

Visual arts teacher support material

First assessment 2027

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Diploma Programme

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Published April 2025

Published by the International Baccalaureate Organization, a not-for-profit educational foundation of Rue du Pré-de-la-Bichette 1, 1202 Genève, Switzerland.

Website: ibo.org

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IB mission statement

The International Baccalaureate aims to develop inquiring, knowledgeable and caring young people who help to create a better and more peaceful world through intercultural understanding and respect.

To this end the organization works with schools, governments and international organizations to develop challenging programmes of international education and rigorous assessment.

These programmes encourage students across the world to become active, compassionate and lifelong learners who understand that other people, with their differences, can also be right.



IB learner profile

The aim of all IB programmes is to develop internationally minded people who, recognizing their common humanity and shared guardianship of the planet, help to create a better and more peaceful world.

As IB learners we strive to be:

INQUIRERS

We nurture our curiosity, developing skills for inquiry and research. We know how to learn independently and with others. We learn with enthusiasm and sustain our love of learning throughout life.

KNOWLEDGEABLE

We develop and use conceptual understanding, exploring knowledge across a range of disciplines. We engage with issues and ideas that have local and global significance.

THINKERS

We use critical and creative thinking skills to analyse and take responsible action on complex problems. We exercise initiative in making reasoned, ethical decisions.

COMMUNICATORS

We express ourselves confidently and creatively in more than one language and in many ways. We collaborate effectively, listening carefully to the perspectives of other individuals and groups.

PRINCIPLED

We act with integrity and honesty, with a strong sense of fairness and justice, and with respect for the dignity and rights of people everywhere. We take responsibility for our actions and their consequences.

OPEN-MINDED

We critically appreciate our own cultures and personal histories, as well as the values and traditions of others. We seek and evaluate a range of points of view, and we are willing to grow from the experience.

CARING

We show empathy, compassion and respect. We have a commitment to service, and we act to make a positive difference in the lives of others and in the world around us.

RISK-TAKERS

We approach uncertainty with forethought and determination; we work independently and cooperatively to explore new ideas and innovative strategies. We are resourceful and resilient in the face of challenges and change.

BALANCED

We understand the importance of balancing different aspects of our lives—intellectual, physical, and emotional—to achieve well-being for ourselves and others. We recognize our interdependence with other people and with the world in which we live.

REFLECTIVE

We thoughtfully consider the world and our own ideas and experience. We work to understand our strengths and weaknesses in order to support our learning and personal development.

The IB learner profile represents 10 attributes valued by IB World Schools. We believe these attributes, and others like them, can help individuals and groups become responsible members of local, national and global communities.

About the teacher support material

Welcome to the Diploma Programme (DP) visual arts teacher support material (TSM). This resource supports both new and experienced teachers involved in teaching the visual arts course (first assessment 2027). The materials presented here must be read in conjunction with the DP *Visual arts guide*—in itself, the TSM does not cover all the information necessary to complete the course. In addition, the *Visual arts assessed student work* provides examples to further complement the guidance offered here.

As shown in figure 1, there are five interconnected sections after this “Introduction” section. Teachers are invited to move across these as they see fit to inform their teaching.

1. **Planning and preparing for teaching**—guidance on, and examples of, course planners and unit planners

This section also describes how standard level (SL) and higher level (HL) courses are differentiated yet designed to be offered contextually in the same classroom. There is a tool to support teacher reflection and some suggested professional development (PD) opportunities.

2. **Engaging with visual arts**—guidance on suggested learning structures specific to visual arts in the classroom as studio and beyond

3. **Art-making as inquiry**—materials to support the learning and teaching of art-making as inquiry

This section includes a range of tools and suggestions to:

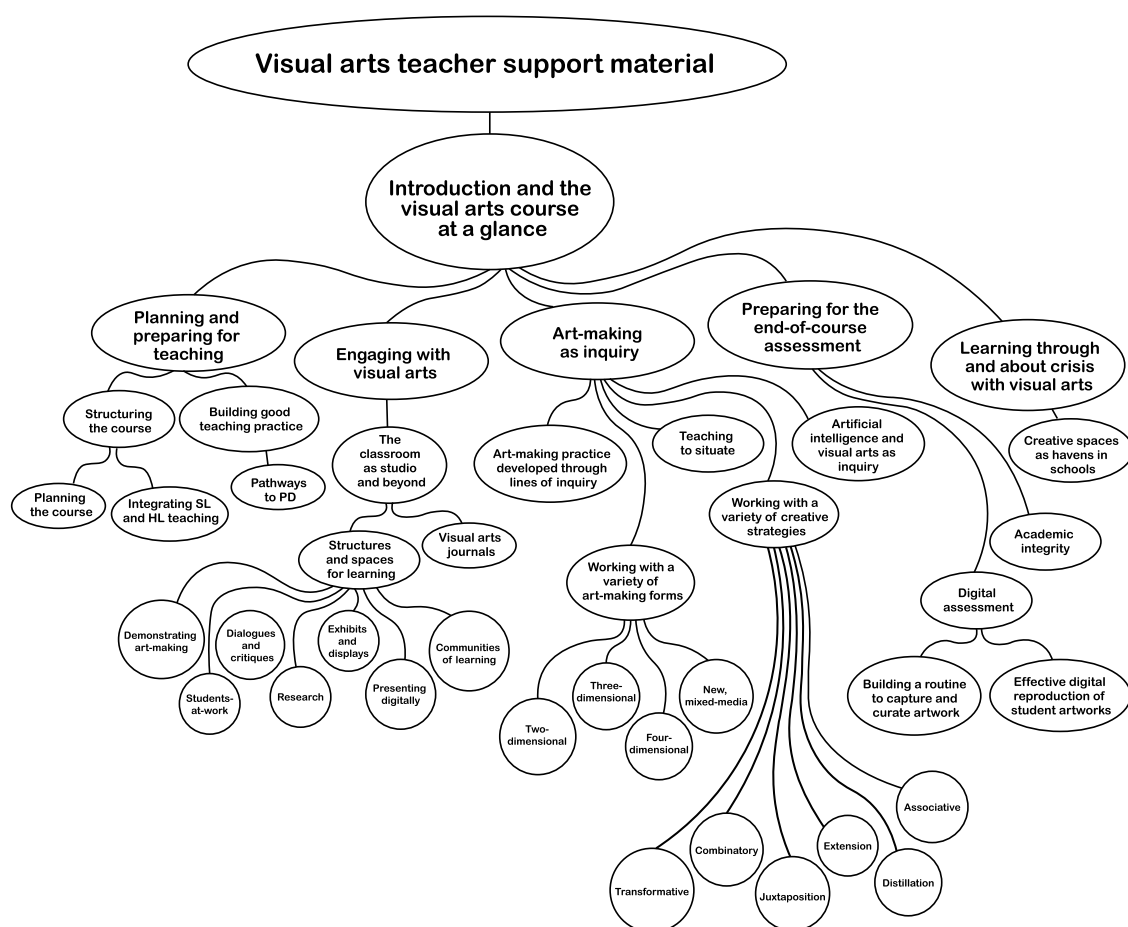
- encourage students to work with a variety of art-making forms and creative strategies
- help students situate artworks and reflect effectively
- help students develop their personal artistic practices through lines of inquiry.

4. **Preparing for the end-of-course assessment**—guidance on how to support students in meeting the assessment requirements, compiling the assessment task submissions and complying with academic integrity

5. **Learning through and about crisis with visual arts**—a suggested framework to understand the importance and role of the visual arts in schools during a crisis, and for students when times are difficult

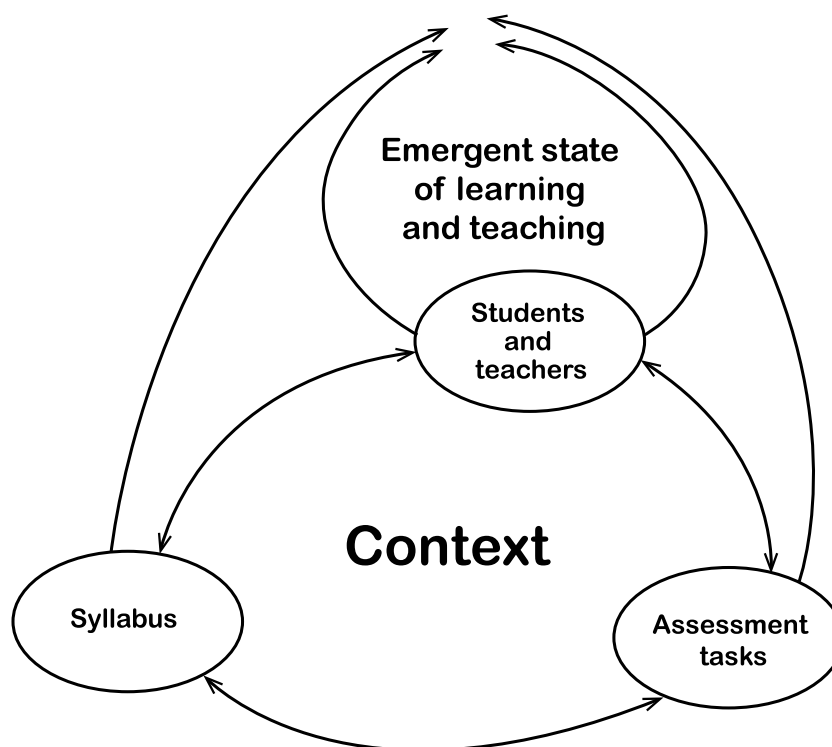
The TSM includes a series of handouts that can be projected in the classroom or shared directly with students. They are accessible via links and also through the “[List of downloadable resources](#)” in the “Appendices”.

Figure 1
Content map



There is no prescriptive way of teaching the visual arts course and no fixed pathway for students. Suggestions and guidance are provided in this TSM so that teachers can respond according to the needs and interests of their students in their particular context. A deeper understanding of the requirements of the course by engaging with the TSM will offer more opportunities for flexibility and openness. Both teachers and students can expand their horizons through DP visual arts, working together so that learning and teaching are “emergent” and student artists are in a state of “continuous becoming”.

Figure 2
Visual arts learning and teaching are emergent



Acknowledgement

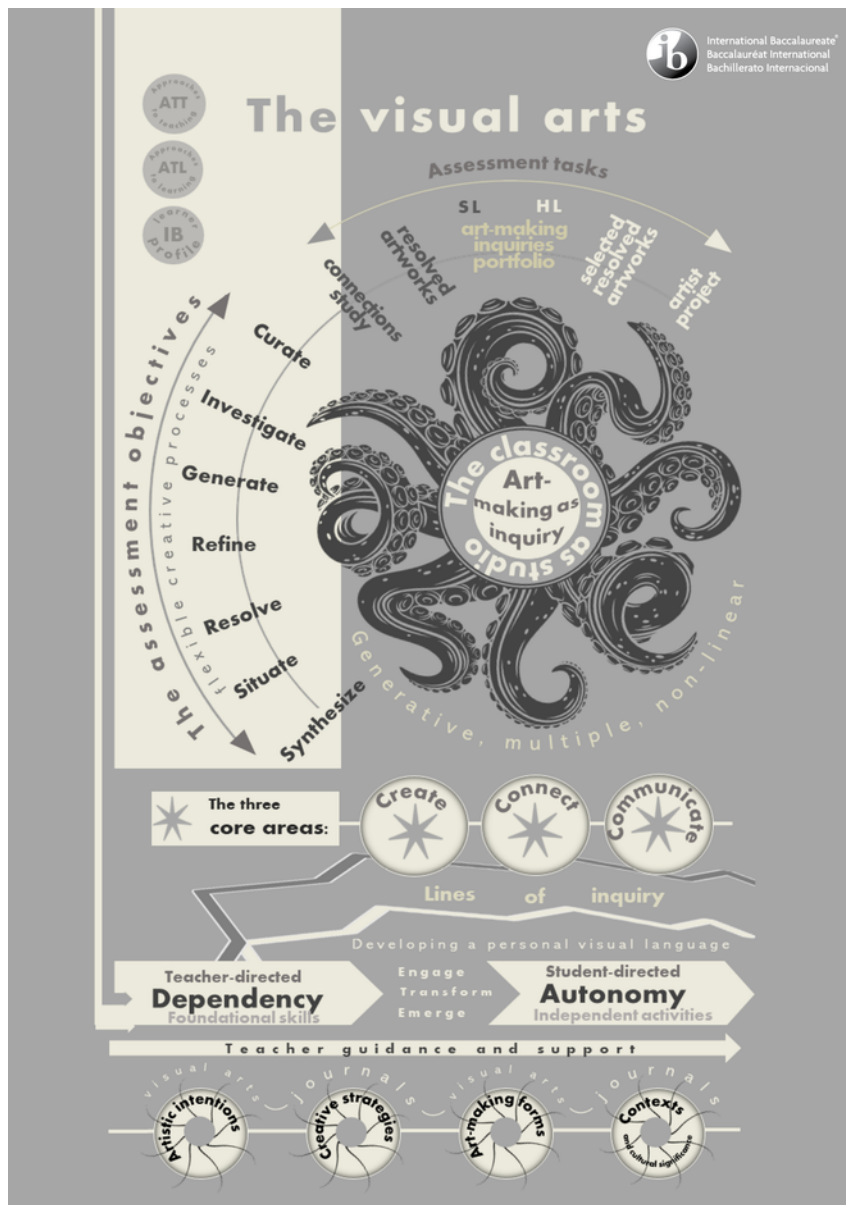
Experienced educators working in a variety of different contexts have collaborated in the creation of these materials. The International Baccalaureate (IB) thanks these educators and the IB alumni and schools who have contributed their time and resources to the development of the *Visual arts guide* and TSM.

The visual arts course at a glance

The visual arts course overview poster (figure 3) summarizes the course elements that students and teachers will need to engage with during the two years of the course.

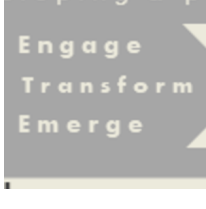
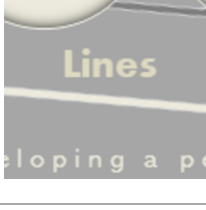
Figure 3

Visual arts course overview



Download: "The visual arts course overview poster" (PDF). The poster can be shared with students and parents/guardians and used whenever the interconnectedness of elements of the course needs to be explained.

A suggested interpretation of the poster is proposed in the following table.

	<p>Art-making as inquiry is at the centre of the DP visual arts course. The focus is on authentic student art-making. The course acknowledges that the creative practice of visual arts is interactive and develops through many different lines of inquiry, following creative processes that are flexible and iterative.</p>
	<p>The multiple non-linear nature of learning and working in the visual arts is explained in the guide by suggesting that art-making is complex and decentralized, similar to the functioning of an octopus: its tentacles representing the various art-making practices students engage in.</p>
	<p>The IB approaches to learning and approaches to teaching, together with the IB learner profile, support an inquiry-based course through which students engage with the self, others and the world around them, through art-making. Students learn to harness curiosity, creativity, critical thinking and dialogue. They also learn to manage their time and to persevere in their work.</p>
	<p>Teachers and students are invited to transform the classroom into a visual arts studio: a collaborative, inclusive, creative and conceptually-rich space where students develop their art and are supported in becoming increasingly independent art practitioners.</p>
	<p>Through art-making, students and their teachers are empowered to engage, transform and emerge, both as individuals and as members of a community. They learn the power of the arts to support well-being and flourishing.</p>
	<p>The syllabus content is organized into three core areas: create, connect and communicate, which are integrated in art-making as inquiry. Students are supported in learning, and deepening their knowledge and understanding of the skills and methods in each core area as they encounter and work in these areas through their art-making.</p>
	<p>Within this course, a line of inquiry is the thread a student explores through their creative processes, answering one or more inquiry questions or generative statements—initiated by their own interests, their ongoing practice or any encounter that fosters specific curiosity and the creation of their artwork.</p>

	<p>The design of the course assessment objectives supports the flexible and iterative nature of the creative process, so that students have the freedom to choose how to develop their art-making and still be able to evidence what and how they have learned against each one of the objectives. The objectives offer a framework to support learning and teaching, and define what is assessed at the end of the course.</p>
	<p>The course is assessed online. Students are required to document their work by digitally curating selected visual and written evidence. The assessment model is structured around three assessment tasks, both at SL and HL. The differing requirements in two of the tasks are a clear differentiation between SL and HL courses, with a focus on student workload.</p>
	<p>The syllabus enhances the authenticity of learning experiences in visual arts and clearly fosters the synthesis of conceptual and material inquiry. Students must engage with a variety of art-making forms and creative strategies. They learn the habits of observing, discovering, experimenting, exploring and developing—fundamental tools of their art-making practice that they record in their visual arts journals.</p>
	<p>The course explicitly invites students to reflect on the relationships between artist, artwork, context and audience. This develops students' understanding of cultural significance, but also their critical and self-reflexivity in considering and evidencing the connections that are significant for their own artwork.</p>

Structuring the course

The visual arts course is designed so that it can be implemented in ways that are bespoke, unique and appropriate to each school's setting and to each learning community. Course planning can take different approaches, reflecting the interests and passions of each cohort of students and their teachers, while always being aligned with IB pedagogy. Irrespective of variations in approach, the course learning and teaching is focused on inquiry and conceptual understanding; it is collaborative, inclusive, cognizant of context(s) and informed by assessment.

The course must be structured to prepare visual arts students for the assessment tasks outlined in the guide and help them to acquire and develop the skills and understandings as per the course requirements. It must also assist students in their development of the attributes of the IB learner profile.

Careful consideration of the arts aims and the visual arts aims (see "Aims" in the *Visual arts guide*) will help to embed learning and teaching within the spirit of an IB education. The visual arts course aims to enable students to:

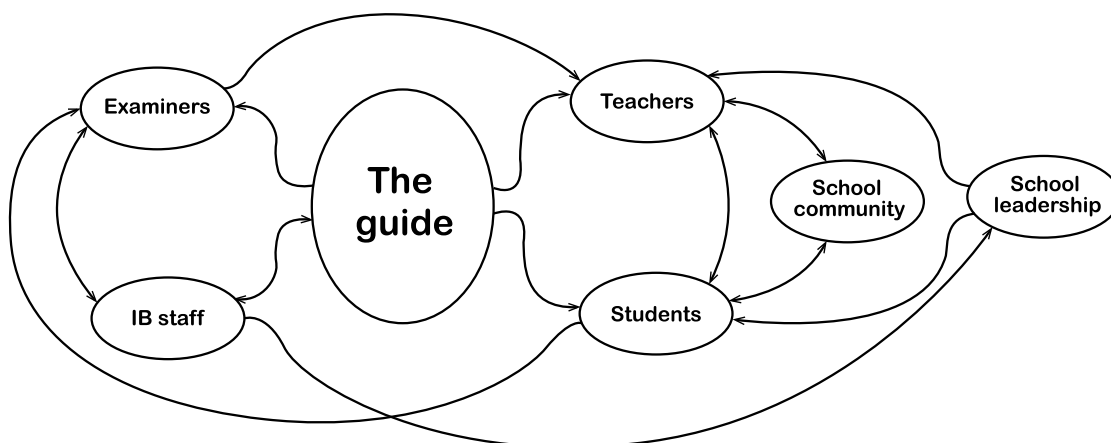
- appreciate that art-making enhances knowledge, develops understanding and transforms ways of being
- employ curiosity, creativity and dialogue to more openly engage with the self, the world and others
- draw on art-making and artworks for their own, and their communities', well-being and flourishing.

Becoming familiar with the guide

The starting point for all teachers planning the two-year visual arts course is to familiarize themselves with the *Visual arts guide*. The guide is the tool that is shared by all those involved with the course: teachers, students, school leadership, examiners, IB staff and any other stakeholders.

Figure 4

The guide is shared by the course stakeholders



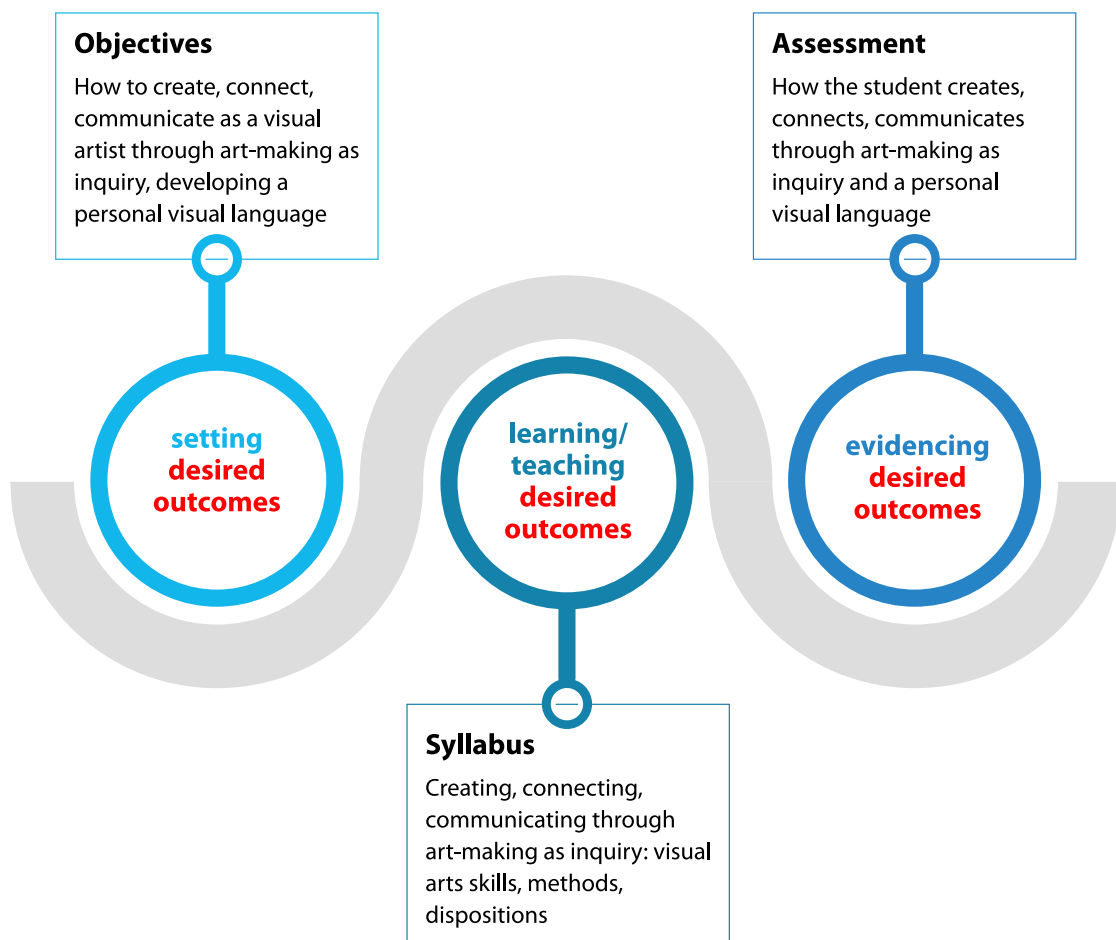
The connections between learning and teaching—prescribed in the "Syllabus" part of the guide and the "Assessment model" in the final part of the guide—are easy for teachers to identify. They are designed to

encourage a truly holistic approach to visual arts learning and teaching as the best way to support students' achievements in assessment.

Figure 5 illustrates how the assessment objectives, syllabus content and assessment tasks all share a focus on the desired outcomes of the course, providing an overall coherent structure. The focus is on each student becoming progressively more competent and independent in their visual arts practice—in how they create, connect and communicate as a visual artist through art-making as inquiry and a personal visual language.

Figure 5

Desired outcomes in the visual arts course



The assessment objectives have been embedded in the creative process to support the authentic implementation of the syllabus and facilitate students' choices and creativity, while also providing a clear set of indicators for assessment.

With the assessment objectives embedded in the creative process:

- teachers should find it easy to structure the course with a focus on skills, methods and approaches across the three core areas, covering these discretely or integrated, while at the same time preparing their students to successfully complete the assessment tasks
- students should progress in their understanding of the meaning and significance of each of the objectives as they iteratively engage with the creative process as part of their learning. In this way, they become confident in selecting and organizing materials as required by the assessment tasks.

