

Photography Long Term Plan

Art and Design Curriculum Intent

To provide every student with the opportunity to fully explore and develop their artistic practice. Through self-expression and creativity, they will build confidence and a strong sense of individual identity. Nurturing students who possess the courage and confidence to discover and contribute to the world around them.

Component 1 (Year 10 Term 1 – Year 11 Term 1)

	Foundation	Portrait Photography	Still Life
Project Outline	<p>In this first term, students will be introduced to essential photography skills, focusing on mastering the technical use of DSLR cameras and understanding manual settings. They will also gain hands-on experience in working with studio lighting setups to enhance their control over the quality and direction of light in their images. Alongside photography, students will explore basic editing techniques in Photoshop, learning how to enhance and refine their photographs through digital tools. The term will focus on developing a solid foundation in light manipulation, composition, and exposure, preparing students for more advanced and creative projects later in the course. By the end of this term, students will confidently shoot in manual mode and produce edited images that demonstrate an understanding of these core principles.</p>	<p>In this project, students will delve into portrait photography with a focus on creating editorial-style images suited for magazine layouts. Building on the foundational skills from previous terms, they will further refine their camera techniques, studio lighting setups, and Photoshop editing, while learning to direct and pose subjects effectively. The project encourages students to experiment with lighting and composition to convey personality, emotion, and narrative through portraiture. In addition, they will integrate graphic design elements like typography and layout, producing work that aligns with magazine aesthetics. This term introduces more advanced techniques in both photography and digital editing, elevating the complexity and professionalism of their work.</p>	<p>In this project, students will build on the skills developed in Term 1, shifting their focus to still life photography. They will revisit key techniques such as manual camera settings and studio lighting, while expanding their understanding of composition and how lighting can influence the mood of an image. This project will encourage students to explore how objects can be arranged and photographed to create meaningful visuals, from traditional still life compositions to contemporary product photography used in advertising. Students will take more ownership of their creative direction, selecting artists and styles that inspire them, developing their own ideas, and applying advanced Photoshop techniques to produce polished, professional-looking images. The aim of this project is to foster creative experimentation, encouraging students to refine their technical skills while exploring new ways to communicate ideas through still life photography.</p>
Knowledge introduced	<p>Introduction to AQA Assessment Objectives</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Understanding the four AQA assessment objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ AO1: Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources. ○ AO2: Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting and experimenting with media and materials. ○ AO3: Record ideas, observations, and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses. 	<p>Portrait Photography Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Directing a subject: Guiding poses, facial expressions, and body language to capture emotion or convey a narrative within the portrait. • Lens choice: Understanding how different focal lengths (e.g., 50mm, 85mm) affect image aesthetics, including background compression, depth of field, and distortion. • Advanced manual settings: Perfecting aperture control for achieving sharp focus or bokeh, and using appropriate shutter speeds to capture subtle movement or keep the subject sharp. 	<p>Advanced Camera Techniques:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Manual mode refinement: Gaining more control over aperture, shutter speed, and ISO to achieve desired exposure and effects. • Composition techniques: Experimenting with framing, balance, and the use of negative space to create more dynamic still life compositions. • Depth of field: Mastering selective focus to isolate subjects and control background blur for artistic effect. <p>Exploring Still Life Photography:</p>

- o **AO4:** Present a personal and meaningful response that realizes intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.
- Learning how to structure a project to meet these objectives.

Camera Skills (DSLR):

- **Understanding camera anatomy:** Familiarizing with the key functions of buttons, dials, and menus.
- **Manual settings:**
 - o **Shutter speed:** Controlling how motion is captured, either by freezing action or creating motion blur.
 - o **Aperture:** Learning depth of field control, from sharp landscapes to blurred backgrounds with bokeh effects.
 - o **ISO:** Balancing noise and light sensitivity, especially in low light conditions.
- **Focusing techniques:** Understanding when to use auto or manual focus and selecting focus points for sharp images.
- **Composition techniques:** Applying compositional rules such as the rule of thirds, leading lines, framing, and symmetry to enhance image structure.

Studio Lighting:

- **Understanding light sources:** Differentiating between natural and artificial light and their effects on photography.
- **Studio lighting setups:**
 - o **3-point lighting system:** Learning how to use key, fill, and backlighting to shape the subject.
 - o **Soft boxes and reflectors:** Manipulating light to reduce harsh shadows and create balanced lighting.
 - o **Continuous light vs. flash:** Controlling the direction, intensity, and quality of light for different creative outcomes.

Basic Photoshop Editing:

Studio and Natural Lighting for Portraits:

- **Advanced studio lighting:** Using techniques like **Rembrandt lighting, butterfly lighting, and split lighting** to shape and enhance facial features.
- **Natural light exploration:** Utilizing reflectors and diffusers to soften shadows or highlight certain aspects of outdoor portraits.
- **Creative lighting with gels:** Adding coloured gels or filters to studio lighting setups to introduce mood or stylistic effects into portraiture.

Magazine Aesthetics and Contemporary Portraiture:

- **Researching influential portrait photographers:** Exploring both historical and contemporary portrait artists (e.g., Annie Leibovitz, Richard Avedon) to gain insight into their techniques and how they tell stories through their images.
- **Understanding magazine layouts:** Analysing the structure of magazine covers and photo spreads, and learning how to combine photography with graphic design elements for a polished, professional look.

Advanced Photoshop and Design Skills:

- **Skin retouching:** Applying techniques like **frequency separation** and **dodge & burn** to enhance skin texture while keeping the image natural and realistic.
- **Lighting enhancement:** Adding or adjusting highlights and shadows to enhance the portrait's dimension and focus using advanced Photoshop tools.
- **Typography and layout integration:** Learning to incorporate text into the image, designing visually cohesive magazine covers or editorial spreads.
- **Colour grading:** Using precise colour grading techniques to create consistent moods and tones that align with the magazine aesthetic.

