

art (fine art)

A Level

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Exam board: Pearson Edexcel



What is this subject about?

Fine Art A Level is all about enabling you to develop exciting and innovative visual responses to the observed world. You will be taught to develop essential skills that will help you to challenge your own perceptions. You will also investigate different cultures, art history and other influences to inspire your work and to develop your understanding of how to generate meaning with art. This course will enable you to develop varied ideas using unexpected approaches.

What will I study over the two years?

In this course, drawing from observation forms the basis of the fine art development process, from visual research to final outcomes. You will be encouraged to experiment with the possibilities of traditional and non-traditional media in 2D and 3D. You will learn many new and challenging approaches to drawing and painting from observed subjects and your sketchbooks will be filled with sustained and self-focused explorations as you explore the formal elements of line, tone, colour, composition, shape and texture. Contextual understanding is vital and is developed through the individual and class study of art history through museums trips, contemporary art shows, architecture, literature and music. You will also investigate nature and the man-made world through self-devised visual research.

The skills you have learned in the first year provide a starting point for your second year. These skills will enable you, with guidance, to pursue your own individual creative and visual ideas. You will choose your own starting points for the practical portfolio, and by analysing and refining your work, you will work to produce ambitious, challenging and thoughtful responses.

In addition to your practical portfolio work you will also complete a written and illustrated related study of between one thousand and three thousand words.

How is the course assessed?

Assessment is 60% coursework, in the form of a Personal Investigation which is presented as an art portfolio and practical outcome(s). There are also marks allocated to a written Related Study (20% of the coursework grade). In addition to the coursework there is an Externally Set practical which is worth 40% of the overall A Level mark. Projects are marked by the teachers and externally moderated by the examination board.

What skills will I need and develop in this course?

You will need to have good drawing skills, a genuine interest in art and a real love for experimenting with new ways of working. We also want you to really enjoy looking at the work of other artists and questioning why they made their work in a particular way. Good written analytical skills are an advantage.

What can the course lead to in terms of higher education and future careers?

Students who study this course go on to a range of different art and design degree courses and Art Foundation. Fine Art A Level will build your confidence and open up many different creative pathways for you to explore.

Many of our students progress directly to degree courses in a wide range of subjects including: Jewellery Design, Architecture, Art History, Interior Design, Graphic Design, and Computer Game Design as well as Fine Art degrees. Applications to London art schools for Art Foundation courses are also popular.

What are the formal entry requirements for this course?

Aside from the general entry criteria that the College requires, you will also need to achieve a minimum of:

- Grade 4 in GCSE Art

Students who have not studied Art at GCSE can still achieve great success on this course. You will need to contact the Head of Department and complete some creative tasks that you will present to the team at enrolment. Enrolment will be at the discretion of the Head of Department.

What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?

The department offers optional life drawing evening classes for first and second year students. Gallery visits are also organised for all students across both years. Additional sessions exploring specialist techniques such as print-making may also be offered. At the end of the year we celebrate student achievement with a large exhibition and have a prize giving evening.

Subject combination advice:

Students who combine A Level Art with more academic subjects have found it to be a real asset to their programme as it promotes critical thinking, analytical and problem-solving skills.

A Level Art will equip you with broad transferable creative skills and can be studied alongside Photography, Fashion, 3D Design or Graphic Communication to build an excellent art foundation portfolio for degree level and apprenticeships. The workload of studying more than one practical subject should be considered.

What is the difference between A Level Art and BTEC Art and Design?

A Level Art is a Fine Art course. Essentially this means that unlike the BTEC course or A Level design courses you will do no design work. You will work to themes but will choose your own subject matter and response, rather than working to a set brief, as in Art & Design or design based A Levels. On the Fine Art course emphasis is placed on developing visual language skills to a very high level.