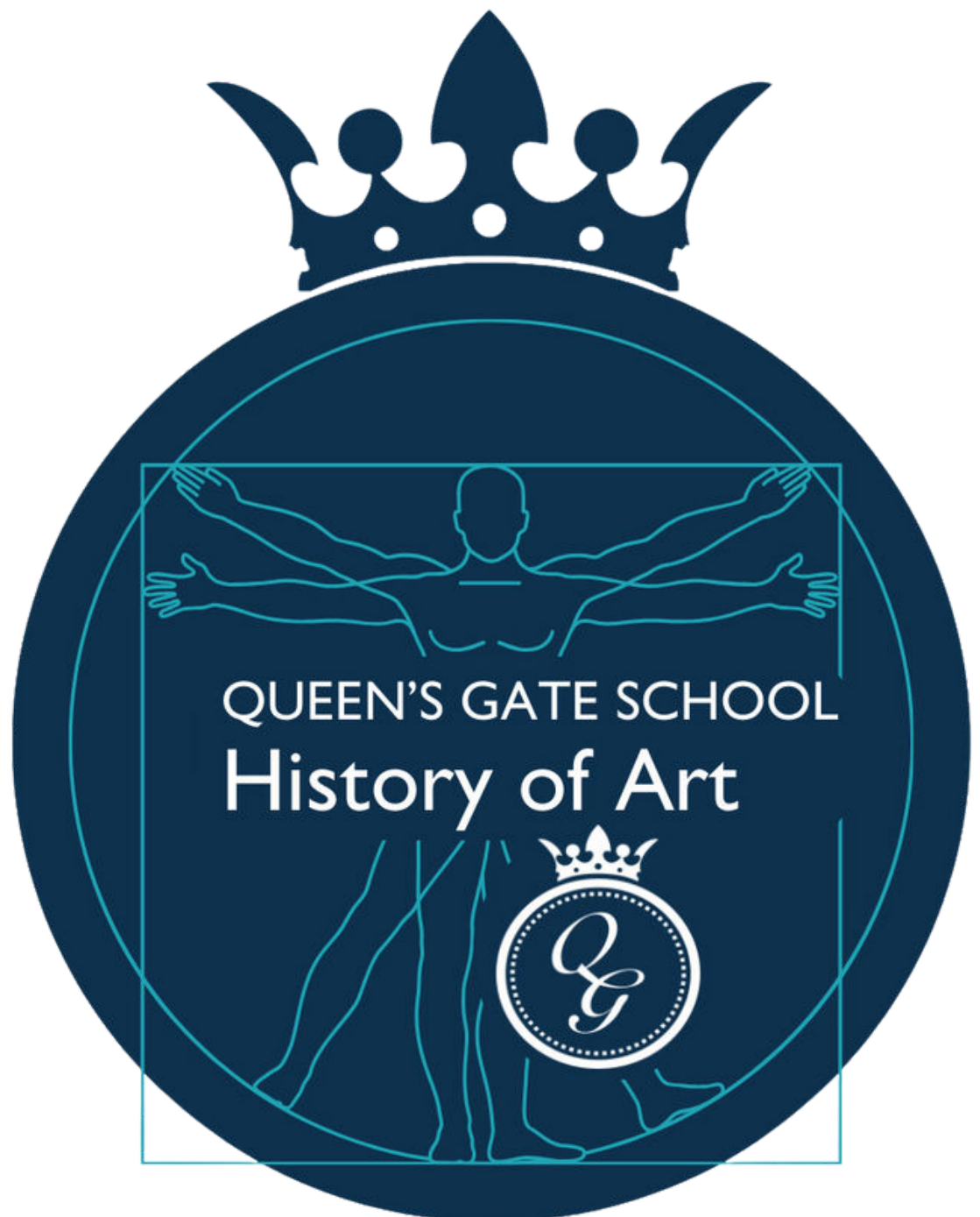


QUEEN'S GATE SCHOOL

HISTORY OF ART

A-LEVEL GUIDE



ART HISTORY A LEVEL AT QUEEN'S GATE

"ART HISTORY IS THE STUDY OF POWER, POLITICS, IDENTITY AND HUMANITY." JEREMY DELLER

WHAT IS ART HISTORY?

Art history is the interdisciplinary study of visual arts, examining artistic works as expressions of culture, history and human creativity across various societies and time periods. Its interdisciplinary nature stems from its integration of other academic fields, such as history, sociology, anthropology, psychology, geography, economics, philosophy, English and even the sciences, to provide a holistic understanding of an artwork's creation, context, and impact. By analysing art, art historians gain insight into human experiences, social structures, and broader historical forces, connecting the past, present, and future.

