

1. Introduction

(200 words)

What is your Topic?

Outline what it is you want to explore with your personal study. Is the essay exploring different approaches to a specific theme, genre or art movement? Can the essay be framed around a question: e.g. How has 20th Century Abstract Art influenced Contemporary Textile Design? Can the Fashion Industry be used as a positive tool to influence and encourage environmentally responsible behavior? Can Textile Art be therapeutic?

2. Reason for exploring this topic:

You must explain your reasons for choosing your specific focus and outline how it relates to your current projects and ways of working.

For example: "I am choosing to focus on... (artist / art movement) because...it astounds me how.../ I find it fascinating that.../ I'm curious to know why.../ I hope to show / share / highlight / discover..." For example: "I'm particularly interested in how moving to the coast influenced the work of Barbara Hepworth; living by the sea has had a big impact on my own creative development..."

Does it relate to a course you are planning on studying after college – diploma, apprenticeships, Art Foundation or degree?

Have you completed any work experience in this field, or volunteering that you could write about?

Does it link to another subject at college or to a hobby/ area of interest outside college?

2. Context

(300 words)

Context. The essay has to have a clear focus and cannot just be a collection of written work on a variety of random artists. It is important that you put the subject of your essay into context. You should outline the various ways that different artists and designers from a range of times and cultures have approached the subject. How did these different approaches evolve? Were they influenced by changes in society? How did different art movements approach the subject? It is just good to show that you have read around the subject and are not just focusing on individual artists in isolation.

.e.g. Start with a definition of your topic then list some key artists/ designers, (these don't have to be designers that you have copied the work from.)

Artist 1

(500 words)

Name here:

Analysis of Artworks

Choose three or four artworks by four different artists. These artworks should be carefully chosen to highlight three/four contrasting approaches to your subject. Make sure you outline why you have focused on those particular artists otherwise the essay will not flow (also write about them in the order you created your work.)

When writing about the artwork you must refer to its title, date and the name of the artist. Use the "Guide to writing about artists' work and cover the following: subject matter, use of materials/techniques and the use of the formal elements to create mood/atmosphere. You must also fill out the Research notes sheet for each artwork.

However, when analysing an artwork you need to do more than just describe it! You need to show an understanding of the concepts and ideas that underpin the work. You must show that you have grasped the ethos or ideas of the artist. You need to explain what factors influenced the artist, such as: other artist' work, art movements, manifestos, politics, changes in society, personal circumstances etc.

Artist 2

(500 words)

Name here:

The examiner is interested in your opinions and personal perspective on the artwork. However, when writing personal opinions there is a danger that these can be too simplistic.

Consider the progression in the points below:

- Your initial reaction – informed by instinct, taste, likes and dislikes, interest in / relevance of subject matter.

This can offer valuable insights when justified E.g. "I like this because...". However, just providing an opinion without explanation is not enough.

- A basic / superficial understanding of wider contexts. This might demonstrate growing understanding but is still not good enough: "I'm interested in Cubism because I like how Picasso's artworks are made up of cube-like shapes"; "I like Pop Art because it uses bright colours and film stars".

- Based on a deeper understanding / complex grasp of wider contexts – demonstrating a confident stance and justified, well-informed opinions: "I'm interested in Cubism, particularly how the depiction of multiple viewpoints – stimulated by Cezanne's explorations of form – revolutionised..."; "I'm interested in how Pop Art emerged as a response to Abstract Expressionism, it strikes me as a mischievous movement that counter-balanced..."

- From an alternative perspective – Perhaps more of an expectation at degree level, but are you able to place yourself in somebody else's shoes?

For example, can you argue or justify an alternative viewpoint e.g. from a feminist, modern, or post-modern perspective? "Whilst appreciating Rothko's intent to provoke with his Seagram Restaurant commission, I can imagine a dining capitalist might have been entirely less sensitive to the sense of claustrophobia he envisaged..."

Artist 3

(500 words)

Name here:

It is important that you link the artwork back to the focus of your essay. It is also crucial that you compare and contrast the three/four artworks with each other, making interesting connections and outlining similarities and differences. It is really important that you also make connections with your own work and discuss how they have influenced your own development. Remember some artworks could link to your own work in terms of the subject matter others through the use of materials and formal elements.

Artist 4

(500 words)

Name here:

You are allowed to use relevant quotes as long as they are attributed: you should use appropriate footnotes.

4. Conclusion (500 words)

Connections with your own work and summing up

Summarise your study and the key findings that have come from your research and analysis.

Revisit your introduction – specifically the aims or investigative questions set out at the start. (You do not need to have definitive answers though; reflective, new, unanswered questions can have value too).

Offer reflective, personal opinions on your research, and how this has shaped your own practical work. What are the similarities and differences between your work and the work of the artists you have studied? Describe how your own practical work has evolved. Outline how the artists and ideas you have studied has informed your approach to subject matter, style, scale, materials, concepts and ideas.

Share thoughts on potential opportunities for future exploration – themes / artists / experiments you might explore if given more time. Include a short reflection on the process of the study itself – the research and thinking skills that you have developed.

5. Bibliography

The essay must include a full bibliography, citing all references.

