

A Level Fine Art



CAMBRIDGE
OCR

Mrs Crook and Mrs Kaur



Personal Investigation

Practical Portfolio

60% of the total A Level

A personal response to either a:

- Starting point
 - Theme
- } Set by the student or the school

A related study: an extended response of a guided count of between 1000 - 6000 words.

Externally Set Task

15 hour supervised design task

40% of the total A Level

A choice of 7 themes each with a choice of:

- Starting points
 - Theme
- } Externally set by  CAMBRIDGE OCR

Choose 1 option and generate an appropriate personal response for assessment.

No written examination.



c o u r s e o u t l i n e

- **Y12 Autumn Term:**

Mini Project: Exploration of drawing, painting, photography and mixed media through studying art history

- **Y12 Spring/Summer Term**

Personal Investigation: Developing and broadening your technical skills and visual understanding based on a theme. Building up an impressive portfolio and introducing essay

- **Y13 Autumn Term:**

Specialism in and exploration of medium/theme in independently led work. **Completion of essay – Complete Personal Investigation by end of Jan**

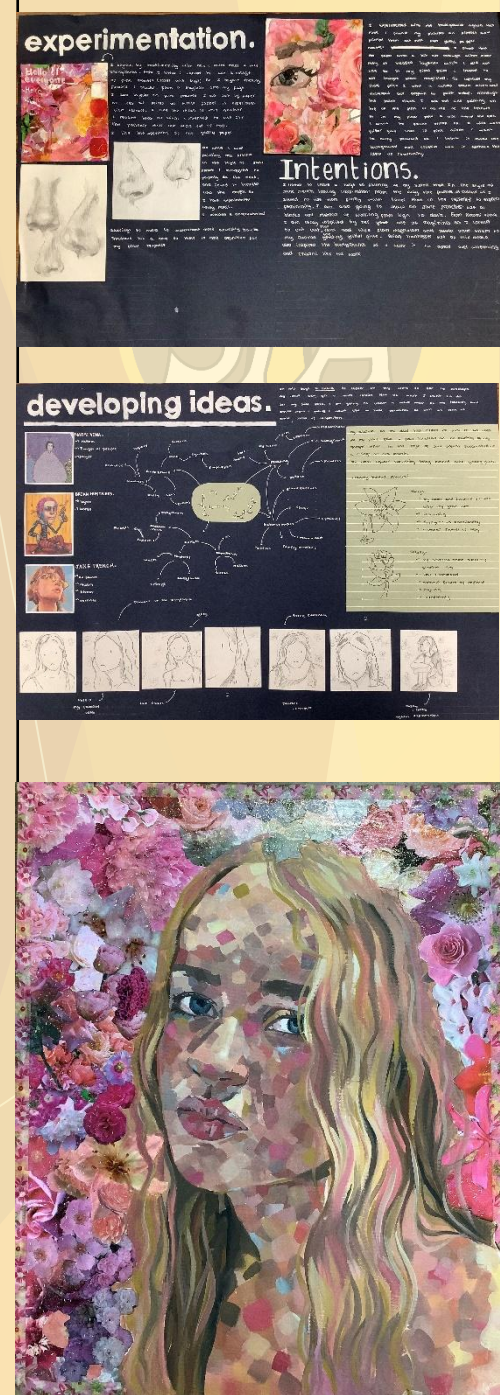
- **Y13 Spring Term:**

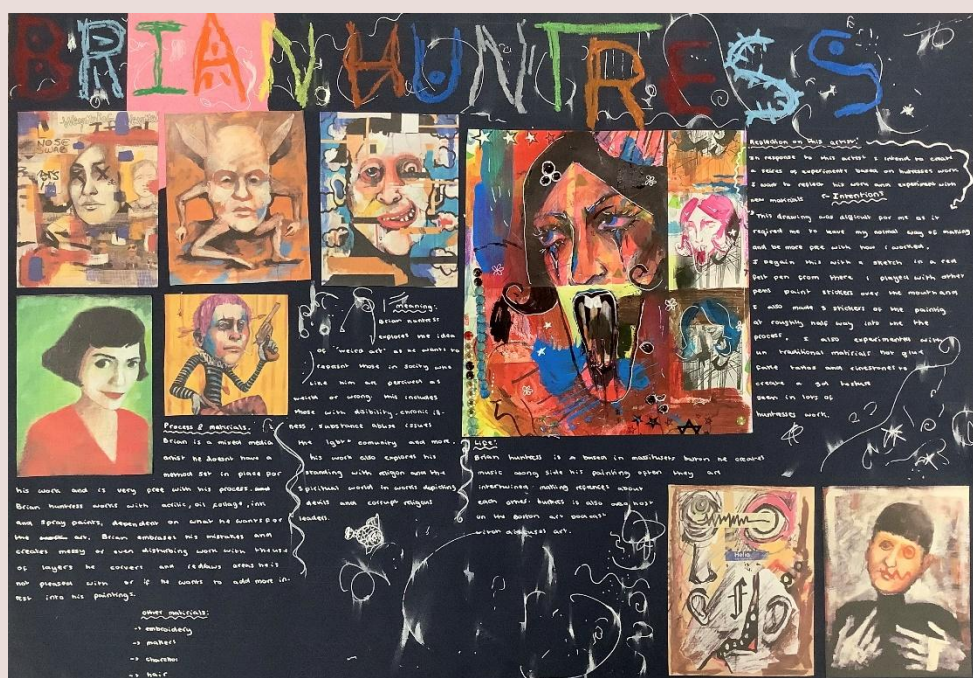
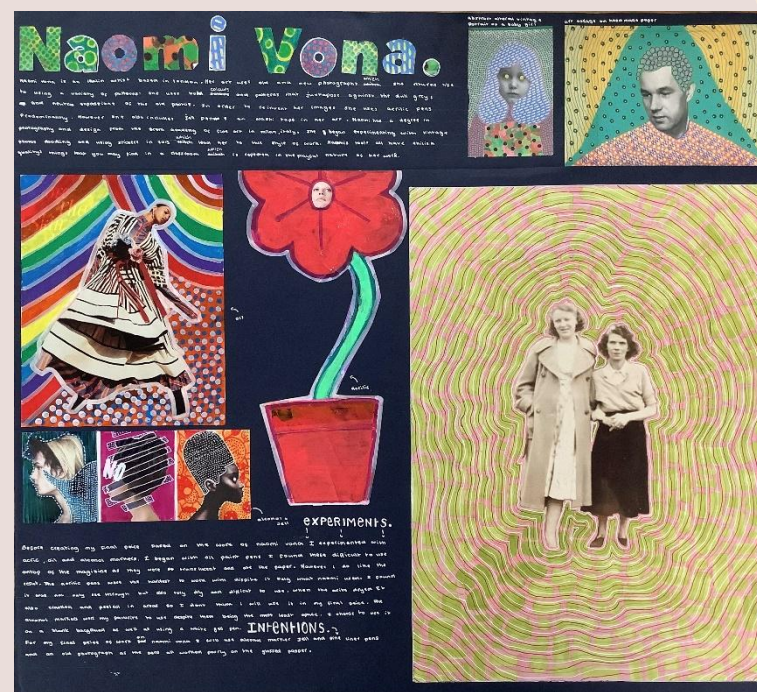
External Exam released Feb, preparation and 15 hour exam

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

1. Mini Project: Three artists will be studied as a group, a painter, a pattern artist and a mixed media artist. After studying their processes individually, students develop ideas for a final piece to show their learning. This final piece will combine the subject matter/materials/processes/meaning of the artists, together with the student's own creative voice.

