

Visual Art as a key Learning Area

- People make art to interpret and respond to experience in visual form. Since the beginning of time humans have used images, made marks and shaped objects. Human beings have made useful and decorative objects as well as made images to record and represent experience.
- Visual art fulfils many roles in our society. Some art works have a specific function or purpose. Others are made simply for their aesthetic qualities.
- Visual arts experiences in schools develop students' capacities to create visual and tactile works. Visual art enables students to understand the world around them and to respond to it and record and express feelings and ideas about it.
- Visual art is an essential learning area in the same sense that learning to write is.
- As writing is a form of communication and a way of expressing ideas, feelings etc, visual art is also a way of communicating visually.
- Though practical experience students acquire an understanding of a diverse range of two and three –dimensional media. They learn to use both traditional processes and new technologies to communicate visually.
- Through manipulating visual media students bring into existence objects and images that have not existed before. This process involves many steps and this fosters the learning of a range of skills and understandings that underpin education in other areas. Students generate ideas, observe, experiment, manipulate material, evaluate, revise, discuss, examine and share. They base their ideas on play, experience, perceptions, personal concerns, observations, fantasy and imagination.
- Experience in visual art also enables students to experience the social, cultural and historical context of the visual world around them. Through this aspect students learn to describe, analyse, interpret and experience the rich tapestry of the visual world. Study of this world gives students an opportunity to understand the meanings, symbols and imagery and values of their own culture, other cultures and minority groups.

Goals/Aims of Visual art

The aims and goals of visual art are to involve children in the following three broad areas:

Creating, making and presenting visual images

1. Exploring and developing ideas
 - Generating ideas
 - Bringing new objects and images into existence
 - Transforming existing images
 - Refining ideas
 - Selecting & rejecting
 - Making decisions

2. Using skills, techniques and processes
 - Experimentation with a wide range of media, tools, materials and techniques
 - Formal demonstrations of techniques and skills
 - Practice and rehearsal

Arts criticism and aesthetics

- Listening, talking, reading and writing about works of art
- Reflecting on own work and the work of others
- Describing, analysing, interpreting, judging, valuing and challenging art works and arts ideas
- Developing aesthetics values
- Learning about aesthetic values in a range of social and cultural contexts

Past and present contexts

- Analysing, researching the arts of past and present
- Understanding, interpreting and questioning the arts of past and present
- Developing knowledge about how societies record information about the arts and the values they use to select and elevate some art and omit others

Kindergarten and Grade One Curriculum

At this level students are starting to generate ideas by using their imaginations and abilities to observe, and employ a range of simple materials and processes. They talk about their work to others. They study a range of visual arts work and learn to recognise and discuss particular features, and provide opinions and give simple reasons for their judgements. They recognise characteristics of works from different cultures and times.

In creating, making and presenting students will:

- Draw, paint, manipulate and construct in order to interpret fantasy and imagination, record observations, express feelings and thoughts
- Invent structures, images or forms for a purpose
- Explore different visual concepts such as space, pattern, contrast and form
- Demonstrate simple manipulative and physical skills in collage, construction and assemblage
- Experiment with different media and tools
- Share work with others in the classroom and elsewhere in the school
- Discuss their work, giving simple reasons for choice of materials, ideas and methods

In arts criticism and aesthetics, students will:

- Look at works and describe some features
- Explain features they like and disliked, giving reasons why
- Describe the meaning of works ('I think this painting is about...')
- Recognise that visual arts works are made to be looked at and enjoyed and some can be used for a variety of purposes

In past and present contexts, students will:

- Participate in cultural celebrations from their own and other cultures
- Show awareness that visual arts happen in their own community
- Talk with adults about the what, why and how of making works of visual arts

Creating, making and presenting visual images

1. Exploring and developing ideas

Students will draw upon play and imagination in making art works

Evidence of this could include:

- Using observations, experiences and imagination as a source for clay modelling, drawing and painting
- Drawing or painting images of people with a focus on detail such as curly hair, buttons and shoes
- Choosing different combinations of shapes and colours to make into other shapes based on real or imagined images or forms
- Drawing from imagination to construct buildings, puppets or crazy machines by assembling and joining boxes and other materials

2. Using skills, techniques and processes

Students will use basic elements of the visual arts such as colour, line and shape and explores them in making art works

Evidence of this could include:

