

Unit 13: Art and Design Specialist Contextual Investigation

Unit code:	H/502/5749
QCF Level 3:	BTEC National
Credit value:	10
Guided learning hours:	60

● Aim and purpose

This unit aims to develop learners' skills, knowledge and understanding, investigating contemporary and historical practice in art, craft and design relevant to their specialist pathway. Learners will gain an insight into different practitioners' ideas and approaches and will use their research to inform and inspire their own practice.

● Unit introduction

Past and present artists, crafts people and designers have all been influenced in different ways by contemporary and historical contextual understanding. Professional practitioners from all visual fields recognise the value of researching other practitioners' work to help develop new ideas and inform their understanding of specialist areas. In this unit learners will investigate contemporary and historical practice in art, craft and design relevant to their specialist pathway. Learners will gain an insight into different ideas and approaches and develop an understanding of the context the artist, craftsperson or designer worked or is working in. Learners' choice of subject matter will cover a breadth of historical and contemporary movements, artists and designers. Learners will collate information of others' practice from a range of sources including visits to galleries, museums, market research and practitioners' workshops and studios. They will be expected to keep records of their research findings and evaluate their understanding throughout the unit.

Learners will analyse aspects of art, craft and design production and consider how a professional body of work relates to their own specialist practice. Learners may focus on a particular period of historical or contemporary practice to explore in depth and present their findings. In working through this unit learners will explore and analyse the various materials, processes and techniques that practitioners use in constructing their designs. They will also research the social, political and environmental influences surrounding work produced at different times in historical and contemporary practice. Learners will use their research to inform and inspire their own practice.

● Learning outcomes

On completion of this unit a learner should:

- 1 Know how the work of historical and contemporary specialist practitioners can influence current practice
- 2 Understand the context in which specialist work was produced
- 3 Understand the function, purpose and qualities of creative specialist work
- 4 Be able to evaluate, structure and present findings.

Unit content

1 Know how the work of historical and contemporary specialist practitioners can influence current practice

Research: sources eg workshop, gallery, museum, visits, shows, exhibitions, visiting practitioners, learning centre resources, internet; CD ROM, DVD, printed matter

Production of art and design: ideas eg initial inspiration, starting point; construction eg methods, equipment, design, process, recording, techniques; factors eg impact, power, influence, choice of creative tools, use of materials, size, volume of work, final outcome

Visual vocabulary: use of media; communication eg design ideas, visual language; formal elements eg line, tone colour, texture, shape, form, scale, proportion, structure, composition, perspective; media; tools; techniques; processes

2 Understand the context in which specialist work was produced

Context of the work: cultural influences eg fashion, politics, social, community, historical, economic, environmental, national, international, religion, beliefs, literature, music, ecology, sustainability; personal objectives of the artist, craftsperson, designer

3 Understand the function, purpose and qualities of creative specialist work

Function: eg design, impact, longevity, durability, performance, production methods, impact, objectives

Purpose: eg functional, aesthetic, fitness for purpose, concept, brief, ideas, client, user, audience, relevance, suitability

Qualities: eg characteristics, specialism, market, period, materials, appearance, finish

4 Be able to evaluate, structure and present findings

Evaluate: eg identify, select, analyse, suitability, relevance to specialism

Structure: eg brief, ideas, research, findings, ordering, importance, highlight, references, supporting evidence, final outcomes

Present findings: eg visuals, diagrams, photographs, notes, formal report, video diaries, essays, video, web links, blogs, oral, written presentations; contextual language eg terms, academic conventions, references, bibliographies

Assessment and grading criteria

In order to pass this unit, the evidence that the learner presents for assessment needs to demonstrate that they can meet all the learning outcomes for the unit. The assessment criteria for a pass grade describe the level of achievement required to pass this unit.