- WHY?**
- Covers assessment objective of course
 - Introduces each element needed to pass the course
 - Introduces students to three very different ways of working
 - Allows students to make mistakes without the pressure of having to submit the work





artist research

Past A-Level Student Lily O'Reilly



developing ideas.



NAOMI VONA.

→ Ruben
→ Images of people
→ Images



BRIAN HUNTRESS.

→ layers
→ words



JANE FRENCH.

→ all paints
→ realism
→ blocks
→ portraits



this is
my favorite
idea



same idea



flowers
→ names



ending
→ going
again experiment

on this page I intend to repeat on my work so far to develop my ideas and get a more definite idea of what I want to do for my final piece. I am going to create a mixed media of my femininity and growth which I think I want to have personal as well as look at some ideas of composition.

my reaction on my ideas has helped me come to an idea for my final piece. I plan to create an oil painting of my younger sister in the style of Jane French surrounded in a collage of pink flowers.

my idea repeats femininity being pushed onto young girls.

meaning behind flowers:



→ lily
→ my name and favorite flower after my great nan
→ femininity
→ purity → in Christianity
→ national flower of Italy



→ roses
→ my sister's name after my grandad (my love + romance)
→ national flower of England
→ royalty
→ femininity

experimentation.



I began by experimenting with how I could make a nice background. This I knew I wanted to use a collage of pink flowers (roses and lilies) so I began sticking flowers I sawed from a magazine onto my page. I also layered on pink flowers I cut out of paper as well as pieces of tissue paper to experiment with texture. I like the result of this however I realised that all when I intended to use for the portrait does not work well on top. I like the appearance of the glossy paper.



As while I was painting my friend in the style of Jane French I struggled to properly do the nose, and found it blended into the cheek so I have experimented using pencil.

drawings of noses to understand more accurately how the shadows hit a nose so there is more definition for my final response



Intentions.

I intend to create a large oil painting of my sister's head in the style of Jane French taking inspiration from the way she pushed colour as I intend to use more pinky warm tones than in the reference to express femininity. I am also going to draw on Jane French's use of blocks and method of working from light to dark. From Naomi Vona I am really inspired by her use of magazines so I intend to cut out roses and lilies from magazines and glue some them to my canvas using glitter glue. Brian Huntress's use of mixed media also inspired the background as I want it to appear over whelming and chaotic like his work.

I experimented with the background again this time I found my pictures on Pinterest and printed them out onto some glossy paper however I found that the paper was a bit see through which made them as bleed through which I did not like so in my final piece I intend to use images from magazines. To replicate my final piece I used a canvas board which was easel and began to paint atop. Although the paint stuck I did not like painting on top of the pink or on top of the texture so in my final piece I will avoid the area I want to paint atop of. I also used glitter glue that is pink which I want to carry forward as I think it made the background more cohesive and it matches the idea of femininity.

developing ideas

Past A-Level Student Lily O'Reilly



resolved piece

Past A-Level Student Lily O'Reilly

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

- 1. Coursework Portfolio : Personal Investigation** You will be required to mount an exhibition of a number of pieces of work presented as assignments. That is - with research and preparatory studies in either two or three dimensions or a combination of both.





Past A-Level Student Clodagh Delahunty-Forrest
Research into Gustav Klimt and mural by the Spanish
street art duo Pichi & Avo

artist research

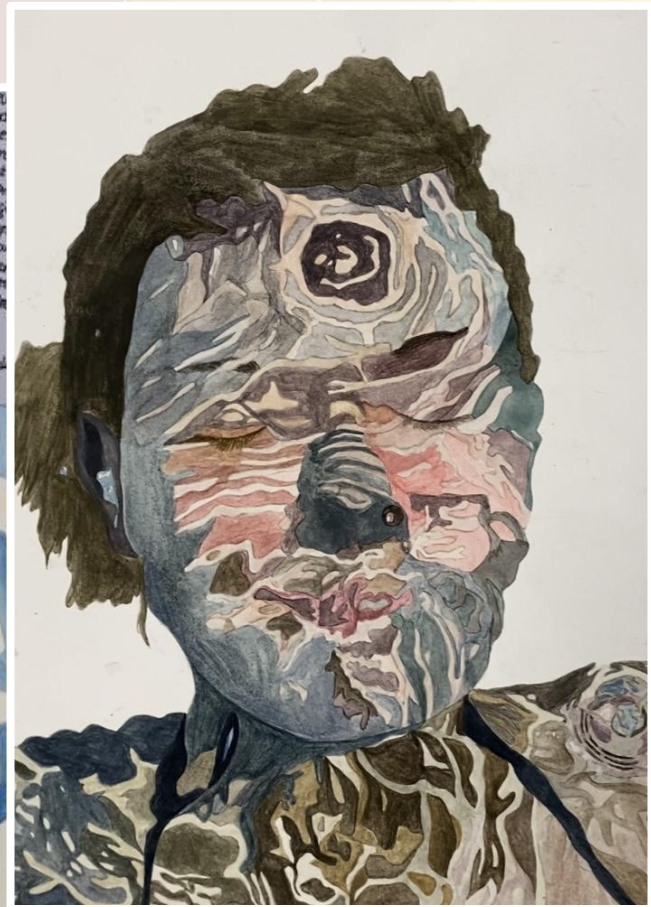
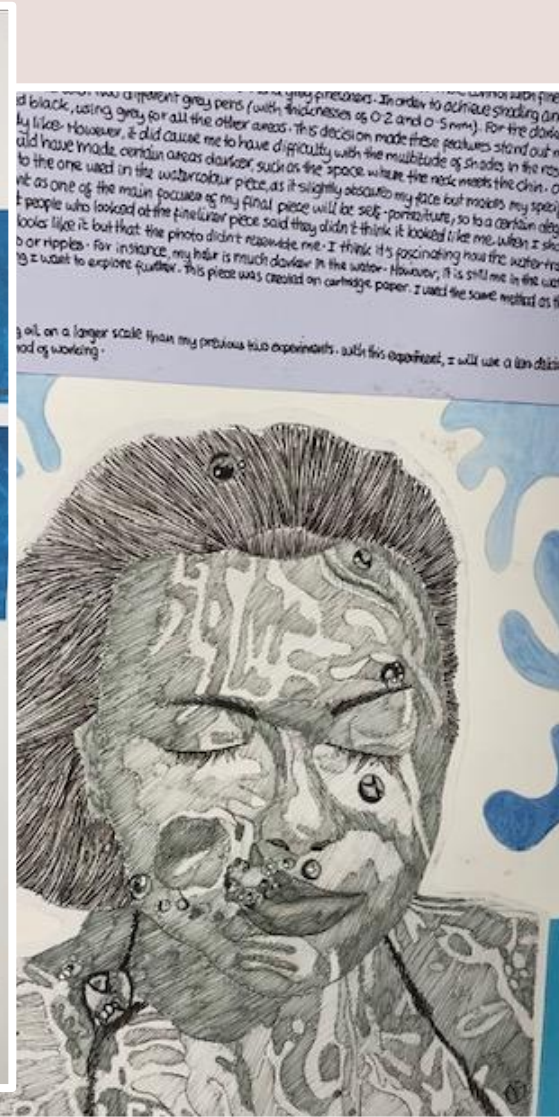
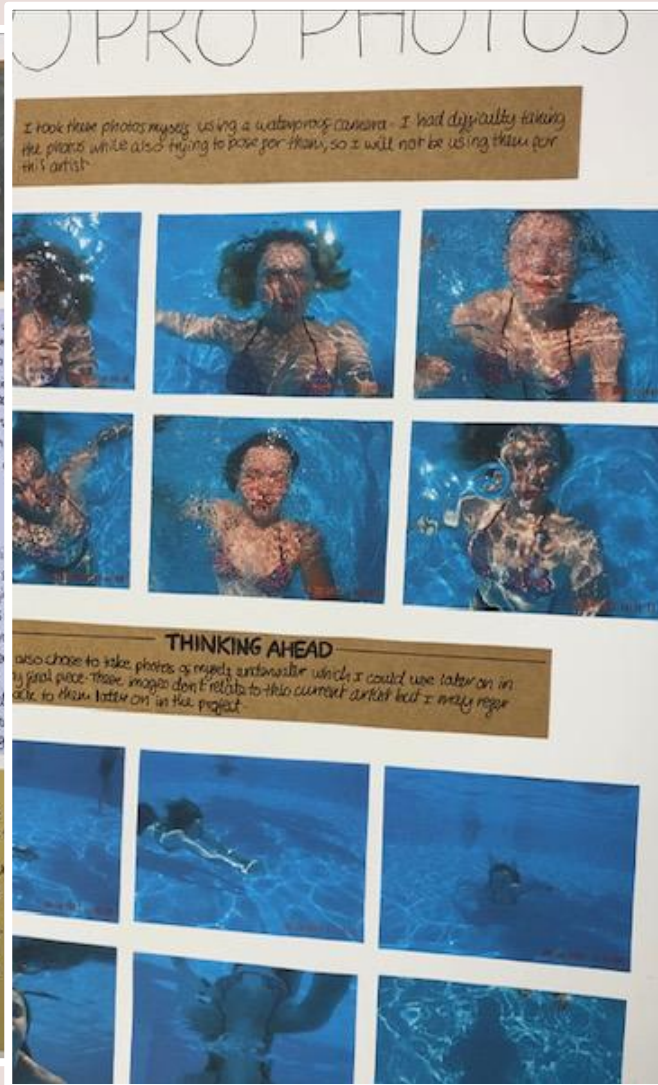


