

History of Art 1

# Western Art



Level HE4 - 40 CATS

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Cover image: Gustav Klimt, *Malcesine, Lake Garda*, 1913

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# Before you start

## Course aims and outcomes

Welcome to *History of Art 1: Western Art*. This course explores the development of visual culture in the west from Ancient Greece to the present day. Its main focus is on painting, sculpture and architecture but it also refers to applied arts such as ceramics, textiles, glass and illustration. In the later sections, there are references to the way in which these traditional disciplines have interacted with photography and to the use by artists of new media such as video and computer art.

Your OCA Student Handbook should be able to answer most questions about this and all other OCA courses, so keep it to hand as you work through this course. If you're new to OCA, make sure you work through OCA's free online induction course *An Introduction to Studying in HE* on [oca-student.com](http://oca-student.com) before you start.

One of the primary aims of the course is to help you to develop your observational skills in order to enjoy works of art more. In addition you'll learn how to research works of art and respond to them in a practical way, using drawing, painting, annotation and photography. You'll also get the opportunity to study art historical texts and write your own – a 2,000-word review on an art historical topic of your choice.

On successful completion of the course, you should be able to demonstrate the following outcomes:

- a basic knowledge of the history of western art in chronological order from classical to modern times
- an understanding of how the creation and interpretation of western art has been influenced by political, economic and social circumstances and by changes in the role, patronage and training of artists and their development of new materials, processes, genres and styles
- skills in researching, annotating and evaluating works of art and in communicating about them in a range of media
- an ability to reflect perceptively on your own learning experience.

Even if you don't intend to submit your work for formal assessment, it's useful to take on board these outcomes to support your learning and to use them as a means of self-assessment. You can check your progress against the learning outcomes in your learning log when you review your progress against each assignment.

## Working with your tutor

Your tutor is your main point of contact with OCA. Before you start work, make sure you're clear about your tuition arrangements. The OCA tuition system is explained in some detail in your Student Handbook.

Arrange with your tutor how you'll deal with any unusual queries – such as a request for more time to complete an assignment – that might arise between assignments. This will usually be by email or phone.

Before you start the course, please email or post your tutor 150 words about your experience to date (your profile). This might include some background information about your experience of studying art and/or art history in the past, your reasons for starting this course, and what you hope to achieve from it. This will help your tutor understand how best to support you during the course.

Always make sure that you label any work that you send to your tutor with your name, student number and the assignment number. Your tutor will respond as soon as possible after receiving your assignment but this may take a little time. Continue with the course while you're waiting.

There are two types of coursework:

- the assignment that you'll send to your tutor at the end of each part of the course
- the work that you'll do in your sketchbooks, notebooks and learning log throughout the course.

Your tutor will give you feedback about how well you're progressing towards each of the learning outcomes and will suggest ideas about each assignment that you might have missed. You'll also agree a submission date for the next assignment, which will usually be about two months after the previous one.

You're encouraged to reflect carefully on your tutor's feedback and, if appropriate, go back to the assignment and make adjustments to it based on your tutor's comments. If you submit for assessment, making such adjustments demonstrates responsiveness and learning and will help improve your mark.

## Formal assessment

When you send in your second assignment you should advise your tutor whether or not you intend to submit your work for assessment. Read the section on assessment and accreditation in your Student Handbook. You'll also find a study guide on assessment and getting qualified on the student website.

If you're submitting your work for formal assessment, this will comprise an evaluation of your work for Assignments Two to Five. However, you should send all five assignments together with your sketchbooks, notebooks and learning log for assessment at the end of the course. Only work done during the course should be submitted to your tutor or for assessment.

## Assessment criteria

The assessment criteria for *Art History 1: Western Art* are listed below. Please make sure that you take note of these criteria and, for each assignment, consider how well you've fulfilled each criterion.

Even if you don't intend to submit your work for assessment, you might want to use the criteria to keep track of your progress. On completion of each part of the course, and before you send your assignment to your tutor, test yourself against the criteria. Note down your findings in your learning log, including all your perceived strengths and weaknesses and taking into account the criteria every step of the way.

- **Demonstration of subject-based knowledge and understanding** – Broad and comparative understanding of subject content; knowledge of the appropriate historical, intellectual, cultural or institutional contexts.
- **Demonstration of research skills** – Information retrieval and organisation, use of IT to assist research, ability to evaluate IT sources; the ability to design and carry out a research project and locate and evaluate evidence from a wide range of primary and secondary sources (visual, oral, aural or textual).
- **Demonstration of critical and evaluation skills** – Engagement with concepts, values and debates; evidence of analysis, reflection, critical thinking, synthesis and interpretation in relation to relevant issues and enquiries.
- **Communication** – The ability to communicate ideas and knowledge in written form and to support them with relevant visual material in ways that are clearly presented.

## Planning ahead

This Level 1 course represents 400 hours of learning time. You'll probably spend around 35% of your time on practical work. The rest of your time will be spent reading, researching and writing about art in your learning log. The course will take about a year to complete if you spend around eight hours each week on it.

As with all OCA courses, these course materials are intended to be used flexibly but keep your tutor fully informed about your progress. You'll need to allow extra time if you decide to have your work formally assessed.

*History of Art 1: Western Art* is divided into five parts and contains five course assignments. Your first assignment is a diagnostic assignment which will help your tutor get to know you and your work and decide how best to support you. Your tutor will mark this assignment but it won't count towards your final mark if you decide to have your work formally assessed. However, you should submit it as part of your assessment portfolio because the assessors will want to gauge how far you've progressed during your work on the course.

The 2,000-word review that you'll submit as part of your fifth and final assignment will be agreed between you and your tutor, so you'll need to have some ideas mapped out by the time you submit your third assignment – or Assignment Four at the latest – so that your tutor can decide how best to help you with this.

The first part of the course provides an introduction to art history. Each of the following four parts addresses a different chronological period and is related to a number of chapters in your set text, Honour, H. & Fleming, J. (2009) *A World History of Art* (revised 7th edition), London: Laurence King. As well as information and advice, each part offers exercises and research tasks to develop your understanding of art.

The exercises and research tasks are designed to build on your reading in WHA and stimulate you to find out more about a particular aspect of the topic under consideration. They'll also help you to develop your learning log. You won't send them to your tutor as part of your assignment submission but you will have to submit your learning log to the assessors if you decide to have your work on this course assessed. The amount of time you spend on this independent research is up to you. If you find a particular topic interesting, you'll probably want to devote quite a bit of time to finding out more about it. Some will be of less interest to you, but please try and engage with all of the exercises at some level, even if time constraints mean that you have to come back to one or two of them later in the course.



## Study skills

There are five keys to successful study:

- Ask yourself the right questions.
- Know where to find the answers.
- Use your imagination.
- Present your findings clearly and in an appropriate format.
- Reflect on the results – your learning log.



Willem de Kooning, *Untitled*, 1950

## 1. Asking the right questions

Ask questions according to what you're studying and what you want to achieve. For example, to improve your observational skills when looking at paintings, you might ask yourself whether the contours are thick or thin; the tones are dark or light; the brushwork is coarse or smooth; the colours are bright or dull; the space is deep or shallow; the shapes are angular or curved.

You might also ask yourself how the painter has organised these elements into a composition. Are the different parts of the painting in proportion to one another? Do lines and colours repeat themselves throughout the work? You could also ask yourself how well you think the artist has constructed a narrative and whether they've been successful in conveying a particular mood.

If you're looking at sculpture, you might also want to ask yourself how the artist has dealt with issues of weight, mass, balance and texture and if they've implied a sense of movement. In the case of architecture, you'd also consider the decoration and symmetry of the façade and how the building relates to those around it.



Barbara Kruger, *Untitled (Money Can Buy you Love)*, 1985

All of these are things you can see when you look at an image. When you come to annotate images (see below) you'll make notes on these aspects *above the line*.

You'll also need to ask questions that can't be answered simply through observation. In order to improve your 'Subject-based knowledge and understanding', your 'Research skills' and your 'Critical and evaluation skills', you'll need to think about things like: the person, place or scene that the artist has represented; the meaning of any allegory or symbols used; who commissioned the work and why; how the work relates to others by the same artist or on the same subject; how innovative is the choice of particular themes, materials or techniques.

You might also want to ask questions about the political, economic and social circumstances in which a work has been made. To use a twentieth-century example, a work made by a painter in the First World War will have a different resonance from that of a photographer in the Great Depression or a feminist artist in the 1970s.

All of these are things you can't see when you look at an image so you'll need to research them for yourself. When you come to annotate images (see below) you'll make notes on these aspects *below the line*.



