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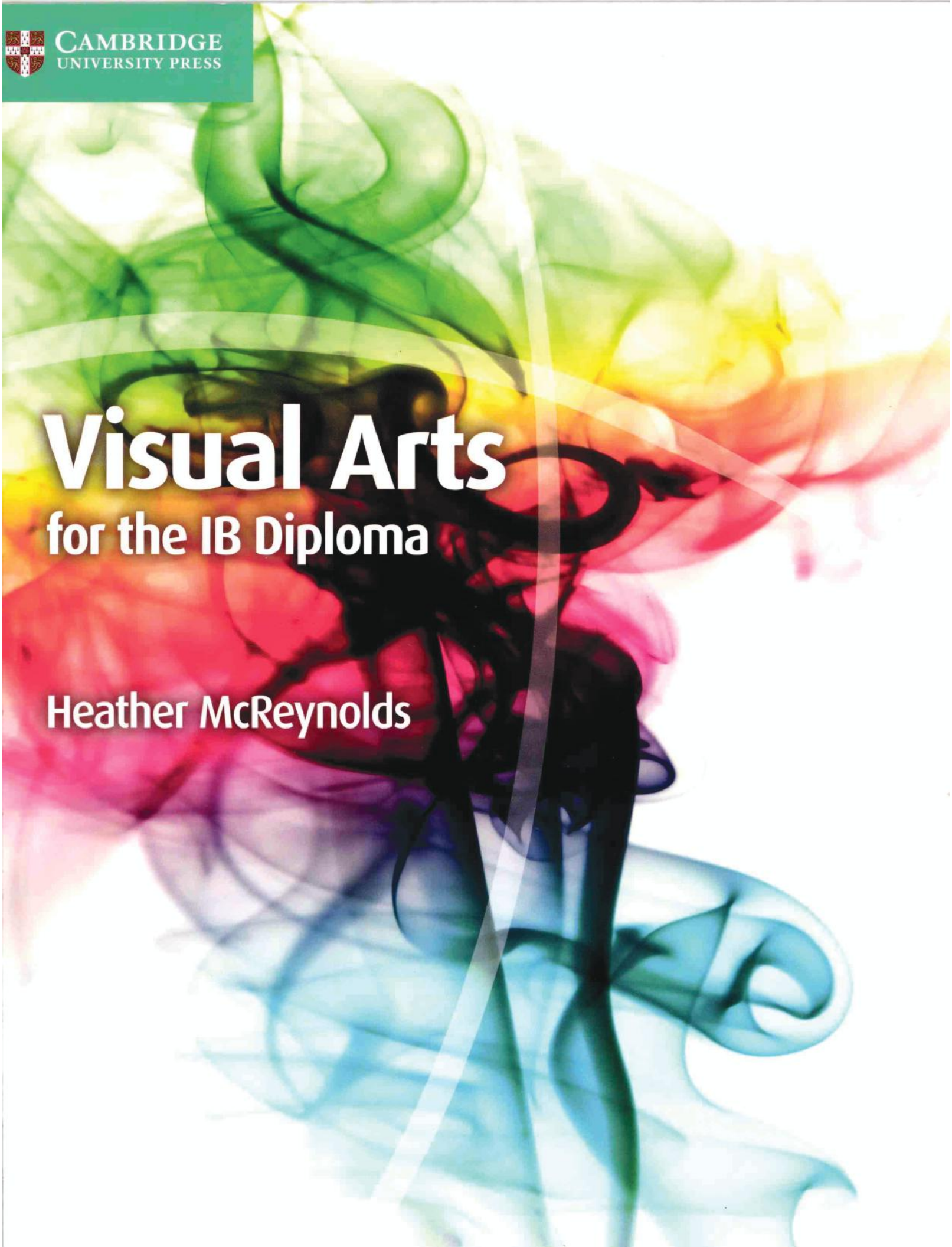

Visual Arts
for the IB Diploma

Heather McReynolds

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Introduction

0.1 Welcome

This student book is designed as a guide and companion to the International Baccalaureate (IB) Diploma Programme (DP) Visual Arts course (first examinations 2016). It will help you to understand the aims and objectives of the course, what is expected of you, and how to go about achieving it.

You will be introduced to the ideas and the language that underpin the course, and offered practical advice for navigating your way successfully through the requirements. The book will support and encourage you while you engage in your individual journey of inquiry, investigation, reflection and creative application in art.

Figure 0.01: *Daydream* by student Sage Dever (mixed media collage on board). With freedom to explore a variety of art forms, ideas and different approaches, students can discover their own modes of visual expression.

0.2 Who is this book for?

This book is for students taking the two-year Visual Arts course for the IB DP, part of Group 6, The Arts (first examinations 2016).

Although the IB Visual Arts course will appeal to students who wish to study visual arts in higher education, students with no previous experience will also benefit from it.

The course not only builds art-making skills and confidence but helps students to develop important analytical skills, divergent ways of thinking and creative problem-solving. Reflecting the IB emphasis on international-mindedness, students are

encouraged to explore art from a wide range of contexts and practices, thus broadening their understanding and appreciation for the diversity of creative and aesthetic expression.

The study of art is much more than just a training of the eye. Through the study and practice of visual arts we are cultivating attention to the act of observing, and in doing so we learn to perceive the world differently, as well as art.

Art is about paying attention.
(Laurie Anderson)

Standard level or higher level

The course may be taken at standard level (SL) or higher level (HL). There are additional assessment requirements for HL: students explore art-making techniques in more depth and breadth and produce a larger, more considered body of work, with added awareness of the viewer's relationship. They also reflect more on how other artists have influenced their own work.

0.3 What is the IB Visual Arts course about?

The course revolves around three main aspects of art practice: theoretical practice, art-making practice and curatorial practice. As an IB Visual Arts student, you are all of these: a critic, a maker and a curator. Let's consider what these mean and what your learning objectives are for each one.

Theoretical practice (the critic)

Using investigative strategies, critical thinking, comparative analysis and reflection, you will examine various art forms and artists from different times, places and cultures. You will investigate different techniques and processes, enquiring into their contextual evolution. You will explore ways of communicating knowledge in both visual and written forms.

Art-making practice (the maker)

Through exploration and experimentation you will discover and apply a variety of artistic techniques. You will develop your own concepts throughout this explorative process and, with reflection and self-evaluation, produce a considered body of work.

Curatorial practice (the curator)

Through careful, informed viewing of artworks and exhibitions you will develop an ability to formulate your own considered response. You will begin to articulate your intentions for developing and displaying your own work. You will also consider the relationship between artist and audience and what it means to exhibit work; learn to select and present your own work effectively; and articulate your intentions and the connections between your artworks.

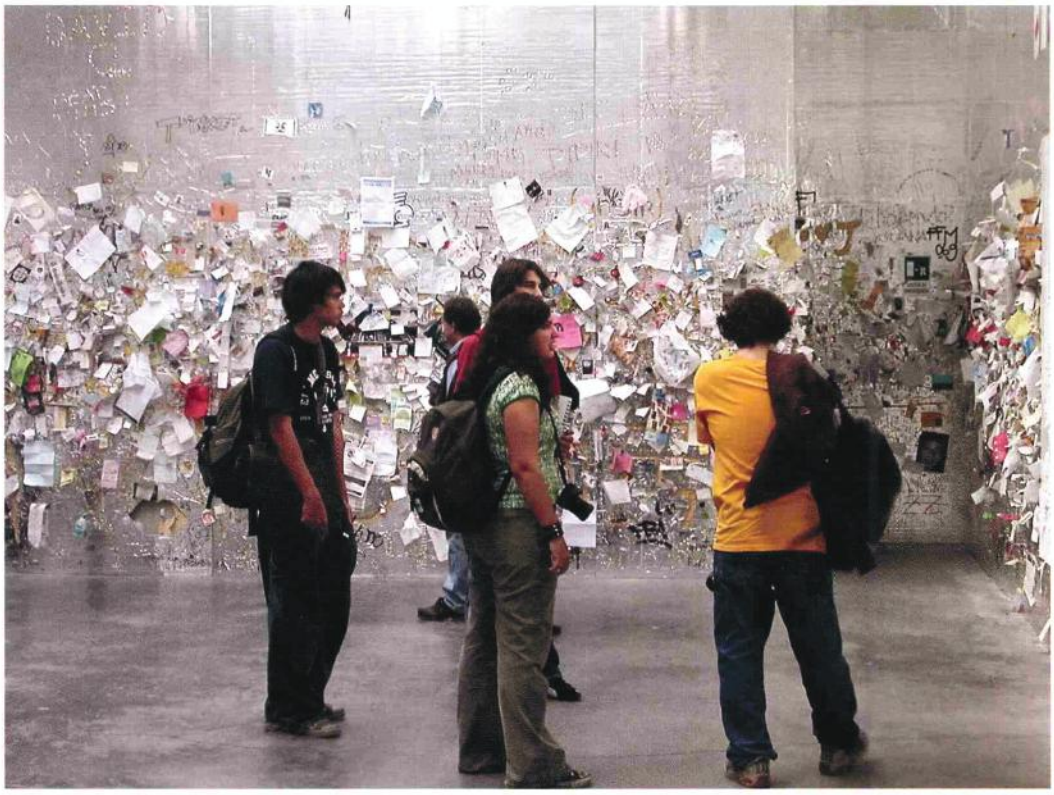

Figure 0.02: Seeing and experiencing art first-hand will help you to develop your own informed response. Whenever possible try to visit exhibitions, galleries and artists' studios to experience the work yourself. In Rudolf Stingel's *Untitled*, 2003, the artist invited viewers to interact with the aluminium foil covered walls by scratching, writing, pinning notes, or otherwise engaging in acts that would normally be considered vandalism of an artwork.