Past A-Level Student Declan Evans



Artist researched: Andre Desjardins

artist research



Past A-Level work by student Clara Moore based on Linda Strid

artist research



Past A-Level Student Leah Grennan



Past A-Level Student Skye Timbrell

media experimentation



Past A-Level Student Deborah Omokorede



Past A-Level
Student Blaise
Delahunty-
Forrest

media experimentation

resolving ideas

Past A-Level Student Jessica Mehew

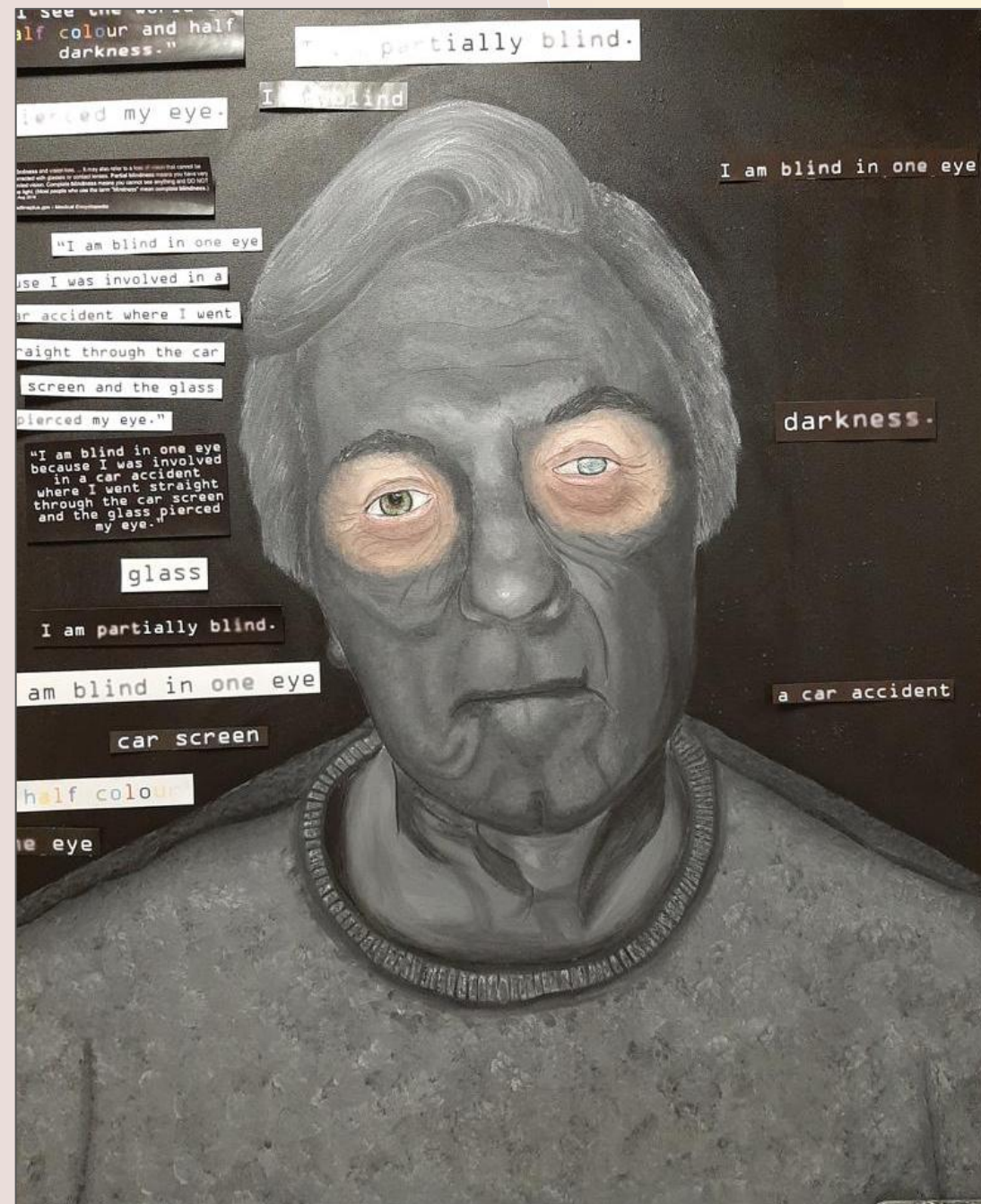


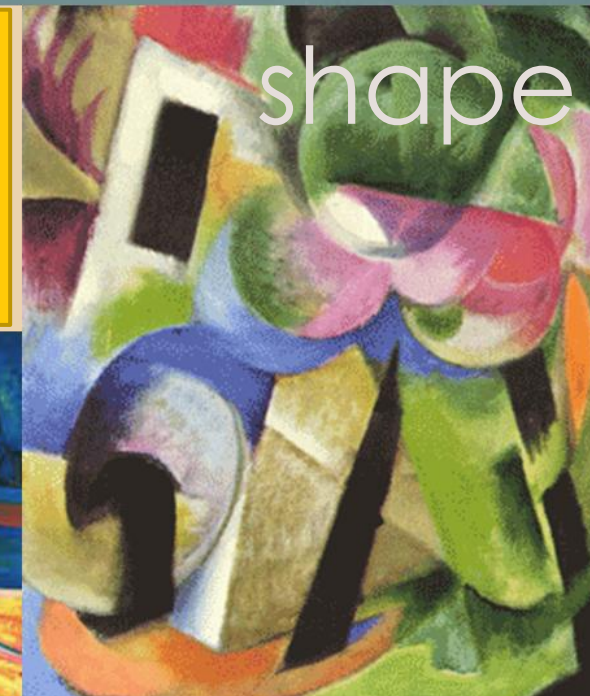
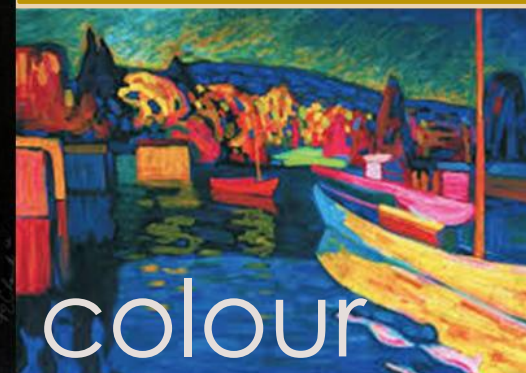
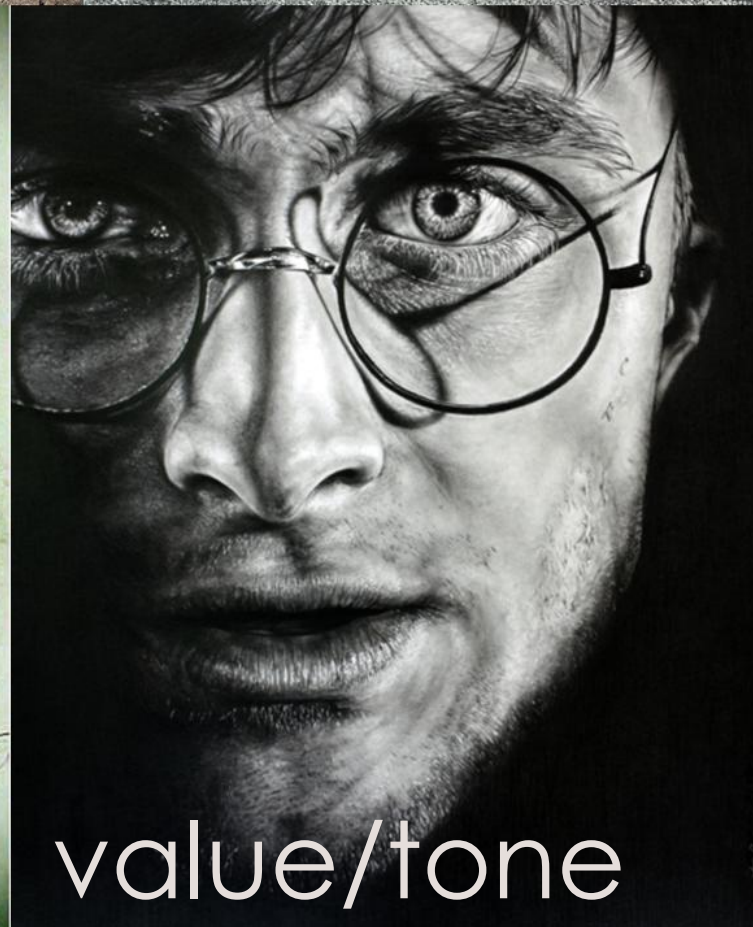
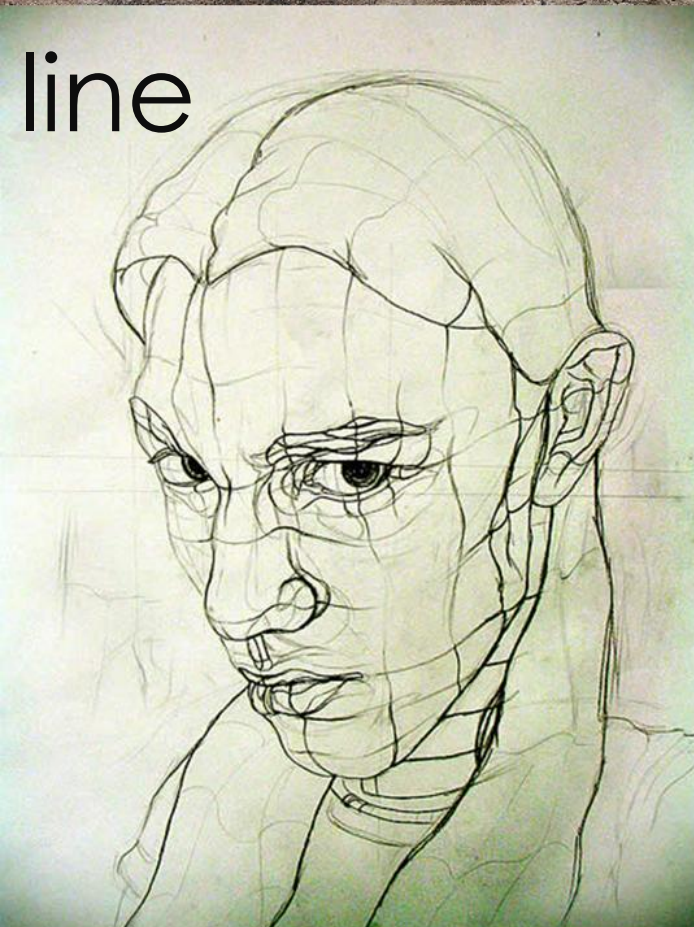
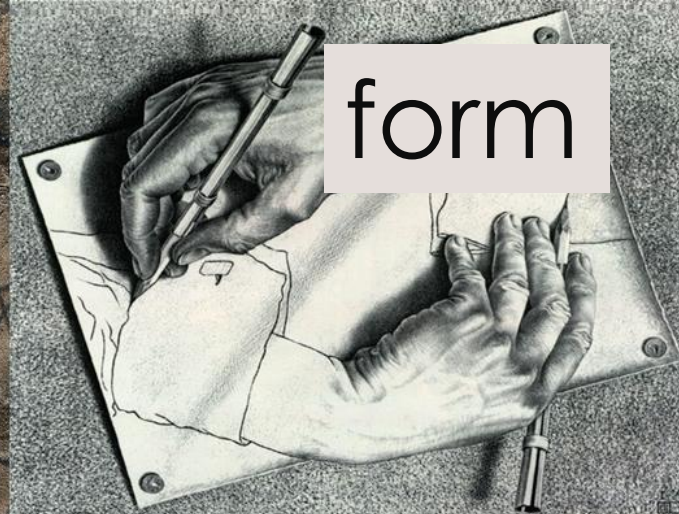
Past A-Level Student Una Clifford