Walker Evans, *Poverty-stricken American, Bud Fields, with his wife and daughter, Hale County, Alabama, 1938*

## 2. Knowing where to find the answers

### Your set text



Apart from your own eyes, the answers will come from books, articles, TV programmes and the internet. Much of your reading for this course will be from your set text, *A World History of Art*, from now on referred to as 'WHA'.

This is a big book which also includes chapters about non-western art that aren't relevant to the course. Don't try to read the whole book at once; the course guide will direct you to the relevant chapters for each assignment.

The chapters are quite long and you may find it easier to skim through the whole chapter first and then come back to the bits you're particularly interested in. Each chapter starts with a chronological table, outlining the main artistic developments of the time or place under discussion and relating them to the broader historical context. It's worth taking a close look at this before you start reading each chapter.

- The 'In Context' boxes take a detailed look at the historical, cultural and artistic context of a particular work or series of works.
- The 'Concepts' boxes look at the philosophy or world view underlying a particular artistic period.
- The 'Sources and Documents' boxes draw your attention to primary sources of information on particular art works or art forms. A source is said to be 'primary' if it originated at around the same time as the object or event it describes: a first-hand account as opposed to a later second-hand account or 'secondary source'.
- The Glossary at the end of the book explains many of the specialised artistic and architectural terms used throughout WHA.
- Further Reading recommends more books and articles related to each chapter. You'll also find a reading list at the end of this course guide and on the OCA student website.

## Internet and other research

You're likely to do most of your research via the internet. Use the internet to search for images as well as articles on the web. Most museums and galleries have their own websites; these contain information about the works they display and are invaluable as resources to consult before visits. The BBC's 'Your Paintings' provides images of works from many UK collections.

YouTube is particularly useful for finding out about materials and techniques, although be aware that the videos are of variable quality.

Your membership of OCA allows you to use a number of subscription websites including:

- the Bridgeman Art Library
- Oxford Art Online
- VADS.

## Research task

Spend some time now exploring the research resources on the OCA student website. Don't rush this – an investment of time now may save you a lot of searching later. Keep a list of useful resources in your learning log and add to this as you work through the course.

TV programmes are also an invaluable source of reference. You can download the nine-hour video sequence *Art of the Western World* from the OCA website. This series is several years old and is slightly old-fashioned in some respects, but it contains a great deal of valuable and relevant material for this course. Watch as many of the programmes as you can before you start work on the course then come back to individual programmes at the appropriate point in the course.

One of the reasons why it's important to read additional texts and articles is that you'll need to demonstrate your 'Critical evaluation skills'. This means analysing and comparing one writer's work in relation to another. A key consideration is whether the writer was writing at the time when the work was made (i.e. is it a primary source?). Pieces written by artists themselves are very useful in this context. Many of these, such as Matisse's notebooks or the letters of van Gogh, are particularly illuminating. However, while studying the work of contemporary authors is useful as a way of understanding the political, economic and social context in which works were made, you shouldn't necessarily regard them as more authoritative than more recent (secondary) texts.



For example, Renaissance artist Giorgio Vasari is sometimes referred to as the first art historian yet his *The Lives of the Artists* (first published 1550), a set of biographies of his near-contemporaries, is now regarded as biased and inaccurate. Ideally your research should include both primary and secondary sources.

One of the things that you'll study in this course is how the interpretation of particular works of art has changed over time. A good example is the portrayal of slaves by William Blake and Josiah Wedgwood. These were influential in the successful campaigns against the slave trade but have since come to be regarded as sexualised or condescending.

## Making visits

You should try and see as many original works of art 'in the flesh' as you can. Below is a summary of the visits you'll make during the course. Start planning your visits now. If you don't live near a major urban centre, don't miss the opportunity to make a visit because you haven't yet reached that stage in your course. Think ahead and make the visits when you can. You'll need to make the first art gallery visit at an early stage in the course, however, because this visit will inform your first assignment. You'll find the details of each visit at the end of the relevant part of the course. If for any reason you're unable to make any or all of these visits, use museum and other websites as an alternative.

**Part One** – An art gallery

**Part Two** – A Gothic church

**Part Three** – A town or country house

**Part Four** – A classical building

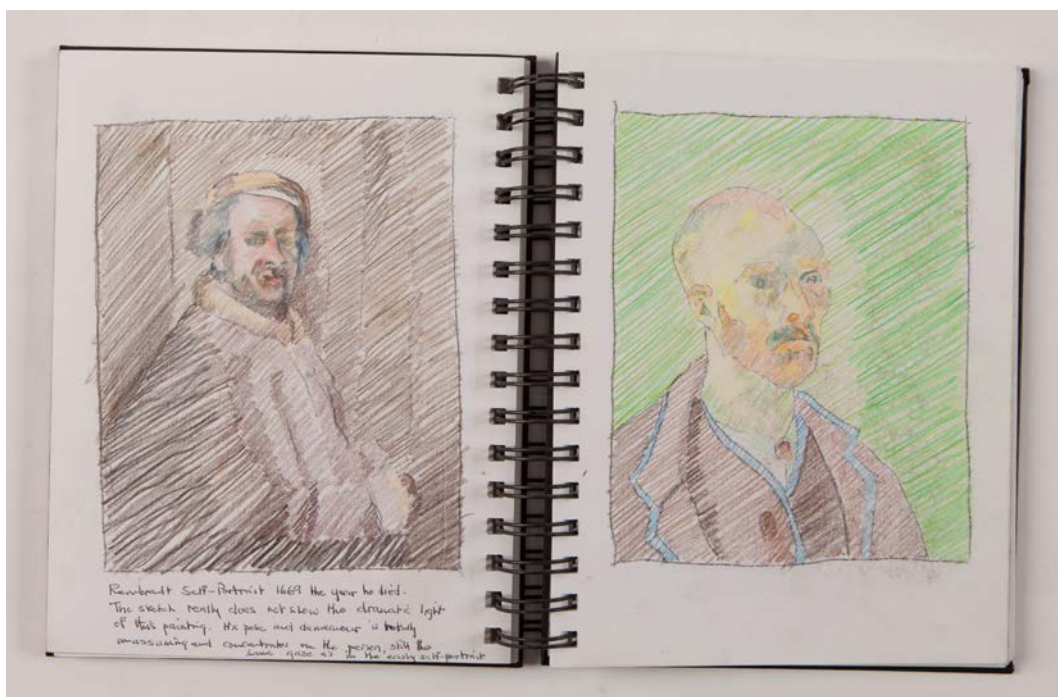
**Part Five** – A twentieth-century building and/or a piece of public art.

### 3. Using your imagination

An important part of learning is to use your imagination in order to make what you learn your own. For this reason we've included a number of exercises asking you to choose works of art to analyse or annotate. We encourage you to think creatively by imagining, for example, that you're collecting a set of artist's prints. We also encourage you to draw and paint in order to find out more about the works of art you're studying.

All of these exercises are intended as learning tools and are additional to the assignments that you'll send to your tutor at the end of each part of the course. Unlike the work that you might do for an OCA painting, drawing, sculpture or photography course, you won't be judged on your skills as a draughtsman or painter. However, if you decide to submit your work for formal assessment, the assessors may take these exercises into account as evidence of how much you've learned.

Buy a sketchbook and notebook to take with you when you visit museums and galleries. You might also want to purchase a file with plastic sleeves in which you can keep a collection of postcards or images from guide books, catalogues or magazines. Follow your own interests but try to make sure that your collection of images reflects a wide range of fine art disciplines (painting, sculpture, architecture, applied arts) and genres (historical, mythological and religious art, still life, the human figure, interiors and landscape).



OCA student, Stephen Powell



## 4. Presenting your findings

There are three different kinds of exercises that you'll send to your tutor at the end of each part of the course:

- A minimum of two and a maximum of four pages of A4 notes on your reading. If you wish, you can set your notes out in a template (see below).
- Two annotations of works of art.
- One 500-word analysis of a work of art or art historical concept.

You'll also submit a 2,000-word review as part of Assignment Five, to be agreed with your tutor after Part Three.

### Your research notes

At the end of each part of the course, we ask you to distil your notes from WHA and from your research into other books and texts into a two- to four-page summary. If you wish, you can use the template below. Don't worry too much about the headings for now; they're based on an analysis of the Introduction to WHA and are explained more fully in Part One. Using these headings should help you structure your thoughts and focus your reading.

Your initial research notes may be quite extensive which is why we ask you to send a summary of them to your tutor. Your tutor will use this summary to check that you've understood the relevant period or concept and that you're developing an ability to pick up on the important points in your reading. In your notes you're free to paraphrase your research sources (i.e. express what you've read in your own words) or quote directly from the source.