Assessment and grading criteria		
To achieve a pass grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass criteria, the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that, in addition to the pass and merit criteria, the learner is able to:
P1 describe how the work of historical and contemporary specialist practitioners can influence current practice [IE, RL]	M1 compare and analyse a diverse range of specialist contemporary and historical practice purposefully	D1 evaluate independently and perceptively an extensive range of specialist practice
P2 explain the context in which the work was produced [CT, RL]	M2 demonstrate coherent understanding and considered analysis of the purpose, meaning and context of creative specialist practice	D2 present exciting, well-structured findings demonstrating informed and articulate analysis of the techniques and visual vocabularies used in selected work.
P3 assess the function, purpose and qualities of creative specialist work [IE, CT, RL]	M3 show an individual approach to structuring and presenting findings effectively.	
P4 evaluate, structure and present findings. [SM, EP]		

PLTS: This summary references where applicable, in the square brackets, the elements of the personal, learning and thinking skills applicable in the pass criteria. It identifies opportunities for learners to demonstrate effective application of the referenced elements of the skills.

Key	IE – independent enquirers	RL – reflective learners	SM – self-managers
	CT – creative thinkers	TW – team workers	EP – effective participators

Essential guidance for tutors

Delivery

Learners will need access to an extensive range of art, design, craft and media information from a wide variety of sources. Access to audio/visual equipment and the internet are essential along with a well-equipped learner resource centre. A classroom or studio space which offers scope to show a range of illustrated lectures, as well as offer practical specialist resources will be ideal for this unit.

Tutors delivering this unit should prepare a programme of contextual and historical information that will enable learners to broaden their knowledge of art, craft and design within a wide range of contexts. Audio-visual and computer-aided equipment will support delivery along with group discussions, individual and group tutorials. Learners should be encouraged to explore artwork from primary sources such as visits to museums and galleries. Practitioner workshops and studios will also enhance learners' perceptions of the work they are investigating.

The volume, scale, function and presentation of original work, as seen in museums and galleries, can greatly influence its impact on the viewer and will enable the learner to understand why certain materials, techniques and processes were used in its production. Resource collections can be accessed from museums and art galleries, which often have educational services offering the loan of artefacts from their collections. Learners should be encouraged to develop a research file to collate the notes, handouts and information generated through formal lectures, tutorials and independent study. This information should be supported by personal annotations and evaluation. Learners should be encouraged to use different methods of presenting their research such as oral presentations supported by audio, visual or digital formats.

Learners should be encouraged to develop an in-depth knowledge of their chosen field of study. One or more assignments should outline the need for extensive independent study to support a programme of lectures and studio sessions. Tutors may wish to demonstrate certain specialist techniques to help learners understand the production methods artists and designers utilised. Understanding the relationship between studio practice and the field of enquiry will greatly enhance the practical knowledge, skills and understanding that learners utilise within their chosen specialist pathway.

Briefs should be designed to encourage broad and wide ranging investigation so that all specialist interests are catered for. An overarching, thematic approach to the brief may offer learners good opportunities to choose what to focus their enquiries on. Briefs could also contain guidance on the structure and content of the body of work required for the unit.

Learning outcome 1 provides opportunities for research into, and analysis of, historical and contemporary practitioners' use of visual language. Learners will need to explore how formal elements are utilised in the communication of the art, craft and design process. Through this learning outcome learners will also identify the production methods artists, craftspeople and designers use and how effective they are in relation to the original concept. Learners will need to make critical judgements about the value, function and aesthetic qualities of artwork. It will also be important for learners to evaluate the judgements made by others when critiquing a body of work. Tutors will need to ensure that learners have access to sufficient contextual information, from a variety of sources, so that research methods can be fully used.

For learning outcome 2 tutors will facilitate analytical debate and group discussion. Learners should be encouraged to make independent judgements and group responses to the topics discussed and record the learning process. Learners should investigate how cultural, political, social and environmental influences can underpin the development of art craft and design movements and concepts. Learners will need to identify these influences and analyse the effects they have on the work of individual practitioners.

Learning outcome 3 will encourage the development of learner knowledge and understanding of the function and purpose of creative, professional practitioners' work. This might be taught effectively through visits to contemporary practitioners' studios or workshops. Learners could set up interviews with practitioners to explore details of their working practice. Market research will also give learners opportunities to research the function and purpose behind, for example, corporate identities and advertising techniques.