The visual arts journal

The visual arts journal is a central element of the course and you are required to maintain your journal throughout your study. The visual arts journal links together the three practices of theory, art-making and curating. You can use your journal to record your work on all aspects of the course – your critical investigations and reflections, your experiments with media and techniques, and your ideas, plans and intentions.

Your journal is not directly assessed but it contributes significantly to your comparative study (CS) and process portfolio (PP), which are externally assessed. Chapter 2 discusses the pivotal role of the visual arts journal in the course.

0.4 How is your work assessed?

You are required to submit your work on three major tasks for final assessment. The assessed components are as follows:

Part 1: Comparative study (externally assessed, 20%)

This is an independent critical and contextual investigation in which you explore artworks from differing cultural contexts. Both SL and HL students compare at least three different artworks, by at least two different artists, in a presentation (visual and written) over 10–15 screens. In addition, HL students reflect on how their own artwork and practices have been influenced by any of the art/artists examined (3–5 screens). (Chapter 7 looks in detail at the CS.)

Part 2: Process portfolio (externally assessed, 40%)

You are required to compile carefully selected materials, documenting your experimentation, exploration, manipulation and refinement of a range of visual arts activities during the two-year course. The presentation comprises 9–18 screens for SL students and 13–25 screens for HL students, and must demonstrate at least three different art-making forms. (Chapter 8 looks in detail at the PP.)

Part 3: Exhibition (internally assessed, 40%)

You are required to submit documentation (images or video) of a selection of resolved artworks from your exhibition. This is a coherent body of work, which shows evidence of technical skills, and that is thoughtfully considered, presented, and supported by a curatorial rationale. SL students submit 4–7 pieces, with exhibition texts and a curatorial rationale (max. 400 words). HL students submit 8–11 pieces with exhibition texts and a curatorial rationale (max. 700 words). (Chapter 9 looks in detail at the exhibition.)

(This is a brief summary. Chapter 10 explains the assessment procedures and includes tables that reference the assessment criteria.)

0.5 The learner profile

The IB believes that students today are responsible for shaping a better world tomorrow. The qualities set out in the IB learner profile are positive human characteristics that aspire to a model of international mindedness and to the creation of a more peaceful world.

The learner profile is reflected throughout the Visual Arts learning objectives, embracing a range of qualities that extend well beyond technical proficiency and academic learning.

As IB learners we strive to be:

- inquirers
- knowledgeable
- thinkers
- communicators
- principled
- open-minded

- caring
- risk-takers
- balanced
- reflective.

Figure 0.03: *Tree of Life* by student by Julia Granillo Tostado (cardboard, paper and watercolour). Julia describes the piece as 'a tree of life, consisting of 50 movable puppets that are based on real people, experiences and conversations that surround me, helping me grow and develop'.

0.6 The IB core

Supporting the IB learner profile are three other elements at the 'core' of the DP, which should all form part of your learning experience. These are: TOK, the extended essay, and creativity, action, service (CAS).

Theory of knowledge

In the TOK course you explore forms of knowledge through the natural sciences, the social sciences, ethics, history, mathematics, and religious and indigenous knowledge systems, as well as the arts. TOK also requires you to reflect on different ways of

knowing, including reason, emotion, sense perception, intuition, imagination, faith and memory, and to consider how knowledge is arrived at in the various disciplines.

TOK invites you to think critically and challenge your existing belief systems. For the art student it presents rich opportunities for asking questions that will inform your art-making investigation and practice.

Creativity, action, service

Many links can be made between the visual arts and CAS: exhibitions, workshops, productions, design, costumes, graphics, mentoring, murals and on-and-off campus projects. Put your creative skills to work, but remember, CAS activities must be distinct from the course requirements for any subject.

Extended essay

All DP students are required to write an essay (4000 words maximum) on a topic of their choice, based on independent research. For the art student with a particular area of interest to explore, visual arts may be an appealing subject area for this in-depth research paper. Visual arts topics may include fine art, design, architecture and aspects of contemporary visual culture. Students are strongly recommended to engage with primary sources, seeing and experiencing the work themselves whenever possible. (The extended essay is discussed further in Chapter 10.)

0.7 How to use this book

This book, like the Visual Arts curriculum, is meant to be approached as a whole rather than as distinctly separate units. The knowledge and skills that you need as a visual artist are explored in all the chapters. Each component of the course overlaps and influences the others, just as theory and practice inform and influence each other in art. The focus of each chapter is as follows:

- In Chapter 1, 'Start exploring', you will identify creative starting points for exploration using different visual and conceptual approaches.
- In Chapter 2, 'The visual arts journal' you will look at the visual arts journal and its pivotal role in the course.
- Chapter 3, 'Culture and place' contributes to your understanding of culture and context, and has significant links to the CS.
- Chapter 4, 'Materials and meaning' looks at different art-making forms and relates to both your PP and your work for the exhibition.
- Chapter 5, 'Developing focus' is about digging in deeper, developing and sustaining those initial explorations, and developing a body of work for your final exhibition.
- Chapter 6, 'Curating and presenting' will help you to develop your own curatorial practice and curate your own exhibition.

- Chapters 7, 8 and 9 are dedicated to the three assessed components (and supported by all the other chapters):
  - The CS (covered in Chapter 7)
  - The PP (Chapter 8)
  - The exhibition (Chapter 9).
- Chapter 10, 'Visual arts assessment' explains how the IB DP Visual Arts course is assessed and is your go-to point for assessment criteria tables and task requirements.

This coursebook therefore functions both as workbook and as a back-and-forth reference: you may follow the chapters sequentially, or move around the book as you take what you need at any given point in your progress.

The coursebook features

This coursebook contains several special features, which are designed to enhance your learning experience. They are outlined below.

ACTIVITIES

There is a wide range of activities in each chapter. Your teacher or tutor may set some as tasks, or you can use them as jumping-off points for your independent work. They are offered as seeds of inspiration for you to cultivate, as challenges to push you further, or simply to feed your desire for new experiences.

TOK and art

Throughout the book you will find a set of theory of knowledge (TOK) questions designed to provoke a conversation. TOK is a core aspect of the IB DP that encourages students to think **critically and curiously** (see also 'The IB core'). The study of Visual Arts offers many deeply provocative questions, from how we make value judgements to the meaning of originality. Hopefully some of these will lead you into unexplored territory, raise new questions, incite curiosity and bring insight into how you construct your own beliefs.

Your teacher may use these questions as discussion points or assign them as individual journal reflections. You may choose questions of particular interest or relevance to your own investigations and develop them as critical reflections.

STUDENT EXAMPLES

The examples of students' work shown throughout the book have been generously contributed by real IB art students from around the world. The work shown is of a generally high quality so as to be aspirational. Examples are not intended as prescriptive: they represent each student's individual approach, so please view them as examples, not prototypes. There are as many ways to make art as there are human beings in the world!

CASE STUDIES

The case studies are intended to provide a more in-depth view of one student's way of working on a particular task. These case studies are only a small sampling – they do not represent the student's entire body of work. Again, these examples are not intended as models but rather as insightful windows into how others approach the course work.

SPOTLIGHT ON THE STUDENT

This feature is an inside glimpse of a given student's areas of artistic interest, the topics and ideas they are looking at and thinking about, and the artists who have influenced their investigations and art-making practices.

Tip: This feature provides additional advice on how to meet the assessment objectives by highlighting key issues, including pitfalls to avoid, and suggesting time-saving strategies.

Key terms: This feature lists art terms mentioned in the text, with definitions.

0.8 Exploring unknown territory

IB Visual Arts is an enquiry-based and largely self-directed course. Although there are assessment objectives that serve as guidelines, the specific content of each of these is for you to decide, challenging your own creative and cultural expectations and boundaries. You will choose the artists that you want to investigate, the techniques you want to develop, and the ideas and concepts that you wish to explore. As you become more discerning you will be able to recognise your strengths and learn from your failures, discover the methods that work for you, and set your own personal goals and pursue them courageously. There is no specific set of questions (you come up with your own), and no right answers.

Figure 0.04: Detail of *Shift Happens*, by Heather McReynolds. This piece was made of maps torn from a world atlas and reconfigured into a new, unrecognisable map of the world.

This book can provide a sort of road map, with key features and main highways highlighted, but you are invited to chart your own path across this territory. As Georgia O'Keefe said:

> Whether you succeed or not is irrelevant – there is no such thing. Making your unknown known is the important thing – and keeping the unknown always beyond you.

Enjoy your journey!

Chapter 1

Start exploring

Introduction

This chapter examines how inquiry, exploration and reflection inform all of art-making. We will look at a range of strategies for getting started in the course with various activities for making discoveries, building confidence, considering different visual and conceptual approaches, playful exploration and self-reflection.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Identify creative starting points for exploration.
- Experiment with ways of looking, thinking and making.
- Explore an idea using a variety of visual approaches.
- Engage in creative discovery through play.
- Explore how to transform failures.
- Through the above, develop higher-level thinking skills.

Figure 1.01: Art begins with exploration. Exploration is led by curiosity, fed by investigation and developed through intentional experimentation and reflection.

1.1 Starting strategies

Starting strategies are entry points, activities to get you looking, thinking and creating. While these are mainly suggestions for getting started, you can come back to them at any time during the course when you are stuck for ideas.