Type of information	Notes and quotations
Political, economic or social factors	
Changes to status or training of artists	
Development of materials and processes	
Styles and movements	
Inside and outside influences	
Critics, thinkers and historians	

**A word of caution:** Make sure that you distinguish very clearly between what's a quotation and what you've written yourself by putting any text that you've copied in quotation marks. If the source isn't WHA, reference it using the Harvard referencing system. There's a guide to referencing using the Harvard system on the OCA student website: [oca-student.com/content/harvard-referencing-system-1](http://oca-student.com/content/harvard-referencing-system-1)

Print this out and keep it to hand as your work through the course. Getting down the full reference at the time will save you the frustration of having to hunt for the details of a half-remembered reference long after the event – and ensure that you don't inadvertently plagiarise someone else's work.

## Annotations

Annotations are hand-written notes about a single work of art. Begin by taking an A4 sheet of paper and a postcard or postcard-size image. Note down the information given on the back of the postcard, or in the caption to the picture, at the top of the sheet.

Now stick your card above the centre of your A4 sheet and draw a line across the sheet underneath the image.

Above the line, include information that you can deduce visually by looking. You can present some of this in written form but you should also include sketches.

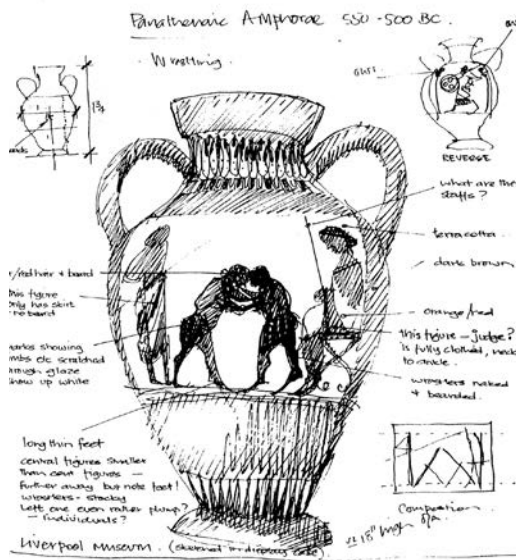
Below the line, include contextual information (see 'Asking the right questions' above). This can't be found simply by looking; you'll need to refer to texts, TV programmes or the internet.

You might also want to include:

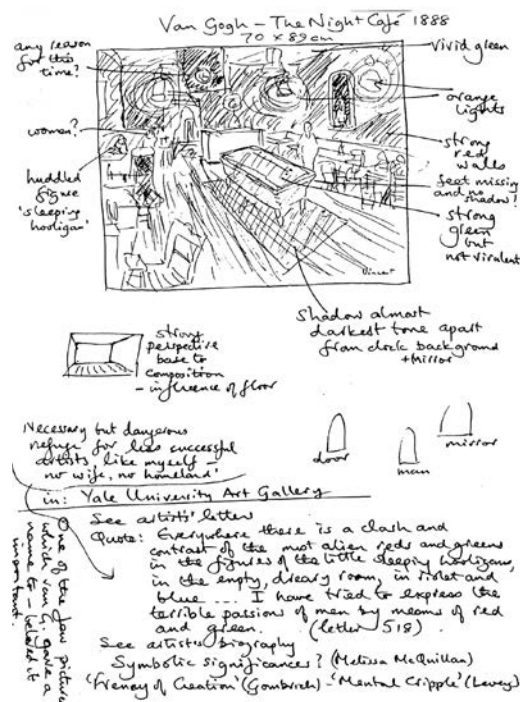
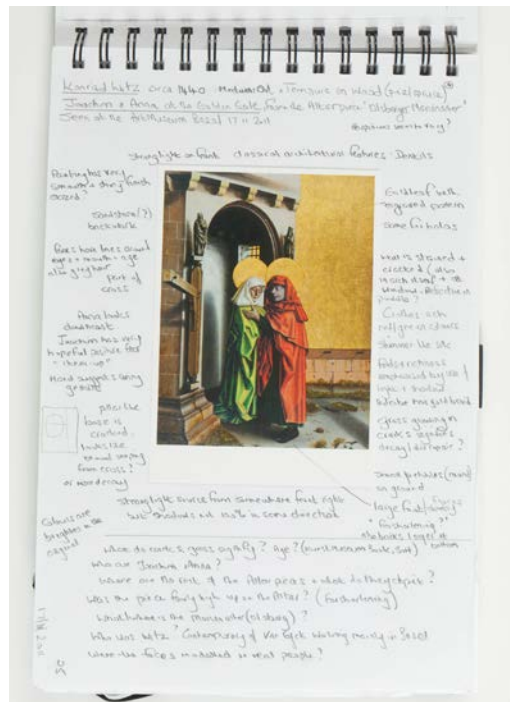
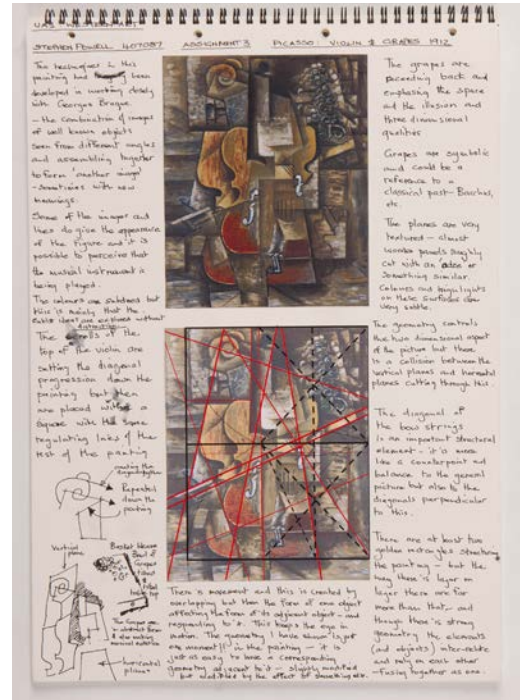
- general comments, highlighting why you chose the image
- comments about how well the card reproduces the colours of the original or whether it shows the whole image or only a detail.

There's more on annotating images in the study guide 'Looking at artists and photographers'. You'll find this on the student website.

## Examples of student annotations



- religious festivals - greatest Greek Panhellenic - 550 BC.
- shards of specially made pottery jars filled with olive oil
- Athens one side, reluctant competitors the ITRs



## Analyses

Analyses are pieces of written work that might refer to a single work of art or to an historical period, concept or idea. For the purposes of this course, you'll write around 500 words. You'll need the skills that you've learned from your note-taking and annotations. For example, if you're referring to a single work of art, you might use the following structure:

- Describe what you see.
- Interpret its historical and artistic context.
- Evaluate how successful the image is and how it compares with similar images by other artists or other works by the same artist.

Apply these questions to your writing:

- Are your observations and ideas clear?
- If you've made notes, do they pinpoint the key issues?
- Is all the information in your text salient and necessary?
- If you've advanced a particular argument, is it logical?
- Does your text have a definite beginning, middle and end?

**A note on artistic terminology:** The glossary at the back of WHA doesn't cover every artistic term that you're likely to encounter, so you'd be well advised to invest in a comprehensive dictionary of art. Several of these are available in paperback and you'll find some specific titles listed at the end of this course guide and on the OCA website. As you work through the course guide, you're bound to come across names or terms that you're unfamiliar with. Don't panic – just look them up in the WHA glossary or online and note down your findings.

Be aware that some apparently familiar words are used differently in an artistic context (e.g. formal) and there's sometimes more than one word in regular use for an identical concept. An example is the language of colour; where one person may refer to a particular hue, tone and degree of saturation, another person might use the words colour, value and chroma for exactly the same concepts.

The qualities of pictures can be described in various ways. A picture might be described as linear, as in the case of Botticelli who stressed line in his work. Titian's work, on the other hand, is described as painterly. This means that forms are principally defined by tone rather than line; there may even be visible brushstrokes (e.g. van Gogh).

## 5. Reflection – your learning log

Reflecting on your progress during the course will enable you to identify your strengths and weaknesses. You'll do this by keeping a learning log. If you're new to OCA courses, read the study guides on keeping sketchbooks and learning logs; these are available to download from the OCA student website.

Use your learning log to record your progress through the course. It should contain:

- images (e.g. postcards, images from the internet) you've collected
- catalogues and guidebooks to exhibitions and places you've visited
- comments and reflections on your visits
- cuttings of interest from newspapers, journals and magazines
- your thoughts on the work you produce for each project
- your reflections on the reading you do
- your tutor's reports on assignments and your reactions to these.

You're strongly recommended to set up your learning log as an online blog. Setting up a blog is free and you can do it through websites such as Blogger, Tumblr or Wordpress. Alternatively you can set up a blog using the Wordpress template available on the OCA student website. Read the guide to setting up an online learning log on the student website.

