze (an alloy of copper and tin)

**Technique:** This was created using the lost wax technique.

**Process:** The artist would have modelled an armature and then built the forms with clay, then a thick layer of wax is added, with the surface detail carved into it such as the mane and saddle. Then it is covered in sand to make a hard outer casing. Small holes are drilled so that when the mould is heated the molten wax can run out, leaving a space that the molten bronze can fill. When it is cool the casing is removed. It is then polished, but over time this sculpture has created a patina because of exposure to the elements.

**Comparison:** The complex process has meant that the artist must keep the form of the horse simple. For strength he must have all four hooves touching the ground. This horse does not show movement like the other two instead the artist has created a strong recognisable image.

▲ This example approaches formal analysis by considering materials, techniques and processes. Notice how by placing the three works on the same page they make a really effective comparison too.

This print by Utagawa Yoshitora (right) (歌川 芳虎), an artist who was active from 1850-1880, is a prime example of a medical Japanese woodblock print. These woodblock prints were produced mainly to inform the Japanese public about prevention and treatment of common illnesses like cholera and measles, subjects like pregnancy, or as drug adverts. This particular print is about caring for patients with measles. I chose to focus on this print because it shares formal qualities possessed by a large number of prints from this time

Use of text, involved with the rest of the composition means it is not exclusively pictorial but also informative via text. Also note the distinctive Red label (top right) that is seen on nearly all prints of this kind.

The colours used are natural and non-offensive. The common colours in this particular print are blues and greens, which, interestingly are the usual colours associated with health in modern western society. Blacks and reds are used sparingly but confidently.

Minimal interior setting that merely hints at their environment. Isometric perspective

Figures whose features are defined by black lines, gives clarity.

Gentle gradient background interworked with graphic and vibrant style

The position of the figures and the furniture (especially the black bordered decorative board) in the foreground implies that the setting is a room but the rest of the composition has no regard for this.

Source  
<http://asian.library.ucsf.edu>

Signed by artist



- ▲ Ella used annotation to consider the formal qualities of Ukiyo-e prints. This is a very effective method as it allows her to make each point clearly and then support it by directly showing an example in the image.

### Colour in Ukiyo-e Prints

The formal qualities of the prints by Utagawa Yoshitora that I have been studying are shared by all the Ukiyo-e woodblock artists like these on this screen.

They use black to frame the colour and to enhance its value.

The colours add to the spatial quality of floating.

The colours, I imagine, are faded due to time but originally they would be bright colours. The prints are built on colour harmonies by using analogous colours such as blues and greens, these are then contrasted with reds and oranges, often on the clothing which are active and lively. They also use desaturated colours especially in the backgrounds to work against the stronger saturated colours that fill the shapes of the figures. Ivory white is often used to suggest purity and to give the effect of light. It is usually framed by creams such as in the image of the geisha that I have copied above. They also use warm against cold blue contrasts. Because they were printed from separate blocks the colours were designed very carefully.

- ▲ This screen is the companion to Ella's analysis of formal qualities in the prints of Utagawa Yoshitora. Here she has used her watercolours to act as a background to comments about the use of colour in Ukiyo-e prints. Notice the colour samplers that are an effective way to capture an artist's palette.





## How to interpret function and purpose

*"Looking is not indifferent. There can never be any question of 'just looking'."*

Victor Burgin (1982)

Your next task is to investigate the function and purpose of the works, although you will have begun to open out ideas as you described the formal qualities.

Many pieces will fulfill more than one function, for example, a wedding dress is: symbolic both of a culture and of a rite of passage; aesthetically beautiful and at the same time a practical item of clothing.

All art is made for a reason. The aim of this section is to help you consider the "why and what for?" of the artworks you have chosen to study. But remember, art rarely has a straightforward purpose. Artists often make their work deliberately **ambiguous** and rather than giving definitive answers, consider the multiple functions that your artwork may have.

### Questions to ask

You will need to first research the cultural context in which the artwork was created. Refer to the research section in this chapter to guide you. When you have read about the history and context of your artworks, then you will be equipped to answer these questions.

#### Why was this artwork made?

Some possible answers:

**For status:** to enhance the power or social standing of the owner. To display wealth (through the use of precious materials, skilled craftsmanship or the creative originality of the artist).

**For ritual:** as a part of a religious celebration, or as a votive offering to ask for forgiveness, as an **icon** to worship, to alleviate suffering or to attain spiritual enlightenment.

**For education:** to teach. For example, religious works which tell a story or have a **narrative**. Images are especially important when much of a population are illiterate, such as the Christian frescos of the Renaissance or the political murals of the Mexican revolutionary artists.

**To understand the human condition:** through the representation of abstract concepts and feelings. Modern art does this by means of **metaphor** and **allegory**. For example, the 9/11 memorial in New York, the legacy of colonialism shown by Doris Salcedo's "Shibboleth" (2007), a fissure running through the floor of the Tate Modern in London, or the existential works of Giacometti.

**As propaganda:** art that contains a strong polemical (one-sided) message aimed to distort the truth for political advantage.

**As documentary:** to record an event. For example, Goya's etchings of the atrocities of the Napoleonic wars, or the work of war photographers such as Don McCullen. Similarly, social realism seeks to use art to show the lives and suffering of ordinary people, such as the FSA photographers in 1930s America aiming to promote change.

### Key terms

**Ambiguous:** having more than one possible interpretation. The meanings of most works of art are ambiguous.

### Tip



You will find the highlighted words useful tools in your analysis of meaning; they are defined in the glossary.

### Tip



#### Evaluation of cultural significance

It is important to comment on the cultural significance of your selected artworks. In order to do this well you will need to understand the original cultural context in which they were made. However, before you start the task, it is worth pausing to consider your own cultural context, as we are all influenced by the values and beliefs with which we have grown up. Think about your cultural identity and what makes you different to others. Remember that these differences influence the way you interpret the world, the art that you are interested in and the judgments that you will make about it. Awareness of our personal viewpoint can help us to be more objective in our opinions, less prejudiced and more international-minded.

## TOK

## L'ART EST INUTILE, RENTREZ CHEZ VOUS

Jean Vautrier

This translates as “Art is useless go home”. Vautrier makes use of irony to question the value of making art. In utilitarian terms the statement is correct. Yet humankind has expended considerable energy and resources in the making of cultural artifacts. Consider what justifications there could be for this. When the Taliban destroyed the ancient Buddhist sculptures at Bamiyan they claimed that the act was partly in protest at the money being paid for the statue’s upkeep, which could have been better spent on the starving people of the region. What do you think?

## ATL Social skills: defining our cultural identities

In pairs draw a Venn diagram. Write each of your names in an oval. Now fill your ovals with all the aspects of your life that define your culture. Any aspects you share with your partner go in the middle, where the ovals overlap.

Here are some suggestions:

- Personal details: religion/beliefs, ethnicity, nationality, gender, age
- Signifiers: dress, make-up, hairstyle, music, dance, food, language, customs, rites of passage (how do you celebrate birth, coming of age, marriage and death?)

When you have finished, discuss with other students. Perhaps you can divide into different cultural groups within the class.

Which aspects of cultural identity do you think are most important in relation to your judgments of visual art? Perhaps gender and religious belief?

## Tip



## The introduction

Your first screen will introduce your study. Make the content very clear by including:

- a title
- illustrations of the main works you will analyse
- explain any linking theme or framework.

Adding a personal touch, such as mentioning where you have seen the works or what attracted you to them, can make your work more interesting.

**To question:** in the past art was used within the constraints of strict **convention**, but in modern societies the role of art is often to subvert accepted ways of doing things, or to make us see with fresh eyes. **Irony** is often used to subvert convention: by choosing a disjuncture of scale; by **juxtaposing** imagery that would not normally be seen in the same context; by using an unexpected or inappropriate media; by using an inappropriate style, such as being soft and gentle for a gruesome act, and, of course, by using humour. For example, Margaret Wertheim’s group project to crochet a coral reef, “transforming the hard and wet into the fluffy and dry”, this is ironic and its purpose is to disrupt conventional ways of seeing the world. Appropriation is another way in which artists question the values of contemporary culture by recycling imagery. Most collage relies on the juxtaposition of images to suggest new meanings, or to disrupt the established order of the world.





**For self-expression:** for the personal expression of the artist. Although this is considered the artist's main motivation by a modern audience, there are in fact few artists who create art purely for themselves. Even if they are financially independent, which is rare, they will always be working for an audience. However, artists such as Van Gogh and Edvard Munch by examining their personal psychological trauma through their art help us to better understand the human condition – what it is to live, suffer and die.

**For contemplation:** to enjoy art for its **aesthetic** beauty; sometimes this is called “art for art's sake”. In western culture the principal function of art was to be aesthetically pleasing. The Romantic movement in the 18th century changed this, considering emotions such as terror to be more powerful than beauty. Some modern art has also challenged ideas of the beautiful. Aesthetics depends on cultural context as there are different ideas of what is beautiful. Consider the classical aesthetic, that is, from ancient Greece and Rome; the machine aesthetic (this is what the Futurists aspired to – the sensual curve and gleam of a car bonnet, for example); the modern aesthetic (the pure forms and white surfaces of early modernism) or the postmodern aesthetic (the late 20th century fashion of combining completely opposing styles).

**For decoration:** pattern, colour, texture all serve to give variety and life to our surroundings. Decoration is the primary function of many of the artifacts in our daily lives, from the patterns on ceramics to the stripes on your trainers, and the same is true of the original purpose of many objects that are now in museums.

**For catharsis:** as a release from powerful emotions. This is an ancient Greek idea that to see images of violence helps us to control or release our feelings of aggression through art rather than in action. Shocking the spectator is a method of achieving this. Think also of gothic film and images of death and destruction.

### Who paid for this artwork?

Consider who is paying for the materials and the artist's labour. The piece may have been made to a specific order, that is, commissioned. There may have been a contract drawn up by the patron (the person who pays for an artwork). The patron may have been a religious individual or group, the state, or a wealthy private individual. Art dealers arrange contracts with their artists. Contemporary gallerists provide studios and a wage for their artists in exchange for a set number of artworks.

### Where was it created for?

Art is often made for a specific place. Consider whether this was a public or private space. Was the work made for the private contemplation of a few privileged people or for many to admire? Perhaps for a religious or a secular building. Was it designed for a specific architectural setting?

### Who is looking?

Consider the audience, the viewer, the spectator. The next section considers how you might present answers to these questions, but first consider them in relation to function. Who are we when looking at this artwork? What are the ways in which we regard the figures?

# जैन प्रतमि (Jain statue)

**Cultural context**  
This stele is of Ambika, a nature spirit from a Jain temple. Jainism is an ancient Indian religion that teaches that the way to freedom is to live lives of harmlessness and they are concerned for the wellbeing of every creature in the universe (by treating both animals and plants with equal respect as humans). Ambika was the attendant specific to the twenty-second tirthankara (teachers preaching the Jain philosophy) called Neminath. Statues such as this one would have been central in temples for Jains to worship. This statue was commissioned during King Bhoja's reign of the Paramara Kingdom where the great Jain scholar, Dhyanapala, lived.

**Function and purpose**  
This statue would have been worshipped in order for it to be worshipped, Jains honour the tirthankaras every day. Rather than worshipping the individual of the tirthankara, Jains worship the ideal of perfection that the tirthankara's have brought to the world. In Jain temples, offerings are made to pictures and statues of tirthankaras and gods. This statue would have been one of many statues worshipped in a Jain temple.

**Material, conceptual and cultural significance**  
As a religious icon, this statue has a large cultural significance. However, the significance should not be overstated. Every Jain temple would have numerous statues to worship in addition to carvings into the walls, so the significance of this individual statue would have been diluted and rather it was the idea of the icons to worship that were more significant than the objects themselves.

**FORMAL QUALITIES**  
The sculpture is made from marble, which was a popular stone by the eleventh century in India. It is carved in relief, however, the central figure is no longer attached to the background, it has a more three-dimensional appearance as well as standing out more.

Jain figures tend to have little clothing, and this statue is no different. There are some elaborate details in the jewelry around the arms, legs and neck. This decoration could be seen as an attempt to clothe the figure, and therefore, typical of the Digambara Jain view that women are not allowed to be naked in public.



However, the figure's pose is quite open and she accepts a seductive S-shape which suggests that she is not trying to hide or cover-up - which is contradictory to this Digambara view as naked women are meant to feel ashamed of being naked.

This statue shows Ambika mounting a lion (on the bottom right of the statue) with her sons which presents her as both motherly and strong.

Anor. (Jain temple)  
Inscribed stele with the yaksini Ambika  
AD 1034, central India.

**Sources:**  
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/religion/religions/jainism/>  
[http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight\\_objects/asia/j/ins](http://www.britishmuseum.org/explore/highlights/highlight_objects/asia/j/ins)

▲ Freya has effectively combined an analysis of formal qualities with careful consideration of cultural significance. Her combination of word processed text and handwritten comments are very effective.



A useful way of considering this question for a modern audience is to use the concept of **the gaze**: this is the word art historians use to refer to how we look at a figurative image, particularly the spectator's gaze, the gaze of the viewer at an image of a person. It was a term first used by Laura Mulvey, a feminist film theorist. More recently the art critic James Elkins has described the different types of gaze you might experience when you look at a figurative painting in a gallery:

*"You, looking at the painting, figures in the painting who look out at you, figures in the painting who look at one another, figures in the painting who look at objects or stare off into space or have their eyes closed. In addition there is often the museum guard, who may be looking at the back of your head, and the other people in the gallery, who may be looking at you or at the painting. There are imaginary observers, too: the artist, who was once looking at this painting, the models for the figures in the painting, who may once have seen themselves there, and all the other people who have seen the painting – the buyers, the museum officials, and so forth. And finally, there are also people who have never seen the painting: they may know it only from reproductions... or from descriptions."* (Elkins, 1996)

The gaze is a way of considering the social power relationships between the observer and the observed that are implied by figurative images, especially with respect to the male gaze and the female gaze: men gaze at women; women gaze at themselves; women gaze at other women; and the effects of these ways of seeing. Consider these ideas in relation to contemporary media. Is this statement still true?

### Tip



Be careful with the word "simple". You can describe works as being "simple", meaning straightforward or direct and uncomplicated, for example, Van Gogh's sunflowers have a simple composition. However, avoid saying "simplistic" unless you intend to suggest that what you are describing lacks meaning.

#### Function and Purpose

**Status:** In the Ming period this robe was a signifier of status. From details in the exhibition catalogue, I found out that this robe had actually been buried with Zhu Tan, Prince Huang of Lu, along with six other "dragon robes". It was clearly such an expensive item of clothing that, in the modern world it would have been inherited or sold not simply buried. Also, the necessity of six robes in his coffin evokes an eerie feeling – as if the inhabitant is going to use and wear all the robes.

**Yellow Silk:** the fact that it is around 600 years old and has not disintegrated shows its sheer durability and quality of the silk. I found out that the silk for this robe would have originally been bright yellow, with a pale yellow thread for the embroidery. And also this yellow silk was actually reserved for the imperial family only as a sign of their authority and superiority colours were, in essence, copyrighted for the highest echelons of society.

**Imperial Symbols:** there was also a law in place that the emperor was the only person who could wear a garment with the twelve imperial symbols these were the sun, moon, stars, mountains, dragon, pheasant, the fu pattern, axe, two sacrificial cups were representations of monkeys and tigers, water weed, fire and grain.

**Long sleeves:** Not only did this complex silk in a garment add to it becoming a high-end product of wealth and class, impractically long sleeves used to suggest statues in the Ming period. It used to be reserved only for the emperor, his family and extremely notable people of the empire. They would wear white silk inside and yellow silk, the colour of the earth, outside of the palace, so this robe would have been worn only on public occasions.

**Exclusive:** the robe is given high value simply by association with the emperor. Human nature suggests that we instinctively want the forbidden. This presumably grants the emperor an extra element of power over his people, indicating the strength that a piece of clothing can have. The robe also distances the Emperor from his people, with completely contrasting day-to-day clothing. This separation gives him a God-like status with his foreignness, leading to an idolisation

### Prince Huang of Lu's Dragon Robe



I drew this sketch in the British Museum with the robe in front of me. This however, does not do the intricacies of the silk justice. In the museum, I learnt that the silk was mas made from silk worms that fed on mulberry, showing why the quality of the garment is so high The delicacy made the robe difficult to draw and record accurately, as did the gold embroidery.

I embroidered the sample (left) in the style of the dragon robe. I enjoyed the hue of the embroidery against the colour of the distressed material, in a similar contrast of the real robe in the British Museum exhibition.

### ATL Thinking skills

Consider these views on "the gaze". What do you think of the speakers' opinions?

*"In advertising males gaze, and females are gazed at."* (Fowles, 1996)

*"The gaze signifies a psychological relationship of power, in which the gazer is superior to the object of the gaze."* (Schroeder, 1998).

*In Ways of Seeing (1972) John Berger observed that:*

*"... according to usage and conventions which are at last being questioned but have by no means been overcome – men act and women appear. Men look at women. Women watch themselves being looked at."*

Berger argues that in European art from the Renaissance onwards women were depicted as being:

*"aware of being seen by a [male] spectator. ... Women are depicted in a different way to men – because the 'ideal' spectator is always assumed to be male and the image of the woman is designed to flatter him."*

◀ Jessica shows her textiles skills on this screen. Machine-embroidering a copy of the silk patterns as well as distressing fabric to create an appropriate background has helped her to understand the relationship between materials and meaning. Notice how a gallery sketch has been presented on a final screen, making this much more personal than simply pasting in a photograph of the robe.

Case study

Kierlan has brought much of her research together onto one screen that considers the audience for both Dali and Makonde art using the McFee model.

Audience's World	Audience	Artwork	Artist	Artist's World										
<p>The western collectors were by the abstract forms of sculptures that linked with Surrealism. Colonials wanted souvenirs of their time in Africa. Excited by the imaginative power of the anthropomorphic figures.</p> 	<p>The first audience were fellow Makonde tribespeople ; the works held cultural and religious meaning.  <b>Post Colonial audience:</b> The sculptures were adapted to sell to German and Portuguese officials.  <b>Western patrons changed the style of the art.</b> They wanted sculptures of humans and animals in the traditional African blackwood. They were then sold in Dar es Salaam and exported to Europe this is how artists like Dali saw them.</p>	<p>TANZANIA East Africa Makonde ebony wooden sculpture www.alamy.com</p> 	<p><b>The artist is unknown. An ancient culture:</b> This sculpture style is influenced by traditional Makonde sculptural traditions when they were made by tribesmen in kinship groups who were not artists.</p> <p>Makonde carvers with ebony carving in Dar es Salaam Tanzania www.alamy.com</p> 	<p>The Makonde plateau in Tanzania was colonised by the Portuguese. In the 1910's they worked under a colonial system and then for the tourist trade. The carvings became so popular that the sculptors moved to Dar es Salaam to work. Those who remained behind kept to the traditional uses for sculpture. In 1970 the carving trade was nationalised by the government</p>	<p>Republican soldiers in Spain during a Spanish Civil war battle 1937 www.alamy.com</p> <p>Spain was in a state of social and political struggle. The Spanish Civil War started in 1936 Europe on the brink of World War, divided between Fascism and Communism.</p>	<p>Fellow surrealist artists were very competitive showing artworks together. Surrealism was becoming very popular amongst art dealers and especially an American audience. Dali was selling work to collectors</p>		<p>He was becoming famous. He was apolitical, but his sister was tortured by the fascists and his friend Lorca was shot by the republicans so he was very effected by the civil war.</p> <p>Dali 'Soft Construction with Boiled Beans' 1935 www.alamy.com</p>	<p>Dali was part of the Surrealist group who met regularly and showed each other their work. They shared ideas about the subconscious and art. Influenced by the ideas of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan.</p>	<p>Sources: 'Makonde' Sidney Littlefield Kasfir. <i>Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online.</i> Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent 'A Host of Devils: The History and Context of the Making of Makonde Spirit' Zachary Kingdon Education: Philadelphia Museum of Art <a href="http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51315.html">http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51315.html</a></p>				
<p>Republican soldiers in Spain during a Spanish Civil war battle 1937 www.alamy.com</p> <p>Spain was in a state of social and political struggle. The Spanish Civil War started in 1936 Europe on the brink of World War, divided between Fascism and Communism.</p>	<p>Fellow surrealist artists were very competitive showing artworks together. Surrealism was becoming very popular amongst art dealers and especially an American audience. Dali was selling work to collectors</p>		<p>He was becoming famous. He was apolitical, but his sister was tortured by the fascists and his friend Lorca was shot by the republicans so he was very effected by the civil war.</p> <p>Dali 'Soft Construction with Boiled Beans' 1935 www.alamy.com</p>	<p>Dali was part of the Surrealist group who met regularly and showed each other their work. They shared ideas about the subconscious and art. Influenced by the ideas of Sigmund Freud and Jacques Lacan.</p>	<p>Sources: 'Makonde' Sidney Littlefield Kasfir. <i>Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online.</i> Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent 'A Host of Devils: The History and Context of the Making of Makonde Spirit' Zachary Kingdon Education: Philadelphia Museum of Art <a href="http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51315.html">http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51315.html</a></p>									
<p>Sources: 'Makonde' Sidney Littlefield Kasfir. <i>Grove Art Online. Oxford Art Online.</i> Africa Remix: Contemporary Art of a Continent 'A Host of Devils: The History and Context of the Making of Makonde Spirit' Zachary Kingdon Education: Philadelphia Museum of Art <a href="http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51315.html">http://www.philamuseum.org/collections/permanent/51315.html</a></p>														



# Donald Rodney

During my research and previous skin themed project I came across the work 'In the House of my Father' by Donald Rodney. The piece is an up-close photograph of the artist holding a small sculpture of a house. The house is made from skin that the artist had removed during a medical procedure to treat his sickle cell anaemia, a condition that effects individuals of African, Caribbean, Eastern Mediterranean, Middle Eastern and Asian ancestry (Tate, Barson, 2002). The house also exists as an individual artwork. The works are a part of a collection that is dedicated to the artist's father, who died while the artist was in hospital. This piece combines ideas of family, origin, ethnicity, medical themes, health and skin. Rodney, who was constantly conscious of his own cultural identity as a black artist living in London, went on to Form the 'Black Art group'. The work, although addressing a condition exclusive to a specific group of people, also discusses less culturally dependant themes like family and skin.



'In the House of my Father' – Donald Rodney, 1996, Photo

Donald Rodney's 'The house of my Father' image  
<http://www.tate.org.uk/art/artworks/rodney-in-the-house-of-my-father-e78529>



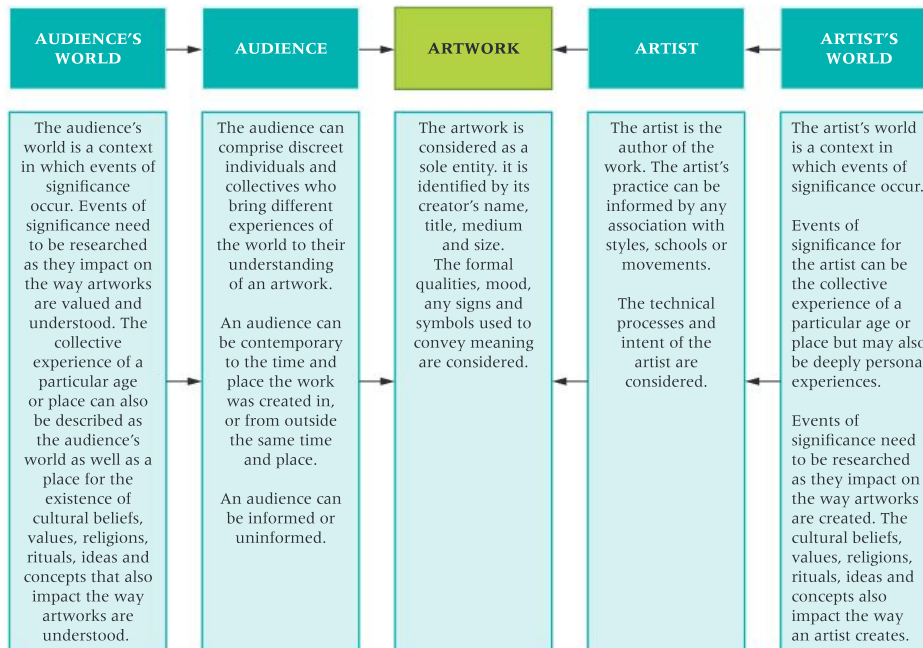
My Photos of my grandmother's hand and my own hand.

The house itself is symbolic of Rodney's illness. It concerns the fragility of existing within a structure that is unable to support the host. The house is surrounded by the hand, which can be seen as a threat to the house, extending the image of the house as fragile. The position of the hand suggests that the body the hand is connected too is not conscious, as it is sprawled across sheets. The notion of illness and mortality can be seen here. These observations are possible once the viewer transcends the initial reaction of revulsion towards the skin. However this work is not macabre or gory. It has more in common with a child picking scabs than a silence-of-the-lambs-esque work of skin wizardry.

- ▲ In this student's work the simple act of photographing her hand and that of her grandmother illuminates the meanings suggested by Donald Rodney's piece. Notice how she reflects on our response to the use of skin. She has used her own feelings about the work to explore function and purpose rather than reading the ideas of others.

## What do we mean by context and audience?

We have considered cultural significance and the viewer; now you can link those ideas with function and purpose to explore the context of the artworks, that is, the time and place that they were created and the audience. A useful way of doing this is to use June King McFee's conceptual framework (1978).



Visual arts teacher support material

To complete the table, you will need a good understanding of why and for whom the artworks were made.