Learning outcome 4 will develop learners' ability to organise their findings using appropriate presentation methods outlined in the unit content. The suitability of the field of enquiry, in relation to learners' specialist pathways, will be particularly important. The link with theory and studio practice is vital to the success of the presentation of learner findings. Through presenting their critical knowledge, learners will develop a deeper understanding of their specialist field and a greater knowledge of production methods, the context in which the work is produced, the design process and the cultural influences that affect the production of artwork.

Outline learning plan

The outline learning plan has been included in this unit as guidance and can be used in conjunction with the programme of suggested assignments.

The outline learning plan demonstrates one way in planning the delivery and assessment of this unit.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment
Unit introduction
Assignment 1: Course Folder of Research
Part 1: Course folder of research
Whole class exploring the aims and requirements of the unit.
Focus for contextual research – an appropriate theme or brief related to specialist area of study eg for interior design: Compare and contrast the contextual influences on the selected works of three contemporary practitioners.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Analysis of the brief: focus, selection, intention, proposal, constraints, potential.
Part 2: A series of structured slide presentations investigating possible routes and specialist practitioners to meet the brief
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners given handouts and take notes.• Activity followed by discussion and seminars.
Part 3: Research relevant contextual sources
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learning centre/workshops/specialist practitioner visits/galleries.• Learners use notes and research findings to select specialist images to analyse.• Identifying selected artists' use of materials, techniques, processes and formal elements.• Making notes on results of enquiry.• Learners investigate influences on the selected work of chosen specialist practitioners.• Independent working combined with individual and group tutorials.
Part 4: Gathering and organising specialist contextual research studies.
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Evaluating artists' approaches, the contextual influences on their ideas and use of media and techniques.• Interim assessment, tutorials and review of progress.

Topic and suggested assignments/activities and/assessment

Assignment 2: Extended Project from a Learner/Tutor Negotiated Subject

Part 1: Reviewing and evaluating.

- Researching findings to generate and develop dissertations.
- Selecting, structuring and developing findings towards final work.
- Exploring approaches to structuring written work, independently.

Part 2: Critical analysis – visual/verbal/written.

- Comparing and contrasting selected artists' approaches to ideas and use of media and processes.
- Use of written, visual and verbal analytical and critical studies – written work, storyboards, worksheets, annotated sketches and notes.
- Ongoing review of the structuring and development of study.
- Developing and refining findings towards completed presentation.
- Self, peer and tutor review.
- Describing and commenting on the qualities, strengths, weaknesses of study.

Part 3: Completing specialist contextual critical study independently.

Part 4: Presenting work.

- Exploring a range of presentation methods.
- Tutorial guidance.
- Planning and designing a presentation gathered research and enquiry independently.
- Presenting to the group in an appropriate format using verbal/written/visual means.

Review of unit and assessment.

Assessment

For P1, learners must evidence their ability to research and analyse a range of contemporary and historical art, craft and design relevant to their specialist pathway. They should demonstrate an understanding of the basic concepts behind a movement or artwork and how selected practitioners use visual language and formal elements in different ways to communicate their ideas. Learners articulate their understanding of the media, materials and techniques used by selected practitioners in the creation of their work.

For P2, learners will evidence an understanding of the cultural, historical, social, political and environmental influences that affect practitioners' work. They will need to recognise and demonstrate their understanding through notes, essays, discussions and presentations. Evidence for P3 could be integrated with that for P1 and P2.

For P3, learners should understand the different functions and intended purposes of selected works, for example how artists, craftspeople employ different techniques to sell products for various purposes to a range of clients.

For P4, evidence can be presented in a variety of formats from individual, group and tutorial presentations. Documentation for presentations might be collated through research files, annotated sketchbooks, digital media and worksheets. Presentations might include a range of formats: such as video diaries, audio-visual, PowerPoint, essays, worksheets and research folders. Witness statements may be used to evidence the ability to articulate understanding in discussions and presentations. Academic conventions for referencing and bibliographies must be evident.