- Create a viewfinder (cut a rectangle from a piece of card) and use it to frame different **compositions** within the same view, then record it in your journal.
- Enlarge something tiny using a gridding system.
- Collect multiples of one thing: many different-shaped leaves, bus tickets, teabags. Create a method of display with labels. Photograph or draw this in your journal.
- Collect things in varying **hues** of the same colour. Arrange your collection into a composition. Document it. Give it a title.
- Look for found patterns, and record them with rubbings and drawings in your journal. Note where each pattern was found.
- Take something apart and put it back together in a completely different way that alters the form and the function.
- Make a 3D piece of work that fits in a matchbox.
- Choose a building or a landscape in your area, and draw it in chalk or charcoal at different times of day, observing the changing light, like Monet's paintings of Reims Cathedral.
- Select a small square section of the earth and meticulously record it, like Dürer's piece of turf.
- Design something to place on an altar. Explain why.
- Reinterpret an artwork in a completely different medium: for example, make a video of a drawing, or a construction of a painting.
- Make something ugly. Make something beautiful.

Composition: Composition in art refers to the arrangement of visual elements (shapes, lines, colours, forms) and their relationship to each other.

Hue: Hue refers to the gradation or intensity of a colour, such as 'the brilliant hues of autumn leaves'.

Start with something

Take an object. Do something to it. Do something else to it.
(Jasper Johns, 1964)

There are an infinite number of things you can do to an image, or to an object. In 1964, American **pop artist** Jasper Johns famously made this note in his sketchbook: 'Take an object. Do something to it. Do something else to it.' We might even say that making art is a series of decisions enacted on an image or an object, or an idea. Do something to it, then something else, and something else; through persistent visual exploration you can evolve and change even the most boring thing into something interesting – art? Maybe.

Pop art: Pop art was an art movement of the 1950s and 1960s in Britain and America. The artists of the pop art movement drew their imagery from popular culture, mass media, advertising and consumerism, often with an ironic or critical undertone.

Figure 1.02: Jasper Johns, American pop artist, *Bronze, c. 1960-1*. Johns plays with the idea of low and high culture, taking a banal object from everyday life and elevating it to the status of 'fine art'.

In the 1960s, sculptor Richard Serra's interest in materials and the physical process of making sculpture led him to compile a list of action verbs: 'to roll, to crease, to curve', which he then carried out using the materials he had collected in his studio.

ACTIVITY 1.1: TAKE AN IMAGE. DO SOMETHING TO IT . . .

Make different-sized good-quality prints of a single image. Carry out the following actions by drawing, collage or a combination.

- Remove something.
- Expand or enlarge a portion.
- Fragment it.
- Simplify everything.

Continue to change it with your own actions.

> It struck me that instead of thinking what a sculpture is going to be and how you're going to do it compositionally, what if you just enacted those verbs in relation to a material, and didn't worry about the results? (Richard Serra)

ACTIVITY 1.2

Instead of an image, start with a piece of (choose one) rubber, fabric, wood, metal, plastic ... and so on.

'Enact these verbs' on your chosen material:

- Roll it.
- Bend it.
- Fold it.
- Rearrange it.
- Turn it upside down.
- Mirror it.
- Divide it.
- Compress it.
- Expand it.

Figure 1.03: Pablo Picasso, *Bull's Head*, 1942. In this ready-made Picasso combines two objects, a bicycle seat and handlebars, and there you have it: a bull's head!

Ready-made: A 'ready-made' is a commonplace object or combination of objects selected and presented as an artwork. Marcel Duchamp created the first ready-made (*Bicycle Wheel*, 1913) by mounting a bike wheel on a stool. Duchamp and members of the Dada movement challenged the conventional notions of what is art and influenced much of the art that followed – including pop art, which took its subject matter from everyday objects of pop culture, and conceptual art, which values the artist's idea over the actual product.

ACTIVITY 1.3: READY-MADE AUCTION

Create your own ready-made from a found object or objects, give it a title and present it to the class. Be prepared to defend it as ART! Stage an auction of the works, just for fun. See which pieces are convincing enough to hold value.

Art lives from constraints and dies from freedom.
(Leonardo da Vinci)

What do you think Leonardo meant by this? How does having set limitations encourage creative thinking?

TOK and art: Language and art

- Does art need to be explained?
- Can an idea be more important than the physical artwork?
- How does a title influence our reading of an artwork?
- Can the ability to discuss and defend your ideas carry more weight than the actual piece itself?

1.2 Looking, thinking, making

This section offers the opportunity to carry out a comprehensive activity, the object study. The study shows you how to look at a single object in depth and breadth, considering its visual qualities, form and function, context and meaning. The activities in the object study will enable you to generate many valuable visual journal pages, which you could also use in your process portfolio. As the object study has many parts to it, you could develop your work on it over several weeks.

ACTIVITY 1.4: OBJECT STUDY

a) **Choose an object** that interests you for both its visual qualities and its symbolic value, preferably something small enough to hold in your hand. This will be your object of study so choose thoughtfully. It helps if the object has an interesting shape to draw, and lends itself to multiple meanings (for example, an apple, an egg, a lightbulb or even a teacup!).

b) **Draw your object from different viewpoints.** Try unusual points of view, distortion, changing scale.

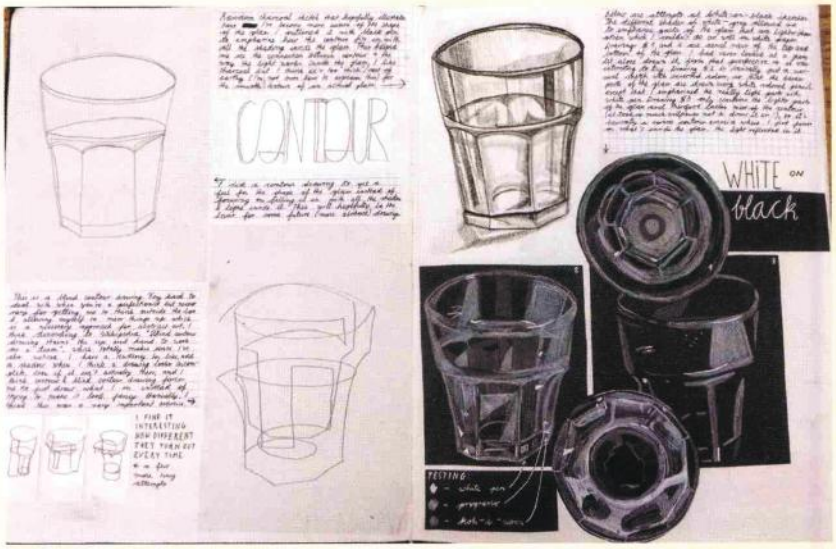

Figure 1.04: Page from student Ewa Nizalowska's visual arts journal. Ewa takes a simple object (a common drinking glass) and using different drawing media, contour lines, shading and reflections, she observes it from different points of view.

Figure 1.05: Ewa practises observational drawing of a glass, using cross-hatching to create subtle variations in tone. She has written 'This is not a glass' boldly across the top of the page, referring to René Magritte's famous painting *The Treachery of Images*. With the addition of this text, she is introducing a conceptual way of thinking about the object and representation in general.

Figure 1.06 *The Treachery of Images*, 1929, by Belgian Surrealist René Magritte, is a painting of a pipe with the words 'Ceci n'est pas une pipe' (This is not a pipe) painted underneath. The painting depicts an image of a pipe but it is a painting, not a pipe, making the point that an image is a representation of a thing, not the thing itself.

c) **Place in different contexts and draw.** Alter the surroundings, the composition, colour and/or juxtaposition (place it next to something else). How does this affect the meaning of the object?

d) **Use different materials to interpret your object,** such as pencil, paint, clay, words, fur, print, photo, film, cardboard, wax . . .

