

**At A Level we offer two endorsements: Art, Craft and Design; and Textiles Design. Students are introduced to a variety of experiences that employ a range of media, processes and techniques appropriate to the areas of study they are engaged in. Knowledge of art, craft and design is developed through research, the development of ideas and making, working from first-hand experience and where appropriate, secondary source material. In each case, the syllabus provides opportunities for exploration and investigation of the subject. For students intending to take an Art and Design or a related course at university, it is possible to study both endorsements at A Level.**

A Level sets in Art and Design usually consist of between eight and twelve students and teaching is divided between two members of staff. We follow the AQA syllabus that provides the opportunity for thorough exploration and investigation of the subject. Techniques and principles established at GCSE are expanded upon and a wider range of media is introduced. A greater emphasis is placed on a personal response and the influence of artists, designers and other secondary sources are expected to feature increasingly in the development of work. While very rewarding, a strong commitment to the subject is important in order to gain fully from the course.

Students are required to complete two components over the two years of the course. The first of these (Component 1) takes the form of a practical investigation into an idea, issue, concept or theme, supported by written material. The focus of the investigation must lead to a finished outcome or series of related finished outcomes and must demonstrate an ability to construct and develop a sustained line of reasoning from an initial starting point through to a final realisation. The second (Component 2) in the form of an Externally Set Assignment is completed in the second half of the Upper Sixth Year and includes 15 hours of allocated time following a preparatory period, in which students produce a final piece or pieces. Both components are marked using the same criteria with Component 1 accounting for 60% of the overall mark and Component 2 the remaining 40%.

At the start of the course there are a series of drawing days conducted at sites away from the school studios. Visits to galleries are made periodically and students are encouraged to make full use of both local and national gallery collections. In addition, a residential trip, either in the UK or abroad, may be offered during the Lower Sixth year. In the Autumn Term all A Level students are able to benefit from a series of life-drawing sessions that help broaden their portfolio.

It is important that students are aware of Art and Design in the wider context and the theoretical attachments, in both historical and contextual terms, are a major part of the department's teaching. A student's ability to discuss their own and other artists' or designers' work illustrates their understanding of the balance between objective and subjective as well as the practical and academic, in other words, the very nature of Art and Design.

The department has enjoyed an enviable reputation when entering work for selection in both local and national exhibitions. There is great benefit to be had in seeing students' work in a formal gallery environment and a number of opportunities exist for this to take place throughout the year.

## University

It is by no means the case that only students wishing to follow a course in Art and Design at university should consider the A Level. Its balance of practical, academic and analytical skills are widely transferable and students intending to study courses unrelated to Art and Design find that it successfully complements their other subject choices. That said, many of our Advanced Level students choose to go onto specialist Art and Design courses or to read Architecture at University. The department enjoys a strong reputation for producing candidates that have a thorough understanding of the design process coupled with a high level of technical skill.