Comparison between Makonde Sculpture and Dali Painting

Makonde Sculpture	Shared Characteristics	Dali Painting
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Unknown artist</li> <li>African</li> <li>Member of the Makonde people.</li> <li>Sculpture in black ebony</li> <li>Smooth sculptural forms</li> <li>Simplified form</li> <li>Flowing and balanced composition</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Distorted forms</li> <li>Anthropomorphic</li> <li>Dream like</li> <li>Use positive and negative shapes</li> <li>Figures stand on a solid base</li> <li>Combine abstract and realistic elements</li> <li>Forms viewed in silhouette</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Famous artist</li> <li>European</li> <li>Member of the surrealists.</li> <li>Painting in oil on canvas</li> <li>Heightened realist colour</li> <li>Strong chiaroscuro</li> <li>Precise detail</li> <li>Complex</li> </ul>

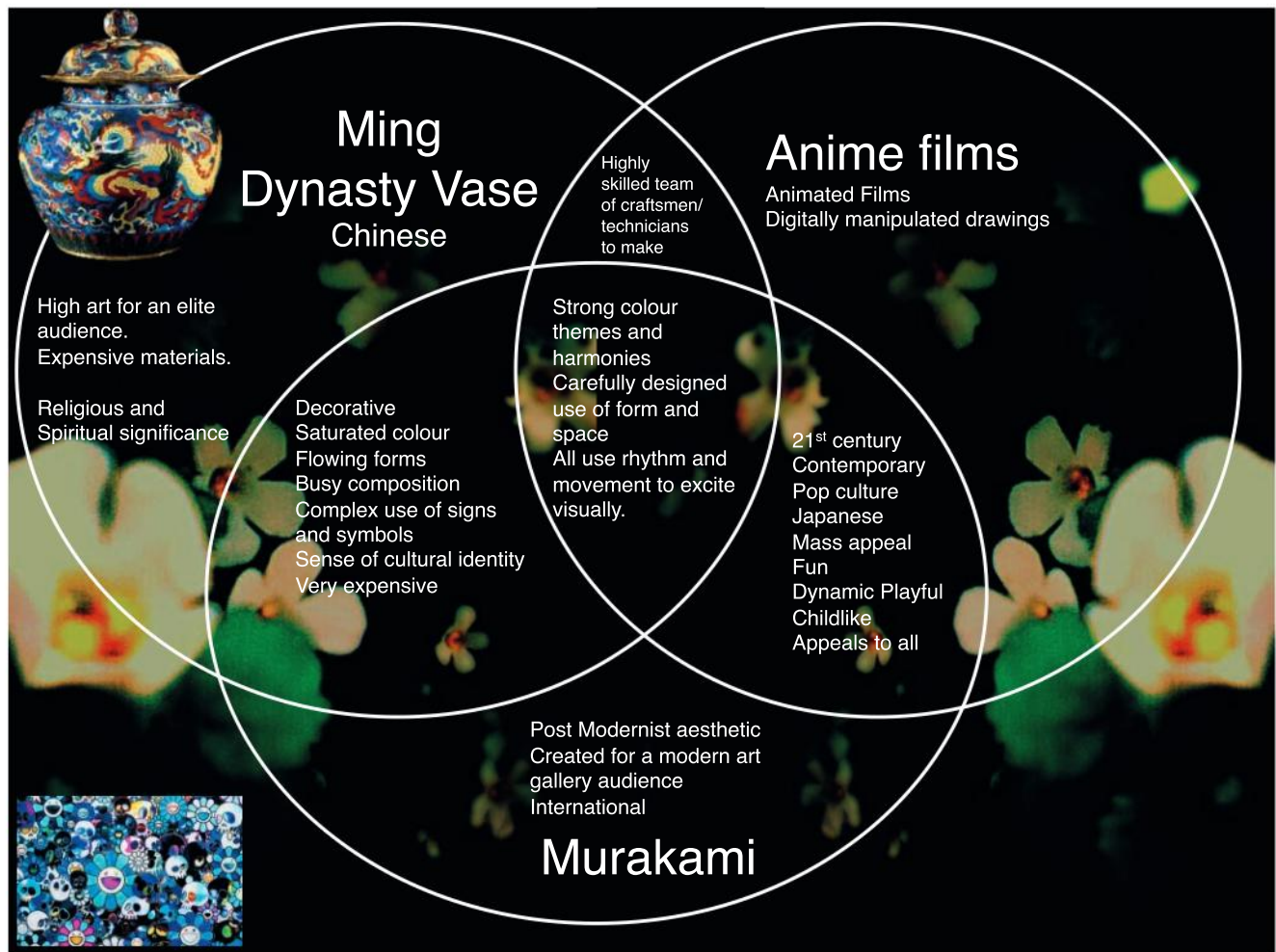


## How to make comparisons

This component is called the comparative study for a reason: you are expected to compare and connect art from different cultures! Always keep in mind that you are comparing the artworks, not the artists.

A straightforward way to start this is to use a Venn diagram. This will clarify the similarities and differences. But don't rely only on these, as they can be rather reductive and simplistic: you end up pointing out the obvious and irrelevant such as there is a duck in this painting and a pigeon in that one! You can see diagrams here that have been done well, where the important stylistic, technical or thematic differences are shown. It is much better to concentrate on themes that connect the works rather than treating this as a listing exercise and it is really important to use evidence to support your comparisons, perhaps by juxtaposing details from different works. All the works need to be compared at some point, but not at the same time, so concentrate on developing insightful comment rather than lists.

Remember the suggestion at the start of this chapter was that you look for thematic links when you choose your artworks. If the works you have chosen lack common themes, this is where you will now find it hard to draw meaningful comparisons. The very best studies



Tip



Be careful not to simply repeat information from earlier screens when making comparisons; this will not gain you any new marks. Instead aim to synthesize your research, developing the themes of your comparisons into new insights.

start comparing the artworks from the introduction, pointing out the key thematic links when the artworks are first mentioned. This is just the same as you would in a good essay that develops a convincing argument by adding evidence as the ideas are explained. So in fact your comparison should be something that develops and flows across all the screens, rather than just an isolated activity towards the end.

As in an essay you will need to synthesize – bring together – the different parts to make a coherent whole. Try to make meaningful comparisons rather than repeating earlier information.

You might compare the following.

- Formal qualities: such as the use of light in landscapes, expression in colour, ways of representing the illusion of depth.
- Style and technique: for example, comparing the handling of paint, the manipulation of media, the finishing of surfaces in sculpture or the different ways fabric is transformed in dress.
- Function and meaning: how are overarching themes interpreted differently? How are they culturally dependent?

**Comparisons and Connections**

**Formal Qualities**

In situ, one can see the contrast in size of the two paintings. Degas's is a fraction of the size of del Valca's. This, together with the size of and the way art has changed between these two periods emphasises the way art has changed between these two periods

Here, the figures take up a greater proportion of the picture plane – emphasising their importance as the subject

Whereas here, the figure is more set back, which captures the importance of the space around the woman

At the centre of both paintings, the protagonist figure is located. In both cases they are positioned in a void of unpainted canvas/panel.

The colours used in the two works are not too dissimilar, however, this is partly due to the fact that substantial expanses of both works are left bare

Although both paintings are left in a seemingly unfinished state, the different techniques with which they were painted (Degas's is more sketchy whereas del Vaga's painted sections are finished with great attention to detail) highlight the contrasting contexts in which they were created and the way in which the ideas behind painting, and art, have changed.

**Cultural Context**

The two periods from which these paintings are taken from are completely different. During the Renaissance, representation of ideal beauty and truth to nature were values of significance, whereas during the Impressionist movement, painters only sought to make quite literally, impressions. And hence, the unfinished nature of the Perino del Vaga's Holy Family with Saint John the Baptist is more surprising than the sketchy look of Degas's Women at a Window. Also during the Renaissance subjects were generally of a religious or mythical nature, or portraits commissioned by the clergy or nobles but the Impressionist artists wanted to portray normal, everyday life.

**Function and Purpose**

The contrasting contexts of the two paintings emphasises their differing function and purpose. The unfinished nature of del Vaga's work shows that, at the time it was abandoned, it had little function or purpose; he may have not finished it because he didn't think it was "right" – the incompleteness of it adds nothing to the artist's intentions. However, Degas left his painting with the intention of leaving it as a sketch, which suggests that he is aware that he is sketching this part by this part, and that he does not expect many people to admire his work whereas, Degas may have expected a certain amount of attention on his painting.

**Material, conceptual and cultural significance**

Had del Vaga finished his painting, it would have had a similar significance at the time it was produced to Degas's painting; they could both have been described as a typical example of painting within their respective contexts, but they may not have been the most admired works of art. However, the fact that del Vaga's painting was not finished to the highly, to the Renaissance standard, its material, conceptual and cultural significance would have been minuscule. Whereas Degas's painting would have had the significance described above; it would have been admired as a classic work of the time.

▲ Freya has compared these paintings mainly for their formal qualities, but then she has added focused paragraphs on function and cultural significance. This is a discussion of differences, rather than a simple bullet point list and this is what places it at a higher level.



## Maori Woodcarving

Maori woodcarving is unknown to their ancestors, and was consequently brought to New Zealand by the Maori. It is a traditional art form, and is particularly well known for its intricate designs and realistic figures. The art is passed down through generations, and is a source of pride for the Maori people. It is a unique and beautiful art form, and is a testament to the skill and creativity of the Maori people.

<http://www.noarderslocht.com/portrait.html>

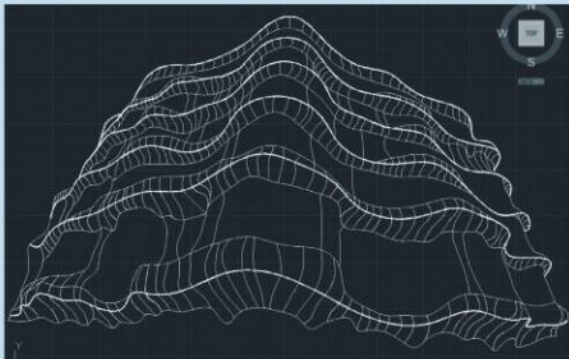
Accessed: 26/01/16

<http://www.intrepidtravel.com>

This example of a woodcarving is particularly powerful and realistic, especially in its striking and powerful stance and mathematically precise, each pattern holding a different meaning. Although this is not an ancient example of a woodcarving, it is a testament to the skill and creativity of the Maori people through generations. A variety of carving tools are used in the process.



▲ This comparison focuses on different audiences.



### Function and Purpose:

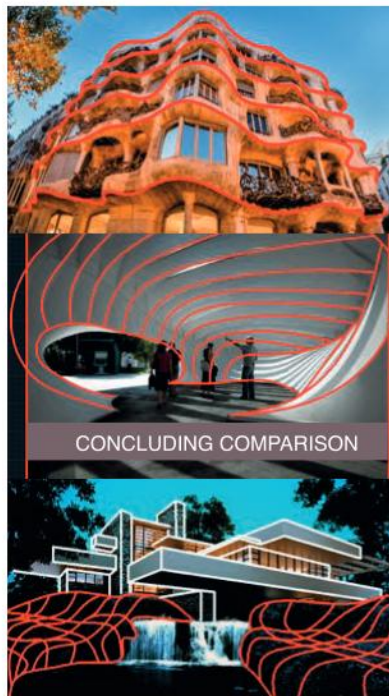
Gaudi's 'La Pedrera' was commissioned by the wealthy Milà family in Barcelona (1906-10).

Buildings can be considered as labels, the upper class use their houses as a way of showing their wealth and success, this allowed Gaudi to develop a different style to make it stand out. For that period La Casa Milà was cutting edge, as nothing similar had been seen before. The family Milà asked Gaudi to build their house, because he was a famous architect, so they could expose their wealth and moreover have a house with a good functionality, a factor which it is assumed an expensive house includes. This is clearly seen as it follows that houses in hotter countries need small windows to keep the interior cool and to include balconies. The colour scheme is also an important consideration, with lighter tones. The façade is made up of curved cast iron balustrades, brick parabolas, forming the shape of flowing waves. Not only in the façade but also the house includes a lot of abstract structure, due to the irregular shaped roof and variable ground plan.

Above is my photograph taken from the roof of the house and below is my AutoCAD drawing of the façade to analyse the flowing art nouveau forms inspired by nature.

▲ This student has used their freehand sketches together with drawing to make a very coherent and well-presented sequence of pages.

▶ This student has made effective use of graphics to compare the visual forms in the architecture of three different buildings as well as developing the contrasts in her text.



**Similarities** - All three buildings are similar due to their link with nature. On the one hand 'La Pedrera' is part of the Art Nouveau movement, which was inspired by organic forms. With organic form, it is referred to as very dynamic curved shapes, the new characteristic which was created with the movement, 'whiplash' line. "This is a decorative line that seems to have a life of its own. It writhes and coils with dynamic force, as if trying to break free of the forces holding it in place."(1) This line can be seen in the adornment and forms of La Pedrera, it is especially evident in the Cast iron balustrade of the balconies. However, the building is also seen to be part of the Art Nouveau movement due to its natural colour and great mass. Nature is equally important in Modernism, as despite its appearance, the surroundings of the buildings are a very important factor of its design, apparent by the fact that 'Falling Water' is part of the waterfall. Modernist buildings therefore connect with their surroundings, through the cantilevered roofs, long window panels and predominant horizontal lines used. These features are aimed at integrating the building with its surrounding space by bring in light and air to living spaces, which creates a healthier environments. This need to create an open and healthy environment was a reaction to the poor living conditions of industrialised 19th century cities. Like Art Nouveau designs, the formal qualities of the 'Burnham Pavilion' were also inspired by an organic form, a cocoon. Its shape can consequently be seen in both, nature and Gaudi's design. Furthermore, its use of 21st century high tech, materials are revolutionary just as the materials of modernist buildings in the 20<sup>th</sup> century were new to the times. I have pointed out the natural shapes in all the three buildings with AutoCAD. Firstly on the façade of La Pedrera, then on the interior of the Burnham pavilion and finally on the Falling Water. To strengthen the link between 'Falling Water' and the other two buildings, I outlined the house with white, to shows how perfectly it fits with the irregular shapes of the rocks.

**Differences** - The main difference between these buildings is the time in which they were designed and build. La Pedrera is the oldest building, as it was still part of the Art Nouveau movement in 1906. Then the Waterfall house, was build 30 years later, since it belongs to a visually opposing movement, Modernism. And finally the Burnham pavilion build in 2009. This difference in time, is also the reason for other variances between the buildings, such as the materials. For example, the Burnham pavilion is made out of an innovating recycled material, something which would have not existed in 1906. La Pedrera is therefore simply made out of traditional stone, brick and cast iron. Cast iron had only been discovered recently at the time, which reinforces the difference in time and techniques of building between then and now.





## How to present your comparative study

Your work will be awarded marks for presentation. It should be clear, coherent, engaging and creative. The comparative study will be uploaded for assessment as a document file (PDF). The system does not support animations or animated slide transitions, so don't waste time planning these. You may well wish to use software such as Microsoft's PowerPoint® or Apple's Keynote®, but there are no prescribed ways of presenting your study – it really is your choice. Look at really well-designed web pages, for example, those of the major museums, or online magazines, for solutions as to how to effectively combine text and image.

The examples in this book will show you ways that other students have made good presentations, but here are some extra pointers.

- Ensure you show things clearly. In other words, the text must be legible. Avoid subtle overlays, distracting backgrounds, small text (less than 12pt) or complex fonts.
- Blocks of text look better and are easier to read than continuous lines that span the entire screen (as in a magazine or on a web page).
- Never split your text across illustrations.
- Consider creating a consistent design for your screens. This will look good and save you time redesigning each one.
- Avoid downloading pre-designed templates; these are rarely appropriate to the artwork being presented, besides this is a visual arts course and you are expected to show your personal visual skills.
- Make style choices that are visually appropriate to the works you are presenting. Do not use decoration, but choose colour schemes and fonts that enhance the artworks. For example, a gothic font is not appropriate for text about an Andy Warhol print, but could be for an Alexander McQueen dress.
- Remember that graphics and visuals can show information more effectively than just words. Try to achieve a balance between the two.
- Some of the examples in this book are scanned sketchbook pages – as long as they are easy to read this is a perfectly acceptable way to present a comparative study.
- Do not scan pages that are illegible and then provide a typed transcript – this is not considered to be clear and coherent presentation.
- Juxtaposing images can effectively communicate comparisons, especially when supported by simple annotation.
- Make your study engaging. This means being creative in the design of screens so they are appealing to read. Perhaps using collage, photography, sketches or even models to explore and explain concepts.

**Reflection:** The bold and direct visual qualities of the Mexican artists allowed me to make a print which has a strong narrative message. If I had not looked at their works I would not have considered it possible to combine so many different elements of what I wanted to say in the same image. I have combined the symbolic elements – such as the flags—the key political figures, myself and the angry crowd just as Siqueiros does.

**This is my two colour dry-point print. I was strongly influenced by the style and ideas of the Mexican revolutionary artists.**

The presence of the artist:

The artists that I have studied such as Giotto and Riviera sometimes included themselves in their compositions to make them more personal and real. They used this to emphasise that the artist is the witness of the event. I have inserted myself into the composition on the bottom left: with an unopened umbrella and a book in hand, they symbolise my neutral view on this protest. The umbrella shows that I am part of Hong Kong, unopened because I am in the UK. I want my voice to be heard in a calm and educated way.

I wanted to make a print that would use the visual ideas from the Mexican revolutionary artists, but which would be about my own times and experiences. As I was in the UK during the HK umbrella protests I had to rely on photographs. **Colour Comparison:** I wanted to use colour in a very simple way. Diego Riviera and Posada used strong clear visual language that could be understood by the illiterate populace. The registration of the colours is not perfect, but this fits with the rough and quick production of political protest art such as Posada's prints. **Composition Comparison:** I wanted to use the same composition methods as the Mexican Artists:

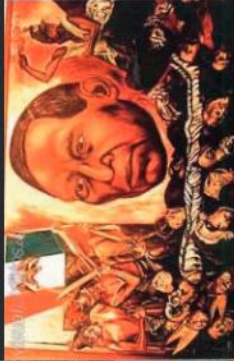
Shallow depth

Out of proportion with scale used to show importance

Two types of figures:

Simplified human forms and then clear detailed portraits

Crowded scenes with no intervening space or negative areas



Above: Mural by Jose Clemente Orozco

In traditional Chinese culture words are sometimes written upside down to add a secondary meaning. In the case of my composition the words are added to make it look more similar to my Mexican Revolution composition. That means 'unity, unified': its upside down nature implies that China and Hong Kong are not united or unified although unity is meant to arrive slowly according to the Sino-British declaration and HK Basic Law in the time frame of 50 years. It is not uncommon to read words upside down, hence the unsettled nature adds to this political response. This is intended to be a political response just as the mural by Orozco.



▲ Anson was interested in the student protests in his home city of Hong Kong. This led him to research the art of the Mexican Revolution. His research suggested to him how he could respond in the studio to events that were important in his life using a similar approach to that taken by the artists he had read about. He did not use painting but print to explore the visual language of these artists.

Notice how Anson has flagged up the connections with his paragraph headings. He has made the visual connection very clear by placing the Siqueiros mural next to his print so that we can readily see the similarities. However, this is not a copy. Instead he has told us how the composition style has affected his own work.



## How to make connections to your own art

If you are taking this course at HL your comparative study will conclude with three to five screens that analyse and reflect on how the study has influenced your development as an artist. You will need to show connections between one or more of the works that you have studied and your own creative work.

When you are assessed for this task it is your understanding of the ideas and the extent to which you have linked processes and practices in a meaningful way that is being looked at. The quality of the artworks is not being assessed here, as you will probably have included these in your exhibition or process portfolio where they will be assessed for the skill and ideas; rather it is how you have made meaningful and informed connections that matters. So the writing here has a different purpose to your exhibition text even though you will be describing some of the same works.

To prepare for these screens, reflect and review what you have already written about other artworks. Your visual arts journal will be useful in this task. You may well want to take key points that you have made about other artists from earlier screens to now directly link to your work.

To help start your reflection consider these three ways in which your own practice might have been influenced.

- 1. Formal qualities:** Refer back to the formal qualities section of this guide and apply these to your artwork. Are there connections in the approach to colour, light, form and texture? Look for specific similarities that you can demonstrate. Perhaps, for example, you started using saturated colours for the first time in response to a vibrant painter that you were studying.
- 2. Technique and media:** Artists are frequently inspired to change their working methods by seeing what others have done. Perhaps you were triggered to change scale, format or to try a new medium. Perhaps you began to use paint more freely. Or maybe you were encouraged to be more accurate and attentive to detail. Again look for evidence.
- 3. Concepts:** How does the function and purpose of the works you studied connect with your creative idea development? There might be a strong political or social connection. Are there cultural links? You might have taken aspects of cultural style to develop. Perhaps you have applied different cultural insights to the context of your art.
- 4. Presentation:** You will need to explain connections visually by juxtaposing your artwork with examples that you have studied. These don't need to be large, just clear so that the links are obvious. Often cropping details is the most effective way of showing this. As elsewhere in the study, annotation and lists can be just as effective as longer written passages to show your thought process.

### Tip



There are three aspects to address on these final screens:

- reflect on the outcomes of your investigation
- identify connections between one or more of the artworks and your own art-making
- explain how these influenced your development.

Many students forget to reflect on the outcomes of their studies of the artworks. But the most common mistake is to discuss creative ideas and process on these screens without making explicit connections (with words) to the artworks studied. This is a different task to the descriptors that are included in your process portfolio and exhibition, so don't use the same text! And remember to include images of your art-making to support the links.

### Tip



Here are some key points to consider for your connections screens.

**Making connections:** Have you been able to make meaningful links?

**Development:** Have you demonstrated how your thinking/approach has changed over time?

**Reflection:** Have you paused to consider what you have learned?

**Analysis:** Is there precision to your comments? Have you shown detail and depth?

## Making Connections



**Chris Offili**  
**'Adam and Eve'**

Similarities to my work:

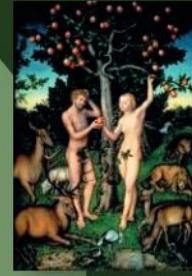
- I have used the same pose with the man's hand reaching for the woman's pregnant belly.
- I have used a cartoon like style for my sculpture, with simple outlines
- I have used a modern take on symbolism by placing the apple inside the woman
- I have mixed together unusual materials, using plaster, wire and a real apple. Offili uses real elephant dung in his paintings!



**Cranach**  
**'Adam and Eve'**  
1526

Similarities to my work:

- I have used the biblical story for my sculpture like Cranach
- I have posed the two figures so that they appear to be having a conversation
- I have used the symbol of the apple



**Reflection: In my sculpture above I wanted to recreate the intimacy of the two works of art that I had studied, but to do this in an original way.**

- ▲ Julia compared different artists' portrayal of the story of Adam and Eve in her comparative study. This is one of her connections slides. She has taken a more straightforward approach than the other examples by using bullet points, but this is effective. Her sculpture is really original; she is not attempting to copy style or technique. Instead she has been inspired by the ideas of the artists, especially the way they have used symbolism.

### Tip



Signal the connections between the artworks and your work clearly by using the names of the artists and the titles of the artworks studied. Then give clear evidence in words and images of the link. Trigger phrases such as these will help.

- I was influenced by ...
- The aspects of the artworks I studied that most affected my development were the way that ...
- As I developed my ideas I considered how the artworks that I had studied ...
- The ideas from this artist that are most evident in my work are ...
- This influence is evident in my use of ...
- My choice of colour/forms shows how I was influenced by ...
- I then developed the concepts I had researched into ...
- The influence can be seen in the way that I ...

### ATL Communication skills

In pairs, explain how your personal artworks have been influenced by other artists. Are these descriptions convincing? Suggest to each other ways that the ideas could be more clearly communicated.



## Making Connections to Francis Bacon

My painting from Francis Bacon 'Three Figures at the base of a Crucifixion' 1945 The left panel

My Chalk drawing from Francis Bacon 'Three Figures at the base of a Crucifixion' 1945 The right panel

Francis Bacon the differences to my art work:  
I use textiles, sculpture and performance.

### Francis Bacon the similarities to my work:

- Shocks the audience
- Distorted forms
- Influenced by surrealism.
- Responding to the holocaust.
- Use of second hand photographic sources
- Expressive paint handling

**Reflection:** I found inspiration in the photographs of the holocaust to develop an expressive language. I have used Bacon's mixture of paint handling and violent mark making as well as his strong formal compositions. However my work is also influenced by the performances of Marina Abramovich's 'Balkan Baroque' 1997. My work is more interactive and kinetic whereas Francis Bacon relies on the traditional format of easel painting.'

Me and my soft sculpture in the churchyard.

◀ Brianna has made a thematic comparative study that considers several artists' responses to conflict including Goya, Francis Bacon and Marina Abramovic. Here in her final connections slides she has concentrated on her response to Francis Bacon's "Three Figures at the Base of a Crucifixion". The screens include her painted copies of the work, which give a good sense of her exploration of his style, but she has then reinterpreted the painting in new forms. She clearly explains how it is in her final painting that the influence of these artists has become assimilated into a personal work of art rather than being just a transcription. Notice the use of bullet points to reinforce the main links between her work and Bacon's. These slides are also legible, visually appropriate and engaging with their sombre olive green and blood red theme.

## Connections to my work

On the left is my final exhibition piece. Here the influence of Bacon and Abramovic is more hidden. I have used my own pictorial style and the life size textile limbs break out into the space to confront the viewer. In this and in my performance (on the right) I want to shock the viewer. This is similar to the artists I have analysed in the comparative study. I feel that in this piece I moved away from consciously imitating artists and instead to a more individual response that used their idea process rather than their style.

There were four stages in the development of my work from the study of Francis Bacon. The first stage was to explore the expressive nature of his forms through photography (the triptych below); then a reconstruction in textile of the screaming mutated figure that is central to his painting; this became part of my performance piece, that in turn was influenced by Abramovic; the final stage was to develop this into a personal paint and textile response using the imagery of the holocaust. (above)

In the photographs below I wanted to capture the sense of containment that is so important to Bacon's placement of the figure. There is a link to the Post War theme 'Geometry of Fear' where organic forms, such as the human figure, are trapped by architectural spaces. I chose the shower cubicle because it has the sinister empty associations of a torture room that Bacon suggests in his interiors, as well as the disturbing pipes that suggested harsh surgical instruments. Similarly I used the steel armature for my performance that was inspired by the sculpture turn table that Bacon's figure perches on.



I responded to the expanding form of Bacon's figure. I wanted mine to have the same latent fearfulness.



# 4

## The process portfolio

### Tip



*The process portfolio does not exist!* The process portfolio is not a physical object. It is a digital record of your development as an artist. It should be considered as a collation of evidence to be viewed on screen by an external examiner. This should guide your selection of evidence when you curate your process portfolio submission.

### Key terms

**Medium (singular)/media (plural):** refers to the more specific materials used in an art-making practice such as watercolour, charcoal and plaster. In the art-making forms table, these are listed after the given forms.

**Technical and material practice:** refers to the aspects of an artist's art-making practice that is concerned with the form of the work: specifically, the choices and decisions made about media and materials, as well as technique and application.

**Conceptual practice:** refers to the aspects of an artist's art-making practice that is concerned with intent, and the visual communication of ideas.

### What is the process portfolio?

The process portfolio task is the largest externally assessed component of the visual arts course, worth 40% of your total mark for visual arts, so it puts a high value on the art-making processes you engage in as a part of your practice as a developing artist. It is uploaded to the IB for assessment as a single portable document file (PDF).

In the process portfolio you need to show evidence of an art-making process that demonstrates:

- that you have experimented with and manipulated a variety of **media** and techniques, and selected art-making materials, media and techniques that are appropriate to your artistic intentions
- that your art-making practice has been informed by critical investigation of artists, artworks and artistic genres and provides evidence of how these have influenced and impacted your own artwork
- how your initial ideas and intentions have been formed and how you have made connections between the techniques employed, the chosen media and ideas you wish to communicate
- how you review and refine your ideas, skills, processes and techniques, and reflection on your development as a visual artist.

In addition, the screens you submit must be clearly and coherently presented with fluent use of subject-specific language.

To compile your process portfolio you will need to critically review all the work you have undertaken throughout the course and carefully select the materials which document your experimentation, exploration, manipulation and refinement of your **technical and material practice** as an artist. You will also need to show the development of your ideas in your **conceptual practice** as an artist.