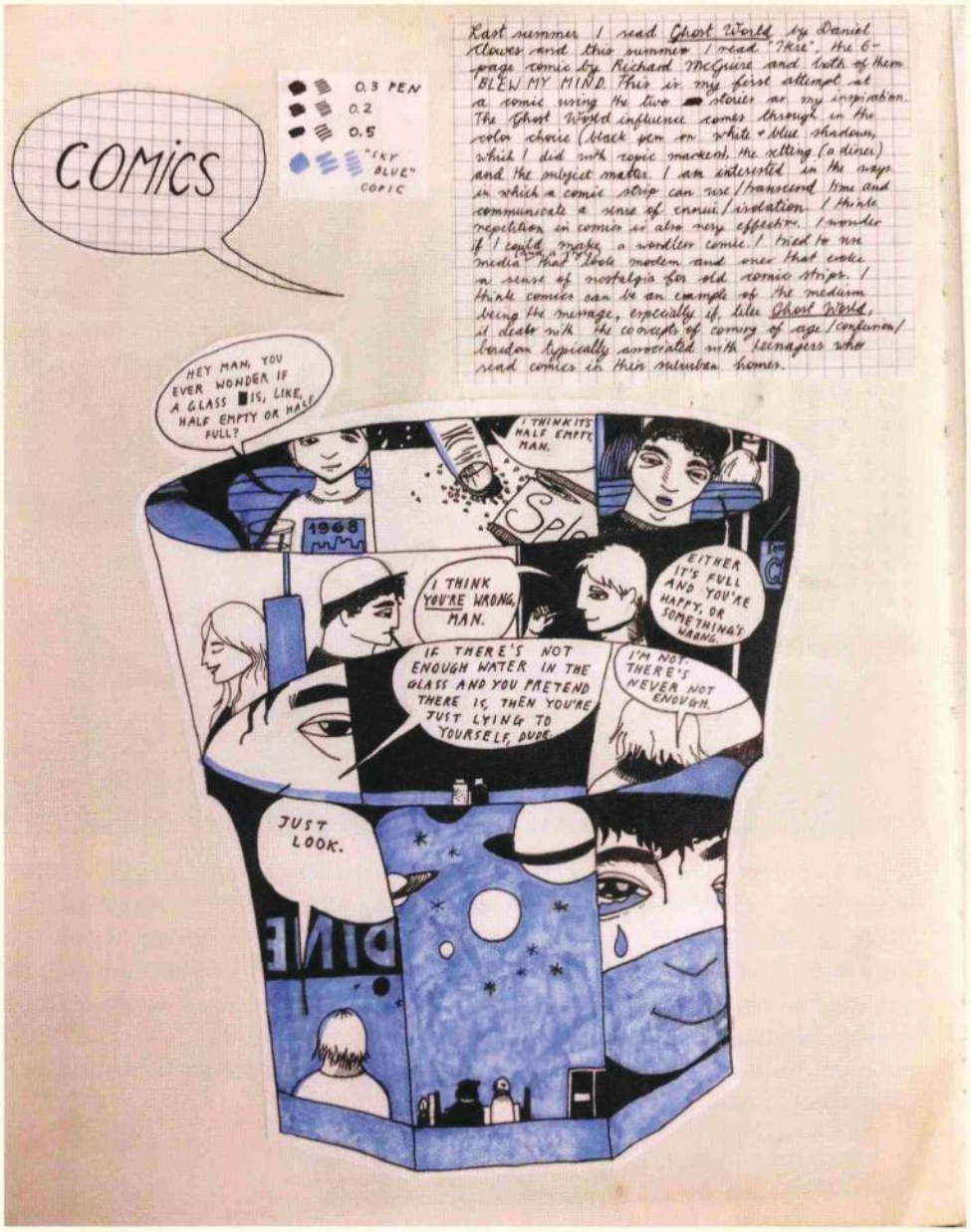

Figure 1.07: In this drawing, Ewa has turned her glass into a cartoon in which the characters discuss the notion of 'the glass half empty or half full', in a humorously philosophical take on teenagers in suburban homes.

Iconography: The use of a symbol or specified image associated with a subject or theme in art.

Vanitas: A still-life painting genre of the 16th and 17th centuries, mostly Dutch, that references the transient nature of life through the use of symbols of death and decay: for example, skulls, hourglass, jewels, fading blossoms, rotting fruit. Vanitas is the Latin term for vanity, the vanity of wealth and clinging to earthly existence. These pictures were intended to remind people of their mortality and the passing nature of all things. Ironically they became desirable worldly possessions themselves.

e) **Consider possible meanings and symbols.** What is the significance of your object: inherent, attributed and invented?

f) **Consider the historical and cultural context.** How has this object evolved in time? Consider the design: how was the object used in the past? What is its cultural **iconography**, its role in technology and its social significance?

g) **Make connections to other artworks.** What relationship does your object have to art history and other artists? How have examples of this object been addressed by others? Make connections and use visual examples in your journal (remembering to cite your sources).

Figure 1.08: Francisco de Zurbarán, *A Cup of Water and a Rose*. A rare still life by the 17th-century Spanish painter, who often painted works with religious themes, or with *vanitas* (works that reference the transitory nature of life). It is likely that the objects depicted here also have a religious symbolic function: the water in the cup signifies purity and the flower a 'mystic' rose. The contrast of the velvety dark background and the luminous objects evokes the duality of shadow and light, form and emptiness, life and death. It is also a delightful example of observational painting.

ACTIVITY 1.5: MIXED MESSAGES

- Read the caption to Meret Oppenheim's *Object*. What messages do the materials in this artwork communicate?
- What do you think is meant by the phrase 'Art . . . has to do with spirit, not with decoration'?
- Now combine two unlikely materials to create a new message of your own.

Spirit, not decoration

The materials an artist uses may have their own inherent significance already, and when materials are combined in unusual ways they can create new meaning altogether. (Chapter 4 takes a closer look at this topic.)

> Art [. . .] has to do with spirit, not with decoration, Meret Oppenheim.

Figure 1.09: Meret Oppenheim, *Object*, 1936. This piece (also known as *Breakfast in Fur*) began as a joke. The artist took a porcelain teacup, covered it in fur and gave it the title *Object*. '... a work as small and economical as Object has such outsized spirit because fur combined with a teacup evokes such a surprising mix of messages and associations. The fur may remind viewers of wild animals and nature, while the teacup could suggest manners and civilisation. With its pelt, the teacup becomes soft, rounded, and highly tactile. It seems attractive to the touch, if not, on the other hand, to the taste: imagine drinking from it, and the physical sensation of wet fur filling the mouth. This humorous juxtaposition of unlikely materials and their connotations earned Oppenheim a reputation as a Surrealist artist'. (http://www.moma.org/learn/moma_learning/meret-oppenheim-object-paris-1936)

Surrealist: Historically, the Surrealists were a group of artists, writers and intellectuals in Europe between First and Second World Wars who responded to postwar society's rigid order by creating works that intentionally challenged rational ways of thinking. Led by the poet André Breton, the Surrealists made work that arose from the unconscious, from dreams and the imagination. When we say an artwork is Surrealist we mean that it is not bound by the rules of the conscious, rational mind.

1.3 Fun and games

On those days when inspiration is elusive, or your inner critic is being particularly harsh, you could try a more playful approach. When we are free from the expectations of perfection we are able to experiment and make mistakes without fear of failure. A playful approach can introduce a sense of lightness into the serious business of making art. You might even find that through play and accident you make some discoveries worth pursuing (seriously).

Juxtapose: To juxtapose is to place things next to each other in contrasting relationship. The Surrealists used juxtaposition by rearranging everyday things in ways to create new meaning, challenge reason and open the doors to the freedom of the subconscious mind.

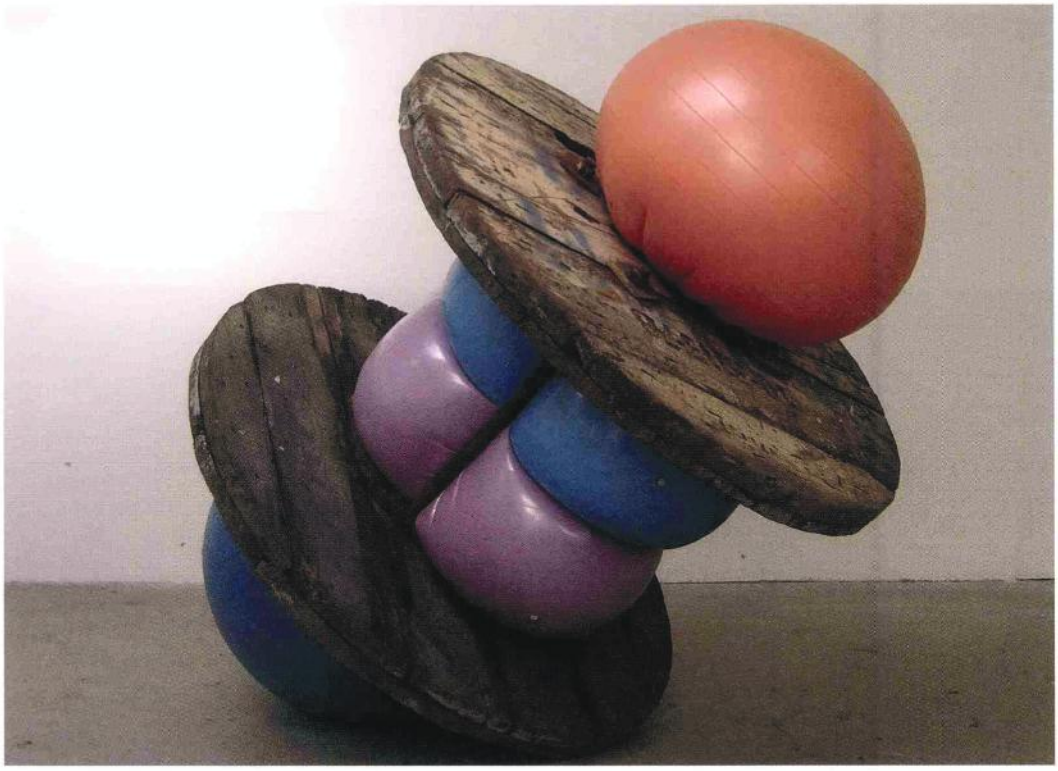

Figure 1.10: "There's some wonderful things in the world" a playful piece of sculpture by artist Maurice Citron using a cable drum and exercise balls. Maurice says *I love making things that end up surprising me.*

ACTIVITY 1.6: (DE)FACING THE BLANK PAGE

That crisp white page or canvas can be pretty scary sometimes. Here are a few ways of getting over the fear of making the first mark:

- Spill a cup of tea on your paper and begin a drawing from the stain.
- Walk on your paper, making footprints.
- Rub the page all over with charcoal and buff it off so you have a nice atmospheric surface to work on.
- Erase an old drawing you don't like, almost all the way – now start drawing on top of this ghostly image.

