



Curriculum Detail: Art

Year 7 students develop their observational drawing skills and knowledge of the subject's formal elements, including perspective and proportion, through the depiction of shape and form using a full range of tones. Students learn about colour mixing and theory and develop an understanding of primary, secondary and complementary colours; chalk pastels are used to display tonal contrast in warm and cool shades. After examining the works of a number of artists, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate their skills and understanding through the observational painting of a still life.

Through depicting animals, students learn to simplify and redefine their drawings. They learn about pattern and further explore colour by examining artefacts such as North American totem poles. A ceramics project allows students to investigate the construction and joining of clay slabs and to look at surface decoration techniques before designing and producing an item themselves (a section of totem pole, for example).

In examining portraiture, students become familiar with the proportions of the human face, using B grade pencils to illustrate the shape and form of the features in a range of tonal contrasts. Students learn about compositional elements such as background and foreground and how these can add meaning to portraits. They look at the work of other artists and how this can influence their own work, take digital photographs and manipulate images using Adobe Photoshop.

In Year 8, students look at the work of a contemporary artist such as Brenda Wholey and, using this for inspiration, develop their own designs featuring a variety of surface decoration techniques. They explore a particular style and genre (for example, surrealist landscape painting) and learn to use both primary and secondary sources as well as a variety of media and techniques. They further develop their understanding of composition and learn how to create depth using one-point perspective. Students create a series of animations using different techniques to produce a narrative cartoon strip, inspired by the work of a comic book artist or graphic novelist such as Frank Miller. They learn how to create an animation sequence using zoetrope and praxinoscope techniques as well as photographic stop frame animation.

In Year 9, students examine styles of illustration and develop their understanding of the work of artists associated with a particular movement, style or period (for example, art nouveau). They then examine the way this work has influenced the style of a contemporary artist (such as the illustrator Paul Harvey). After collecting visual information connected with a particular theme (for example, identity), students further develop their skills by drawing from observation. They then produce their final pieces, based around the explored theme and including elements from both sources of inspiration (e.g. art nouveau and Paul Harvey); this process tests students' design and watercolour skills as they experiment with layout and lettering.

Year 10 students develop their understanding of the proportions of the figure when drawing from primary and secondary sources and explore how other artists have looked at the human figure in their work. They explore different techniques to create a sculpture from wire, card and paper pulp and decorate it using a dry brush technique to create a bronze-effect surface. Graphic design influences such as the poster designs of Rodchenko and the Russian Constructivists are explored along with different lettering styles as students learn how to use mixed media, montage and collage techniques. Students build on this knowledge to create poster designs using cut paper technique to promote the college's Student Voice forum.

Manmade and natural forms are examined and contrasted; students visit a public space such as Kew Gardens and produce carefully-observed drawings using tone and mark-making techniques. Detailed visual and written analyses of other artists' work, showing awareness of historical context, are produced; students demonstrate their ability to write about their own work and that of others showing awareness of intention and audience. They develop ideas, experiment with different mediums and formal elements and make selections appropriate to their intentions, creating oil pastels which illustrate their personal responses.

Further exploration of manmade and natural forms is enabled through the examination of a specific genre depicted using a particular style, e.g. cubist still life. Students might make drawings and take photographs of musical instruments, for example, before going on to describe, analyse and respond to the work of artists such as Pablo Picasso, Roy Lichtenstein and Gabriel Orozco. Students are encouraged to incorporate influences along with their own observations in experimenting with collage and mixed-media techniques to create designs using materials such as paper, card, wallpaper, ink and paint. A visit to the National Portrait Gallery, where students copy and describe the work of portrait artists and photographers, leads to the production of composition sketches based on drawings and photographs. A scaled-up image of a photographed self-portrait is produced using black and white paint to explore effects such as chiaroscuro. Students create a final piece exploring ideas shaped by independent research.

In Year 11, students develop personal work based on a theme such as "I, Me, Mine." They look at a variety of vanitas still lifes and portraits and, over a period of ten weeks, create portfolios of research, experimentation and development that lead to the creation of final examination pieces. Coursework and examination pieces are displayed in an exhibition in June.