You do not have to represent all of the artwork that you produce throughout the course in the process portfolio. This should be documented in your visual arts journal. Here select the evidence that demonstrates most clearly that you have met the course requirements and shows your strongest achievements against the assessment criteria. This evidence could be drawn from your visual arts journal as well as other sketchbooks, notebooks, and so on, but could also include photos of preliminary work such as sketches, maquettes and other incomplete or unresolved pieces that may have been significant in the development of other pieces in your body of work. Ideally, these examples should have led to the creation of both resolved and unresolved works and they should be carefully selected so that you can achieve the highest levels of the assessment criteria. The most useful source of evidence for use in your process portfolio will probably be your visual arts journal, so treat every entry in your visual arts journal as a potential process portfolio screen.





## What are the requirements of the process portfolio?

The process portfolio does not exist as a physical object; it is not a notebook, workbook, sketchbook or your visual arts journal, but all of these things can be used to contribute material to it. It needs to show your development as an artist through ongoing investigation into other artists and artworks, into a variety of **forms** and media, and provide evidence of how you develop a body of work, from initial ideas through to realization, and it is worth a substantial 40% of your total assessment in visual arts.

Such a significant task must have some specific requirements.

In any assessment task, requirements are set to give all candidates the same scope or boundaries within which to complete the task. Penalties usually apply if a student fails to meet the minimum requirement, and sometimes if they exceed it, such as going over a word limit in an essay.

While the process portfolio is, by design, an open-ended task to cater for a wide range of art-making practices, the Diploma Programme *Visual arts guide* does state some specific requirements for the task. Failing to meet these requirements will negatively impact the mark you ultimately receive for this task, so a good place to start is to identify the requirements and keep these in the back of your mind as you start your art-making practice. The requirements are different for standard level (SL) and higher level (HL) students.

### Formal requirements of the task—SL

SL students submit 9–18 **screens** which evidence their sustained experimentation, exploration, manipulation and refinement of a variety of art-making activities. For SL students the submitted work must be in at least **two** art-making forms, each from separate columns of the art-making forms table.

### Formal requirements of the task—HL

HL students submit 13–25 screens which evidence their sustained experimentation, exploration, manipulation and refinement of a variety of art-making activities. For HL students the submitted work must have been created in at least **three** art-making forms, selected from a minimum of two columns of the art-making forms table.

Diploma Programme *Visual arts guide*, page 45

### The number of screens

The number of screens required is given as a range: 9–18 for SL; 13–25 for HL. This difference reflects the length of the course at each level: the SL course is 120 hours, while the HL course is 240 hours. In the process portfolio, SL and HL students' work is judged against the same assessment criteria and students are therefore expected to produce work of similar quality. HL students are just expected to produce more.

As the process portfolio is uploaded as a single portable document file (PDF) with a maximum file size of 20 megabytes, it is possible to upload work that falls over or under the specified range of the required number of screens. No direct penalty is applied for this. A process portfolio that is below the minimum number of screens is likely to be self-limiting and is unlikely to achieve a high level, while examiners are not permitted to consider any screens that are in excess of the maximum number of screens.

### Key terms

**Forms:** in art-making, the broad, generalized categories of creative endeavours such as painting, drawing and sculpture. In the art-making forms table, forms are denoted by bold text.

**Process:** in art-making, process refers to the means to the end (or product). It is an operation that involves a range of cognitive (or thinking) and practical methods or techniques that are employed when you are engaged in an art-making activity.

### TOK

#### Process versus product

In pairs, small groups or as a class, debate the question, "Is **process** more important than product in the visual arts?" Choose an affirmative position (that is, "process is more important") or a negative position (that is, "product is more important") and in your argument, consider examples from art history that support your position.

## Tip



From the outset, plan to submit the maximum number of screens permissible for the process portfolio at your level. Any less and you are likely to be selling your art-making practice short. Remember, your examiner is not familiar with your work in the same way that you and your teacher are, so you need to be informative and clearly articulate your intentions, ideas and processes, as well as justifying the artistic decisions you make throughout the course.

## The number of art-making forms

The course has been designed to encourage visual arts students to experience a broad range of art-making forms, and you must give evidence of this in your process portfolio. At SL, students submit evidence of work created in at least *two* art-making forms, each from separate columns of the art-making forms table, while at HL, students submit evidence of work created in at least *three* art-making forms, selected from a minimum of two columns of the art-making forms table. Students that fail to do this can only receive a maximum of 3 marks from a possible 12 under assessment criterion A for the process portfolio. This is a substantial penalty, so it is important that you understand the art-making forms table.

It is of critical importance that there is enough visual evidence of your engagement with the minimum number of art-making forms for you to achieve higher than 3 marks for this component. Sketches of a proposed sculpture are not sufficient evidence of having worked in three-dimensional forms. Similarly if you work in lens-based, electronic and screen-based forms, you need to include sufficient evidence of involvement in the process. You need to provide evidence of proof sheets, test strips, darkroom experimentation, screenshots of screen-based work in development, photographs or diagrams of studio or improvised lighting set-ups.

### The art-making forms table

Two-dimensional forms	Three-dimensional forms	Lens-based, electronic and screen-based forms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Drawing:</b> such as charcoal, pencil, ink, collage</li> <li>• <b>Painting:</b> such as acrylic, oil, watercolour, murals</li> <li>• <b>Printmaking:</b> such as relief, intaglio, planographic, chine collé</li> <li>• <b>Graphics:</b> such as illustration and design, graphic novel, storyboard</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Carved sculpture:</b> such as carved wood, stone, block</li> <li>• <b>Modelled sculpture:</b> such as wax, polymer clays</li> <li>• <b>Constructed sculpture:</b> such as assemblage, bricolage, wood, plastic, paper, glass</li> <li>• <b>Cast sculpture:</b> such as plaster, wax, bronze, paper, plastic, glass</li> <li>• <b>Ceramics:</b> such as hand-built forms, thrown vessels, mould-made objects</li> <li>• <b>Designed objects:</b> such as fashion, architectural models, interior design, jewellery</li> <li>• <b>Site specific/ephemeral:</b> such as land art, installation, performance art</li> <li>• <b>Textiles:</b> such as fibre, weaving, constructed textiles</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Time-based and sequential art:</b> such as stop-motion, digital animation, video art</li> <li>• <b>Lens media:</b> such as analogue (wet) photography, digital photography, montage</li> <li>• <b>Lens-less media:</b> such as photogram/rayograph, scenography, pinhole photography, cyanotype, salted paper</li> <li>• <b>Digital/screen based:</b> such as vector graphics, software developed painting, design and illustration</li> </ul>





To satisfy the requirement, you will need to ensure that you cover the required number of forms (the terms in bold), not just different media. The list of media is not considered exhaustive, but you should talk to your teacher if you want to include any medium that does not appear on the table to decide in which category and form it best fits.

## Case Study

### A student example: Scarlett



▲ Scarlett, Abstracted Face (*blind contour drawing*), felt tip pen on Fabriano paper, 22 cm x 20 cm



▲ Scarlett, Reclining Nude (*blind contour drawing*), felt tip pen on Fabriano paper, 22 cm x 20 cm



▲ Scarlett, Reclining Upper Torso – Profile, felt tip pen and water on fabriano paper, 47 cm x 52 cm



▲ Scarlett, Mask no 2, aluminium wire, 170 mm x 250 mm x 100 mm

In Scarlett's development as an artist, she quickly realized that she had a strong interest in the human form. In her investigations, she came across the work of Brooklyn-based contemporary artist Ian Sklarsky, who uses blind contour drawings to explore the human form. In discussing the artist with her teacher, Scarlett resolved to try the technique of blind contour drawing herself during a series of life drawing classes. Blind contour drawing is a technique of drawing that is used to train the eye and hand to work in sync. Instead of looking at the surface upon which you are drawing, you never take your eye off the subject, and as your eye slowly traces the contour of the subject, your hand moves in synchronization with the eye in a single continuous line.





Initially, she used conventional life drawing media, such as charcoal, pencil and conté but, encouraged by her teacher, she began using black felt tip pens. “I liked the drawings I was completing, and so I decided to continue the exploration of this medium. It is very quick and easy to do, although some of the works sometimes don’t end up being successful”.

Scarlett quickly built up a folio of contour line drawings. As a process, blind contour helped her discover and experiment with the properties of line as an element of design, and lead to her undertaking some sculptural work with aluminium armature wire. Influenced by some wire forms Scarlett saw by contemporary artist Gavin Worth, she quickly began making wire versions of some of her more successful blind contour drawings. In the beginning, these were no more than drawings in wire, but as she investigated wire sculptors more broadly and became more fluent with the medium, the wire drawings started to become increasingly three-dimensional, starting with wire form masks. These sculptures are consistent with her other works, as they explore line, and are similar to the blind contour drawings, where one continuous line is used to represent the form.

If Scarlett was an SL candidate, she would have already satisfied the art-making forms table requirement, having created work in *drawing*, black felt tip pen, as well as *sculpture*, wire form masks, completing at least *two* art-making forms, each from separate columns of the art-making forms table.

However, if Scarlett was an HL candidate, she would need to create more work in different forms. She has already satisfied the minimum in terms of forms from at least two of the table’s columns (two-dimensional forms and three-dimensional forms), but needs to create work in at least one additional form other than drawing and sculpture.

She could do this in a range of ways that might include:

- developing one of the more successful life drawings into an oil painting (two-dimensional forms, *painting*: oil painting)
- taking a pre-ground etching plate into a life drawing class and completing a blind contour drawing directly onto the ground with a scribe, biting the plate in acid and producing an edition of the print (two-dimensional forms, *printmaking*: intaglio)
- using one of the flat wire drawings to produce a photogram on black and white photography paper or cyanotype paper (lens-based, electronic and screen-based forms: *photographic media*)
- using a torch to draw a continuous line drawing in front of a camera with an open (bulb) shutter in a dark room (lens-based, electronic and screen-based forms: *lens-based media*).

These ideas are not exhaustive, nor would they necessarily result in a work that might be sophisticated enough for inclusion in the exhibition, but by experimenting with any one of these ideas, Scarlett would satisfy the HL requirement of working in at least *three* art-making forms, selected from a minimum of two columns of the art-making forms table.





## Avoiding duplication of work

The final requirement for the process portfolio concerns the duplication of work. Duplication is a form of academic misconduct that is sometimes referred to as “self-plagiarism”, “recycling” or “double dipping”. It occurs when a student’s work assessed in one subject or component is also submitted and assessed for another subject or component.

The screens submitted for assessment for the process portfolio must not contain images of resolved or finished works that are submitted as a part of the exhibition component. This is important in the process portfolio, as in addition to selected pages or extracts from the visual arts journal and other notebooks and sketchbooks, students can submit preliminary artworks as screens in their process portfolio submission. The inclusion of resolved artwork from the exhibition might be mistaken for preliminary work.

It is permissible to show the entire process of a work that is included in the exhibition, as long as it is stated alongside the reproduction of the work that the image is the final resolved work as included in the exhibition. This is an academic honesty requirement to prevent duplication of assessment between the process portfolio and exhibition components. It prevents examiners from mistakenly assuming a work is a preliminary or practice piece.

It is also critically important that you include full citations next to any image of your own artworks in the same way you would acknowledge the work of another artist. This helps examiners distinguish between your work and other artists’ works, but also makes very clear the form and media you have worked in (to satisfy the minimum requirements) as well as giving the examiner a sense of the scale in which you are working. Do not use your own name. Use the phrase “Candidate’s own work” or “my own work” as the authenticity of the assessment process requires student identity to be anonymous.

An example of suitable organization of citation lines is:

My own work

*Title of work*

Medium (for example, Oil on canvas)

Size (for example, 120 cm × 60 cm)

## Assessment criteria for the process portfolio

The assessment criteria for the process portfolio do not refer to the specific content of the task, although some may refer to the need for you to show specific kinds of content knowledge and skills. The criteria concentrate more on the generic skills that you are expected to demonstrate.

Criteria that are considered to be more important are given a greater number of achievement levels. In the case of the process portfolio, greater weighting is given to criterion A: skills, techniques and processes with a maximum of 12 marks available. Criterion B: critical

### Tip



While the format for a screen is not prescribed, it is important to think about the end user: the examiner. Most examiners will mark the process portfolio on a laptop or home computer. Ensure each screen is oriented correctly (the right way up) throughout the submission. Most computer monitors are oriented horizontally, so it might be worth presenting your screens horizontally. Most monitors use a widescreen format, so try working with a 1600 x 900 pixel format. This will ensure your process portfolio will fill your examiner’s screen.

## Tip



*Criterion A: skills, techniques and processes is a big deal.*

Criterion A is worth the most out of all of the process portfolio criteria, over 35% of your total process portfolio mark. This is twice as much as criterion B, C or D and three times as much as criterion E. Therefore, it makes good sense to include an equivalent proportion of your process portfolio screens to sufficiently cover the requirements of criterion A. Assuming that criterion E: presentation and subject-specific language will be demonstrated on each screen, a good guide is up to eight screens in an SL process portfolio and ten screens in an HL process portfolio.

investigation; criterion C: communication of ideas and intentions; and criterion D: reviewing, refining and reflecting each attract a possible maximum of 6 marks each. Criterion E: presentation and subject-specific language has a maximum of 4 marks available.

Each assessment criterion has level descriptors describing specific levels of achievement together with an appropriate range of marks. The level descriptors concentrate on positive achievement, although for the lower levels failure to achieve may be included in the description.

It is essential to refer to the assessment criteria when compiling your process portfolio submission to ensure that your efforts are awarded with the highest mark possible, but it is equally important to be familiar with the descriptors throughout the course so that you are mindful of expectations as you undertake your work.

The examiner marking your work will not be interested in individual works, how well resolved they are technically, or how well they convey your intentions. Rather, the examiner is interested in your overall art-making practice, the processes that you were engaged in to develop your works of art.

### Understanding criterion A: skills, techniques and process

The descriptors in each criterion reflect the qualities in your work that will be assessed. Criterion A requires you to provide evidence that you have purposefully experimented with the range of media and forms. Remember that in this assessment criterion, you need to show that you have engaged in an art-making practice that has had sufficient breadth to meet the minimum requirements (creating work in at least *two* art-making forms, each from separate columns of the art-making forms table for SL; at HL, creating in at least *three* art-making forms, selected from a minimum of two columns of the art-making forms table). This assessment criterion will penalize you if you have not done this, making a maximum of only 3 marks available out of a possible 12, so covering a range of forms and media is crucial.

Additionally, you need to show how you have manipulated the various skills, techniques and processes you have used to realize your artistic intentions. Finally you need to show evidence of sensitivity to the selection and use of materials; that the materials used are appropriate, or the best choice, for the work you are undertaking.

### Choosing your evidence

There is a range of evidence that can be used to show experimentation and manipulation of skills, techniques and processes which are appropriate and consistent with your artistic intentions. These could include:

- single pages scanned directly from your visual arts journal
- single pages scanned directly from your visual arts journal, but with annotations added (possibly electronically) while compiling the process portfolio to further clarify, update, reflect or make connections to other screens in the submission





- compilations of smaller extracts scanned directly from your visual arts journal then compiled to correlate with each other to illustrate a particular aspect of your art-making practice
- screenshots of “work in progress” taken from a range of digital art-making platforms, with additional annotations explaining what is being done in each shot and why it is being done
- slides completely developed using programs like Microsoft® PowerPoint® that use images, graphics and text
- photographs of preliminary work that you have undertaken such as designs, cartoons, sketches, artist’s proofs, maquettes and other mock-ups with annotations such as title, media and size
- photographs of resolved works that were not included in the exhibition, but nonetheless were an important part of the art-making process.

If a student has failed to meet the minimum requirements (such as in the selection of a sufficient range of forms and media), the process portfolio will only reach the lowest achievement level for this criterion. The lowest level will also be awarded if the process portfolio is “incoherent”. An incoherent submission means little thought has been given in the selection and assembly of evidence so that there is little apparent correlation between one screen and the next. To develop a coherent process portfolio, it is important the evidence you assemble justifies your choice of media, techniques and processes and that you clearly articulate the direction and purpose of the work undertaken.

### Tip



#### Using your smartphone smartly

Most students today have some form of smart device with them at all times. Whether this is a phone or an MP3 device, most have a digital camera of a reasonable quality. If your school’s policies permit it, use your device to photograph your work regularly at various stages. You can even ask friends to photograph you working on your work. If you print these images and include them in your visual arts journal with annotations, they can be used as evidence in your process portfolio of your involvement in the art-making process, your experimentation with materials, or even to explain the process involved in producing an artwork.

Criterion A descriptors	Possible evidence		
	Two-dimensional forms	Three-dimensional forms	Lens-based, electronic and screen-based forms
Experimentation and manipulation of skills, techniques and processes	<p>Research-based investigation in media and techniques.</p> <p><b>Drawing:</b> pages from the visual arts journal showing comparisons of the expressive qualities of various drawing media</p> <p><b>Painting:</b> annotated photographs of experiments with colour palettes and paint media</p> <p><b>Printmaking:</b> annotated photographs of artist’s proofs using various inks and papers</p> <p><b>Graphics:</b> annotated photographs of preliminary designs, pages from visual arts journal showing alternative renderings</p>	<p>Research-based investigation in media and techniques.</p> <p><b>Sculpture (all forms):</b> pages from visual arts journal showing photographic record of method</p> <p>Annotated photographs of maquettes</p> <p><b>Designed objects:</b> pages from visual arts journal showing mood-board style consideration of various surface treatments</p> <p><b>Site specific/ephemeral:</b> pages from visual arts journal showing photographic or graphic record of site survey</p> <p><b>Textiles:</b> pages from visual arts journal with annotated fibre and fabric swatches, dye samples and so on</p>	<p>Research-based investigation in media and techniques.</p> <p><b>Time-based and sequential art:</b> screenshots of work in progress taken from a range of digital art-making platforms, with additional annotations</p> <p><b>Lens media:</b> annotated proofs, contact sheets and test strips</p> <p><b>Lens-less media:</b> annotated proofs, interesting failures and experiments, photographic documentation of process</p> <p><b>Digital/screen based:</b> screenshots of work in progress taken from a range of digital art-making platforms, with additional annotations</p>

Selection of materials appropriate to intentions

### Across all forms

Your process portfolio should include evidence that for each concept you are trying to give visual and physical form to as an artwork, you have considered what form and medium is most likely to enable you to realize the best outcome for the work. In other words, spend time in your planning considering what the outcome of the work might be if it was developed as a painting, or a sculpture, or a series of photographs, then justify the choice that you make.

### TOK

Originality in art: when does “inspiration” become plagiarism?

In small groups, investigate the terms “appropriation”, “parody” and “pastiche”. Discuss how important originality is in art. At what point does taking inspiration from another artist or artwork become plagiarism?



▲ Ullens Centre for Contemporary Art, Beijing, China. A student makes the most of a museum field trip, making a detailed study of the exhibited artwork.

Any documentation in the process portfolio should include visual examples that demonstrate your direct involvement with the actual work, with examples of developmental processes, technical efforts, and reflection on both formal and expressive qualities, as this begins to address other assessment criteria, while adding value to criterion A.

## Understanding criterion B: critical investigation

When you are engaged in an art-making practice, you make art as part of a long history of various art-making traditions and conventions. You do not make art inside a bubble. To live in the 21st century is to live in a world bombarded by visual imagery that you perceive and “read” the same way you comprehend your native tongue. Whether you are conscious of it or not, your immersion in a visual culture informs your art-making.

Critically investigating the work of other artists and consciously allowing their work and practices to inform your own expands your repertoire and visual vocabulary. This will greatly enrich your own art-making practices, both technically and conceptually, giving greater depth and sophistication to your work, and fluency in visual communication.

### Where do I begin?

Knowing where to start with critical investigation is a challenge when you want to begin making art. Looking at art is a visual experience initially, before it becomes a cerebral one, so being able to browse for something that you like or are drawn to is important.

Art museums and galleries are fantastic resources. Always take your visual arts journal with you (or a smaller companion notebook and transfer ideas to your journal later). Record the date of your visit. Browse the collection until you find works that make you want to stop and consider them further. When you do this, record the details of the work from the wall text. Always include the artist’s name, their nationality, date of birth to date of death, the title of the work, the date of completion, the medium and the size. Make sketches of the work. Then start reflecting upon what made you stop at this work. Was it familiar to you – a work you may have seen in a textbook before? Was it the subject matter or the style of representation? Was it something about the visual qualities of the work?

Try to articulate exactly what has captured your attention. Now you have a starting point. From here you can do further investigation. You could find other works by the same artist, or by other artists working in the same period or style.

If you do not have ready access to galleries and museums, good quality books on art can also be useful. Start with general books that cover a broad range of styles, and as you find work that appeals to you, narrow your search.



Broadly speaking, there are three areas in which the work of other artists can inform your own art-making.

### **Representation**

Representation refers to the way that an artist represents the world around them. You may be looking for a particular style of representation to use in your own art-making.

Styles of representation include:

- naturalistic, figurative, mimetic, objective – all of these terms describe forms of representation that are realistic or true to nature
- impressionistic – literally referencing the 19th-century Impressionists who sought to capture the fleeting effects of light on their subject matter, often through quick painting in short brushstrokes, but today includes representations based on a subjective or personal response to a subject
- stylized – where particular forms or visual qualities are distorted or embellished to conform to a particular style or aesthetic
- simplification – where the level of detail is reduced
- expressionistic – concerned with the conveying of emotion, often through the exaggeration of particular visual qualities, such as colour or line
- abstract – literally refers to the practice of representation that has started with a recognizable subject matter, but through a process of simplification, reduction, distortion or exaggeration, a schematized version is produced
- non-objective – usually concerned with the arrangement of visual elements, such as geometric shapes, rather than the representation of objects.

### **Material/technical practice**

Material or technical practice refers to ways in which a particular artist routinely employs materials and media in their art-making so that it becomes a recognizable style or “artistic voice”. When your critical investigation is concerned with an artist’s material or technical practice you are most likely to be interested in what forms the artist has used and how they have used the media and tools of that form.

### **Conceptual practice**

Conceptual practice refers to the ideas and concepts that an artist explores through their art-making. This can be as simple or concrete as the subject matter they choose to represent, or the genre within which they choose to work, or it could be more abstract themes and ideas exploring world issues or philosophy.

### **What will this look like in my process portfolio?**

For criterion B, you need to demonstrate genuine critical engagement with the work of other artists that has been used to help shape and form your own art-making. Two descriptors are used to judge the level of success of your investigation: the depth of the investigation and how clearly the investigation relates to your own art-making.

Reproducing biographical information about artists with little or no connection to their own work will get only the lowest level of achievement.



To achieve the higher mark levels of criterion B, you will need to engage *critically* with the work of a number of artists whose works are helping to inform or influence your own art-making practice, which you then reflect upon. The *Visual arts guide* does not specify a model to use when critically investigating the work, so any approach that involves analysing, deconstructing, interpreting and evaluating specific works of other artists will be acceptable.

While developing a body of work, use your visual arts journal to record your investigations into other artists and artworks. While the biography of an artist might be interesting, the assessment criteria do not make any marks available for knowing it, so focus on analysing, interpreting and evaluating the work, particularly in terms of how the work is inspiring and informing your own art-making practice. Successful pages, or extracts from successful pages, can be selected for use in your process portfolio submission.

Try to work visually. Annotating a reproduction of an image is an efficient way of analysing and interpreting an artwork. Make a good colour reproduction of the selected artwork. Include with it appropriate citation lines that include:

- artist's name (artist's nationality, date of birth to date of death)
- title of artwork (year of completion)
- medium
- size
- source (where you retrieved the image).

Strictly speaking, acknowledging the artist's nationality and date of birth to date of death is not a necessity, but it is a good habit to develop. It helps you consider the context within which an artist created their work, but is also likely to be helpful when you come to choose artists for the comparative study, where at least two of the works you investigate need to be drawn from different cultural contexts.

Then use call-outs (text boxes that are connected to arrows that point to significant features in the work) to analyse and/or interpret the work. You could use one colour for analysis and another colour for interpretation.

When analysing, you need to consider how formal and visual qualities have been used in the work. You should consider the elements of design (line, colour, shape, value, texture, space) and the principles of design (emphasis, variety, unity, balance, rhythm, focal point) and in the text boxes describe how these are used in the work and to what effect.

When interpreting, you are looking for various signs and symbols that the artist has used in the work to convey a meaning to the viewer. Is a particular mood or atmosphere established in the work? How is this accomplished? Does the work tell a story? Be speculative when discussing interpretations of artworks. Everyone that looks at an artwork brings to their perception of that artwork all of their experiences and might see aspects differently. Using phrases such as "this might suggest ..." or "possibly implying that ..." does not reflect that you are unsure of yourself. Rather, it suggests that you are aware that other interpretations are possible and equally valid.

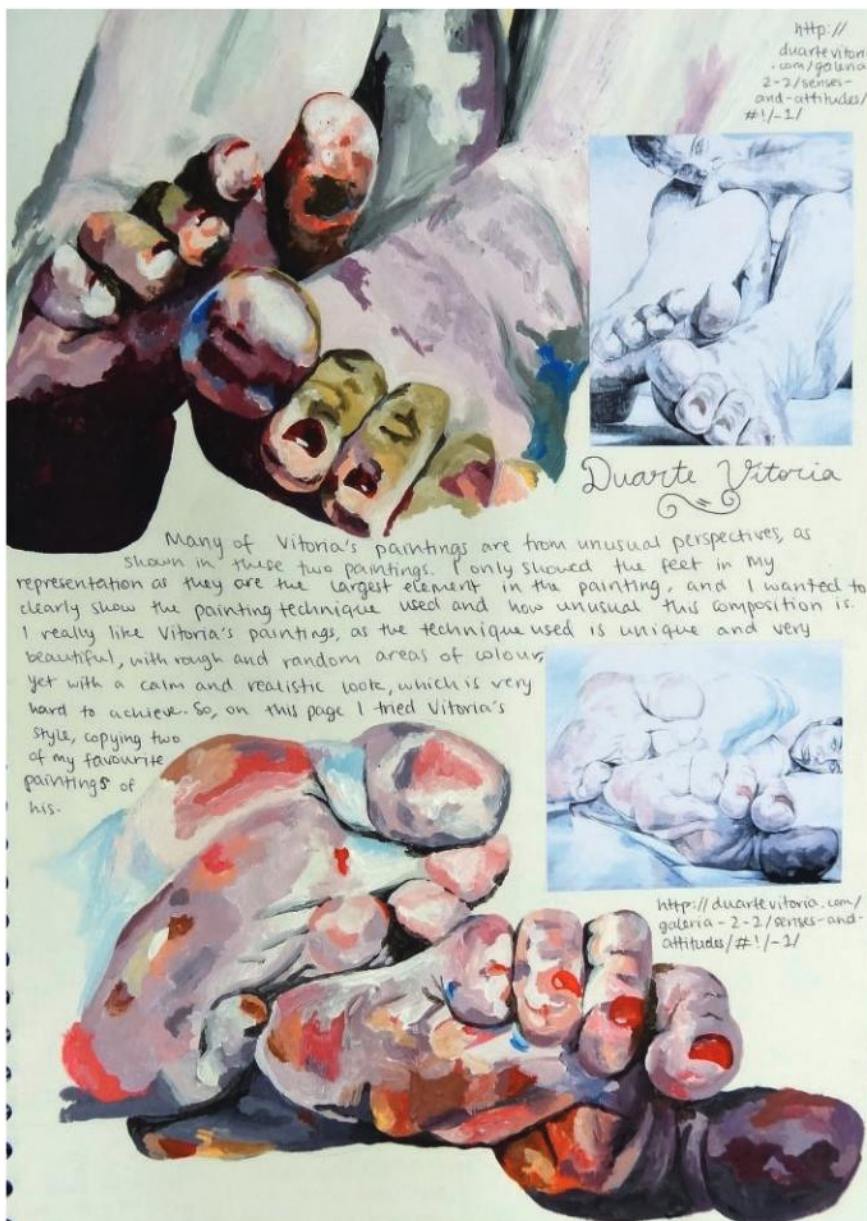
It is also appropriate, and encouraged, for your critical investigation to be informed by research. Just be sure to acknowledge the sources of your



research when they have contributed to your understanding of the work using the referencing style of your school or college.