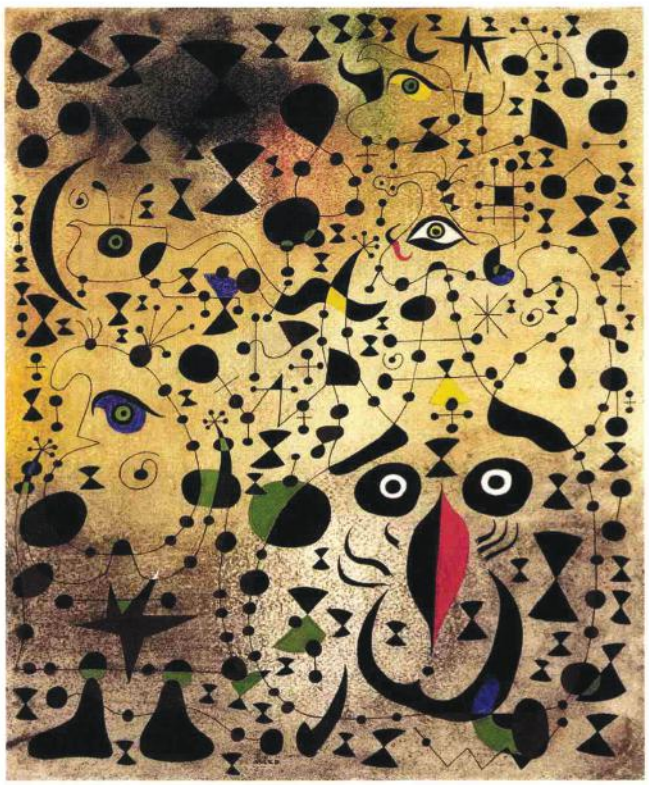

Figure 1.11: Joan Miró, *The Beautiful Bird Revealing the Unknown to a Pair of Lovers* (from the *Constellation* series), 1941 (gouache, oil wash, and charcoal on paper). Miró recalled how he began these small works on paper: 'I dipped my brushes in solvent and wiped them on the white sheets of paper with no preconceived ideas.' Then he drew animals, stars and other whimsical figures on the already marred surface.

ACTIVITY 1.7: DRAWING WARM-UPS

These warm-up drawing exercises require you to focus completely on looking at your subject; they also help you to loosen up and let go of expectations . . . You might even be pleasantly surprised by the results!

- Draw with the 'wrong' hand.
- Draw blindfolded or without looking at the paper.
- Draw an object you can feel but can't see, held under the table.
- Draw with chalk taped to a very long stick.
- Draw symmetrically, with a pencil in both hands.
- Draw, with a continuous line, a figure who is moving around the room.
- Try a collaborative drawing (see Activity 1.8).

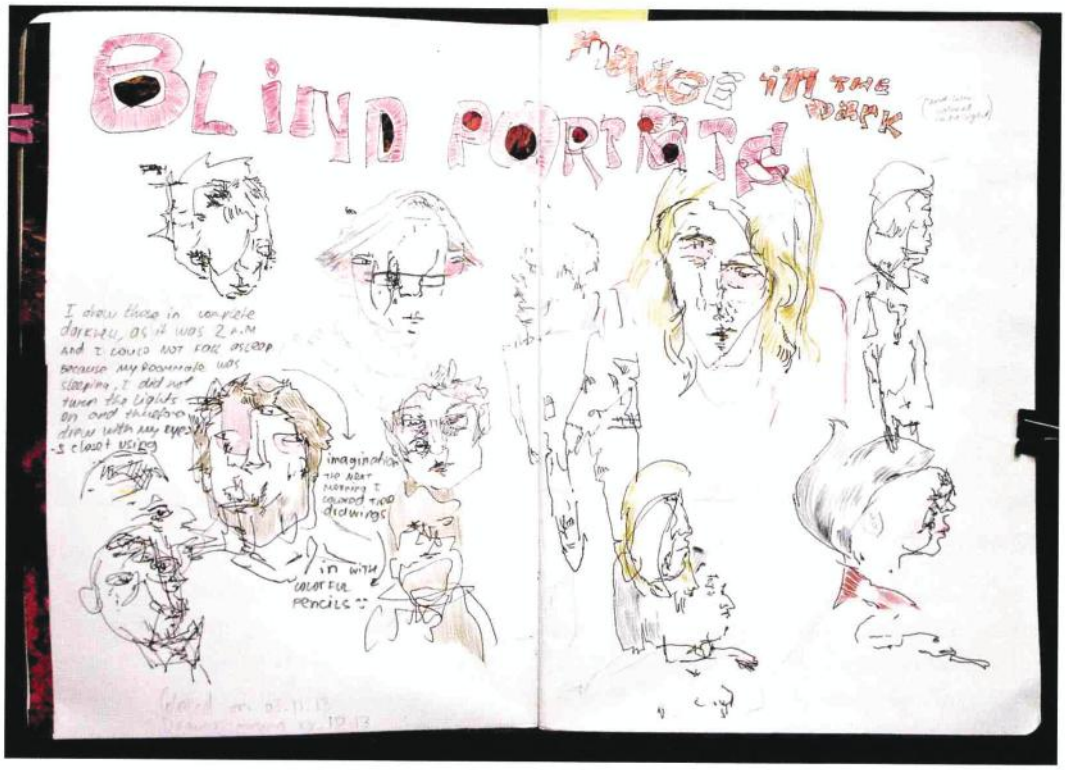

Figure 1.12: Blind drawings by student Polina Zakharova. Polina drew her classmates without ever looking down at the paper. Drawing like this forces you to relinquish control of the outcome and surrender to the act of looking.

In the 20th century, the Surrealist artists brought a sense of play into art-making, favouring approaches that involved elements of unpredictability, chance, unseen elements and group collaboration – all to disrupt the waking mind's desire for order. They would play a collaborative, chance-based game, typically involving four players, called 'cadavre exquis' (exquisite corpse). This was originally a game based on words, resulting in nonsensical phrases, but it developed into one using drawing, resulting in absurd combinations of drawings.

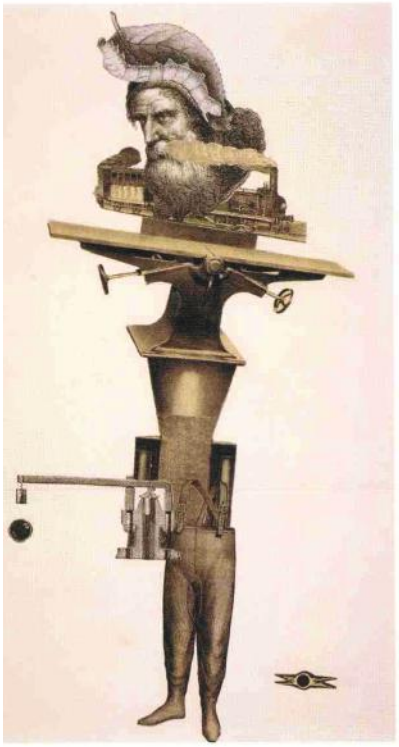

Figure 1.13: This 'exquisite corpse' collage from 1938 is by the Surrealist artists André Breton, Jacqueline Lamba and Yves Tanguy. It depicts a body that is part human, part mechanical and part mannequin.

ACTIVITY 1.8: CADAVRE EXQUIS

All you need is three or four people, paper and pencil, but collage works well for this too. Each person begins by making a 'head' on a piece of paper then passes it to the next person who makes a 'body', and so on. The work has no individual ownership; it is truly collaborative. Warning: this activity may generate ideas that are absurd, whimsical and wild!

ACTIVITY 1.9: TAKE A COLOUR WALK

Pick a colour and follow it wherever it appears, down the street, through a museum, wherever it leads you. Notice the variety of **hues** within a colour range. Can you find an interesting way to document your colour walk?

1.4 Failures and transformation

Sometimes things don't work out as we would like them to. In fact, the number of successful art works produced by most artists is probably far fewer than the number of unsuccessful ones. One solution might be just to make lot of work to increase the likelihood of getting a good one!

Of course we have to be able to define what we mean by 'successful' and 'unsuccessful' work. Discernment is an important part of IB DP Visual Arts. You need to learn to recognise your stronger work and, just as importantly, to see what is weak or unresolved, and reflect on this constructively.

Your less-successful works are as much a part of your learning process as the successful works; one cannot exist without the other. It is the so-called 'failed' pieces that point the way to something else – sometimes by knowing what we **don't** want to do we understand what we **do** want to do. When confronting a disappointing piece, you might ask yourself what you could do differently. Then forgive yourself: you are not defined by your 'failures'.

> The seed for your next artwork lies embedded in the imperfections of your current piece. Such imperfections (or mistakes, if you are feeling particularly depressed about them today) are your guides – valuable, reliable, objective, non judgemental guides – to matters you need to reconsider or develop further. It is precisely this interaction between the ideal and the real that locks your art into the real world and gives meaning to both. (From *Art and Fear: Observations on the perils (and rewards) of art making,* David Bayles and Ted Orland.)

> Everything I needed to know about creativity I learned by making mistakes. (Tanner Christensen, product designer)

Artist Susan Hiller deals with failed paintings in a different way: In *Painting Books and Painting Blocks* she reconfigures old unwanted paintings on canvas as books, or sewn together as blocks. The paintings are given a new chance at life as a different art object.

Tip: Record your critical reflections on your successes and failures to include in your process portfolio (covered in Chapter 8) as part of the progression and development of your work.

Figure 1.14: Susan Hiller, *Painting Books and Painting Blocks*, 1972–84, two series of previously exhibited paintings, reconfigured in sculptural formats. (Top, open: *Big Blue*, 1976. Bottom: *Three Painting Blocks*, dated with size of originating works.)

> Artists have a vested interest in our believing in the flash of revelation, the so-called inspiration . . . shining down from heavens as a ray of grace. In reality, the imagination of the good artist or thinker produces continuously good, mediocre or bad things, but his judgement, trained and sharpened to a fine point, rejects, selects, connects . . . All great artists and thinkers are great workers, indefatigable not only in inventing, but also in rejecting, sifting, transforming, ordering.
> (Friedrich Nietzsche, in *All Too Human*, 1878)

Inspiration: where does it come from?