For M1, learners should investigate a range of specialist historical and contemporary practice that covers a wider area than work for P1. There will be a greater sense of enquiry and purpose in the research undertaken. Links between contextual factors and practitioners' output will be coherent and concise.

For M2, learners should demonstrate an in-depth understanding and articulate analysis of the creative process adopted by artists and designers. There should be evidence that learners have made critical judgements about the value, function and aesthetic qualities of artwork and reference to the critical judgements of others when evaluating a body of work.

For M3, learners should show an individual approach to structuring and presenting information coherently. Conclusions reached will be more in depth and coherent than those expressed in work for P3. Evidence for the merit criteria can take any of the forms suggested for the pass criteria.

For D1, learners must show evidence of a comprehensive body of research and demonstrate independence in selecting and organising of material, and an informed personal interpretation of the information. Research tasks will be comprehensive and managed independently, with attention to contextual factors and influences articulated clearly. Conclusions reached about factors and practitioners' output will be produced independently and at a sophisticated level. There will be a greater sense of enquiry and analysis than in work for M1.

For D2, learners should show perceptive understanding and analysis of the techniques and visual language used in the creation of art, design and craft. They should be able to articulate critical analysis independently, supporting their arguments with well-selected quotes when making informed judgements and evaluating conclusions drawn from the investigation constructively. Learners should demonstrate a high level of sophistication and innovation in the presentation of information.

Programme of suggested assignments

The table below shows a programme of suggested assignments that cover the pass, merit and distinction criteria in the assessment and grading grid. This is for guidance and it is recommended that centres either write their own assignments or adapt any Edexcel assignments to meet local needs and resources.

Criteria covered	Assignment title	Scenario	Assessment method
P1, P2, P3 M1, M2	Assignment 1: Course Folder of Research	An artist researching others' work in a specialist field.	This will contain all lecture and seminar notes with individual comments on the work of others. Evidence of gallery, museum and workshop visits will be present. Self-evaluation and tutor feedback.
P4 M1, M2, M3 D1, D2	Assignment 2: Extended Project from a Learner/Tutor Negotiated Subject	A curator producing material to accompany a designer's work.	Learners will produce and present an outcome. The outcome could be in written form supported with a presentation to the class. Presentation of findings with written support materials or other appropriate evidence.

Links to National Occupational Standards, other BTEC units, other BTEC qualifications and other relevant units and qualifications

This unit forms part of the BTEC Art and Design sector suite. This unit has particular links with the following unit titles in the BTEC Art and Design suite:

Level 1	Level 2	Level 3
Explore Artists' and Designers' Work	Contextual references in Art and Design	Contextual influences in Art and Design
Any optional specialist unit	Any optional specialist unit	Any optional specialist unit

National Occupational Standards

This unit also provides development opportunities for some of the underpinning skills, knowledge and understanding of the following National Occupational Standards:

CCSkills Sector Skills Council

Design (revisions in draft form June 2009)

- DES1 Apply research on the history and theory of design to your own design activities
- DES2 Apply design industry knowledge to inform your own design work practice and work
- DES3 Use Critical Thinking Techniques in your design work
- DES14 Explore the history and social impact of creativity and how it can influence your own design work
- DES15 Research and evaluate the nature of design in a specific industry context
- DES28 Developing your own design offer
- DES32 Apply concepts and theories of creativity and innovation to your own design work
- DES36 Develop and extend your design skills and practices

Skillfast-UK Sector Skills Council

Textiles and Material Design

- DI – Research design information and ideas for textiles and materials using a range of techniques
- DI0 – Develop alternative textile and material design ideas

Essential resources

Learners will need access to an extensive range of art, craft and design information from a wide variety of sources. A classroom or studio space which offers scope to show a range of illustrated lectures, as well as offer practical specialist resources, will be ideal for this unit. Access to audio/visual equipment and the internet are essential so that learners can benefit from a range of visual information and presentation techniques and equipment. A well-equipped learner resource centre and other learning facilities are vital for learners to access extensive information.

