

OCR A Level Art and Design Themes 2018

Resource Pack

Themes:

- **Flight** air · plane · bird · oxygen · floating · gliding · falling · ascending · hover · flutter · wings · feathers · launch · freedom
- **Apertures** photography · lens · perspective · glass · opening · break · pinhole · light
- **Boundaries** halt · barriers · stop · physical · social · edge · wall · border · limits
- **The Moon** space · race · face · the future · science · sci-fi · tides · beams · light · balance · lunar
- **Mother** mum · child · figure · birth · protector · caretaker · woman · family · matriarch
- **Maps** pages · lines · travel · territory · location · art · longitude and latitude · diagram · journey · guide · atlas
- **Black and White** shades · light · dark · contrast · opposites · monochrome · night and day · sharp

It is usually the case that Artists and Designers use materials specific to the theme of their work, so they can illustrate a specific **meaning, mood** or **story**. They may also consider **composition, scale, colour, text** and **style**. They will develop their ideas, refine them through testing, reflect and record their work in writing and practical outcomes and present their work to reflect the theme running through it.

When collecting research and contextual influences:

- Consider **how** the artist has made the work.
- Look at **what materials** have they used.
- **Why** do you think they used these materials?
- Do you think the medium effectively portrays the **concept/ theme** of the work?
- Do you think there is **more than one** theme in the work?
- Do you see **inspiration/ influences** from other artists, art movements or events in the work?

The following artists particularly illustrate some of the themes listed above within their work:

Flight [Kate McGwire/ Makiko Kudo](#)

Apertures [Maurizio Anzeri/ Thomas Mailaender](#)

Boundaries [Josh Faight/ Thomas Mailaender/ Makiko Kudo/ Maurizio Anzeri/ Danny Fox/ Dale Lewis/ Alexi William Wynn](#)

Maps [Makiko Kudo/ Maurizio Anzeri](#)

Black and White [Kate McGwire](#)

Boundaries Josh Faught Gallery 1



Josh Faught is a multimedia artist who uses textiles, collage, found objects, sculpture, and painting to create installations which explore the history of craft, cultural neurosis, and the construction of 'queer identity'. These works, founded on a laborious process of traditional fabric making techniques, have woven objects of commercial indulgence into their structure, exploring 'kitsch ornamentation' and 'domestic dysfunction'. Faught includes objects such as self-help books, plastic food, greeting cards, novelty buttons, nail polish and political badges. These objects have their own networks of associations, which Faught has carefully curated together to offer a jumbled impression of compulsive decoration and cultural history. They are also everyday objects, making them accessible and relevant to the viewer. The use of colour is also important in each piece as it challenges our general association of colours with gender i.e. pink means feminine or female artist.

- **Boundaries** in society
- Breaking preconceptions and social **boundaries**
- Exploring **bounderies**

Apertures/ Boundaries

Thomas Mailaender Gallery 2



Mainlander predominantly uses photography in his practice. He is a compulsive collector who uses images found on The Internet, flea markets and so on. He uses this large archive and presents these images in quirky, often very humorous ways. He manipulates and showcases them in the form of collage, installation and even ceramics. His work in this exhibition consists of large cyanotypes and a series called 'Illustrated People', which is created by burning negatives onto the participant's skin using an intensive UV light. Cyanotype is a process which was used to create photographs before digital images had been invented. They are made by covering a surface with chemicals which will react with UV light, placing a negative on the surface and exposing it to sunlight. Although the two outcomes by Mainlander in this exhibition are seemingly very different, and make reference to different concepts, the processes followed by the artist are very similar.

In today's society we are bombarded with images, whether in the form of advertising, or on social media. We feel we are affected by images of violence and conflict but are often (even unknowingly) desensitised to them. Having images from the Archive of Conflict exposed and branded onto human flesh, forces the viewer to re-engage with the subject matter. With strong, aggressive flash lighting and bodies only partially on view, the message of the work becomes much more aggressive and visceral. The 'Illustrated People' series forces audience members to look more closely.