Another sound method of analysis for the process portfolio is practical engagement with an artist's style or technique. Traditional training in the arts often included spending many hours in the galleries and museums of the world faithfully copying the works of the masters, emulating the technique and style of the artist. Explore how your own imagery might develop when painted in the style of Anselm Kiefer, or your drawing of figures when stylized and simplified in the style of Henri Matisse, or your photography when using the framing devices of Robert Mapplethorpe.

The results can be photographed and annotated for your process portfolio. Include reference images of the artist's work that you are emulating to make comparisons and to clearly demonstrate to the examiner the connections between your work and the artist that you are exploring.



- ◀ In this image, Coralie has investigated the work of contemporary Portuguese artist Duarte Vitoria. She has included two images sourced from the artist's website (note the references) and has then cropped the areas that have interested her and attempted to paint in Vitoria's style. The annotations she has included reflect Coralie's response to the work in a personal manner, but would have been a stronger submission if the commentary had included more critical language that justified or explained why she found the images to be beautiful.





These pages show the development for my Skin works. My final textile piece featured in my exhibition. I started experimenting with textiles and looking at other artists who use textiles in their work. I wanted to introduce the grotesque in my textures so I began to use wax pellets and string to emulate the surfaces of skin. I used colored string to suggest the presence of veins under tissue and fabric. This can be seen in my top left development page featured. The skin project also led me to take some photos on the theme of skin. Whilst working in Uganda, I took some pictures of the children's hands and feet. It was raining and the cloud created an energetic purple tone on their skin.

▲ This image represents a screen from Ella's process portfolio submission that gives some insight into the development of an idea relating to human skin and textiles, and how she made choices about the materials she used. The screen includes reproductions of four pages from a visual arts journal. This many pages on one screen is normally not advisable, but the size of the handwriting on each page remains legible. The selected pages outline her interest in human skin, which she has documented photographically, include experiments with a range of media and some brainstorming of potential ideas for a more resolved artwork in the form of a textile-like bodice to be crafted in some of the more successful media experiments. In the annotation at the bottom of the page she discusses some of the reasoning behind her material choices.

## Understanding criterion C: communication of ideas and intentions

Coming up with one “big idea” or theme can be a huge stumbling block for students. It can be the cause of a great deal of procrastination and consternation in the art studio, so it is important for you to realize two creatively liberating points.

Firstly, there is no compulsion in the visual arts course for your body of work to be linked together by one common idea or theme. An idea often needs to develop in much the same way that an artwork needs to develop.

Secondly, there is no such thing as a bad idea, all ideas are worth exploring. Some ideas will result in successful artworks; others might result in interesting failures or complete dead-ends, but all will contribute to a solid process portfolio. In fact, often it is the early failures that lead to more successful artworks later on.

In the process portfolio, you need to show the whole process of your art-making practice, from the development of your initial ideas through the various stages of development up to a point of realization.

Criterion C is principally concerned with how well you are able to articulate how you arrived at your initial idea or intention for your work, and then how well you have married your exploration of





technical skills and media with the realization of your intention or the communication of ideas.

If you explore concrete and literal ideas with predictable art-making outcomes you will only reach the lowest level of achievement. At this level there is limited evidence of ideas being reviewed and permitted to develop as your technical skills and conceptual understandings develop, where artworks fail to move far beyond media experiments or literal representations of ideas or concepts.

If you demonstrate original ideas that are a springboard for the further development of more sophisticated ideas or divergent ideas that take you in new directions that challenge and extend you, you will be reaching the highest levels of achievement. At this level there is evidence of skilful and intelligent application of media to realize your artistic intention that communicates ideas to an audience.

### Purposes of art

Thinking about the purpose of art can be helpful when developing ideas for your own art-making. It may help to simplify the purpose into which artworks fall into five broad categories.

- Artistic expression: what the French call “art pour l’art” or art for the sake of art itself; where art is about expressing yourself and communicating emotions, feelings or ideas.
- Ceremonial: where the art is created as a part of, or to support, a cultural or spiritual practice or undertaken as an act of devotion or worship.
- Functional: where art is created to serve a utilitarian function, such as product design; decoration is also a function.
- Narrative: where art tells a story or describes events or experiences; the stories can be mythical, fantasy or historical and are often allegorical.
- Persuasive: where art promotes a particular idea, belief, philosophy or product.

### Some guiding questions for considering ideas and intentions

The following questions may be helpful to consider, and write answers for, in your visual arts journal when you begin a new artwork.

- Why are you doing this work? (The answer is not “because I need to complete between 8 to 11 artworks”.)
- What do you want to share with your audience? What idea/theme/message would you like the completed work to convey?
- Why is this important?
- What lasting impact do you want the work to have?
- What visual and formal qualities will you use to effectively communicate your ideas and intentions?
- What imagery will you use to effectively communicate your ideas and intentions?
- What form and medium/media would be the most suitable to achieve my intentions?

### TOK

Does an artwork have to “say something” to be meaningful?

In your class, organize a debate on the question, “Does an artwork have to ‘say something’ to be meaningful?” Organize yourselves into two sides of the argument: the government, supporting the idea that an artwork has to say something to be meaningful; and the opposition, supporting the idea that an artwork does not have to say something to be meaningful. Both sides should find examples of art to use to support their position.

## Tip



A pitfall for immature artists is underestimating their audience and making the meaning behind an artwork too literal or obvious. This usually happens when students try to produce persuasive artworks on issues that they are passionate about. Meaning can be developed through layers and with subtlety. To avoid overly literal work or work that relies on visual clichés, think about your concept from a range of perspectives and try to raise questions, rather than draw conclusions.

## ATL Thinking skills

There are many strategies and techniques that can be useful to visual arts students when developing and selecting ideas for art-making. The following can be used individually as starting points, but often are more powerful if combined.

**Brainstorming using sticky notes:** Using a pad of sticky notes, write down every possible art-making idea that comes into your head. The ideas can range from single words to phrases, but limit each sticky note to a single idea. As each idea is written on a sticky note, stick the note on a desk, window or wall. Stop after 20 minutes or when the desk, window or wall is covered in sticky notes. Then spend 15 minutes reviewing what you have written on each sticky note. You can group common or related ideas together by simply rearranging the notes and eliminate ideas that are too crazy or just plain silly by removing the sticky note. Then take up to three of the most viable ideas and transfer them to your visual arts journal where you can flesh them out further, perhaps with mind maps or concept webs, or by doodling and sketching.

**Brain dumping:** Brain dumping is a similar process to brainstorming in that it aims to transfer ideas from the brain to another storage system such as your visual arts journal. Brain dumping might begin as a list of ideas that you start to make in your visual arts journal, but becomes a bit more organic and fluid as you start making the list of ideas and you get other ideas or make a list of related tasks which you jot down as you go. It is a good idea to set a time limit to do your initial brain dump. When the time runs out, finish writing the last point, then start to organize and evaluate the points. It may be useful to categorize the ideas into “concepts” and “medium/techniques” or “now”, “maybe later” and “probably not”.

**Concept webs and mind maps:** Concept webs and mind maps are visual/written techniques used to expand upon ideas. After brainstorming or brain dumping, they are a powerful way to take key ideas and flesh them out. With either concept webs or mind maps, place the key idea at the centre or bottom of the page, and flesh out or develop the idea further with branches that are used to explore it from various points of view. Mind maps most often result in a tree or root-like image, while concept webs take on a web or starburst shape. When developing ideas for art-making using concept webs or mind maps, it is a good idea to add sketches, cartoons and doodles to the page so your brain is already beginning to give visual form to your ideas. This is also more interesting for the examiner.

### Communication of ideas and intentions: satisfying the whole criterion

So far we have looked at a range of approaches to help define, narrow down and refine the ideas you want to explore in your art-making, but this really only addresses the first aspect of criterion C. The first part of the level descriptors deals with communicating ideas and intents from “listing” in the lowest level (worth 1 or 2 marks) to “clearly articulating” in the highest level (worth 5 or 6 marks).

The second part of the level descriptors requires you to communicate how you have incorporated technical skills and use of media and materials into your ideas and intentions to develop your work further. Thorough documentation of your art-making process is the best way for you to communicate this. Using your visual arts journal, annotate



a range of experiments, photographs of your work as it develops, reworked planning sketches and diagrams with clear explanations of why you are doing what you are doing, and how it helps you better convey your ideas and intentions to your audience.

At various points in the development of an artwork, it is good practice to go back to these formative pages in your visual arts journal to revisit what your original intentions were, and to see how your work has developed or is developing. Sometimes it is helpful to add additional annotations to old pages, particularly if your work changed directions, such as a reworking of the image, composition or a change in media. Don't change or alter your earlier notes. Simply update them, explaining why you made the changes. You can also make cross references to the more recent pages in your visual arts journal.

When it is time to start assembling your process portfolio, you will have built up a wealth of evidence in your visual arts journal that shows how you have assimilated your conceptual practice (your ideas and concepts) with your material and technical practice (your art-making practice), which addresses the second aspect of criterion C.

## Understanding criterion D: reviewing, refining and reflecting

Many a first-year student at art college has been frustrated by the advice given by lecturers that if the student can visualize the final outcome of an artwork before they start it, then there is no point in beginning it.

What does that mean? How do you begin to make an image if you don't know what the image is before you start?

Art-making and the practice of being an artist is a discipline. It involves growth and development that is personal, intellectual and technical. You are not the same artist today as you were yesterday. As soon as you begin to create a work of art you are developing a set of skills as an artist. Your brain is constantly engaged in high-order thinking as it continually evaluates your work, while simultaneously directing your body as it gives visual form to the ideas and concepts that were conceived in your mind. Your fine motor skills develop as you engage your fingers and hands to undertake the physical task of art-making. As you work, you accumulate a repertoire of skills in representation, rendering or modelling as you seek to make the outcome of your endeavours submit to your artistic intentions.

Each artwork you develop will involve research and planning, making, reflecting, problem-solving, reworking, reflecting some more, refining until your work is resolved to your satisfaction or you give up trying. However, regardless of the outcome, be it a success or failure, you will have grown as an artist. Your ideas and understandings will have become more sophisticated and your skills more diverse and more sharply honed.

Reviewing and refining your own work and practices and reflecting on your growth as an artist are critical disciplines to adopt in order to improve your art-making practice.

For criterion D, you need to show that you can review and refine selected ideas, skills, processes and techniques, and reflect on the acquisition of skills and your development as a visual artist.

### ATL Thinking skills: Reflection

Evaluating and reflecting upon your own art-making practice can occur at any stage during the art-making process, not just at the end. A simple routine you can use is asking yourself these questions and answering the questions in your visual arts journal:

What's working? (What are the strengths in your work?)

What's not working? (What are the weaknesses or what's not going as well as you had hoped?)

What have I learned about myself as an artist? (Has your work revealed some things that you are good at, or some things that you need to develop?)



### TOK: Caught in the act of reviewing and refining: Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)* – a case study



▲ Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973), *Self-Portrait with Palette* (1906)



▲ Pablo Picasso (Spanish, 1881–1973), *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)* (1907)

Look at Picasso's *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)*. This is considered one of the most significant images of modern western art, certainly in the development of the style known as Cubism. What do you notice? Do you think the work is unified? Does the work look finished? Compare the three figures on the left of the canvas to the two figures on the right. Look specifically at how their faces are represented. How do they differ?

Daniel-Henry Kahnweiler was a contemporary art dealer to Picasso, and one of the first champions of the emerging style of Cubism. Kahnweiler perceived *Les Femmes d'Alger (O. J. R. Version O)* as the beginning of Cubism. He recognized the incongruent representations between the left- and right-hand sides of the painting. In his book *The Rise of Cubism* (1920) Kahnweiler writes:

*Early in 1907 Picasso began a strange large painting depicting women, fruit and drapery, which he left unfinished. It cannot be called other than unfinished, even though it represents a long period of work. Begun in the spirit of the works of 1906, it contains in one section the endeavors of 1907 and thus never constitutes a unified whole.*

*The nudes, with large, quiet eyes, stand rigid, like mannequins. Their stiff, round bodies are flesh-colored, black and white. That is the style of 1906.*

*In the foreground, however, alien to the style of the rest of the painting, appear a crouching figure and a bowl of fruit. These forms are drawn angularly, not roundly modeled in chiaroscuro. The colors are luscious blue, strident yellow, next to pure black and white. This is the beginning of Cubism, the first upsurge, a desperate titanic clash with all of the problems at once.*

What Kahnweiler observes as unfinished in Picasso's piece is in fact evidence of an artist in the midst of reviewing and refining their work from a style of representation as seen in his *Self-Portrait with Palette* (1906) to the more angular and fractured style that was to become recognizable as Analytical Cubism.

### Showing evidence of reviewing and refining your work

At the lowest level of achievement for this aspect of criterion D, there is usually limited evidence of any reviewing or refining. There is a sense that once a work is “finished”, another work is started, independent of what has been completed before, while at the highest level of achievement, there is evidence that the student’s art-making practice includes an ongoing process of reviewing and refining ideas, skills, processes and techniques in which the successes and failures in previous work inform and enrich subsequent work.

Working out ways to make your work better is an important part of your development as an artist. Coming to the conclusion that you cannot realize your original idea is nothing to be ashamed of. Perhaps you were not familiar enough with the limitations of a particular drawing or painting medium, or perhaps the laws of physics prevent you from realizing an ambitious sculptural form. Coming up against these problems and finding ways to work around them is how you learn as an artist.

If you finish a work and are not completely satisfied with the outcome, working through a different form or medium can be a good strategy to review and refine your work and compel you to think differently about the idea or imagery. You can use the art-making forms table as a



resource for this. Take a painting, for example, and think about how you could represent the same idea sculpturally.

Documenting the process of your own art-making as you go is the best way to ensure that you will have sufficient evidence to address the first aspect of criterion D. If you have access to a camera, take a photo of your work at the start of the lesson and again at the end. Do this throughout the process. As you go, get into the habit of printing the photos and pasting them thoughtfully into your visual arts journal. Annotate each photograph, describing what you have done in each image, and explain why. Pay particular attention to points through your art-making process where you were presented with a problem or a challenge that needed to be resolved, and explain and evaluate the solution, especially if the solution resulted in you having to divert from your original designs and plans. These pages can be scanned or photographed for inclusion in your process portfolio. You do not need to include images of you working on your work, unless this really demonstrates your involvement in a complex project that may otherwise be misconstrued as the work of someone else and not your own.

### Reflecting on your work and your development as an artist

At the lowest level of achievement for this aspect of criterion D, reflection is superficial and descriptive or completely unrealistic; described outcomes are not reflected in the evidence. At the highest level of achievement, the student considers all aspects of their art-making practice including skills, ideas, techniques and processes, and makes realistic and considered evaluation of successes and failures.

It is a mistake to think that reflection is part of the art-making practice that can only be done at the end of the process when the artwork is finished. You should be reflecting on your processes and your own development as an artist throughout your course, so make a habit of doing this regularly in your visual arts journal. You can always add to these with additional text boxes when you select the final evidence for your process portfolio.

Reflection does not come easily to everyone. It fits into a range of higher-order thinking skills known as metacognition (or thinking that is about thinking). To meet the highest levels of criterion D, you need to include meaningful and assured reflection upon the skills you have acquired and your development as an artist.

The following questions can be used to help promote your reflective thinking:

- What are you trying to achieve in your work?
- How well did you achieve it?
- What are your strengths as an artist?
- What strengths do you see in your work?
- What problems have you faced?
- What are your limitations as an artist?
- How have you attempted to overcome perceived weaknesses?
- Who/what has influenced you and why?
- What has been your greatest area of growth as an artist?

#### Tip



#### The more opinions the better

When you review your work, your opinions and those of your teacher are important, but your classmates may be your greatest untapped resource. A class critique can be very useful as other students identify what they like and don't like about a work, and pose questions like:

“Have you thought of ...” or

“Are you familiar with the work of ...”

Different perspectives can help you determine how well your work is progressing and how close you are getting to realizing your intent.

#### ATL Social skills

Participating in a group critique can be quite uncomfortable. Giving and receiving constructive criticism requires a reasonable level of emotional intelligence. It is important that the group establishes some ground rules that help to make everyone feel more comfortable and at ease. Bookending negative feedback with two positive affirmations can be a good way to do this.

## Tip



Most students are familiar with an assortment of adjectives that might be appropriate when used in informal conversation with peers, but should certainly not be used in submitted works or examinations. When reflecting upon and evaluating your own work, you can add to that list of adjectives words like “nice” and “good”. When you evaluate the success of an aspect of your work, or justify a choice you have made, use full sentences that articulate the effect or impact of what you have done to the work.

For example: “I decided to keep the sculpture white, rather than applying the different finishes as I had intended in my original plan, and it resulted in a more unified form.”

This is better than: “I decided to leave the sculpture white because it looked nice.”

## Understanding criterion E: presentation and subject-specific language

Criterion E carries the smallest weighting of all of the assessment criteria with a maximum mark of 4. This shows that the content of your process portfolio, that is, the content that is assessed against criteria A to D, is of more significance than how you present your work and the language that you use to do it. But as a *visual* course, presentation is important enough to give a mark value to, and as one of the learner profile attributes is to be communicators, value is also placed on the subject-specific language we use to describe visual arts.

While the value of this criterion is smaller, it is nonetheless an important consideration in your process portfolio. It is the one criterion that is likely to be evident on every screen you include and investing time in getting it right will ensure that your ideas and processes are communicated clearly and effectively in an engaging manner, which is likely to positively impact your assessment against the other criteria.

### Presentation: what constitutes a “screen”?

The term “screen” is used in both the comparative study and process portfolio task outlines. The *Visual arts guide* does not specify the orientation of a screen (landscape or portrait), the size and resolution, nor the number of words included on a screen.

The use of the word “screen” is intentional. It is a constant reminder that this task has to be submitted electronically. Your submission will be viewed by the examiner on a computer screen. The screens are not uploaded individually, but combined into a single portable document file (PDF) with a maximum file size of 20 megabytes. (Note that the IB Assessment Centre may adjust this requirement from exam session to session. Your teacher can check the most updated requirements in the annually published *Handbook of procedures for the Diploma Programme*.)

Students studying at SL must submit 9–18 screens, while HL students submit 13–25 screens. The screens must show evidence of a sustained art-making practice that involves research, experimentation, manipulation and refinement of a variety of art-making projects.

Screens need to be static. They cannot include dynamic elements like animations, transitions, embedded media (video or audio) files or hyperlinks and QR codes. It should be possible to read each screen without having to zoom in and out to read the text.

The IB does not prescribe how screens are to be produced. For the vast majority of students, the most effective way of working will be to scan or photograph pages from the visual arts journal, then assemble them as a single PDF document. Other students like to use presentation programmes such as Microsoft® PowerPoint® or Apple® Keynote®, both of which can be saved as PDF files. Screens can also be crafted with a range of Adobe products including InDesign and Photoshop. One or a combination of all of these is possible. You will need to choose the process that best suits your way of working and will be the most time effective. It is important that your art-making practice is your main focus and that publishing your process portfolio does not become an end in itself.





## Presentation: Making the most of the “screen”

The key terms in the top level descriptor for the presentation aspect of criterion E are explained in the table below. You should keep these terms in mind whenever you work in your visual arts journal, and when you start assembling your process portfolio.

Clear	Keep the register of your writing informal, but technically accurate. Write any annotations as if you are writing to a friend who knows something about art, but may not necessarily be an expert in the particular form you are working in. Explain what you are doing and how you are doing it. Using headings can be helpful too, both to you in organizing your thoughts and ideas, but also to an examiner who is looking for evidence of how you have addressed each criterion.
Coherent	If you are using your visual arts journal appropriately and authentically as a vital and integrated part of your art-making practice, it might not always be the most coherent document to pick up and read. This is particularly true if you are the sort of person that needs to have a couple of artworks in development at the same time. When you assemble your process portfolio, it usually makes good sense to rearrange the order of the pages to create a narrative that documents the development of a particular artwork. In doing this, you might find some gaps in the narrative. You can always add these digitally when you start assembling the PDF file, or you can add cross references, for example, “see screen 9 for ...”.
Visually appropriate	Avoid putting text over busy backgrounds and textures. When working in your visual arts journal, keep the idea of a screen in your mind when you lay your work out. Avoid writing around curvilinear forms like spirals, and changing the direction of your writing. These work in a book that you can rotate easily, but it is more of a challenge to read on screen. If you are constructing your process portfolio digitally, choose a font and colour scheme and use them throughout the presentation.
Legible	<p>If you are using pages from your visual arts journal in your process portfolio, your handwriting is important. Consider the size of your sketchbook against the size of the average computer screen. Unless your visual arts journal is A4 or letter format size, it is likely that your handwriting will look smaller on screen. Keep your annotations to a reasonable size but references and citations can be smaller. Examiners can zoom in and usually only need to look carefully at the citations if something is looking suspicious. Printing is usually easier to read than cursive writing. Contrast is also important. Black pen reproduces best, but if you use black pen to annotate a graphite pencil drawing, a scanner may adjust the exposure for the black pen and wash out your drawing. If when you assemble your process portfolio you find some of your handwriting hard to read, you can always cover it with a text box and transcribe the text within the program you are using. Also, consider leaving a margin on each side of the page to avoid text being cropped when you scan or photograph the page.</p> <p>If you are creating your process portfolio digitally, limit the number of fonts you use and use them consistently, perhaps using one font for headings and another for the body. For the body text, a simple standard font is better than something too ornate. Keep your body text to 12 points, but use smaller sizes for footnotes or citations. Your screen will be opened in an electronic marking platform and will not take up the entire screen, so some reduction of size will occur.</p>
Engaging	An engaging process portfolio is interesting for the reader. Use a good balance of visuals and text. Do not overdecorate pages with irrelevant embellishments. Using coloured text fields to highlight more important content can be a good way of breaking up information, and wherever possible, use a good image of an illustration in the place of copious amounts of text. All images should be accompanied by some explanation, as well as any necessary citations. Always consider your layout and how you place images and text.

### ATL Self-management skills: organization

Review some pages that you have completed in your visual arts journal. What can you see that would be good evidence of your art-making practice and could be included in the process portfolio? What is missing? What could you add to a page to make your processes or **intent** clearer to an examiner who knows nothing about you or your art-making practice?

### Key terms

**Intent:** refers to authorial intent or, in other words, what the artist hopes to accomplish, achieve or communicate through a work of art. An intent can be specific, concrete and literal or open-ended and abstract.

## Using subject-specific language

Every field of human endeavour has its own vocabulary or jargon. This is sometimes referred to as metalanguage – language that is used to describe language.

Within the visual arts, when we engage critically with artworks we might refer to the fundamental aspects that work together to make an artwork such as the elements and principles of design. This is what we are referring to when we consider and discuss elements like colour, line, shape, texture and value, or principles like rhythm, variety, balance and emphasis.

We use a range of nouns to associate artists and artworks to particular styles, schools and movements in art history such as Realism, Impressionism, Cubism and Pop. We also use a range of terminology that describes particular conventions, techniques and processes encompassed within the various forms of art-making that artists engage in.

All of these aspects form a rich subject-specific language that you should embrace and use fluently as you begin to take your art-making practice seriously. As you begin working in a new form, make a vocabulary list of all the new terms you are taught or come across in your own independent research. When you use the terms for the first time in your visual arts journal, it is a good idea to highlight or underline the term and include a definition.

When describing your art-making, get into the habit of using hue colour names to describe your use of colour.

For example: “Here I have used *India red* and *raw sienna* with *titanium white* for my *base skin tone*.”

This is better than: “I used a red-brown and brown-orange with white to make a skin colour.”

Also use technical terms to describe your process: “I scumbled some titanium white mixed with a small amount of Naples yellow over the thickly impasted ultramarine blue paint in the foreground to emphasize the texture.”

## Assembling your process portfolio

The IB does not prescribe how to assemble or organize the contents of your process portfolio. The approach that follows assumes that most students will rely on the careful selection of visual arts journal pages to assemble their process portfolio. It uses a logical and mathematical consideration of the process portfolio assessment criteria to propose a guide for the selection of pages for both SL and HL students.

Firstly, students studying at SL must submit work that shows they have worked in at least two art-making forms, each from separate columns of the art-making forms table, while HL students must show that at least three art-making forms have been explored, selected from a minimum of two columns on the art-making forms table. Therefore, a priority of the selection of screens for the process portfolio must be to demonstrate that these requirements have been met.

Secondly, the *Visual arts guide* states that any image appearing in a process portfolio of a work in its final resolved state which is going to be included in the exhibition component must include a statement alongside the reproduction of the work, making it clear that the image



is the final resolved work as included in the exhibition. Works that have not been included in the exhibition, of course, may be included without such restrictions. There is no directive for the process portfolio to document the processes of all of the work submitted in the exhibition. It may be more effective to focus on the processes of fewer works that address the minimum form requirement and provide a deeper insight into your art-making practice.

Thirdly, it is good practice for students to aim to include the maximum number of screens for the level in which they have enrolled (9–18 for SL, 13–25 for HL). There is no penalty for submitting work with fewer screens, but this is because this is usually found to be self-limiting – students cannot meet the highest levels of the assessment criteria because they are providing insufficient evidence. Similarly, if students submit only the minimum number of screens in the range then they are limiting their chances of meeting all of the criteria.

Do not include a title screen. Students should not include identifying details, such as their name, school name, school number or candidate number on any screen throughout the submission. This is to prevent an examiner from making presumptions about the candidate, the type of school they attend, or the country or region they come from. When identifying images that are your own work, labels such as “my own photograph” or “student’s artwork” work well. The title of the work, medium or media used, and the size of the work are also expected and helpful when your work is being assessed.

Now that we have covered the basics, it is time to select the most appropriate pages to put in the process portfolio. Given that criterion E: presentation and subject-specific language is likely to be covered on most, if not all screens, we are going to focus on selecting material to demonstrate your achievement against criteria A to D.

Consider the marks that are available for each criterion. Criterion A is worth a maximum of 12 marks or 35% of the total marks. When we discount criterion E, as it is likely to be represented on every page, around 40% of the screen content should attempt to address criterion A, while criteria B, C and D with a maximum of 6 marks each should each be represented by 20% of the screen content.

Using a set of four different coloured sticky notes, assign a colour to each of the criteria. Now go through your visual arts journal and use the coloured sticky notes to select pages that best show your achievement against the corresponding assessment criteria. Do not worry if some pages have more than one coloured sticky note assigned to them; this is not uncommon and will just give you more scope for including more pages.