### OCA student forums

There are plenty of other students studying art history with OCA. Share your ideas and findings with your fellow students via the forums on the student website: [oca-student.com/forum](http://oca-student.com/forum)

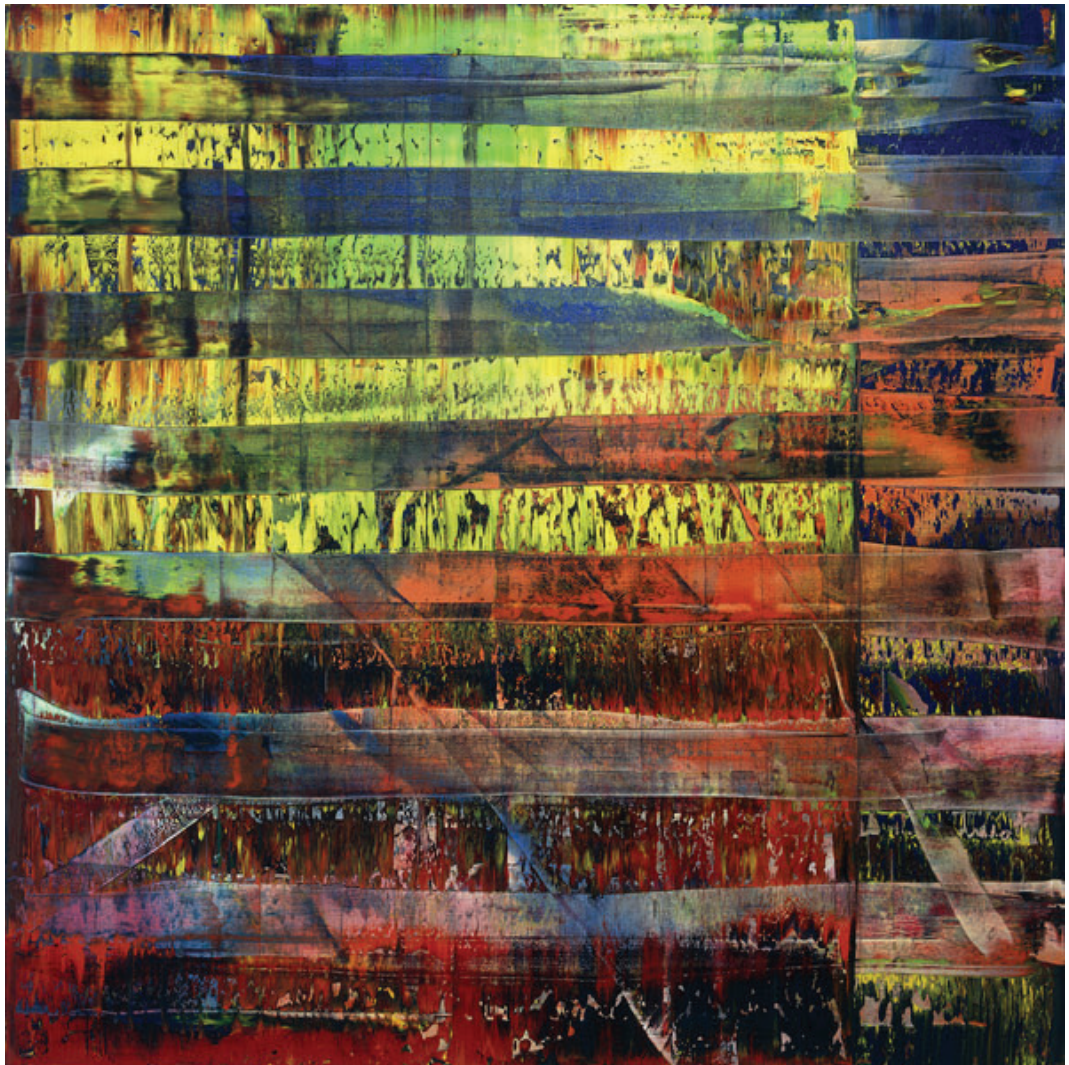
Log on now and say hello.



# History of Art 1

## Part one

# An introduction to art history



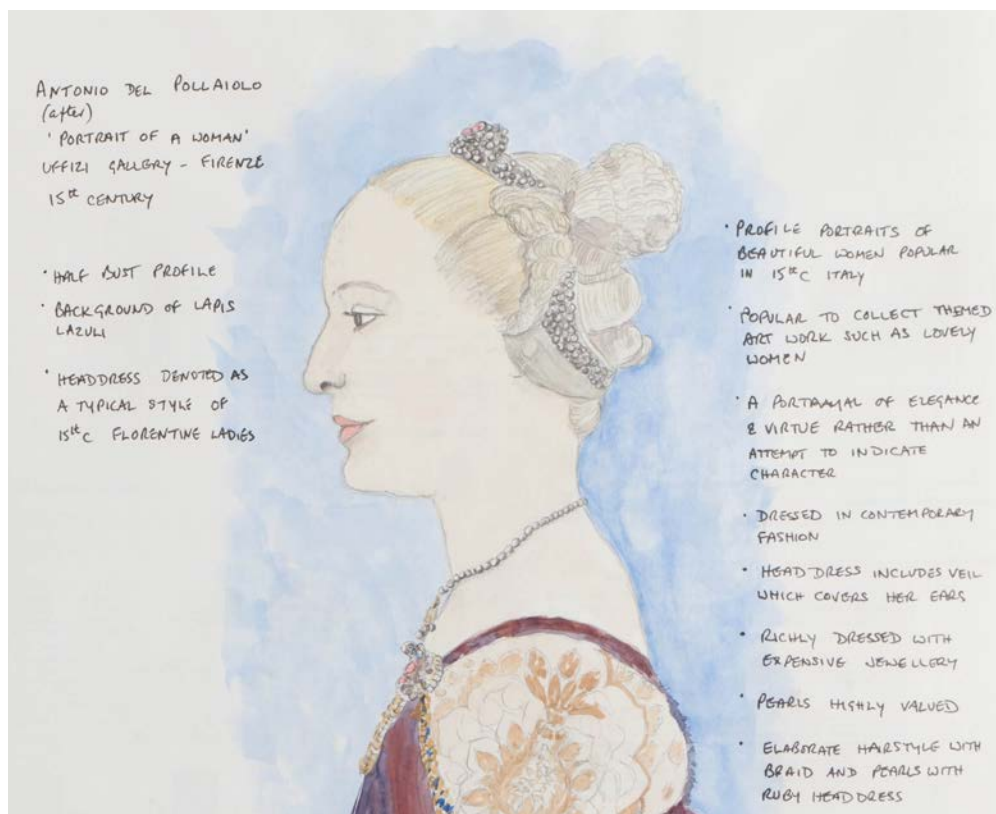
Gerhard Richter, *Abstract Painting; Abstraktes Bild*, 1992

The aim of this first part of the course is to introduce you to some of the themes of art history and to demonstrate that art history is much more than a timeline of who painted what and when. You may find a lot of names that you don't recognise and you may find it hard initially to get to grips with some of the art historical concepts discussed. The important thing for you to take away from this opening section is a sense of the broad range of factors at work in what we call 'art history' because these are the kinds of issues your tutor will expect you to address in your assignment work.

At the end of each section there's a question to stimulate reflection in your learning log. Try answering these, even if you don't feel particularly confident about the topic at the moment. You might want to come back to these questions at the end of the course and see if your ideas have changed.

Please note that most of the artworks referred to in the course guide are illustrated in WHA, so keep this to hand as you read.

Before you start reading, look ahead to the details of your first visit. You'll find this at the end of Part One. You can make this visit whenever it's convenient, but you'll need to do it before you submit your first assignment.



OCA student, Lucy Butler, sketchbook



## Political, economic and social factors

*For every time its art. For art its Freedom.*

(Inscription on the Viennese Secession Building)

As you read through this course guide and WHA, you'll find that both pay considerable attention to the political, social and economic circumstances in which works of art have been produced. The question of how art relates to its time is a complex one. For example, the nineteenth-century painters influenced by Baudelaire's 1863 essay 'The Painter of Modern Life' made a self-conscious attempt to reflect their time. Just think of the paintings of everyday Parisian life by Manet, Caillebotte and others. Yet even Baudelaire acknowledged that in addition to the elements of 'the fleeting, the transient and the contingent' that he identified with modernity, there were more universal aspects of art that did not necessarily change.



Édouard Manet, *At the Café*, c.1879 (oil on canvas)

The idea that art is independent of its time is often accompanied by a belief that it can be assessed according to the same criteria and understood by everyone in the same way. We're less likely to think like that today. After all, how could we explain the artistic developments of the twentieth century without reference to political factors such as the First World War, economic circumstances such as the Depression or social developments such as changes in the role of women?