final response

Past A-Level Student Precious Chidzomba







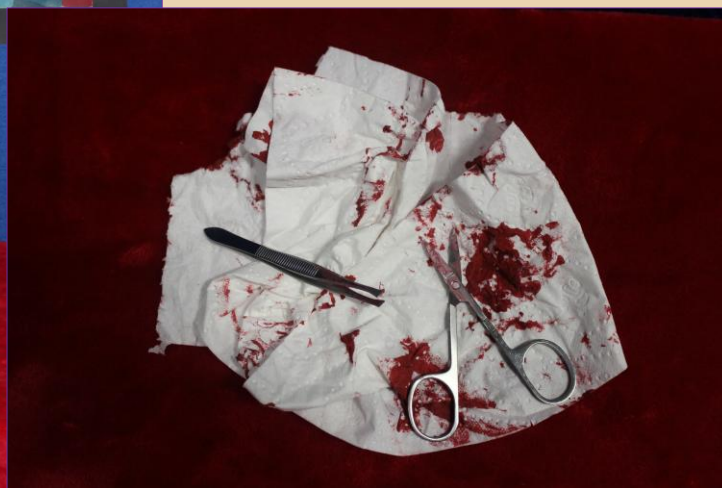
Past A-Level Students
Clodagh Delahunty-
Forrest and Precious
Chidzomba



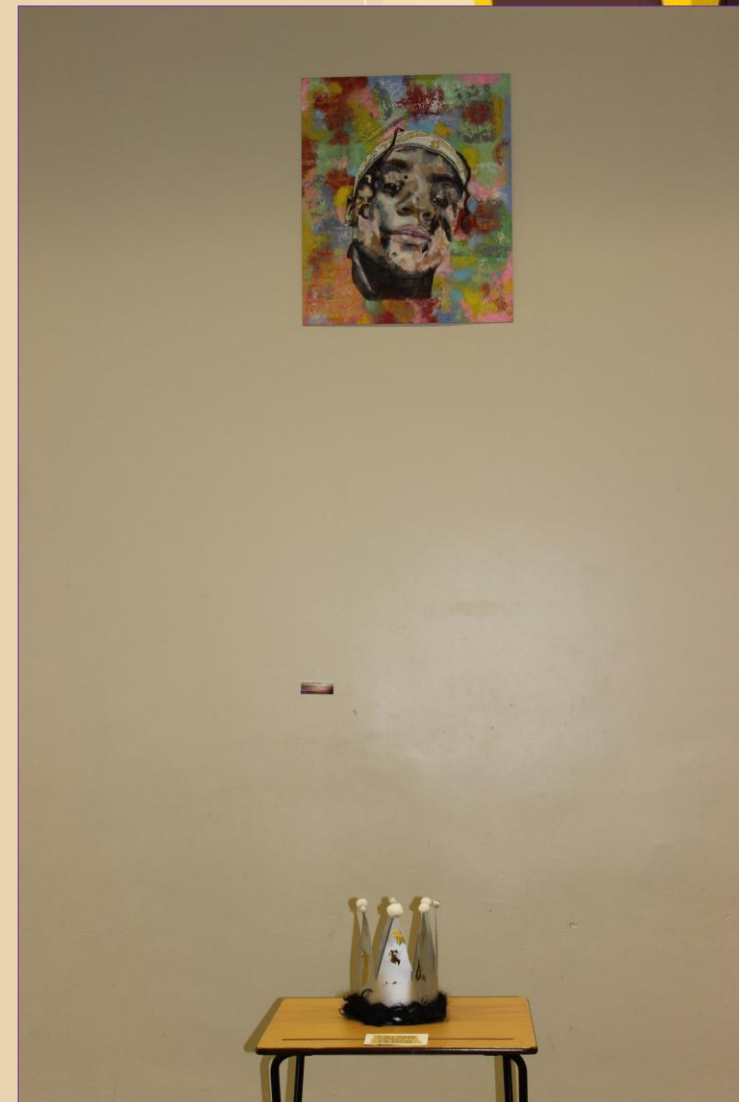
exhibition skills



Past A-Level Students
Sophie McGeough
and Precious
Chidzomba



exhibition skills





Past A-Level Student Precious Chidzomba

exhibition skills

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- 2. Personal Study:** Usually a written essay, which can be between 1,000 and 6,000 words on a topic of your own choice. This must closely reflect your work and link to your interests/theme/area of study. They have a high content of illustrative work.



Can't help myself

By Sun Yuan and Peng Yu

Sun Yuan and Peng Yu both studied oil painting at the Central Academy of Fine Arts, Beijing. They began collaborating in the 2000s and used art to comment critically on political constructs, freedom, and democracy. Their large-scale installations spark controversy for using human and animal material when opposing political activity and moral boundaries.

'*Can't help myself*', the piece I want to look at, is an installation that was revealed to the public in 2016. They modified a robotic arm, which is often used in car manufacturing, by adding a shovel to the end of the mechanism. Yuan and Yu had designed different movements for the machine to mimic the normal movements of a human. Some examples they had labeled are "*scratch an itch*," and "*bow and shake*."¹ They isolate the machine from the public by an acrylic partition. The machine was then surrounded in animal blood, which the machine attempts to sweep inwards.



<https://hannahrooseprendergast.com/sun-yuan-peng-yu-cant-help-myself/>

I chose to research this machine due to its movements: The artist's humanized the machine through the robot's erratic gestures and it appears to be struggling to scoop the animal blood towards itself. This can be seen through the abrupt spins and flails breaking up, and in contrast to, the machines controlled, rhythmic engineered movements. The spins interrupt a series of slow melancholic movements to show how the machine is getting bored and frustrated with its lack of progress. There is a sense of desperation and hopelessness as it is trying to clean up its mess but as it turns its attention away, the blood just seeps back. It is almost trapped in a cycle with no progress.

¹<https://www.guggenheim.org/artwork/34812>

Key Elements

The colours used are similar in tone to imply consistency. All colours are also realistic (the sky is blue, and the brick is stone as it would be at the time).

The sky is in 3 distinct layers of colour, again keeping in line with the structured architecture within the painting.

The city itself is imaginary. The main, thought to be religious, building at the centre, with the other buildings located around it in the distance. The central monument resembles a historical site called Tempio di S. Pietro, located in Rome.



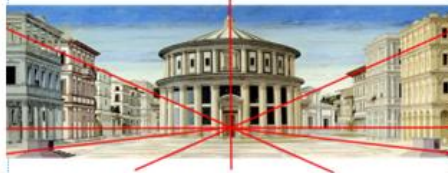
The painting includes no people and no nature—the focus is solely on the perfection of the structural aspects of the city. This is emphasized by the empty plinths. That would usually adorn a statue. This adds to the emptiness of the city, making it feel vast and abandoned, even though it looks new.

The painting reflects the ideals of Renaissance artists at the time—they used Roman monuments as influences for their paintings and architecture.

Artistic Elements

The whole painting is symmetrical vertically, a mirror line can be drawn directly down the centre of the central building on both sides would be completely symmetrical. The only difference being the heights of the buildings in the very back that disappear into the horizon line. This creates balance.

The door of the main building is the vanishing point, with all lines leading to it. This door is also slightly ajar, creating darkness - emphasising the vanishing point.



A sense of depth and space are created within the painting, due to the use of one-point perspective. The buildings go back into the distance, giving the illusion of a three-dimensional space—adding to the realism.