Once the best pages of the visual arts journal are colourfully flagged with the sticky notes, you can start narrowing down your selection. Each artwork you include in your process portfolio should have sufficient screens to address each of the criteria well. The table below can be used as a guide, but essentially you are looking for two to three screens per artwork to address criterion A, and one to two screens each for criterion B, criterion C and criterion D.

Each selected page will need to be photographed or scanned and assembled into a single 20 megabyte PDF document. Some scanners



▲ *When compiling your process portfolio, your visual arts teacher is one of your most valuable resources. Your teacher can give you feedback on a single draft of your process portfolio. This feedback is most useful as it can highlight any criteria that have not been addressed or where more clarification is required such as annotations or additional visual evidence.*



have a function that will scan images directly to PDF files. These can then be assembled into the desired order using software such as Adobe Acrobat Pro. Such programs will also take separate jpeg files, such as those created by a digital camera, and combine them into a single PDF document.

Review every page to ensure that no sides or edges have been cropped and that the exposure is appropriate. Also, proofread the document to ensure that the screen order is logical and coherent. If you feel further clarification is required, you can add additional text boxes to include more information as needed.

The last step is to save the document. Most programs will give you the option to save the file in a way that optimizes it for viewing on the web or on screen. This should compress the document sufficiently to be under the maximum file size of 20 megabytes without adversely affecting the quality of your document. You should, nevertheless, always review your work to be sure before you upload it.

Criterion	Suitable evidence	Recommended number of screens total for SL (per artwork – minimum of two forms from two columns)	Recommended number of screens total for HL (per artwork – minimum of three work from at least two columns)
<b>A</b>	Technical research into a particular form or medium Experimentation with media Evidence of considered and purposeful manipulation of media to suit intentions Evaluation of the appropriateness of the media for the intended outcome Justification of the media used	4–7 screens total (2–3 screens per work)	5–10 screens (2–3 screens per work)
<b>B</b>	Critical investigations of other artists, styles, artworks and artifacts Annotated copies of other artists’ artworks Critical analysis Responses to museum and gallery visits Art-making experiments using the imagery, style or technique of a particular artist or style Producing copies of works “after” a particular artist; written reflections on the connections between an investigated artist and their own work Comparisons of own art-making with the work of artists that have been investigated	2–4 screens total (1–2 screens per work)	3–5 screens total (1–2 screens per work)



C	<p>Concept maps of ideas and themes</p> <p>Annotated brainstorming pages from visual arts journal</p> <p>Statement of artistic intent; planning of imagery with annotations considering how meaning might be conveyed through the work</p> <p>Preliminary drawing, sketching, thumbnails, designs</p>	<p>2–4 screens total (1–2 screens per work)</p>	<p>3–5 screens total (1–2 screens per work)</p>
D	<p>Various trials of compositional arrangements with annotations</p> <p>Reworking imagery employing different techniques or media</p> <p>Mediating original outcomes through alternative choices in forms, media and materials</p> <p>Reflections and evaluations made throughout the progress of a work, resulting in changes in direction, imagery or technique and reasons given for this</p> <p>Examples of artworks with developing levels of resolution evident</p> <p>Reflection on own development as an artist</p>	<p>2–4 screens total (1–2 screens per work)</p>	<p>3–5 screens total (1–2 screens per work)</p>
		Maximum of 18 screens	Maximum of 25 screens

### ATL Thinking skills: Higher order thinking

There are an enormous range of models and routines that can be used to critically analyse a work of art. Among these, Edmund Burke Feldman's critical analysis model from *Varieties of Visual Experience* [1987] has been successfully used by high school students for over 30 years. The following routine of questions adapts Feldman's model to suit the purposes of the process portfolio:

**Describe** What is the form? (painting, sculpture, mural, advertisement).

What is the format? (scroll, easel painting, magazine image).

What is the medium? (charcoal, acrylic, oils, etching).

What is the subject matter? (Non-objective or figurative, ie: landscape, portrait, nude, still life etc.)

Is there a narrative? Does the image tell a story?

What culture? (European, ancient, modernist, postmodernist, tribal, Chinese).

**Analyse** How have the elements of design (line, colour, tonal value, texture, shape etc) been used?

How have the principles of design (rhythm, balance, focal point, emphasis etc) been used?

What techniques and methods (conventional or non-conventional, direct or indirect) have been used?

What is the style of representation (impressionistic, expressionistic, abstract, simplified, stylized etc)?

**Interpret** Does the work evoke a mood or emotion? What is the mood or emotion and how is it created?

Identify and interpret any signs, symbols or codes that are used in the work to convey meaning?

If the work has a narrative, explain how the story is conveyed. Does it have an allegorical significance?

**Relevance** What relevance or what connections can you make to your own work?

# 5

## The exhibition



- ▲ *Tessa is experimenting with tonal variation in paint. The original colour of the paint in the tube or tub is often not the best (or most appropriate) colour, and paint-mixing will enable you to find a colour that is more relevant to your intentions.*

### What is the exhibition?

It's time now to turn your attention to the event that is the practical culmination of your visual arts course, an event that is a celebration as well as visual statement: the exhibition.

So, what is an art exhibition? In general terms, it is traditionally a space where an audience encounters art. Your exhibition is a collection of artwork selected from the art you have created during the course and assembled for display to an audience.

The art exhibited will reflect work in all three of the visual arts core areas (visual arts in context, visual arts methods and communicating visual arts). For example, your responses to the exhibitions you have visited will enable you to formulate ideas and intentions for creating and displaying your own artworks (visual arts in context). With regard to visual arts methods, you will have considered how your art communicates meaning and purpose, selecting the best artworks through a process of reflection and evaluation, and you will also have considered the nature of "exhibition". As for communicating visual arts, you will select and present resolved works in your exhibition and explain how the works are connected. You should also be discussing how artistic judgments impact the overall presentation. At HL you will also be explaining the impact of your art on different audiences.



- ▲ *These three exhibition views demonstrate some of the approaches taken by different students, with examples of work displayed on walls and panels, easels and tables.*







## Key terms

**Resolved:** generally “resolved” means that an artwork is complete and/or finished. However, it is not a simple idea. Sometimes an artist will say that their artwork is complete when it still looks unfinished to an audience. Ultimately the question of how resolved your work is could come down to a discussion with your teacher and peers.

## TOK

Questions related to TOK that a visual arts student might consider include the following.

- To what extent is artistic knowledge something which cannot be expressed in any other way?
- Are ways of knowing employed in radically different ways in the arts than in other areas of knowledge?
- To what extent does imagination play a special role in the visual arts?
- What moral responsibilities do artists have?
- How can the subjective viewpoint of an individual contribute to knowledge in the arts?
- What are the standards by which we judge artworks?
- Why might we be more concerned with process rather than product in the search for knowledge?
- Do the arts have a social function?
- To what extent is truth different in the arts, mathematics and ethics?

From *Visual arts guide*, page 8

## The importance of process and the journal

Throughout the course you will plan and create different artworks. Not everything will be successful or **resolved**, but much of this process will be documented in the visual arts journal.

Some parts of this process will be submitted at the end of the course in the process portfolio while other parts will lead to outcomes that will be selected for inclusion in your exhibition. You will explore a number of techniques as you develop ideas and artworks, but your exhibition does not *have* to show more than one technique (although it can if you wish). Bear in mind that any images of resolved artwork submitted for your exhibition should not also appear in the process portfolio.

The starting points for the artworks you show may occur at any time throughout the two years of the course, and may not initially seem likely to lead to resolved final pieces. But almost any idea can be the starting point of a great exhibition artwork, so you should jot down any ideas that come to you, using your visual arts journal to record ideas.

It is important to refer to this stage as an art-making starting point, because some of your explorations of process will lead to the creation of the resolved artwork that represents the final stage of the creative process.

Processes will be explored in different contexts, for example, some assigned by your teacher, others in response to your own ideas. It is important that you discuss your ideas with your teacher and identify directions to follow.

It's also important that you understand the link between process and final outcomes (resolved work). Process by its nature tends to be exploratory and experimental, but the learning that occurs is closely linked to the success (or otherwise) of the resolved work.

It is also important that you review your output throughout the course, and identify ways to improve your collection of work. You need to evaluate and critique your explorations and the outcomes.

## ATL Self-management skills

Art may be the most time-intensive of all courses, so time management will be one of the most important skills you develop.

Time is needed for you to acquire the knowledge, skills and understanding to make the works. Also allow time to review and monitor progress.

If you decide to create a large-scale or complex piece of art, make sure you allow yourself enough time!





These two journal pages show Charlotte starting to plan a self-portrait. Her two pages combine some relevant drawings with a written explanation/comment.







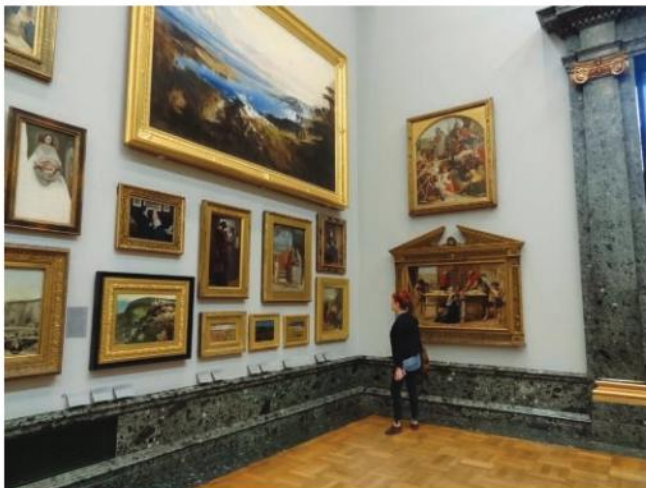
## Visiting exhibitions and art galleries

In the section on the comparative study we looked at visiting galleries and museums to study work of other artists. It is also vital that you visit art exhibitions as part of your preparation for your own exhibition. You will be putting on a display of your artwork towards the end of the course, so you should take advantage of any opportunities during the course to see examples of how other people's art is displayed.

### Exhibitions: layout and display

As we have already seen, your journal is the ideal place to document your experiences at exhibitions you have visited. You should use the journal to record your responses to the art encountered in the gallery and to the gallery experience itself. All of this will enable you to have a greater understanding of the issues when you put on your own exhibition.

The images here show views of how artworks are arranged in two London galleries.



- ▲ *It's vital that you as a student visit as many examples of different art exhibitions as possible. This is partly because you will be assembling and presenting an exhibition of your own work, and the more experience you have of different approaches to layout, lighting, the impact of size and scale, considerations of media (including 3-D and digital/lens-based art) when art is displayed etc., the better. It's also important that you see 'real' art, rather than (for example) just seeing images on a monitor screen.*





Of course, most schools do not have the wall space and lighting of major metropolitan galleries, but whatever the space and light available in your school, it can still be extremely valuable to visit exhibitions and evaluate these aspects as well as the artworks on display.

Similarly, the layout and arrangement of artworks within the space available has an impact, and rearranging the display might change this impact. Look at how artworks are displayed when you visit exhibitions. Are some layouts better than others? Why?

Think about “clusters” of artworks – it can make sense to group pieces with a similar style or theme together.

What about any sculptural pieces that you encounter? Can they be viewed in the round? If you are looking at a three-dimensional artwork, examine the way space is used. Is there a particular viewpoint that allows the viewer to best appreciate the sculptural qualities?

Think about the size and scale of the artworks encountered. There are no restrictions on size in your exhibition. Consider how the scale, media and presentation of the work can help convey its message. Large-scale art obviously has impact but there may be practical considerations that make it difficult to work to this scale. But could you show a film clip of this work?

Are there digital works being shown? What technology is used and what technology is available to you?

All of these experiences with and questions about art exhibited in real galleries will provide you with ideas for your own exhibition planning.

### Exhibition documents

Also review any available exhibition documentation, including artists’ statements and the text boxes that frequently accompany artworks on gallery walls. There may also be **curatorial documentation**.

Note: A **curatorial rationale** and a series of **exhibition texts** are required elements when you put on your final show, and we will look at them in more detail a little later in this chapter.

### Ideas

In addition to the gallery “experience”, consider the ideas contained in the artworks that you encounter at the gallery. Consider the following questions.

- What is the artist saying with his/her art?
- Why are these things important?
- Are there things that you want to say with your art?
- What inspires you? It may be something unexpected, for example, surface texture.

### Key terms

#### Curatorial documentation:

text explaining how and why the works were selected and displayed in the gallery or exhibition space.

#### Curatorial rationale:

at SL this explains the intentions of the student and how they have considered the presentation of work using curatorial methodologies. At HL this shows consideration of the potential relationship between the artworks and the viewer. Refer to relevant sections of the guide for further detail.

**Exhibition texts:** students are required to include exhibition text for each piece submitted for assessment. This outlines the title, medium, size and intention of each piece. Where students are deliberately appropriating another artist’s image, the exhibition text must acknowledge the source of the original image. The text should contain reference to any sources which have influenced the individual piece.

### TOK

- Where do ideas come from?
- Where do your ideas come from?

One answer might be “everywhere”, and your exhibition does not have to be “about” anything in particular, although in assessment terms it should be coherent, competent and contain conceptual qualities.

## Tip

**Audience/viewer experience**

You are part of the audience when you visit an art show and will therefore have an audience or viewer experience. When you put on your show, others will be your audience and an important part of planning your show is to consider your audience. While in the gallery, reflect on what works and what does not work. Ask others to describe their response to the artwork and the experience, and review their comments.

This type of experience can give you ideas about the arrangement and layout of your show (although of course it is unlikely that you will have use of a large public gallery).

## Developing ideas and intentions

*“Showing your art in an exhibition is a little like taking your clothes off in public!”*

You may or may not agree with this quote, but the idea underlying it is that your art tells your audience something about you. It may reveal or express aspects of your identity, your personality, your passions or your fears. Whether you like it or not, your audience will form some opinions based on what they see.

Of course, you can and will influence their opinions through the art that you show, but responses to art are subjective, so it is impossible to envisage exactly what the audience will take away from their encounters with your artwork.

### Let your ideas evolve

It would be a little restrictive to have a fixed and final idea about your exhibition from the start. You need to be open to ideas and influences. However, you should always have your exhibition in mind as you go through the learning and art-making activities and exercises suggested or provided by your teacher.

Schools and art teachers adopt a range of approaches to teaching visual arts, and in guiding art students towards success there is certainly no single route to creating a great exhibition.

Towards the end of the course you will be selecting the artworks that will be displayed in your show, and these artworks will have been generated throughout the course. Some may have been created early on, others towards the end of the first year, and still others in the second year.

Ideally you will have some ideas about your exhibition at the back of your mind while you explore process (ideas, techniques and media) during the course. There may be ideas that you work on because they represent something you want to say in your exhibition, or there may be particular techniques that you are interested in.

You do not need to have a specific theme for your exhibition. We will look at this more closely in a later section, but it's important to understand that your exhibition can contain a diversity of ideas and elements. Coherence does not mean repetition, and your exhibition can contain a range of ideas, themes or concepts.

### Intentions

The *Visual arts guide* makes a number of references to your **intentions**, that is, what you hope to achieve or accomplish through your artwork. The exhibition should reflect your personal intentions. These intentions could also take account of an audience response, that is, the impact of your art and your intentions.

But what if you just enjoy making art and have no specific intentions beyond displaying your work at the end of the course? You may have no “artistic intentions” at first, or you may not have a clear idea about your intentions for the exhibition.







This is not necessarily a problem: your intentions can develop and evolve throughout the course. In some ways it can be a hindrance to have fixed intentions from the very start. It is usually better to allow your ideas to evolve and develop as the course progresses. Your intentions may develop further as you visit exhibitions that show the work of other artists.

In the second year you could identify a focus. This could include the choice of media you will use, **formal qualities** you plan to employ, or a theme/choice of imagery or subject matter.

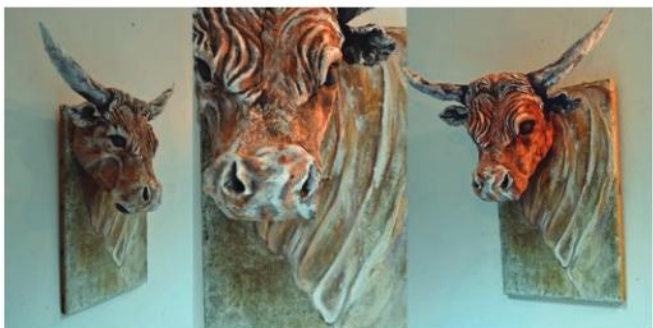
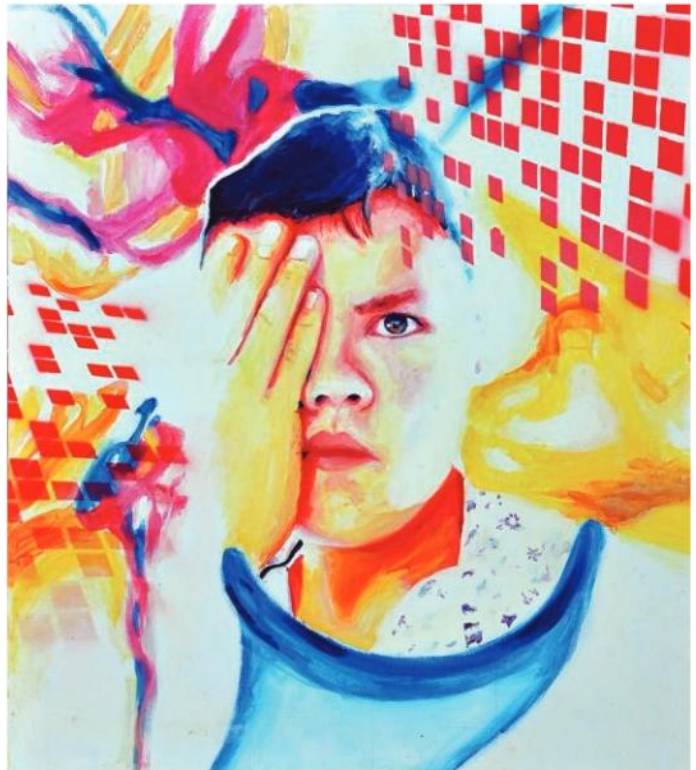
Your visual arts journal is key to the development of your ideas and art. You will probably explain and describe your artistic intentions as you work on ideas in the visual arts journal.

These may evolve as you explore different directions and techniques, but if your intentions do lead to work that is shown in your exhibition, then these written notes on your intentions will also probably inform (and be explained in) your curatorial rationale and/or the exhibition texts.

The visual arts journal will also be useful when you start to think about the layout of your exhibition and arrangement of your artworks. Where will the audience enter from? What relationships need to be established between artworks? How should they be placed?



◀ *Ideas and Intentions: the extravagant hat by Allegra (opposite) and the 'raindrops' painting by Coralie are both examples of final pieces that ended up being very different from their starting points. Letting ideas evolve frequently allows time for creative diversions and experiments that ultimately lead to a far stronger resolution than sticking to the 'first idea'.*



▲ These photographs provide a glimpse of the variety of ideas and processes that students might explore in their creative visual arts journey. Although all these are resolved, the route each student took to reach this 'destination' was frequently long involving many experiments, some creative accidents and sustained exploration.



## Tip



When planning your exhibition, think about how you will communicate the meaning and purpose of your artworks.

- How do other artists communicate meaning and purpose?
- Can art have no meaning?
- Can art have no purpose?
- What is the meaning and purpose of your art?
- Is this understood by your audience?

The way art communicates is complex, and is further complicated by the fact that your audience consists of individuals who may each take away something different when they see your art.

There may be a gap between your artistic intentions and what the audience perceives. This is not necessarily a bad thing: in some ways it is inevitable, and it may be that your art is complex and mysterious. In any case, it is not unusual for artists and their work to be sometimes misunderstood by their audience.

There is a case to be made for art that is subtle and might take time to decipher, with communication that is subtle and even subliminal, or even art that is impenetrable and open to different interpretations. At the other extreme, some artworks are obvious and predictable: their meaning is immediate and overt. In effect they “shout”.

You need to consider not just the meaning and purpose of your art but also ways it might be interpreted. However, this does not mean that you can ignore your audience!

## The journey

The idea of a theme sometimes implies a static idea, but the theme can be more like a journey, with artworks providing evidence of evolution and change, and linking to other ideas as part of that journey.

Ideas about your exhibition will probably occur to you during the art-making process throughout the course. Your exhibition will include art that you make at various times during the course, so it makes sense for you to at least think about the final collection while content is being generated.

It may be that early on in the course you have a vision of what you want to say through your art, so you have an overarching theme that all of your work relates to. Or your exhibition might depict your visual arts journey.



- ◀ *'The City is Transparent' consists of transparent acrylic sheets and was the result of numerous attempts to capture the experience of walking through a city, looking up towards the sky and being surrounded by buildings. In the exhibition text the student wrote 'I created a 3-D sculpture that took into account the original geometric elements that combine together to make up a building and convey the idea of transparency and density within an architectural landscape. The hanging sculpture allowed me to explore space. By shining a light at it, different perspectives were created and further enhanced the idea of people interacting within a city.'*



## Developing skills and considering art-making forms

The development of technical competence and skills goes hand in hand with the development of ideas and intentions. Ideas are important, of course, but they become compromised if they are badly realized or poorly depicted.

**Technical competence** is important. You may have an incredibly imaginative idea for an artwork, but unless you have the skills required to depict your idea it is unlikely to be successful. Technical competence is also one of the exhibition assessment criteria (we will look at these criteria in more detail later on).

It is difficult to separate any discussion of skill from the art-making form that the skill relates to.

### No restrictions in media/techniques

You may develop skills in a variety of art-making forms during the course, but when selecting work for your exhibition, do not worry about including a wide variety of forms, processes and techniques – as we have seen, this is a requirement in the process portfolio, but it is not required for the exhibition. This means that you can choose a medium that works for you and your work, and develop your skills to a high level.

For the exhibition, however many (or few) techniques feature in your exhibition artwork in order to effectively communicate your ideas and intentions, you need to show skill in the art-making processes used in your exhibition.

When developing skills it is important that you have some degree of freedom to experiment and make mistakes, because this is one of the best ways to learn. You will develop and acquire technical competence throughout the course. It is likely that you will become stronger and more successful in some techniques than others, and this may determine the pieces that you choose to exhibit (although it may also be true that work that is not strong in terms of technical competence is still chosen because it has other qualities, for example, a conceptual element).

The visual arts journal may well be one of the places where you work on and document your developing skills, although realistically you are likely to explore and develop skills in art-making forms outside the journal, for example, developing skills when exploring three dimensions (using clay, wood, metal and so on) or video.

**Observational skills** refer to learning and knowing how to look at something and translate or express this visually. Selecting and making decisions about what will be emphasized, minimized or distorted is also a skill.

There is almost no limit in terms of the media and processes that you can work with and present in your final show, but it may be worth briefly considering three areas: collective pieces, collaborative art and the implications of working with film.



## Collective pieces

You may have some artworks that work together as a group. You will need to decide whether the group works best as a single named artwork, or whether you want them to remain separate pieces. A **triptych** (or any sort of **polyptych** for that matter) can certainly be considered as one artwork.

The decision may be affected by how many resolved pieces you already have. For example, if you have more than 11 artworks it might make sense to combine associated artworks into a **diptych** or triptych. If you do this, it must be clearly stated as part of the title of the work in the exhibition text in brackets: Title of work (polyptych). It is important to make this clear so that you do not exceed the maximum number of pieces permitted for assessment purposes.

You should also consider how grouping works will affect the size of them when viewed by an examiner. Will the details be clear enough or will the work be compromised?

## Collaborative and group work

You might work with other students to make a “shared” artwork during the course, and you may want to include this in your exhibition. There can be great value in working collaboratively. Collaboration as a principle and as an approach to learning is valid and exists in visual arts art-making: students complete individual student-directed work through class critiques, there is a cooperative exchange of ideas and techniques, and space and equipment are shared.

However, it should be noted that students are not encouraged to submit collaborative work for assessment in this course. Work submitted for assessment must demonstrate how well an individual student has achieved against the assessment criteria. This can be unclear in collaborative projects and presents potential difficulties in assessment terms as it must be absolutely clear what you did personally.

It is important that you discuss any collaborative work with your teacher to ensure that if the work is submitted, accurate and fair assessments can be made.

## Working with film

Film is an exciting and still relatively new creative medium, and is an increasingly popular choice as part of submitted assessment materials. If you are considering making a film or animation, make sure that it succeeds in purely visual terms. Remember that the course is in visual arts so sound in any films submitted will not be assessed.

The *Visual arts guide* states:

*“Please note that any work selected for final assessment in the visual arts course must have been made or constructed by the student. For example, a piece of clothing designed as part of a student’s study of fashion or a piece of jewelry cannot be presented for assessment in realized form if the student did not create it themselves. The same principle must be applied to the use of additional elements used to create an atmosphere or a specific experience for an audience (even though any audio component will not be assessed in this visual course). If the student uses music or sound effects, for instance, they must be copyright free with appropriate citations provided or have been created by the student”.*

### Key terms

**Triptych:** a work consisting of three panels usually painted and hinged together.

**Polyptych:** a work consisting of four or more painted (or carved) panels that are normally hinged together.

**Diptych:** a work consisting of two panels, painted or carved, and hinged together.



▲ *‘The Windmill’ is a photographic ‘joiner’ inspired by the photography of David Hockey. Ana was interested in the potential of assembling and arranging many photographs that showed the same scene, and created seven or eight preparatory joiners before going to the Netherlands to take a set of photographs of her windmill. Ana writes, ‘The joiners represent the movement our eyes make when exploring a new environment. The joiner shows the windmill from different angles and positions in order to capture detail and to actually show the viewer much more than a single photograph could. Joiners also explore time.’*

## Themes, ideas and concepts

Are there particular ideas, themes, styles or techniques that interest you?

In this section you will find examples of themes that students have explored through the journal, culminating in work presented in the exhibition. The purpose in showing these is to briefly illustrate the kind of thing that students frequently create in response to particular ideas. They are not presented as examples of perfect work and of course there are many other broad themes that students explore. There is a tendency for students to work in two dimensions and these examples reflect that tendency, but of course all of these themes can be expressed in many art-making forms.

## Responses to work and exhibitions seen

Art does not exist in a vacuum and your art-making should not occur in one, but be within the context both of other artists and their artworks, and the audience. Obviously people have been making art for at least the past 20,000 years, so this is a potentially huge and possibly daunting resource – but don't ignore it! Student exhibitions often reflect the

approaches of recent artists but the artists and approaches of past centuries can also inspire new ideas and the creation of relevant and successful art.

Considering the art of others may inform your explorations of media, processes, materials and techniques: it is important that you are aware of artworks as part of a broader understanding of the purpose and nature of art in culture. In a sense, your art is a continuation of a dialogue with artists and artworks of the past. In a later section we will consider the assessment criteria in detail, but looking at art can lead to a better understanding of phrases in the criteria such as “the

considered use of imagery” and “complex imagery, signs or symbols that result in effective communication of stated artistic intentions” (referred to in criteria A and C).