Karl Marx was one of the first to make the link between art and the values or ideology of the dominant group within society. We're more ready to accept a link between art and socio-political factors today. Few critics would disagree that the transition from the religious imagery of the medieval world to the more secular imagery of the Renaissance reflected a shift in power from the Roman Catholic church to the courts and cities. They might also identify a broader progression from 'primitive' works of art associated with honouring the dead to those associated with temples and churches, then courts and, finally, the market place. Consider the transition from the Pyramids to the Parthenon or from Chartres to Versailles, for example. The notion of where power lies within a particular society might also explain the development during the seventeenth century of new genres such as portraiture, landscape and still life in response to the demand for smaller, more 'domestic' paintings – for example, those of Vermeer and his contemporaries – that could be hung in the new homes of an increasingly influential mercantile class. In a modern context, the growing importance of the apparatus of the state and of business in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries is reflected in the development of public galleries and museums and of corporate collections and foundations (think Saatchi Gallery).

Some critics have argued that to deny the influence of political, social and economic factors on art represents an attempt to conceal the nature of power. For example, in his essay 'Nature and Culture', Peter Halley has argued that:

*to attribute to (art) universal, timeless value... suggests that the society that encourages and validates .... such attributes is itself timelessly and universally valid.*

(Halley, P. (1983) in Harrison & Wood, 2003, p.1043)



What political, economic or social factors might be influencing practitioners of art in the west today? Before you move on, make some brief notes in your learning log. Don't just think about painters; consider other disciplines such as architecture and applied arts (textiles, ceramics, etc.).

## The changing status of painters and sculptors

Thus far we've considered the context in which art is made rather than factors specific to its practice. One of the most important of these is the change that took place in the status of the artist. The key period was during the Renaissance when painters and sculptors acquired a much higher status than that of craftspeople who worked with glass, ceramics or as the illustrators of manuscripts. Although Greek authors such as Plato and Aristotle wrote about the work of the sculptors Phidias and Praxiteles, most of their works have been lost or are represented only as Roman copies. During the Middle Ages, the artists who worked on the great cathedrals were usually anonymous artisans who worked in teams and whose achievements were prized more for their technical skill than their personal vision. Even in the early Renaissance, the person who commissioned the work, rather than the artist, was the driving force in the creation of a work of art. The patron would decide not just the subject matter but sometimes the attitudes and emotions of the figures and the exact type and quantities of the materials used. In part this was financially motivated because of the huge cost of copper, gold leaf or lapis lazuli, which was imported from Afghanistan. By contrast, umber or siena, as their names imply, were earth-based pigments that could be sourced locally in Italy.

During the High Renaissance, artists such as Raphael, Michelangelo and Titian not only acquired enormous wealth and reputation but the freedom to choose their subject and how to approach it. There were several reasons for this. One was the development of fresco. Fresco was a method of wall painting in which paint was applied to freshly-laid wet plaster; this required a very competent painter to handle it in the short space of time before the plaster dried. Another was the creation of workshops in which the most important artist had a role as manager and negotiator. The workshops of Titian or Lucas Cranach were in some ways analogous to a major contemporary architectural practice, overseen by its principal architect. But the most important factor behind this change in the artist's status was Renaissance patrons' demand for sophisticated classical and mythological paintings. During the Renaissance artists came to be perceived not as craftsmen or mere copiers but as thinkers and conceivers with emphasis placed not just on their manual skills but also on what Albrecht Dürer described as their 'God-given' genius.

During the Baroque period, the cult of the artist was reinforced by authors such as Vasari, author of *The Lives of the Artists*, who was himself a painter. Court painters were even used as ambassadors and go-betweens. Rubens helped the Habsburgs to negotiate a treaty and Velázquez was active in the plans for Philip II of Spain's second marriage. When Rubens himself remarried, however, he resisted the advice of his friends to marry the daughter of an aristocrat since he wanted a less haughty companion who 'would not be surprised at seeing him with a paint brush in (his) hands'. In contrast, Velázquez documented his own rise to fame in *Las Meninas*; this portrays an artist at ease in the royal household and bearing the cross of a noble order on his chest.



Diego de Velázquez, *Las Meninas* or *The Family of Philip IV*, c.1656  
(oil on canvas)

Although painters and sculptors benefited enormously from these developments, the work of craftspeople was held in less esteem – and this remained the case for centuries. Women artists were similarly undervalued because they were regarded principally as decorative artists. There were periods in which craft or decorative skills were more valued, as in the development of luxury items such as ceramics, furniture and wallpaper textiles during the eighteenth century. However, the very fact that the playful and decorative

Rococo style remains so undervalued today reflects the continued dominance of the art world by the notion of male genius. The opening of schools such as the Royal Academy in London in 1769 tended to confirm this trend. Tuition was divided between three areas. One of these was life drawing – the drawing of nude figures – from which women were excluded. Another was the copying of casts of classical statues, which reinforced the notion of ideal beauty and established a repertoire of accepted subjects and interpretations. The third comprised lectures by prominent artists, which affirmed the status of painting and sculpture as an intellectual discipline.

The hierarchy of artistic subject matter itself became more rigid, with history painting at its apex. During the nineteenth century women were encouraged to concentrate on their skills as copyists or as decorative artists in fields such as needlepoint. As one anonymous author wrote in 1836:

*Women only have an undisputable talent for landscape, interior scenes, pastel, watercolour, portrait painting and above all for miniature....Neither should one forget painting on porcelain.*

Even in the nineteenth century there were dissenting voices, though. William Morris pleaded for a reassessment of what he called ‘the lesser arts’ in response to the shoddy and depersonalised production of the industrial revolution. At the same time he adopted a collaborative way of working that challenged the dominance of a single practitioner. In the twentieth century his example was followed by many other artists who had become sceptical about the cultural importance of unique works of art in a world saturated with mass-produced images. Among them were a large number of progressive women artists who contributed to a reassessment of the importance of traditional craft practices as well as to an expansion of the subject matter of art from a feminist perspective.



How would you describe the status of artists today? Do we still think in terms of big ‘stars’? Are they still predominantly male? Is there still a hierarchy that privileges painting and sculpture over art forms like textiles? What about photography? Make brief notes in your learning log. Again, you’ll develop your ideas about all these questions as you progress through the course.

## Materials and processes

Another approach that art historians have taken is to see art in relation to the development of new materials and processes. When you come to study the classical world (Part Two), you'll discover how the development of new tools affected carving and how the introduction of concrete influenced architecture. In Part Three, you'll learn about the impact of painting in oils, first perfected in Northern Europe. Van Eyck and his fellow painters applied oils (i.e. where oil was used as a binding agent for pigments) to carefully prepared panels from the Baltic forests and experimented with brushes made from the tails of squirrels and foxes as well as those from cheaper and cruder hogs' bristles. This enabled them to achieve a new depth and luminosity of colour and to imitate the different surfaces of glass, wood and textiles. The exceptional smoothness of these new media is apparent in van Eyck's famous *Madonna of Chancellor Rolin* (c.1435). The artist portrayed the duke's adviser in a palatial setting, which contains obvious allusions to the secular pleasures of the Burgundian court as well as to the complex iconography of the Madonna.



Jan van Eyck, *The Rolin Madonna*, c.1435 (oil on panel)

Printmaking is another example of a step change in the way in which art has been made and distributed. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries engravings were developed alongside the spread of printed books. Marcantonio Raimondi's prints allowed people to buy a religious image by Raphael on a scale suitable for their own walls and at a price they could afford. They also enabled an artist to see and copy another artist's work. The same image could now take on different meanings. During the early seventeenth century, for example, printed images recording the horrors of the religious wars were copied and adapted to depict conflicts between Europeans and indigenous peoples in Brazil and North America. The versatility of images as weapons of propaganda continued in the eighteenth century when French and English artists used the same image, which they had originally borrowed from the pietà (an image of Mary holding the body of Christ), to describe both the death of Wolfe and that of his adversary Montcalm at Quebec.



Benjamin West, *The Death of General Wolfe* (colour lithograph)



Jean Baptiste Morret, *Death of Louis Joseph de Montcalm at the Siege of Quebec, 1759, 1789* (colour lithograph)

Staffordshire potters copied the same image onto a ceramic plate, making it available to a vast number of households that could never have afforded the engraving. The importance of mass-produced ceramics in cementing political and social affiliations at a time when Britain's commercial wars were forging a new sense of national unity has often been overlooked. These ceramics represented public spectacles such as sermons by popular preachers or horse races and bare-knuckle fights, which people were now able to access thanks to improved communications. The most popular ceramic image, Josiah Wedgwood's anti-slave trade cameo, with its inscription 'Am I not a man and a brother?' was worn on hats and watch chains in Britain and America and probably expressed support for a range progressive ideas, of which anti-slavery was just one example.