- Using a range of materials to create different effects in drawing (use thick and thin pens and pencils, bright or dull colours, pinching or pulling techniques in clay)
- Creating images as representations of people, animals or objects or make repeat patterns by pressing objects on to paper or other surfaces
- Making textured rubbings from different surfaces in the environment and select and use in imaginative pictures or design of plants, cars, and buildings
- Selecting and arranging shapes and colours to make cards

Arts criticism and aesthetics

Students will respond to visual art in a personal way

Evidence of this could include:

- Naming and talking about the use of different materials used in making art works (wax crayons, thick paints, pointy pencils)
- Using words to describe particular qualities in art works (wiggly lines, strong shapes, prickly textures)
- Looking at a range of two- and three-dimensional art works and talk about what they like and dislike, giving reasons for preferences
- Telling a story about their own art making
- Making connections between their observations of art works and their own experiences

Past and present contexts

Students will show an awareness of the visual arts in everyday life

Evidence of this could include:

- Recognising the major forms associated with the visual arts (can say, ‘This is a painting, photograph, sculpture’ and know that the people who made them are women and men called painters, photographers or sculptors)
- Knowing that two- and three-dimensional art can be made for different purposes (for play, pleasure, celebration, everyday use)
- Talking about where they live and about people who design and make houses, furniture, and rugs for the floor and bowls for breakfast cereal
- Recognising examples of art and design in their own environment and in the media (in magazines, on billboards, in shops)

Grade Two, Three and Four Curriculum

At this level students are more able to draw ideas and invention from fantasy and imagination, from other cultures and communities and from observing the world around them. They combine experiments with the learned skills of arranging, designing, differentiating and interpreting. They include more perceptive observation and detail in their work and work collaboratively on projects.

Students build on the physical, manipulative, visual and intuitive skills developed earlier and experiment with a range of materials and techniques. They gradually become more skilled in describing what they are making, expressing and interpreting, giving reasons for their choices and decisions.

In creating, making and presenting students will:

- Make works showing a knowledge of visual cues and conventions and manipulate these to represent form and dimension
- Select from a range of acquired skills and techniques for invention
- Animating images and forms spatially or electronically
- Experiment in depth with media with similar or like characteristics to explore limitations and combinations
- Explore the relationship between form and function in design
- Integrate visual arts experiences with dance, drama, media and music
- Make, design and arrange works for a specific audience or purpose
- Select and present works that demonstrate their competence in aspects of visual arts practice, such as the use of particular media or colour schemes

In arts criticism and aesthetics students will:

- Discuss visual arts work of their own and others, using personal criteria
- Compare works and establish preferences, giving reasons
- Consider the value works have for different people, for example, to communicate a message, express an idea or opinion, reflect a cultural belief, or for enjoyment
- Use descriptive language and terminology to support critical activities
- Describe subtleties of difference in aspects of techniques and media (e.g. transparent or opaque colour) and give aesthetic reasons for preferences
- Study the relationship between form and function in designing

In past and present contexts students will:

- Compare the visual characteristics and functions of past and present works from their own and other cultures, focusing on aspects such as how, when, where and why
- Understand that the visual arts work forms a part of history and tradition
- Share experiences of different types of art and design practices such as popular arts, community arts and traditional arts
- Look at and talk about works by both women and men
- Understand that people make their living as artists and designers
- Appreciate the contribution of artists and designers in the community

Creating, making and presenting visual images

1. Exploring and developing ideas

Students will use experience and imagination to make art works

Evidence of this could include:

- Using combinations of colours to create different effects in printmaking, painting or drawing
- Creating real and imagined environments by selecting and joining a range of three-dimensional shapes in clay or board
- Designing and make their own shapes to use printing stamps for radial, linear or random patterns or pictures
- Interpreting a character from a story using a variety of different collage materials.
- Drawing, making or arranging objects and images to form imaginary worlds for a story character to support drama improvisation or puppetry

Students will explore ideas and feelings through making art works

Evidence of this could include:

- Making and arranging different images, shapes and colours to make art works that tell visual stories (cartoons, book and poem illustrations, animation sequences)
- Using art forms from different cultures as stimulus for their own art works (Asian kites, Indonesian textiles, masks)
- Designing posters and other art works that explore issues relating to conservation and the environment, or other issues by using paint, drawing and cut out magazine pictures and letters

