

# ART SYLLABUS

The Syllabus, subject to revision, is written with the following beliefs in mind.

## Truth to Teach

A whole variety of gifting comes from Father God. It is a family 'trait' or inheritance we expect to see in every individual. **Genesis. 1:27** 'So God created man in His own image, in the image of God He created him.' Therefore, art is an expression of the creativity God has given man by making him in His own image.

## Way to Work

All the elements employed in creating artwork – line, tone, colour, texture, proportion, mass, form, weight, rhythm, symmetry, space etc. – are creations of God. Colossians 1:16 '...by Him all things were created that are in heaven and on earth.'

Creative sources of experience, imagination, intuition, inspiration and knowledge are directly influenced by personal lifestyle and values.

## Learning for Life

1. For students to discover and develop through practice the gift that is in them.
  2. For them to find personal satisfaction in appreciative stewardship of their gifting.
  3. For them to communicate through art as a serving response to God and His world. This can range from a celebration of the beauty in creation to a challenging or redemptive response to pain, hurt or evil.
- Thus, we have a variety of God-given gifts,  
a variety of God-created means, and  
a variety of God-provided creative sources which are brought together in the syllabus in order to experience, explore, discover and share with others responsively and responsibly.

There are four major areas we seek to develop through the syllabus:

<b>Vision</b>	–	The ability to 'see' accurately and perceptively (reflective and prophetic!)
<b>Skills</b>	–	Acquired and personally developed techniques.
<b>Creativity</b>	–	The ability to select, formulate, imagine, reorganize etc.
<b>Evaluation</b>	–	Developing personal, cultural, historical and critical skills. In <b>Genesis 1</b> , God evaluated each creative work when finished.

## Vision: Learning to see!

It was not to those in the Kingdom that Jesus said, '...Listen and listen but you will not understand. Look and look but you will not see.' To His followers He said, 'You have been chosen to know the secrets about the Kingdom of God' **Luke 8:18** and 'Everything that is hidden will become clear and every secret thing will become known. So be careful how you listen. Those who have understanding will be given more.' **Luke 8:18** Jesus' 'seeing' and 'listening' relates to understanding the truths and mysteries of the Kingdom, of course; but it is seeing beyond the obvious; it is seeing which perceives accurately.

Willingly Jesus explained and gave understanding to those who asked Him. In devising a syllabus, a major key, which 'progressively' facilitates the development of personal skills and techniques, is learning to SEE. Many useful exercises and activities can be used throughout the art programme to challenge and stimulate observation and perception as an ongoing process.

## Examples

Some practical exercises aimed at developing visual accuracy and, at the same time, exploring a variety of techniques and media both two and three dimensionally.

- **'SELECTING' EXERCISES** (i.e. Isolating, Emphasising, and Abstracting)
  - Pulling out TONE pencil or monochrome
  - Pulling out SHAPE silhouettes, modelling
  - Pulling out STRUCTURE analysis in any medium
  - Composing the FRAME view through 'keyhole' vignettes
  - COLOUR LIMITATION – hot and cold, colour 'families'
- **'SURPRISING' EXERCISES** (i.e. Refreshing, Enlightening, and Humorous.)
  - UNUSUAL viewpoints – birds-eye or beetles-eye views, perspective, view through lens
  - UNEXPECTED colour – colour reversal, transcriptions, over/understatement
  - SELECTIVE composition – re – selecting part of a study and enlarging it
  - WEIGHT or DIRECTION – in - composition – exaggeration, making a statement
  - DRAMA – in colour, tone, composition or content
- **'ANALYSING' EXERCISES** – (i.e. seeing the Whole, breaking down the Parts.)
  - PERSPECTIVE – tips on correct drawing, vanishing points
  - PLOTTING relationships – still life to landscape
  - CRITICAL study – looking at artists' work, self-evaluation, group discussion, transcriptions
  - TARGET practice – looking for light source, weight of tone/colour, direction, meaning etc.

## **SKILLS**

'Skills' here includes observation, problem finding and solving, developing a theme, expressive use of elements, imagination, scale and composition as well as the use of media. We make no class distinction between communicating ideas and enjoying the skills of a craft. For one person the satisfaction may be intellectual and for another the activity of creating is a therapeutic safety valve. For many it will be a mix. We make art for all kinds of reasons and, hopefully, always for the love of it.