William Hackwood, *Anti-slavery medallion, Wedgwood, 1787*





Alfred Stieglitz, *A Bit of Venice*, negative, 1894

Yet another force to be reckoned with was the introduction of photography. For a long time photography wasn't taken seriously by the art world. In the words of Lady Elizabeth Eastlake it was an example of the public's appetite for 'cheap, prompt and correct facts' or, as Baudelaire put it, of its narcissistic desire 'to see its image on a scrap of metal'. There was a widespread belief that photography was a purely mechanical process whose practitioners couldn't select or transform the 'facts' of nature as 'proper' artists could.

It was not until 1899 that Alfred Stieglitz wrote his essay 'Pictorial Photography', in which he pointed out the fallacy of the commonly held belief that:

*...after the selection of subjects, the posing, lighting, exposure and development, every succeeding step was purely mechanical, requiring little thought.*

By the early twentieth century photographers such as Rodchenko and Moholy-Nagy in Russia were decoding the processes of photography through exploring those aspects of it – shutter speeds, chemical compounds and printing techniques – which were specific to the medium.

Ironically, during the nineteenth century photography helped to exalt the individual or hand-made aspects of other artists' work. More attention was paid to the uniqueness of the artist's temperament and to the spontaneity with which he or she manipulated materials and processes. This was fuelled by a desire on the part of sophisticated collectors to distinguish themselves from the tastes of the crowd who appreciated the realism of which photography was now capable. One of the first people to point out this irony was Thorstein Veblen, who in 1899 wrote that the 'visible imperfections' of hand-made goods 'are accounted marks of superiority'.

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Are you aware of any current developments in materials and processes that might influence the art of the future? For example, how have developments in digital technology influenced artists in the recent past?

## The concept of style



What do you understand by the term 'style' as applied to art? Before you read any further, make some brief notes in your learning log and return to this question when you've got to the end of this section.

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Style can refer either to an artist's personal 'handwriting' or to a group of formal characteristics or ideas that link a number of artists together. For example, Heinrich von Wölfflin analysed the differences between the Renaissance and Baroque in terms of a series of contrasts. These included distinctions between the linear and the painterly, between static and moving forms, and between order and disorder. (Look up the terms 'linear' and 'painterly' if you're not sure how they're applied in this context.) But we need to be cautious when we refer to 'styles' or 'movements'. Earlier art historians tended to define artistic periods in terms of the lives of a few well-known artists whose work was widely imitated. They also tended to exaggerate the links between artists. For example, although the Futurists were a self-appointed group that published its own manifesto, the terms 'Impressionism', 'Post-Impressionism', 'Cubism' and 'Fauvism' were all invented by critics.

In fact, what art historians had previously described as a 'style' is often a complex interweaving of political, social and economic factors with new materials and processes and a response to market forces. The example of Flemish art is useful in this context. Bartolommeo Fazio, a contemporary Italian author, described the new techniques adopted by Flemish artists as enabling them to be 'able to imitate reality through rendering colours and textures and appropriate feelings and emotions'. The patronage of Flemish textile workers by secular courts encouraged an interest in decoration and storytelling that was adopted by painters such as van Eyck. Similarly, the tradition of Gothic carving may have influenced Flemish painters' use of rigid contours. In contrast, Italian artists were influenced by developments in mathematical perspective. They also imitated the dignified postures and simplified shapes of classical sculpture, which helped to determine the more rounded and fluid shapes of the Italian masters. While the artists of the Northern School portrayed saints as ordinary people with real emotions, Italian artists portrayed idealised and other-worldly figures in geometrically organised compositions. This explains the contrast between the serene figures and triangular composition of Raphael's *Madonna in the Meadow* and the anguished, stick-like distortion – and more modern feel – of Rogier van der Weyden's *Lamentation*. Interestingly, Michelangelo, criticised the Flemish as able to inspire 'many a tear' but lacking 'reason, art, symmetry or proportion'. However, his comment may have been inspired in part by jealousy since many Italians, including the Medicis, were keen collectors of Flemish work.



Raphael, *Madonna in the Meadow*, 1505 or 1506 (oil on panel)



Rogier van der Weyden, *The Lamentation of Christ*, c.1460–75 (oil on panel)

## Critics, thinkers and historians

One of the things you'll learn on this course is to evaluate the work of prominent art historians and critics. Some of these, such as the philosophers Aristotle and Plato, the writer Zola or the psychologist Sigmund Freud, are people that you might not have associated with the visual arts. Others, including Vasari, van Gogh and Matisse, were prominent artists whose writings shed light on the work of other contemporary practitioners as well as on their own. You'll also learn how critics and art historians, as well as artists, have been influenced by the intellectual concerns of the periods in which they were writing. For example, the nineteenth century saw a preoccupation with the conquest of the material world and scientific research into colours, optics and perception, all of which were to have a huge influence on the Impressionists. It was also to influence the critic Gustav Semper who argued that decorative forms were a product of their materials and techniques. In contrast, his contemporary Alois Riegl suggested that formal changes were often merely the result of accidental influences derived through trade or conquest.

In the same period Jacob Burckhardt, in his *The Civilisation of the Renaissance in Italy*, argued that culture was a product of the particular society that produced it – as in the contrast between Republican Florence and papal Rome, whereas John Ruskin argued that the difference between Northern and Italian art was in part due to the influence of climate and geography.

One of the most influential critics of the twentieth century was Clement Greenberg. In his essay, 'Towards a Newer Laocoon', he wrote that:

*The motto of the Renaissance artist 'art is to conceal art' (was) exchanged for 'art is to demonstrate art'.*

(Greenberg, C. (1940) in Harrison & Wood, 2003, p.566)

What he meant by this was that, while Renaissance artists aspired to create a 'window on the world', modern artists had no qualms about making it clear that a work of art was just that – a work of art. In the same essay he pointed out that the way for 'art to demonstrate art' was through focusing on the materials and processes that were specific to a particular art form:

*Purity in art consists of the acceptance, the very willing acceptance, of the limitations of the medium of the specific art.*

(ibid, p.566)

The idea of 'purity in art' has now become almost as unfashionable as Zola's ideas about the importance of the artistic temperament or Ruskin's comments about geography and climate. In their day, however, all three were extremely influential.



Read some reviews of exhibitions or articles about art in the newspaper or in a magazine. What is the role of the art critic today?

## Inside and outside influences: non-western art

Although this course focuses on western art, it's important to look beyond Europe and America in order to understand its development. Very often the manner in which Europe encountered other cultures was crucial to their influence. Take the contrast between Chinese and Japanese art, for example.

Europe had been in contact with China since as early as Roman times. China had influenced European art through technical advances in ceramics, glass and papermaking passed down the Silk Road and absorbed indirectly through Islam. During the eighteenth century Chinese art became enormously fashionable among the European designers of luxury items for the newly affluent west. Many of these were based directly on Chinese models, as in the decoration of tea and coffee services, which also reflected forms of factory organisation and the application of glazes and firing techniques which Europeans had imported. The ornateness of Chinoiserie found a ready market among those who were already familiar with the elegance of rococo artist Watteau. So too did the 'graceful disorder' or *sarowaichi* style appeal to the English designers of landscape parks. The fact that the Chinese had developed no such gardens, except perhaps at the imperial summer place, didn't deter those who used it as a marketing device.

In contrast, European artists were influenced by the work of Japanese artists only from the late nineteenth century onwards. The work of its printmakers felt exotic and yet familiar. Their portrayal of the red light district of Kyoto recalled the seamy demi-monde of Paris with its gas-lit cabarets and bars, for example. The flatness of the Japanese printmakers' portrayal of space and their decorative use of line and colour seemed to endorse western artists in their own abandonment of conventional portrayals of the visible world. And it reinforced the escapism that they associated with the expression of their own feelings and emotions. However, all of this overlooked the historical reality of Japanese prints, which were a relatively new and popular art form designed to appeal to the pockets of a new urban society that was experiencing some of the same rapid change as Europe.



Gustav Klimt, *The Kiss*, 1907–08 (oil on canvas)



Can you think of any other non-western influences on western art? Try and come up with two or three examples and make some brief notes in your learning log. If you can, identify the route by which this influence came about.

## Inside and outside influences: art and popular culture

We can see similar patterns in western artists' absorption of popular culture, particularly during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. As early as 1854, Courbet used an image from a popular print of a Jewish peddler in his painting *Good Morning Monsieur Courbet*.



