

Fine Art A Level



HEADS OF DEPARTMENT

Jenny Bucknall
and Paula Pearson

EXAM BOARD

AQA

INTRODUCTION TO THE DEPARTMENT

We are a Central London Art Department committed to developing our students' creativity, independent thinking, and cultural capital. We study AQA Fine Art and expect students to develop their own ideas and find ways to express them. A-Level students work experimentally in response to briefs set by the teacher, as well as investigations they initiate themselves. As a small department, we enjoy taking opportunities to collaborate with external agencies to expand opportunities and enable students to engage as much as possible with the London art world.

COURSE DESCRIPTION

The course aims to:

- Develop candidates' understanding of the nature of visual thinking
- Encourage exploration of a wide range of materials
- Help to develop an understanding of cultural change and contextual studies
- Develop an awareness of both analytical and intuitive value judgements

Students are required to produce sketchbooks, work journals, and final pieces for both internal and external moderation. At The Grey Coat Hospital, students who study Art spend the first-year broadening and deepening their understanding and skills. They visit galleries, attend workshops, and develop their own projects. All students at A Level are introduced to the life model through life drawing classes. In the summer term of Year 12, they begin working towards Component 1 of the A Level: their Personal Investigation.



COMPONENTS OF STUDY

Component 1 – Personal investigation (60%)

In Component 1, students develop work based on an idea, issue, concept or theme leading to a finished outcome or a series of related finished outcomes. Practical elements make connections with some aspect of contemporary or past practice of artist(s), designer(s), and photographers and include written work of no less than 1000 and no more than 3000 words which supports the practical work.



Component 2 – Exam (40%)

In Component 2, students respond to a stimulus, provided by AQA, to produce work which provides evidence of their ability to work independently within specified time constraints, developing a personal and meaningful response which addresses all the assessment objectives and leads to a finished outcome or a series of related finished outcomes.

PROGRAMME OF STUDY

Component 1

Personal Investigation

Practical work supported
by written work
of between
1000 - 3000 words

60% of total A Level

Component 2

Exam (over 3 days)
15 hours

40% of total A Level

Exhibition

Students will curate an
exhibition of their work to
be displayed in school in
May of Year 13.

Course Requirements
Minimum Grade 6 at
GCSE Art and English

Other Information

The key to success
in the A Level course
is enthusiasm and
dedication, excellent
drawing skills
independent research,
consistent hard work,
reviewing and improving
work as you go along,
making sure that you
work to deadlines and
being fully aware of how
you are being assessed.

EXAMINATION RESULTS

In 2025 students achieved 69.2% A*-A and 100% A*-B in A Level Art. Over the last six years results have averaged 97% A*-B. We are exceptionally proud of our students.

Every year, the majority (though not all) of our A Level students' progress to study Art and Design, either through Foundation Diplomas or, in some cases, directly onto Honours degrees. Each year we have students progressing to Architecture degrees, including recent admissions to The Bartlett School of Architecture (University College London), as well as Sheffield and Bath Universities. Every year, students also take up places on Foundation Diplomas at institutions such as UAL, Kingston, and The Royal Drawing School.

Within each cohort, there are students enjoying and benefit from Art A level who are taking it to complement their other subjects and who go on to study a wide range of courses in the arts or sciences at university.

ENRICHMENT ACTIVITIES

Trips and Residential Visits

Trips are a vital part of the A Level Art course, enriching learning through direct engagement with both historical and contemporary art, design, and culture. We run a continuous programme of visits to leading galleries, museums, and cultural institutions in London, carefully selected to align with current exhibitions and themes. These opportunities enable students to explore diverse artistic practices, sharpen their critical thinking, and stay connected to the contemporary art scene.

A highlight is the Year 12 visit to New Designers, a national showcase of emerging creative talent from across UK universities—from Dundee to Falmouth. This event offers valuable insight into the latest trends in art and design, and encourages students to consider future study and career options within the creative industries.

In addition, all Art students have the opportunity to take part in a Sixth Form residential trip, either in the UK or abroad. These trips offer invaluable experiences, allowing students to immerse themselves in diverse cultural and creative environments, deepen their understanding of art, and spark fresh inspiration for their own work.

Further opportunities:

- Life drawing sessions
- Participate in ARTiculation, a national public speaking competition
- Join the Attract Programme at the Royal Academy
- Become a member of the Tate Collective
- Opportunity to exhibit work in a commercial London gallery
- Visits to leading galleries, including Tate, Royal Academy, Hayward, Saatchi, White Cube, and Whitechapel
- Assist in designing and painting sets for the school play
- Support and run KS3 Art clubs and mentor GCSE students

BUILDING CREATIVE FUTURES

Every year, our A Level students' progress to top London art colleges for Foundation Courses, including the Royal Drawing School, University of the Arts London, Kingston, Ravensbourne, and more. Many also go straight into degree courses at leading universities such as Cambridge, Glasgow, Oxford (Ruskin), Kingston, Leeds, Nottingham Trent, Manchester, and Sheffield.

These pathways lead to careers in Architecture, Media, Interior Design, Fashion, Jewellery, Ceramics, Product Design, Theatre, Film, and Fine Art.

We support every step with portfolio workshops and interview practice.