

Starting with confidence >>

Fine Art

The following is a list of activities you may like to do during your summer holidays, in preparation for studying A Level Fine Art.

Drawing

“So many artists are prepared to suffer for their art, yet so few are prepared to learn to draw”
Banksy

“It is often said Leonardo da Vinci drew so well because he knew about things; it is truer to say he knew about things because he drew so well.”

“I draw like other people bite their nails” Picasso

At the start of the course in September, you will be concentrating on mark-making skills and producing large scale observational drawings from 3D objects.

If you are going to work in a creative industry you need to be able to communicate your ideas in a visual way, but you also need to be able to record information to help you develop your ideas. If you feel unconfident with drawing or even just a bit out of practice, read on and try some of the exercises below.

Sketchbook

Keep a visual diary/sketchbook of your summer environments. Record the world around you visually and in writing. Try to complete a drawing a day from first hand observation (not from a secondary source such as a photograph). This will help you improve your drawing skills. Use a variety of materials if you can.

Visit

Go and visit galleries and art exhibitions. This will help you generate ideas for your work. Some galleries are free. Check the websites for the following:

- The National Gallery
- Saatchi Gallery
- Pallant House Gallery, Chichester
- de La Warr Pavilion, Bexhill
- Hannah Peschar Sculpture Garden
- Museum of Modern Art, Oxford
- The National Portrait Gallery
- Tate Britain/Tate Modern
- Brighton Museum and Art Gallery
- Turner Contemporary Gallery Margate
- Towner Art Gallery, Eastbourne
- Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge

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Golden Rules of Drawing

- Do not smudge your tone; allow the marks you make to be directional and visible to help convey form and texture.
- Do not draw lots of small objects spaced out and floating all over the page. Look at what is surrounding your subject and remember to include this to anchor your drawing. Look at your work from a distance to check you have sufficient contrast.
- Drawing can be recording evidence quickly in the form of accurate sketching or it can be long visual investigation, make sure you have a variety of styles.
- Plot the image lightly before you add detail, tone and texture. Be aware of the light source and record the darkest shadows first looking for the true blacks and working back through the tonal range. Avoid heavy outlines.
- You could also try drawing just in tone or dots or with a rubber on a tonal background.
- Think about the space you will fill before you start. Lightly plot the outer area of your subject ensuring you can capture it on the page, for example, when drawing a person you want to ensure their head does not go off the page, at the same time you do not want the drawing to be so small you cannot capture detail.
- Consider the material most appropriate to capture the characteristics of your drawing.
- If the subject is moving, several overlapping sketches may be the best option.
- Check your drawing by measuring and looking at negative space.

Mark-making

Try varying the type of mark you make to create texture and tone. For example, hard shiny surfaces are rendered with more solid marks and sharp contrast between tones. An orange's pitted surface may be represented with dots; soft textures may have less defined marks. Tone can be created by placing the marks closer together and using darker medium such as softer pencil. Directional marks can also help show form e.g. curved hatching can help show a curved form.

Select a group of objects with different surface textures and shine a strong light on them or place by a window in strong daylight. Try to capture both the surface texture and the tone on them through mark-making.

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Line and Shape

The lines and shapes in an image can convey different messages. Regimented, repeated lines suggest order and random lines chaos. Straight lines and shapes are more aggressive than curved. Repeated lines and forms can create a sense of movement. Lines and shapes can be used to create direction, which can help show form e.g. curved hatching on a tube shape. Direction can also create mood – top to bottom being more negative than upward.

Create a linear design for an abstract textile print thinking about how line can express mood e.g. an angry design, a serene design.

Scale and Proportion

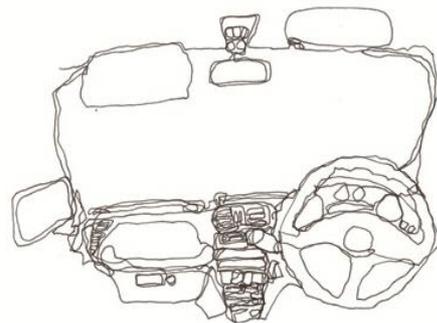
Importance can be given to elements of the image depending on the scale of them in relation to other elements or their location in fore, middle or background. Children often make heads larger in proportion to the body and eyes to head in their drawings as they perceive these to be the most important parts. Classical sculpture often exaggerated muscles and physique, making the head smaller to create a sense of power.

Composition

The way elements of a picture are composed can create different moods and atmospheres. A very busy composition may look hectic and energetic. Imagine a landscape where a lot of sky is visible compared to one with a high horizon line. Perspective can create a sense of space and emptiness, or full intense images without a visible horizon. Different viewpoints can affect the way a subject is perceived. Choose a location such as the beach, and draw it from several different viewpoints. Maybe zoom in on an object on the sand and then draw it from further away, then with the horizon in view etc. Spend half an hour on each and compare the results.

Continuous Line Drawing

Do not take the pencil off the paper. Let your eyes follow the line of an object and your hand follow your eye. Find a starting point and keep going. Some artists use this technique looking only at the subject matter and not at the drawing, this is called "blind line drawing".



Negative Space Drawing

Look at the spaces that are not filled by the object(s) and record those. The key characteristic of negative space drawings is that they have no overlapping lines.

