Thomas Mills
High School & Sixth Form

The Thomas Mills High School & Sixth Form: Art Curriculum

The Thomas Mills High School & Sixth Form **Art curriculum** aims to give pupils a broad and meaningful understanding of visual art, covering the three OFSTED curriculum strands:

Substantive Knowledge Pupils gain knowledge of core artistic elements—line, tone, pattern, form, shape, and colour—alongside key artists and cultural traditions. They explore both historical and contemporary artworks across European and non-European traditions, developing visual language and cultural awareness.

Ways of Knowing Pupils learn how to observe, analyse, and interpret artworks and materials. They develop visual literacy through sketchbook work, experimentation, and critique, understanding how artists express meaning using the formal elements and how these can vary across time and culture.

Personal Knowledge Pupils are encouraged to reflect on their own responses to art, developing creative confidence and independence. Through projects and sketchbooks, they begin to explore identity, environment, and culture, and learn to articulate their personal views and choices in art-making.

All pupils will broaden their visual language, develop a range of artistic skills, create visual statements in the world that they are proud of and gain an enjoyment of the arts.

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Year 7 Art Curriculum for **Thomas Mills High School**,

Year 7			
Term	**Topic**	**Knowledge and Skills**	**Useful Links**
1	**Name of topic** BASIC ELEMENTS **Autumn Term** **Introduction to the Formal Elements of Art** **Line, Tone, Pattern, Form, Shape, Colour**	**Knowledge:** Pupils explore the basic building blocks of art. Each half-term introduces and reinforces a different formal element, developing foundational skills. Pupils study artists such as **Paul Klee** and **Kandinsky** for line and abstraction, **Dubuffet** and **Van Gogh** for expressive mark-making and tone, and **Matisse** for simplified form and bold colour. Pupils also explore the **colour wheel**, colour mixing, complementary colours, and warm vs cool tones **Skills:** • Observational drawing using line and tone • Mark-making techniques (ink, pencil, pastel) • Understanding and creating pattern and texture • Colour theory and practical mixing using paint • Compositional planning and visual analysis	• Websites here • Tate Kids – Elements of Art • BBC Bitesize – Colour Theory • Google Arts & Culture – Paul Klee • Van Gogh Museum Resources
Assessments		**Autumn 1:** Sketchbook project focused on the elements of line, tone, and pattern **Autumn 2:** Final colour project inspired by Kandinsky or Matisse, using formal elements and colour theory	

2	**Non-European Art Traditions Aboriginal Art, Indian Rangoli, Islamic Tiles, Chinese Brush Painting, African Textiles**	**Knowledge:** d Pupils are introduced to global art traditions outside the Western canon. They study the purpose, symbolism, and design principles behind Aboriginal dot paintings, **Rangoli designs**, **Islamic geometric tiles**, **Chinese calligraphy and brush painting**, and **African textile patterns**. Cultural context and meaning are central to the exploration. **Skills:** • Repetition, symmetry, and geometric pattern • Symbolic representation and storytelling through pattern • Use of natural pigment-inspired colour palettes • Mixed media and pattern-based design work • Layering, dotting, and brush control .	• British Museum – World Cultures • Tate Kids – Pattern Activities • Google Arts & Culture – Islamic Art • V&A Museum – African Textiles
Assessments		**Spring 1:** Create a design based on non-European pattern traditions, with a sketchbook of development and research **Spring 2:** Final piece in the style of a selected tradition (e.g. Islamic tile or Aboriginal painting) with artist/context analysis	

3	**Landscapes and the Environment Inspired by Hockney, Van Gogh, and Matisse**	**Knowledge:** Pupils investigate how artists represent **landscape and environment**. They explore **David Hockney's landscapes**—from LA's vivid pools to Yorkshire's rolling hills—and compare them to the expressive brushwork of **Van Gogh** and the vibrant collages of **Matisse.** They consider colour, space, movement, and emotion in landscape painting **Skills:** Landscape composition using foreground, midground, and background Perspective and scale Use of expressive line and brushwork Colour mixing for atmosphere and mood Experimentation with collage or digital elements	• Tate Kids – Landscapes • The Hockney Foundation • Van Gogh Museum – Landscapes
Assessment		**Summer 1:** Observational or expressive sketchbook landscape studies using different media **Summer 2:** Final landscape painting or collage inspired by Hockney, Van Gogh or Matisse, with evaluation of artistic choices	