### **'EXPLORING' SKILLS**

Procedures can be taught but personally-developed techniques are uniquely individual and become expressive, artistic tools. As wide a variety of skills should be explored as possible in the confidence that no-one has to be good at everything, but everyone will be good at something. Teachers should have a spirit of enquiry and experiment no less than their students. Different methods of working can be suggested to widen the students' repertoire but also give opportunities to exercise real choice. Do not always impose.

### **'RELEASING' SKILLS**

Teachers should also be sensitive both to the successes and struggles of students. In the area of techniques certain materials will release creativity while others may seriously discourage. For example, 'beavering' away at Pointillism would certainly frustrate a haptically-orientated (i.e. strongly 3D) person whereas Modelling Form would release them. The reverse could be true for a strongly visually-orientated (i.e. strongly 2D) person. Look for enjoyment and release in materials.

### **'FITTING' SKILLS**

Some materials are better suited to certain subjects or ways of working than others. For example, landscapes and skies are best interpreted using more 'plastic' media such as watercolour, oils or charcoal. It is hard to capture fluidity and spontaneity in a linocut. As different skills and media are introduced they should be teamed with exercises that exploit their potential. The aim being that students learn to choose materials appropriate to their aims and subject matter so that the medium becomes an inextricable expression of the finished work.

### **'RECONCILING' SKILLS**

All students gain confidence from the acquisition of skills. Adolescents in particular need to project their thoughts and feelings through their artwork at a time when they are critically aware of their own shortcomings and their perception may be forging way ahead of technical competence. The discrepancy between what they achieve, and what they would like to achieve, can be painful for some. Fresh skills can help bridge this gap. It is a good time to look at unsophisticated artists like Klee and Chagall. Use new techniques to engage and challenge (silkscreen, airbrushing, sculpture, photography, etc). Short exercises designed to succeed yet with artistic validity (e.g. composing a series of abstract 'blobs' or lines to express ideas, actions and feelings). Figure work can be particularly sensitive and finding new ways of representation using photos, Montage and sporting heroes can be helpful.

Our students, especially the gifted, need to be encouraged to maintain single-mindedness in using their artistic gifts with the understanding that 'From everyone who has been given much, much will be demanded; and from the one who has been entrusted with much, much more will be asked.'

**Luke 12:48**

'Art is one way for men and women to respond to the Lord's command to cultivate the earth, to praise His Name.... Art is no more special (nor less special) than marriage and prayer and fresh strawberries out of season. Like acrobatics and careful thought and running a business well, artistry takes training. It is more difficult than falling off a log.'  
Calvin Seerveld - 'RAINBOWS FOR THE FALLEN WORLD'

## **CREATIVITY: SOURCES OF CREATIVE THINKING**

**SOURCES OF EXPERIENCE** – Involving observation and memory, feelings and emotions, past or present. Recognizing Jesus' Lordship means remembering that He did not always judge by only what He could see **Isaiah 11:3** or make a decision by what His ears heard.

**SOURCES OF KNOWLEDGE** – We cannot know all the facts but we can go to the One who does 'In Him are all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge safely kept.'

**Colossians 1 2:3**. As we study to learn from others we use the plumbline of God's Word in order to sift wheat from chaff.

**SOURCES OF INTUITION AND IMAGINATION** – As we seek to follow Jesus we must guard our thoughts so that we honour God and line ourselves up with His heart for the world – **Philippians 4:8** gives specific directions concerning the mental attitude involved in expressing the kind of humanity Jesus came to restore. Therefore, truth, honour, righteousness, loveliness, excellence and praise are as important to art as they are to life.

**SOURCES OF INSPIRATION** – God is a rewarder of those who seek Him. We look to the Holy Spirit, recognize and thank God for our supply. 'The power to bring forth proceeds from the Father, the power to arrange from the Son, the power to perfect from the Holy Spirit.' (Abe Kyper) **Psalms 37:4** 'Delight yourselves also in the Lord: And He shall give you the desires of your heart.'