Employer engagement and vocational contexts

Centres should develop links with practising artists, craftspeople and designers, to deliver assignments to learners or to provide work experience.

Links with employers are essential to delivery of the programme in terms of work experience and future employment.

Vocational learning support resources include:

- Learning and Skills Network – www.vocationallearning.org.uk

Business and finance advice:

- local and regional Business Link – www.businesslink.gov.uk

Assignments should be vocationally relevant. Centres should consider the delivery of 'live projects' for example to support the vocational content of the unit and programme. Centres should develop links with local museums, art galleries, independent artists, craftspeople and designers, open studio events; heritage and cultural sections of the local council

Creative & Cultural Skills (www.ccskills.org.uk), the sector skills council for arts, crafts and design have launched the web portal Creative Choices (www.creative-choices.co.uk). This portal has a range of information about careers in the arts, crafts and design sector, including job descriptions.

Skillset, the sector skills council for creative media (www.skillset.org), provide details on their pages (www.skillset.org/careers) about careers advice and industry information, plus a regularly updated news and events page.

Skillfast-UK, the sector skills council for fashion and textiles (www.skillfast-uk.org), provide details (www.skillfast-uk.org/justthejob) about careers advice and industry information, plus regularly updated news and events pages.

Indicative reading for learners

Textbooks

Dormer P – *Design Since 1945* (Thames & Hudson, 1993) ISBN 978-0500202616

Duby G and Daval J – *Sculpture – From Antiquity to the Present Day* (Taschen, 2006)
ISBN 978-3822850787

Fiell C and F – *Graphic Design Now* (Taschen, 2005) ISBN 978-3822847787

Grosenick U – *Art Now V2* (Taschen, 2005) ISBN 978-3836503242

Howells R – *Visual Culture* (Polity Press, 2003) ISBN 978-0745624129

Jefferies J and Quinn B – *Contemporary Textiles: The Fabric of Fine Art* (Black Dog Publishing, 2008)
ISBN 978-1906155292

Jodidio P – *Architecture Now* (Taschen, 2006) ISBN 978-3836503723

Micklewright K – *Drawing: Mastering the Language of Visual Expression* (Abrams Studio/HNA Books, 2005)
ISBN 978-0810992382

Miller J – *The ABCs of the Bauhaus* (Thames & Hudson, 1993) ISBN 978-0500277140

Mirzoeff N – *An Introduction to Visual Culture* (Routledge, 1999) ISBN 978-0415327596

Papanek V – *Design for the Real World* (Thames & Hudson, 1985) ISBN 978-0500273586

Pointon M – *History of Art: A Students' Handbook* (Routledge, 1997) ISBN 978-0415151818

Raizman D – *A History of Modern Design: Graphics and Products Since the Industrial Revolution* (Laurence King Publishing, 2004) ISBN 978-1856693486

Rayner G et al – *Artists' Textiles in Britain, 1945-1970* (Antique Collectors' Club Ltd, 1999)
ISBN 978-1851494323

Taylor L – *The Study of Dress History* (Manchester University Press, 2002) ISBN 978-0719040658
Walter S and Hanson M – *Motion Blur: Onedotzero* (Hali Publications, 2005) ISBN 978-1856694650
Wells L – *Photography: A Critical Introduction* (Routledge, 2004) ISBN 978-0415460873
Wilk C – *Modernism: Designing a New World 1914 – 1939* (V & A Publications, 2006)
ISBN 978-1851774777