So it is important that you learn about art and it is natural that your own art will be informed by what you learn. Consider how your work is affected by that of other artists. Artists often build on the work of others.



▲ The artworks shown here are **appropriations** (sometimes referred to as *homage or transcriptions*).





- ◀ *Themes, ideas and concepts: appropriation and homage. In the two artworks shown here, you can see a student starting to use art icons as part of her own artistic development, with some expressive reinterpretations of well-known paintings by Botticelli and Vermeer.*

### Key terms

**Appropriation:** when an image or an idea is taken from its original context to be recycled by an artist in order to create new meanings, or to subvert its conventional meaning.

You could consider relatively new postmodern ideas: in postmodern contexts this is sometimes characterized as an ironic approach, frequently using earlier styles and conventions or combining the work of different artistic and popular styles and media. These include installation art, conceptual art and multimedia, particularly involving film.

*“Postmodernism was born of scepticism and a suspicion of reason. It challenged the notion that there are universal objective certainties or truths that will explain everything for everybody. Postmodern art advocates that individual experience and interpretation of our experience is more concrete than abstract principles and is the best way of understanding and responding to reality. While the modernists championed clarity and simplicity; postmodernism embraces complex and often contradictory layers of meaning.”*

Source: Tate website

<http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/onlineresources/glossary/p/postmodernism>

What artworks or artists from different times and cultures have been most influential? How has your work been informed or influenced by the work of other artists?

Looking at artworks will help you with the idea of concept because through this process you will learn about art ideas, themes or concepts and “imagery, signs or symbols that result in effective communication of stated artistic intentions” (criterion C). The process will normally be documented in the journal but the outcomes (resolved artworks) may appear in your exhibition.

Build on skills acquired through exploring process to create resolved artworks. How are you choosing, combining and applying media, processes and techniques in your art-making? Discuss the application and manipulation of media and materials – what does it look like? Does it match your expectations?

Simply copying the work of another artist may be helpful in terms of learning a technique, but a more useful element may lie in assimilating and responding to the work of another artist. Relevant questions would relate to the use of media, processes, materials and techniques, and the relationship between these media and the intentions of the artist.

*Understanding why an artist made the work may be far more useful than knowing how.*

## Genres

The idea of artistic genres is in some ways a rather old-fashioned one, but these basic themes continue to feature in one way or another in the majority of student art exhibitions.



▲ These artworks contain multiple depictions of the human form, with some realistic depictions as well as more creative interpretations.

## The human form

The human form has obviously played a huge role in art in many cultures over the centuries, and forms an important part in many student exhibitions. There are limitless ways to interpret the human form in art, and if you are interested in this it could provide a great area for experiments with process, exploring a variety of responses, from straightforward observation with a focus on technical competence, to work that is more creative or conceptual in nature.



◀ Exploring the human form: in these four drawings (in felt tip pens or graphite pencil), Allison combines experiments in line and tone with detailed portrait drawings, working elements of pattern and abstraction into each image.



A great starting point can be a life-drawing class, either in school or through an external provider. It may be that the work completed during the class is strong enough to be selected as an exhibition piece, or it may be that working directly from the model leads to the development and creation of other final artworks.

In some cultures the human form, particularly the nude, is unacceptable. Please refer to the section on “Sensitive issues/provocative art” (page 117) for further discussion of this theme.





- ▲ *Working from the nude: students frequently refer to the human form in their work. Sometimes this involves working from the model. This form of observational drawing is valuable and important, and although it may not be possible to do this in some cultures, you are encouraged to work from a real human model, clothed or unclothed, wherever possible.*



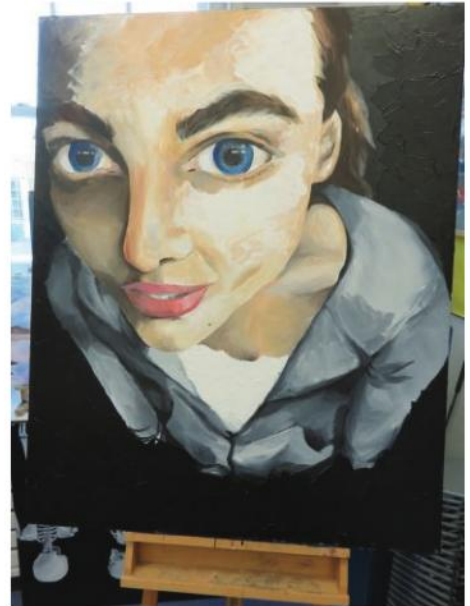


## Portraits and self-portraits

Both portraits and self-portraits can link to the theme of your identity but are also part of a long artistic tradition. The treatment can be traditional, creative, or reflective, and might include elements that are metaphorical or symbolic.











## Landscape/cityscape

Landscape is a traditional and fairly popular theme and often ties in to concepts of identity. You may want to record and document where you are now, and/or where you have been previously (or even where you would like to go). This can of course be achieved in virtually any art medium and can include film/photography (lens-based media) as well as more traditional art-making forms.

▼ *The painting 'Windsor Castle' was based on initial studies and sketches. The two cityscapes used photographs as a starting point and when working on the artwork combined some of the architectural ideas of Mies van der Rohe.*



## Still-life

Still-life has a long history in art and can be expressed in virtually any medium. It is also not just about a collection of objects because the objects themselves can have meaning and significance.







## Narrative and story-telling

Narrative art is art that tells a story, either as a moment in an ongoing story or as a sequence of events unfolding over time. Some of the earliest evidence of human art suggests that people told stories with pictures and much of western art before the twentieth century depicted stories that were based in religion, myth, history and literature. Obvious narrative is less common in modern art but it still exists. So, do you want your art to tell a story? Your story?

▼ *This painting refers to contemporary issues and reflects a student's sociopolitical concerns.*

## Sociopolitical ideas



Sociopolitical issues involve both social and political factors and can include issues such as environmental conservation and sustainability, feminism and the women's movement, identity politics, gender issues, the rights of indigenous people and the impact of global conflicts. All are influenced by both social attitudes and by political policies, all can provoke passionate debate, and all can and do inspire artists. Indeed, artists have responded to issues for centuries.

The image on this page relates to the theme of conflict. The planning and development of this painting occurred in the visual arts journal, with a series of drawings and ideas about the impact of conflict.

### Tip



It is good practice to photograph all your work as you go along and keep the photographs in digital folders. There are a number of reasons for this but one is simply as a precaution: if your artworks get lost or damaged you will still have a record that could be submitted if necessary.



You may feel that you want to make a sociopolitical statement as part of your exhibition, particularly if you feel strongly about a certain issue. There is sometimes a danger here if the impact and perceived importance of your sociopolitical message outweighs or displaces the visual qualities of the artwork exhibited, so do not forget to refer to the criteria by which your work will be assessed.

Sometimes student (or other) exhibitions contain an obvious message. For example, perhaps you are concerned about environmental issues and your artworks reflect those concerns. They may refer to pollution, global warming, sustainability, flooding or drought. This may work, but simply having a message is not enough, and the images and ideas could already be familiar, clichéd and predictable.

Also, although the issue and your intentions may be valid and admirable, keep the assessment criteria in mind. Being passionate about an issue does not mean that you will have put on a successful or even interesting exhibition.

Conceptually you should aim for some degree of sophistication, with subtlety and complexity in the use of images and symbols rather than merely restating the obvious. You may be justifiably passionate about the cause but the assessment criteria do not reward your cause or exhibitions that contain familiar or predictable imagery.

Sociopolitical ideas can also provoke strong reactions, both positive and negative, so as always it is important to discuss your ideas with your teacher and to also review the section on “Sensitive issues/provocative art” (page 117).

## Culture and identity

- ▼ Addressing important, contemporary issues can create moving and provocative art.



“Culture’ is defined as learned and shared beliefs, values, interests, attitudes, products and all patterns of behaviour created by society. This view of culture includes an organized system of symbols, ideas, explanations, beliefs and material production that humans create and manipulate in their daily lives. Culture is dynamic and organic, operating on many levels in the global context—international, national, regional and local, as well as among different social groups within a society. Culture is seen as fluid and subject to change.

Culture can be seen as providing the overall framework within which humans learn to organize their thoughts, emotions and behaviours in relation to their environment, and within this framework ‘cultural context’, which specifically appears in both the taught syllabus and assessment tasks of the visual arts course, refers to the conditions that influence and are influenced by culture. These include historical, geographical, political, social and technological factors.”

Diploma Programme Visual arts guide, page 9



As you are following an international education programme, ideas and images related to your own culture can play an important part in expressing the sense of identity that many international and IB students have.

These ideas and images often form part of the art-making process and some appear in the final exhibition.

Again, the visual arts journal is frequently the starting point of this journey. Cultural references in your art may be inadvertent and even unintentional, and may appear because of who you are rather than because you planned this.

When planning and creating artworks relating to culture it is sometimes hard to strike a balance between the recognizable and more creative interpretations: exhibitions regularly include a number of “cultural” artworks that are obvious and predictable and do not receive high marks.

## **Sensitive issues/provocative art**

Art has power. Art can shock, make people think, make people ask questions. But this power must not be used carelessly or thoughtlessly.

There is no single rule for what constitutes sensitive issues or provocative art: these issues tend to be culturally dependent. A person’s values and beliefs will affect what they consider to be acceptable and what they see to be shocking. For example, in some countries and cultures there is an open and positive attitude to depictions of the nude, with schools supporting exhibitions of student art that include images of the human form, both clothed and unclothed. This approach is not universal, however, so if you are interested in this as a subject matter you should discuss it with your teacher. They will be able to advise you on how to engage with some topics in a sensitive manner.

More generally, artists often tackle difficult or controversial issues and sometimes the result is provocative. During the visual arts course you may encounter examples of art that (to some extent) surprise or shock you. In some ways it’s easy to make art that shocks. However, this should not be your aim.

It may be that, as part of your creative journey, you wish to explore ideas that deal with sensitive topics and the results may challenge those who see your art. If you create provocative artworks as part of a valid exploration of ideas that interest you, it may be that these form part of your exhibition but only with the approval of your teacher and school administration. An important aspect of art-making is being sensitive to your audience and the culture in which you live and operate.

In this context it may also be worth noting that the “exhibition”, as far as the visual arts assessment task is concerned, does not have to be open to the public or available to the school population in general. It should be created for an audience, and the exhibition photographs that will be uploaded to the IB should show all the submitted artworks, but it is perfectly acceptable to remove potentially “difficult” artworks when your exhibition is shown. This scaled-down version of your exhibition can still be a celebration of your artistic journey.

Your teacher will advise you on specific questions, but at all times you must be aware of the relevant ethical codes of the IB and be sensitive to your audience.

## Academic honesty and the artworks you present

There are some key principles to bear in mind with regards to academic honesty.

- Any image taken from the internet and used as inspiration when creating your artwork must be appropriately referenced in the exhibition text.
- For each artwork that refers to another artwork you must include in the exhibition text clear reference to your source of inspiration, acknowledging its title, artist, date, medium (where this information is known) and providing details or bibliographic reference to where the artwork was viewed.
- Where you are deliberately appropriating another artist's work, the exhibition text should acknowledge the original work and make explicit reference to the appropriation. The appropriation process and relevant references can also be included in the curatorial rationale.
- In the curatorial rationale all sources need to be referenced at point of use.

All your work must be authenticated by your teacher. You must confirm that the work you submit is your work and is the final version of that work. All your exhibition artworks must have been made or constructed by you.

This may seem obvious, but some students have previously submitted things that they designed but did not actually make. These things included dresses that had been designed by the student but made by someone else. This is not allowed. However, in this case you would still be able to submit the design as an artwork, but the piece itself cannot be included since you did not make it.







Similarly with new technology, for example 3-D printing, it is vital that the intentions and process are clearly explained in the available text options. Remember that the examiner will not have access to the pages of your journal or the screens showing the development of your ideas in the process portfolio.

Many artists include “found objects” in their art. This is considered as having been “constructed” by the student and is acceptable but must be acknowledged and explained in the relevant exhibition text.

If your artworks reflect the influence of other artists and artworks, or if the ideas or images of anyone else have influenced your work, the source must be included as a bibliography reference within the exhibition text, following the protocol of your school.

There is sometimes a fine line between being informed and influenced, and copying, and sometimes influences are subliminal rather than obvious, but if you are unsure about whether your art and ideas have been influenced then you should discuss this with your teacher. If in doubt, it is always safest to acknowledge an influence.

- ▼ *The illustration below on the left shows a collage of views of a dress designed and made by the student, Nicole. There are no academic honesty issues here because of the authenticity of the process of her planning and creating the dress. Similarly the dress in the exhibition view was also made by the student.*



## TOK

The DP visual arts course judges your work against published assessment criteria. However, other examining boards use different criteria and there is a lot of debate about how we judge art. For example, is the idea behind the art as important as the techniques used to express the idea?

The most central question in this context is, “What are the standards by which we judge artworks?”

Of particular relevance in the context of your process portfolio and the exhibition is the relationship between process and product. So another consideration related to TOK is the importance of process versus product in the search for knowledge.

## The impact of your school, your culture, and your teacher

The visual arts course tends to be structured around the location and context of the school, the cultural background and identities of the students, and the experience and strengths of the art teacher, so the course is designed and implemented in different ways in each school. No interpretation of the course in one school is exactly the same as any other interpretation, and there are large variations in what has been taught and what has been made. No one interpretation is the “right” one; there are many different routes to success in visual arts.

Your teacher will probably have approached the teaching of the course in a holistic way, interpreting the syllabus creatively according to local circumstances and the context of your school. As an international course teachers choose to explore art and artists from various cultural contexts at their discretion. You will have investigated the core syllabus areas through exploration of theoretical, art-making and curatorial practice. However, wherever the school and however the course has been implemented, all students will be assessed in the same way. Therefore it is also useful to consider the exhibition in terms of what will be assessed.

Within the context of your art class, your teacher’s directions and your own art-making, it is important to remember that your exhibition will express *your* ideas. You will be learning and developing ideas, concepts, techniques and processes. Other students working in class alongside you will also be learning the same or similar ideas, concepts, techniques and processes. It would be impractical for it to be other than this, at least at the start of the course. Teachers need to teach students so that students can make art more effectively.

This means that you may make some artworks that are similar to those made by your peers, particularly if this is part of a class assignment. For example, if everyone is asked to make a collage or an animation according to a specific theme.

However, if it is a more open-ended assignment and you are given a degree of freedom in what you make and how you make it, the results are likely to be far more individual. In this case students could be creating artworks that are more different from each other.

This course is studied all over the world and it is natural for you to respond to the conditions and culture that are familiar to you. Likewise you may be inspired by ideas and issues raised in other subjects that you are studying. This can be a vital and creative avenue to explore.

Either way, as you go through the process of exploring techniques and ideas you should keep in mind the exhibition that you will be putting on at the end of the course. You might decide to include some of the results of class assignments as well as some of the artwork that you made outside of class assignments. You should make sure that you give yourself enough time to review the art that you have made and select art that is suitable for display, as well as planning and creating other art.



## Assessment criteria for the exhibition

It's important to remember that your teacher will be evaluating your exhibition as a whole, referring to all the evidence available, including the curatorial rationale, the submitted artworks, exhibition text and exhibition photographs.

It is important that you are familiar with the exhibition assessment criteria, but it is not necessary for you to constantly refer to them. In the same way that assessment of the exhibition is holistic, so is the course itself.

Part 3: Exhibition		SL marks	SL total	HL marks	HL total
A	Coherent body of works	9	30	9	30
B	Technical competence	9		9	
C	Conceptual qualities	9		9	
D	Curatorial practice	3		3	

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You will need to study the criteria when the time comes to select your exhibition artworks. This final selection will occur towards the end of the course, but you should keep it in mind throughout the course: you may adjust artworks and ideas as your journey progresses or you may decide to create a piece that is a specific expression of your exhibition idea.

There are four assessment criteria for the exhibition. Three relate specifically to the work itself (criterion A: coherent body of works; criterion B: technical competence; and criterion C: conceptual qualities). Criterion D: curatorial practice relates to the curatorial rationale.

### Criterion A: coherent body of works

Criterion A asks the question: "To what extent does the submitted work communicate a coherent collection of works which fulfil stated artistic intentions and communicate clear thematic or stylistic relationships across individual pieces?"

▼ *Coherence is not about repetition or even similarities between artworks. Coherence can be about thematic or stylistic links between artworks. In this sense, artworks might be said to 'talk' to each other.*

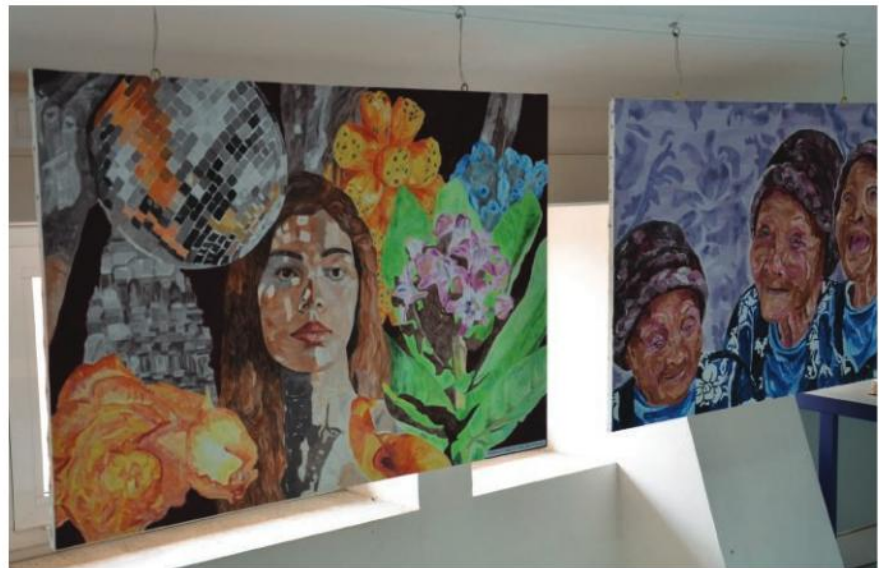




In general terms, when something has coherence, all of its parts fit together well. It could also appear to be a well-organized, easy to understand and logical arrangement (of artworks).

Coherence does not mean repetition or similarity. Nor does it mean that you must have a theme. A single theme or style could in fact be restrictive and a hindrance. This criterion does not mention “theme”, and having a theme does not mean that that your exhibition will be successful in terms of visual arts assessment. Coherence is not formulaic and examiners do not want to see a series of works that all look the same!

- *The first photograph shows a view of Ella's final exhibition. In her rationale, Ella starts to explain the thematic relationships occurring in her collection: artwork to do with the human body, the familiar and the unfamiliar, and the use of different media and contexts. Ella's curatorial rationale states 'I think that as an artist the human body presents an artistic challenge; to capture and explore something we all hold familiar. During the process I have aimed to investigate the human form through different mediums and contexts; namely the sexualized and objectified presentation of the body in the media versus the grotesque, tactile and intimate experience of the body as a surface... The other portion of my exhibition is about the relationship between family and skin. The Skin I focused on was the un-photoshopped skin that is rarely exposed. My textile piece "Friends and Family" involves first hand photographs of my friends' and family's skin that is seldom visible, for example bruises, stretch marks and scars. The raw colour palette and detailed images may evoke the response of disgust, but the involvement in the idea of "family" aims to counterbalance this repulsion. My Paintings "Skinny" and "Fat" are an attempt to trigger the response of disgust and fascination in the viewer.'*





## Themes and styles

The first part of the top level of criterion A states: “The work forms a coherent body of work through effective communication of thematic or stylistic relationships across individual pieces”.

Coherence in the exhibition is not achieved through visual conformity, or a collection that is just visually similar and/or repetitive. There can be diversity within coherence: there should be evidence of relationships between artworks rather than simply similar artworks.

The relationships could be dynamic and surprising, and could involve ideas about styles of art-making, or there could be thematic relationships but a theme is not required or necessary.

### Theme

It is true that a theme can provide some cohesion and/or consistency to your exhibition. But as has been said earlier in the book, there is no compulsion in the visual arts course for your body of work to be linked together by one common idea or theme. An idea often needs to develop in much the same way that an artwork needs to develop.

Just “having a theme” is not necessarily a good idea. Sometimes exhibitions are restricted because of the theme: some thematic exhibitions reflect a narrow, rather than exploratory, approach. For example, exhibitions that are centred around one key idea sometimes contain repetitive visual responses and do not show enough creativity in terms of concepts and exploration.

So you do not need a theme. If you do have one, be open to ideas and interpretations, and focus on how well you explore creative processes and conceptual threads, so that your exhibition will not be repetitive and “hindered” by the theme.

### Relationships

Also consider the idea of relationships between artworks. “Relationships” covers a number of ideas but one effective relationship is stylistic: there may be no traditional “theme” but there can be a strong sense of identity because the works reflect the ideas, the vision and the hand of the artist. The coherence in the exhibition comes from the student’s conceptual approach, decisions relating to media and/or techniques, or size and scale.

Focus on creating thematic or stylistic relationships across the artworks, not simply a set of similar pieces. The collection of works should involve relationships across and between the pieces.

### What are thematic relationships?

The artworks in an exhibition might be diverse and explore different styles, techniques and media, but present a series of themes that tie the collection together: the coherence in this body of work is a result of the thematic relationships.

There are many possible interpretations of thematic relationships. One thematic link that frequently appears in student exhibitions comes from the student’s sense of identity.

### Tip



Ask yourself these questions when considering the coherence of your exhibition.

- How do artists incorporate themes and styles in their work?
- How do the styles of different artists compare?
- How do artists interpret themes, for example, conflict or love, in different times and cultures?
- What are the identifiable themes or styles in the work I am creating and have created?
- How are my ideas evolving?



▲ This image shows a student’s final exhibition. Can you identify themes, or links and relationships between the different pieces?

### **What are stylistic relationships?**

You could present 11 very different artworks that express a number of different ideas, but are stylistically linked through your approach. This constitutes a potentially successful exhibition because of the creative stylistic relationships between the pieces. Similarly, relationships could show formal coherence, such as considered use of a limited colour palette or line used throughout the work.

Style is a distinctive or recognizable approach to art-making. You may already have a recognizable style, and it may be that others can identify work that is yours because they “know” your style. It could be the way you draw, paint or take photographs, or your use of space/balance in any composition, or the way you use colour – in fact your approach to any artistic process. It is like handwriting or your signature. Style results from your approach and the artistic decisions you make.

It is important to acknowledge that styles can evolve as you learn more about the processes you are using. For example, your “early” style may be different to the way you work at the end of the course.

You will have encountered thematic and stylistic relationships in art when you visited art galleries and exhibitions. Frequently it is the artist’s approach or style that makes the artworks recognizable. Picasso explored a number of different styles but his work is very recognizable.

Other artists have similarly recognizable styles. It might be a useful exercise to identify and discuss examples of thematic and stylistic relationships across individual pieces when visiting art exhibitions.

### **Exploring media, processes, materials and techniques**

The second part of the top level of criterion A continues: “Stated intentions are consistently and effectively fulfilled through the selection and application of media, processes and techniques and the considered use of imagery.”

#### **Stated intentions**

What you say in your curatorial rationale – your “stated intentions” – affects how an audience views your work. What are your stated intentions? Why have you selected and applied certain techniques, media and imagery?

Your written rationale should support and explain your selection of works and their relationship to each other or to the collection as a whole. Do not try to invent ideas here: the examiner has visual evidence in front of them and will be able to see whether your intentions really have informed your selection of processes/imagery.

#### **Selection and application of media, processes and techniques and the considered use of imagery**

Although not directly referred to in the assessment criteria, it is difficult to deny that the size and scale of art on display often has an impact on the viewer. Consideration of this impact could affect the way you select and apply media, processes and techniques. (Of course, in some cases it may not be practical or relevant for you to consider working in a large scale.)





This phrase also implies some overlaps with criterion B insofar as “application of media” occurs in both criteria: you need to provide evidence of coherence and competence when considering how you apply media.

The “considered use of imagery” implies an approach of thoughtfulness and ideally a degree of sophistication within that approach. There needs to be a level of sophistication in the choice and use of imagery and in the way that ideas are conveyed to achieve in the highest level.

## Criterion B: technical competence

Criterion B asks the question: “To what extent does the submitted work demonstrate effective application and manipulation of media and materials and effective application and manipulation of the formal qualities?”

### Addressing technical competence and formal qualities

#### Technical competence

The top level descriptor for this criterion states: “The work demonstrates effective application and manipulation of media and materials to reach an assured level of technical competence in the chosen forms and the effective application and manipulation of the formal qualities.”

Technical competence is often acquired through sustained practice. There is no need for you to include work in a lot of different media for your exhibition. In fact, this may hinder your success if your skill levels are diluted because you have worked in so many art forms. The exhibition is your chance to develop and refine skills in one medium.

If your work shows evidence of skill, this can enhance other elements, for example, the conceptual basis. Conversely, artwork that shows lack of competence may weaken the overall impact of a piece of art.

The degree of refinement and resolution is an important part of technical competence. The top level descriptor for this criterion requires an “assured level of technical competence” which is likely to include evidence of sensitivity, sophistication, control, and an excellent understanding and use of media/materials.

As already mentioned, there is no reference to the size of artworks in the assessment criteria, but working in a large scale can sometimes indicate confidence and the assured level of competence referred to above. This is not to say that working on a large scale inevitably leads to successful work. The opposite can be true. But taking on the challenge of working on a large scale, or of working intensively in any creative and demanding art form, shows evidence of your commitment and can lead to very impressive artwork. A large and successful artwork could well become the “stand-out” piece in your exhibition!

#### Tip



Ask yourself these questions when considering the technical competence of your exhibition.

- How do artworks show technical competence?
- What are the signs within an artist’s artworks that might tell you that an artist has skill?
- How do different kinds of technical competence in the context of different art-making processes and forms compare?
- Is technical competence identifiable in all art forms?
- Can some art forms or artworks be successful even if there is no obvious evidence of technical competence?
- Where is the evidence of technical competence in the work you are creating and have created?
- How are your skills evolving?
- What are formal qualities and how do you apply and manipulate formal qualities in your own art-making?



▲ Students working in acrylic on canvas. Note the scale of these and other pieces. None of the assessment criteria refer to the size of artworks in the exhibition, working on a large scale can present specific creative and compositional challenges, and can also lead to work that has impact in the context of the exhibition.



▲ Examples of views of exhibitions and artwork.







Technical competence refers to evidence of skill in the media and materials you choose to work with. In some cases technical competence – or lack of it – is the easiest thing to recognize when looking at art. For example, if you want to include a realistic (rather than, say, expressive) depiction of a person using paint or pencil, then mistakes may be easy to identify.

It is vital that you make appropriate choices of medium in relation to technical skills. For example, if you find it difficult to convey ideas effectively in a chosen medium as you develop skills in the visual arts journal, perhaps it is not the right medium for your final pieces. Perhaps collage would be more effective than paint, for example. Your teacher should guide you in this respect. Ongoing group critiques and self-reflection should also take place as part of this process.

Of course, there are other ways to assess competence, but in general terms it refers to your experience with, understanding of, and ability with the media and processes you use when making art: the learning that will have occurred when you were exploring the techniques that were probably documented in your visual arts journal.