To inspire literally means to breathe in. Inspiration is simply whatever we take in from outside us. Each one of us creates our own opportunities for inspiration – it doesn't just descend from above (or very rarely).

ACTIVITY 1.10: TRANSFORMING FAILURES

Give an unsatisfactory piece of work a new life. Deconstruct it and put it back together in a different way, making it into something else altogether.

Figure 1.15: *Detonate* (ceramic and glaze) by student Eleanor Wells. Eleanor reflects on how her piece *Detonate* was the result of an accident: 'I was looking at the work of Cornelia Parker, whose work is inspired by destruction and often incorporates broken fragments. When one of my ceramic pieces exploded in the kiln, I decided to create a new artwork, with glazed pieces piled on top of one another. These form a volcano structure ready to explode – a volcano made of pieces that are the result of an explosion!'

However, if you look for inspiration, it is everywhere – it's a matter of paying attention and being curious. If you give something your full attention – a human face, a humble leaf, a maths problem – you may be surprised to find there are infinite possibilities for creative exploration. Making art is 99% perspiration and 1% inspiration . . . so don't wait for inspiration to visit you – go look for it, and sweat it out!

Summary

This chapter is designed to help you enter into the spirit of art-making with curiosity, seeding ideas for you to build upon throughout the course. The starting strategies in this chapter have launched you into a playful exploration of ideas for making art. You have experimented with a range of activities using different visual and conceptual approaches. You have seen how this kind of exploration can help you start thinking about and making art. Now you are ready to follow those ideas, developing your own lines of inquiry, deepening your knowledge of artists and techniques.

(Chapter 5 looks at cultivating individual areas of focus in your art-making and developing a coherent body of work.)

Chapter 2

The IB visual arts journal

Introduction

This chapter looks at the pivotal role of the visual arts journal in your course. All students are required to make a visual arts journal. The journal brings together many aspects of your learning process, including research, analysis, reflection, experimentation and personal response. There are many ways to work in your journal: this chapter shows some examples of the sorts of work you could include.

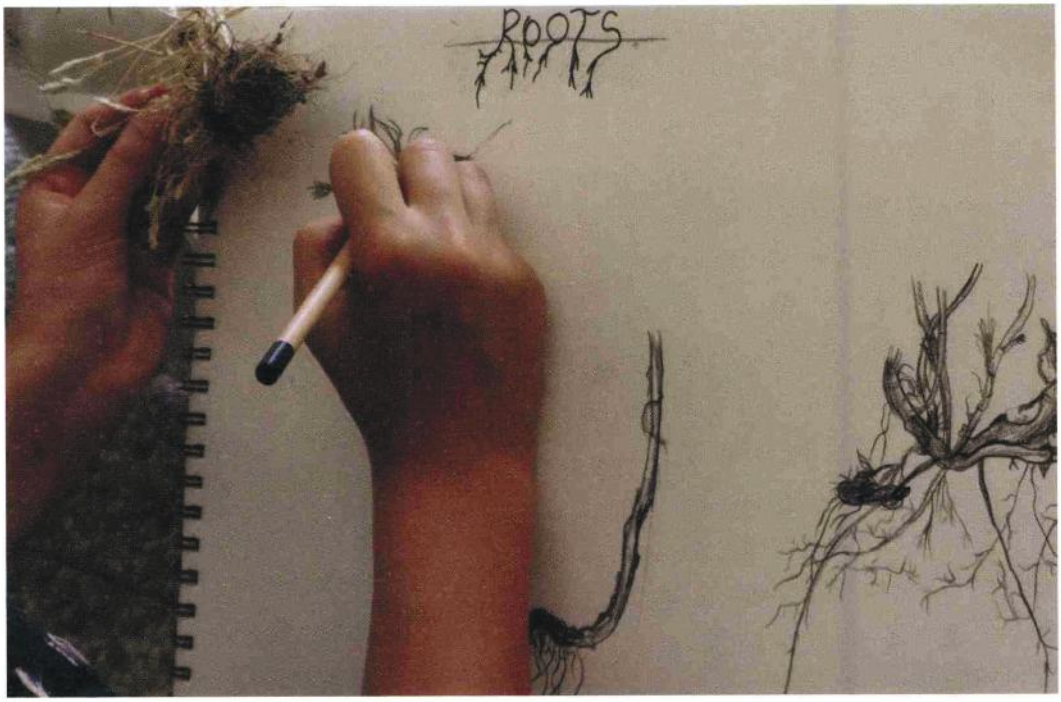

Figure 2.01: The IB visual arts journal is a place to record your first-hand observations, personal reflections and experiments with media, along with your ideas and their development, and your responses to the world around you and to the art and artists you encounter.

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

- Consider how artists use sketchbooks and journals.
- Use the visual journal to develop your skills and techniques.
- Use the visual journal to develop your ideas and intentions.
- Develop good research skills.
- Reflect on artists, artworks and on your own developing work.

2.1 Artists' sketchbooks and journals

> I should recommend . . . keeping . . . only a small memorandum-book in the breast-pocket, with its well-cut sheathed pencil, ready for notes on passing opportunities: but never being without this. (John Ruskin, *The Elements of Drawing*, 1857)

For an art student, artists' diaries both past and present provide valuable insights into the sometimes mysterious creative process. People often keep journals as a record of observations and reflections on life: an artist's journal is also the record and observation of the artistic process. These depositories of the inner life and evidence of the artists' way of thinking can be a great source of information when researching an artist for the comparative study (CS).

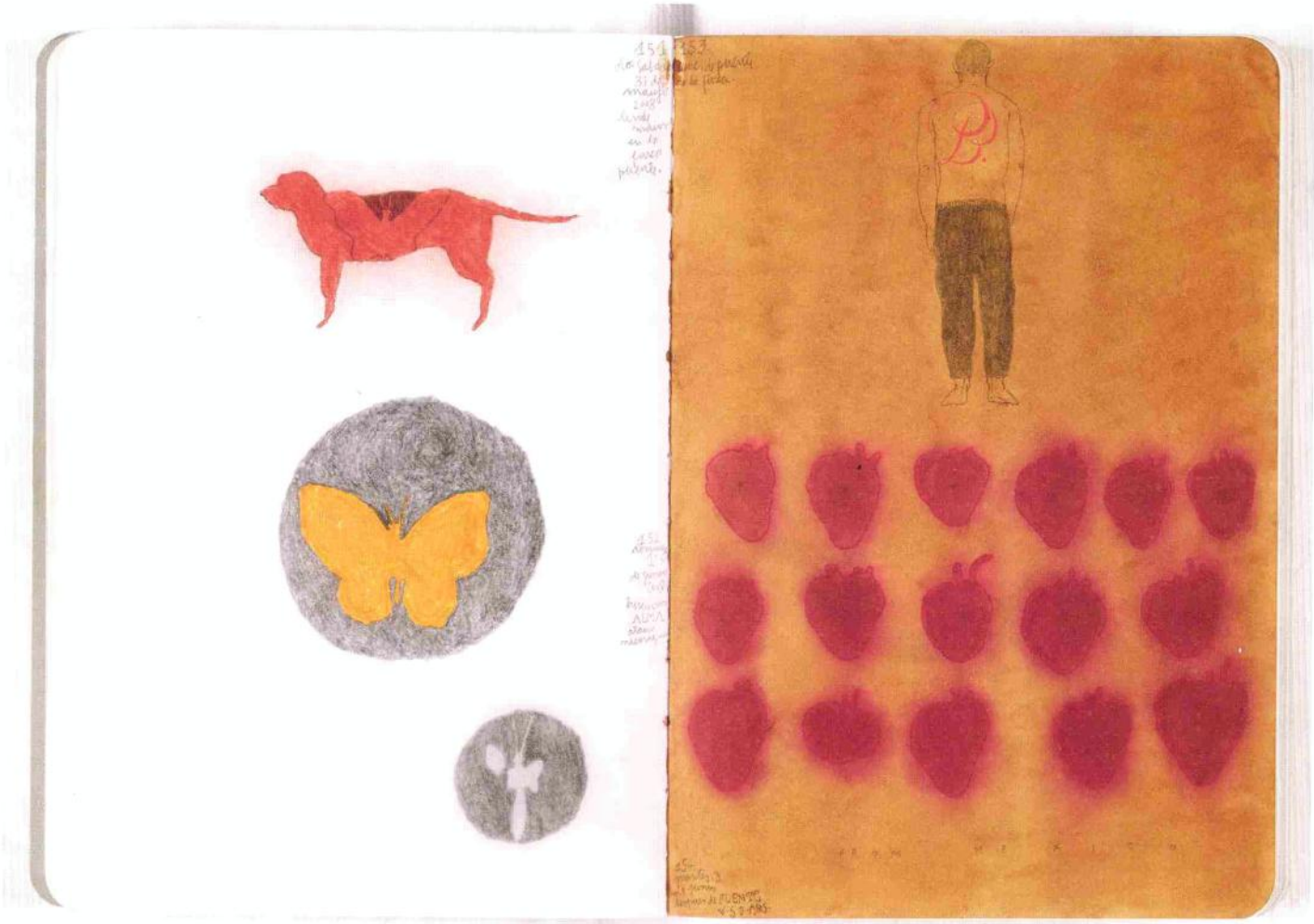

Figure 2.02: Colombian artist José Antonio Suárez Londoño's notebooks, which he refers to as 'yearbooks', are an ongoing project in which he creates a drawing a day in a small sketchbook. These drawings are based on a particular book or a series of books he is reading over the course of a year.