Planning the course

The freedom that the course offers in terms of implementation in the specific context of each school and classroom means that careful planning is required to ensure meaningful and comprehensive learning experiences. Teachers will need plenty of time for planning and reflecting on their work. The following tables summarize the key tasks involved.

In their personal planning for the course, teachers combine and integrate their understanding of:	
what ...	how ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> inquiry-based teaching means within IB pedagogy and for this course 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to support students in learning to work as artists through lines of inquiry
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is prescribed within each of the three core areas of the syllabus 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to invite each student to engage, transform and emerge as a visual artist
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are the demands of this course in terms of teaching informed by conceptual understanding 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to encourage students to work with both form and concept, and develop their artistic, reflective and reflexive practices
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are the meaning and demands of each of the assessment objectives 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> to work with the objectives as a framework
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> are the requirements of each of the assessment tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> students can best compile their digital submissions having developed enough understanding, and using their skills, tools and time to maximum effect.

Through their planning, teachers aim to guide and facilitate:	
what ...	how ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the flexible and iterative creative processes could be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> this will be achieved through teacher-directed activities at the start, but progressively facilitating student-directed activities
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the authentic learning experiences will be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the generative and interactive nature of visual arts practices will be fully explored
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> is needed for successful and timely submission of the three digital assessment tasks. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> teaching of the course will respond to the course requirements and reflect each student's personal learning.

While planning their course, teachers will action:	
what ...	how ...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the idea of the classroom as a studio is 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> this will be realized through the recommended structures for learning
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the removal of barriers to learning and well-being will be 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> this will be realized through differentiation and dialogue, to respond to students' needs and offer SL and HL versions of the course
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> the skills, approaches and disposition to work as an artist are. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> this will be realized through the approaches to learning and approaches to teaching.

Providing the foundations

Teachers are required to embrace teaching art-making as inquiry as outlined in the *Visual arts guide* and in the “Art-making as inquiry” section of this publication. The course is best started with a teacher-directed inquiry that provides some of the foundations for art-making practice while showing different ways in which a creative process may unfold. By undertaking a directed arts-based inquiry, the assessment objectives can be touched upon and introduced to students. From the start, teachers can also highlight how a line of inquiry can be developed, along with demonstrating how to use journals and how to document creative processes effectively.

The open-ended nature of inquiry should be emphasized and this first foundational part of the course will ideally encompass the following taught units. Note that while they are presented here in a certain order, the manner and order in which they are taught can be rearranged in multiple ways as desired.

1. A practical learning experience focused on investigation and drawing as fundamental skills
2. An activity that introduces at least one creative strategy to generate new possibilities
3. An activity in which students investigate a relevant artwork to situate their own art-making
4. A directed exercise in refining studies to realize an artwork
5. A defined timeframe that allows students to synthesize and to resolve

A second guided line of inquiry that directly derives from the first will utilize reflection (refine) and encourage the generation of new ideas. The introduction of another creative strategy will give students the creative tools for transformation or further development of the first outcome. When a second line of inquiry emerges from the first, students then begin to understand that a body of work grows in complexity as one work informs another.

Further planning

As the course progresses, teachers will plan other learning experiences to support their students to continue in their learning across the three core areas. This can be done via discrete activities or in a more holistic, integrated way—always ensuring that students deepen their understanding of the creative process and assessment objectives. Every line of inquiry will also encourage students to develop their ability to reflect and engage critically with both concept and form in their art practice.

Teachers are invited to plan activities and to organize the learning space—either physical or virtual—so that dialogue within and beyond the classroom is always seen by students as a means to deepen and generate knowledge and understanding. Teachers model and guide students in developing their ability to articulate ideas, artistic intentions and artistic choices using subject-specific vocabulary. They also model and encourage students to interact with respect and curiosity.

Opportunities for sharing, displaying and exhibiting students’ artworks should be included in the planning of the course. Similarly, opportunities to visit museums, exhibitions, art galleries or events, whether in person or virtually, are also important.

Planning student exhibitions

Organizing exhibitions and displays of students’ artworks must be integrated in the planning of the visual arts course. This can be done flexibly. Teachers and schools can freely choose how and when they would like to schedule one or more art exhibitions, making these enjoyable, authentic art events that involve the whole school community.

Exhibitions can be planned at any time during the two years of the course, for example:

- after the assessment tasks are submitted, as a celebration of completing the course
- at the end of the first year—as a celebration and an opportunity for students to showcase what they have created up to that point (i.e. with no pressure or need to match the full course requirements)
- at the time of graduation.

A series of smaller exhibitions could also be considered. Exhibiting and sharing artworks is one of the fundamental structures for learning, and schools should support teachers in organizing and planning for

these opportunities. These events can also foster collaboration, with students curating each other's exhibitions or taking the lead in organizing art events.

Course planners and preparing for assessment

The essence of learning and teaching in this course focuses on the practice of art-making. Therefore, the recommended approach to the planning is to **not** use the assessment tasks as the key elements by which teaching should be structured. This would reduce the authenticity of the learning experience and limit what students can achieve. Teachers should instead plan the course using their awareness of the assessment requirements and engage their students in authentic visual arts inquiries. It will be useful to regularly reference the different assessment tasks while students progress in their learning. This approach to teaching—informed by assessment but focused on the syllabus (art-making as inquiry)—will support students' development without hindering their holistic engagement in learning in the visual arts.

In this course, it is expected that teachers and students work in the [classroom as studio](#) through creative processes—to create artworks; to connect with the self, with others and the world; to communicate their artistic intentions to real or potential audiences. Compiling the assessment tasks is an exercise to evidence students' level of achievement in different aspects of their learning, and implies that students have enough work to select from to match the requirements.

Not all objectives are necessarily covered in every unit planned by the teacher or in every student's line of inquiry. Nevertheless, during the two years of the course all students must be taught what is prescribed in the syllabus and gain a full understanding of all the assessment objectives.

Teachers must connect the learning and teaching of each unit with the assessment objectives, both as part of art-making as inquiry but also in relation to the ways in which the work will be assessed. Allowing time to teach students how to document and keep records of their work is vital.

Sharing the assessment criteria with students and planning for interim digital assessment during the two years of the course is another way the teacher can support students in understanding the course requirements and prepare them for the digital summative assessment tasks.

It is important that students learn to work to meet specific requirements and to be able to curate their work in response to specific criteria, recognizing that this is a transferable skill. Students also need to understand that assessment has its own rules. This will also help them to appreciate that their artwork might be judged differently in different contexts, depending on the established criteria.

Example planners

The following three course planners developed by experienced teachers illustrate different approaches to planning the course considering the assessment objectives, the course requirements and the progression from teacher-directed to student-directed activities.

The two unit planners exemplify how to create an inquiry-based unit with a focus on generative thinking that starts from different entry points, and to further students' engagement with inquiry by expanding their use of creative strategies and investigation, and encouraging them to situate their own art-making.

All of the planning approaches introduced in this TSM are examples only. They are proposed to inspire and support the shaping of bespoke courses that each teacher will bring to life with their cohort of students.

Course planners

[Visual arts course planner 1 \(PDF\)](#)—with DP theory of knowledge (TOK) and Career-related Programme (CP) personal and professional skills (PPS) connections

[Visual arts course planner 2 \(PDF\)](#)—with extra slides visually articulating the planned course content

[Visual arts course planner 3 \(Excel\)](#)—colour-coded spreadsheet for progression of student autonomy

Unit planners

[Visual arts unit planner 1 \(PDF\)](#)—investigating contexts to situate art-making

[Visual arts unit planner 2 \(PDF\)](#)—developing art-making as inquiry using an event as a prompt

Integrating SL and HL teaching

Visual arts students learn holistically to develop as young artists, irrespective of whether they opt to follow the course at SL or HL. This being a practice-based and student-centred course, it is in the interests of students to design a syllabus with common objectives at SL and HL, along with specific requirements at each level of the course (in line with the recommended teaching hours).

It is important that the assessment objectives embedded in the creative process are properly understood, so that each and every student will meet the assessment requirements at the end of their SL or HL course. This understanding supports authentic and interactive learning in the visual arts curriculum. This is why it is not only beneficial and possible, but essential, for teachers to focus mainly on teaching art-making as inquiry—helping all students to develop an understanding of the objectives, irrespective of the course level they have chosen. Through this approach, both SL and HL students will be equipped to respond to the assessment tasks in the way they have been designed to assess differentiated achievements.

Figure 6, which maps the assessment objectives in relation to the SL and HL assessment tasks, aims to support structuring the course through the common objectives, thereby facilitating the work carried out in mixed SL and HL classrooms.

Figure 6
Mapping the assessment objectives and assessment tasks

Objective	Task
Curate	Art-making inquiries portfolio
	Resolved artworks
	Selected resolved artworks
	Connections study
	Artist project
Investigate	Art-making inquiries portfolio
	Connections study
	Artist project
Generate	Art-making inquiries portfolio
Refine	Art-making inquiries portfolio
	Artist project
Resolve	Resolved artworks
	Selected resolved artworks
Situate	Connections study
	Selected resolved artworks
	Artist project
Synthesize	Resolved artworks
	Selected resolved artworks
	Artist project

The timetabling of students' lessons should mirror the level of the course they enrolled on and support the intended balanced distribution of student workload across subjects. Therefore, although it may seem practical for SL students to be present in the art classroom as much as HL students, SL students will need to be timetabled for 90 hours fewer, so that they can complete work in other DP subjects. The differentiated

assessment model acknowledges a reduced number of hours at SL. Considering the demands of the DP as a whole, it is not in the interests of SL students to ask them to attend the same number of classroom hours as HL students.

In the second year of the course, and irrespective of the level, student-led activities should by design become dominant, with teachers supporting each student's personal practice, research, realization of artworks and critical reflection. Classrooms become art studios in which each student follows their own creative processes. These classrooms can either be populated by students studying the course at the same level, or mixed-level classrooms. Differentiation at this point is about the teacher managing the complexity of supporting a group of young artists—each one with their own visual language emerging.

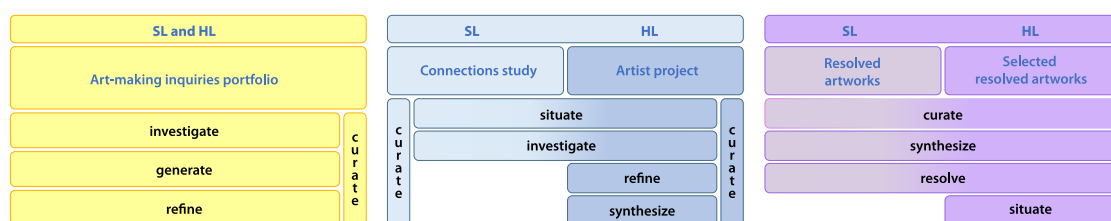
In the second year of the course especially, differentiation is also about making clear to students the tasks they have to complete for assessment—for example, making sure that HL students have enough time to complete the artist project and to curate their selection of resolved artworks.

The planners presented as part of this TSM provide some examples of how teachers can organize teaching in mixed-level classes. All planners alternate common and differentiated teaching interventions to support both SL and HL students.

Teachers supporting the contextual completion of assessment tasks at both levels might find it useful to refer to figure 7 that shows which objectives are common in each task and which are HL-only extensions.

Figure 7

Assessment task requirements at SL and HL



The resource “[Mapping the visual arts tasks to the assessment objectives](#)” (PDF) features these diagrams and a table mapping objectives to tasks requirements.

The objective “situate” in the assessment tasks

Both SL and HL students are assessed on how well they apply “situate” in their art-making as inquiry. For the teacher, this means that it will be effective and efficient to plan combined SL and HL learning activities about this objective and its relevance.

For SL students, the objective “situate” is assessed in the connections study. Teachers can prepare their students, firstly by ensuring that they are aware early in the course that they will have to select one of their resolved artworks to conduct the study, and secondly by encouraging art-making practices that effectively connect with the work of other artists, investigating and expanding understanding of cultural significance.

For HL students, the objective “situate” is assessed in both the artist project and in the selected resolved artworks. It is the role of the teacher to ensure that the proposed projects will allow each student to engage sufficiently with context and show connections with at least two artworks by different artists. Consideration of the audience is an element of the HL artist project that is not included in the SL task. This may be supported by some exhibition-based activities, which, while crucial for the learning experience of the whole class, will be especially helpful to HL students in developing those curatorial skills that they have to evidence for summative assessment. “Situate” is also demonstrated in more breadth and depth in the HL task on selected resolved artworks, with students required to evidence critical analysis in the artwork texts.

For both SL and HL students, it is crucial that they learn to investigate and understand the cultural significance of other artists' work to inform their art-making and to be able to evidence connections.

Common activities that support the completion of task 2 and learning about "situate" across SL and HL include:

- investigation and research activities—individually and in a group
- critical analysis activities—individually and in a group
- activities involving consideration of the relationships between artist, artwork, context and audience
- activities focused on reflecting and evidencing the connections with the work of other artists
- visits to museums and galleries.

Guidance for class activities and resources to help teach "situate" can be found in the section "[Teaching to situate](#)". [Unit planner 2](#) is also an example of how to approach the teaching of "situate" in the classroom.

The scaffolded structure of the artist project

The HL artist project requires that students document their work across a number of discrete sections, each assessed through a separate assessment criterion. This scaffolding is intended to support the assessment of the task, but also its completion—for example, it is important that, as in any authentic project, students have a deadline for the completion of their project proposals.

The project proposal is where, after initial investigation, the student presents initial plans and shows ideas about the project and its feasibility. The initial proposal must inform their work, yet it can also evolve during the development of the project. Final outcomes will then be captured in the finalized intentions text.

To explain to students what this means and how to compile their proposals, teachers may like to share the resource "[The artist project proposal](#)" (PDF) with students.

It is important that teachers support their students in understanding that the assessment of the artist project task is focused on more than the making of yet another artwork. In this task, assessment is focused particularly on evidencing how the student's project is situated in context and is created to communicate artistic intentions to the audience(s) in a specific chosen location. The dialogues section of the project should therefore focus on how critique(s) informed interventions and choices that refined the way the student's artwork functions in the chosen context, thereby communicating its intended meaning.

The investigation of the work of other artists is instrumental to HL students developing a personal visual language in a piece that does not need to be coherent with the rest of their production. Students are asked to evidence their understanding of cultural significance to support their personal practice.

Structuring the teaching of this new task is about facilitating students' autonomy, but also about providing guidance so that they learn to emerge as informed young artists.

The resource "[Artist project—scaffolded teaching of the task](#)" (PDF) supports teachers in organizing the work for this task, mostly in the second year of the course.

Building good teaching practice

Teaching is an art that evolves and needs continuous refinement. Teachers should find the time to review and reflect on their course design, approaches, strategies and practices, and to allow for open dialogue within the classroom to adjust their approaches. When it is authentic and recurrent, reflection generates new possibilities and enhances the experiences of learning and teaching.

Feedback from students, other teachers, coordinators and parents/guardians is an excellent source of information to guide reflection, both during and after the course. There are three points at which reflection can be particularly useful: at the end of a learning/teaching experience; following professional development (PD); at the end of the course/teaching cycle. The following table suggests possible reflection questions to consider, alongside feedback received from others.

Reflection questions	
After a learning/teaching experience	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Was the learning experience successful? In what way(s)? • Did the learning experience encourage students to develop understanding and skills in practical, authentic, transferable ways? Was art-making as inquiry at the core of the activity? • Was there enough space for dialogue? Are there other ways you might consider to encourage connections within and beyond the classroom? • Was formative assessment meaningful and supportive of student progress? How might formative assessment inform the needs of each student? • Were students engaged? Did you seek feedback to learn how they found the learning experience? What strategies did you adopt to motivate and support students' choices as well as their well-being? • How do you position this learning experience in relation to developing students' autonomy? • What have you learned? What was interesting to experience within this particular iteration of the experience? • What could be modified, improved or removed to improve this inquiry or experience?
Following PD	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were my action points from this experience? What are my next steps? • How can my action points be integrated into my curriculum planning? • How can I share my learning with other teachers? • Where can I find further information or resources?
At the end of the course or teaching cycle	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Do IB resources, such as the subject report, example assessments or community insights, highlight issues that I recognize in the work of my students? • Was predicted student performance different from actual outcomes? • Are there areas where PD would be useful? • What should I change in my approaches, strategies and planning, so that the course is relevant, engaging and transformative for my students, allowing them to flourish and emerge as artists?

Pathways to professional development

Teacher well-being and PD are key factors for course success. As schools are unique ecosystems, there is no one approach that will be effective in all settings, but as a starting point schools and teachers are invited to engage with the IB framework for teacher well-being in the report *Wellbeing for schoolteachers*.

By taking part in continuous PD opportunities, teachers will be keeping up to date with studies in visual arts pedagogy and trends in contemporary arts. As well as giving teachers the professional satisfaction of expanding their own horizons, these opportunities will also help to ensure that learning and teaching are in line with current developments in the field and remain relevant for students.

The following table proposes some ways in which teachers can support their PD.

IB pathways	Other pathways
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • IB PD workshops: ibo.org/professional-development • IB Exchange: ibo.org/professional-development/discover-ib-exchange/ • Becoming an IB examiner: ibo.org/jobs-and-careers/become-an-assessment-ib-educator/become-an-ib-examiner • The IB educator network (IBEN): ibo.org/jobs-and-careers/ib-educator-network/ <p>Through IBEN, educators can be trained for several roles, becoming workshop leaders as well as school visitors, consultants or examiners.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visual arts education organizations: Many associations support visual arts education with classroom materials, resources and/or events. Teachers may want to explore both local and international organizations that, even if not specific to the DP visual arts course, might provide resources that complement it. • Museums or art institutions: Many institutions offer excellent PD opportunities, some of which may align with the course. • IB-related organizations and networks: IB teachers and schools often participate in networks focused on a particular region or type of school. These networks offer opportunities to develop competencies and to connect with other teachers. See ibo.org/benefits/associations-of-ib-schools/. • Visual arts course companion: Oxford University Press publication produced in cooperation with the IB.

The classroom as studio and beyond

Structures and spaces for learning

the studio is at least in part a psychological construction, tied to the individual artist as part of the formation of artistic identity.

(Singerman, 2010, p. 40)

The artist studio is intended in this course as a generative state, even more than an actual space. Teachers have the opportunity to create this for their students to promote their conceptual and formal development as emerging artists. In the artist studio, inquiry-based, experimental and creative activities lead to productive (and unproductive) making (and unmaking), to unexpected paths, fruitful failures and critical reflection.

The culture of the classroom as studio relies on careful planning and observation by the teacher. In practical terms, the teacher needs to work within the specific context in which the course is implemented, responding to students' needs, and to the culture of the school and the larger community to which students belong. Some aspects of teaching will remain consistent from year to year, while others will change with the dynamics of each cohort of students.

The classroom as studio also relies on the structures for learning and on the dispositions specific to the visual arts. These have been introduced in the [Visual arts guide](#) following the work of Lois Hetland, Ellen Winner, Shirley Veenema and Kimberly Sheridan (2013) in The Studio Thinking Project.

Proposed structures for learning

Demonstrating art-making
Students-at-work
Dialogues and critiques
Research
Exhibits and displays
Presenting digitally
Communities of learning

It is the ways in which the teacher balances and alternates the different structures in the classroom as studio that support the generative and interactive nature of learning.

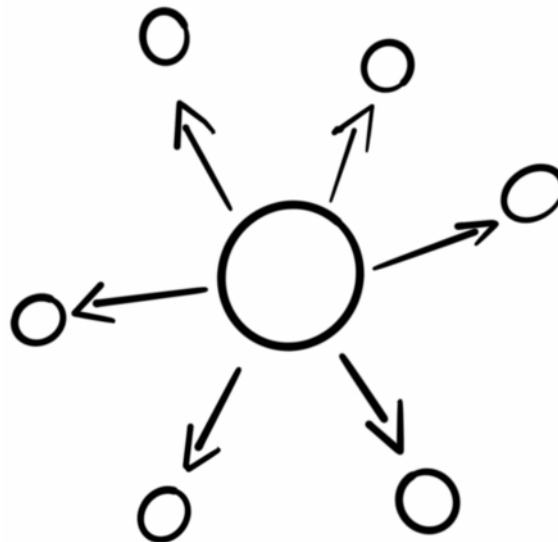
As the course progresses, teachers will find that some structures for learning are used with greater or lesser frequency. For example, demonstrating art-making might play a more prominent role earlier in the course as teachers front-load and instruct students. At the start of the second year a classroom as studio will focus more on a combination of students-at-work with dialogues and critiques, and communities of learning. At the end of the course, as students wrap up their studio work, dialogues and critiques might become even more frequent.

After introducing research methods and tools, teachers encourage students' personal engagement with diverse sources to foster curiosity. As the course progresses the focus is on developing students' abilities to be informed artists whose artwork is supported by research and conducted with academic integrity. Exhibits and displays will be useful whenever these emerge as a need in the studio or are felt to be useful at a specific moment: to reflect on, repurpose or simply celebrate the work of students. Meanwhile, presenting digitally is a skill students develop during the course and mainly as they focus on the final assessment tasks.

Demonstrating art-making

In “demonstrating art-making”, students watch and listen to the teacher presenting a task, explaining a process, demonstrating a technique or a method, showing the work of other artists, sharing resources, demonstrating divergent thinking strategies and possible steps, and/or talking about their own creative practice.

Figure 8
Demonstrating art-making



Demonstrating in the classroom as studio is a valuable way to provide a visual mode of teaching focused on being practical, visually rich, informative and clear. Demonstrations should be as brief as possible and emphasize methods, approaches and dispositions to allow quick transition into students-at-work.

When teachers use demonstrations at the start of the course, they generally assign tasks to students to cover specific teaching within one core area, or across the three core areas. This may not be the work that the students feel most connected to, but it will be useful to instil foundational dispositions and skills.

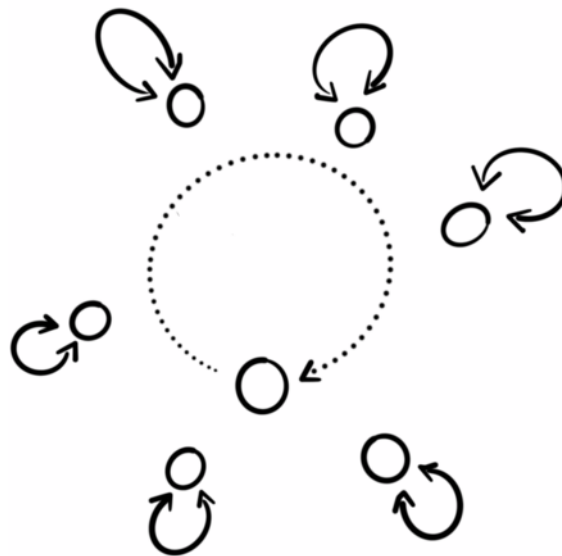
To support a transition to more personal and independent student practices as the course progresses, teacher demonstrations should progressively become more of a way to support students’ ideation or refinement processes. When the demonstrations are connected to wider concepts and built on prior learning, students can develop their ideas at a higher level, and build a more sophisticated understanding of aspects of the creative process.

Practical and spatial considerations: A space with a central focus point could be used. For example, it could be a table around which students gather to watch the teacher demonstrating and modelling technical skills and processes or displaying images of artists’ work in books or on-screen. In virtual learning environments, the teacher needs to be able to demonstrate live using a camera, or present live a pre-recorded demonstration.

Students-at-work

In “students-at-work”, students are engaging in their own art-making and creative processes. The teacher is a facilitator and supports each student and the group in the classroom as studio.

Figure 9
Students-at-work



The visual arts course requires as much time as possible for students-at-work. At the beginning of the course these working occasions should be prefaced by demonstrations that include assigned tasks planned to encourage understanding of specific creative processes in connection with the assessment objectives.

The tasks assigned should develop a range of skills and have technique-building goals, allowing time for experimentation and exploration of materials. As the course progresses, the students-at-work scenario should become progressively student-directed. Teachers should facilitate and support students as they experiment with new techniques and processes, envision and generate their artistic intentions, and investigate and progress through lines of inquiry. The spirit of the course is best achieved when teachers facilitate and support student-directed art-making.