The central building is in the shape of concentric circles and its peak is the central point of the painting.



her in this state of stillness. With nothing beyond, the viewer gets the sense that nature is suffocating Ophelia and although she appears to be looking at the sky, really, she sees nothing, because she is dead.



Her facial expression isn't one of happiness, but it isn't pain or suffering either. She's waiting for death to release her.

Ophelia's hands are reaching up and are open. In my opinion, there is a religious tone to this. Jesus is often painted with his arms outstretched towards Heaven. In Crucifixion paintings, Jesus' arms are spread and he is looking up at the sky, accepting his fate and awaiting God. Ophelia also has her arms reaching out, upwards, despite the fact that she is *dead*, as if being patient under the water. Milton is suggesting, through her pose, that Ophelia is accepting of her fate and even welcoming it, which fits with the context of this being her suicide. We can almost picture her hopes of peace that come with death, similar to Jesus' peace in Heaven after a life of persecution.

COMPOSITION



The strength of nature is exemplified in the painting through the use of the Golden Ratio and Rule of Thirds. The backdrop of trees and bushes curve around the piece towards the front left side of the composition. Ophelia's face rests just above the centre of the Golden Ratio, drawing the viewer's attention immediately to her and her story. Nature is everywhere and it guides the eye, as if the forest has allowed them to witness Ophelia's death.

pg. 13



The cover of nature is broken up by the water travelling through the middle and bottom thirds at a slight angle. Ophelia's dress straddles the centre and bottom thirds, travelling along the horizontal bottom third line. The bulk of the foliage is placed in the top and bottom thirds, (horizontally) allowing the painting to feel encompassed by nature while still retaining a distinctive portraiture and storytelling aspect in and at the centre.



The river banks on either side of Ophelia form leading lines, guiding the viewer to create a sense of flow and movement as she floats parallel to them.

OPHELIA AND WATER

The water itself is personified by Queen Gertrude as being the killer of Ophelia, making her dress so heavy that it pulled her under. If she was alive there would be some kind of movement or rippling. Water is a part of nature, but the fact that it has no movement symbolises that death is present in the scene. Ophelia is being carried and almost supported by the river, while its ultimate purpose is to end her suffering. In the most obvious way, the water is the killer. However, in the romantic mood of the painting, water is her saviour/means of escape.



This piece⁹ is a little different and doesn't have as many obvious contrasts. The woman in the artwork appears to be experiencing domestic abuse: others see a happy loving relationship as he gives her flowers, but behind closed doors he is punching her which she has sadly become numb to. This makes me feel helplessness as I feel like the woman and I are defenceless and unable to react. The male arm in the piece is a vivid orange tone which is the same colour as the hair of the victim, yet her skin tone is ghostly and white which could represent the vulnerability and powerlessness she has. The use of the same orange tones of the arm and hair could represent the control he has over her. The black clothing also could represent the lifelessness she feels as it appears she is dressed for a funeral. The composition of this piece is a straight horizontal line which passes through the middle of the image. The arm, moving into the flowers flying out of the original bunch, and the hair, create movement from the right of the piece to the left. This could show the power and motion of his strength when abusing her as we follow the male arm across the piece until it reaches her face. I feel like this piece represents domestic abuse and how the female in the digital painting is expected to take it and how, on the surface to anyone else, the relationship would seem loving symbolised through the roses. The powerful physicality of the horizontal gesture is disguised and masked by the flowers - this is power and fragility, dominance and submission. The removal of the eyes, for me, emphasises this further as the woman's identity is hidden. The use of colour affirms the muted identity of the female whilst reminding the viewer of her previous life and passion through the colour of her hair.

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Frida Kahlo was a Mexican artist whose main form of work was paintings, out of the 143 works, 55 were self-portraits. The themes she based on her work on was her own personal experiences including marriage, miscarriage and the operations she underwent from many different diseases she caught as a child and growing up. Ultimately, she was depicting the pain that she experienced throughout her whole life and career. Her work is affiliated with many different art movements including surrealism, magical surrealism, symbolism and modern art. Some influences for her work were surrealism and Diego Rivera. Kahlo admired Rivera and his work and eventually married him in 1929.



This artwork that she created was a part of the naive art period which means simple and unaffected. This piece was made in 1940 and titled 'Self-portrait with thorn necklace and hummingbird'. My initial thoughts about this piece was that Kahlo was trying to send a message that she was unaffected by her divorce and the end of her affair which happened around this time, that she was calm and unbothered by these events. However, after researching the meanings behind this work and gaining understanding of the thorn necklace and the hummingbird, both juxtaposing each other, I strongly believe that she is trying to say that she is in pain and hurting. This continues to follow the dark themes in her work. She also is comforting herself by using the hummingbird as symbolism for good luck. Kahlo is portraying herself as how she wants to be in the future but also presently that her current feelings are almost a weight keeping her down. The thorn necklace could further support her suffering as it can be seen as religious imagery taken from Jesus' death and the crown of thorns.

WHAT DOES THIS LOOK LIKE?

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- 2. Personal Study:** Usually a written essay, which can be up to 6,000 words on a topic of your own choice. This must closely reflect your work and link to your interests/theme/area of study. They have a high content of illustrative work.
- 3. Externally Assessed Assignment:** A final assignment chosen by you after consultation with your teacher. This is carried out under controlled conditions of supervised time, which will be fifteen hours in total.





INSTRUCTIONS TO TEACHERS

- The 15 hours supervised time can be scheduled at any time provided that it is held one session of at least 2-3 hours in duration.
- Time given to candidates for preparatory work can be determined by centres.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- There are seven themes in this paper. You may choose any theme.
- After you choose a theme, choose one option (A, B, C, D, E or F).
- All options are available for all specifications.
- During the 15 hours supervised time, you are required to demonstrate your ability to select your theme and produce your submission(s) for selection by your preparatory work.

INFORMATION

- The total mark for your preparatory work and submission(s) is 80.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- You will be given a period of time to plan and prepare your work before the 15 hours of supervised time.
- This document consists of 20 pages.

Theme 1

Circles and Curves

'Circles and curves' have been extensively used by artists, designers and craftspeople.

Respond to **one** from (a), (b), (c), (d) or (e).

(a) Round, spherical, rotund, circular, arc, bend, twist, loop, coil, spiral...

(b)



(c)

"An attempt at visualising the Fourth Dimension: Take a point, stretch it into a line, curl it into a circle, twist it into a sphere, and punch through the sphere."

Albert Einstein, 1879–1955

(d) A mathematical society is offering commissions for art, design, digital presentation and craft in response to the following brief.

Explore, develop and produce a design for a mixed-media artwork to be displayed in the entry area of the mathematical society headquarters. The design should be based on 'circles and curves'. The final piece should fit onto a wall 5 m × 5 m. You are required to produce scaled designs that explore the theme using appropriate materials.

(e) The use of circles and curves can be found in the work of practitioners such as:

Kenneth Noland, Bridget Riley, Frank Lloyd Wright, Jean Paul Gaultier and Vladimir Tatlin

Either

- (i) In a medium of your choice, make several studies which explore this theme and produce a commentary on your selected context and techniques.

Or

- (ii) Design an exhibition of selected practitioners on the theme of 'circles and curves'. You should include written analysis of key works and related promotional material.