2. Using skills, techniques and processes

Students will make choices about elements in the visual arts and organise them in expressive ways

Evidence of this could include:

- Cutting and pasting images, words and letters to explore simple lettering and layout in an advertisement for a storybook or to send a message
- Showing understanding of concepts such as ‘small and tall, ‘narrow and wide’ in drawing, painting or modelling
- Designing and making works with a function to send to others (e.g. a package for a gift, postcards)
- Creating symmetrical or asymmetrical patterns using weaving, stitching, drawing, painting
- Constructing imaginary or known shapes in clay to demonstrate skills of joining, modelling and forming

Students will explore and use several art elements and use specific skills, techniques and processes appropriate to the medium

Evidence of this could include:

- Selecting and using different textural effects and surfaces in paint or collage by using thick, thin, opaque, transparent, wet or dry paint
- Exploring point of view to make single or composite drawings of objects viewed from close-up, far away, underneath, above, below eye level, surface reflection
- Employing skills of slotting, flanging, folding, scoring and curling to make sculptural works in paper and card
- Developing a simple logo design suitable for a given purpose or group. Stencilling or printing/designing onto a T-shirt
- Scaling-up, enlarging, reducing and distorting images using drawn grids or with computer assistance

Arts criticism and aesthetics

Students will responds to visual arts works, giving reasons for preferences

Evidence of this could include:

- Looking at a number of landscape paintings and comparing shapes, forms, lines, colour families, patterns and textures
- Telling others in the class why they prefer a particular art work from a small display of reproductions or from objects brought from home (e.g. pottery, fabrics, or baskets)
- Making up stories to interpret art works
- Recognising and naming the techniques and art mediums they use in practical activities (e.g. drawing, painting, collage, printing, weaving, constructing, modelling)

Students will respond to key features of visual arts works

Evidence of this could include:

- Comparing art works, focusing on how images, forms, colours, shapes and lines are organised and arranged
- Using words to describe particular qualities in patterns, designs and decorative surfaces (symmetrical/asymmetrical, rhythmic, balanced, delicate, bold)
- Identifying the way geometric shapes such as squares, ovals, triangles and circles and forms such as cube, cone, ellipse and cylinder often form the basis for two- and three-dimensional work
- Recognising and naming colours used in art works, including those of cool, warm and neutral
- Looking at art works and providing personal observations and opinions

Past and present contexts

Students will discuss ways visual art works are made and used for a range of purposes

Evidence of this could include:

- Comparing new and old objects (e.g. the making of a ceramic vase in contemporary times with pots made 3000 years ago)
- Understanding that different forms of art can be made for different purposes and functions (Aboriginal Australian and Indonesian culture use things such as body painting, carving and weaving for special purposes and occasions)
- Knowing that artists often draw the world around them (often represent people, plants animals and landscapes)
- Understanding weaving as a form of art and recognising examples of woven objects in their environment and in other cultures
- Knowing that many of the spaces they live in and the things they wear and use have been designed and made by artists, architects, craft artists and designers

Students will discuss visual arts works from several cultures

Evidence of this could include:

- Understanding the concept that art works can be made from observation of nature and the environment
- Looking at art works made by artists working in a range of cultures that show observations of the people, patterns of life and focus on their narrative and expressive qualities
- Understanding that lines, shapes, colours and forms can serve as symbols with different meanings in different situations (flags, logos, brands, letters, words, patterns)
- Knowing that some artists, architects, designers, craft designers make a living from their art

Grade Five, Six, Seven and Eight Curriculum

At this level students continue to draw ideas and invention from fantasy and imagination, from other cultures and communities and from observing the world around them at a more sophisticated level. Students begin to specialise in one or more areas and show increasing competence in the use of materials, processes and techniques.

Students begin to show preferences for one or more styles or forms of visual arts. They are more able to respond to, appreciate and discern expertise in the work of others and can evaluate their own competency levels.