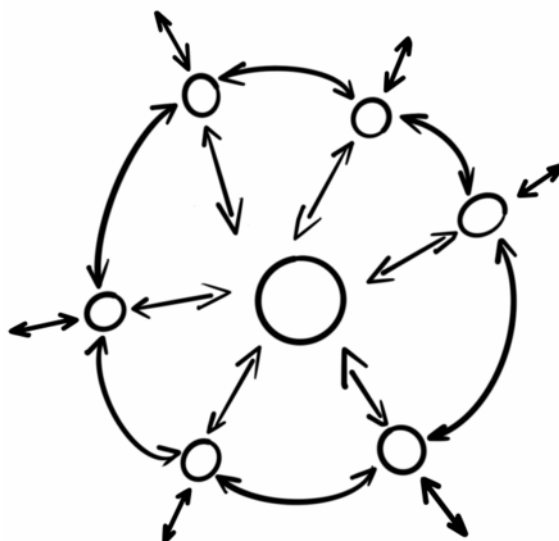
Practical and spatial considerations: The working space should be such that students can experiment and develop their work and also have access to some form of storage space to keep their ongoing work safe. Depending on school resources, this could involve a designated working space for each student (e.g. a desk or area that they can claim as their own). If such a space is not available, each student should have a folder, or space on a shelf or in a cupboard to safely store their ongoing work. In virtual learning environments, each student should have a folder where they store their own work. They will also need the necessary digital tools to document and share their work regularly, but also to participate in synchronous student-at-work time with others.

Dialogues and critiques

In "dialogues and critiques", students:

- talk to each other, share their ideas, glean ideas from one another, are influenced by each other
- meet informally with teachers to discuss their work
- meet formally with teachers to discuss their work and art-making practice
- participate in critiques, giving and receiving feedback
- meet informally with other students to discuss their work; they also dialogue with their audiences.

Figure 10
Dialogues and critiques



Opportunities to discuss their own and each other's work will inevitably lead to students' art-making practices becoming more engaged and meaningful. Teachers should flexibly allow time and opportunities for students to give and receive feedback about their own and their peers' ongoing and resolved artworks. Time should then also be allocated for students to be able to use the feedback.

The resource "[A framework to support dialogues](#)" (PDF) can be used to encourage and facilitate the review of artwork through dialogues, in pairs or in small groups.

Establishing a questioning framework and vocabulary that students progressively become familiar with is a way to help them become familiar with the process of dialoguing in one-to-one or small-group situations. The same framework can be adopted and adapted by the teacher to conduct one-to-one formal dialogues with each student. Each dialogue might select just a few questions from the suggested categories and not all need to be covered at one time.

Teachers use questioning to encourage students to develop their artistic intentions and their work, as well as to help them in understanding what is realistically feasible versus what they envisage. Teachers offer "feedback that moves learning forward" (William, 2011). Teachers might suggest directions, but they should not and do not provide answers. As mentioned in the *Visual arts guide*, a dialogic approach to formative feedback in the visual arts classroom empowers students. This is also outlined in the IB publication *Formative feedback in DP visual arts: A case study*. "If we are to harness the power of feedback to increase student learning then we need to ensure that feedback causes a cognitive rather than an emotional reaction—in other words, feedback should cause thinking. ... Indeed, the whole purpose of feedback should be to increase the extent to which students are owners of their own learning" (William, 2011. p. 132).

The critique is a formal moment of presenting works in progress and completed works, with the aim of receiving constructive feedback for revising, refining and resolving the work. It is an integral part of the classroom as studio in that it creates a community of practitioners who actively support and help grow each other's artistic practices through dialogue. Critique is also a requirement for HL students to fulfil criterion C in the artist project, where they are asked to demonstrate, when finalizing their work, their ability to integrate feedback about the realization of their project in context.

Teachers are recommended to integrate critiques throughout the two years of the course, offering clear instruction to students beforehand to set the expectations of the time given, ensure they understand the task, and ensure that everyone is included in it.

The resource “[A framework for critiquing](#)” (PDF) can be shared with students to support this activity in the classroom.

Building a vocabulary list for critique and feedback

Teachers should model and instruct on ways to provide meaningful feedback that is empathic and sensitive to students’ individual needs. For example, it is important to use words that address shortcomings in a constructive way, but that where possible are also complimentary.

Adopting meta-normative goals and language, and being mindful of this, is helpful in determining not only the kinds of questions to ask but also the vocabulary to use. This will benefit everyone involved and facilitate dialogue between teacher and student, student and student, and students individually reflecting on their own work. As students become more confident in asking questions and using subject-specific vocabulary, critiques and feedback become faster and more focused, with students able to clearly articulate their own ideas.

It is vital that the students understand the impact of their words on others during peer critique. Being too critical or being too complimentary can be equally obstructive in the critiquing and feedback process, hindering meaningful dialogue that has the potential to develop.

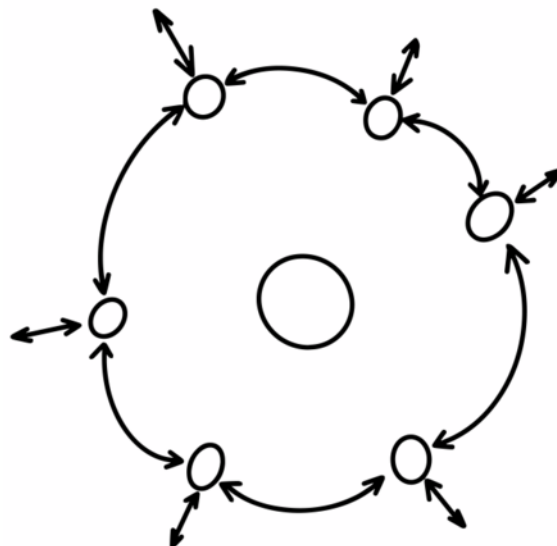
Practical and spatial considerations: A meeting space in which students and teacher gather to look at and discuss student work. A semi-private meeting space for providing students with individual feedback, preferably while looking at work in person or in digital reproduction.

Research

In “research”, students focus on investigation to inform their art-making. They look at other artists’ work, research context(s), practically investigate and experiment, and explore ideas and other disciplines to connect and inform their art-making; in the classroom as studio, students also share their discoveries and learn from each other.

Figure 11

Research



Intertwining research with creative interpretive approaches gives the artist freedom to create new possibilities and to look at location and situation from new angles. When investigating the work of other artists, students should be invited to explore the possibilities that others have opened and consider how these might be relevant or adaptable to further developing their own creative practices. Research involves

practical investigation, experimentation, and a curious and creative disposition. Students also learn to research contexts to understand cultural significance, how artworks communicate with audiences and how artists situate themselves.

Students may also undertake field research by taking on, adapting and mimicking the methodologies and techniques of research in other fields, thereby gaining and developing new understandings to inform their practice.

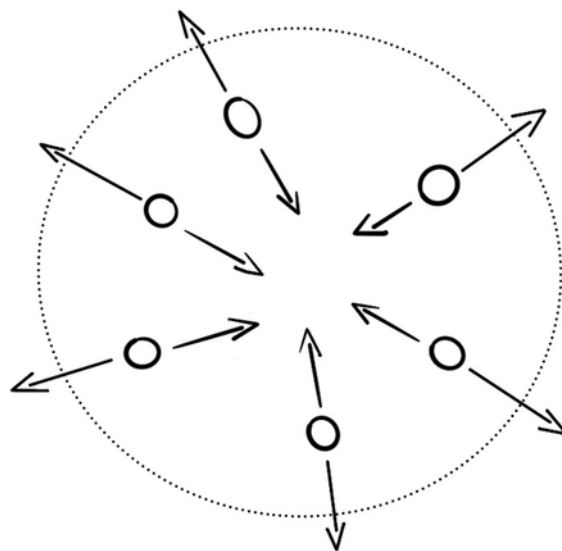
Practical and spatial considerations: Access to a computer with internet, a variety of sources and a library.

Exhibits and displays

During the course teachers and students create opportunities for “exhibits and displays” of artwork. Students:

- make choices about their artworks and how to display them
- display, exhibit and present their artworks within the classroom, the school, and in other locations when possible, reaching audiences outside their school community.

Figure 12
Exhibits and displays



Artworks are created to communicate artistic intentions, and most often to be shared and displayed for audience(s). It is important that students learn to consider audience(s) and context(s) when they engage in their creative practice. This will allow them to engage, transform and emerge as artists.

Teachers instruct students on the responsibilities of curating their own artwork and make time for some curatorial activities. Students make decisions about the visual display of their works for an audience, to communicate intended meaning and realize the presentation of their own or other artists' works. The process of selection is an important skill that students must be instructed on when teaching the core area “communicate”.

As highlighted in the section “[Planning student exhibitions](#)”, the visual arts course requires schools to provide the resources, time and space(s) needed for students to exhibit and display their work. To allow this to be an authentic experience there is no requirement to submit evidence of a final exhibition of students' resolved artworks as part of the internal assessment (IA) tasks. Every teacher and group of students should be supported by their school to engage with audiences and find the best format and timings to do so. This might, for example, entail one or more of the following: personal exhibits; group exhibitions; performances, projections and events; an end-of-year, one-off exhibition; an end-of-course or graduation exhibition. In all

cases, these should honour the students' work to maximum effect and conveniently fit within the school calendar.

Small-scale exhibitions in school spaces beyond the art classroom build confidence and encourage communication skills when students present, explain and answer questions from audiences of their peers or teachers. Different audiences provide new insights and stimulate dialogue and critique. It will be even more effective if teachers also look at spaces beyond the school where students can exhibit. Curating these events and writing artist statements for them make communicating with an audience a real learning experience.

The idea of an audience can also be effectively applied to the online display of art, and encouraging students to engage with wider communities of practice will help them to broaden the concept of what a modern art audience is.

The only requirement to display artwork for assessment is related to the HL artist project, where students are responsible for curating the realization of an artwork in a chosen context. Guidance about this task is provided in the "[Planning the course](#)" section of this TSM.

Practical and spatial considerations: School spaces should allow students to display their work, both ongoing and completed—for example, a space where students can arrange their works beside each other. In the case of virtual learning environments, digital exhibitions can be set up, but students should also be encouraged to identify physical spaces to display their artworks to local audiences. Note that for HL students, this is a requirement for the artist project.

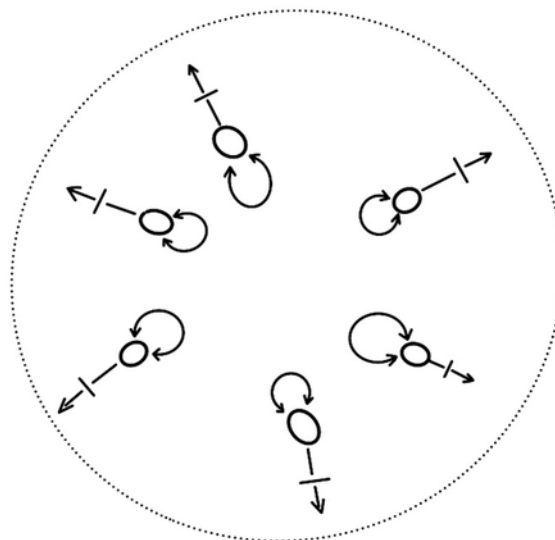
Presenting digitally

As part of the course, and for assessment purposes, students will be "presenting digitally". They:

- curate visual and written materials for on-screen and online presentations of their artwork
- compile the course digital assessment tasks
- share their artwork virtually to audiences beyond their local context.

Figure 13

Presenting digitally



The skills required to curate and present visual arts materials digitally must be developed throughout the course and are highly relevant to contemporary young artists. The practice of selecting relevant evidence, appropriately documenting it and laying it out digitally is a requirement for preparing the assessment tasks at the end of the course. Students must understand that when sharing their artwork online they are

reaching a much wider and more diverse audience beyond their local communities, and this applies to the digital assessment of their artwork too. The skills of efficiently creating and editing layouts that are clear and visually engaging, and to communicate to a global audience, while also responding to prescribed requirements, should be given dedicated instruction time.

Students who are able to synthesize and communicate their work by digitally curating visual and written materials, and a portfolio about their art-making, are better prepared for the demands of the contemporary arts scene. They will also be able to use these skills in various ways—for example, to promote their own art practice, to apply for further education courses and to apply for jobs.

Practical and spatial considerations: Digital tools and applications should be made available to students for the preparation and presentation of digital materials.

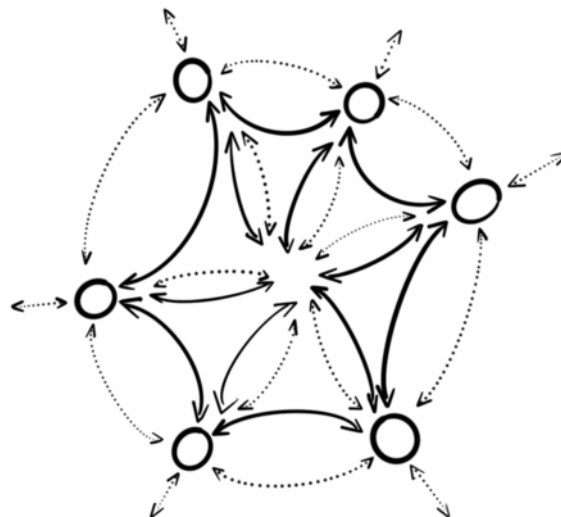
Communities of learning

Students and teachers are part of “communities of learning” and are interconnected with each other as well as with the wider communities of artists they have the opportunity to engage with or feel connected to. Students:

- share resources, offer advice, plan projects together, talk about other artists, participate and learn from each other
- identify what their connections are and what their genealogy of artists is
- visit museums, art galleries, art monuments, cultural sites and art events, get to know more artists and start to feel part of the ever-evolving history of visual arts
- and teachers connect with local artists to discuss their work and/or attend workshops.

Figure 14

Communities of learning



Communities of learning begin in the classroom, with collaborative and “everyday” creativities (Eisler et al., 2016). They offer a new way to consider creative processes and activities in the visual arts that might not always relate to skills-based outcomes.

The classroom as a community of learning creates a shared environment where visual arts students are all participating in a similar creative experience.

Communities of learning extend beyond the classroom to the local community. It is important for students to situate themselves within the local context and understand how regional artists are responding to the same particular location. This might be supported by inviting local artists to the classroom or visiting their studios.

Finally, communities of learning open up into the larger field of the arts—both the contemporary art scene and art history in general. Students create affinities with a range of artists and build their own “family” of artists that they are most inspired by and return to repeatedly.

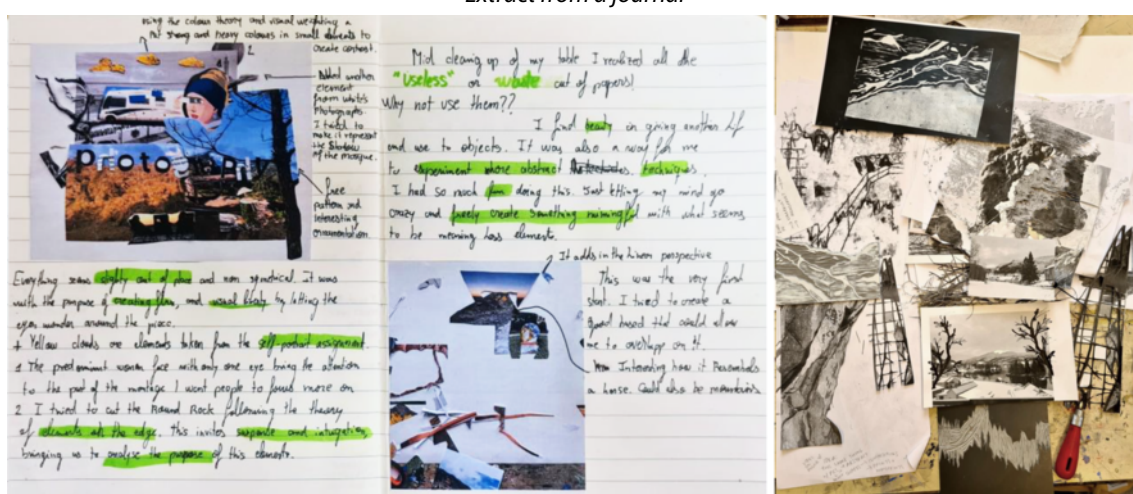
Practical and spatial considerations: Teachers should create opportunities for unmediated exchange between students, invite local artists for talks and workshops, and take students on trips to exhibitions and museums.

Visual arts journals

As stated in the *Visual arts guide*, students are encouraged to explore beyond traditional sketchbooks, embracing a variety of “journals” to support their authentic creative practice. Offering a variety of tools and approaches, and allowing students to work in the ways they find most suited to their practice will enhance their engagement and learning.

Figure 15

Extract from a journal



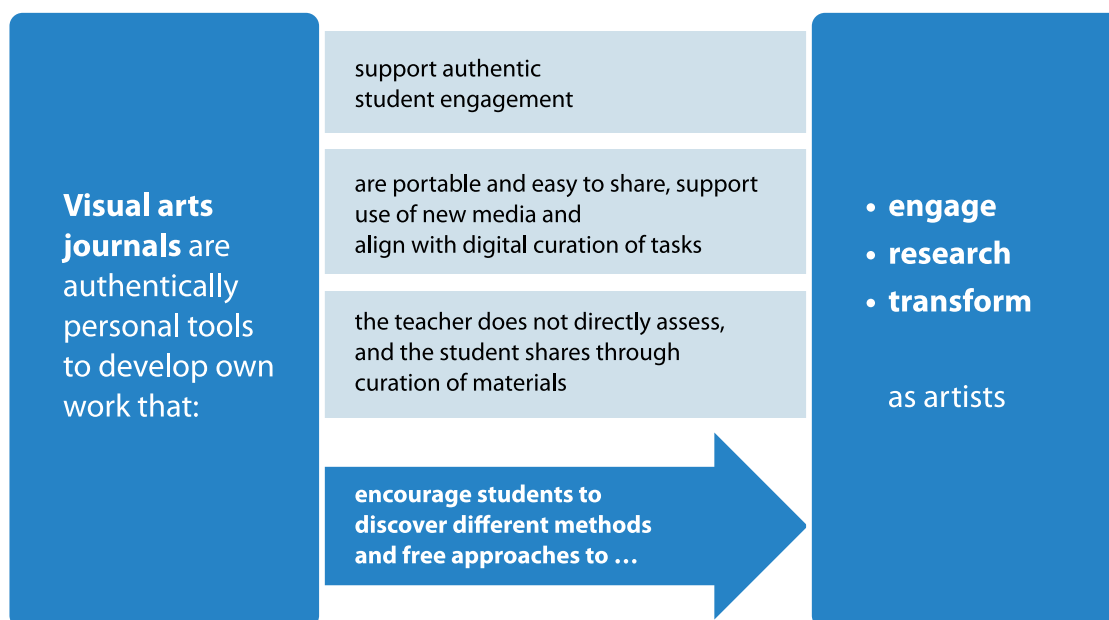
Students who investigate, experiment, explore, reflect and develop their work in a variety of formats are not only able to follow authentic generative processes, but are also able to produce enough materials to select from for the diverse assessment tasks. The use of journals emphasizes the importance of personal exploration, continuous engagement and reflection to support the iterative creative process inherent to this course.

It is recommended that teachers regularly ask students to select and organize content extracted from their journals for interim digital assessment, as this will enable reflection on their progress and development of curatorial skills. When the teacher feels it is appropriate, mini mock versions of the assessment tasks are also a very useful exercise to assign, as different criteria need to be used to select materials for each of the tasks. In this way, students will learn the necessary skills to curate materials both from their journals and their artworks.

Being asked to share materials curated in a digital format will support students in learning to bridge the gap between personal practice and the formal presentation of their own artwork. At the same time, it will also allow them freedom of authentic experimentation, knowing that they will be able to keep for themselves work that they do not wish to show.

Figure 16

How visual arts journals help students develop their creative processes



Teachers should also create opportunities for students to share with peers selected content from their journals, as this will foster both a collaborative spirit and self-motivation. This practice builds a supportive learning environment while keeping the focus on individual practice.

The resource "[Example visual arts journals](#)" (PDF) helps to introduce students to the importance of using visual arts journals in many different formats. Teachers may also want to look at the interactive online arts resource, "[Effective journaling in DP arts](#)".

Example journals

Teachers are encouraged to show their students various ways of using visual arts journals, sharing their own methods and those of other artists. There is no single, correct way to keep a journal. The role of the teacher is to facilitate students' personalized approaches to art-making. The aim is to emphasize the creative process itself and the authentic use of journals, rather than the inauthentic creation of journal pages at a late stage, merely for final presentation.

Figure 17
Example visual arts journal



Art-making practice developed through lines of inquiry

Art-making as inquiry in an educational context presents visual arts practices as a means of discovering, constructing, transforming, and sharing knowledge and understanding, where these are encompassed conceptually through ideas and intentions, and applied through skills.

The course is designed with art-making as inquiry at its core. To better understand what this means, it is useful to start by looking at the diagrams that illustrate the content of the syllabus in the *Visual arts guide*. As a series, these provide a visual representation of the main elements of the curriculum.

The two diagrams in figure 18 appear as figures 6 and 7 in the guide. The first shows a general overview of how art-making as inquiry is central to the course and how it is propelled by the three core areas of the syllabus. The image also indicates to teachers and students that art-making practice is situated in context(s), an element of the course they must always relate to. The second further defines art-making as inquiry via a close-up view of the diagram on the left. Art-making as inquiry is presented as the continuous and ever-evolving interplay among **artistic intentions**, **creative strategies**, **art-making-forms** and **contexts**.

Figure 18

The centrality of art-making as inquiry

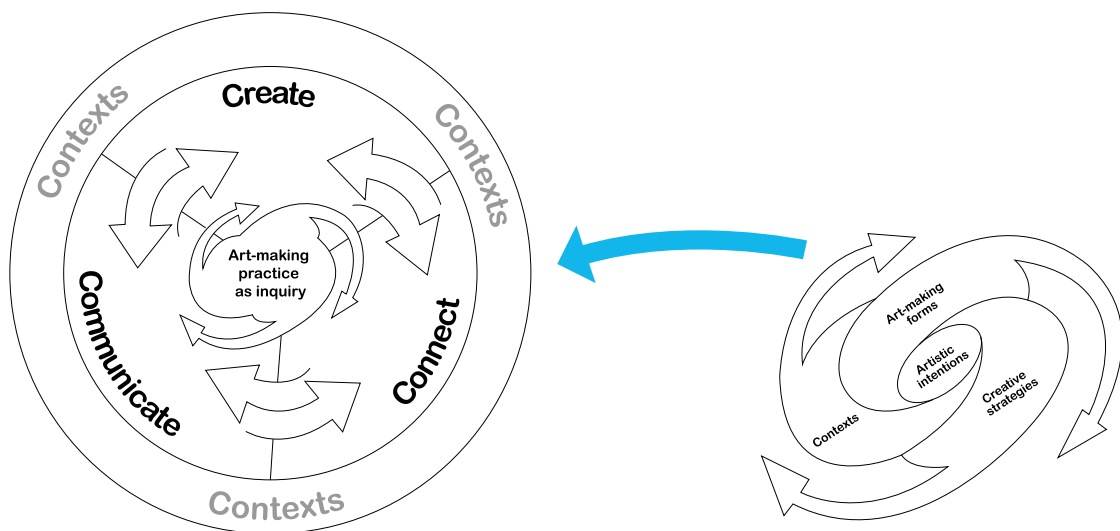
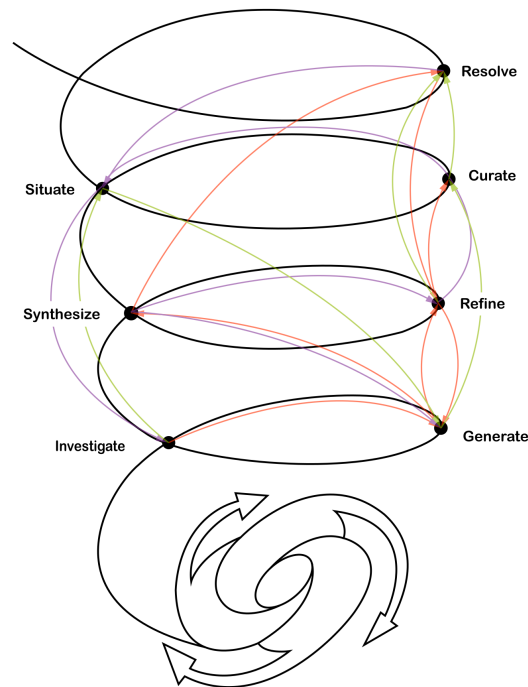


Figure 19 (figure 9 in the guide) visualizes in a three-dimensional model how the creative process may develop through lines of inquiry.