Inner thoughts and feelings affect all our sources. Applying the plumb-line of God's Word to all our sources roots us in God and brings a depth of truth and poignance honouring to Him.

J.B. Phillips **Romans 12:2** says 'Do not let the world around you squeeze you into its own mould.'

**Proverbs 4:23** says 'Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it spring the issues of life.'

## **EVALUATION / CRITICAL SKILLS**

‘God saw all that He had made, and it was very good.’ **Genesis 1:31**

Intermittently during creation God evaluated as ‘good’ what He had made and then finally pronounced that it was ‘very good’. Assessment or evaluation should not only be applied to students’ work by teachers and others but is an essential part of the process of making artwork and should be developed in our students like any other skill. It is through the ability to make ongoing value – judgements during the making of artwork that students learn to make informed decisions concerning the direction and correction of their own work. Students engaged in evaluating their own work take responsibility for it. A repenting and confessing lifestyle sharpens the ability to evaluate, beyond the use of skills – in the area of ideas etc, by sensitizing us to know what is acceptable and perfect in God’s will – a practical route the Holy Spirit uses to guide us into truth.

### **ACTIVITIES USED TO ENCOURAGE THE DEVELOPMENT OF CRITICAL SKILLS**

**LEARNING VOCABULARY** – Aim to teach correct terminology for the elements and processes involved in artwork. Frequently draw attention to achievements verbally in an exercise by re-capping essential thrusts etc. Point things out – ask the question ‘What can you see....?’ at the end of a lesson or project. Encourage students to enlarge their vocabulary by using such words as you introduce during group discussion.

**LEARNING FROM OTHERS** – Look at other artists and cultures, targeting achievement and meaning to develop awareness. Reinforce with follow-up work. e.g. Transcriptions, Work in the manner of.....

Group discussion of completed work, encouraging positive comment and looking for progress and achievement and learning from others’ mistakes (Practise using appropriate terminology). Give permission to ‘borrow’ from one another. Circulate a group during a lesson to identify successful aspects in other’s work before resuming their own.

**LEARNING ACCOUNTABILITY** – Student Assessment Sheets allow students to re-cap and evaluate their own achievements during the year. It is a good indication of involvement and engages students in marking their own progress. Teacher assessment alongside reinforces the student’s own estimations in a dialogue endorsing or correcting as necessary.

### **YEARS 10 AND 11 AND THE GCSE NATIONAL CRITERIA**

There is nothing of the GCSE Subject Specific List of Criteria, at present, to compromise or challenge our Christian values.

However, God as Father, Creator and Artist, as Provider of all gifts, ‘means’ and sources, and Jesus as our Redeemer ‘model’ for living our lives, thinking our thoughts, our gifts and serving others, and the Holy Spirit’s enabling and leading in all of these is notably omitted. What we say to our students about the GCSE Course at the outset will establish the priorities in their minds at a time when they are particularly receptive and all ‘agog’ to hear about the forthcoming two years.

## CHOICES

It is a good time to remind ourselves that as young adults there are more and more opportunities to exercise freedom of choice – do we self-serve or aim to honour God and serve others? We will be accountable, as stewards, to God for those choices.

Art is essentially communication and the challenge to us as artists is WHAT shall we communicate to others?

I would ask students to be thinking and praying about that and be ready with a list of personal insights later in the year. The message of the Gospel is entirely relevant here. In our Critical Studies we could look at ways in which Christianity has been expressed through the ages and, again, think and pray about ways of using our gifts to communicate something of God to our own generation. What 'speaks' to us? How can we communicate without being 'religious' or 'sermonising'?

Students want to pass the exam well and need to know the National Criteria for Art. Unpacking these within our Christian framework, hopefully, sets all our priorities in the right order.

\*\*With various tasks we work through the National Criteria using Short Exercises, Group Themes and Individual Projects.

\*\*The aim is to build up specific skills in the areas of:

- Observation
- Problem solving and finding
- Experimenting with media
- Appropriate use of media
- Developing a theme
- Expressive use of Texture, Line, Colour, Tone, Pattern,
- Rhythm, Shape, Form, Space, Movement etc.
- Imagination
- Scale and Composition.

\*\*In all this a wide range of media is encouraged.