

Art GCSE Overview

Year 10

The year 10 course begins with observational drawing techniques; students develop their understanding of proportion, shape, scale and how to demonstrate these vital art skills in their own work. The drawings of Henry Moore and Euan Uglow support their drawing studies at this stage of the course. Mark-making and shading to create tonal range are explored using the traditional art media of graphite, pastel, and charcoal with the focus on creating contrast in their work. Observational drawing from natural forms then progresses onto more challenging portraiture drawing and the core elements of proportion and scale are explored.

Having developed their vital observational drawing techniques the course progresses onto more challenging painting techniques and how warm and cool colour tones affect mood and can be used to create a wide tonal range in portrait painting. The human face offers scope for students to explore paint and mark-making techniques ranging from thick impasto associated with the work of Lucien Freud to the pointillist work of George Seurat. There is an emphasis on students' understanding of how the type of mark-making they employ and their use of colour can portray different emotion and mood within their work.

Portraiture then leads on to Architectural drawing and this transition allows the important drawing techniques of foreshortening, depth and perspective to be studied. This stage of the year 10 course allows students to explore a range of different techniques in art and develop a variety of art skills. The gestural, architectural charcoal drawings of Dennis Creffield and the deep paint hues and colours of John Piper are studied and offer a different approach to their portrait work. The artist's work acts as starting point for their own work which now moves onto the traditional artistic technique of mono-printmaking. Students now develop their understanding of how they can create multiple copies of their work and then create different final ideas based on the same starting point.

Having developed their drawing and painting skills the final year 10 project now nurtures their 3 dimensional clay sculpting skills. Students design and build a clay sculpture based on the theme of 'identity'. They are asked to explore their own 'identity' whilst looking at how other artists have responded to the world around them. They study the sculptural work of more traditional classical sculpture to the contemporary work of YBS's (the young British artists). Having drawn and created designs for their sculpture they then build a small scale model or 'maquette'. Whilst their clay modelling skills are developing they learn the process of kiln firing and glazing clay. Further adjustments to their work are considered prior to the larger version being built.

The GCSE Art course encourages and nurtures an inquisitive and explorative approach to students own learning. The students develop, through their art, a more mature understanding of themselves and the world around them. The course aims to enable students to appreciate their own and others artwork and to encourage individuality and creativity. The course nurtures skills in creative thinking and problem solving and generates self-motivated, independent learners. It is structured to enable students to confidently develop their own ideas with guidance and support. Students are introduced in lessons to a variety of experiences, exploring a range of fine art media, techniques and processes.

They explore images and resources from past and recent times to inspire their own work. Students investigate drawing for different purposes and use sketchbooks to support their work. They are required to work in one or more areas of fine art and may explore overlapping areas. These include painting and drawing, mixed media including collage and assemblage, 3D sculpture, printmaking and they have the opportunity to explore lens-based media and new technologies such as animation.

Students are expected to demonstrate a wide range of skills and techniques and use different approaches to recording images from observation and imagination. They must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of how feelings and meanings are conveyed in images by other artists and how they relate to social and historical context. They have to develop a working vocabulary of specialist terms within art. In order to explore different themes in art students are encouraged to discuss images in lessons and annotate their work with their own opinions.

Year 11

In Year 11 the students now apply the skills and techniques learnt during year 10 but they are asked to work within a short time frame. They are expected to establish and develop their own personal responses to artists work whilst responding to an exam theme. Throughout year 10 the students document their work in their sketchbook and that formed part of their coursework. In year 11 they now work at larger scale on A2 boards and they start with a mock exam project. The project is 8 school weeks in length and culminates in a 10 hour final personal response.

This project forms part of their coursework portfolio. The project must show evidence of them developing ideas through their own investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources. They need to refine their work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes. Throughout the project they need to record their ideas, observations and insights relevant to their intentions as the work progresses.

At the end of the 8 school week time frame they create a personal and meaningful response that realises their intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language. The project must demonstrate their ability to sustain work from an initial starting point to the realisation of their final piece.

Year 11 - Externally set task assignment worth 40% of their grade

The year 11 course culminates with students receiving an examination paper which is worth 40% of the students GCSE grade, it begins nationally after a date set by the exam board. The theme is often an individual work such as 'fragments' or 'reflection' and is sometimes a group of words such as 'apart and/or together'.

This theme is discussed and explored during lessons and for the first 4 weeks of the project student's work on responses to artists chosen by their teacher. Students then select their own starting point and develop their work in accordance with the assessment objectives. There must be evidence of critical understanding of sources, refinement of their work, experimentation with appropriate media, materials, techniques and processes. Throughout the project they need to record their ideas. The project follows the same time frame as the mock with a 10 hour timed examination at the end in which students produce a personal response to their exam theme.

The students portfolio of work is then to be marked and moderated by the art teaching staff and it is then checked by an external moderator. Homework is set regularly and builds upon the skills and knowledge gained in lessons. A successful coursework portfolio is a result of effort and hard work.