Figure 19
The art-making creative process developed through lines of inquiry



Emerging from the base of art-making as inquiry (as presented in figure 19) the creative process is represented as a black spiral on which all the assessment objectives are plotted. The coloured lines represent the different pathways that different students may take in their art-making practices given the flexible nature of the creative process, or the creative process iterations a single student could go through when engaging in their art-making inquiries.

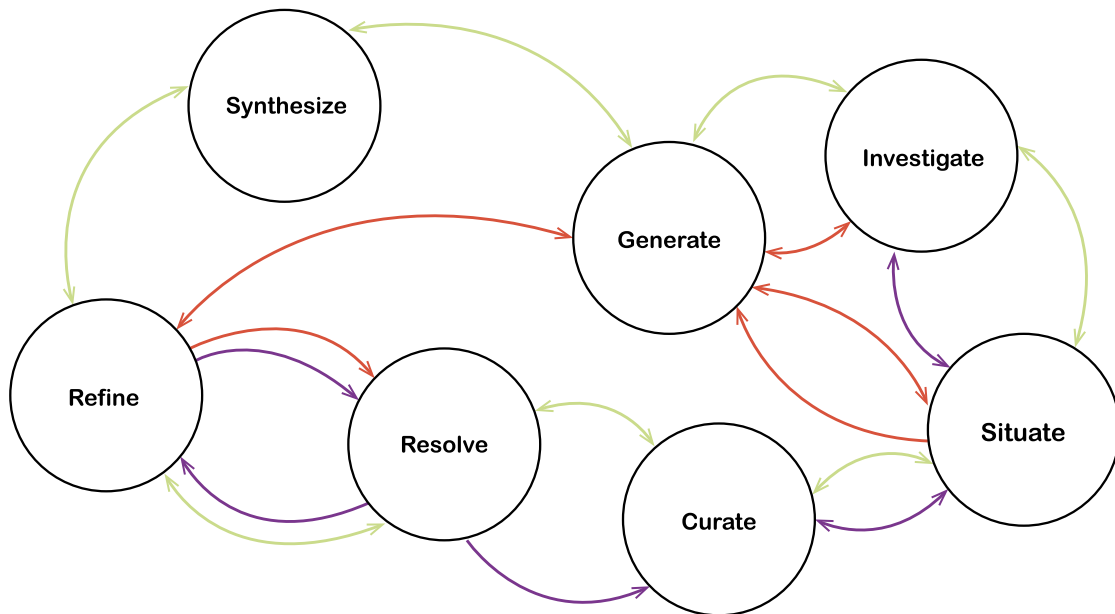
This figure also shows how, when engaging in creative processes, students are inherently addressing the assessment objectives of this course. Not every inquiry will necessarily touch all objectives, but during the course students will develop an understanding of all the objectives and create artwork to evidence their personal art-making practice with regard to each.

The assessment objectives embedded in the creative practice become a framework to guide learning and teaching and provide coherence between the syllabus and the assessment model.

Figure 20 (figure 10 in the guide) proposes the spiral model as it would be seen from above, and more clearly evidences the iterative and flexible nature of the visual arts creative process.

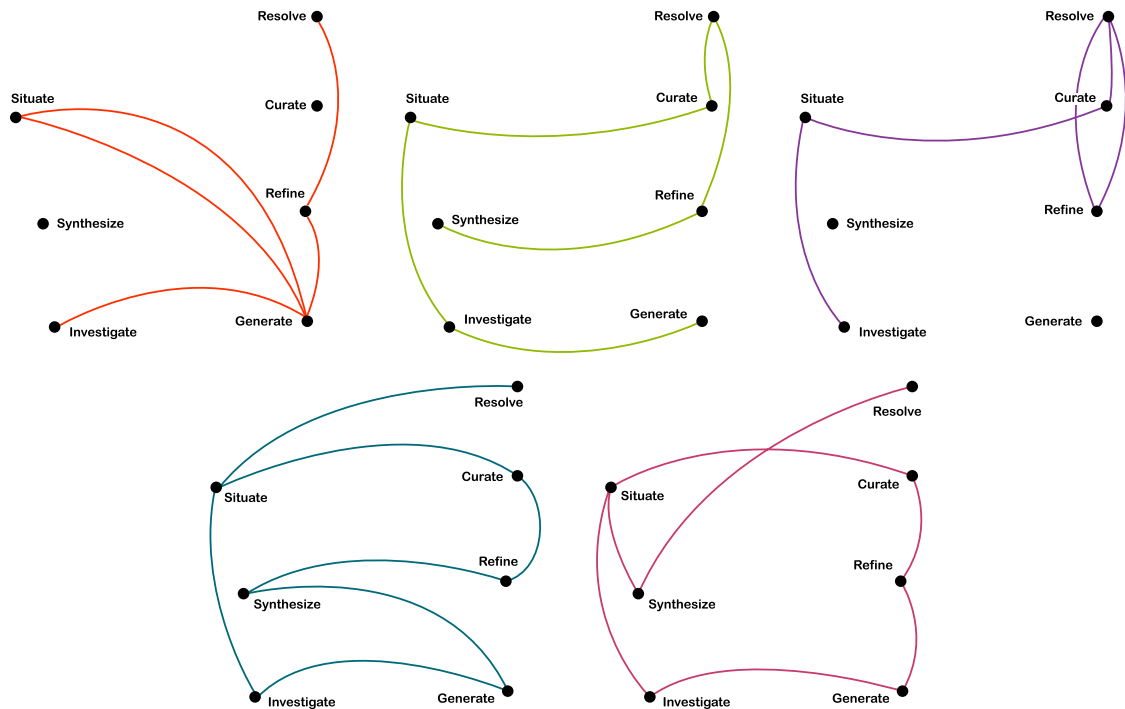
Figure 20

Assessment objectives with examples of different creative pathways



In figure 21 (figure 4 in the guide) the inquiry lines in orange, green and purple are those seen in the figures shown so far.

Figure 21
Different approaches to the creative process

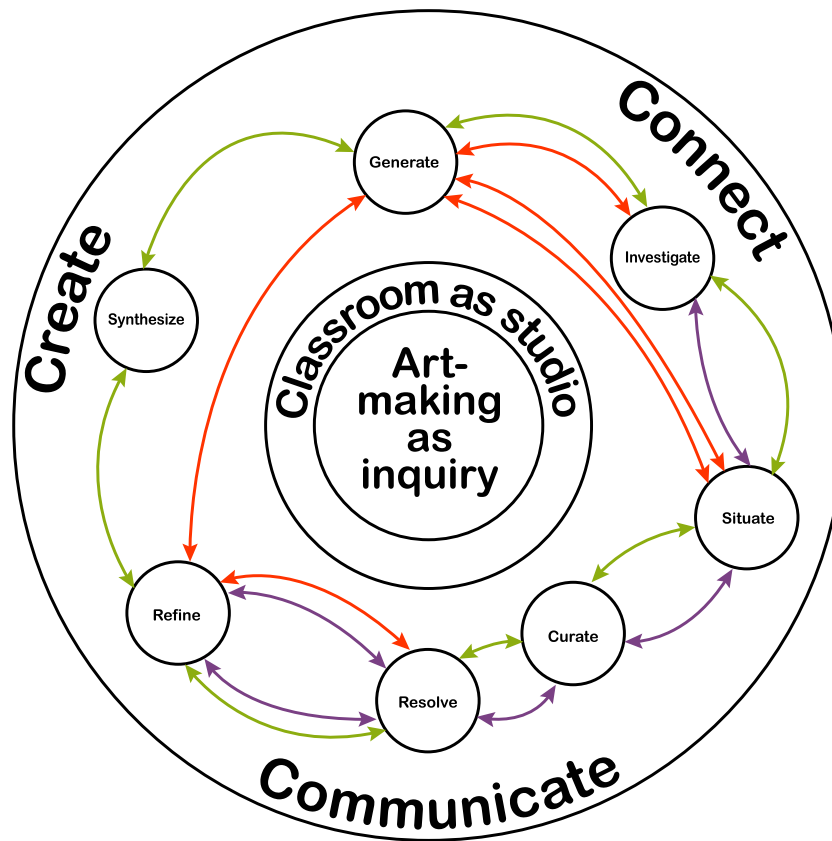


Common to all these diagrams is the overarching idea that each student should always be free to choose one of the many possible paths to approach, articulate and progress their art-making. The images also suggest that different starting points are possible and new directions may emerge; iteration and re-purposing are also allowed, as well as false starts.

The overview of the course shown in figure 22 (figure 3 in the guide) once more shows lines of inquiry, the creative process as iterative and non-linear, and the assessment objectives integrated in the space of the three core areas of the syllabus. The image represents how the classroom as studio is the place where art-making as inquiry is fostered in creative and imaginative ways.

Figure 22

Overview of the course with the core areas and assessment objectives



Teaching art-making as inquiry

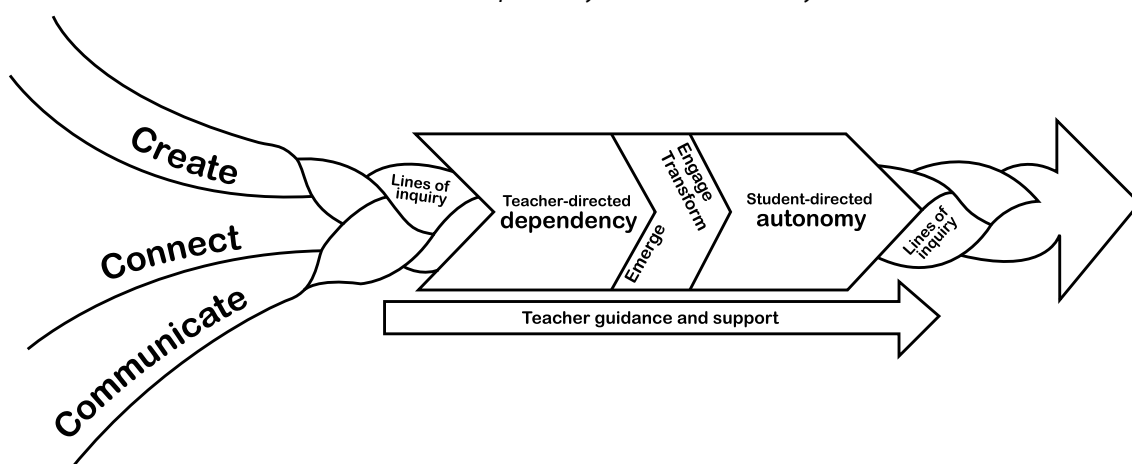
Inquiry-based teaching and the nature of the visual arts offer flexibility to teachers, inviting them to shape the art classroom as a space where the curriculum is always in a state of “becoming”.

Teachers are encouraged to expand their artistic understanding and practices in response to students' interests and choices, fostering a culture of curiosity, risk-taking and collaboration.

The teacher–student relationship involves negotiation and agreement on each student’s effective learning progressions. Teaching to facilitate creative thinking will support transformative learning experiences. (For further information on creative thinking, see *Measuring student success skills: A review of the literature on creative thinking* [Brandt, 2023].)

Figure 23 (figure 11 in the guide) illustrates the path from student dependency to student autonomy. It shows how throughout the two years of the course, transitioning from teacher-directed activities, to teacher-guided activities, to free, open, student-directed activities, can support the development of students’ personal visual language and artwork. This occurs through lines of inquiry and learning in the three core areas— create, connect and communicate.

Figure 23
From student dependency to student autonomy



Teachers are encouraged to plan the course so that students can move from developing work in response to teacher-directed activities to progressively being more proactive and successful in self-managing their own inquiries and creative processes, with increasing awareness, critical reflection and reflexivity.

Allowing students to lead their own creative work as they assimilate capabilities is a way of providing them with agency. Through this they will also develop a growing understanding of the possibilities their artwork has to transform and impact them as well as their communities. Approaches to teaching should recognize the importance of supporting learning characterized by processes that are “exploratory, inquiry led, emergent or embedded” (Bunce, 2022).

In the earliest stages of the course, particularly when students have limited experience of visual arts in their prior learning, teacher-directed inquiry is an appropriate approach. As suggested in the “[Planning the course](#)” section of this TSM, it is recommended that each teacher starts by modelling an inquiry-based approach to art-making by instructing, demonstrating and guiding.

Research in this course should always link and feed into students’ art-making. Students must be guided in developing effective ways of researching as art practitioners using a variety of approaches. They must learn not only to conduct research as they might do in other subjects, but also to do this through their art-making practice. Students are guided to investigate while exploring a variety of art-making forms and creative strategies, through observation and practical investigation of the work of other artists.

Teaching art-making as inquiry means guiding students to always connect conceptual and material practices. As outlined in the guide in “Teaching focused on conceptual understanding”, making art always involves engaging with concepts as well as with form. Students must acquire and deepen their ability to relate to and work with concepts, these being the ideas they are interested in researching and presenting in their artwork. Or, they may be the theories that might guide them as artists or even the more broad ideas and concepts that they might need to learn about to deepen their understanding of the nature of visual arts and its language.

Lines of inquiry can be generated, redirected, progressed and/or elaborated through a range of starting points and approaches, including the following.

Media-led	Experimenting with materials and techniques as starting points for inquiry into the properties of materials, technical skills and/or formal qualities.
Artist-led	Research into the work of others as a starting point for students’ own inquiry into techniques or concepts explored by other artists.

Event-led	Utilizing a significant event as the starting point for an inquiry into the time and space, whether it is personal or shared.
Process-led	Inspired by reflecting on personal process, including mistakes that can generate new directions. Here the process-oriented nature of art-making is the starting point of an inquiry.
Location-led	Research or a response to location is a starting point for inquiry, exploring its significance either personally or for a community, and setting out on an inquiry for or inspired by this location.
Concept-led	An idea or intention is a starting point for inquiry that progressively expands and finds focus or discovers new directions.
Object-led	An object is a starting point for an inquiry into its meaning, function and purpose as impetus for creating work.

As students gain confidence in their art-making (or when a class has more experience of visual arts in their prior learning), unit planning should shift to **teacher-guided inquiry**, supporting student agency and choice. The teacher continues to instruct, demonstrate and guide students, but increasingly their role shifts to observing, listening, dialoguing and facilitating students at work.

A manageable range of art-making forms and media should be presented for students to choose from. The teacher could suggest a prescribed range of creative strategies to explore the inquiry questions and generative statements that students have developed. Students can freely experiment with media they have had prior experience with, or the teacher might introduce students to unfamiliar forms of media via class workshops or demonstrations.

It is important to acknowledge that the learning needs of students vary. Different students will require varying levels of teacher guidance throughout the course, but the goal of all DP visual arts classes should be to move to **student-directed inquiry**. Teachers continue to plan and support and manage learning, but focus more on facilitating each student's personal practice as it emerges.

In a student-directed inquiry, having developed some independence and increased autonomy in their art-making, students can take a more significant lead. This is particularly important as they develop work towards the resolved artworks (SL) or selected resolved artworks (HL).

In the inquiry-based art classroom, teachers should feel comfortable acknowledging that they are not experts in every aspect of the visual arts. They are therefore likely to be presented with student art-making aspirations that fall outside their particular areas of expertise. Where possible, realistically achievable, and if it is safe to do so, teachers are therefore encouraged to embrace inquiry and support students in exploring their ideas. They may do so by providing some initial resources, information or links to other experts, helping the student evaluate the possibilities and limitations of their aspirations. In some cases, this might lead to the teacher further supporting an art practice they have not previously worked with in their classroom. At other times, the teacher may be supporting the student with alternative, more cost-effective, time-effective or safer options that will better allow them to realize their intentions.

Leading students through discussions about material and time constraints, as well as workplace safety, is a crucial role for the teacher. In the student-directed art studio, teachers can suggest different modalities for students to explore and experiment with as part of their inquiries. These will be crucial in providing input to inspire learning encounters that matter to individual students. This could include creating opportunities for peer collaboration or instruction.

Students learn to think and make like artists as they engage, transform and emerge. These approaches are introduced in the *Visual arts guide* in the section "Approaches to learning and approaches to teaching in visual arts". They can be very powerful lenses to discuss each student's art-making as inquiry and learning across the three core areas as this becomes more personal and self-directed.

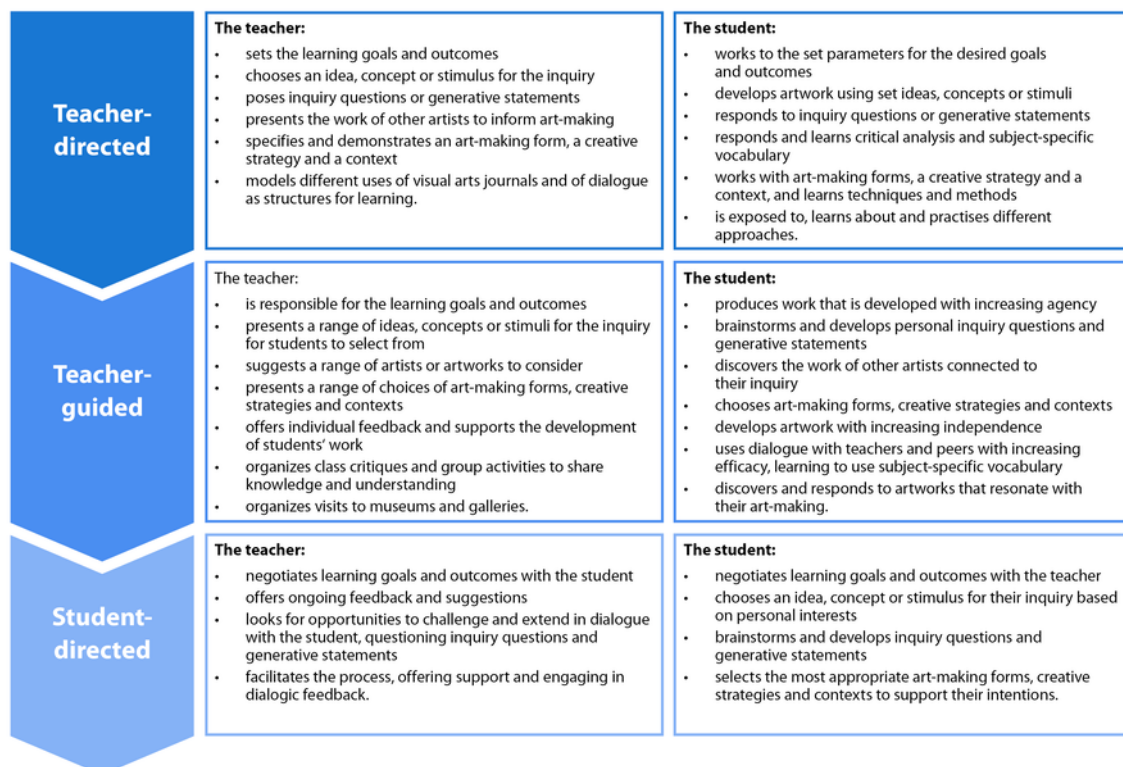
	Create	Connect	Communicate
Engage	What attitudes, strategies and methods did you find the most useful to engage with your practice? How have these changed?	In what ways do you engage with contemporary issues and practices through your work?	How has engaging in dialogues supported development of your practice?
Transform	What have you learned in terms of manipulation of media to make art?	How has art-making been transformative for you, changing how you connect with the self, others and the world?	In what ways have you experienced how art-making communicates with audience(s) and can be an agent for change?
Emerge	How have you explored innovative trends through your study of art?	What creative habits will you use beyond this course?	How do you feel you have developed as a practitioner of the arts?

From student dependency to student autonomy

Figure 24 summarizes how different approaches to teaching and planning will support this transition in the visual arts classroom as studio.

Figure 24

The change in the teacher–student relationship as student autonomy increases



Teacher direction might initially be quite specific, but this approach could also be followed up with more subtle guidance. For example, if the teacher wants students to engage with self-portraiture inspired by

Frida Kahlo, they could ask them to ideate and critically reflect on their ideas and intentions, but not to create a piece. Instead, moving to the creative student-at-work activity, it would be important not to lock students into a specific genre, but rather let them develop their ideas independently for a more authentic and original outcome that is their own work.

In teacher planning, even a small shift can help students to develop their autonomy. For example, using an extract from example unit planner 1 (figure 25), instructing students to “create a self-portrait” would be more restrictive than asking them to “create an artwork about identity” as part of a unit to introduce “situate” and the connection with context in artworks.

Figure 25

Subtle shifts in learning and teaching help to develop student autonomy

Diploma Programme subject outline—the arts														
DP subject	Visual arts	Further details of the planner		Higher level: Duration of each class 55 minutes; 5 classes per week. Around 20 students										
Topic	Content			TOK	Assessment instruments									
Year 1	UNIT 2	Diploma Programme subject outline—the arts												
Connections study	DP subject	Visual arts	Further details of the planner		Higher level: Duration of each class 55 minutes; 5 classes per week. Around 20 students									
	Topic		Content		TOK	Assessment instruments								
	Year 1	UNIT 2	Community Presented with reproductions of artworks from different periods/cultures, students are tasked to categorize them based on what they see. Afterwards, students describe how and why they grouped the works.											
	Connections study	Unit 2 objectives - Students will choose a work of art to research and situate the context in which it was produced.												
	Contexts and cultural significance	1. Teacher-guided investigation to situate relevant artwork (e.g. Las Dos Fridas) a. What is the symbolic value of clothing in the painting and how is it a signifier of cultural identity? b. What relevant events can be linked to the artist's life and the artwork? c. How does Kahlo's use of a portrait comment both on society and her role within it? d. What formal elements (e.g. composition, lack of depth) does Kahlo experiment within this artwork? e. How do the politics of Mexico at the time (e.g. revolution, cultural identity) and Mexican society (religion, role of women) affect the artwork?												
Duration: 4 weeks			2. Investigating context to situate art-making: Iceberg metaphor of culture Students interview classmates in an activity to gain insight into aspects of surface and deep culture elements.											
			3. Utilizing Willatts' "socially interactive model of practice" , students explore the interconnectedness and complex relationships between artist, audience and context in an artwork. Students look at various contexts/cultural lenses.											
			<table><tr><td>aesthetic</td><td>scientific</td><td>historical</td><td>spatial</td></tr><tr><td>social</td><td>spiritual</td><td>personal</td><td>local/global</td></tr></table>				aesthetic	scientific	historical	spatial	social	spiritual	personal	local/global
aesthetic	scientific	historical	spatial											
social	spiritual	personal	local/global											
			4. Students reflect on how their unique place in the world contributes to their artwork and creative practice. They present curated visual and written evidence to demonstrate the connections between their resolved artwork and their chosen researched artwork. Upload in digital format.											

Inquiry questions and generative statements: An inquisitive disposition

To deepen and expand their art-making as inquiry, students must be taught to approach their artistic practice by questioning their work, discovering possibilities, expanding their knowledge and understanding, investigating, repurposing and developing their own visual language.

To engage in art-making as inquiry, students need to formulate self-directed inquiry questions or generative statements to assist their creative processes with developing intentionality.

There is no specific approach to formulate inquiry questions or generative statements, and these may emerge in many different ways. They may come about and be dealt with quickly, or the opposite, and require a fairly long process of inquiry. Students should always be given space to answer their own questions, but also need to be guided in asking relevant questions and using them purposefully.