E.g. Elderfield, J, "Bonnard" Thames and Hudson, 1997

Also websites address: www.bonnard.co.uk accessed on [date]

NOT all websites, and avoid Wikipedia (drop to the bottom of the page and take the actual source from the Wikipedia bibliography)

6. Appendix

Appendices

Good quality printout of images studied clearly labelled: title, name of artist and date. Each image should be numbered, for example Fig.1 or Fig 2. Refer to this number when discussing the work in your essay. You may also photograph your own work in your sketchbook, if it helps to explain how you have been inspired by that artist.

DESCRIBE THE ARTWORK

Describe the subject matter of the artwork – is it abstract, figurative, landscape or portraiture. To what genre/ subject does it belong?

Does it endorse or challenge the conventions of this genre?

What approach has the artist taken? Is it stylised, figurative, abstract or realistic? Why have they made this choice?

What ideas and thoughts does it explore? For example, is it about politics, class, nature, gender, society, consumerism etc?

Is the subject matter of the artwork the artwork itself? For example, is it just about line, colour, composition, texture, mark making, shape etc.

Describe the use of materials and the use of the formal elements. The formal elements are line, colour, tone, texture, shape, depth, rhythm etc.

How is the artwork drawn, sculpted or painted?

Describe the mark making. For example, what kind of brush or tool was used to make the marks, what size are the marks, were the marks carefully applied, slapped on, dripped, scratched, blended, dotted etc.

Describe the consistency of paint. For example, is it thick, thin, encrusted, scumbled, glazed, dry, oily etc.

To what extent has the subject matter been stylised? For example, has it been elongated, made angular or squat, fragmented, simplified etc

How much depth is there in the artwork? For example, does it seem flat, or create the illusion that some forms are further away than others?

Describe the use of colour. For example, is the colour exaggerated or does it closely resemble the colours of the actual subject?

Describe how colour is used to convey mood and atmosphere. For example, describe the use of complimentary colours, hot and cold colours etc.

Describe the tonal range of the artwork. For example, does it go from dark areas to light areas or is it all dark or all light or all middle tone?

Describe the texture. For example is it rough, smooth, cracked, lumpy etc.

Describe the composition. For example, are there dramatic angles, is it made up of horizontal or vertical shapes, is the subject being viewed from above, below, eye level

ANALYSE THE IMPACT AN ARTWORK HAS ON YOU

We are interested in your opinions – positive or negative – about the artwork. This can be about the subject matter, or focus on the use of materials and the formal elements.

For example:

I (love, like, dislike) or I am (fascinated by, obsessed with, interested in) the artist's use of (formal element – line, colour, tone etc.) or exploration of (subject matter – landscape, the figure, war, abstraction)

For me, the key to this work is the (use of or interaction/relationship between) (formal element- line, colour, tone etc.)

However, to achieve a high grade we expect you to reflect on WHY you like or dislike something.

You should describe or analyse how the artist's approach to subject matter or his/her use of formal elements impacts on you.

Describe how the artist has used the formal elements to convey or express an emotion and create a specific mood or atmosphere.

For example: 1. I think the artist [creates/evokes] [a sense/feeling or an atmosphere/experience] of [calm/energy/melancholy/foreboding/space/lightness/delicacy] [through the use of/by using/] [a variety of/bright/rhythmic] [line/colour/shape].

The [bright/rhythmic/bold] use of [line/colour/shape] creates an overwhelming [atmosphere/sense/feeling/experience] of [calm etc.]

2. I am [struck by/fascinated by/inspired by/drawn to/impressed with] the artist's use of [bright colours/line/shape], which [capture/evoked/create] the experience of [heat/loneliness/joy].

I enjoy the way that the artist exploits the [tactile/textural] qualities of the [materials/media].

3. The inclusion of the [cypress tree/ woman in black/ blue circle] [on the far left/linking earth and sky] creates an air of [mystery/menace/tranquillity].

4. The artist's [bold/subtle] use of [line/colour/shape] encourages the viewer to [explore/focus on/reflect on] the [experience/impact/role] of [women/poverty] in [20th century wherever].

5. The apparent order of the composition [is offset by/is undermined by/contrasts with] the [random/unexpected/free/spontaneous] use of [colour/paint/shape].

I am interested in the way that the use of [felt/colour/silk] [softens/mitigates/balances] what would otherwise be a [harsh/cold/dull] piece.

I love the way that the artist uses techniques usually associated with [popular culture/children's cartoons] to address serious issues of [whatever].

6. The [bold/bright/muted] colours remind me of [whatever].

I associate the [bold/bright/muted] colours with [a feeling of/a sense of] [whatever].

This artwork is the visual equivalent of a (slap in the face with a dead fish, poem, music, the hustle and bustle of rush hour)

7. A [stark beauty/sense of opulence] is created by the [subtle/precise] [interaction/interplay] of [simple geometric shapes].

8. The artist celebrates [pop culture] by the use of [gaudy colours/simple outlines]

9. I think the artist deliberately [distances/alienates/confuses/confounds] the viewer by [painting in a naive style/focusing on...].

10. The technique of [layering/distressing materials] forced me to [consider/confront] the issue of [memory/time passing] by [allowing only some parts of the work to be visible].

COMPARE AND CONTRAST THE ARTWORK WITH OTHER ARTISTS' WORK OR WITH WORK FROM LATER IN THE ARTIST'S CAREER – DESCRIBE SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES.