



AS Art and Design

PERSONAL INVESTIGATION

Theme for AS Personal Investigation: Rhythms and Cycles

GCE Art and Design

Personal Investigation support

Centres are free to devise their own projects, tasks or themes for the Personal Investigation component.

This document suggests a broad theme that you could use with your students for the AS Personal Investigation component. It also suggests starting points relevant to each of the endorsed titles, although students can interpret the theme according to their own interests and research, or the resources available.

The theme and starting points within this document are suggestions and are not intended to be prescriptive. You are free to devise any project, task or theme for the Personal Investigation.

Theme

Rhythms and Cycles

The cycles of life, death, decay and rebirth have provided a wealth of inspiration for artists, craftspeople and designers.

The Earth is responsible for natural events resulting in widely contrasting visual spectacles, from vast tidal estuaries to jagged mountain peaks.

The sea changes with every tide and new weather front – calm azure blue one minute, steel grey crashing against cliffs and harbour walls the next.

Each season produces its own unique visual display, beginning with spring as new life emerges.

Fashions change with the season as well - winter's drab textiles are replaced by summer's colourful designs, often recycling and reviving the styles of previous generations.

Here are some more ideas that might help you begin your research:

- frogspawn, eggs, newborn lambs/calves
- building, recycling, reclamation/demolition sites
- shop windows, markets, street vendors, carnivals, fêtes
- clouds, rainbows, whirlwinds
- music, waves, rivers, tides
- timetables, maps/contours, journeys
- ferries, trains, racing/rally cars, racehorses, greyhounds
- routines, rituals, ceremonies, habits, rush hour
- emotions, movement, development, evolution.

If possible, begin your work on the theme by recording from direct observation and experience. Try to select sources which are unusual or challenging, sources which will provide you with a variety of visual stimuli from which you can develop your work.

Starting points

The starting points below may help you form ideas. You can follow them closely, use them as a source of information, or produce your own individual response to the theme.

- **Fine Art** – human lifecycles have provided inspiration for artists such as Ron Mueck, Frida Kahlo, Paula Rego, Ken Currie, Maggi Hambling and Augustus John.
- **Fine Art** – abstract artists experiment with the rhythms created by the juxtaposition of colour and form. Look at the work of Piet Mondrian, Joan Miró, Mark Rothko and Howard Hodgkin.
- **Graphic Communication** – rhythms, cycles and movement are often used creatively to tell stories in advertising. The Sony Bravia campaign 'Colour Like No Other' was a series of adverts which rhythmically changed and moved from one shape to another.
- **Textile Design** – nature, growth and decay often inspire contemporary textiles. Kathleen McFarlane uses animal, vegetable and mineral forms for reference, combining weaving, crocheting, stitching and knotting to create her unique pieces.
- **Three-dimensional Design** – operas such as Wagner's *Ring Cycle* have given set designers such as Ezio Frigerio and Christian Fenouillat opportunities to create environments that enrich and enhance the whole production.
- **Photography** – waiting for the right moment is often dependent on the natural cycles and rhythms of the Sun or Moon. Landscape photographer Art Sinsabaugh would wait for hours to capture an exact moment at sunrise. Henri Cartier-Bresson and Bill Brandt took unique snapshots of peoples' lives, timed to capture poignant, precious and unrepeatable moments.