In creating, making and presenting students will:

- Use drawing, photography, collage and experimentation to develop ideas
- Use a variety of resources for ideas, including imagery from the mass media
- Use lateral and logical thinking processes in developing ideas for invention and design
- Explore design problems, develop and evaluate prototypes, make final solutions and test against purpose and constraints
- Refine work for public exhibition and display
- Design and present their work to suit the needs of a particular audience
- Analyse, evaluate and discuss group and individual exhibitions and displays

In arts criticism and aesthetics, students will:

- Perceive the subtleties of technique, process and skill in expression
- Examine characteristic features of styles and themes, and discuss differences
- Focus on works to discern both explicit and implicit messages and ideas
- Make judgements based on experience and knowledge of the cultural and social context of the work being viewed
- Critically analyse and evaluate visual arts in both written and oral form
- Derive meaning from the works being observed and show an understanding of skills and techniques used by the artists and designers
- Recognise and use specialised and descriptive terminology in analytical and critical discussion and investigation
- Perceive their own visual arts activity and that of others in their social and cultural context

In past and present contexts, students will:

- Describe personal aesthetic awareness of works and explain preferences
- Identify and compare topics and themes used in their own and other cultures
- Identify different meanings assigned to visual symbols and conventions across cultures and societies both past and present
- Research links between the visual arts and the built and natural environment
- Examine the work of individual artists and designers in some depth and connect this with their own work
- Do research on potential careers in the visual arts industry

Creating, making and presenting visual images

1. Exploring and developing ideas

Students will experiment with ideas and explore feelings to find satisfactory solutions to tasks

Evidence of this could include:

- Using popular imagery as a source of ideas in conveying feelings and responses to time and culture by exploring contemporary styles in hair, clothing, and dress
- Reinterpreting imagery from cultural sources other than their own (e.g. design simple repeat patterns based on Indonesian images and apply to textile or paper surfaces)
- Demonstrating an ability to represent detailed figures, animals or machines in movement (sports, pets or factory production lines)
- Collaborating with others to design a three- dimensional sculptural form, which will enhance a local area

2. Using skills, techniques and processes

Students will select, combine and manipulate images, shapes and forms using a range of skills, techniques and processes

Evidence of this could include:

- Exploring the visual cues of size, scale overlap and perspective, colour, light, shade and shadow through drawing or photography to develop skills of two and three-dimensional representation
- Experimenting with colour in painted, drawn and printed images to create particular lighting effects of moods such as night-time, 'spotlit' or 'onstage'
- Using found objects and effective joining techniques to construct 3D forms based on a personal idea or interest (a flying machine)
- Exploring in painting or drawing point of view and other visual cues of size, scale, overlap and perspective, light, shade and shadow through observations of close-up, far away, underneath, above and below eye-level
- Using light and movement as inspiration for image making (e.g. exploring basic film making and photographic techniques)

Arts criticism and aesthetics

Students will talk and write informally about personal observation of visual arts works

Evidence of this could include:

- Analysing the arrangement of images and words in mass-produced printed materials to identify and discuss similarities and differences in their qualities, use, arrangement, colours used and techniques involved
- Focusing on different media and techniques used in paintings, drawing and printmaking and describing the particular textural, linear, colour and tonal qualities found in each
- Focusing on elements associated with three-dimensional work, such as form, dimension, shape, space, organisation, balance and location, and describe, orally or in writing, how artists have used these in their works
- Looking at useful products and discussing features of their design in relation to their prescribed function
- Visiting an exhibition of art works and writing a short descriptive report on what they saw and thought about the works

Past and present contexts

Students will identify distinguishing features of visual art works that locate them in a particular time, place or culture

Evidence of this could include:

- Showing awareness of the history of fashion (e.g. from the fifties to the nineties)
- Reflecting an understanding of stylistic traditions associated with landscape portraits, still life or other genres by comparing paintings, drawings and sculptures from different times and cultures in their own work and discussion
- Comparing art works, focusing on their different visual characteristics, expressive qualities and interpretive qualities and the social and cultural contexts in which they were made
- Investigating the broad range of design fields (built environment, graphic, product, environmental)

Sample Activities Kindergarten, Grades One and Two

1. Examine collage pictures by Patricia Mullins in Crocodile Beat. Discuss with the children the way the pictures have been made and the materials that have been used. Provide tissue paper and glue and invite children to create their own image using torn tissue paper
2. What patterns can you make in the fingerprint? Make a print of some
3. Look carefully at old shoes and sketch them using the alpha chalks
4. Have a reproduction of a painting set up for children to look at. What is this painting about? Either discuss as a group or have children record ideas for sharing later
5. How many different colours can you make? (Only give children primary colours and black and white so they learn how to mix colours)
6. Talk about families. What are they? What are they for? Look at some examples of family portraits. Invite children to paint their family portrait.
7. What ideas do you have for your own painting?