ART HISTORY A LEVEL AT QUEEN'S GATE

THE HISTORY OF CULTURE THROUGH THE VISUAL ARTS

Pearson Edexcel Art History A Level: 9HT0

TOPICS STUDIED

Paper 1 - Visual Analysis and Themes

- **Visual Analysis.** This module provides foundational visual analysis skills for painting, sculpture and architecture. Works from 500BC to the present are explored. How does each of the visual arts communicate? For example, how does an artist manipulate composition, colour, space, line and form to create particular effects? What materials and techniques do artists and architects employ, from oil paint, to bronze, marble and 'real' objects in the 20th century, or stone, brick, steel, concrete and glass in architecture, and how do these affect outcomes? What are the functions and varieties of subject and type in painting, sculpture and architecture?
- **Art and Identity.** A thematic study over time. Students consider how and why identity is represented in painting, sculpture and architecture, exploring how the concept has changed over time, reflecting the values of the society in which it was produced. For example, how is a contemporary idea of identity different from a Roman or a 15th century concept of identity? How did the emergence of the ideas of personality and the self in the 17th century impact the arts? How is the divine depicted in Christian and Hindu art? Themes such as status, personality, gender and ethnicity are explored. Case studies are from the Classical world to the present, and both Western and non-Western examples are studied. Examples of painting, sculpture and architecture are explored.
- **Art and Nature.** A thematic study over time. Students explore how representations of nature have changed over the course of history, reflecting the evolving relationship between humans and the natural world. Themes such as the pastoral and the sublime are explored, alongside the influence of social class on attitudes to nature, as well as how religion, the Industrial Revolution and modernity have impacted how nature is experienced and represented. The symbolism of plants and animals and contemporary ecological debates are also considered. Case studies are from the 16th century to the present, and both Western and non-Western examples are studied. Examples of painting, sculpture and architecture are explored.

Paper 2 - Periods

- **Power and persuasion: The Baroque in Catholic Europe (1597-1685).** An in-depth study of the period, linking works to aims, intentions, and social, historical, religious and philosophical contexts. How and why does 17th century Baroque religious art and architecture fulfil the aims of the Catholic Counter Reformation church, seeking to emotionally engage the viewer, and promote Catholic religious belief? What techniques and subjects were employed to achieve these ends? How did European absolutist monarchs express their political ideology through the art and architecture they commissioned? How does secular subject matter, such as myth, portraiture, still life and landscape, express the artistic, cultural, philosophical and scientific ideals of the period?
- **Brave new world: Modernism in Europe (1900-1939).** An in-depth study of the period, linking works to aims, intentions and social and historical contexts. How did the cultural, philosophical, technological changes, and factors such as modernisation, urbanisation and industrialisation impact the arts? How did artists and architects seek to explore the modern world and reject the past? Why were there utopian and dystopian interpretations of modernity? How did World War One and the Spanish Flu impact the arts and how was trauma expressed? What is art, and how and why does art of the period reject naturalism and subvert Western aesthetic tradition and ideals of beauty? How and why did modernists experiment with new materials?

KEY ACADEMIC SKILLS DEVELOPED IN ART HISTORY A LEVEL

In Art History you develop key academic skills that highly prized by universities and employers. It is recognized as a rigorous, academic essay-based subject by Oxford and Cambridge, as well as Russell Group Universities.

- Ability to write clearly and concisely, and to logically construct an argument manipulating evidence both for and against a proposition.
- Ability to substantiate analysis with evidence.
- Ability to critically analyse both visual and textual sources.
- Ability to confidently develop interpretations and opinions backed up by judicious choice of evidence.
- Ability to read and employ primary and secondary sources and reference a variety of critical interpretations to substantiate an argument or interpretation.
- Ability to analyse the requirements of a question and rigorously focus on the question.
- Ability to speak with confidence, and present ideas clearly and concisely in front of a class.

RESULTS

June 2025	A*, A, A, A, A, B
June 2024	A*, A*, A*, A*, A*, A, A
June 2023	A*, A
June 2022	A*, A*, A, A, B, B, C
June 2021	A*, A, A
June 2020	A*, A, A, A

UNIVERSITIES WHERE QUEEN'S GATE GIRLS HAVE READ OR MAJORED IN ART HISTORY

- Cambridge
- Edinburgh
- UCL
- St Andrews
- Courtauld (London University)
- Manchester
- Nottingham
- Goldsmiths
- Cornell
- McGill

ART HISTORY CAN LEAD TO A RANGE OF CAREERS IN THE ARTS:

- Museum curator
- Art Dealer
- Auctioneer (Christies, Sotheby's etc)
- Publishing
- Media
- Heritage Management (eg National Trust)
- Museum education professionals
- Art critic and arts journalist
- Film/ TV producer/researcher
- Art Historian
- Advertising
- Art Conservator
- Art consultant
- Museum digital media

ART HISTORY CAN ALSO LEAD TO A RANGE OF OTHER CAREERS:

- PR
- Management consultant
- Civil Service
- Accountant/tax specialist
- NGOs
- Politics
- Journalist
- Lawyer
- Banker

WHO READ ART HISTORY?

- Claudia Winkelman
- Lilly Cole
- Eddy Redmayne
- Neil MacGregor
- Duchess of Cornwall
- Gwyneth Paltrow
- David Cameron – said it was the only A Level subject he can remember and really enjoyed.
- Marc Quinn - major British contemporary artist
- Cornelia Parker OBE RA – major British contemporary artist: *'I devoured the knowledge and use it all the time'*