Websites

www.artjournal.co.uk	online guide to books and journals
www.craftscouncil.org.uk	the national development agency for contemporary crafts in the UK
www.creativehandbook.co.uk	directory of creative practitioners
www.culture24.org.uk/am30786	links to a broad range of art and design resources
www.design-council.org.uk	the national strategic body for design in the UK
www.designmuseum.org	website of the Design Museum, dedicated to contemporary design
www.fashion-era.com/C20th_costume_history	links to resources on fashion
www.graphicdesign.about.com/arts/graphicdesign	graphic design links
www.hayward.org.uk	website for the Hayward gallery
www.hillmancurtis.com	website for film and web based company
www.masters-of-photography.com	photography links
www.nationalgallery.org.uk	website for the National gallery
www.onedotzero.com	digital arts organisation promoting use of moving image
www.tate.org.uk	website for the Tate galleries
www.vam.ac.uk	website for the Victoria and Albert museum

Delivery of personal, learning and thinking skills

The table below identifies the opportunities for personal, learning and thinking skills (PLTS) that have been included within the pass assessment criteria of this unit.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> researching art, craft and design movements and individuals reviewing and evaluating how the work of historical and contemporary specialist practitioners can influence current practice linking cultural contexts to historical and contemporary art, craft and design work researching and producing outcomes
Creative thinkers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> comparing and contrasting contemporary and historical art, craft and design in their specialist study area. examining the wider context and researching and analysing connections between practitioners. structuring, developing and finalising their studies planning and giving creative presentations of their studies
Reflective learners	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> reviewing and evaluating how the work of historical and contemporary specialist practitioners can influence current practice reviewing their work throughout the development of their studies analysing the qualities of their ideas and developing studies researching, evaluating and presenting findings
Team workers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> working in group seminars to analyse and critically review others' work explaining the context in which the work was produced working in groups to review their work throughout the development of their studies presenting work to an audience
Self-managers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> managing own research and development of outcomes independently comparing the function, purpose and qualities of creative professional work evaluating, structuring and presenting reviewing their work throughout development of their studies
Effective participators	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> presenting work to peers or an audience participating in reviews and evaluations about how the work of historical and contemporary specialist practitioners can influence current practice working in group seminars to analyse and critically review others' work participating in reviews about their work throughout the development of their studies.

Although PLTS are identified within this unit as an inherent part of the assessment criteria, there are further opportunities to develop a range of PLTS through various approaches to teaching and learning.

Skill	When learners are ...
Independent enquirers	planning and carrying out research to explore their specialist area
Creative thinkers	seeking out innovative ways to present findings analysing connections between historical and wider contextual influences of key developments in the art, craft or design specialist area
Reflective learners	setting goals to produce work and assimilate feedback
Team workers	presenting findings to group and providing informative handouts on the topic
Self-managers	dealing with research from a variety of sources managing time effectively
Effective participators	to presenting work to a group.

● Functional Skills – Level 2

Skill	When learners are ...
ICT – Use ICT systems	
Select, interact with and use ICT systems independently for a complex task to meet a variety of needs	researching key individuals, movements and contexts
Use ICT to effectively plan work and evaluate the effectiveness of the ICT system they have used	planning for the production of a final outcome
Manage information storage to enable efficient retrieval	storing researched information in files
ICT – Find and select information	
Select and use a variety of sources of information independently for a complex task	planning and carrying out research to develop understanding from lectures, seminars and visits to museums, galleries and practitioners investigating assignment topics
Access, search for, select and use ICT-based information and evaluate its fitness for purpose	exploring, extracting and assessing the relevance of information from websites
ICT – Develop, present and communicate information	
Enter, develop and format information independently to suit its meaning and purpose including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • text and tables • images • numbers • records 	formulating and presenting a final outcome
Bring together information to suit content and purpose	
Present information in ways that are fit for purpose and audience	
Evaluate the selection and use of ICT tools and facilities used to present information	
Select and use ICT to communicate and exchange information safely, responsibly and effectively including storage of messages and contact lists	communicating with tutor

Skill	When learners are ...
English	
Speaking and listening – make a range of contributions to discussions and make effective presentations in a wide range of contexts	discussing and debating cultural and contextual issues
Reading – compare, select, read and understand texts and use them to gather information, ideas, arguments and opinions	seeking and reading and responding to research
Writing – write documents, including extended writing pieces, communicating information, ideas and opinions, effectively and persuasively	writing notes from web materials writing up final outcomes.