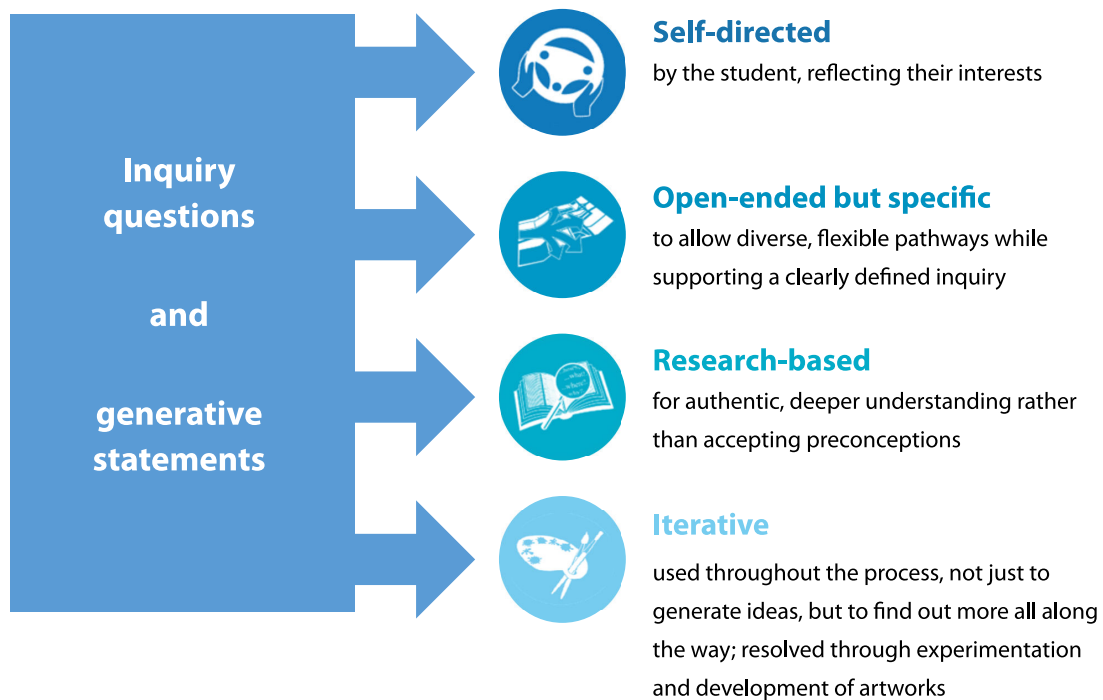
Effective inquiry questions and generative statements relate to the three core areas as follows.

- **Create**—inquiring into a variety of art-making forms, creative strategies, media and techniques
- **Connect**—inquiring about the work of other artists, the artworks students are interested in as well as their own or other context(s), and other fields of knowledge that are relevant to their art-making
- **Communicate**—inquiring about who the student perceives as their audience, what the audience may bring to their art-making, and what is their most effective way to communicate artistic intentions; also looking at how other artists communicate and more generally at the impact of visual arts on audiences across time and place

Students can pose inquiry questions at any stage in the creative process. Further inquiry may be prompted by the outcomes from the original question(s), or may arise from unexpected outcomes or consequences of their experimentations and investigations. Experimentation and investigation always take students' work in exciting new directions.

Figure 26

Qualities of inquiry questions and generative statements



Critical reflection as part of inquiry

Using a questioning framework specific to the visual arts is useful for students to build their confidence in reviewing and refining their artwork, and giving feedback to others during the creative process. Many different approaches to this are possible, but organizing questions into different categories can be helpful to adapt to different times and needs during the course.

A valuable approach is to develop a questioning tool and refine it with your students. For example, questions can be categorized into questions for the student to:

- reflect on the way ideas were generated and developed
- expand and deepen their understanding of concepts and contexts relevant to their own artwork
- support self-reflexivity and reflection on the cultural significance of their own artwork
- reflect and seek further insights into the relationships between their work and the work of other artists
- review, challenge and push their own experimentation and use of media
- review and refine their own artwork and creative processes
- understand how to move on from one artwork to the next, reflecting on their own visual language
- review how their own artwork communicates with audience(s) and to reflect on synthesis of concept and form.

Working with a variety of art-making forms

Art-making forms are categories of creative endeavour by which artistic intentions are realized as works of art, using different expressive media, techniques, conventions and styles. Figure 27 illustrates the variety of art-making forms. This diagram can support students when they consider what the most appropriate form, media or technique(s) could be to realize their artistic intentions in their art-making inquiries. It can also be used as a tool to begin practical investigations into different techniques and styles.

Figure 27
Art-making forms



Download: “Art-making forms” (PDF)

In the art-making inquiries portfolio task, the requirement of evidencing work and experimentation in a variety of art-making forms encourages each student to explore the properties of different media, materials and techniques to fulfil their artistic intentions and succeed in their inquiries.

As mentioned in the *Visual arts guide* “variety implies more than one. It is deliberately non-specific”. Each student should be offered the chance to have an expansive choice of forms, media and techniques to work with. It will be the authentic development of their creative processes, their curiosity, their self-directed investigations, and their use of creative strategies, that determine how many art-making forms they experiment with.

Student evidencing of their inquiries in two art-making forms may be sufficient, as long as this effectively supports the development of each student's visual language. In the guide, the course requirements acknowledge that “two students could equally show that they have produced work reflecting the needs of their inquiry and time available for the course—one by exploring fewer forms and strategies in greater depth, the other by exploring more broadly but with less depth”.

To build students’ practical skills and to engender a creative disposition, teachers introduce a variety of art-making forms and strategies, broadening students’ approaches to art-making and deepening their understanding of what it is to work as an artist.

At the beginning of the course, teachers should encourage all students to engage in and learn a variety of art-making forms so that they are later able to make informed choices to realize their artistic intentions. As the course progresses students should have increasing freedom to choose the forms, media and techniques they feel are best suited to realize these intentions within the realistic constraints of the resources available to them in the classroom as studio. Teachers are encouraged to assume the role of a lifelong learner, willing to facilitate student investigations into forms and techniques that they themselves may not be familiar with, where this can be done safely and ethically. When safety or ethics is in question, or the student’s wishes are beyond what is reasonable or practicable given the limitations of resources, budgets or time, the teacher might be able to redirect a student to how a similar outcome could be realized, using alternative materials.

It is not the intention here to provide a list of all existing art-making forms; only some main categories are listed as part of a categorization that is not exhaustive or prescriptive. Art-making forms not included in the diagram may be explored by students. Hybridization of forms, media and techniques is of course also possible.

Figure 27 presents art-making forms in three categories and lists art-making forms that are best associated with each. Specific media and techniques are not identified, inviting teachers and students to include any example they wish to engage with in their specific context.

The outermost ring suggests the categorization of mixed media or emerging new media as evolved, influenced or hybrid art-making forms.

In the visual arts, medium (singular) and media (plural) refer to the materials that give form to an artwork. Each medium has specific properties that an artist needs to consider for the appropriateness of realizing their artistic intentions in a specific art-making form.

Two-dimensional art-making forms

Created on a predominantly flat surface, these usually comprise drawing, graphics, painting and printmaking (or a combination).

Drawing remains a foundational art-making form that all students should experience and develop competence in. It is an immediate means by which students can represent their ideas visually, through sketching and diagrams. Drawing is fundamental to developing observation and visual communication skills. As such, it provides students with transferable skills they can apply in any field in which they want to progress their careers.

While drawing is often used as a preliminary stage in art-making within other forms and media, it can of course also be used as a final art-making form to create resolved artworks. Conventional media used alone or in combination with drawing include charcoal, ink, marker pen, pastel and pencil, but could also include unconventional materials—anything capable of leaving a mark. Digital drawing is also considered within this form, where an image is produced on a device such as a graphics tablet before being printed using a giclée or laser printer.

Graphics is a term used to group visual design-based forms. Students may choose to include graphics in their art-making to support future vocational aspirations in architecture, graphic design or industrial design, as well as illustration.

Painting is an art-making form that encompasses a range of media from acrylic paint to oil paint, encaustic to watercolour, to name a few. In experimenting with different forms of painting, students can also be encouraged to explore the different properties of a range of supports: from timber panels to stretched canvas, from paper to walls. Students can also be encouraged to consider the possibilities of painting on three-dimensional objects or surfaces, exploring the point at which a traditionally two-dimensional form becomes three-dimensional. Digital painting can also be considered within this form, where an image is produced using a computer-based painting application before being printed using a giclée or laser printer.

Printmaking can be an exciting art-making form for students to explore. Each of the printmaking techniques involves a range of processes that allow students to quickly modify their imagery. As most printmaking forms also allow multiple copies of an artwork to be made, this can empower students to become more experimental, taking risks by cutting up prints and collaging, or simply through hand-colouring. Printmaking techniques include intaglio, planography, relief and serigraphy.

Three-dimensional art-making forms

Art that goes beyond the flat surface, encompassing depth, volume and weight—these forms include additive, cast, modelled, printed and subtractive sculpture.

Three-dimensional art can be created where the object is free-standing or suspended and the audience can move around it, viewing it from all sides. Or it can be created in relief, where the object protrudes from a relatively flat surface. When working with three-dimensional forms, students engage not only with new materials, but with a completely new sense of materiality and space. Working in three dimensions requires students to discover and learn a completely new vocabulary where, for example, texture, volume and line assume completely new meanings.

In additive sculpture students add and join components and can work with found objects, engaging with the techniques of assemblage and installation.

Casting in bronze is well beyond the possibilities of most schools, but to experiment with this process, resources including acrylic resin, clay slip, paper pulp or plaster may be viable and more accessible options.

Modelled sculpture is any process that involves the working of a malleable material to build up a three-dimensional form, usually by hand. Through this practice students may find it easier to develop a sense of plasticity, even if tools are also often used to further refine the work. A potter's wheel can also be used when working with clay. This will allow students to engage with new techniques connected with a deeper understanding of the concept of form, as well as develop their understanding of the relationships between form and function.

Three-dimensional printing and laser cutting are more recent forms of sculpture that involve the use of applications, software and hardware to create artworks. There is less physical involvement in these making processes, nevertheless with these techniques students learn to employ three-dimensional visual vocabulary through new media.

Subtractive sculpture offers students the opportunity to engage with typically traditional approaches to the art-making process. This begins with a singular mass of a medium and involves removing material from the mass until the desired form is reached. Students learn to use tools and to enter into a very direct dialogue with the material they choose to work with.

Four-dimensional art-making forms

Adding the dimensions of time and motion to an artwork, these forms include lens-based art-making as well as ephemeral/temporal and sequential art-making forms.

These forms range from an image captured in a fraction of a second by a camera, to artworks that constantly move or change form, to works that create temporal, multimodal or multisensory experiences in four dimensions. In some cases, four-dimensional artworks exist only with the participation of an audience.

Analogue and digital photography use lens-less and lens-based techniques and light-sensitive materials to capture time and motion through short and long exposures, creating imagery. Analogue photography includes the techniques of black-and-white and colour photography, pinhole photography, and the creation of photograms such as cyanotype, chlorophyll and salted-paper processes. These can all be playful and engaging processes to explore in schools, even if a darkroom is not available.

Digital photography includes using digital single-lens reflex and mirrorless cameras, photo-editing applications, scanograms and mobile phone cameras. The challenge of digital photography as an art-making form in this course is to support students in developing and understanding the more creative and advanced use of digital tools and processes, and not merely relying on instant results.

Sequential art-making forms encompass artworks that involve the audience over any period of time and also involve motion. They are different from ephemeral/temporal art-making forms in that the artwork can be viewed repeatedly. Examples of sequential art-making techniques include digital animation, interactive virtual reality experiences, stop-motion animation, time-lapse photography and video art.

Ephemeral/temporal art-making forms include body art, interactive installations, kinetic art, land art and performance art. These are art forms that exist as an experience for an audience and may only exist in a physical, experiential sense for a limited time. Teachers will need to direct and guide students in how best to capture such forms for the purposes of documentation.

Developing new, mixed-media art-making forms

These forms experiment with possibilities by pushing boundaries and extending conventions, combining different media and techniques in mixed media to develop new art-making forms.

Claire Anscomb (2023) articulates a typology to aid in categorizing new and developing arts as evolved, influenced and hybrid art-making forms.

- An evolved art-making form is one where some aspect(s) of a pre-existing form, approach or medium is developed or expanded on, concerning techniques or conventions without incorporating any defining techniques and conventions from other forms.
- Influenced art-making forms are the practices of an art-making form that have been adapted, so that the resultant works reflect the qualities of other art-making forms, but without incorporating any of the defining techniques or conventions from those other art-making forms.
- Hybrid art-making forms are those in which some defining techniques or conventions from two or more previously distinct art-making forms are employed as key features of a new art-making form.

As an art term “**convention**” refers to accepted and established approaches, either in the ways of representing a subject matter or in using an art-making form or medium. The following are examples.

- A hieratic drawing scheme is a convention observed in Ancient Egyptian art from the Early Dynastic Period (3100–2685 BCE) to the end of the Ptolemaic Period (305–30 BCE). In this convention, the size of the figures is used to symbolize their importance. This was the accepted, established way of representation within that specific cultural context at that time.
- A convention and established practice in most printmaking forms, is when the artist produces a numbered edition of their artwork. After creating a satisfactory proof of a print, they create a set number of further prints, “editing” each of the identical prints using graphite pencil. The prints will be sequentially numbered (e.g. 1/25, 2/250) at the far left-hand side of the image, with the title in the middle and the artist’s signature on the far right-hand side. After completing an edition, the matrix is destroyed so that new impressions cannot be made.

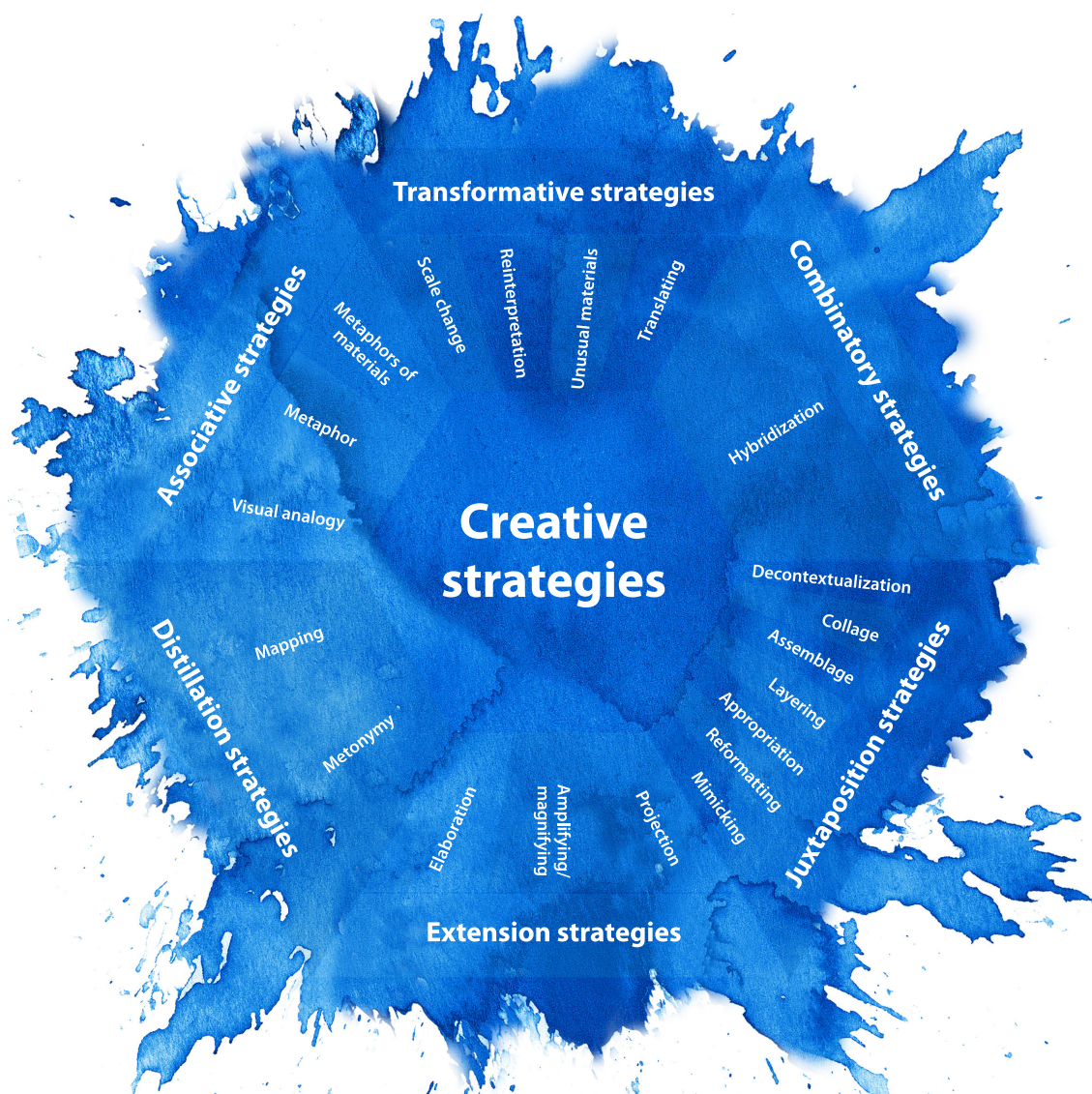
While conventions are followed by artists, these can also be challenged and altered. Conventions are often rooted in a specific context and reflect the values, technology and beliefs of that time. In the history of visual arts, challenging established conventions often resulted in the expansion of the boundaries of traditional or accepted forms of art or styles of representation, in some cases transforming the definition of art itself. When artists intentionally reject conventions, they are often searching for new possibilities and presenting new perspectives.

Working with a variety of creative strategies

The *Visual arts guide* requires that students engage not only with a variety of art-making forms but also with a variety of creative strategies. For assessment, they are required to demonstrate evidence of having engaged meaningfully with at least two strategies.

Creative strategies are defined in the guide as “methods and approaches that artists use to manipulate ideas and imagery to generate new possibilities in their art-making”.

Figure 28
Creative strategies



Download: "Creative strategies" (PDF)

Figure 28 presents the creative strategies according to the categorizations of professor Julia Marshall. Through her collaborative research with teachers, she proposed accessible models of informed 21st-century art education that connect making with thinking. It is true to say that creative strategies have been employed and can be observed in the whole history of visual arts, but following Marshall's work, the specific strategies proposed in this TSM aim to encourage students to learn, play and create in connection with the practices of contemporary artists.

For each creative strategy, deliberately brief, open-ended prompts are given as starting points for teachers to invite their students to explore possibilities for interventions and adaptations to help generate ideas or propel their art-making forward.

Creative strategies can be employed at different stages of the art-making process. They can be used to help students develop initial ideas for their art-making, to clarify generative statements or inquiry questions, or to consider and discover different ways of refining, reworking and realizing artworks.

The creative strategies proposed in figure 28 are not to be considered an exhaustive or prescriptive framework. Variations of Marshall's work exist, developed in collaboration with art educators across the world. Students should also be free to identify other creative strategies as they consider the art-making practices of other artists, contemporary and historic, allowing these strategies to inform their artworks.

Figure 28 presents a number of individual strategies grouped into six broad categories.

- Transformative strategies
- Combinatory strategies
- Juxtaposition strategies
- Extension strategies
- Distillation strategies
- Associative strategies

Each of these categories and subcategories is presented as follows, including examples of artists' work that teachers may want to retrieve or add to and use with students.

Transformative strategies

Transformative strategies promote notable, significant or complete changes in an image or object. These strategies were originally informed by the Russian formalist concept of "ostranenie" or defamiliarization, proposed by the critic Victor Shklovsky, who in 1917 analysed the way in which poetry was able to artistically alter or "make strange" common language and transform our perception of the world.

Transformative strategies include **scale change**, **re-interpretation**, **unusual materials** and **translating**.

Scale change

Scale change involves altering the relative size of an image or object, and also provoking in this way a change in the perception and interpretation of the object by the viewer.

As a creative strategy, change of scale is playful and may help students to develop their artwork conceptually or bring about interesting changes in their formal and technical choices.

Examples of scale change

- Ron Mueck (born 1958) is a contemporary Australian sculptor whose work is all about the human body represented in hyperrealist style. Mueck makes some sculptures larger and some smaller than life-size, creating engaging imagery that, through the manipulation of scale, brings a different perspective and question key aspects of being.
- Claes Oldenburg (1929–2022), a Swedish–American sculptor, and Coosje van Bruggen (1942–2009), a Dutch–American sculptor and art critic, collaborated predominantly in the late 20th century. They are best known for their public sculptures featuring large replicas of everyday objects that aim to transform and question the viewers' traditional perception of these items.

Figure 29

Image source: **Balancing Tools** [sculpture], by Claes Oldenburg and Coosje van Bruggen, 1984, Choinowski/Wikimedia Commons



- Yinka Ilori (born 1987) is a contemporary British designer and sculptor who draws upon his Nigerian heritage to employ bold colours and patterns. As a part of “The Line” art walk in London’s Royal Docks area, Ilori installed two gigantic chairs, each over three metres high, from the series *Types of Happiness* (2023). Using scale change in a playful way, this work aims to connect people in a public space, bringing a sense of joy.

Re-interpretation

Re-interpretation involves changing art-making styles, styles of representation or art-making techniques.

As a creative strategy, a student might consider what they could communicate by employing more than one art-making form and technique or style of representation. As an intervention during an art-making process, re-interpretation could be experimented with to explore the potential of a change to better realize the artistic intentions for the artwork.

Examples of re-interpretation

- Robert Rauschenberg (1925–2008) was an American artist whose practice often challenged the conventions of traditional art-making forms. In 1957, Rauschenberg set out to create the same painting twice, informed by the prevailing conventions of abstract expressionism while foreshadowing pop art. He carefully replicated the spontaneous brushstrokes of *Factum I* in *Factum II*, subverting in the resulting pair of artworks the notion that the expressive spontaneous gestures expose raw emotion.
- Do Ho Suh (born 1962) is a contemporary South Korean artist who re-interprets architectural structures using fabric and paper, blurring the line between architecture and sculpture. As explained in the *frieze* magazine article “Do Ho Suh’s Translucent Architectures” (Ives, 2022), Do Ho Suh engages in “a subjective ‘act of memorialization’” and makes the audience “look at what is normally invisible: space itself”. Each time the work is exhibited in a new place, Suh also adds the location to the title, in this way tracking the different locations the work has travelled to and indicating the impact of the places where he is able to carry his childhood memories.

Unusual materials

Unusual materials involve producing an image or object using unconventional materials—those that fall outside the expected forms and media of traditional art-making.

As a creative strategy, students could explore the generative and expressive possibilities afforded to them by exploring any wet or dry material that is capable of leaving a mark—even when a mark might be impermanent, creating an ephemeral work. The strategy could also involve constructing artworks from found or discarded objects. It can also be used during the process of refining, considering how adding an unusual or unexpected material could add value, create a new texture or structure or introduce a new layer of meaning in their artwork.

Examples of unusual materials

- Ekow Nimako (born 1980) is a contemporary Ghanaian–Canadian artist whose sculptural practice is almost exclusively to use black Lego® bricks. Nimako takes West African imagery, traditions and mythology and blends them with the concepts, aesthetics and visionary scope he refers to as “Afrofuturism”. Using Lego® bricks he “imagines new monuments for Black youth” (Nimako, Power, 2020).
- Vik Muniz (born 1961) is a contemporary Brazilian artist who works with unconventional and found materials to replicate famous paintings from history and scenes from popular culture. Muniz then photographs his pieces and, by presenting his work as photographs, investigates the role of images in art and communication. In 2010, Muniz was featured in the documentary film *Waste land*.

Translating

Translating describes the creative strategy of transforming an image or object into a different art-making form or medium.

As a creative strategy and as a refining intervention, translating might be a useful strategy for students. Mediating an image or object through a different art-making form or medium involves engaging creative and critical thinking to reformat ideas to better realize artistic intentions. Translating could include a partial translation where a form or medium becomes hybridized, such as only parts of a painting being translated and resolved with three-dimensional elements.

Examples of translating

- Meret Oppenheim (1913–1985) was a Swiss surrealist artist who created one of the most iconic works of contemporary art by lining a teacup and saucer with fur. The translation from porcelain to fur removes the associated use of the cup for drinking tea and creates a surrealist image.
- Helmut Smits (born 1974) is a Dutch artist who often translates abstract concepts into form. For example, in his work *695 hours* he created a visual image for the duration of an exhibition by gathering a pile of candles that would burn for the indicated length of time. In the work *1847 meter, the distance from my house to my studio* he gathered a collection of rope, string, tape and cables measuring the exact distance. These visual translations of concepts of time and distance give the audience a tangible way of viewing the intangible.

Combinatory strategies

Combinatory strategies involve the intentional combination of elements from multiple sources to create new images or objects, new meanings, or new forms and media.

Combinatory strategies are presented as a single strategy: **hybridization**.

Hybridization

Hybridization involves combining different parts or elements of multiple things.