[80]



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INSTRUCTIONS TO TEACHERS

- The 15 hours supervised time can be scheduled at any time provided that at least one session is at least 2-3 hours in duration.
- Time given to candidates for preparatory work can be determined by schools.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- There are seven themes in this paper. You may choose any theme.
- From your chosen theme, choose one option (A, B, C, D, E or F).
- All options are available for all specifications.
- During the 15 hours supervised time, you are required to demonstrate your ability to select your theme and produce your outcome(s) (as related to your preparatory work).

INFORMATION

- The total mark for your preparatory work and outcome(s) is 88.
- The marks for each question are shown in brackets [].
- You will be given a period of time to plan and prepare your work before the 15 hours of supervised time.
- This document consists of 20 pages.

'Nostalgia' has been a popular source of inspiration for artists, designers and craftspeople.

Respond to **one** from (a), (b), (c), (d) or (e).

(a) Historic, the past, childhood, vintage, retro, sentimental, yearning, memory, evocative...

(b)



A Level Fine Art

Results:

A Level Fine Art

2024 – 2026: 100% A* – C (7 students)

2023 – 2025: 100% A – D (4 students)

2022 – 2024: 80% A – B (5 students)

2021 – 2023: 100% A – C (6 students)

2020 – 2022: 92% A – C (13 students)

2019 – 2021: 100% A* – B (3 students)



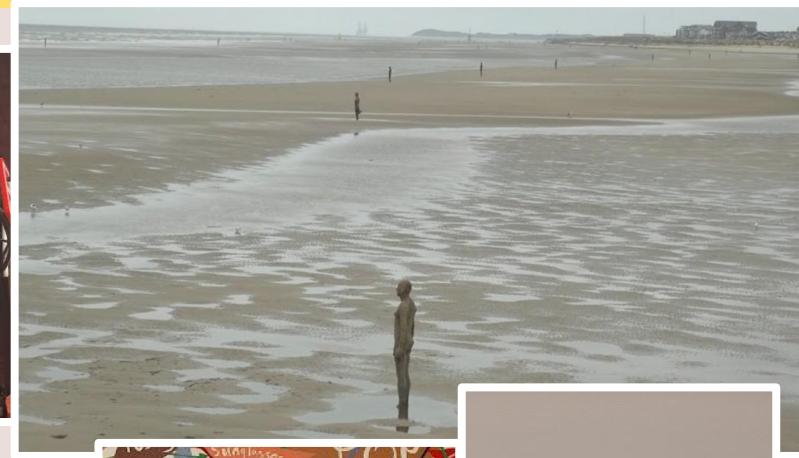
CAMBRIDGE
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A Level Fine Art

Visits

- Crosby Beach
- The New Art Gallery Walsall
- Birmingham Museum and Art Gallery
- Tate Britain
- Tate Modern
- Walker Gallery, World Museum, Liverpool



OCR A Level Fine Art

Qualities required:

- Creativity and Imagination
- Passionate
- Observant / an eye for detail
- Curiosity and Questioning nature
- Persistence, patience and flexibility
- Time management
- Communication skills
- Technical and creative skills



Writing / Analytical

- Art Curriculum Writer
- Art Historian
- Art Critic
- Arts Administrator
- Arts and Cultural Planner
- Website Owner / Blogger
- Graphic Novel Author

Graphic Design

- Advertising Director
- Logo / Branding Designer
- Advertisement Designer
- Sign Writer
- Magazine Layout Designer
- Book / eBook Designer
- Packaging Designer
- Calendar / Stationery / Wallpaper Designer
- Typographer

3D Product Design

- Industrial Designer / Bridge Designer
- Toy Designer / Kite Designer / Utensil Designer
- Miniature Model Maker / Mock-up Artist
- Stained Glass Window Designer
- Prop Designer
- Food Product Designer
- Potter / Ceramic Designer
- Wood Turner / Carver
- Mosaic Designer
- Jeweller
- Weaver
- Glass Artist

Fine Art

- Airbrush Artist / Spray Painter
- Architectural Illustrator
- Book Illustrator
- Graphic Illustrator

Fashion / Textiles

- Fibre Artist
- Accessory Designer (Shoes / Bags / Hats)
- Dressmaker
- Embroiderer
- Fashion Consultant
- Fashion Designer / Sports Apparel Designer
- Fashion Merchandising
- Pattern Maker
- Costume Designer
- Quilt / Rug / Linen Designer
- Fabric / Textile Designer
- T-Shirt Designer

Spatial Design

- Architect
- Landscape Architect
- Urban Designer / Town Planner
- Playground / Theme Park / Sports Arena / Golf Course Designer
- Interior Designer / Decorator
- Set / Stage Design

Digital / Multi-Media

- Animator
- Concept Artist
- Digital Illustrator
- Digital 3D Modeller
- Web Designer
- iPhone / Android App Designer
- Television / Film Producer
- Documentary Filmmaker
- Camera Operator
- Film Editor
- Special Effects Designer
- Video Game Design
- YouTube Video Creator

Photography

- Advertising Photographer
- Fashion Photographer
- Photo Journalist
- Food Photographer
- Portrait Photographer
- Underwater Photographer
- Wedding Photographer
- Stock Photo Seller
- Director of Photography

Fine Art

- Airbrush Artist / Spray Painter
- Architectural Illustrator
- Book Illustrator
- Graphic Illustrator
- Technical / Textbook Illustrator
- Story Board Illustrator
- Cartoonist / Caricaturist
- Commercial Artist
- Fine Artist (Painter)
- Printmaker / Screen Printer
- Courtroom Artist
- Art Conservationist
- Special Effects Makeup
- Mural Artist
- Tattoo Artist

Organisation / People Management

- Art School Director
- Primary / Elementary Teacher
- Middle / High School Art Teacher
- University Lecturer / Professor
- Private Art Instructor
- Art Therapist
- Art Dealer
- Artist Agent
- Art Supplies Retailer

- Photo Journalist
- Food Photographer
- Portrait Photographer
- Underwater Photographer
- Wedding Photographer
- Stock Photo Seller
- Director of Photography
- Video Game Design
- YouTube Video Creator

Arranging / Display

- Food Stylist
- Floral Arranger
- Display and Exhibition Planner
- Art / Design / Colour Consultant
- Gallery Owner / Assistant
- Museum Curator
- Personal Stylist
- Picture Framer
- Online Curator

Any Other Career!

Art can be great preparation for any career that requires fine motor skills, presentation skills, an eye for aesthetics and creative thinking!



PAST STUDENTS

- York St. John University: BA Animation
- University of Brighton: BA Animation
- University of Warwick: BSC Bio Medical Science
- University of Staffordshire: BA Fine Art
- Birmingham City University: BA Fine Art
- University of Staffordshire: BA Cartoon and Comic Arts



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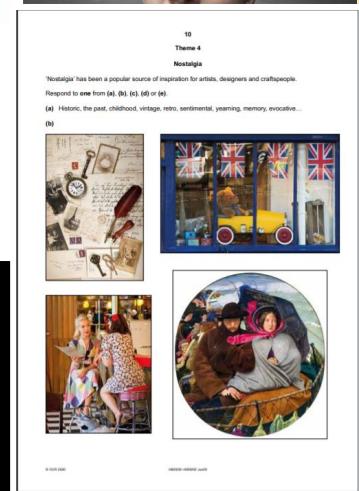
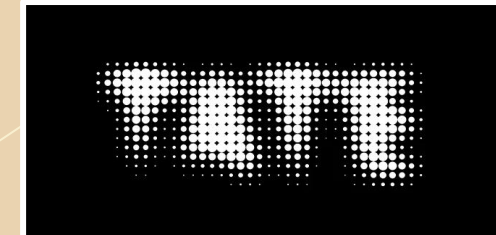
her facial expression with one of happiness, but it isn't one of anything either. They're waiting for death to release her.