2

The IB visual arts journal

Not every artist keeps a journal, and those that do have many different approaches: Degas's sketchbooks are primarily observational, Frida Kahlo's diary is an expressive outpouring, Paul Klee's diaries teach, Eva Hesse makes diagrammatic drawings, Leonardo da Vinci works things out, Suárez Londoño keeps a 'yearbook' with a drawing a day. Most artists' journals are a combination of notes and images, but graffiti artist Keith Haring's journals contain more words than images, and sculptor Henry Moore's sketchbooks are surprisingly full of drawings of woolly sheep! What you are aiming for in your IB visual arts journal (your artist's journal) is a balance of both visual and written content, in your own unique style.

ACTIVITY 2.1: LOOK INSIDE THE BOOK

Find out about an artist by studying their sketchbook and journals.

- What is the relationship between the journal and the work the artist makes?
- What are the connections between your work and this artist's work?
- Record your reflections in your own visual journal.

ARTIST'S SKETCHBOOKS AND JOURNALS

Leonardo da Vinci's notebooks

Keith Haring Journals

The Diaries of Paul Klee

Gerhard Richter, *The Daily Practice of Painting*

Frida Kahlo's diary

Louise Bourgeois's diaries

Suárez Londoño, *The Yearbooks*

The sketchbooks of Degas, Delacroix, Giacometti, Eva Hesse, Henry Moore, Frank Lloyd Wright

Figure 2.03: Frida Kahlo's colourful journal is half intimate personal diary, half artist's sketchbook, just what you might expect from an artist whose work is so emotionally driven.

Private or public, paper or digital?

Today, many artists use social media: websites, blogs, Facebook, Tumblr and Instagram. These online 'journals' are often open to the public. Ideas about privacy are shifting. The formats may be changing, but are the contents? How is an online diary different from a diary in book form? What other forms might a diary take?

Tip: Make working in your journal a regular habit, documenting your process as you go along. You can also make notes of useful feedback from teachers and peers as well as your own reflections on your development. Include investigations and detailed analysis of artists, art works and exhibitions you have seen. Record your responses to the world: collect ideas as well as images, things you have seen or read that could be a starting point for investigation.

2.2 What is the IB visual arts journal?

All art students are required to have a visual arts journal as their own record of the course. The journal is intended to support the development of your skills and nurture the elaboration of your ideas. The visual journal is much more than a sketchbook; in some cases it might not even take the form of a sketchbook!

A rich and varied visual journal in which you continually record your work is invaluable as a record of your artistic journey and as the source from which you can extract material for the three assessed components: the CS (discussed in Chapter 7), the process portfolio (PP; Chapter 8) and the exhibition (Chapter 9). The journal itself is not handed in for final assessment but any of the materials that you submit may be compiled from your journal pages.

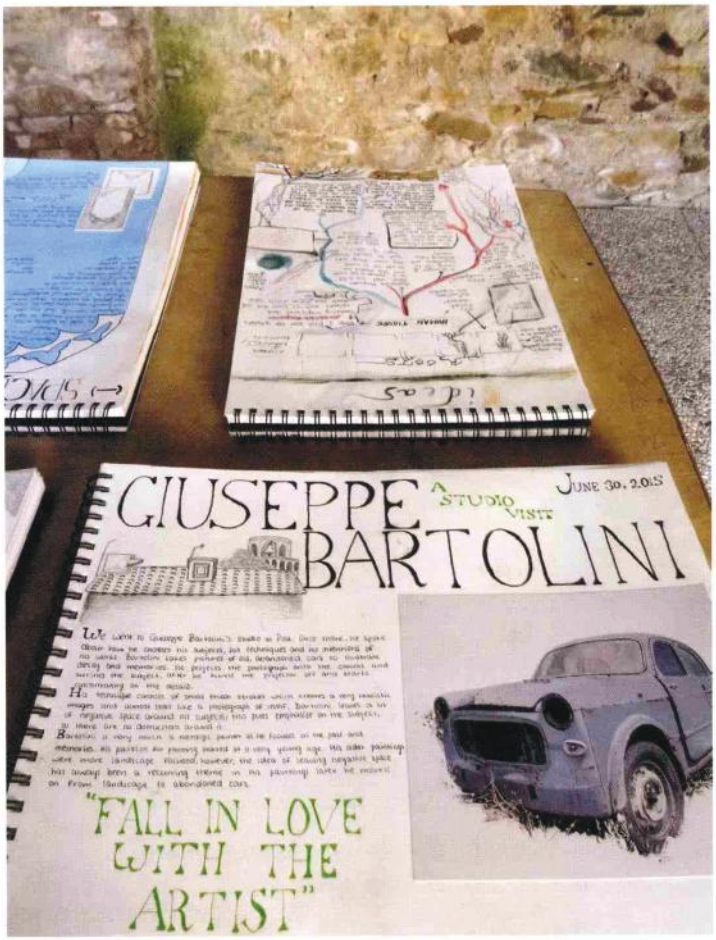

Figure 2.04: Student journals at La Vigna Art Studios, Pisa, in Italy. These large-format A3 journals have plenty of room for writing and images. A horizontal (landscape) format makes it easy to scan a journal page into a process portfolio screen.

The format of your visual arts journal and what to include

The IB visual arts journal does not have a prescribed format: it can be a sketchbook or several sketchbooks of varying sizes, a folder, a container or a digital document, depending on what is most appropriate to your way of working.

Your visual arts journal is a work in progress and as such should be a place of freedom and **experimentation**. Don't censor yourself; there will be time for editing and revising portions of the journal later when you choose extracts to hand in for the assessed components.

Your journal is a place to explore and develop your ideas. You can show the trajectory of an idea through various stages of development, including reflecting and reviewing, by:

- mind-mapping ideas and themes for exploration
- reworking an idea or image using different techniques
- reflecting on how meaning is communicated through your choices of imagery and materials.

Experimentation:
Experimentation is when you try something new or different, not necessarily knowing what the result will be, for example experimenting with materials, media and technologies, and developing skills and techniques through trial and error.

In your journal, you can . . . draw, analyse, explore, observe, discover, design, doodle, document, dissect, develop, invent, compare, collect, compile, experiment, evaluate, record, respond, rework, reflect.

Figure 2.05: Visual arts journal page by student Daryl Baclig. On this page Daryl experiments by mixing sand and petroleum jelly with ink, trying out different papers (tracing paper, newsprint) and recording how the materials react on the different surfaces. Daryl says: 'I wanted to look at different options for creating depth and texture in my contaminated ocean piece. I observed my tests with different pastes made from sand and ink and realised they looked like coral reefs.'

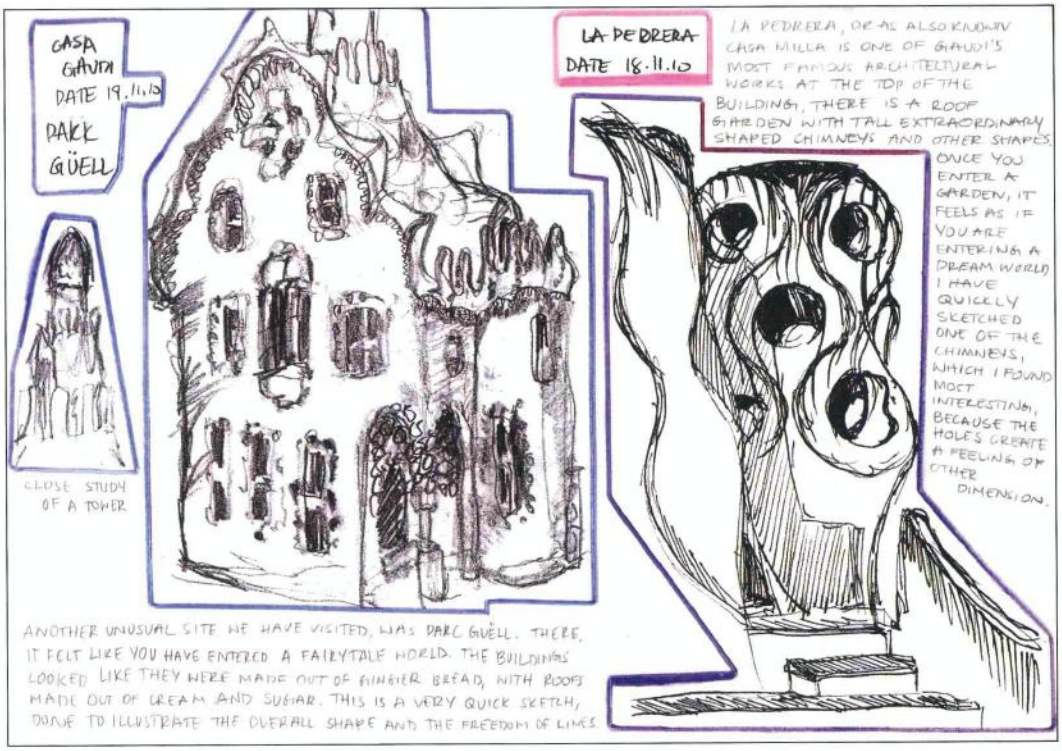

Figure 2.06: This journal page by student Anastasia Leonovich shows quick sketches made during a visit to Barcelona to observe the work of architect Antonio Gaudí. Anastasia writes of visiting La Pedrera: 'There is a roof garden with tall, extraordinarily shaped chimneys . . . it feels as if you are entering a dream world. I quickly sketched the chimneys, which I found most interesting because the holes create a feeling of another dimension.'

Observation: Observation means looking around you and recording your experience, both visual and written, including first-hand observations, drawing on site, written and visual responses to artworks you encounter.

Record your encounters with artworks and artists, including:

- reflections on gallery and museum visits
- making connections between an artist and your own work
- detailed evaluations of artworks and critical analysis.