As a generative creative strategy, students can explore hybridization in a variety of ways, utilizing objects and imagery together, from the organic and inorganic, or from different knowledge systems from outside the visual arts.

Examples of hybridization

- Patricia Piccinini (born 1965) is a contemporary Australian artist who works across a range of art-making forms that include painting, video art, sound, installation, digital prints and sculpture. Her work often brings into question the unexpected consequences of science and biotechnology. Employing hyperrealistic representation, Piccinini combines familiar elements of different organisms to create biomorphic mutant animals that can be appealing and repulsive at the same time. Piccinini's body of work also includes the anthropomorphic representation of scooter-like organisms, such as those in *Nest* (2006).

Figure 30

Image source: *Nest* [sculpture], by Patricia Piccinini, 2006, Patricia Piccinini/Wikimedia Commons



- Doreen Garner (born 1986) is an American artist who creates hybrid sculptures that combine organic and synthetic materials including glass, hair extensions, silicone and crystals. These often challenging and grotesque sculptures explore the subjugation of African American people in the United States.

Juxtaposition strategies

Juxtaposition strategies involve incorporating two or more (often disparate) visual qualities, images or objects to emphasize difference, create contrast, suggest ideas that unify seemingly disparate things, and/or derive or suggest new meanings.

Juxtaposition strategies include: **decontextualization, collage, assemblage, layering, appropriation, reformatting, mimicking.**

Decontextualization

Decontextualization involves changing the context of an image or object.

Decontextualization could include taking the subject matter of an artwork and changing the background. It could also include placing the art object in different context(s) to alter an audience's perception of the work.

As a creative strategy, students could employ decontextualization when generating their work by exploring how including different surroundings or situations might alter meaning. This can also be experimented with as a refining strategy, to observe how playing with context might open up new possibilities for the work.

Examples of decontextualization

- Marcel Duchamp (1887–1968) was a French artist associated with cubism and Dada, whose avant-garde art-making practices brought the concepts of the “found object”, the “readymade” and the “rectified readymade” into the vernacular of modern art. Duchamp’s revolutionary practice of taking found objects from outside the accepted realm of fine art and placing them within a museum context compelled the audience to reconsider their preconceived ideas of the very nature of art.
- Gabriel Orozco (born 1962) is a Mexican artist who has made a name for himself with his unconventional approach to sculpture, photography and installation. In his work *Cats and Watermelons* (1992) he decontextualized objects in the supermarket by placing cans of cat food on top of watermelons and then photographing them.

Collage

Collage involves juxtaposing images to develop or reveal a theme/concept that unifies them.

As a creative strategy, collage is distinct from the art-making medium of collage in the emphasis of concept and process over the product, intentionally bringing incongruous imagery together to suggest new meanings.

When using collage as a generative strategy, students can be encouraged to collect published images and place them together, considering how to create a dialogue between the elements and meanings the new juxtapositions imply. As a refining strategy, students can consider where adding collaged elements to an artwork contributes to conveying their intentions.

Examples of collage

- Hannah Höch (1889–1978) was a German Dada artist and one of the earliest artists working in the medium of photomontage.
- Wangechi Mutu (born 1972) is a contemporary Kenyan visual artist working in New York. Her work examines the violence and misrepresentation afflicting contemporary Black women, colonialism, globalization and consumerism. Mutu’s collage work offers a critique of Western advertising and beauty standards, undertaking what she describes as an intellectual and actual vandalization of advertising images.
- Grete Stern (1904–1999) was a German–Argentine photographer who produced a large body of photomontages while working for the Argentinian magazine *Idilio*, where she created surreal collages of readers’ dreams as psychoanalysed by Richard Rest. Stern’s imagery often subtly subverted traditional values, employing a feminist critique of Argentinian gender roles and, as seen in *Sueño No. 28: Love without Illusion*, of psychoanalysis itself.

Figure 31

Image source: **Sueño No. 28: Love without Illusion** [photograph], by Grete Stern, 1951, Grete Stern/Wikimedia Commons



Assemblage

Assemblage involves juxtaposing objects to develop or reveal a theme/concept that unifies them.

As with collage, assemblage as a creative strategy is distinct from the three-dimensional art-making approach in the emphasis of concept and process over product, intentionally bringing incongruous objects together to suggest new meanings.

Similarly with collage, considering assemblage as a creative strategy involves students considering how different forms can have inherent meaning that, when juxtaposed, can generate dialogue and new meanings.

Examples of assemblage

- Rosalie Gascoigne (1917–1999) was a New Zealand-born Australian artist who worked predominantly in assemblage sculpture. Her preference for materials that reflected the patina of having been exposed to the weather resulted in her best-known works—using faded timber crates for soda drinks, aged domestic items such as torn floor linoleum, building materials such as galvanized tin, corrugated iron and hardboard, and old reflective traffic signage. These materials were used to create abstract references to the Australian landscape.
- Damián Ortega (born 1967) is a Mexican artist. He alters and transforms everyday objects to problematize broader concepts involving economic, social and political discourses. He uses assemblage to deconstruct/reconstruct objects, questioning the idea of functionality, and the relationship between objects and their cultural and social contexts, as well as more broadly the way they are designed. One of his most famous artworks *Cosmic Thing* (2002) shows a Volkswagen Beetle disassembled and suspended in pieces from the ceiling.

Figure 32

Image source: **Cosmic Thing** [sculpture], by Damián Ortega, 2002, Emilio Gómez Fernández/Wikimedia Commons



Layering

Layering involves juxtaposing meaning(s) through layering an idea or image onto another—making an image in the mode of something else.

When using layering as a creative strategy, students can explore what including different layers in an artwork can communicate. Aesthetic and conceptual choices determine what parts of a layer are concealed, which layers remain exposed and what effects are created, both aesthetically and in terms of meaning.

Examples of layering

- Sherin Neshat (born 1957) is an Iranian artist living in exile in New York. She employs layering in her work to explore contrasts between Islam and the West, antiquity and modernity, femininity and masculinity, and public life and private life. Central to Neshat's body of work is the juxtaposition of veiled and unveiled faces, reflecting the tension between tradition and modernity. Persian calligraphy texts are inscribed or superimposed over the faces of her subjects.
- Lubaina Himid (born 1954) is a British artist and activist whose work reveals the histories of marginalized people by literally layering their stories on top of objects that are symbolic of the wealth of the ruling class. For example, in her work *The Lancaster Dinner Service*, Himid painted portraits and history of the slave trade on a 100-piece ceramic dinner set.

Appropriation

Appropriation involves using, reworking and recontextualizing an existing image or style, to draw upon its meaning to create new meanings.

As a creative strategy, appropriation is not simply copying and recreating an existing artwork. It is an active, intentional process where the artist wants the audience to recognize the original image, bring all their associations with the image to the new context and renegotiate meaning.

When working with appropriation as a creative strategy, students must acknowledge their connection with the work of another artist and clearly reference the artwork they appropriate, to avoid plagiarism.

Examples of appropriation

- Yasumasa Morimura (born 1951) is a Japanese artist working with photography, video and live performance. He is known for his appropriation of recognizable artworks from art history and popular culture where he adopts the persona of the key figure in the image. Morimura's work explores interconnected themes of identity, postcolonialism, originality and authorship, and Western perceptions of Japan and Asia.
- Daniel Boyd (born 1982) is an Australian First Nations' artist working in painting, sculpture and installation. Boyd's work satirizes the Eurocentric view of colonial Australian history by appropriating depictions of historical figures, such as Captain James Cook, Joseph Banks, Governor Arthur Phillip and King George III, and portraying them as pirates.

Figure 33

Image source: **An Inner Dialogue with Frida Kahlo (Hand Shaped Earring)** [photograph], by Yasumasa Morimura, 2001, Emilio Gómez Fernández/Wikimedia Commons



Reformatting

Reformatting involves using a format from outside the visual arts.

The creative strategies of reformatting and mimicking are very similar. Reformatting is focused on formats adopted from outside the visual arts. The format refers to how the object exists as a physical or experiential object.

In adopting reformatting as a creative strategy, students explore the generative and expressive possibilities of formats from different fields of knowledge. Common formats that contemporary artists have brought into visual arts include vitrines and collections of specimens from the fields of science and museology, displays from the field of museology, videos taken from mainstream broadcasting, formats taken from forensic science or investigations, typography and even the forms of traditional rituals or everyday acts.

Examples of reformatting

- Fiona Hall (born 1953) is an Australian artist who predominantly works in sculpture and photography. Hall's work explores the intersections of environment, politics and exploitation. A significant part of the body of work she produced at the turn of the 21st century, such as *Fieldwork* (1999), *Cell Culture*

(2002) and *Tender* (2002–2003), installed sculptural objects in glass vitrines, referencing the practices of natural history museums.

- Wolfgang Tillmans (born 1968) is a German artist whose work transcends the boundaries of photography, incorporating elements from various disciplines to create multifaceted and thought-provoking works. He often reconfigures formats from other disciplines in his art or in the way he curates his exhibitions. For example, he has used tables and glass display cases to present his works, inviting viewers to engage with photographs in a manner akin to examining artefacts or documents. He has also arranged his photographs on walls as if they were part of a magazine layout, blending editorial and artistic presentation.

Mimicking

Mimicking employs methodologies from a non-art discipline.

The creative strategies of reformatting and mimicking are very similar. Mimicking is focused on a process or methodology from outside the visual arts employed in creating or presenting an artwork.

In adopting mimicking as a creative strategy, students assume a role that is conventionally outside the visual arts, and explore the creative and expressive possibilities of the methodologies from different fields of knowledge. Contemporary artists have brought different methods from many fields (including the sciences, archaeology and museology) into the visual arts.

Examples of mimicking

- Mark Dion (born 1961) is an American conceptual artist who mimics scientific presentations in his installations, questioning the dominance of the sciences and the risks of knowledge production being subject to ideology, or of approaches that may be seen as objective and taken for granted by the majority even when they are only pseudo-scientific.
- Patrick Pound (born 1962) is a New Zealand-born artist, working in Australia. He is an avid collector, interested in systems and the ordering of objects as found in museums. For this reason, he employs the methodologies of curators—the exhibition of his collections becomes the medium. He collects found photographic snapshots and disparate objects that he categorizes and arranges into themes or concepts.
- Shahzia Sikander (born 1969) is a Pakistani–American artist who developed her visual language starting from traditional miniature and then working across many different media. In her sculpture *Havah...to breathe, air, life* (2023) for Madison Square Park in New York, she explains that she “demonstrates how justice is conceptually and actively vibrant across cultures and genders” (Sikander, 2023). With the use of mosaics, she mimics the stained glass of the nearby historic courthouse building.

Extension strategies

Extension strategies involve elaborating and extrapolating subject matter, ideas and concepts to highlight meanings or to suggest/create new meanings.

Extension strategies include: projection, amplifying/magnifying, elaboration.

Projection

Projection takes subject matter, ideas or concepts to seemingly logical or absurd conclusions that can be fictional and fantastic.

Students can use projection as a creative strategy to generate ideas or progress their work by posing speculative questions such as: “What happens next?”; “What if...?”; “How will this be different if projected in a different time or space ...?”. These and similar questions foster creativity and imagination.

Examples of projection

- Miwa Yanagi (born 1967) is a Japanese photographic artist whose work explores self-image and challenges stereotypes of women in Japanese society. She developed her series of works *My*

Grandmothers (2000) by asking female participants to give an account of what they hoped to be doing in 50 years' time. These stories became the premise for the artworks, where Yanagi presents the imagined futures through a photographic "projection" accompanied by a textual account.

- Simon Starling (born 1967) is a British artist known for humorous and at times absurd actions that often lead to destruction. For example, in *Autoxylopyrocycloboros* (2006), the artist took a trip on a wooden steamboat fuelled by wood that he removed piece by piece from the boat itself. Eventually there was not enough wood to keep the boat afloat and it sank.

Amplifying/magnifying

Amplifying/magnifying exaggerates a phenomenon, making it larger than life.

As a creative strategy, amplifying/magnifying takes parts or a whole subject and enlarges them (to focus on detail) or exaggerates them for emphasis and effect (to communicate meaning).

Students can experiment with amplifying/magnifying to consider what exaggeration might suggest to an audience, and how this strategy might contribute to fulfilling their artistic intentions.

Examples of magnifying/amplifying

- Georgia O'Keeffe (1887–1986) was an American modernist painter. In the 1920s, informed by the style of precisionism, O'Keeffe began painting large-scale depictions of flowers, as seen through a magnifying lens. These paintings have been interpreted as metaphors for femininity and female sexuality.

Figure 34

Image source: **Red Canna** [painting], by Georgia O'Keeffe, 1919, Georgia O'Keeffe/Wikimedia Commons



- Trevor Paglen (born 1974) is an American digital artist who critically examines contemporary issues such as surveillance and data collection. He focuses on particular aspects of these technologies and magnifies them to a point where the viewer cannot remain indifferent to their workings. For example, the interactive artwork *ImageNet Roulette* highlights the problem of categorizing visual content using text descriptions, as utilized in training some artificial intelligence (AI) models. It uses similar AI technology to categorize an image it takes of viewers as they stand in front of the work.

Elaboration

Elaboration involves adding more detail and spinning further meaning.

Students using elaboration as a creative strategy as part of their generative process consider how layers of symbolism can be developed in an artwork. As a refining strategy, students might use elaboration to better communicate their intentions. They can experiment with how they can more clearly and meaningfully convey meaning to an audience through some kind of elaboration.

Examples of elaboration

- Ah Xian (born 1960) is a Chinese–Australian artist working with diverse materials. His well-known ceramic busts—cast from life and often self-portraits—are embellished with detailed designs and patterns. He uses these to reference Chinese art history and interrogate the significance of values and traditions to cultures.

Figure 35

Image source: **Human human - lotus, cloisonné figure 1** [sculpture], by Ah Xian, 2000–2001, Kgbo/Wikimedia Commons



Distillation strategies

Distillation strategies involve extracting the essence—the essential meaning or most significant aspect(s)—from a complex idea.

Distillation strategies include: **metonymy, mapping**.

Metonymy

Metonymy is the visual equivalent of the literary device, where a part or element of something is used to represent the whole.

Metonymy as a creative strategy allows students to use singular visual images or objects to represent more complex ideas and can enrich the conceptual meaning of their artworks.

Examples of metonymy

- Tejo Remy (born 1960) is a Dutch interior and product designer. His work *You Can't Lay Down Your Memory* (1991), where a chest of drawers is an assemblage of found drawers held together coarsely with a burlap strap, is reminiscent of Dada sculpture. For Remy, use and memory are innate to the chest and each different drawer signifies the memories it contains.

Figure 36

Image source: **You Can't Lay Down Your Memory** [product design], by Tejo Remy, 1991, 14GTR/Wikimedia Commons



- Ceal Floyer (born 1968) is a Pakistan-born British artist whose work uses everyday objects or details of these to represent something greater than their original function. For example, in the work *Ladder* (2010) Floyer removed all but the first and last steps of an aluminium ladder—the incomplete ladder becomes suggestive of a journey.

Mapping

Mapping involves visual strategies of organizing ideas, objects and images graphically.

It is also a creative strategy derived from practices that emerged with the conceptual art movement, where artists employed visual tools like maps and organizers to convey complex ideas simply.

As a creative strategy, mapping can be used by students to articulate connections across and through various ideas or to connect worlds.

Examples of mapping

- Ward Shelley (born 1950) is an American artist who creates large-scale painted timelines that rethink the development of art history. His playful, organic timelines create unexpected connections that highlight the subjective nature of historical narratives.
- John Wolseley (born 1938) is a British artist who emigrated to Australia in 1978. He creates large-scale works on paper, and installations that chart and map the environments in which he works. In *Chart of*

rubblings of samples from an Aboriginal ochre mine, Heavitree Range, Northern Territory (1979), samples of natural ochres are layered on a large-scale sheet of paper, and cut-outs reveal a watercolour painting of the topography of the land where the ochres were sourced.

Associative strategies

Associative strategies involve the artist making or suggesting associations between images, objects, subject matter and materials with ideas, themes and concepts for an audience.

Associative strategies include: **visual analogy, metaphor, metaphors of materials.**

Visual analogy

Visual analogy makes simple one-to-one comparisons.

Using visual analogy as a generative creative strategy, students can enhance communication to audiences. They start with an original concept, then explore different images or objects sharing similar traits. As a refining strategy, students consider alternative imagery, making the message less obvious and supporting deeper audience engagement.

Examples of visual analogy

- Janine Antoni (born 1964) is a versatile American artist whose work often references her own body to challenge assumptions about classical beauty. In the installation *Lick and Lather* (1993–94) Antoni made 14 busts from casts of her own body—7 in chocolate, facing 7 in soap—on identical pedestals. The process of licking the chocolate busts and lathering the soap busts references rituals of eating and cleaning, ideas of desire and purity.
- Kirsten Pieroth (born 1970) is a German artist who plays with visual analogies by displacing objects from their original context to place them side by side. For example, in her work *Die Farbe der Meere* [*The Colour of the Seas*] (2002) she presented water samples from the Red Sea, the White Sea, the Black Sea and the Yellow Sea. Seeing bottles of clear sea water side by side creates a contrast with their colourful origin names.

Metaphor

Metaphor involves casting one thing in place of another, with the thing becoming representative or symbolic of something else. This strategy includes the metaphorical use of materials in an artwork.

Metaphor as a creative strategy encourages students to generate imagery that draws upon an audience's existing understandings and experiences. Artists using metaphor as a creative strategy require the audience to consider the logic behind an implicit comparison.

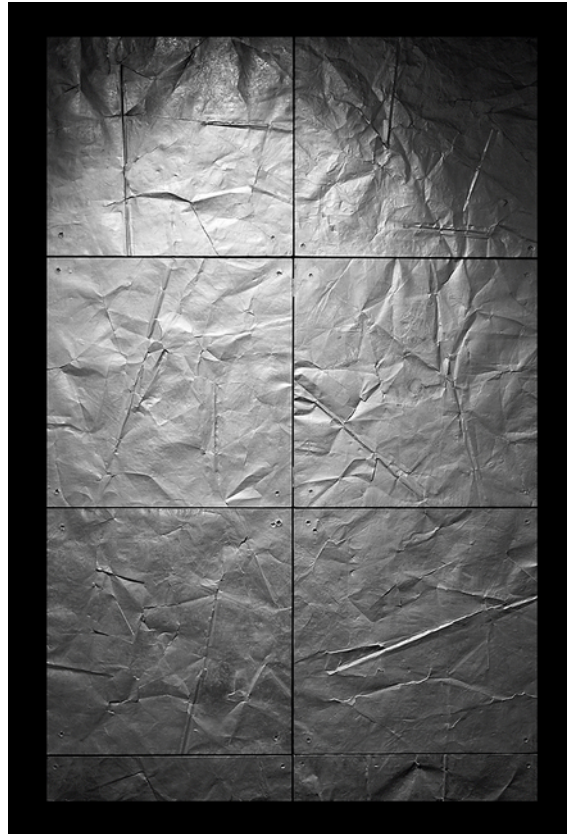
Examples of metaphor

- Dhruvi Acharya (born 1971) is an Indian artist who uses metaphor in her psychologically complex artworks. Her installation *What once was, still is, but isn't* (2015) features a bedroom where everything is made of soft materials. The work was made after the artist lost her husband and her father. It looks and feels unreal, like the feelings of people in the early days of grief. The bed is also a metaphor that appears in the installation and became a recurrent motif for the artist, who said: "When my husband passed away, that very place that was a solace became a place of disturbance" (*The Indian Express*, 2020).
- Marina Abramović (born 1946) is a contemporary conceptual and performance artist born in what was, at the time, Yugoslavia. She often uses her own body in body art, performance art and endurance art as a metaphor for identity, fragility and resilience. Abramović's work also uses metaphor of materials—for example, in her installation *Balkan Baroque* (1997) where through the action of cleaning bones she conveyed the idea that it is impossible "to wash the blood from your hands as you can't wash the shame from the war" (MoMA, 2024).
- Doris Salcedo (born 1958) is a Colombian artist whose work consists of installations created by assembling organic or inorganic materials. She explores themes of pain, loss and trauma, and the

capacity of art to facilitate mourning. Her 2017 installation *Fragmentos: Espacio de Arte y Memoria* (*Fragments: Art and Memory Space*) was a counter-monument and place of reflection for the armed conflict in Columbia. The floor of the work tiled with metal plates made from the melted weapons of the Revolutionary Armed Forces of Colombia. Salcedo collaborated with women who had been victims of sexual violence during the armed conflict to create this solemn empty space.

Figure 37

Image source: ***Fragmentos: Espacio de Arte y Memoria*** (*Fragments: Art and Memory Space*) [installation], by Doris Salcedo, 2017, SergioG23/Wikimedia Commons



Teaching to situate

The assessment objective “situate” is an integral part of learning and teaching in this course.

- To “situate” an artwork is to position it in relation to the context(s) of where, when and why it was made and how it is experienced.
- To “situate” is also to make connections in relation to other artworks, to the artist(s) and to audiences.

Art is not created in a vacuum, so given that this is a practical art-making course, investigations into the context and cultural significance of the work of other artists should always be connected to students’ own art-making. In DP visual arts, students not only learn to situate the artworks they investigate but also their own artworks and art-making practice.

Terms associated with “situate”

The following IB definitions of key terms must be considered when teaching “situate”.

- **Identity** is the combination of background, dispositions and experiences of people.
- **Personal identity** is the combination of background, dispositions and experiences that an individual states as being unique to them.
- **Cultural identity** is the combination of background, dispositions and experiences that an individual attributes to an ethnicity, place of origin, nationality or social group.
- **Reflective and reflexive practice** is an intentional, active and ongoing process of reviewing thinking, practice and actions, examining views and assumptions, and being open to having perspectives challenged and changed. It takes on a variety of forms: metacognitive and process reflection, critical reflection, critical reflexivity and self-reflexivity.
- **Reflection** can be thought of as metacognitive or process oriented. It involves examining past experiences and actions to improve future practice, focusing on the “how” of actions.
 - **Metacognitive reflection** enhances awareness of one’s own cognitive/learning process. It involves examining thinking, actions and goals, leading to self-regulated learning.
 - **Process reflection** starts with an experience and leads to new or changed understandings, insights and/or action.
- **Critical reflection** links reflection with analytical and critical thinking, encouraging students to focus on experiences and actions within a broader, systemic context.
- **Critical reflexivity** involves critically examining and challenging collective assumptions, values and frames of reference, understanding their contexts (e.g. cultural, societal, historical), how they shape perceptions and actions, how they impact others and how they might change in the future.
- **Self-reflexivity** involves considering personal positionality, identifying and questioning assumptions, biases and attitudes. It involves understanding how these influence responses and actions, and how they impact other people, given the complexity and interconnectedness of roles and relationships.
- **Positionality** refers to the stance or positioning of individuals or groups in relation to overlapping cultural, social, historical and political contexts, and relations of power. It considers how identities (including the perspectives, biases, assumptions, values and experiences we hold) shape frames of reference and the way we understand and engage with the world. It also aims to highlight both how individual identities are created by social constructs and how they are malleable.

Through reflexive practice, we can examine and interrogate our positionality and understand its impact on the reception and production of knowledge, on social interactions and relationships, and on the interpretation of experiences—see “critical reflexivity” and “self-reflexivity” above.

