

Art

OCR GCE Fine Art (H601)

Head of Department: Mr Nikolas Arvanitis

Introduction

The Art School is an inspiring environment that encourages creativity; facilities are excellent, and the range of materials and techniques available is extensive. We treat our A-level students as young artists and expect them to think independently and put their work in context.

A-level Art allows students to extend their practical and theoretical skills, and opens the door to an incredibly wide range of creative careers such as architecture, fine art, history of art, design, publishing, television, film and theatre, to name just a few. The independence of mind, and the investigative, analytical and creative approach to problem solving that the course nurtures, are widely valued and highly transferable.

Subject Requirements

Grade 6 or above in Art at GCSE. We may consider candidates without Art GCSE if they can provide evidence of practical work that showcases their technical and conceptual abilities in the subject.

Course Outline

The two-year course is a logical continuation of GCSE Art. We follow OCR GCE Fine Art because it is the broadest and most inclusive specialism under the art and design umbrella, offering the greatest opportunities for our students. They can refine the traditional skills of drawing, painting and printmaking, but they can also work in film, digital art, animation, sculpture and installation. The specification allows students to investigate their interests and notions; possibilities develop through experimentation, refinement and selection. Students produce work that reflects their continued practical development. It is designed to encourage creativity, independence and an inquisitive approach to materials, techniques and ideas. Students are required to find personal direction and develop individual specialist skills.

The course is made up of two units, which are both marked internally and moderated externally.

The Personal Investigation (coursework) unit consists of two integrated elements: a portfolio of practical work and a related written study which explores the context in which the student's chosen practical area of study exists. Themes chosen are often conceptually broad and enable students to investigate their ideas by making and developing art and contextualising their practice. The related study is marked in its own right. This unit runs throughout the Lower Sixth and through the Michaelmas term of the Upper Sixth; it accounts for 60% of the A-level mark. Through this period, students are continually refining their skills in order to produce an original and resolved portfolio of work. Personal strengths are identified and then supported to refine them to a sophisticated level.

The Externally Set Task is released at the beginning of February and is completed in a 15-hour practical exam. Students respond to a question paper that provides them with a range of written and visual starting points, briefs and stimuli. From this, they select one to develop their work around. This task accounts for the final 40% of the A-level mark.

Higher Education and Careers

There are plenty of reasons to opt to study Art at A-level. It opens doors to creative subjects at a university, such as Architecture, Art, History of Art, Digital Animation, Games Design or Fashion. The A-level also encourages exploration, originality, risk-taking, independence, critical analysis and reflection, and an ability to think creatively to solve problems. These are transferable skills that are useful for success in all areas of study and in all working environments. In recent years our Art A-level students have been offered places at some of the best universities in the UK and the US to study an array of subjects. Central Saint Martins, the Bartlett School of Architecture UCL, Goldsmiths College, the Courtauld Institute of Art, St Andrews, and Parsons School of Design are just a few examples of our leavers' destinations.

What should I study alongside Art?

The broad specification and flexibility for students to incorporate the interests from all sorts of other fields of study means that Art goes well with any other subject, providing invaluable training in creative and critical thinking.

Is there anything else I should consider?

While Art A-level is not usually a requirement for Architecture, universities in the UK and abroad value the breadth and depth that an A-level Art course provides, as it allows students to produce a plethora of artistic outcomes showcasing their creative skills in many different media and techniques. Students applying for Architecture without Art are often required to submit a portfolio of work in support of their application and this involves significant independent work.