



# Introduction to A Level Fine Art



Please send any questions to Miss Morrison: [dmorrison@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:dmorrison@birchwoodhigh.org.uk).

We look forward to seeing your work in September.

Good luck and enjoy the tasks- let's get creative!

# Birchwood High School Specification



Exam Board: Edexcel

Website link: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/art-and-design-2015.html>

This is a linear course which means you will study the full A Level Specification over Year 12 & 13 completing coursework for the portfolio and then sit the exam at the end of Year 13.

## Component 1: Coursework Portfolio 60%.

Introductory project developing ideas on Portraiture and Still-life.

Personal Investigation, theme selected by you with preparatory work and practical outcomes.

Submission of an essay study of a minimum of 1000 words linked to your Personal investigation.

## Component 2: Externally Set Assignment (15 hour exam) 40%.

The Externally Set Assignment comprises an externally set theme with suggested starting points.

Students will need to develop their own personal work from this theme and related starting points.

The Externally Set Assignment paper is handed out on February 1<sup>st</sup> of each year when students will begin their preparatory studies, culminating in the final 15 hour period of sustained focus under examination conditions. The Externally Set Assignment is internally assessed, and externally moderated.

## Transition Tasks and getting organised

### **In practical terms, you will need a few things:-**

1. A good camera
2. Access to a colour printer, these are available in school if required
3. One A4 sketchbook for collecting ideas and inspiration.
4. A3 hard backed sketchbooks. We would prefer you to buy through Birchwood High school Art department as we have sourced the preferred size and paper quality required. We will send out specific information about prices at a later date.

Over the summer, in preparation for studying A Level Fine Art, you should ensure that you attempt at least some of the preparation tasks on the last page.

Start an ideas book in an A4 sketchbook as above, this book is for gathering any inspiration and ideas for possible topics you might explore in your artwork. There is not a minimum or maximum expectation with this task over the summer, but if you see something you like, or have an amazing idea pop it in your book!

These are some things you can include:

- Tear sheets from magazines, colours, patterns, photography, architecture, fashion...
- Drawings
- Notes from exhibitions or things you have seen that inspire you
- Design ideas
- Annotation with thoughts and inspiration

## **Suggested gallery visits/ virtual visits**

You could explore the collections at the following galleries:

National Portrait Gallery- **currently closed for renovation but excellent online resources.**

National Gallery an amazing range of work with lots of artwork that you will know.

Royal Academy of Art- inspiring paid exhibitions- including the Summer Exhibition open to amateurs and professionals with a huge range of amazing work.

The Tate Galleries, including Tate Modern, Tate Britain, Tate Liverpool and Tate St Ives- lots of free galleries, some excellent paid exhibitions and great online resources.

Saatchi Gallery- contemporary artwork exhibitions.

There are also numerous international galleries and many online events that you can get involved in.

## **Useful websites:**

<https://www.royalacademy.org.uk/>

<https://www.nationalgallery.org.uk/>

[https://thephotographersgallery.org.uk/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4tuR4-vj4gIVKRbTCh1JcQVBEEAAAYAAEgKajPD\\_BwE](https://thephotographersgallery.org.uk/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4tuR4-vj4gIVKRbTCh1JcQVBEEAAAYAAEgKajPD_BwE)

<https://www.npg.org.uk/>

[https://blog.britishmuseum.org/whats-on-at-the-british-museum-in-2019/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4tuR4-vj4gIVKRbTCh1JcQVBEEAAAYAAEgKpcvD\\_BwE](https://blog.britishmuseum.org/whats-on-at-the-british-museum-in-2019/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4tuR4-vj4gIVKRbTCh1JcQVBEEAAAYAAEgKpcvD_BwE)

<https://www.saatchigallery.com/>

[https://designmuseum.org/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4YHk7Ozi4gIVWYjVCh3XgAmLEAAAYASAAEgLz\\_PD\\_BwE](https://designmuseum.org/?gclid=EAIaIQobChMI4YHk7Ozi4gIVWYjVCh3XgAmLEAAAYASAAEgLz_PD_BwE)

<https://www.geffrye-museum.org.uk/>

<https://www.vam.ac.uk/>

## **Useful visuals:**

Sky Arts- Portrait artist of the year & Landscape artist of the year

Loving Vincent- stop-motion oil painted film about the life of Van Gogh, very inspiring! Cert: 12

Frida- dramatic film starring Salma Hayek and Alfred Molina about the life story of Frida Kahlo Cert: 15

Grayson Perry's Art Club- available on catch-up, 3 seasons of this, plus any of his previous programmes are also very inspiring!

## GCE Fine Art Summer preparation tasks.

Our starting point in year 12 will be **Portraits**. You will research a range of ideas and artists and respond to how those artists have explored the genre. The work you complete over the summer will be the starting point for your course work and will be marked as part of Component 1.

1. **Drawing:** This summer and from now on, take your sketchbook everywhere. You are an artist! Aim to do at least one drawing (of anything) a day as this is great practice in improving your accuracy when recording through drawing. Your work should demonstrate a confident approach to recording ideas using a range of media and techniques with consideration of composition including zooming in, overlapping, juxtaposition and working in different media. Show us your skills!
  - Plus, draw a range of **primary source studies** working quickly, recording faces around you; aim to fill an A3 page or 2 x A4 with several studies.
  - Plus, draw one detailed, tonal pencil **self-portrait** study to fill a page.
2. **Photography:** Photography is vital for recording from primary sources so be creative and make sure the photos are good quality!
  - You could present all photos taken as a **contact sheet** to help you select your best two photos to print larger. (contact sheet- small thumbnail prints, all on one page)

### Tips for taking interesting photographs

**COMPOSITION:** try taking pictures holding the camera **portrait** and **landscape**.

**Zoom:** make sure you take some photos where you really zoom in on a detail.

**Eye Level:** take a series of photographs where you alter the eye level. This will give you more foreground and less sky and vice versa.

**Rule of Thirds:** imagine your photograph is divided up into thirds. Move the subject of your photograph onto one of the points where the lines cross so that it is not always in the centre.

3. **Artists:** Research a range of **relevant artists** who have explored the genre- Portraiture.
  - **'Visit' galleries, museums and exhibitions**, to see a varied range of styles and techniques.
  - **Select one or more artists to research.** You could research any portrait artist of your own choice but ideas to get you started are... Jenny Saville, Daphne Todd, Tim Okamura, Rembrandt, Chuck Close, Vincent Van Gogh, Christian Hook...
  - Present **two portrait images** (printed in colour) by your researched artist with basic information; artist name, title of the work, media and technique used, size and date created. Make a real effort to find this out as this is a key part of your research.
  - **Annotate** the images explaining why you chose it and/ or why it is of interest to you.
  - **Describe** one of the portraits by each artist explaining the artist's use of the **formal elements** (colour, tone, line, texture, pattern, shape, form, composition).
  - Produce **one transcription** of your favourite portrait by one of your researched artists, selecting appropriate media and techniques. (A transcription is an accurate copy).

**GOOD LUCK and enjoy, we look forward to seeing you and your Portrait project preparation in September.**

**Have a lovely summer!**