Creative and Professional Presentation:

- **Creating a magazine cover or spread:** Developing a final product that blends portrait photography with

- **Traditional photographers:** Studying still life photographers such as **Irving Penn** and **Edward Weston** to understand how they used objects and light to create iconic images.
- **Contemporary advertising:** Examining how modern product photographers use lighting, colour, and composition to create appealing visuals for branding and commercial purposes.

Studio Lighting & Object Arrangement:

- **Lighting techniques:** Learning various lighting methods such as side lighting, backlighting, and diffused lighting to shape texture and control shadows.
- **Object placement:** Understanding how to arrange objects in ways that highlight their form and material, using light to emphasize texture or create atmosphere.

Advanced Photoshop Editing:

- **Refining selections:** Developing precision in creating selections with tools like the lasso, quick selection, and masking to enhance specific areas of an image.
- **Colour grading:** Applying advanced adjustments to control the tone, contrast, and colour balance, giving images a professional finish that aligns with the project's concept.
- **Sharpening and retouching:** Enhancing details in still life objects by using retouching techniques to bring out texture and sharpness.

Creative Concept Development:

- **Independent idea generation:** Creating mood boards and planning photo shoots that reflect personal creative vision, while drawing inspiration from relevant still life photographers.
- **Execution of concepts:** Producing a cohesive series of still life photographs that demonstrate a clear creative direction and refined technical skills.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Importing and exporting files: Understanding RAW vs. JPEG formats, and managing file types for editing and sharing. ● Basic tools: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Cropping, resizing, and rotating images to improve composition. ○ Exposure correction: Adjusting brightness, contrast, and highlights/shadows for balanced lighting. ○ Colour correction: Modifying saturation, hue, and white balance to enhance or adjust colours. ○ Retouching techniques: Using tools like the clone stamp and healing brush for minor corrections and image clean-up. ● Advanced Photoshop Techniques: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Blending modes: Experimenting with how layers interact to create unique lighting and colour effects. ○ Adjustment layers: Non-destructive edits to exposure, colour balance, and other properties. ○ Layer masks: Precisely editing specific parts of an image without altering the entire composition. ○ Polygonal Lasso tool: Creating detailed selections to isolate areas for further editing or adjustments. <p>Creative Composition and Concept Development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Planning and framing a shot: Considering creative intent behind each image and thoughtfully composing scenes. ● Documenting the process: Keeping a visual journal or reflection of image choices and the techniques used to achieve the desired results. 	<p>design, achieving a professional standard suitable for publication.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Branding and identity through portraiture: Understanding how portrait images can communicate identity, story, and personality, both for individuals and in commercial contexts. ● Independent research and experimentation: Selecting relevant photographers, magazines, and visual styles to inspire personal creative choices, and experimenting with different approaches to portrait photography and design. 	
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Component 2 (Year 11 Term 2 – Year 11 Term 3)

Project Outline	<p>In Component 2, students will apply the skills and knowledge gained from previous projects to tackle an externally set assignment that emphasizes independent exploration and creative expression. This project will challenge students to conceptualize, develop, and execute a personal photographic series, demonstrating their technical proficiency and artistic vision. Through research and experimentation, they will create a cohesive body of work that responds to the given theme or prompt, allowing them to showcase their individual style and approach to photography. By the conclusion of this component, students will not only have produced a</p>
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polished portfolio piece but will also reflect on their artistic journey, evaluating their growth and the decisions made throughout the creative process. This component serves as a culmination of their learning, encouraging them to present their work with confidence and clarity.

Assessment

1. Assessment Framework: The assessment strategy will follow the AQA GCSE Art and Design specification, evaluating students' work based on the four Assessment Objectives (AO):

- **AO1:** Develop ideas through investigations, demonstrating critical understanding of sources.
- **AO2:** Refine work by exploring ideas, selecting, and experimenting with media, materials, techniques, and processes.
- **AO3:** Record ideas, observations, and insights relevant to intentions as work progresses.
- **AO4:** Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and demonstrates understanding of visual language.

2. Project-Based Assessment:

- **End-of-Project Assessment:**

Each project concludes with a formal assessment where students' work is marked holistically against the four AOs. Teachers use a standardised marking process to ensure fairness and consistency. This includes departmental moderation sessions to align grading and address discrepancies.

3. Ongoing Feedback:

- **Regular Reviews:**

Throughout the project, students receive formative feedback. This feedback explicitly references the four AOs, guiding students to strengthen areas that need development.

- **Actionable Suggestions:**

Feedback includes specific, actionable recommendations, such as refining techniques (AO2), exploring alternative sources (AO1), or enhancing observational studies (AO3).

- **Peer and Self-Assessment Opportunities:**

Students periodically review their own and peers' work against the AOs to build critical reflection skills.

4. Moderation and Standardisation:

- Regular departmental meetings ensure that all teachers are confident in applying the AQA criteria consistently. Exemplars and benchmark pieces are used to calibrate grading judgments.

5. Evidence Collection and Tracking:

- Teachers maintain an ongoing record of student progress against the AOs, using checklists and notes from feedback sessions. These records inform the end-of-project marks and highlight areas for targeted intervention in future projects.

6. Support for Progress:

- Struggling students receive additional support through targeted feedback and focused intervention sessions addressing specific AOs where improvement is needed.

By embedding regular feedback and ensuring consistency through standardisation, this strategy provides clear, constructive, and actionable assessments to help students achieve their best outcomes in GCSE Art.