The image was subsequently re-used as the basis for a similar work by Gauguin in Pont Aven and then by Peter Blake in California. Like the re-working of Greek sculptures by Roman artists, or the use of classical casts as the models for European paintings (see Part Two), this is a good example of how artists have imitated and recycled earlier works. Interestingly, during the late twentieth century, artists 'appropriated' the work of earlier practitioners not so much out of homage but ironically as a way of indicating their distance from them. One of the key thinkers in influencing this change was Walter Benjamin. In his essay 'The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction' (widely available to read online) Benjamin described how the introduction of printing, photography and film had not only replaced traditional art forms but also transformed their meaning. Most people experience the Mona Lisa not as a unique painting in the Louvre but as an image on personal stationery or T-shirts. This both underlines its importance and devalues its meaning.



Gustave Courbet, *Good Morning Monsieur Courbet*, 1854 (oil on canvas)

More recently, an interest in popular culture has been superseded by an interest in the process of globalisation, the arrival of communications technology and the emergence of new ideas about the relationship between the artist, the artwork and the viewer.

In addressing these concerns, as always, art has continued to reinvent itself. In doing so, artists have responded to the political and economic context of their times and taken on new roles, materials and processes. At the same time they have both reflected and criticised the market and the ideas of the dominant group.



Do you think there's still a clear distinction between fine art and popular culture today or is it more useful to think in terms of a spectrum of visual culture?

With millions of images available online, is there still a place for the traditional art gallery? Make some brief notes in your learning log. You might want to revisit this question when you've made your gallery visit.



Now read the Introduction to WHA. This makes a number of points similar in kind to the course guide introduction you've just read.

The template overleaf, if you decide to use it, is intended to help you structure your thoughts and organise your ideas about the reading you do, in WHA and elsewhere. You'll see that the headings are based on the introduction to the course guide. As you read about a particular period (bearing in mind what we said earlier about treating such definitions with caution) you should take notes, write down any interesting quotes, etc., and then try and distil your notes into the template so that you have an overview of the period in question – and so that your tutor can see that you've grasped the salient points. You don't have to write a lot – probably no more than 200 words for any single section – and it's quite acceptable to write in note form. There's not much space so it's fine to use abbreviations, but make sure that your tutor can understand them. You don't have to find something to write in every box – sometimes you won't have anything to say under one of the headings. If you include a quote from WHA you can just put the page number after the quote, as we've done overleaf; if you quote from another source, put (Jones, 1981, p.00) after the quote and write the full reference under the template, always remembering to use Harvard referencing. If there's a particular artwork that reflects your point, note it down, using the format: Artist, Title, Date (Medium).

Here's an example of how to fill in a template based on the Introduction to WHA to give you an idea what we're looking for. In this example, we've just included direct quotes from WHA. Your templates will probably also include your own notes and perhaps quotes from other sources, properly referenced.

Type of information	Notes or quotations
Political, economic or social factors	<p>'In every human society, art forms part of a complex structure of beliefs and rituals, moral and social codes.' (p.2)</p> <p>'Architecture has often been used to assist as well as signal the subjection of one people by another...Franz Fanon (wrote) of 'a world of statues: the statue of the general who carried out the conquest, the statue of the engineer who built the bridge..'' (p.16)</p> <p>'There are no more obvious examples of the way in which visual images can sustain cultural structures than those of blacks in Western art.' (p.16)</p> <p>'[Women painters were] expected to display in their works those qualities of delicacy, charm, sentiment and softness, which, with a yielding conformity to convention, men supposed to be essentially feminine.' (p.20)</p>
Changes to status or training of artists	<p>'It was at this time [since the sixteenth century] that painters and sculptors assumed a superior status to that of potters... and other practitioners of the decorative arts.' (p.3)</p>
Development of materials and processes	<p>'The manner of the representation is restricted by the materials and tools, by the skill passed on from one generation to the next and by what can only be called 'tribal' conventions.' (p.2)</p> <p>'The production of any artefact is dependent on both manual skill and technical knowledge.' (p.3)</p> <p>'As hollow bronze statues are much lighter in weight than equivalent pieces in stone...the medium permits a wider range of formal effects.' (p.5)</p> <p>'Pigments are basically of two types: stains that are absorbed into the ground and coloured powders....mixed with some adhesive binding agent and applied on to the ground.' (p.5)</p>

<p>Styles and movements</p>	<p>'An individual style, akin to handwriting ....can imply artists' whole outlook and range of response, their view of themselves and of the human condition.' (p.13)</p> <p>'Gustave Courbet and other mid-nineteenth century painters sought to represent the harsh realities of contemporary life with uncompromising candour.' (p.14)</p> <p>'Idealist artists sought the perfect proportions of the human figure, that is the relationship in size of parts of the body to each other and the whole, derived from ancient Greek statues.' (p.14)</p>
<p>Inside and outside influences</p>	<p>'Japanese artists had developed a woodcut process for making color prints which were imported into Europe and America from the 1850s and enthusiastically received by many artists who welcomed an escape from the European tradition of oil painting.' (p.8)</p>
<p>Critics, thinkers and historians</p>	<p>'Giorgio Vasari in 1550 [conceived] the history of art since the fourteenth century as a series of progressive movements.... Giotto to suggest solidity and expressive movement.... Masaccio mastered perspective and light and shade..Leonardo and Raphael added grace and beauty....Michelangelo 'a genius universal in each art.' (p.21)</p> <p>'Joachim Winckelmann in <i>History and Ancient Art</i> gave an account of an organic process of maturity, birth and decadence.' (p.21)</p>

If you decide not to use this template, that's fine, but please do bear the six headings in mind as you take notes. In this way, you'll ensure that you've covered all the various aspects of the artworks you've studied. You might find it useful to use the template for the first couple of assignments so that your tutor can check that you're getting the most out of your reading at an early stage in the course. Do whatever works best for you.

## Visit an art gallery

Your first visit will be to an art gallery and this visit will form the basis of your submission for Assignment One. In addition you should make drawings, take photographs (if it's allowed), collect images (postcards, etc.) and write about your experience in your learning log. The notes on this page will give you some ideas. Before you visit the gallery, review the guidance about looking at works of art in the introduction to this course guide.

A programmed visit to an art gallery may seem superfluous since the course constantly encourages you to see original works, but this visit is different. Your everyday visits are to see permanent collections and temporary exhibitions; the building and the galleries themselves are incidental. This time, one of your objectives will be to focus on the gallery itself and write a report on your experience in your learning log. The other will be to look in particular at representations of the human figure. This includes portraits, self-portraits and nudes, as well as religious subjects. You'll be writing about some of the works you see for your assignment so read the assignment guidelines thoroughly before you make your visit. [You'll be encouraged to visit an art gallery again in Part Three, when you'll look at some other genres such as landscape, still life and interiors.]



Titian, *Venus and Adonis*, 1553



John Napper, *The National Gallery: Interior of Gallery VIII*, 1988

A visit to a major art gallery will amply repay any effort you have to make to get there, but if you're short of time or the distances involved are prohibitive, visit a local gallery instead. Whichever gallery you visit, choose two or three works of art to examine very carefully; allow yourself to notice everything about them. Try making a list in your learning log of the colour, pigments, materials, subject and technique. The art historian Kenneth Clark said that he enjoyed hanging exhibitions because he liked to discover what the paintings said to each other. Try this for yourself and look for the correspondences and contrasts in the galleries.

Look at the galleries themselves. How do they complement the experience of seeing the works? Are there too many or too few works in each room? Is the lighting good? Can you get close enough to the works of art to study them properly? Can you sit down? Can you easily get back to revisit earlier parts of the gallery or exhibition or do you feel propelled along from beginning to end?

Think about the information you're given in the gallery itself (as opposed to a guidebook that you have to pay for). Is there information on every piece of art? Can you read it easily? Is it detailed enough – or perhaps too detailed? Can you hire an audio guide? (A few galleries, e.g. the Royal Collection galleries, include this in the ticket price but most charge extra.) Think about how the gallery designer and curator have solved particular display problems. Can you think of different answers?

**If you're unable to make a gallery visit yourself, visit an online gallery instead. There's a good selection at BBC – Your Paintings. All the major art galleries, in the UK and elsewhere, have very sophisticated websites that allow you to view works in their collections. In some cases (e.g. the Louvre) you can make a virtual tour of parts of the collection. You could review the website itself as part of your report.**

### On your visit think about the classical canon

The term 'canon' – in art and literature – refers to a body of works traditionally accepted as being of particular value. There isn't a single overarching canon; the Chinese canon will be completely different from the western canon, for example. For centuries the western canon took the classical art of ancient Greece and Rome as its point of departure. The concept of a classically-based canon only came under serious challenge in the nineteenth century, for example with the work of the Impressionists and other artists more concerned with realism than with depicting some sort of classical 'ideal'. It was in the nineteenth century, too, that the canon expanded to include Gothic art and architecture and Italian art before Raphael (which provided a model for the work of the Pre-Raphaelites). Up to that point, 'canonical' essentially meant 'classical' – which is why Level 1 students of art history need to know something about Greek and Roman art.