- Images seen through an **aperture**
- Images created by burning light through **apertures**
- Exploring **boundaries** with our own perception of conflict

Flight/ Boundaries/ Maps Makiko Kudo Gallery 3



Makiko Kudo's work is chaotic and lively. Her well-crafted compositions evoke bittersweet memories of by gone days and balance between loveliness and loneliness. Kudo was born and raised in Japan where during the late 20th Century a strict society and failing economy left many young people feeling trapped and confined. In most cultures fantasy and escape are a way of avoiding reality and in Japan many young people turned to Manga as a form of escapism. Kudo uses this Manga character in her paintings like avatars. Invading dream like landscapes reminiscent of old masters such as Monet and Matisse. She creates these landscapes from places she has glimpsed sometimes only briefly but have stuck in her mind. She then fills them with elements of her childhood memories. She builds each image in her head (sometimes for up to six months) before she paints them in only seven to ten days. Her paintings are large, taking up the whole of the viewer's vision. This allows the viewer to immerse themselves in Kudo's fantasy landscape.

- Kudo's characters are often floating or in **flight**, giving them a sense of surreal freedom
- The **boundaries** of reality and non-reality are blurred in Kudo's paintings
- Each painting offers a visual **map** through the artists dreams and memories

Apertures/ Boundaries/ Maps

Maurizio Anzeri Gallery 4

When confronted with Anzeri's work, one becomes overcome with a feeling of unease. The pieces are much smaller than in other rooms in the exhibition. They draw you in and invite the audience to have an intimate relationship with each of the individuals from their "tribe". The pieces show portraits with their faces veiled, and eyes and mouth exposed. Anzeri uses the contours

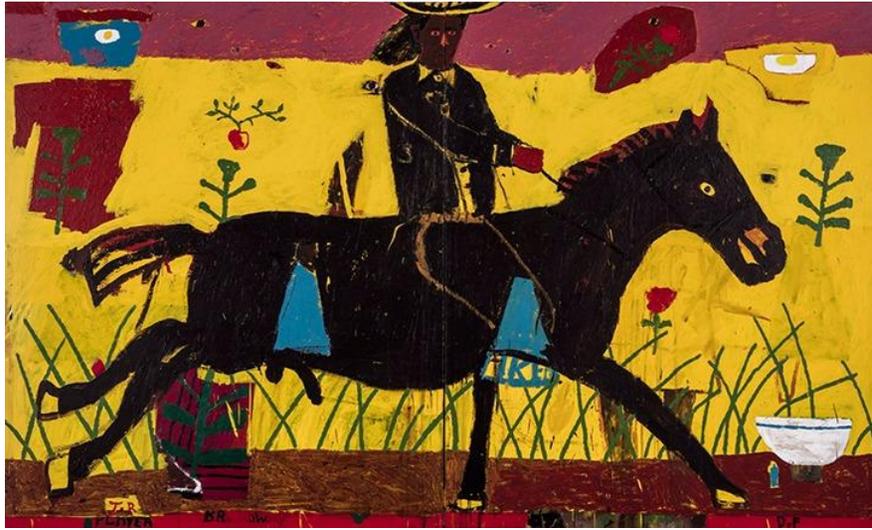


of the face to distort, elongate or magnify certain features so the 'creatures' are other-worldly yet recognisable. They peer out from behind their masks. They can see you but you cannot see them.

Anzeri comes from a Mediterranean fishing village. During his childhood he spent considerable time mending fishing nets, so he works to bring this element of his identity back into his pieces by making these photo-sculptures. He is also an obsessive image collector (similar to Mailaender). He speaks about the photographs he uses as magical moments captured. Although the works in this exhibition consist of vintage photographs, his practice transports them into the future and makes them very "current". He also builds a relationship with each of the images, giving each one a new title or name. The use of the vintage images is also significant because they are not like the portraits/ selfies that we are constantly bombarded with every day.