Sample Activities Grades Two, Three and Four

1. How were the illustrations in this book made? What sort of lines, shapes, colours, and textures has the illustrator used? What sort of mood has the illustrator created? Using the same materials to make your own pictures using some of these ideas
2. Experiment with the monoprint technique. How many different types of marks can you make? Use your discoveries to sketch a musical instrument
3. Use the mirror and coloured drawing material to draw an accurate self-portrait
4. Choose one of the painting reproductions. Who painted it? What story is the painting telling? What material has the artist used? Make a list of 10 observations about colour, line, mood and your feelings about the painting
5. How many different shades of green can you make? Use them in a painting about a fruit and vegetable display
6. Make a self-portrait wearing the clothes you would most like to wear. Use paint, collage, crayon, dye, textas, pencils or any combination of these
7. Explore different drawing implements. (Give children a circular piece of paper about the size of a small dinner plate). Fill a circle completely with minute dots, shapes, patterns, marks and lines. Make it really detailed and complex
8. Use ink to make a detailed sketch of the skull
9. Press clay into tiles. Experiment with various objects to see how many different patterns or marks can be pressed into the tile. When finished experimenting make one tile using a combination of interesting patterns and textures
10. Use Georgia O'Keeffe's Light Iris 1924 painting as a starting point. What can be seen in the shapes in the painting? Describe the colours she has used. Use viewing frames to look closely at parts of objects. Provide some flowers, viewing frames, watercolour paper and watercolours and ask children to paint the flower using colours like Georgia O'Keeffe did

Sample Activities Grades Five, Six, Seven and Eight

1. Examine the drawings of Chris Van Allsberg in The Mysteries of the Harris Burdick. What makes them successful as images? What techniques and elements has he employed? Brainstorm a list of situations/ideas that could be used as images in similar drawings. Create another page/image to add to the book using black and white drawing media
2. Observe carefully the patterns and colours in the Indonesian textiles. Use these as a basis for designing and silkscreen print patterns
3. Examine the work of Pop Artist, Andy Warhol. Discuss the ideas of this group of artists and the social context of their work. What distinguishes their work? Choose a product from the range provided. Sketch, in outline, the shapes on the product. Photocopy multiple copies to make your own pop art piece. Arrange the finished images in a pleasing manner and mount them onto a backing
4. Prepare a PowerPoint presentation about an artist you admire from the 20th Century. Include in it some biographical details, examples of the artist's work, ideas about their work and way of working
5. Examine the general features of chairs, their purpose, function and design. Discuss materials, shape, proportion, decoration and other features. Design and make a model chair
6. Make a series of drawings that can be scanned into a computer paint program. These images will be combined to print in layers on a printer. Colour each one individually in the paint program and print out each one in layers on the same piece of paper by putting it back into the printer
7. Design and make a hat that will help you to think like an artist (Suitable activity for all age groups)

Materials & Media

Children at all levels need time to experiment and explore media. The art program will give children the opportunity to use the following media and materials on a regular basis:

- Paint – Acrylic, Powder, Oils, Watercolour
- Fingerpaint
- Printmaking – Lino, Silk-screen, Etching, Collagraph, Monoprinting, Stencil Printing, Rubbings
- Drawing – Coloured Pencil, Blacklead pencil from HB to 6B, Oil Crayon, Chalk Pastels, Ink, Charcoal, Texta, Biro
- Crayon & Dye Wash
- Gesso
- Photography – Conventional, Digital
- Fibres & Fabric – Weaving, Stitchery, Dyeing, Batik, Sewing, Quilting, Knitting
- Sculpture – Clay, Papier Mache, Construction, Carving
- Collage – Tissue Paper, Found Objects, Paper, Fabric
- Computer generated graphics and images, and manipulation of images through graphics software
- Computer programs such as Kid Pix, Adobe Photoshop, Paint
- Digital video
- Wire, cellophane, fishing line, coloured card, tissue paper for Alexander Calder inspired mobiles
- Hessian and wool for chain stitch embroidery
- Aida fabric and thread for cross stitch
- Fimo, Sculptamold and other 3D modelling materials
- 35 mm slide transparencies