

## History of Art summer work (spend about 4-5 hours)

### The Task

Please look at **THREE** different artworks by three different artists. You should try look at one painting, a piece of sculpture and one piece of architecture. It might be a really good idea to choose artworks that you have seen in a gallery (or buildings that you have visited). However, this is not necessary, particularly if the work you want to write about is not easily accessible (see notes below on visiting galleries).

### Formal Elements Analysis:

It would be a good idea to do the following as a word document (or equivalent). You might want to make some written notes first before you type them up!

Firstly, make a note of the artist's or architects name, the full title of the work and the date it was made. With architecture, you might want to consider the location as well. It would also be a good idea to include an image. Make some brief notes about each of the artworks that you look at. Use the following pointers to guide you:	
<b>Description:</b>	Can you describe the work of art? What's being shown? Do you recognise any of the characters depicted? If it's a landscape, how has nature being depicted (for example, wild or tamed?) With architecture, you might consider the form that the building takes. Is it large or small, intimidating, simple, decorative etc. If you are able, you could try to identify some of the features of a building, such as pediments or columns (this might be an opportunity to learn about the orders of architecture!).
<b>Materials &amp; Methods:</b>	What materials is it made from? What impact do you think the materials have? With sculpture you might want to research the properties of bronze, marble or wood (or other material if relevant). With paintings, you might consider the different types of brushwork that's being used. This is an opportunity to learn some new subject vocabulary such as impasto (meaning to paint thickly).
<b>Composition &amp; Colour:</b>	You could think about how the artwork or building is composed? Is it symmetrical or asymmetrical? How are your eyes lead around the piece? What kind of colour palette has been used in the work of art? How would you describe the colours (for example, warm or cool, complementary or monochromatic etc.
<b>Light &amp; Tone:</b>	You might consider the impact of light and tone on a piece of work. You might consider how this adds drama and theatricality or simply allows artists to create a greater sense of depth in their images.
<b>Spatial Recession:</b>	How do artists create the illusion of 3D space

<b>Contexts:</b>	You might also want to find out a little more about the artwork or building by considering things that might have influenced or inspired the artist / architect. For example, is it political in any way? Is there a significance about the date? Does it chime with other works of the period or go against them?
You can also add anything else that you feel is relevant. Bullet point notes are fine and, as a rough guide, you should aim to establish at least 10 key points about each of your chosen artworks.	

**OPTIONAL ACTIVITIES** – The following points are things that will help you prepare for the course and will also assist you in the task above.

### **1. Visiting Galleries (Both physically and digitally)**

We are reasonably spoilt in Cambridge with the amount of galleries that are local to us. Many of them you may have visited before. The summer will provide a fabulous opportunity to see artworks and exhibitions and there is nothing quite like the experience of seeing things first hand! Check out what's on in the following galleries and maybe try and visit at least one.

- The Fitzwilliam Museum**
- Kettle's Yard**
- The Heong Gallery (Downing College)**
- The Henry Moore Foundation (At Perry Green)**
- The Tate Britain**
- The Tate Modern**
- The Courtauld Institute**
- The National Gallery and National portrait Gallery**
- The Sainsbury Centre, Norwich**

However, there are also multiple opportunities to get to know collections online. Most, if not all galleries, will have fantastic resources that will allow you to explore their collections digitally. See the links below to get you started with this.

Most sites will also have really good educational sections that help you to explore key works of art. Reading these will help you to understand more about how we look at art and what aspects are important when considering visual analysis.

### **2. Keeping a Visual Sketchbook**

A little notebook (or sketchbook) can be really useful for collecting information in the field! Ideally, it should be at least A5 in size (easy to carry around) and can be used for collecting postcards, notes & information etc. It can also be used on the visits and trips that we undertake next year. I should emphasise that History of Art does not have any practical elements to it, however, you should be aware that keeping a sketchbook with notes and small studies can be extremely useful. When visiting galleries (virtually or physically) you should look out for anything that catches your

eye and perhaps make a quick sketch of it. This can help you to look more closely! You then might want to try and find out any useful information about the work of art (or architecture!).

### 3. Reading

Don't panic, I am not setting lots of reading but it might be useful to get hold of one of the key texts in preparation for the course. When you arrive in September you will be working with a number of text books, including ***A World History of Architecture*** and Mary Acton's ***Learning to Look at Painting***.

However, it is recommended that all students of History of Art purchase the following book: **Honour & Fleming 'A World History of Art' (Laurence King Publishing)**. This is also a core text (but not provided) and will be extremely useful for understanding the topics. A new copy can set you back about £40 but it is definitely okay to get a used copy (alternatively we do have copies in the library). You will be given a full reading list in September so don't go mad buying lots of books! However, do look out for any interesting articles about art online or in journals, magazines, and newspapers. You could also read a novel that gives an enjoyable overview of a particular period; try any of the following:

- ***Brunelleschi's Dome*** by Ross King (good for Florentine Renaissance)
- ***The Yellow House*** by Martin Gayford (discusses the turbulent relationship between Gauguin and Van Gogh)
- ***The Girl with A Pearl Earring*** (on Vermeer) by Tracy Chevalier
- ***The Moon and the Sixpence*** by Somerset Maugham (relating to the life of Gauguin).
- ***My Life with Picasso*** by Francois Gilot
- ***The Masterpiece*** by Emile Zola
- ***Light*** by Eva Figueas
- ***Rothko*** by Glyn Hughes

### 4. TV and Film

Unusual to find a teacher telling you to watch TV! Nevertheless, there are lots of programmes on Art, particularly if you subscribe to any of the streaming services. If you really want to get hold of a good series, you might consider purchasing: ***The Private Life of A Masterpiece Box Set***

A good website that contains lots of mini films is ***smarthistory***. They even have a section devoted to the A Level Course which is well worth a look before you start.

### How will this work be used in lessons?

The first section of the History of Art course will build upon 'ways of seeing' by exploring and building your visual analysis skills. The work completed in summer will provide a great foundation on which to build and will help you to familiarise with how we break down a work of art.