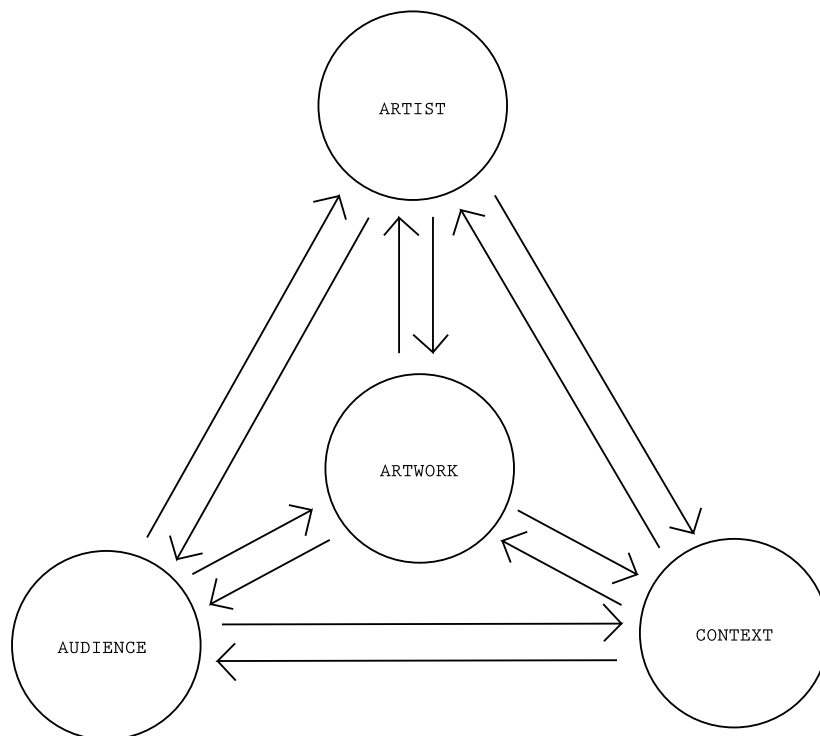
Using Willats' model of practice

The *Visual arts guide* illustrates the interconnections that define an artwork by referring to Stephen Willats' model of practice, which can be introduced to students in different ways.

- **As a teacher-prepared class dialogue:** Place an artwork in the central circle for the class to situate. Students divide into four groups (artwork, artist, audience, context) and each group researches their area. Then they conduct inter-group discussions, role-playing the four domains and exploring the relationships.
- **As an individual presentation:** Students choose an artwork to situate that has influenced their own practical work. They conduct research on the four areas in their visual arts journals. They prepare a visual mind map (no words are allowed) that uses images to illustrate the connections between the four areas. They then present to the class, explaining the relationships, and evaluating the relevance and impact of each area.
- **As a personal study:** Students choose one of their own artworks. They must situate themselves as the artist, reflect on the impact of their context on their artwork and consider their audience. How is this relevant and how do the relationships between these elements impact cultural significance? What happens if one element changes?

Figure 38

Willats' "Socially interactive model of practice" (© Stephen Willats 1970: reproduced with permission). The model represents the multiple, dynamic relationships between "artwork", "artist", "audience" and "context".



Using exhibitions to understand the relationship of artworks to audiences

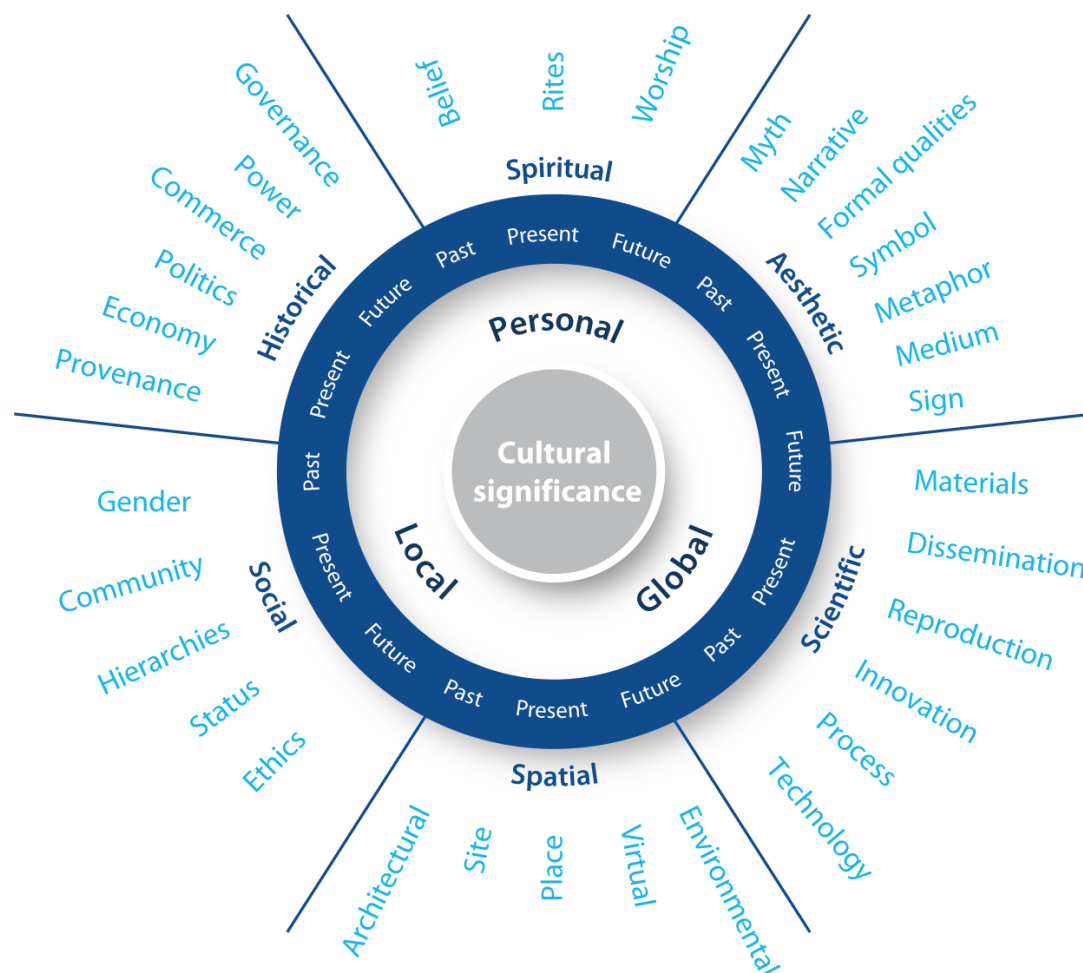
Using opportunities for dialogue, critique, display and exhibition is an effective way for students to understand the relationship of their artworks to context and audiences. Museum and gallery visits are the most stimulating way for students to understand these relationships.

Context and cultural significance

The *Visual arts guide* uses *The Burra Charter* (Australia International Council on Monuments and Sites, 2013) to suggest the variety of ways in which context can influence the cultural significance of an artwork. This may be a useful tool for learning and teaching the requirements of “situate” as outlined in the guide.

Figure 39

Mapping contexts according to *The Burra Charter*



Key elements of *The Burra Charter* include the **spiritual**, **aesthetic**, **scientific**, **spatial**, **social** and **historical**. A full description of these can be found in the section “Context and cultural significance” in the *Visual arts guide*.

When teaching “situate”, teachers should invite students to be attentive and think about the following questions.

- Is it relevant to consider, acknowledge, notice and integrate any consideration of events, practices and worldviews that are connected to cultural survival, continuity, thriving or repression?
- Where does the information you gather come from? How do you decide what knowledge matters and what does not? The sources students access also need to be situated.
- What is the perspective you are adopting? What is your personal positionality?
- If it is possible to consider more perspectives, how does that change our understanding of artworks?

The resource "[Questions to help situate artworks](#)" (PDF) provides a framework of questions to help students focus their investigation on the contexts and cultural significance of artworks.

Using *The Burra Charter*

Using *The Burra Charter* for a class activity will embed an understanding of what context and cultural significance encompass. This will include discussions about:

- how art is made in context and can assume different significance across place and time
- what is appropriation, what is ownership
- how artworks' meanings and functions might change
- the complexity of dynamic relationships between artwork, artist, context and audience
- the different perspectives from which context and cultural significance can often have been considered.

Activity

Step 1: Divide the class into groups and allocate an element to each group. Ask the class to read the definitions in "[Terms associated with situate](#)". It might be appropriate for them to also read the more comprehensive description of each cultural significance lens in the *Visual arts guide*. The groups then present to the whole class their understanding of what their element encompasses.

Step 2: Choose an artwork for the class to situate, and introduce its context. Each group prepares a class presentation that explains the cultural significance of the artwork within their element. This will require independent group research, possibly as an out-of-class assignment, and provides an opportunity to discuss with students effective research skills, reliable sources of information, the use of citation and how to record research in visual arts journals.

Step 3: The groups make their presentations to class. They reflect on the aspects of cultural significance most relevant to this artwork and on what visual clues might reveal these when looking at the work.

Step 4: Students now choose an artwork to situate that has influenced their own art-making. They apply their new understanding of cultural significance to situate this artwork, using their visual arts journals to record the connections.

Step 5: Students then select one of their **own** artworks to situate, applying the six cultural significance elements (as appropriate) as well as considering their audience(s).

The first four steps are an activity for the early stages of the course. Step 5 assumes that students have had the opportunity to pursue artistic intentions relevant to them and to their contexts. Students will need to reflect on their personal contexts and on an artwork that is at least partly resolved to attempt this step.

A discussion at the end of the class activity might support critical reflection and deeper understanding. Other activities or even games can be organized to investigate the relationships between artworks and contexts. Teachers might also consider other strategies to engage students cognitively and consciously with their chosen environments, and to connect meaningfully with their chosen contexts.

Other strategies for engaging with context

Students might find it useful to engage with the following, for example.

Artworlds

This defines a range of contexts that could include, but is not limited to: a historically ordered set of works; works with established styles or genres; categories of different art conventions or practices; artworks reflecting historical, biographical, cultural or theoretical traditions; artworks that employ meaning through material culture and object relationships.

Mapping

This is a way for students to connect meaningfully with, and reflect on, the environments that surround them. It can be used to develop a variety of sensory responses that symbolically and directly represent their own environments, sometimes even in situ, and consider the ways that their own interpretations of these responses have been formed.

Personal and collaborative ethnographies

These can be used for students to connect and explore the ways material culture can embody knowledge, and how personal experiences are constructed. When considering collaborative ethnographies, students can take account of their own communities to discover art communities or cultures, and their own artworlds within them. This encourages interaction with cultural and art-making communities, and takes into consideration traditions and what is preserved or changed over time.

Using subject-specific vocabulary

As professor Dylan William highlights “it is important to help students develop the habits of mind that define the discipline, and coming to terms with the ‘official’ language is part of the process” (2011, p. 65). Introducing subject-specific terminology enables students to analyse context and cultural significance effectively. Many museum websites have glossaries, which have been evolving to include a more inclusive and culturally aware way to talk about artworks. It may be useful to consult resources such as the following.

- Art term definitions, for example:
 - MoMA art terms: [moma.org/collection/terms/](https://www.moma.org/collection/terms/)
 - Tate galleries’ art terms: [tate.org.uk/art/art-terms](https://www.tate.org.uk/art/art-terms)
- Critical analysis methodologies, for example:
 - *The Thames & Hudson Introduction to Art* (Dewitte, et al., 2015)—comprehensive critical analysis methodology with many examples

Making connections between artworks

Students also need to understand how connections between their artworks and the work of other artists are analysed and explained. This is best introduced by taking an example from the history of art, such as the convergence of influences that led Picasso to paint *Les Femmes d’Alger* and then the onward flow of the influences of the painting through time. This is a demonstration of the breadth and range of an artist’s impact through a single artwork.

For the student, it is also valuable to look at how details connect, such as the shared use of formal qualities or techniques to demonstrate that influence in art can be specific and quantifiable. Armed with this thinking, students can then evaluate the influences on their own art-making more effectively.

Ask students to consider the ways in which they might be influenced by, for example:

- techniques, materials and media
- formal qualities
- concepts
- motifs and iconography
- cultural conventions
- cultural appropriation and legacy
- re-examination of the significance of artworks across time and place.

Artificial intelligence and visual arts as inquiry

Art with the assistance of artificial intelligence (AI) provides an opportunity for students to explore and envision the pursuit of new art forms that have not yet been created, pushing creativity beyond traditional artistic boundaries. This new technological development affords seemingly endless possibilities and extends far beyond simply generating “instant art” from a text prompt.

This section offers some ideas on how teachers can work with students to expand their inquiries, integrating AI-supported systems in their learning experiences. This might be through:

- investigating AI and creating connections with TOK
- researching, with the support of AI, the work of artists, and the history and contexts of artefacts
- experimenting and expanding personal artistic practice with AI-aided systems.

Visual arts teachers monitor how their students’ creative practices unfold and their investigations, and are therefore able to witness the ways in which AI is used by their students. It is the teacher’s role to guide students in understanding how the use of AI may be creative and effective if embedded in art-making as inquiry, and used to expand and deepen engagement with both concept and form to create artworks.

Students progressively deepen their understanding of the relationships between artist, artwork, context and audience. With increasing critical and self-reflexivity, they develop their own visual language to communicate with audiences, adopting their own/preferred art-making processes. The visual arts classroom as studio is therefore a space where students and teachers can learn together about how the evolving field of AI is intersecting with the work of visual artists. The teacher’s role is to provide opportunities for dialogue and critical reflection so that students question the implications of using these emerging tools. As with any other tool, the ethical value of their choices when making and presenting an artwork using AI should also be explored.

Investigating AI: TOK connections

Teachers should engage in discussions with their students about the history and evolving impact of AI in the visual arts. They could also consider the use of AI as part of their teaching, and share in the classroom evolving practices of artists working with AI.

In connection with TOK, teachers should find opportunities to discuss some of the questions raised by the growing accessibility of AI and its applications in the arts. Questions could include the following.

- Could AI support democratization of the arts by offering a wider access to complex artistic models
- Can AI substitute the creative endeavour of human artists
- What are the implications of AI accessing a vast number of images created by artists and allowing the use of these?

It may be a useful and interesting exercise to reflect on artworks from different times that students think were innovative, then encourage them to articulate how and why they define something in art as innovative. Questions that might be used to initiate reflection and discussion include the following.

- What is innovation in art?
- What is the relationship between progress in technology and progress in the history of art?

Teachers could invite students to reflect on human–machine interaction in the arts but with a focus on the role of context. Questions that might be posed include the following.

- Does context influence different uses and inspire different applications of AI?
- What is the role of context in the development of an artwork using AI?

Learning about the origins of AI and reading the definition of AI in a dictionary might also be useful starting prompts.

Researching with AI

The visual arts course requires students to connect their knowledge and research about the work of other artists to their work. This research can be supported by using AI systems. However, it is important that students understand that the information they retrieve must always be verified and reviewed. Moreover, the visual arts course does not require demonstration of art-history knowledge and understanding per se, but only in connection with each student's personal art-making. This means that research can be conducted with the aid of AI, as far as this is accurately referenced, but the use of the outcomes of any research will always require some critical thinking, including evaluation and careful selection and organization of content.

It is important that teachers help students to develop effective use of AI and teach them to take the time to always verify content and, if using it, reference it accurately. Information gathered with the use of AI must be cited at point of use and referenced as with the use of any other source. The recommendations for the use of AI in researching the work of other artists or the history of artefacts and their contexts is the same as for all other DP subjects.

AI might enhance the ways to research artworks across place and time, and prompt the discovery of some visual connections and, in some cases, enhance critical analysis. For example, after learning about art movements or the work of a specific artist, students could use an AI system to generate artistic combinations of artworks based on different styles, past and present. This could be useful in developing students' abilities to identify conceptual and formal changes that occur in the AI-generated result, and discuss how this new image might impact an audience. Afterwards, students could apply this approach to their own works to obtain more variants and generate new ideas.

It is recommended that teachers include the work of a contemporary artist who creates with the aid of AI systems in at least one of their guided inquiry investigations.

The resource "[Contemporary artists who use AI](#)" (PDF) includes links to some artists' websites. Given the evolving use of AI by contemporary artists, it is recommended that teachers and students collaborate in regularly updating this list for their own benefit.

Experimenting and expanding artistic practice

Students who want to experiment with AI systems in the creation of their artwork must be supported in their inquiries. It is the teacher's role to help students find a balance between using AI and using traditional methods to fulfil the requirement of engaging with a variety of art-making forms during the two years of the course. Engaging only with AI-aided art-making processes will not be sufficient to develop students' art-making skills, practices and personal visual language. As with any other art-making practice, students must be supported in learning to use AI ethically to make art, ensuring that personal creativity and reflection are central to their artistic practice.

It is important that the teacher encourages students who are creating artworks aided by AI to oversee a process in which synthesis of concept and form are achieved to communicate meaningfully, using a personal visual language. When using AI, students also need to document how this was integrated in their creative process and how it affected their creative engagement. As with any other internet-based school activity, the use of AI must be pedagogically supervised and led by the teacher in the classroom. Students should also be reminded that the use of AI must be referenced in their submissions.

AI-assisted systems can be tools that provide students with quick outcomes, so it is important that other aspects of the use of AI are highlighted. Classroom activities using AI might, in some cases, be implemented to remove barriers to learning, incentivize creativity and promote independent development for all students.

The following are some examples of how teachers and students who are interested in the use of AI could use the opportunities offered by the many available AI systems to enhance learning in the visual arts. These are merely suggestions; it is always for the artist to discover new approaches to expand the ways in which they work to create, connect and communicate.

Visual observation and AI-assisted documentation

Students could use AI apps in a systematic way to enhance their visual perception and increase the documentation register. For example, smartphone cameras with AI object recognition, real-time image processing and tools for analysing the colour spectrum, could help to expand students' observation skills of the environment around them.

Interaction between AI-assisted exploration and representing nature

Students could leverage AI to analyse and generate their own harmonious colour palettes inspired by different natural environments, landscape masterpieces, lighting conditions, and the movement of wind through trees and ocean waves. This enhances students' understanding of colour theory and its relationship with nature, and helps expand their understanding of visual language through AI.

Creating visual metaphors from concepts or phrases

Building upon AI to generate images from text, students could be encouraged to write concepts to craft calligrams or texts expressing emotions. Subsequently, they could generate visual metaphors conveying these emotions, using AI in an abstract manner. They can experiment with phrases that allude to abstraction to explore correlations that may arise from the textual to the visual level. This will help to enhance the development of students' linguistic-verbal intelligence, spatial intelligence and imaginative thinking, promoting the evolution of a symbolic and poetic visual language.

AI and interdisciplinary works

AI offers the possibility of interdisciplinary integration by bridging existing gaps between art, technology and science to represent reality from various perspectives. It showcases the potential of human creativity, as artists in the past who merged knowledge from different disciplines in their works have done. Throughout the history of art, artists have rethought the use of technology, tools and techniques, and their boundaries, to generate new possibilities in their works.

The interdisciplinary use of AI could be discussed with students to propose generating art that involves integration—creating mind maps, brainstorming sessions, and the application of skills they have learned in science and technology subjects, to serve as a starting point for interdisciplinary projects.

AI-facilitated exploration of perspective

AI tools can also be used to create quick sketches and analyse the best compositional perspectives that may then inform the creation of an artwork that the student will develop themselves. After preliminary studies, students can make comparisons and discuss these studies before progressing with their own work. This use of AI may help to enhance understanding of visual balance and spatial relationships.

Researching uncharted artistic territories

Students can explore uncharted artistic territory using AI techniques, including real-time image generation via simultaneous AI interaction with what the student draws, thus enabling "artistic restyling". This can generate stylistic variations of a single work decided on by the student. Techniques include "in painting" to focus on a section of a work being done, and "out painting" to expand a work based on decisions made by human intelligence interacting in real time with AI.

Spatial perception and real-time exploration with photography

Using AI and photography, students could explore how the space around them is changing in real time, comparing how (for example) light, movement, and different camera angles alter the space and the observer's perception.

AI editing

Students could use AI image editors to study and work on the morphological elements of their compositions to create multiple visual representations of the same image to fulfil their artistic intentions.

Creation and customization of fine-tuned models

The creation of "fine-tuned models", referred to as low-ranking adaptation (LoRA) in AI, allows for images to be generated based on a particular style or pose, or from a specific character, drawing or object that has previously been photographed or drawn by the student.

In the later stages of the visual arts course, and to further assist students in gaining confidence in the creative use of AI, the teacher could suggest that students create or customize their own fine-tuned models from their own images. Subsequently, they can visually train these models to produce a repertoire and creative variants associated with and derived from their original works.

Digital assessment

The visual arts assessment model requires both SL and HL students to compile three tasks digitally. They curate visual and written materials to evidence what they have accomplished through the holistic experience of learning art-making as inquiry during the two years of the course. The three tasks are submitted for assessment through the IB online system. Files for each assessment task must be uploaded as set out in the *Visual arts guide*, and as specified in *Diploma Programme Assessment procedures* (updated annually) and in any other session-related guidance document that may be published by the IB.

The key benefits of digital, non-examination-based assessment are that this:

- gives students the freedom to work in a greater variety of art-making forms and authentically engage with their practice as well as with context, rather than being limited to what can be assessed in an examination
- guarantees a more rigorous assessment process, with a higher level of reliability, stronger quality control and less risk of bias
- allows the IB to assess what the course actually aims to assess
- allows students to evidence different discrete aspects of their work, avoiding duplication across the assessment model
- supports students in developing digital curation and communication skills
- prepares students for next steps in their career (e.g. if they decide to apply to universities or art schools that require a digital portfolio as part of the application process)
- guarantees that student work, once digitally reproduced and stored online, is less likely to be lost or damaged (nevertheless, backups should always be kept).

Note: Schools are required to keep copies of all student work submitted for assessment until the end of the examination session. Originals can be returned to students with the assurance that they keep the work available until the same deadline.

After familiarizing themselves with the guide, teachers and students may want to make use of the resource “[Visual arts assessment criteria tables](#)” (PDF), where the full assessment criteria are presented in a condensed tabular format.

Building a routine to capture and curate artwork

Documenting artwork effectively and being able to present it digitally is a relevant skill for contemporary young artists. Teachers should foster this throughout the course, with students learning to maintain a live archive of digital reproductions of their own work. This will be useful at the end of the course to prepare for assessment, but also when applying to further education institutions, employers, or presenting work at school or external events.

Asking students to routinely capture, curate and share ongoing and resolved artworks has many benefits, whether these respond to all or just some of the assessment task requirements. This is a good way to:

- structure and monitor student progress
- familiarize students with the demands of digital assessment
- invite students to review and refine evolving work, curating and critically reflecting on it and responding to teacher and peer feedback.

Each student will also progressively build the digital documentation they will need to refer to when compiling their final submissions, avoiding the stress of having to backtrack and create this at the last minute to account for the two years of the course.

Setting monthly sampling and capture-based tasks across the duration of the course, with formative feedback and critique from the teacher and peers, can ensure that a sequence of investigation, development and reflection is sustained, even as students are given greater freedom to pursue their own directions.

Effectively recording resolved artworks as soon as possible also guards against loss or damage of the work.

It is important that even if they have created mock tasks or series of screens during the course, students are given the time and opportunity to curate their tasks for submission to the IB in the final part of the second year. Only in this way will they be able to select the best evidence and curate it effectively to demonstrate for the purposes of summative assessment their overall achievements with the emerging maturity and understanding they have achieved at the end of the course.

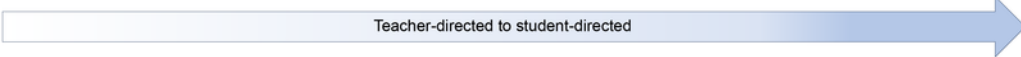
The resource “[A possible calendar for digital documentation and curation of artwork](#)” (PDF) suggests a schedule to support the digital documentation of student work. This can help to ensure students gather enough evidence from which to select when compiling the end-of-course assessment tasks.

Figure 40

A possible calendar for digital documentation and curation of artwork

Task	DP1 terms 1 and 2	DP1 term 3	DP2 term 1	DP2 term 2	DP2 term 3
Art-making inquiries portfolio	Frequently photograph/record ongoing work, experimentations, investigations and discoveries. Scan visual arts journals monthly. Regularly type/save the accompanying short texts. Curate a mock task/series of screens guided by inquiry questions/generative statements—first with directed, then progressively more independent, lines of inquiry.		Refine the approach to compiling screens—checking word counts, selecting and cropping.	Select, reorganize and refine the final draft of screens. Finalize the curation of the art-making inquiries portfolio submission (compress images as necessary—check file size).	
Selected resolved artworks (HL)	Work on digital documentation of work in progress (for the art-making inquiries portfolio). Create videos and digital reproductions of resolved artworks.		Initiate the curation of the body of selected resolved artworks—digital documentation of the artworks (check file format requirements).	Complement written and visual evidence for submission—curate the selection of resolved artworks while working on the rationale and artwork texts so that visual and written evidence complement each other. Finalize the selection and digital curation of the five selected artworks, and the three non-selected artworks (complete selection chart).	
Resolved artworks (SL)	Work on digital documentation of work in progress (for the art-making inquiries portfolio and the connections study). Create videos and digital reproductions of resolved artworks.		Initiate the curation of the body of resolved artworks—digital documentation of the artworks (check file format requirements).	Finalize the digital curation of the five artworks, while working on the rationale so that written and visual evidence complement each other.	
Artist project (HL)		Work on digital documentation of mind-mapping, initial sketches and ideas, materials from site visits, photos/videos, studies, and relevant images about context and about other artists' work (with source references).	Curate the project proposals—compile and refine the drafts. Document ongoing development, dialogues, refinement, artistic choices and ideas for the future—create draft screens.	Document realization in context—make the artist project video following the guidance in the TSM resource “The artist project video”. (This needs planning, and after review/feedback, students are free to film again.) Select, reorganize and refine the final draft of the project screens. Balance visual and written evidence. Curate and finalize the different sections of the task submission.	
Connections study (SL)		Create digital reproductions of the resolved chosen work and of work in progress to evidence connections. Create visuals and texts to support the connections with own context.	Curate evidence of research and connections—create draft screens. Include good reproductions of at least two artworks by different artists, but also other relevant visual references to show understanding of cultural significance.	Refine the final draft of the connections study screens. Curate and finalize the task submission. Check academic integrity compliance.	

