

**Flying Start 2018**

**Art**

**“Art is not a mirror  
to reflect the world,  
but a hammer with  
which to shape it”**

**-Vladimir Mayakovsky**

**The A level Art course is perfect for anyone who wants to develop their artistic, creative and analytical skills. Students who choose Art at A level tend to be passionate about it, and their love of the subject and the time they are willing to invest in their work is evident in the artwork that they produce, and the grade that they attain.**

Like many things in life; the more time, energy, commitment and effort that you put into your work, the more you will get out- both in terms of final grade and in terms of your own personal enjoyment, engagement and satisfaction. Students who work hard on their projects tend to end up with the highest grades and produce the most stunning artwork.

**“Hard work beats talent, when talent doesn’t work hard.” - Jerry Schmidt**

Imagine how hard you worked in the week before your GCSE coursework deadline, or the week before your GCSE Art exam. That level of commitment, energy and effort is our expectation of students throughout the duration of the course. If you are not someone who likes drawing, creating and investigating the work of other artists, then this is not the course for you. If you LOVE art, then you are in the right place, and you are about to develop into a REAL artist. We will do all we can to help you achieve this.

Year Twelve is about developing your skills and ideas, about experimenting with new techniques and approaches, and about working hard to become a better artist.

**“If you’re gonna do it, do it right.” - George Michael**

Not everything you create will be entirely successful, but every assignment that you complete will help you in your journey to become a better artist- providing that everything you do reflects genuine effort and determination. It is important to realise that not everything you create will be as good as you want it to be, and not everything you create will be a pleasure to complete or to look at. This is unimportant. What matters is that with every piece of work you attempt, you do your best and try your hardest. **If you want to be a successful artist, you have to be prepared to put in the time and energy.** In Year 11, GCSE Art students find themselves constantly comparing their work to that of their peers, often demonstrating a fixed mind set “I can’t do portraits”, “your drawing is much better than mine, I can’t draw from real life.” “I don’t want to do any more, I like it just how it is.” Successful A level students tend not to do this. Instead, they focus on how they can improve their work, and they learn to be brave enough to take creative risks. It is difficult to mature as an artist in this way immediately, but the sooner you can do it, the more successful you will be.

Year 11 students know that they will be successful by doing exactly what their teacher tells them. At A level, students need to go above and beyond this. **To become an artist, you need to think like an artist and act like an artist.** The more energy that you invest in your work, the more successful you will be.

**Year 12 can be a very exciting year, where you begin to discover more about the world of Art and Design, and where you begin to develop into a “real” artist.**

**Be true to yourself. Be willing to work hard. Be willing to work out of your comfort zone. Learn from the challenges that you face. Ask questions. Persevere. Respond to advice. Practice. Do your best. Do more than you are asked to do. Create. Enjoy.**

*“The advice I like to give young artists, or really anybody who’ll listen to me, is not to wait around for inspiration. Inspiration is for amateurs; the rest of us just show up and get to work. If you wait around for the clouds to part and a bolt of lightning to strike you in the brain, you are not going to make an awful lot of work. All the best ideas come out of the process; they come out of the work itself. Things occur to you. If you’re sitting around trying to dream up a great art idea, you can sit there a long time before anything happens. But if you just get to work, something will occur to you and something else will occur to you and something else that you reject will push you in another direction. Inspiration is absolutely unnecessary and somehow deceptive. You feel like you need this great idea before you can get down to work, and I find that’s almost never the case.”*  
- Chuck Close

## Assessment.

Students build up their skills and develop their approach in year 12, before committing to a self-selected coursework project which is started at the end of Y12 and completed throughout Year 13, alongside an extended written response evidencing students' understanding of the artists that they have analysed. There is a practical exam at the end of Year 13. In terms of the format of the exam, it is similar to GCSE. Just like GCSE, students are given a starting point by the exam board and then given an extended period of time to complete supporting preparation work. There is then a practical exam, completed over a number of days in the summer term. There is no written exam.

Although coursework that students complete in Year 12 is assessed, the marks awarded do not go towards the final A level grade, allowing students to develop and refine their practical skills, while giving them an opportunity to try techniques and approaches beyond their comfort zones without fear of jeopardizing final grades. The work that students complete is vital in ensuring that students understand the demands of the course and helps them decide an appropriate area of study for their final coursework unit. In this way, the best work that each student completes over the duration of the year is able to go towards their final assessment.

## Our Mission

Our mission as Art teachers is to get the very best out of you. We are passionate about Art and about education and we work hard to ensure that you meet your potential. We want you to enjoy what you are doing, to believe in yourself and to create work that reflects you at your very best. The students who get the most out of the course are those that are good at working independently, but who respond thoroughly to the advice that they are given. We expect students to work hard and to stick to the deadlines that they are given. Be honest about your work. Try to be flexible in your approach, and open to new ideas. If you get stuck, ask. If you become anxious, tell us. Work in Year 12 should be a dialogue, so make sure that you use your voice and make sure that you listen carefully.