Ophelia's hands are reaching up and are open. In my opinion, there is a religious tone to this. Jesus is often painted with his arms outstretched towards Heaven. In Christian paintings, Jesus' arms are spread and he is looking up at the sky, accepting of his fate and smiling. God. Ophelia also has her arms reaching out, upwards, despite the fact that she is dead/dying as being pulled under the water. Milton is suggesting, through her pose that Ophelia is accepting of her fate and even welcoming it, which fits with the context of the being her suicide. We can almost picture her hopes of peace that come with death, similar to Jesus' peace in Heaven after a life of persecution.

COMPOSITION



The strength of nature is exemplified in the painting through the use of the Golden Ratio and Rule of Thirds. The backdrops of trees and bushes curve around the scene towards the front.

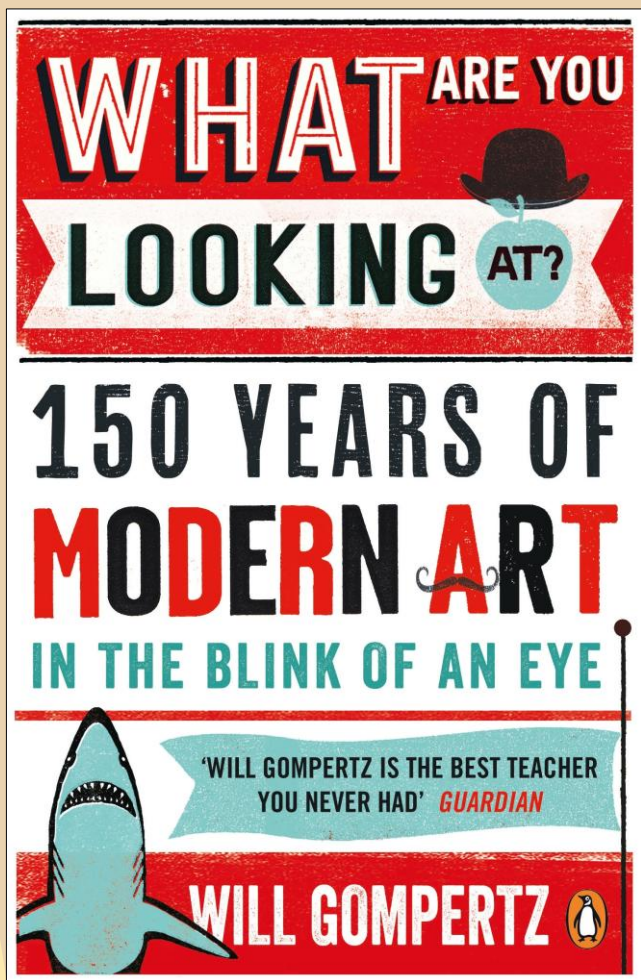


Sound advice....

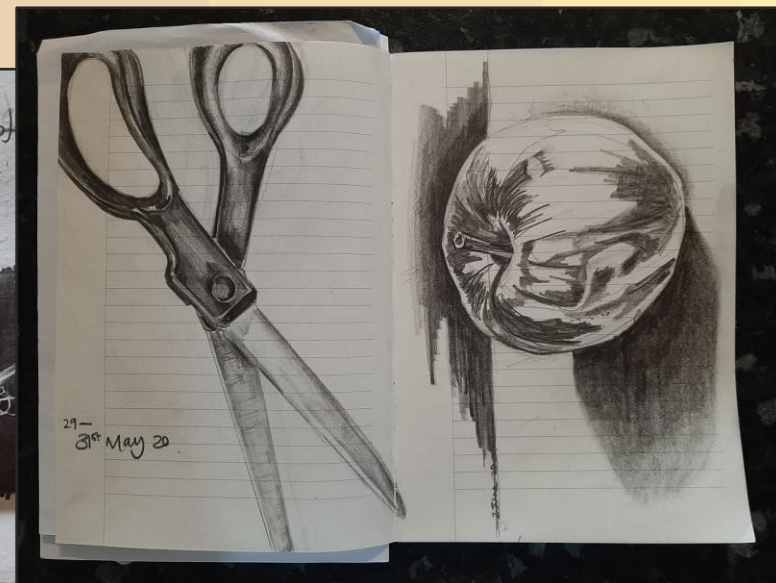
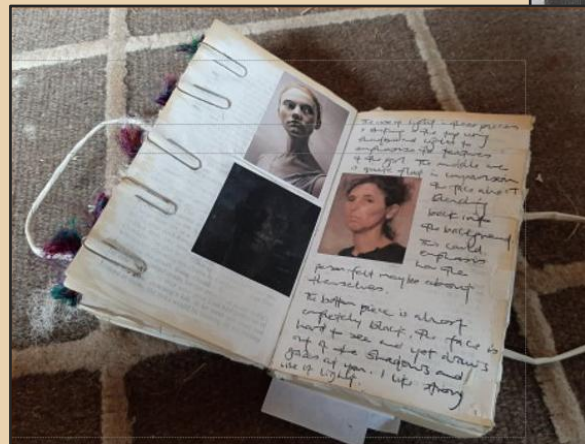
- Pace your workload
- Be curious
- Look outside yourself
- Enjoy the work that you do



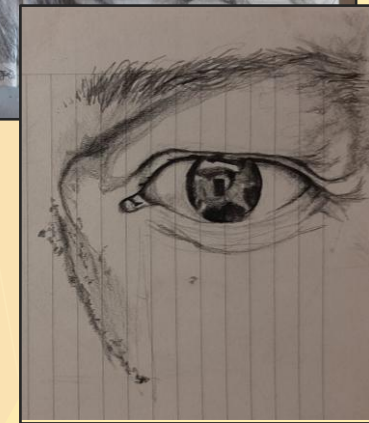
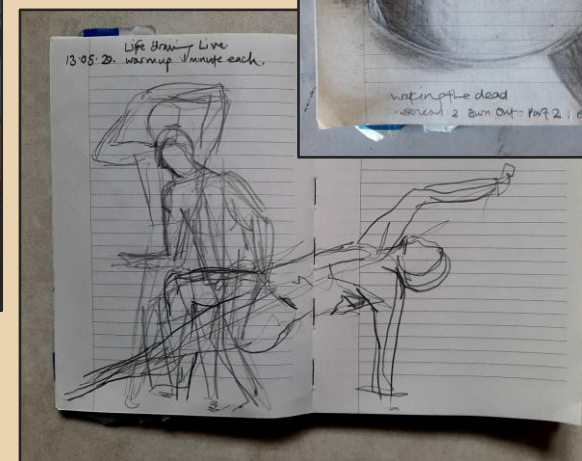
BOOK



PRACTICAL WORK



Sketch, sketch and sketch some more. Quick sketches, sketches for 5 mins, 30 mins, hour. Sketch moving objects, still objects, cans, bottles, landscapes, fruit, people, buildings, your room..... anything.



A Level
Fine Art



CAMBRIDGE
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so we can keep
in touch.



Mrs Crook and Mrs Kaur