### Formal qualities

See the section of this book dedicated to the formal elements of art.

To achieve a high level for this criterion, you need to provide evidence that you understand formal qualities.

Formal qualities are intrinsic to any discussion of art. Your understanding of these is assessed in the comparative study and they are part of the “technical competence” criterion of the exhibition. The IB does not specify exactly what is meant by “formal qualities” and there are a number of different interpretations, including the idea that the formal elements include pattern, colour, texture, tone, form, shape and line. They are often used together and their arrangement determines the artwork.

### Criterion C: conceptual qualities

Criterion C asks: “To what extent does the submitted work demonstrate effective resolution of imagery, signs and symbols to realize the function, meaning and purpose of the artworks, as appropriate to stated intentions?”



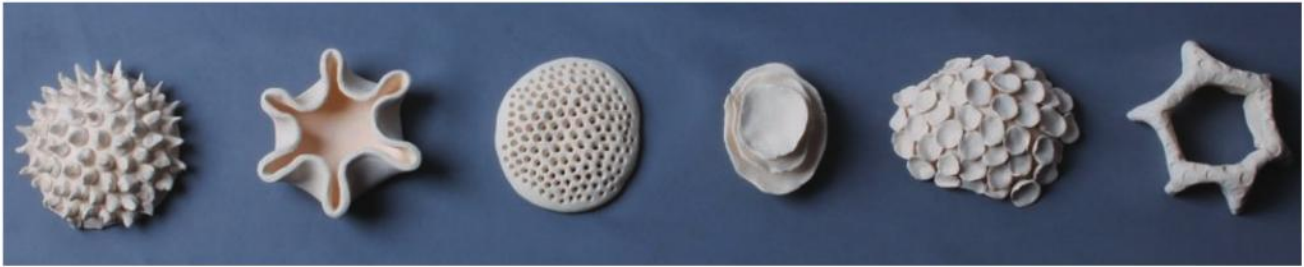
#### Tip



When considering how well your work addresses this criterion, ask yourself the following questions.

- How do artists incorporate and/or depict concepts in their work?
- How do artists effectively communicate their intentions?
- What artworks demonstrate the subtle use of “complex imagery, signs and symbols”?
- What does “effective realization” mean?
- Can you find artworks that demonstrate the visual elaboration of ideas, themes or concepts “to a point of effective realization”?
- What are the contributing elements in an artwork that result in the effective communication of ideas?
- How effectively are your ideas being communicated through your artworks?





▲ Conceptual qualities refer to the way students creatively consider and use imagery, signs and symbols to achieve their intentions. Conceptual ideas can often be seen in groups of artworks, for example the series of works by Tess that explore natural forms that might be found in the ocean and on the coast or shoreline. These artworks have titles which further explain the theme:

'Ocean's Sphere'

'Looking into the rock pool'

'Coastal Collection', (Porcelain clay)

'Nestled'

The central image at the top of the page is a view of the final exhibition.



“Conceptual qualities” relate to the sophistication of your thoughts and ideas, and include the important concept of “elaboration”. To achieve well in this criterion, ideas and concepts should be explored in depth and well developed. Like criterion A, this criterion links to your intentions and how you communicate these intentions. Look carefully at your intentions as stated in your curatorial rationale and the quality of this communication.

There is also consistent reference to “imagery, signs or symbols” in this criterion. This relates to your knowledge, understanding and use of motifs and symbolism, which might mean symbolic use of, for example, colour, choice of imagery or symbolism specific to a particular culture, or considered use of a particular format.

### Conceptual qualities, subtlety and complexity

“Conceptual qualities” does not mean conceptual art.

*“Conceptual art is art for which the idea (or concept) behind the work is more important than the finished art object. It emerged as an art movement in the 1960s and the term usually refers to art made from the mid-1960s to the mid-1970s”.*

Source: Tate website

<http://www.tate.org.uk/learn/online-resources/glossary/c/conceptual-art>

Rather, “conceptual qualities” in this context refer to the ideas and concepts that underpin your exhibition, and, in particular, to the degree of sophistication of these ideas/concepts. This can also involve confidence and complexity of thought, together with refinement and subtlety. To achieve well in this criterion, ideas and concepts should be explored in depth and well developed.

There is also reference to “imagery, signs or symbols” in this criterion. This might include symbolic use of colour, the choice of imagery or symbolism specific to a particular culture, or considered use of a particular format.

To achieve the highest level in conceptual qualities the imagery should show evidence of a thoughtful and considered approach, with evidence of subtle and/or complex ideas and imagery.

Avoiding obvious and familiar art ideas can be a successful approach, although this is complicated by the sense of irony implicit in some recent or contemporary art, when obvious and familiar ideas may be taken and repackaged to become a postmodern comment on, for example, modernist ideas and forms.

Like criterion A, this criterion links to your intentions and how you communicate these intentions, so the curatorial rationale would be the place to explain your conceptual ideas as an important part of your intentions.

Work that reflects weak conceptual qualities may well appear to be simplistic and predictable, containing imagery that is predictable, with obvious, contrived or superficial work: lacking in conceptual qualities.

To ensure that your art is not dull or predictable, you could start by considering artwork that you find obvious, and identifying exactly what the elements are that make them appear so. Dull work may well reflect a lack of conceptual depth.



Of course, a visually exciting image can still be vacuous or contain little beyond the purely visual impact, but in our visual arts context, to be successful there is frequently a balance between technical competence and the concept underlying the piece.

When reviewing your own work, it could be a good idea to discuss conceptual ideas and qualities with your friends.

There is a subjective element in all of this. What you find dull some others may find exciting and vice versa, but the idea behind this part of criterion C is that some parts of your art should strive to go beyond the ordinary.

For example, some students employ the same art forms and ideas repeatedly; these familiar images frequently include poorly copied paintings based on the Pop Art creations of artists such as Andy Warhol and Roy Lichtenstein.

There may be insightful and valid reasons for your exhibition to have some element of Pop Art in it, but often this kind of work appears contrived. “Contrived” in this context can mean superficial, artificial or fake. Similarly, students occasionally include work featuring Barbie dolls, usually as a statement about body image and the pressure to conform.

Pop Art and Barbies can be among the more obvious, clichéd and predictable art/ideas that students present. Invariably the artwork is neither subtle nor complex. This does not mean that exploring these ideas will *always* lead to dull and predictable art, but we are so familiar with them that to be successful the exploration must lead to new, unusual and more convincing art than the kind that is sometimes seen.



▲ Davide, a student in a school in Rome, has used the “tondo” form [a Renaissance term for a circular work of art] in his painting of three portraits. This form has conceptual, artistic and historical relevance to his location.





## Conceptual qualities and visual literacy

**Visual literacy** is the ability to understand, interpret and make meaning from information presented in the form of an image. It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words, but learning to read and understand the picture is not always that simple. The artworks that you have studied and made during the course will have increased your visual literacy, and this in turn can give you a more sophisticated understanding of conceptual qualities.

Your visual literacy also links to your understanding of the “imagery, signs and symbols” referred to in the criterion. Of course, art incorporates a huge range of images and symbols and during the course you will already have looked at the work of artists and considered their use of imagery, signs, and symbols to convey narrative, ideas, values and beliefs.

### Key terms

**Visual literacy:** the ability to understand, interpret and make meaning from information presented in the form of an image.



- ▲ *Conceptual qualities may not be immediately obvious. Understanding of these three artworks can be enhanced by the exhibition text accompanying the image.*
1. The first is in oil on canvas and is explained by the student: ‘My original intention was to augment the colours of a stone. By layering colours and experimenting with techniques I was able to add depth to the painting.’
  2. The second artwork is an architectural model and refers to the architect Frank Lloyd Wright: ‘When considering how the leaf structure would fit into an environment, I decided to create a 2nd model, through which I explored the link between exterior and interior, as seen in modernism. I showed this by including a tree branch, which emerged from the inside of the structure and placing mirrors in the base. These mirrors are around and inside the structure, an idea inspired by Frank Lloyd Wright’s Waterfall.’
  3. The third piece, a dry point print, related to a previous journey – ‘When I visited the Ring of Brodgar in Orkney, the uncertainty and mystery of their origin and purpose intrigued me. This print visualizes a joining of the physical and metaphysical worlds, inspired by how I imagined the stones may once have been viewed. My intention in this piece was to capture a more fantastical aspect of the stones.’



- ▲ The first photograph ('Squashed Face') is inspired by Michael Wolf's 'Tokyo Compression', and was taken with Wolf's images in mind, exploring texture, cropping and contrast. Next to it, the totem pole relates to the student's origins in British Columbia (Canada) and explores relevant symbols. Beneath both is 'A Breakdown of a Building'. This is a fairly large (151 cm × 50 cm) piece consisting of marbled paper, acrylic paint, textured paper, tissue paper and acrylic sheets on canvas, and refers to the geometric outlines of buildings. The student said 'I wanted to explore textures of the buildings compared to the realistic aspects'.



## Criterion D: curatorial practice

We will be reviewing the expectations of this assessment criterion in detail later in this section, but as a starting point you might want to consider these questions.

- What is a curator?
- How will you explain the ways in which your works are connected?
- How will you explain that your exhibition is a coherent body of works?
- Will you have a “single medium display” (one technique/process) or integrated media?
- Will you have a “chronological survey” approach or a thematic approach?

## Selecting the artworks for your exhibition

### When do I choose my final artworks?

The IB does not give a deadline for when you should choose what will go into your exhibition and what will be submitted as part of the process portfolio. It may be a very fluid process and it is possible that resolved work does not start to appear until the second year of the course.

In some schools, students use the first year purely as a time of exploration and experimentation, becoming familiar with different techniques, different ways to interpret an idea, different approaches and so on. In this case you may not make anything during the first year which looks to you like a resolved piece. This is not necessarily a problem, but there should at least be some ideas and experiments that have potential as starting points.

On the other hand, some pieces completed before the end of the first year might look complete, fit well with your plan and have the potential to be exhibited in the final show.

The selected pieces should show evidence of your technical accomplishment and your understanding of the use of materials, ideas and practices to realize intentions. You will also show the decision-making process, which underpins the selection of the connected and cohesive body of work for an audience, in the form of a curatorial rationale.

#### Tip



If you have enough ideas or starting points you could discuss with your teacher having a mini-exhibition at the end of the first year. You may only have a few pieces (four or five) but still this would give you a chance to identify and resolve any problems.

Ideally you would have this show in the same location as your final exhibition, and an audience would visit your show. You could also write a curatorial rationale and exhibition texts so that you experience the things that you will do for real later.

If possible talk to members of this audience to get feedback on their reactions. This could inform decisions that you make when preparing for and assembling your final exhibition.





## Mid-course review

Depending on what you have done during the first year, at the end of the first year or the start of the second you could make a preliminary review of the content of your digital folders or of all the work created so far.

Some form of review will enable you to identify any artworks that have the potential to become exhibition pieces. It could be an informal discussion to ask questions of your teacher and/or peers and receive feedback, or it could be more formalized, with some form of documentation relating to your intentions and identifying any new directions.

Either way, you should ask your teacher to be part of this process so that their professional judgment can inform any discussions. Even if you do not have anything to assemble and review, you should still reflect on the requirements of the exhibition. For example, you could make some notes on ideas for the general coherence, competence and concept of your exhibition.

## Review, plan and curate virtual exhibitions

It can be a good idea, as a form of preparation, to plan/curate an imaginary exhibition, identifying an appropriate exhibition context and choosing artworks from a selected movement or culture. Explore the idea of exhibiting in the present and the past, and in different cultures. Write the rationale for this.

Also involve your peers. Make and critique individual and group presentations, have discussions about work for exhibition, identify pieces that will interest your audience. Identify the elements that provoke or attract, such as technical competence or stimulating subject matter.

## Final selection

Keep the following points in mind when making your final selection.

You may submit work for the exhibition that has been shown and discussed in the process portfolio, providing you make it clear in the process portfolio that the image is the final resolved work as included in the exhibition, for example, by declaring in the process portfolio that this is the case: "This is the final version of the work that is included in my exhibition" (see pages 90–91, "Assembling your process portfolio").

Consider the audience and the likely impact your art will have. How will your work affect different audiences? This aspect could reflect your ideas and intentions as they evolved throughout the course as well as the content of your curatorial rationale.

Evaluate the strengths and weaknesses, and identify any improvements that might be made, and how much time you have to make those improvements.

You may have more artworks than the maximum allowed (7 at SL; 11 at HL). If so, you will need to select the best. Discuss your choices with your teacher.



## The exhibition

### Using your visual arts journal to plan the show

The curatorial rationale is the main opportunity for you to explain your intentions, although you can also use the exhibition texts for this.

The curatorial practice is a required and assessed part of the exhibition component, and your curatorial rationale informs your teacher and the examiner when they are considering the coherence and conceptual ideas underpinning your exhibition.

You could use your visual arts journal to record your intentions for your artworks, reflect on the process of resolving them and plan your exhibition, for example, designing floor plans to show where you will display certain artworks and how the audience might walk through the show.

These ideas could also be the basis for material submitted for the curatorial rationale.

### Writing about your exhibition

Towards the end of the course you will be writing a curatorial rationale in which you will explain the selection and presentation of work in your exhibition. However, you should not wait until the end of the course before you write about your art!

#### Tip



Criterion D assesses your curatorial practice. It asks the questions: “To what extent does the curatorial rationale justify the selection, arrangement and exhibition of a group of artworks within a designated space?”

It is worth looking at the official definition of the command term “justify”: “give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion”.



## Intentions

Your artistic intentions are of critical importance: a large part of the success of your exhibition hangs on the relationship between the art and what your intentions are. The intentions will be read by all those who view your work, including the audience who encounter it in your school or external gallery space, as well as the examiners who view it on screen.

## The audience

Artists make art to be seen, so it is vital that you also step into the shoes of the viewer, and see the exhibition from the point of view of the audience as well as from your point of view as the artist.

As audiences will react differently to different kinds of exhibition, you should visit different kinds of art and reflect on these encounters. For example, consider works in different display contexts: state art museums and galleries, private galleries and online galleries.

Work out what constitutes a successful exhibition, and what does a weak exhibition look like?

What are the reasons for success or failure? Of course in our context the DP visual arts assessment criteria play a vital part but your own ideas should be informed by reflections on audiences and their responses to art seen. These reflections should appear in your journal and be referred to when you start to write your own curatorial rationale.

Although the curatorial practice criterion only achieves a maximum of 3 marks out of 30, what you say will contribute to your assessment against other assessment criteria, particularly criteria A and C, so it's worth taking this component seriously and, for example, writing and rewriting a number of drafts until you are satisfied with the final version.

## What is the difference between SL and HL?

Criterion D is different for HL in that it has an additional requirement. As well as explaining "the selection, presentation and arrangement of a group of artworks within a designated space", there is also a requirement for the curatorial rationale to show "reflection on how the exhibition conveys an understanding of the relationship between the artworks and the viewer". The reflection element and consideration of the viewer is not required in the SL criterion.

You should "justify" the selection by explaining your reasons for choosing the artworks (this will relate to your intentions) and then analyse and explain how the artworks are arranged and presented. Even if they are just displayed in a row you should still explain the reasoning: Is it chronological? Or ordered by theme? Or are you arranging in accordance to art form or size?

Refer to your audience (the viewer) and to the artworks themselves when articulating the relationship between them. For example, is there a large or "stand-out" piece that you think will make the most impact on the viewer? Is there a film that will engage the viewer for a certain period of time? Are there small and detailed pieces that require close study or a sculptural piece that the viewer should walk around? What are the ideas that you want the viewer to take from your artworks?

### Tip



When thinking about arranging your exhibition, consider the following questions.

- How will you arrange, display and present resolved works for your exhibition?
- What compromises will you have to make between your ideal art show and what is realistic in the space available?
- How have the exhibitions that you have seen influenced your ideas? What have you learned about exhibiting artwork?
- Are there artworks that present particular challenges in terms of presenting them to an audience? For example, will you need to set up a monitor to show a video or a plinth to show sculptural pieces?





The statement has a word limit. For SL students it is 400 words; for HL students, it is 700 words. If you exceed this limit, parts of your statement will not be considered for assessment.

The rationale should be informative and not just descriptive. For example, explain and justify your selection through reference to research and learning. Offer justifications (explanations) for the things you say. Support your statement with explanation.

It can be helpful to follow a basic structure:

- overall premise
- the range of artistic approaches you have used (this might also include movements or artists who were especially influential to your work)
- explain decisions about selection, arrangement and display.

If there is a particular work that was instrumental in the way you perceived your exhibition, you could describe it in more depth to draw the audience into your thought process. Remember that you have an opportunity to write an exhibition text – a short statement to accompany each artwork.

Your statement should be written in an informative and persuasive tone, but because you are writing about your own work, personal pronouns (I, my and so on) are appropriate. Be realistic, frank and honest about your work. Statements that do not reflect the work that is presented cannot score highly against assessment criterion D.

### Writing exhibition text

Each artwork you submit should be supported by exhibition text that outlines the title, medium and size of the artwork. There is a 500-character maximum (including spaces) per artwork.

The text should be concise and useful to the examiner. It is not just an opportunity to use flowery language about your artwork. It should include a brief outline of the original intentions of the work and explain any appropriation or sources which have influenced the piece. It should also state if the work was collaborative, part of a series, or included found objects.

When completed, these texts can be printed out and included in your exhibition to help your audience appreciate your work more fully.

Here are six examples of exhibition text, written by different students and referring to work in a variety of forms (ceramics, video, photography, paint and scraperboard). All are within 500 characters.

**Distorted Nightmares: 3 ceramic faces, Clay (fired and glazed).** Sizes: 20 × 15 × 8 cm, 18 × 12 × 8 cm, and 22 × 16 × 9 cm  
 These three masks were inspired by the portraits by Francis Bacon. I wanted to capture the flowing movement created in his paintings through clay as well as the disturbing nature of distortion and use of colour. Through these three masks I have experimented with different levels of distortion and colour schemes to create this disturbing effect. Additionally, I further embraced his style by creating 3 similar yet different faces in homage to his famous triptychs.

**Forever Young, video, 2 minutes**

A series of images of my grandfather, spliced with images of my parents and their children (me and my sisters). This ties in with the CHANGE focus in artworks 3, 4 and 5. I took all photos and video. The speed of the video is deliberately slowed and speeded up. It's mostly black-and-white but colours and some distortion and grain are added to emphasize focus at specific points. There is no soundtrack.

**3 Nepalese Foothills, 59.4 × 84.1 cm. (30 5 cm × 6 cm photographs) Digital Photography.**

This photographic joiner has photographs organized in a grid and has an obvious thematic and stylistic relationship with artwork 1. This also depicts multiple views of a single scene taken when I visited Nepal as part of a CAS trip. Again, this style and technique are inspired by the work of David Hockney and his joiners. With this work I designed restructured multiple views of a flowing scene of countryside and village into thirty 6 × 5 cm photographs.

**Maze, Acrylic on Canvas, 80 × 120 cm**

Inspired by the symmetry of the columns at the University of Glasgow, I'm looking at geometrical symmetry and shadow effects. A young girl leads a shadowy figure through a maze of columns. The only trace of the girl is a slight figure in the back of the painting and a red handkerchief in the foreground. The shadows falling from the columns add another dimension of mystery to the scene.

**A Night in Zurich, Acrylic on Canvas, 60 × 100 cm**

Based on a photograph that I took on vacation, this painting depicts the Limmat River in the centre of Zurich. I experimented with paint texture in this painting, having a differing technique for the skyline, water reflections and sky. The water reflections are fluid, similar to an Impressionist painting, while the skyline has a crackled black paint. The night scene gives the city a tranquil and serene appearance, capturing the moment in between day and night.

**A Universal Fear, Scraperboard, 35 × 28 cm**

Inspired by "An Experiment on a Bird in the Air Pump" by Joseph Wright of Derby seen in London's National Gallery, I incorporated the central figure of the scientist, but added a gas mask to hide his face, echoing the theme of the fear of modern science, which Wright used in the original work. The 'toxic' symbol and the pollution inside the glass tank fit with current fears of science.

<http://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/paintings/joseph-wright-of-derby-an-experiment-on-a-bird-in-the-air-pump>

### Tip



The exhibition is the physical culmination of two years' hard work. Celebrate it. You could have a reception to celebrate your achievement!



## Practical considerations

It is important to remember that your exhibition space (the space where the exhibition is presented) will not influence the assessment of your work. You will not be put at a disadvantage in any way because of the space available for you to exhibit in.

Schools are diverse with a range of geographic and socio-economic circumstances, and physical resources.

Some schools have semi-professional gallery spaces on campus; other schools will use school halls, gymnasiums or classrooms/art rooms to display student work. Some schools do not have enough space for a full simultaneous exhibition of all students.

If lack of space at your school is a problem, it may be possible for you to exhibit in an external gallery. Some schools have arrangements in place with local galleries. Alternatively, there could be a series of consecutive shows. For example, three or four students could put their work up for a few days then take it down so that another group of students can put up their displays for a few days, and so on.

Once the space has been decided you should review the possibilities of the space and the kind of art that will be displayed with other students and your teacher. The division of space should be more or less equitable, but needs to also take into account such things as the size and scope of individual student work, the need for wall versus the need for floor (or plinth) space or access to power outlets.

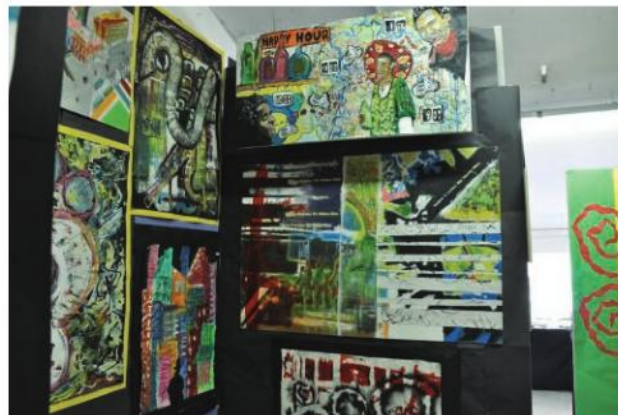
Exhibition spaces need not be self-contained. “Satellite” exhibitions might include site-specific work, such as a mural, installation or sculptural pieces elsewhere on the school campus. Sometimes site-specific works or exhibitions purposely exhibited in unconventional spaces can be effective in relation to the overall intentions, as long as the work can be properly documented for digital submission.

Once you know where your space is you should consider how you will arrange and display your work to best effect within that space.

Clean, neutral walls are preferable. Do not try to decorate the space to the detriment of the artwork itself.

You may be considering including interactive pieces. If so, this should be linked with the mention of the viewer in the curatorial rationale.

- ▼ *Eight views of exhibitions can be seen on pages 139–141. Some show a somewhat crowded exhibition area, with very little space available and artworks taking up almost all of the wall space. Other photos show a more spacious exhibition environment with clean neutral walls. Of course the quality and amount of exhibition space available varies from school to school, but remember that the examiner will not judge the quality of the space. The examiner's focus will always be on the student's intentions and quality of the work with reference to the assessment criteria.*







### Tip



Consider these practical ideas for displaying work.

**Hanging space:** if there are insufficient walls in the exhibition space, additional hanging space could be created.

**Display panels:** these can be hired, or inexpensive display panels can be made. Panels can be joined with steel mending plates in lines or at right angles with an appropriate right-angled bracket.

**Hanging hardware:** gallery-style hanging tracks and hook systems are useful and versatile; picture hooks are equally effective.

**Plinths:** simple wooden boxes, painted in a flat neutral colour, or clean tables are ideal for displaying three-dimensional work.

## Digital submission of the exhibition

Your exhibition is assessed digitally. You and/or your teacher will photograph your artworks and upload digital files to the IB. Photographs of the exhibition as a whole will also be uploaded, although these will not be directly assessed.

Examiners will view the digital files to moderate, uphold or adjust marks awarded by your teacher (who will award you a mark initially as your exhibition is internally assessed). Remember that your teacher's mark can be adjusted after moderation has taken place.

For the exhibition submission, still or moving images can be uploaded. Your artwork should be captured in whatever electronic means is most appropriate for the selected art-making form.

A two-dimensional artwork, for example, might be best captured through a still photograph, while a three-dimensional artwork might be best captured through a short film recording. Lens-based, electronic or screen-based artwork such as animation, however, might call for other file types.

All work submitted must be clear and present your work appropriately. As images will be viewed on monitors, large image files at a high resolution are not needed, but the image should be big enough to fill a computer monitor at 72 pixels per inch.

Where possible, you are encouraged to take ownership of the upload process yourself. This can be a demanding process and it is vital that you get it right, so make sure you follow the relevant upload guidance, make sure the work is captured exactly as you want, presented as you want, and uploaded in the order that you want.



## The two exhibition photographs

In addition to the photos of individual artworks, you should include two photos of the exhibition as a whole. This is a great way to get a sense of size and scale, and demonstrates the way that you want the audience to see the work. These photographs show your understanding of the context of the exhibition and the scope of the works.

- The photographs should only show the artworks that you are submitting for assessment.
- The photograph should not show the work of any other students, or artworks made by you that are not submitting.
- The photographs should not show any people (so you should not be posing in the photo with your favourite artwork, or showing the audience admiring your art).
- The views should be clear and unobstructed.

## Film

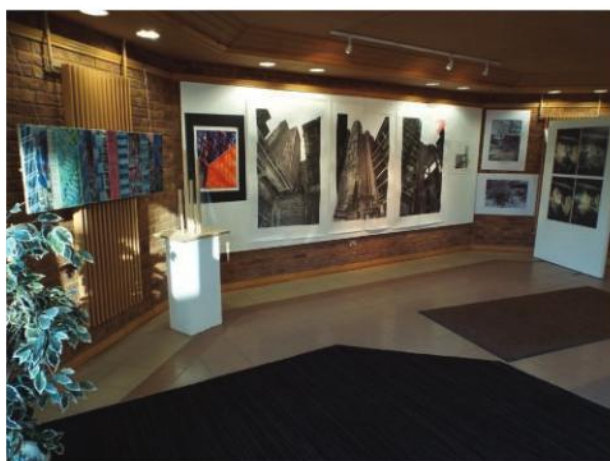
Sometimes one view is not enough to accurately show everything. For example, if you are submitting a sculpture and a single image does not do the work justice, you could make a film of the work or submit a series of images of the work in a film format. Alternatively, you may have worked with film or animation.

### Tip



Images should be saved and submitted with a minimum width of 1,000 pixels and a maximum width of 1,500 pixels. This will provide an image that comfortably fits a standard computer screen while holding enough detail for an examiner to be able to enlarge it, and will help to keep the final file sizes smaller.

Remember that the file formats and file sizes that are deemed acceptable may change from session to session. You need to check with your teacher for the most up-to-date upload information before you upload your work.



## Photographing your exhibition artworks

Your exhibition artworks may include a wide range of ideas and formats. Some exhibitions consist of only two-dimensional art, but increasingly students are exploring other alternatives, for example, film and installation.

Think about the best way of documenting your exhibition – would film be a more successful format?

Some of your artworks may require careful consideration in this context. What about performance art? Films you have made? Installation art? For these you could include a film clip of the work and a still image.

Files can include still or moving photographic documentation of artworks. Check with your teacher if you are unsure about acceptable file types for the upload.