Teacher-directed to student-directed



Effective digital reproduction of student artwork

Students must actively develop the skills they need to reproduce their creations effectively, checking that the quality of digital images or videos is adequate to present their artwork online. To reduce stress at the end of the course, they should also learn to work with file formats that they can easily use for the assessment tasks at the end of the course and develop a filing system to retrieve materials easily.

Teachers might set up sessions for students to reproduce their work and collaborate with them on this task, or invite students to take responsibility and upload files in a shared digital repository.

The resource “[Effective digital reproduction of artworks](#)” (PDF) complements the guidance on reproducing artworks in the “Assessment” section of the *Visual arts guide*, to support students in digitally documenting their work.

When reproducing visual arts work, image editing software is permitted—to correct distortion, crop excessive background or unnecessary mounting, and correct exposure, contrast and colour balance—as long as the work is still a true likeness of the original studio piece. Any additional manipulation of the work risks being in breach of the IB *Academic integrity policy*. The teacher is responsible for authenticating the reproductions of artworks and confirming that they correctly represent the student’s actual work.

Three-dimensional or time-based artworks, including installations, performances and virtual or augmented reality artworks, might best be captured through video recording. High-quality videos or complex editing is not required, because it is the artwork itself that is being assessed and the video will not be played on a large screen.

Sound that is integral to the work may be included, but including a soundtrack or ambient sounds that are not part of the artwork is not permitted.

Two-dimensional digital works are often best documented by saving the work directly from the software they were created with or resolved in. The exception is when the presentation of an artwork aims to elicit a visual experience that is not captured simply by providing the digital file of the artwork—for example, when a digital photograph is projected to increase its scale and through this produce an intended effect. In this case, the student should submit a digital photograph or video of the physical display of the artwork.

Note that the specific software used must be included in the media details accompanying all digital artworks.

Digital reproduction of developmental work from journals

As general guidance, it is suggested that visual arts journals are scanned using a photocopier or similar device that allows even lighting, and captures images and annotations more clearly than a camera.

Editing software can be used to refine scans. For example, drawings often need some adjustments to contrast and levels. Exposure, saturation, colours etc. need to be checked.

The reproduction of full pages of a journal or notebook can be included in the art-making inquiries portfolio, but in most cases, it is more effective to crop and select only what is relevant for assessment.

Examiners are instructed to stop reading beyond the set word limits. If the text in a section of the journals that the student would like to include on a screen is not relevant, they must learn to make curatorial decisions about what text is better to crop or cover. Teaching that “less is more” is often the best approach. If text is relevant but not fully legible, students should type it out.

The artist project video

The HL artist project requires students to use video to document the outcomes as effectively as possible. The requirement to use video for all artworks, including when the artwork is a two-dimensional piece, emphasizes the importance of capturing how and where the outcome of the project was situated, thereby communicating final artistic intentions to real or potential audience(s). In being required to document their work in video format, students may also feel more supported in engaging with a wider range of art-making forms in this stand-alone task.

It is important that students understand that they are not creating a separate video artwork. Instead, they are demonstrating to the examiner how they would encounter and experience the real artwork, within the actual context in which it was displayed. The expectation is that the video is made by the student, and there is no need for them to produce a high-quality “promotional” video. The purpose is to offer documentation of the realized project and to show how the student presented the project in the real context. There must be no editing to present what “could have been”.

The requirements for the artist project video state that it should have a maximum duration of three minutes. Within this limit, the video can be as long or as short as the student feels is necessary to document the outcome of the project.

Videos must be submitted in one of the required file formats as indicated in *Diploma Programme Assessment procedures* (updated annually). Teachers must remind students to convert files when necessary. It may also be necessary to compress video files so that the size is manageable for upload and digital assessment.

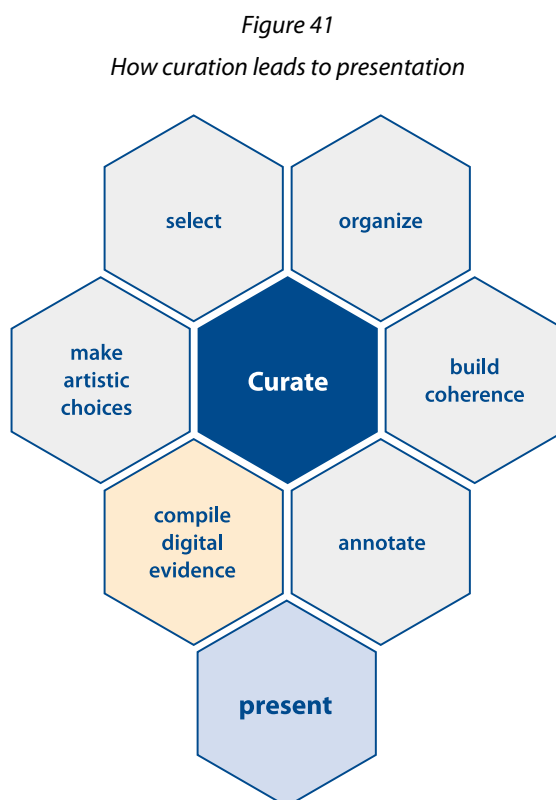
Students are also permitted to present a sequence of still images saved as a video presentation, or add a sequence of still images to the video footage to capture key details if this is easier for them to compile or makes the video more effective.

The resource “[The artist project video](#)” (PDF) provides further guidance for students on creating the video.

Compiling digital evidence for summative assessment

Curating is an ongoing activity for all visual artists and is therefore one of the assessment objectives of the course.

As outlined in the definition of “curate” in the “Syllabus content” section of the *Visual arts guide*, there are ways in which artists as part of their practice “prepare visual (and written) materials to **communicate** meaning for an audience”.



To present their work digitally for summative assessment at the end of the course, students need to compile and curate visual and written evidence to demonstrate the level of their achievement.

Students select, organize, collate, discard, juxtapose, arrange, sequence and comment on visual evidence of their art-making, both from their journals and from the development of the entire body of resolved and unresolved artworks produced during the course. They will also curate visual and written content to evidence their artist investigations; the connections with the work of other artists are best shown through visual evidence. Selecting and juxtaposing images is crucial to evidence the process of refining their own work.

The resource [“Ten rules for compiling screens”](#) (PDF) provides useful reminders for students.

Visual evidence is crucial

Students should make visual evidence predominant in the screens for the art-making inquiries portfolio, and should balance out the visual and written evidence in the artist project and the connections study. To give predominance to the visual evidence, there are word limits for each assessment task and the recommendation is to include written evidence mainly to support what is shown visually.

Teachers must show examples of how visual evidence can speak for itself and guide students in developing the skills to select and organize visual materials. These materials need to offer useful insights into students' art-making practices to meet the assessment requirements.

Visuals are the best and only valid evidence for art-making as inquiry, where investigation, experimentation, exploration and refinement support the development of artworks. Written texts should be short accompanying texts mostly demonstrating critical reflection; they should not be long narratives.

Written evidence: Relevant and concise

As part of evidencing art-making as inquiry, critical reflection and critical analysis of one's own work support the visual evidence presented. It is important that students also understand there is no benefit in writing about their own work if they cannot document this work visually. In the same way, including information that is not relevant in connection to their own art-making practice is not in scope for assessment and needs to be actively avoided.

The word limits in the visual arts tasks highlight the fact that images must be predominant in the art-making inquiries portfolio. Meanwhile in the artist project and the connections study, a balance must be evident between visual and written materials. The rationale and the artwork texts in the IA tasks allow students to include reflections about their work and the curation of their body of artworks to accompany the five resolved pieces that they are submitting; HL students should focus on curatorial choices and critical analysis in particular.

A short text to accompany the visual materials should strive to match the higher level descriptors in the assessment criteria. The visual arts tasks do not require extensive narratives or academic argumentations. Instead, they ask students to demonstrate the understandings they have developed through research and the artistic decisions they took, through their ability to select content that is relevant and meaningful to their artistic practice and their art-making inquiries.

Teachers should support students in learning to compile written evidence to match the assessment criteria, assigning interim mock mini tasks and offering formative feedback on the specific skills students will need to write about their own and other artists' art, such as:

- avoiding long narratives and descriptions
- focusing on relevant content
- reviewing their own writing to produce focused texts
- including critical analysis and reflection, using subject-specific language where appropriate.

Understanding assessment criteria taxonomies to inform curation

Teachers should make clear the taxonomy of terms used in the level descriptors in relation to both visual and written materials. The use of terminology for each level is consistent across the tasks and applied as relevant and most appropriate to the specific evidence required.

To assess written materials there is a progression across levels that moves up from the expectations of **outline** to those of **describe**. Further critical thinking is expected in **analyse** and **explain**, before arriving at **evaluate** and **justify** that appear in the top-level markbands. The definitions of these IB command terms are found in the “Appendices” of the *Visual arts guide*. It is recommended that teachers share this list with students and help them to understand the differences between the terms. Students must understand that the use of relevant information and of subject-specific language is also important and counts towards their assessment marks.

To evidence students’ art-making, the assessment criteria are designed according to a taxonomy that shows a progression from **limited**, **superficial**, **minimal** to evidence that is somehow inconsistent, to **partial** in the medium levels. This moves up to **clear**, **purposeful** and **most** or **mostly**. The top levels use descriptors such as **meaningful** (where the student not only has a purpose but realizes it to communicate meaning), **effective**, **fluent**, **accomplished** and **imaginative**.

To assess how students make use of their practical investigation of the work of other artists, the level descriptors progress from **literal or obvious use** to the notion that their work **mostly integrates**. The top level refers to **effective synthesis** (where the student demonstrates that they have synthesized their learning to create something new). It is important that in the classroom students have opportunities to discuss the quality of their artworks with their teachers and peers and that they become familiar with this terminology with reference to the standards set by the IB.

Questions and statements to curate the art-making inquiries portfolio

A requirement for the art-making inquiries portfolio is that each student explicitly states some of the inquiry questions or generative statements that they followed in their art-making. This introduces the lines of inquiry they selected to present for assessment.

The section “External assessment task 1—SL and HL” in the guide provides ideas on the different ways to support students in developing the portfolio, giving guidance on how they can progress their work through questions or generative statements. Crucially, students need to select their questions or statements and then potentially rephrase them to convey clearly how their work progressed. They need to demonstrate the effect of the questions they posed on the development of their practice and personal visual language through the curation of their submission.

It is important that teachers clarify to students that the portfolio is a curated collection of selected visual materials. Through curation and critical analysis of their own work, students can identify, select and organize the most significant and relevant evidence of their art-making in a variety of art-making forms, and creative strategies that demonstrate the development of their personal visual language through inquiry.

A line of inquiry might correspond at times to the process of making a resolved artwork. However, evidencing the full process of making resolved pieces is not a requirement. As part of curation, it might instead be effective for the student to evidence the threads and connections between inquiries conducted as part of different practices or projects. These can often retrospectively emerge as part of a line of inquiry that is significant, matching the assessment criteria and the focus on developing a personal visual language.

In addition to the section “Visual language” in the *Visual arts guide*, the definition given below may be useful to deepen students’ understanding when selecting materials for assessment.

Visual language is a set of skills, techniques and use of conventions that enables an artist to communicate meaning to their audience through their art-making, in a way that is effective, meaningful and personal.

The focus of the portfolio is on evidencing experimentations and practical investigations that are intentional and directed to the development of a visual language—i.e. not necessarily focused on the

realization of resolved artworks. Even if this may sometimes be the final goal of the work included in the portfolio, the task focuses on assessment of inquiry through assessment of the ways the student progresses their visual language and artistic practice. The student is investigating, generating and refining a variety of art-making forms and creative strategies, and this does not require consideration of the quality of the final outcome.

Questions and generative statement do not need to appear on every screen. It is up to the student how many they want to include to evidence their art-making lines of inquiry.

Preparing the IA submissions

The IA tasks focus on the submission of the student's coherent body of five resolved artworks (SL) or five selected resolved artworks (HL).

Teachers should support students in understanding the meaning of "coherence" in this context and how they can achieve and demonstrate it.

The resource "[Curating for coherence](#)" (PDF) provides further support for teachers and students.

Written evidence is also part of the IA tasks, as students are asked to demonstrate critical analysis and provide a rationale for their body of resolved artworks. The task is differentiated with varying requirements at different levels to mirror the allocated teaching hours at each level.

The resource "[Writing the rationale](#)" (PDF) supports both SL and HL students, outlining the different requirements of the task at each level.

For HL students, a downloadable [HL submissions template](#) (PowerPoint) is available. This template, or a similar one created by the student, can be used to structure the eight screens of their internal assessment PDF.

The resource "[Writing HL artwork texts](#)" (PDF) supports students in understanding what is expected of their artwork texts.

Assessment criteria B and C are common to SL and HL and assess conceptual realization and technical resolution. The assessment objectives involved are respectively "synthesize" and "resolve". Teachers should plan activities throughout the course so that students develop a full and nuanced understanding of these. The course emphasizes the constant need to work with both concept and form. The "Approaches to learning and approaches to teaching in visual arts" section of the guide explains the different ways students can engage with conceptual understanding.

There is no requirement to include work in a variety of art-making forms in the IA tasks, but it is important that students label their work clearly with details that provide the correct information for the examiner. Materials and media, and in the case of digital media, the software used, must be outlined in detail.

The following example cases provide clarification on how an artwork should be labelled depending on what it comprises.

Case 1: The artwork is a melting ice sculpture, and the student opts to submit a video documenting the artwork for assessment purposes. In this case, the melting ice sculpture is the artwork, the medium is melting ice, and the size of the sculpture must be provided.

Case 2: The artwork is a video showing a melting ice sculpture, so this piece of video art is submitted for assessment. As this is a time-based artwork, the film duration must be indicated in the "Size" field when uploading the file.

Case 3: The artwork is a printed photograph of a melting ice sculpture, and the digital version of the photograph is presented for assessment. The artwork is the printed photograph itself. The medium and size entered when uploading the file must refer to the print—specifying its technical details, size and medium.

Case 4: The artwork is a printed photograph of a melting ice sculpture, but this is resolved with further intervention/curation. In this case, a further photograph should be taken of the resolved artwork, and all the media involved should be specified in the accompanying technical details.

Academic integrity

Academic integrity is an essential element of learning and teaching in IB programmes. Students and all IB community members should aim to develop and achieve the IB learner profile attributes. From a young age, IB students are expected to be inquirers and thinkers. When thinking about academic integrity, one of the most important attributes is to be principled. To this end, all students participating in IB programmes are expected to act honestly, responsibly and ethically.

Full IB guidance on academic integrity is found in the publication [Academic integrity policy](#).

When producing work in the visual arts, students must be attentive to respecting the work of others, always working within the boundaries of academic integrity. They must first avoid **plagiarism**, defined as stealing another person's ideas and presenting them as though they were your own. For example:

- commissioning another person to produce work without acknowledging that person as the creator
- copying original artwork, designs or other creative work and presenting this as if it were your own work.

Plagiarism can be avoided if students learn to consider artworks created by others as primary sources to be referenced. **As a minimum, the name of the artist, the title of the work, the date of completion, the media, the size of the work, and the current location or owner of the work must be cited.**

The following is a full, well-referenced example. Note that referencing the actual source where the student saw the piece not only avoids plagiarism, but offers information to help understand an artwork better.

Example

Jean-Léon Gérôme

Le Bain (The Bath), c.1880–85

Oil on canvas, 73.6 x 59.6cm

Fine Arts Museums of San Francisco. Mildred Anna Williams Collection

Source: Benjamin, R. (1997). *Orientalism: Delacroix to Klee*. The Art Gallery of New South Wales, p.102

Note that the IB does not prescribe a specific style of referencing or in-text citation that students should use, so the particular style provided is just one example. Visual arts teachers can therefore choose to recommend a particular style if they see fit.

What matters most is the completeness and clarity of the information.

- Where an image of an artwork is reproduced from a source (as in the example above) this also needs to be referenced. (The student may also decide to present a separate list of sources, with this list comprising image references only.)
- Where an electronic source is cited, the date of access must be included, along with the full URL of the materials. For example: Damien Hirst, <http://www.damienhirst.com/> (22 January 2014).
- If AI has been used to prepare materials submitted for assessment, students must reference that use as they would any other third-party source. Further guidance on academic integrity and the use of AI can be found in the publication [Academic integrity policy](#) ("Appendix 6: Guidance on the use of artificial intelligence tools").

With such a wide variety of materials influencing and inspiring visual arts work, it is important that sources are properly cited so that credit is given to all materials that have been used. These may include:

- the work of other artists
- exhibitions and exhibition catalogues
- filmed interviews with visual arts practitioners

- lectures and lecture notes
- images and photographs
- audio recordings and soundtracks
- newspaper articles and magazines
- online groups and forums
- feedback and advice from others
- films, television and other broadcasts.

The resource "[Academic integrity in practice—visual arts](#)" (PDF) supports students' understanding of the requirements of academic integrity when they are working as artists. It showcases examples of plagiarism, as well as good and bad practice when referencing sources. These examples aim to support students' understanding of plagiarism and the implications of working in ways that are academically unethical.

Copyright: What to consider in making art

Copyright is a complex field of international law that protects the creative rights of individuals. Copyright is a form of intellectual property that allows the creator of an original creative work, and subsequent rights holders, to control the copying of their artwork for a defined time period. It also sets out a framework of rules around how the work can be used, including both the rights of the owner of the copyright and the responsibilities of other people who want to use the work. In this case, those people would be teachers, students and artists.

Copyright protects original creative and artistic works of all kinds: images, audiovisual, photographs, sculptures, collages, drawings, paintings and texts.

The concepts of "fair use" (in the USA), "fair dealing" (in the UK) and copyright exceptions (that differ globally) exist to allow the lawful use or reproduction of copyrighted works without having to seek the permission of the copyright owner or infringing their copyright.

There are several exceptions that copyright users can rely on when using the works of others as inspiration for their own works for private study or non-commercial academic purposes.

Some examples of copyright exceptions include:

- use of an insubstantial extract of a copyrighted work
- non-commercial research and private study
- pastiche and parody
- fair use (USA) and fair dealing (UK).

Different countries have different copyright laws. Teachers must be careful to check the copyright laws in their country to check whether students may be able to rely upon a copyright exception. Further information can be found in the World Intellectual Property Organization's *Study on Copyright Limitations and Exceptions for Educational Activities* (Seng, 2016).

If students cannot rely upon a copyright exception in their country, they may need to seek permission from the copyright owner.

Some material may be considered "in the public domain"—this material is not protected by copyright and may be used freely (with attribution). In addition, some copyrighted material is licenced by Creative Commons (creativecommons.org/share-your-work/cclicenses/)—their range of six licences grants users permission in advance and is fairly generous.

Post-assessment use

If students have relied on a copyright exception for their own private research or study, or for examination/assessment purposes, they need to be aware that as practising artists they will not be able to rely on such exceptions once that use has ended.

It is important that students know that if they plan to use their creative works for some other purposes following their studies (e.g. in a public exhibition, on a retail website, or for some other commercial purpose), they must consider whether they need to seek permission from the copyright holder. This is another reason why it is advisable for students to keep a full and thorough reference list of all original sources used during their visual arts course.

Trademarks

If trademarked brands are included in student artworks, the IB recommends adding a disclaimer that identifies the owner of each logo, stating that the use of trademarked logos is not authorized by, sponsored by, or associated with the trademark owners. A breach of copyright, or trademark infringement, may lead to legal action.

Copyright ownership in student work

In accordance with [IB copyright policy](#) (part E “IB students or alumni”), students retain the copyright in the materials that they submit for assessment purposes. They also grant the IB a non-exclusive licence to use these materials for specific reasons such as for assessment, educational, training, commercial and/or promotional purposes relating to IB activities or to those related activities of which it approves. Further details can be found in section “B1: General regulations” (Article 6) of the [Diploma Programme Assessment procedures](#) publication (updated annually).

Creative spaces as havens in schools

The arts are powerful subjects to study **through** times of crisis because they offer students the opportunity to express their ideas, emotions and experiences, and to heal through making. The arts also allow students to learn **about** and understand a crisis both through the experience of making as well as through discovering, appreciating and studying works of art made and presented by others.

Creative spaces are havens where students can think differently. The arts classrooms—physical or virtual—are sites for creative learning and collaboration, but also spaces for social connections that need to be particularly protected and celebrated at a time of crisis. Arts classrooms are places for experimentation of new ways of relating to the self, to others and to the world.

Students must feel safe to embark on radical inquiries—inquiries that go to the roots of what they care about. Engaging in artistic practice with others can be instrumental to overcome a struggle. Through the arts there are opportunities to connect and find a common safe space, to co-develop new conceptual tools and to communicate what might be difficult to articulate in words. Students can be supported in finding the freedom and the transformative power of the arts to respond, react and resist. Whenever possible this must be celebrated.

Experiencing the arts can be very powerful but also demanding in times of crisis. Creation or fruition of artworks might be personally or emotionally challenging for those who find themselves in a crisis and particular sensitivity is required when learning and teaching through a crisis. Personal, cultural, political and/or spiritual values are continually exposed, so teachers have a crucial role in setting up and supporting an open-minded, respectful and caring environment.

A **compassionate systems approach** might be considered. See the IB publication *Compassionate systems approach* for further information.

Four suggested pathways

Schools can leverage how the arts can help to engage, transform and re-emerge, and the powerful approaches offered by arts subjects to challenge or cope with a crisis.

The arts as a safe space and a space for respite

Arts to:

- give a voice and restore dignity
- find a voice and express ideas, emotions, experiences
- deal with trauma, arts for survival.

The arts as a space for new possibilities

- The transformative power of the arts
- Arts to inspire new visions and incite imagination
- Arts to provoke/disrupt
- The necessity of the arts, urgency in the arts

The arts as a way to understand the past and the present, and to learn about different perspectives

- How artists work during times of crisis; the role of the arts during times of crisis
- Respecting and breaking away from artistic conventions
- Militant arts: propaganda, protest, censorship, satire
- Documenting through art; works of arts as sources of information

The arts as a powerful means to connect with others

Arts:

- as tradition, cultural identity and cultural heritage
- to learn about ways of interacting and situating self/other in the world
- as collaboration, art in the community and for the community
- as empathy, compassion, wisdom, consolation, hope.

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List of downloadable resources

Visual arts course overview poster (PDF)

Visual arts course planner 1 (PDF)

Visual arts course planner 2 (PDF)

Visual arts course planner 3 (XLS)

Visual arts unit planner 1 (PDF)

Visual arts unit planner 2 (PDF)

Mapping the visual arts tasks to the assessment objectives (PDF)

The artist project proposal (PDF)

Artist project—scaffolded teaching of the task (PDF)

A framework to support dialogues (PDF)

A framework for critiquing (PDF)

Example visual arts journals (PDF)

Art-making forms (PDF)

Creative Strategies (PDF)

Questions to help situate artworks (PDF)

Contemporary artists who use AI (PDF)

Visual arts assessment criteria tables (PDF)

A possible calendar for digital documentation and curation of artwork (PDF)

Effective digital reproduction of artworks (PDF)

The artist project video (PDF)

Ten rules for compiling screens (PDF)

Curating for coherence (PDF)

Writing the rationale (PDF)

Writing HL artwork texts (PDF)

Academic integrity in practice—visual arts (PDF)