So who decides what's canonical and what's not? Works of art produced within the classical tradition assumed a viewer who knew what they were looking at and could interpret it accordingly – in other words, a classically-educated social élite. This same social élite controlled the academies that sprung up across Europe after the Renaissance to educate aspiring artists. Clearly the situation is quite different today, when virtually everyone in the west is literate and when there is open access to the arts, not least via the internet and media like TV and radio. While visiting the art gallery, you may find that the choice of works – and the way they're displayed – still broadly reflects traditional western ideas of what great art is. Or maybe not – it depends which gallery you visit. Municipal galleries will often have a small permanent collection organised on quite traditional (i.e. classically-based) lines but will also hold temporary exhibitions – not necessarily of modern art – which take a more innovative approach, for example by making links between seemingly disparate artists. A 2012 show at Tate Liverpool, for example, juxtaposed the later work of Turner, Monet and Cy Twombly.

Make some notes on how your chosen gallery reflects the notion of a western canon.



## Portraits and self-portraits

When you look at a portrait, try and find out something about the sitter so that you can judge how the artist has interpreted their character. Focus on two or three personalities. As well as looking at how the artist has portrayed the sitter, think about where the picture was originally displayed. How big is it? Who was it for? Who would have seen it?

An artist's self-portrait is historically fascinating as well as being personally significant. Go online and compare the self-portraits of Dürer, Rembrandt, van Gogh and Munch. Amongst more modern works look at self-portraits by Lucian Freud, Bruce Nauman, Cindy Sherman, Sam Taylor-Wood and Sarah Lucas. What new problems arise when an artist decides to portray themselves?

As part of your research you might wish to visit the National Portrait Gallery website [www.npg.org.uk](http://www.npg.org.uk) Choose two or three portraits for special study, as described above.

Have you ever attempted a self-portrait? If not, now might be a good opportunity to give it a try. Even if you don't feel brave enough to attempt one, think about how you'd explain yourself visually to others. What would you include? What would you leave out?



Cindy Sherman, *Self-Portrait of Marilyn Monroe*, 1982 (ektachrome photo)

## The female nude

In *The Nude: A Study in Ideal Form*, the art historian Kenneth Clark distinguished between the naked (i.e. unclothed) figure and the nude. He reserved the latter term for an ideal figure, usually derived from classical precedents. When Clark first wrote his book in 1956, he was criticised for hinting that there might be some element of physical attraction in the portrayal of the human body. By 1989, when Gill Saunders published *The Nude: A New Perspective* in response to Clark, art historians were already more open about the political, social and sexual context for the nude.

Go online and research some of the most famous female nudes such as Titian's *Venus of Urbino*, Velázquez's *Rokeby Venus* and nudes by Ingres, Manet and Gauguin. All of these are illustrated and discussed in WHA. Then compare the way in which women artists have portrayed their own bodies and those of other women. You might want to consider some twentieth-century women performance artists such as Marina Abramović in this regard. Also think about the rare instances where women have created well-known images of male nudes such as Sam Taylor-Wood's video portrait of the sleeping David Beckham.



Frida Kahlo, *The Land Itself or Two Naked in the Jungle*, 1939 (oil on tin)

## Religious paintings

During your gallery visit, take a look at one or two religious paintings. These can be quite hard for the modern viewer to interpret because few of us now have the level of biblical knowledge that contemporary viewers would have had. If you see a painting that interests you, take a note of the subject and look up the story when you get home. Buy one or two postcards so that you can revisit these images from a more informed perspective later on in the course.



Jacopo Palma, *The Resurrection of Lazarus*, c.1508-10 (panel)

We're already asking quite a lot of you on this visit so don't get bogged down in the detail of what are often quite complex images. Concentrate on how the human form is represented in religious images. How are the main subjects dressed? How are they posed? What are their facial expressions like? Do they look like you might imagine people to have looked in biblical times or are they idealised figures? (Don't worry, this question will make more sense when you've worked through Part One.) Make some notes in your learning log.

# Assignment one

Please make sure that you look at the assessment criteria and the notes about sending in work which appear in the introduction to this course guide and in your Student Handbook. Remember, if you decide to have your work assessed, this part of the course won't count towards your final grade so you should relax and think of it as a practice.

**The following is the only work that you should send to your tutor.**

1. A minimum of two and a maximum of four pages of A4 of notes – one for each artwork. If you wish, you can set your notes out according to the template below. Write about a maximum of four portraits, self-portraits, nudes or religious works from the gallery you've visited or seen on the internet. You should carry out your own research about the works from books and articles and the gallery and other websites. If you use the template, don't worry if you can't write 200 words – or anything at all – under every heading. This is just intended as a guideline. Don't spread yourself too thinly. It's better to research two or three works in some detail than produce a sketchy account of four different works.

If you decide against using the template, remember to bear the six headings in mind as you write and organise your notes.

Type of information	Notes and quotations
Political, economic or social factors	
Changes to status or training of artists	
Development of materials and processes	
Styles and movements	
Inside and outside influences	
Critics, thinkers and historians	

2. Two annotations of works that you've seen. Take this opportunity to really use your eyes. Choose two of the works you've seen to annotate, which may or may not be works that you've discussed above; if possible compare one to the other. Before you start, re-read the note about annotations in the introduction to this course guide.
3. A 500-word analysis about one of the works you've seen, referring to some of the concepts that you've studied in this part of the course. This might be about anything from how a portrait reflects its political and social context to the techniques used in a sculpture. This could be one of the works you've already written about – or a different one. It's up to you. Use the headings above to help you structure your analysis.

## Reflection

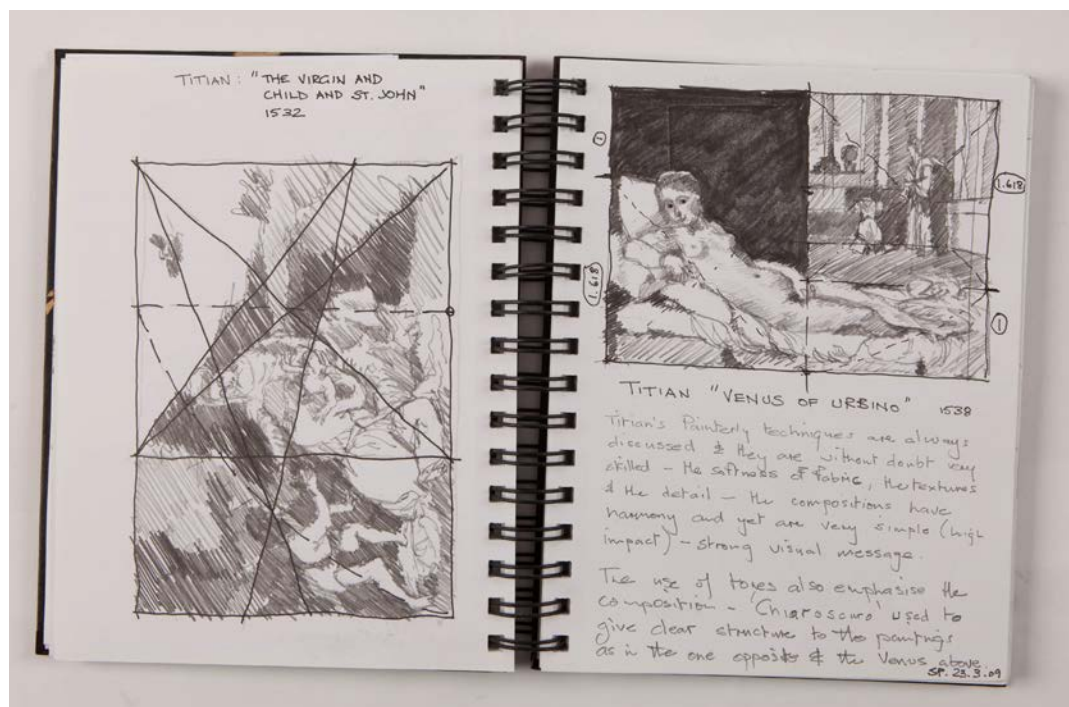
Before you send this assignment to your tutor, take a look at the assessment criteria for this course, which will be used to mark your assignments when your work is formally assessed. The assessment criteria are listed in the introduction to this course guide.

Review your work using the criteria and make notes in your learning log. Send these reflections to your tutor with the rest of your assignment submission.

Your tutor may take a while to get back to you so continue with the course while you're waiting.

## Reworking your assignment

Following feedback from your tutor, you may wish to rework some of your assignment, especially if you are ultimately submitting your work for formal assessment. If you do this, make sure you reflect on what you have done and why in your learning log.



OCA student Stephen Powell