Your journal should also include reflections on your progress, including the challenges you met along the way. (See also Figure 2.11, Beverly Chew's work.)

Documenting your process

Tip: Bring a small sketchbook along whenever you go on a trip to capture the immediacy of your experience. You can cut and paste these smaller sketches and transfer your notes to your visual journal or PP later.

You can record your process in many different ways, depending on the techniques and materials you are using.You might try including several of these approaches in your journal:

- notes and steps of art-making processes
- mind-maps
- preliminary studies and plans
- compositional sketches
- photos of your work in progress at various stages
- photographic contact sheets and test prints
- computer screenshots.

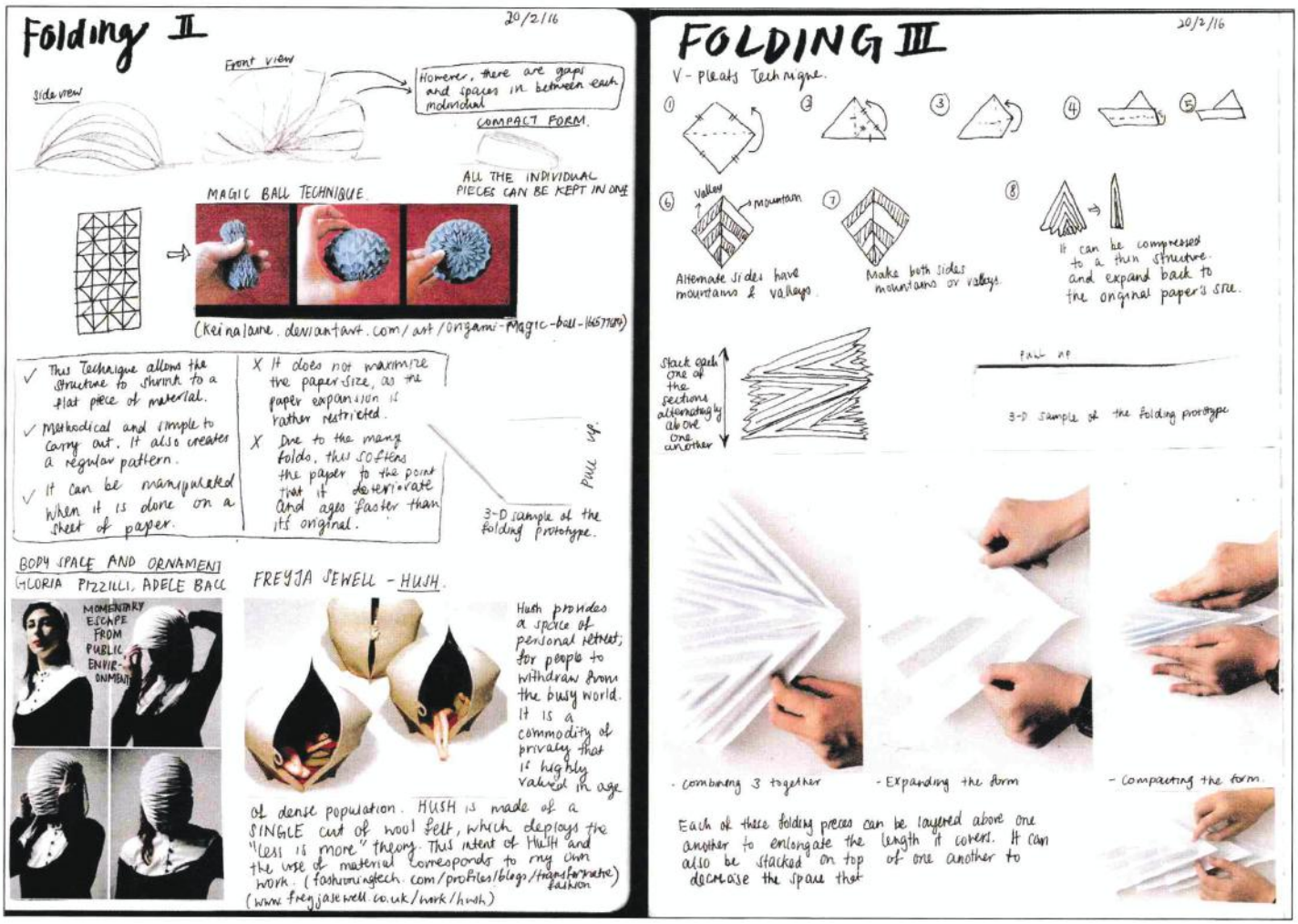

Figure 2.07: Visual journal pages by student Anabel Poh. She documents her process both visually and in written form, using a mixture of drawings, diagrams, photographic documentation and annotation, showing the steps involved in her exploration of folding paper into forms.

2.3 The role of your visual arts journal in the course

As well as assisting and recording your learning process on the course, your visual arts journal is a source of raw material that you can use when compiling work for the assessed components of the course: the CS, the PP and the exhibition. Analysis and comparison of artworks for the CS may come from notes in the journal. Entire pages or portions of pages may be used for the PP screens. Reflections on resolved artworks and planning for the exhibition in the journal may be useful when writing your curatorial rationale and your exhibition texts. All of these elements and more may be adapted from your journal.

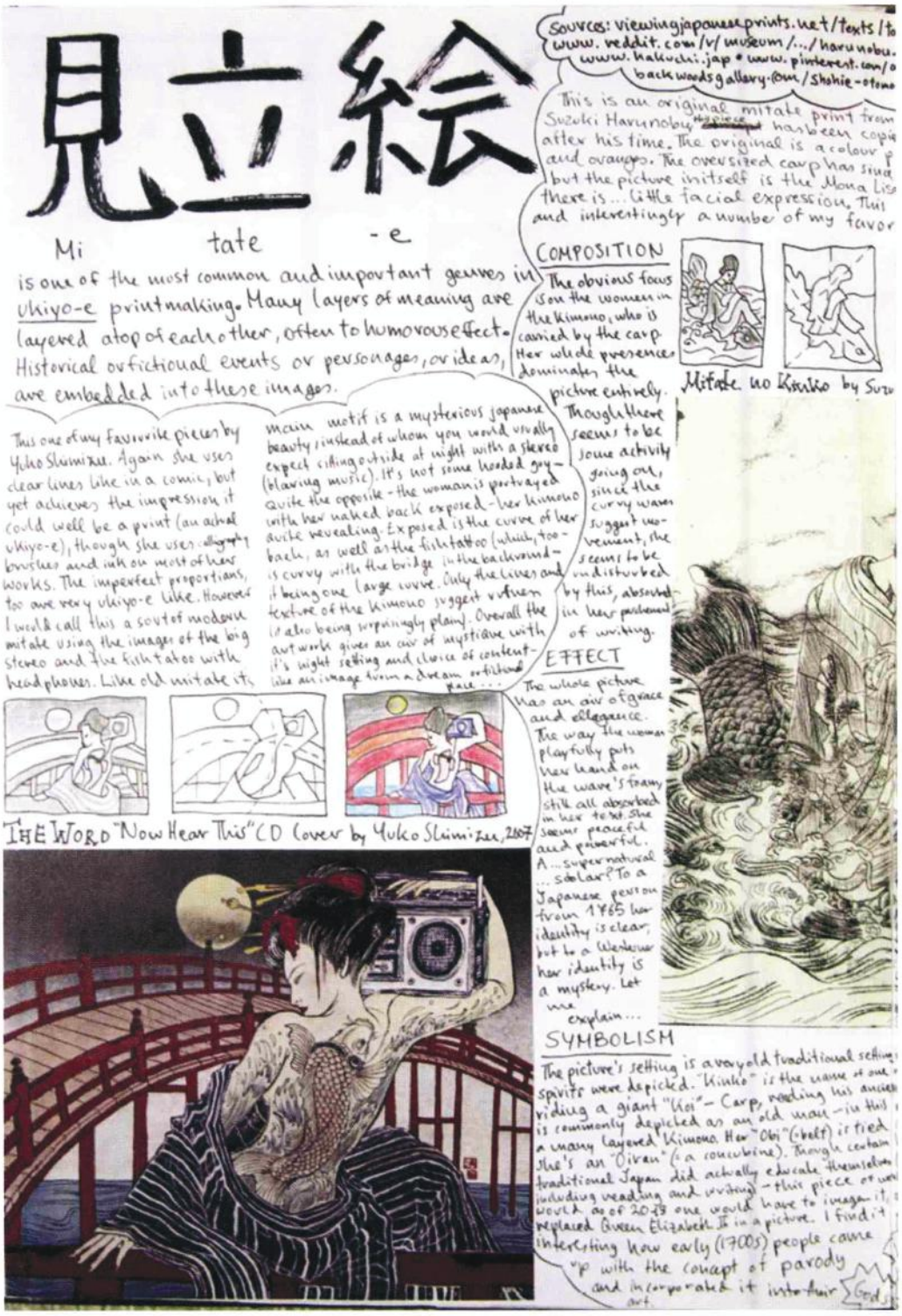

Figure 2.08: Student journal page by Elisabeth Lauer. This page looks at the influence of traditional Japanese Ukiyo-e printmaking on contemporary graphics and illustration, comparing Suzuki Harunubu's *Mitate No Kinko*, 1765, to Yuko Shimizu's 2007 design for a CD cover. The student engages in detailed visual analysis, looks at symbols and meaning, and makes numerous connections between the works. Elisabeth says: 'Mitate-e is one of the most common and important genres in Ukiyo-e printmaking. Many layers of meaning are layered on top of each other, often to humorous effect. Historical or fictional events or personages or ideas are embedded into these images.'