## Advice on capturing three-dimensional artwork

Three-dimensional works such as sculpture or installation work can be successfully documented in either still photography or short video files.

- Video files allow for a virtual walk around a sculpture in the round. This can be successfully achieved in situ, such as the exhibition space, as distractions in the background tend not to be confused with the sculpture with the camera moving around the sculpture. Plain, neutral backgrounds will still give better results. The camera operator should film at a fixed focal length and distance from the work and slowly move around the piece.
- Additional footage of details of the work can be shot in separate takes and then edited together.
- Film the work from a consistent distance.
- When filming, be mindful of reflective and transparent surfaces so as to avoid the reflection of the camera and operator in the shot.
- For still photography, the photographer needs to be mindful of the background, as well as the sculptural form itself. Objects and architectural elements of the exhibition space can become distracting or confused with the sculpture itself, so where possible, it is best to photograph sculpture against a plain neutral background.
- Check that the image is correctly colour-balanced; check the white balance for both still photos and film clips.



# Glossary

**Abstract:** art that is non-representational; a circle, for example, is an abstract shape. Contrast with “figurative”.

**Acrylics:** paints which are synthetic and quick drying. They are made from pigment with polyvinyl acetate and water.

**Additive sculpture:** this is when you start with nothing and create your piece by adding material, such as when working with clay or welding. Compare with “subtractive sculpture”.

**Aerial perspective:** this is when colour values are used to create an illusion of depth. More intense colours appear to come forward while desaturated colours recede.

**Aesthetics:** this is what is considered beautiful or pleasing to the eye; the way an object looks.

**Alla prima:** when paint is put on while the ground is still wet, often creating a soft blurring of colours.

**Allegory:** when an image is used to symbolize a feeling, or a deeper moral or spiritual meaning. Often used to represent abstract notions such as mortality, sleep, victory, enslavement or heroism, for example, Cupid with his bow and arrows as an allegory of falling in love. Compare with “metaphor”.

**Ambiguous:** having more than one possible interpretation. The meanings of most works of art are ambiguous.

**Analysis:** the command term “to analyse” is defined in the *Visual arts guide* as “break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure”.

**Analogous colours:** colours which sit next to each other in the colour circle, such as yellow and green. Using analogous colours creates harmony in compositions.

**Applied art:** a generic term for creative disciplines whose purpose is functional; the product is used in a practical way. For example, ceramics, fashion, interior design, textile design, furniture design, graphic design, animation. Compare with “fine art”.

**Appliqué:** needlework in which small pieces of cloth are sewn or stuck in a pattern on a larger piece.

**Appropriation:** when an image or an idea is taken from its original context and recycled by an artist in order to create new meanings, or to subvert its conventional meaning.

**Aquatint:** a method of creating areas of tone in etching. A fine resin dust (rosin) is heated so that it fuses on the surface of the plate. Acid is used to bite (erode away) successively exposed areas while other areas are protected. The resulting pitted surface of varied depths is filled with ink, printing as fine dots of tone of differing densities.

**Armature:** the structure that supports a sculpture, usually underneath the modelled material such as wax, clay or plaster. It is often constructed from wire, wood or welded steel.

**Assemblage:** when objects (often found from everyday life) are put together to create a sculpture – think of a three-dimensional collage.

**Asymmetry:** the opposite of symmetry. Most compositions are arranged around an imaginary axis to create an imbalance as this gives life and the impression of movement.

**Atmospheric perspective:** when forms are out of focus in the distance and crisper in the foreground to give the effect of depth. This is sometimes reversed in photography, where depth of field is used to blur the foreground and sharpen the focus in the distance. The illusion of depth is just as effective.

**Axis:** an imaginary line running through a form or composition around which elements are arranged.

**Balance:** balance and imbalance can make a composition dynamic. Careful use of positive and negative space as well as the placing of shapes in relation to the frame will give harmony to a design.

**Batik:** painting or printing with dye on cloth using wax on the parts which do not have any colour.

**Blending:** creating transitions of tone or colour. Compare with “rendering”. Because it is slow drying, oil paint is a more effective medium with which to blend than acrylic, allowing the artist to render the effect of changing light over forms.

**Blocking out:** this is when the artist fills in the main forms of the composition with solid slabs of colour as a preliminary to adding detail.

**Block printed:** using a raised wood block as a relief surface to print as used in traditional Indian textiles.

**Bonding:** firmly joining different paper or cloth types using heat or glue.

**Brushwork:** the way an artist has applied the paint. Fast and textured (loose brushwork) or careful and controlled (tight brushwork).

**Cast:** to form molten metal, liquid plaster or plastic, for example, into a three-dimensional shape by pouring into a mould. Can also mean something formed by this means.

**Chiaroscuro:** the modelling of light and dark to show form. A clear light source casts shadows transforming a shape into a form.

**Chine collé:** French for Chinese sticking. In printmaking lightweight papers are laid over the inked plate so that when the heavier backing paper is printed on they adhere to it. It is used to add areas of colour, or to allow printing onto materials that would otherwise be too delicate.

**Collograph:** this is when a material such as card is both cut into and/or built up with textures to create a surface that can be inked to be printed as relief, as intaglio, or as a combination of both.

**Colour:** the visual sensation produced in the eye from the effects of light. It can be usefully described in terms of hue, brightness and saturation.

**Colour contrast:** colour is usually described in terms of contrasts as the effect of colour is always dependent on its neighbours.

**Compare and contrast:** this command term is defined in the *Visual arts guide* as “give an account of similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout”.

**Complementary colour:** the three pairs of opposites on the colour circle are described as complementary. These are orange/blue, red/green and purple/yellow. When placed against each other they contrast and enhance, so red seems redder when placed next to a green.

**Composition:** the arrangement and structure of the elements within a painting. In sculpture it is the relationship of the forms to each other and the surrounding space.

**Conceptual practice:** refers to the aspects of an artist’s art-making practice that is concerned with intent, and the visual communication of ideas.

**Contour:** a line which connects points of equal value, such as the contour lines on a map showing points of equal height. The same principle is used in drawing when lines follow the boundaries of a form or points of equal tone.

**Contrapposto:** this is when a figure stands with their weight on one leg, tilting their hips in one direction and their shoulders in the opposite direction, contrasting tense leg with relaxed leg and tensed arm with relaxed arm. The resulting pose has curves which imply life and movement in both statues and paintings.

**Contrejour:** this is when an object or person is placed against the

light (back lit), so that they form a silhouette.

**Convention:** an accepted way of doing something. In school, for example, there are conventions of behaviour and of dress. In past traditions art usually followed convention – established rules – yet much art since Romanticism in the 18th century has been about breaking convention.

**Coulisse:** the effect of stage scenery where, for example, having a landscape snake away into the distance forms at the sides, like stage wings, a sense of depth which draws the viewer into the picture. Compare with “repoussoir”. This technique was much favoured by early Renaissance artists, as well as by oriental landscape painters.

**Criterion (plural: criteria):** the descriptors of the qualities by which your work will be assessed. They are given in the *Visual arts guide*. Each one has a series of level descriptors linked to a mark range. It is a very good idea to study these carefully to ensure that you have addressed all the assessed areas.

**Cross hatching:** hatching is the use of parallel lines to create tone; when these are overlaid in different directions (cross hatching) successively darker tones are created.

**Cropping:** this is when objects are cut off by the edge of the picture, as often happens in photography. Cropping is less evident in paintings before the invention of photography. Cropping reminds the viewer that we are looking through a window or seeing a portion of a reality that continues outside of the frame.

**Culture:** The *Visual arts guide* defines culture as “learned and shared beliefs, values, interests, attitudes, products and all patterns of behaviour created by society. This view of culture includes an organized system of symbols, ideas, explanations, beliefs and material production that humans create and manipulate in their daily lives”. In your comparative study you are asked to consider the “cultural significance” of artworks.

**Curatorial documentation:** text explaining how and why the works were selected and displayed in the gallery or exhibition space.

**Curatorial rationale:** at SL this explains the intentions of the student and how they have considered the presentation of work using curatorial methodologies. At HL this shows consideration of the potential relationship between the artworks and the viewer. Refer to relevant sections of the guide for further detail.

**Deconstruct:** to take apart; usually to reveal the structure or constituent elements of an artifact or artwork, sometimes to then reassemble, leaving these elements visible. Deconstructivism has been an important concept to all of the arts in the postmodernist era, but is especially evident in fashion and architecture. Look, for example, at the buildings of Frank Gehry.

**Depth:** how far back the image appears to recede from the surface of the picture (the picture plane).

**Depth of field:** in photography this is the range of focus in front of and behind the point that the lens is focused on.

**Diptych:** a work consisting of two panels, painted or carved, and hinged together.

**Dry point:** an intaglio print made by inscribing metal (copper or zinc) or plastic (usually acetate sheet) to create a burr. This edge holds ink creating a line which can be both light and delicate or heavy and expressive.

**Dry brush:** by dragging a dry paint mix across a rough surface a texture can be created leaving “pockets” of colour from underneath to show through. Francis Bacon uses this extensively in his paintings. Compare with “scumble”.

**Earth colours:** colours made from mineral pigments such as yellow ochre, raw sienna, burnt umber, sepia, venetian red.

**Edition:** both prints and cast sculptures are often produced as a numbered set of originals. These are then signed by the artist, after which the print plates or sculpture mould is destroyed to preserve the exclusivity of this “limited edition”. Conventionally prints are numbered in their margin as one in this sequence out of the total.

**Emboss:** to emboss is to create a relief surface. In printmaking this is achieved by pressing into soft paper, in leather work by using stamps, in sculpture by carving, in ceramics by pushing into the soft clay, etc.

**Embroider:** decorate with patterns of stitching; items can be hand embroidered or machine embroidered.

**Engraving:** an intaglio printmaking technique. Copper or zinc plate is incised, or cut into, with metal implements. Ink is then applied

to the plate, the top surfaces are wiped clean and under the pressure of a press the dark ink is lifted out, making positive marks on the white paper. Compare with “wood engraving”.

**En plein air:** French for “out of doors” meaning in front of the landscape, not in the studio.

**Etching:** an intaglio printmaking technique. A wax ground is used to protect a metal plate (copper, zinc or steel). This is then drawn into so that the exposed metal can be etched by acid. The resulting grooves are filled with ink and the top surfaces are wiped clean. Using the pressure of a printing press, paper is forced into the lines, pulling the ink out to make a positive mark. Compare with “engraving”.

**Exhibition texts:** students are required to include exhibition text for each piece submitted for assessment. This outlines the title, medium, size and intention of each piece. Where students are deliberately appropriating another artist’s image, the exhibition text must acknowledge the source of the original image. The text should contain reference to any sources which have influenced the individual piece.

**Figurative:** depicting living forms in a realistic setting. Compare with “abstract”.

**Fine art:** a generic term for the creative disciplines that do not have a practical application. For example, painting, printmaking and sculpture.

**Foreshortening:** this is the illusion in perspective when a form, such as an outreached arm, leads into the space.



**Form:** this word has a specific meaning in art. It refers to the three-dimensional aspect of objects. In images form makes objects appear to be realistic solids, even though they are in fact two-dimensional. Form can also be used in the general sense of “giving form” to ideas, in other words, making concepts concrete. (Do not confuse with “forms” as defined below.)

**Formal qualities:** confusingly, when we talk about the formal qualities in art we are not just referring to form, but to all of the tangible, physical aspects that make an artwork (light, colour, space, composition, depth, texture, the manipulation of media and so on), separate from function and meaning.

**Format:** the compositional framework. There are many types such as landscape or portrait format, panoramic (wide angled), tondo (round) or miniature. The artwork can be part of a series of related forms such as a multi-panelled work. These are called diptych (two panels), triptych (three panels) or polyptych (multiple panels). Alternatively, the format could be sequential, such as in a scroll painting, in an animation, a storyboard or in a graphic novel.

**Forms:** in art-making, the broad, generalized categories of creative endeavours such as painting, drawing and sculpture. In the art-making forms table, forms are denoted by bold text.

**Fresco:** a painting technique in which pigment diluted with water is applied onto wet plaster that acts as the binding medium.

**Gaze:** this is the word art historians use to refer to how

we look at a figurative image, particularly the spectator’s gaze, that is, the gaze of the viewer at an image of a person. It can also be used to describe the way the figures within the composition look out at us or between each other.

**Glaze/glazing:** in oil paint a glaze allows artists to create translucent layers of colour. For example, if the artist paints a pure yellow, allows it to dry and then paints over an oily coat of pure blue, we will see the yellow as if looking through stained glass, thus creating a fresh green translucent effect. The same can be achieved by using translucent mediums with acrylics. In ceramics a glaze is a thin coating of minerals which produces a glassy transparent or coloured coating on bisque ware. It is fixed by firing to melt the minerals transforming the surface qualities and making the ceramic waterproof.

**Golden mean (golden section):** a system to create aesthetically pleasing proportions originating in ancient Greece. The principle is that a line is divided so that the smaller section’s relation to the larger section is the same as the larger section is to the whole, approximately 5:8. Compare to “rule of thirds”.

**Graphic:** a graphic mark is one that has been drawn or scratched. Graphic can also mean clear or vivid. Hence the related word “graffiti” (as in street art).

**Grisaille:** means drawn or painted in tone, often to look as if the subject has been carved from stone.

**Ground:** in painting this is the base colour and will determine

the mood (before underpainting is applied). In oil painting it is traditional to work from a dark or mid tone towards the lighter tones. So artists will paint the whole surface an earth colour to give depth and atmosphere. However, the Impressionists changed this as they wanted to work quickly and create bright, light paintings so they prepared their canvases with lead white to make the colours appear brilliant. Most modern artists have continued to prepare their canvases with a white ground. In etching ground is the acid-resistant layer that is applied to protect the metal.

**Hue:** the distinct property of a colour that distinguishes it from other colours (as opposed to its brightness or saturation).

**Icon:** literally, an image that is imbued with religious power and is worshipped. However, the term is used much more freely nowadays, for example, to describe Andy Warhol’s screen-prints of media icons.

**Impasto:** the technique of laying paint on thickly to give a pronounced surface texture.

**In situ:** in place; in the original position.

**Intent/intentions:** refers to authorial intent or, in other words, what the artist hopes to accomplish, achieve or communicate through a work of art. An intent can be specific, concrete and literal, or open-ended and abstract.

**Incising:** cutting into a surface such as metal or ceramic.

**Irony:** if you are run over by an ambulance, that is ironic.

**Isometric perspective:** a system to describe space where uniform objects remain the same size, so parallel lines give the illusion of depth. This is often used in plans and computer games.

**Juxtapose:** to place one thing against another to achieve contrast. In art placing different images together creates new meanings or emphasizes the intrinsic qualities of each piece.

**Kinetic:** movement. Some artworks, such as Calder's mobiles, move and can therefore be described as kinetic, but we also move around static sculptures in a gallery so we experience them kinetically, through movement.

**Lens:** the eye of the camera, it determines how the image will look. For example, if the subject is close to a wide angle lens, the face will be slightly distorted, giving an enhanced sense of closeness.

**Line:** the trace of a point which describes the meeting of planes at an edge, or the division between light and dark. Think in terms of silhouettes or contours. Hatched lines can suggest tone and form thus describing a plane or curves. Flowing lines can also be used, without the modulation of tone, to suggest form.

**Linear perspective:** when a scene is viewed from a single viewpoint with objects shown diminishing in size as they become more distant, as in a photograph.

**Lino printing:** linoleum is a floor covering made from cork and oil that artists have adapted as a cheap and grain-free alternative to wood for relief printing (see "wood cuts"). There are now

synthetic alternatives available that are easier to cut.

**Lithography:** a 19th century printing technique. Limestone is drawn on with a waxy substance. When water is applied it is resisted by the wax, which can then be replaced by printing ink and transferred to paper through a press. It allows for a particularly expressive range of marks that closely imitate the qualities of drawn marks on paper. In the 20th century the principal was developed using thin metal and plastic sheets to become the principal commercial print technology.

**Local colour:** the actual colour of an object when unaffected by reflecting light.

**Maquette:** French for "model", this refers to a sculptor's small-scale planning piece completed before the main piece is undertaken.

**Mark-making:** this is a term used by artists to describe the character of graphic effects in both drawing and painting.

**Mass:** the body of matter. In sculpture you might refer to the physical mass of the forms; in architecture the sense of weight, solidity and force, such as in the ancient pyramids.

**Medium (plural: media):** refers to the more specific materials used in an art-making practice such as watercolour, charcoal and plaster. In the art-making forms table, these are listed after the given forms.

**Metaphor:** in art an image that suggests or symbolizes a different idea or feeling is metaphorical. For example, Van Gogh's

sunflowers can be seen as a metaphor for idyllic rural life in the south of France. Compare with "allegory".

**Mezzotint (or mezzoprint):** an intaglio print technique. A finely grooved surface of burred lines is created on copper plate by systematically rocking it with a hard steel edge. This surface prints as a black, but the artist burnishes and scrapes the surface to create the design in lighter tones against this dark ground.

**Modelling:** in sculpture the manipulation of material to create forms. Similarly, in painting forms can be described as being modelled in paint.

**Modulate:** vary the tone.

**Monochromatic:** with only one colour. The artist may have chosen a single colour to create a mood, completing the picture only in tones of that colour. Contrast with "polychromatic".

**Monoprint:** one of a series of prints, each with individual variations.

**Monotype:** a unique print made by working freely with inks or paints on a smooth surface (metal, plastic or glass). Sometimes the paper is laid over the inky surface and the artist draws on the back to produce a granulated line. Alternatively, the paper is pressed onto the inked surface and a print is pulled. Degas used both monotype and monoprint extensively, often working onto his prints with pastel to adapt each differently.

**Monumental:** a work can have a monumental effect even if it is relatively small, often through the sense of mass. Perhaps the

forms have been given solidity and weight, or are seen from a low viewpoint.

**Narrative:** storytelling.

**Negative and positive space:** negative space is the area around the forms (void) and positive space is the area taken up by the form. In a strong composition there will be an interesting balance between the areas, with the negative space being just as visually arresting as the positive.

**Objects trouvés:** French for “found object”. Rubbish that has been collected by the artist is used to make artworks. Look, for example, at Rauschenberg’s combines.

**Observational skills:** learning and knowing how to look at something and translate or express this visually.

**Oil paint:** made of pigment, oil and wax. It was developed from tempera painting in the 15th century, allowing artists to achieve heightened realism. Linseed oil is the most commonly used oil, although a wide variety of oils have different properties, for example, some dry faster, others yellow less. By changing the proportions of oil and wax the artist can control the gloss or matte of the paint and the brilliance of the colour.

**Opaque:** cannot be seen through. Adding white to a colour will make it opaque. Contrast with “translucent”.

**Overlapping:** this is the simplest way of giving the illusion of depth, for example, used in the intersecting planes and overlapping shapes in Cubist paintings.

**Paint:** pigment (the colour) plus glue (that binds the pigment) and a medium (which makes the paint flow when it is applied). Types of paint include acrylic, fresco, oil, tempera and watercolour.

**Palette:** Literally the board on which an artist mixes paint, but often used figuratively, for example, “a palette of colours” means a range of colours, a cool palette is blues, a warm palette is reds and earth colours, a varied palette or a limited palette has few colours.

**Patina:** this is the sheen or colouration on an object’s surface produced naturally by age or deliberately by the artist.

**Pentimenti:** the mistakes or alterations that an artist makes. Modern artists often leave their mistakes; this gives a sense of movement and a trace of the thought process they went through as the work developed.

**Perspective:** See “linear perspective”, “aerial perspective”, “atmospheric perspective” and “isometric perspective”.

**Picture plane:** the surface of a two-dimensional work of art. Modern paintings often appear flat or even to come forward from the picture plane into the viewer’s space. Artists also remind the viewer of the physical surface of the canvas or paper with rough mark-making. In the past the picture plane was treated as a window through which an illusion of the world was seen.

**Pigment:** the colour in paint. Originally these were minerals, some cheap such as the earth colours like ochre, others

expensive such as lapis lazuli blue. In the 19th century the development of inorganic chemistry led to the invention of new stronger, cheaper and more lightfast colours.

**Plastic:** in art this refers to something which can be modelled or has the qualities being transformed, as in sculpture. Design and sculpture are sometimes referred to as the “plastic arts”. Alternatively, the material plastic is created by polymerization. It can be made highly transparent, translucent or opaque.

**Plinth:** the base of a sculpture. A useful synonym is “socle” which is more often used to describe the base for classical sculptures.

**Polychromatic:** many coloured.

**Polyptych:** a work consisting of four or more painted (or carved) panels that are normally hinged together.

**Primary colours:** red, yellow and blue. They cannot be created by mixing other colours.

**Process:** in art-making, process refers to the means to the end (or product). It is an operation that involves a range of cognitive (or thinking) and practical methods or techniques that are employed when you are engaged in an art-making activity.

**Proportion:** do not confuse scale with proportion, which means the relationship in size of one thing to another.

**Protagonist:** the main figure in a scene.

**Provenance:** this is the term used to describe the history of who has owned a work of art.



**Raking:** light which falls at an acute angle to reveal the surface textures or relief of an object.

**Readymade:** a term developed by Marcel Duchamp to describe manufactured items removed from their original context by the artist to become art.

**Recede:** to go back, the illusion on a two-dimensional artwork that there is depth as in “the scene recedes from the picture plane”.

**Relief:** raised from a surface such as the shallow relief (or bas-relief) of the design on a coin or the deep relief of Michelangelo’s tondo carvings of “The Madonna and Child”. Compare to “emboss”.

**Rendering:** this is the transition or modulation from light to dark in drawing or painting, usually to create convincing three-dimensional form. Compare with “modelling” and “blending”.

**Repoussoir:** this is when a scene – usually a landscape – is framed by objects in the foreground to emphasize depth and draw the viewer into the picture. Imagine an arching tree and a distant sunset. Compare with “coulisse”.

**Resolved:** generally, “resolved” means that an artwork is complete and/or finished. However, it is not a simple idea. Sometimes an artist will say that their artwork is complete when it still looks unfinished to an audience. Ultimately the question of how resolved your work is could come down to a discussion with your teacher and peers.

**Rule of thirds:** imagine a composition divided into thirds

– these lines become the most significant points at which to place key elements. Compare with “golden mean”.

**Saturated colour:** colour can be described as being saturated when it is highly pigmented or at full strength.

**Scale:** the relative size of an object.

**Scraffito:** Italian for scratch, the effect of scratching away a top layer to reveal the colour underneath. This is often used in ceramics as well as in painting.

**Screen printing (or silk-screen printing or serigraphy):** originally developed in Japan for printing onto textile. Ink is forced through a frame covered with fine nylon or silk mesh onto the print surface. The design is prepared beforehand as a cut stencil or applied as an emulsion to block the negative areas of the design.

**Screens:** the term “screens” is used throughout the syllabus as a constant reminder that the final product for assessment is a digitally uploaded file that will be viewed on a computer monitor as a series of screens. A screen is a digital page. “Screens” is used instead of “pages”, which would imply that the original format was in book form, or “slides”, which suggests an electronic presentation using software such as Microsoft’s® PowerPoint® or Apple’s® Keynote®. While all of these are valid tools for generating potential screens for the process portfolio or comparative study submission, they are not, in any way, prescribed.

**Scumble:** literally scrubbing one opaque colour roughly over another so that both can be seen.

Scumbling works best on a coarse canvas and was much favoured by Monet. Compare with “dry brush”.

**Secondary colours:** green, orange and violet, they are made by mixing two primary colours.

**Sfumato:** a technique in which the artist overlays translucent layers of colour to create perceptions of depth, volume and form. In particular, it refers to the blending of colours or tones so subtly that there is no perceptible transition. For example, Leonardo Da Vinci used sfumato to model the Mona Lisa’s face.

**Space:** the three-dimensional expanse in which objects are located.

**Spectrum:** this is white light refracted into its different wavelengths of colours as in a rainbow. The visible spectrum is red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, and violet.

**Stippling:** this is an effect achieved by the end of the brush being tapped repeatedly against the surface to produce a series of light dots of colour.

**Subject-specific language:** words that are specific to the field of art. The use of subject-specific language is an assessed element of the course and this book includes plenty of ideas for how to develop your language to analyse art.

**Subtractive:** subtractive drawing is when a tone is applied first, then an eraser is used to draw back into the dark to reveal the light areas. In subtractive colour mixing each time you add a colour, such as blue to red to make purple, it becomes darker

(hence subtractive); add yellow to make it brown and it becomes darker still. Subtractive sculpture is when you start with a mass of material, such as a block of stone, and take away from it to reveal the sculpture.

**Support:** the surface that a drawing or painting is made on.

**Technical and material practice:** this refers to the aspects of an artist's art-making practice that are concerned with the form of the work, specifically, the choices and decisions made about media and materials, as well as technique and application.

**Tempera:** a painting medium where egg yolk is used as a binder for pigment. (Do not confuse with tempura which is good to eat!)

**Tertiary colours:** these are mixtures of the three primaries, used to make browns and the wide range of neutral colours in nature such as skin, plants, wood and so on. Along with pink and mauve, they do not occur in the spectrum.

**Texture:** the tactile qualities of surfaces, in other words, the qualities of touch.

**Tint:** created by adding white to a colour, for example, pink is a tint of red.

**Tone:** the intensity of light and dark. Shading is a way of applying tone to a drawing.

**Translucent:** light can be seen through, as in a stained glass window or a translucent glaze of paint.

**Triptych:** a work consisting of three panels usually painted and hinged together.

**Trompe l'oeil:** is French for "trick of the eye", for example, when objects appear to be real in painting.

**Underpainting:** this term refers to the base colours that an artist uses to block out the main areas of the composition.

**Value:** degrees of tonal variation.

**Viewpoint:** the real, or imagined, position from which the spectator looks at a painting. Consider viewpoint in relation to illusions of depth and the use of perspective.

**Visual literacy:** the ability to understand, interpret and make meaning from information presented in the form of an image.

**Void:** nothingness, or the empty space that is the opposite of mass, substance and form.

**Voyeur:** someone who gets pleasure from spying on others. Sometimes the artist makes us unseen onlookers into people's private lives.

**Watercolours:** paints made from pigment and gum arabic as a binder (a natural resin) plus, of course, water!

**Wax:** wax in paint gives it body and thickness. Wax is opaque and dull. Its properties are opposite to those of oil which is translucent and shiny, so an artist can increase the quantity of wax to create a denser, matt surface. It is also good for creating an impasto effect.

**Wet into wet:** wet paint is applied to previous layers of wet paint to create soft flowing marks. This technique requires a fast way of working, because the artwork has to be finished before the first layers have dried. If a colour is applied onto wet paint it tends to mix in a smooth way, creating an intense and soft effect. This is difficult to achieve without the colours becoming muddied. Compare to "alla prima".

**Wood cut:** a relief print technique. The side grain of wood is cut into to create a relief surface, which is then inked and printed. Wood cuts can be highly intricate as in Ukiyo-e or very rough in character as in the German expressionist tradition.

**Wood engraving:** a relief print technique. The hard end grain of wood is cut into to create a relief surface, which is then inked and printed. Wood engravings are often characterized by very fine details.

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