- **Apertures** (gaps) around the eyes offer a way for the original subject to look out
- **Boundaries** are set up between the viewer and the subject with the threaded masks
- Each stitched mask works like a geographical **map** with contours and lines

Boundaries Danny Fox Gallery 5



Hidden within the many layers of Fox's paintings we come across intriguing references such as 'IKEA' and eyes peering out through the surface of the canvas. The work has an immense presence, both due to its size and the unapologetic use of bright colours and brisk brushwork. Fox has no artistic training whatsoever. Growing up in Cornwall, he was exposed to beautiful quaint paintings of the south-west coast where he still often visits. These influences however seem to have been supplanted by other cultural references after Fox moved to London and then on to LA (Skid Row).

"There has always been a colonial interest in my work but I've been thinking about it more and more since moving to LA" Fox.

In several of his paintings, Fox talks about what it must have been like for an Englishman to have moved to America 200 or so years ago. Skid Row has one of the largest homeless communities in the US and Fox states that living there is similar to the conditions of living in the Wild West. His travels have also influenced him in many ways. This is particularly evident in his use of colour, which he uses to hint at the location his 'hero' figure is often found in. His way of working is very relaxed. The canvases are very heavily layered with paint and avoid any meaningful detail. This is another reason why the scale of his paintings is so important. The vast canvases seem to dominate the space that they occupy. Perhaps this is a similar concept to the colonial references that he makes in his work. Horses feature in his work both as the wild buck carrying the cowboy 'hero' and as the noble stead carrying the colonial officer.

- Cultural **boundaries** are visually explored in Fox's portrayal of the 'hero' and the colonial

Boundaries Dale Lewis Gallery 8



Lewis's work is both direct in its painterly approach and in its portrayal of society. The large scale of the work forces the viewer to immerse themselves in the activity of the scene. The often flat style of painting creates a linear surface over which the viewer can follow the story taking place. The speed at which each painting is produced also adds to the sense of motion which is evident. Lewis will complete his paintings in just one day and uses his own memories, often from situations he has directly seen, to create his paintings. The characters in his work are finely choreographed and represent mythology, modernist iconography and contemporary life. Whilst the imagery is often harsh and pushes the boundaries of social decorum, they are honest in their brashness and even light in tone and appearance with the use of bright colours and pattern.

- **Boundaries** are pushed in Dale's explicit characterisation of culture and society

Flight/ Black and White Kate MccGwire Gallery 10



Kate MccGwire is a British sculptor whose practice focuses on using the medium of feathers. She collects feathers from birds such as pigeons and crows (sometimes for years) until she has enough to complete a sculpture. By taking this waste product from 'rats with wings' and raising them to the status of art, MccGwire re-contextualizes these objects, thereby challenging our notions of beauty and disgust. Her work references Freud's theory of "the uncanny", the idea of a familiarity that is

somehow unsettling. These works, which are familiar and yet alien, leave the viewer with a spectacle that is somehow 'other'. She keeps the structure of the work deliberately a secret adding to the layers of mystery surrounding the pieces. It is left entirely to the viewer's imagination as to the density and weight of the pieces. The fact that the structure also has no beginning and no end adds to the idea that the work represents anxiety and tying oneself in knots.

- Feathers allude to **flight** in this work
- The strong **black** crow feathers heighten a sense of fear and anxiety

Boundaries **Alexi Wynn** Gallery 10



Wynn's work focuses on exploring classic notions of beauty. She uses anatomical techniques in order to examine themes including light vs dark, positives and negatives and human perceptions of reality.

In *'Echoes of the Kill'* (pictured), Wynn invites the viewer to engage with a setup of seemingly beautiful natural forms. What many take to be trees or coral are in fact the wax filled insides of cow and horse lungs. Displayed on a butchers block, the once seemingly delicate and light sculpture becomes more of a sarcastic prod, which disrupts the viewer's often predictable expectations.

This work offers a strong sense of contrast in both the perception of what people find beautiful and in what people often originally imagine the work to visually represent. The use of positive/ negative space also adds to the contrast felt throughout the piece.

"My aim is to challenge our disconnect from the natural world. Casting directly from animal organs, I abstract the flash in an attempt to find a new language with which to perceive the body" Wynn.

- **Boundaries** of personal taste and perceptions of beauty are tested with this work
- The **boundaries** of materials are also pushed and explored