## The more you do, the better you will get.

By the time students begin Year 12, most have already realised that investing time in their work is the best way to improve their skills. Younger students approach their work reluctantly, and can sometimes begrudge spending time on their work, finding excuses not to get started or to finish too soon. **The quicker sixth form students realise the importance of sustained and regular hard work, the more successful they are likely to be: the more you use your skills, the better you will become.**

## How to become a better artist in the next eight weeks

It's not as impossible as it sounds. It takes courage and determination and commitment: the exact same skills that are required for success at A level and beyond.

Every time you get a chance to practice your skills, take that chance: Draw. Look. Photograph. Create. Read. Collage. Invent. Paint. The more that you do, the better an artist you will become. Just as you wouldn't expect a professional sportsman to compete without training beforehand, you can't expect to become a better artist without investing time, effort and energy.

How good an artist you become is dependant entirely on the decisions you make over the next twelve months. The sooner you begin taking that challenge seriously, the more likely you are to be successful. It's not easy, but it's worth it.

## General Reading

Art students should take an interest in the world of art and design, and should naturally gravitate towards relevant articles in the press and on line. Keeping up to date with developments in the world of art is not easy, but students who attempt this are usually the most successful.

Accessing artwork first hand is particularly valuable, so students are encouraged to visit galleries and exhibitions whenever they can. **Try to get to at least one gallery or exhibition over the summer.**

Art books are a great way to learn more about artists and their ideas, and are a much better way to learn than relying on internet sources. In terms of reading, a recommended text would be Robert Hughes' "The Shock of the New". This is in no way an expectation, but students that are keen to learn more about art would benefit from the breadth of ideas discussed.

## Materials List

Specialist materials are provided by the department, and it is important that these are used frugally and sensibly. Students are sometimes surprised to discover that when they go on to study at Art College or University that they need to pay for every single piece of paper that they use! At Chenderit, we want to give students the opportunity to use high quality art materials, but expect students to provide their own basic equipment.

Every student will use a range of materials and approaches throughout the year, but the following materials are essential for every student to have with them every lesson:

Drawing materials, including a range of drawing pencils (2B, 4B, 6B), rubber, sharpener  
memory stick

The following items, while not essential, are particularly useful. Students should ensure that they have access to these items. These items will not be used every lesson, but students will benefit from having:

Digital camera

Pens for drawing

Brushes (a variety of sizes dependant on personal preference)

Scissors

Glue

As students develop their skills and begin to establish their own personal artistic preferences, they will inevitably build up a more specialist equipment list. For now though, concentrating on the items listed above is sufficient. It is more important to use your art materials than to amass them, so don't be tricked into thinking that a ridiculously expensive set of brushes or a fancy set of paints will make you a better painter. It's what you do with what you've got that counts!

## **Summer Assignment: Celebrating and talking about the work of other artists**

When the course starts in September, one of the first things that we will want to do is to get to know everyone in the group a little bit better. As such, each student will be asked to prepare a **five-minute presentation on a piece of artwork that they find particularly inspiring**. Students who are unable to complete this assignment over the summer will still be expected to present to the rest of the class in September. Each student needs to create a PowerPoint presentation about a specific piece of artwork that they have selected and prepare a supporting speech that they will be able to deliver. In September, each student will present this to the rest of the group and try to persuade them why that particular piece of art is particularly significant. You can include as many slides as you want.

**The presentation must include a high quality image of the selected artwork, the name of the artist and the date it was created.** The presentation could also include:

- Details of how the artwork has inspired other artists
- Details of how the artwork relates to other work by the same artist
- Details of how the artwork was created
- Details of the emotional response the artwork has on the viewer
- Details of the history of the artwork and how it affected the history of art
- Details of the initial response to the artwork by the world at the time
- Details of when the student first saw the artwork
- Details of where the artwork can be found
- Details of why the artwork is significant to the history of art
- Details of why the artwork is significant to the student

Practise your presentation - please make sure that it lasts no less than four minutes and no longer than six minutes. The best presentation will win a prize. An actual prize, donated by Mr Christy.

## **Summer Assignment: Developing your practical skills**

To make the absolute best start to the A level course, choose one of the following challenges to complete over the summer. Remember: the more you use your skills, the better an artist you will become.

**Your challenge is to document your summer holiday.** Consider one of the following approaches:

- A drawing or painting that shows your bedroom, living space, kitchen or garden.
- A drawing or painting that shows people relaxing.
- A drawing or a painting that shows a typical day of your summer holiday.
- A self-portrait that includes clues about what you have done over the summer.
- A series of drawings or paintings that show a range of locations that you visit over the summer holiday.
- A drawing or painting that shows people completing an everyday activity.
- A drawing or painting that illustrates a passage in a book that you have read.

The best piece of practical work, created in response to these assignments, will win a prize. An actual prize, donated by Mr Christy. The prize itself can't be revealed yet, because I haven't decided what it's going to be. Work will be judged by the consensus of Mr Christy and Ms Cramb.