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 the theme of Journeys and Pathways within their work:**

- Michael Cline
- Bedwyr Williams
- James Howard
- Dominic McGill
- Justin Craun
- Aaron Fowler
- Simon Bedwell
- Roman Stanczak
- John Stezaker
- Douglas Kolk
- Marianne Vitale
- Aleksandra Mir
Michael Cline

Cline’s pastel coloured paintings depict fables in a contemporary style and setting. Many of his pieces are reminiscent of George Grosz and Pierre Klossowski’s paintings. Cline is primarily interested in faith, atonement and the American Dream. He uses unsullied illustration and dreamlike dystopian scenarios to show scenes of subtle horror, which add a sense of contrast. His images depict an imperfect world, where the good, the bad and the ordinary act out narratives of the artist’s imagining.

Whilst Cline’s paintings are completed with unspoiled innocence, works such as ‘Woman In Doorway’ and ‘Police Line’, address uncomfortable subjects like violence. The perspective of the work also invites the viewer to enter the locations and settings and highlights the open secrets and closed-door gossip which exists within the paintings.

- Pathways and alleyways by buildings
- Emotional journeys
Bedwyr Williams

Williams frequently uses his own autobiographic existence to develop his sculptures and performances. By doing this he breaks down the barrier that can sometimes exist between artist and audience.

His work merges art and life with a comedic twist. This makes his practice relatable and personally insightful for audience members engaging with the work.

‘Walk a Mile in My Shoes’ celebrates diversity, inclusion, and community. By using objects which are universal, Williams showcases the values of tolerance and individualism and makes the work relatable to everyone. The installation invites audience members to try on the shoes and become a part of the experience. This again plays with the idea of community and social inclusion.

- Personal journeys
- Literal journeys through walking and running
James Howard

Howard uses real text and image taken from spam emails found in his own email junk folder. He employs collage to combine the images and create a new narrative with them. In wanting to keep true to how real hackers work, Howard uses Photoshop and other kinds of graphic software, in order to create his collages. His work is bright and full of endless information. The endless narrative of the combined images leads the viewer to feel overwhelmed and saturated, mimicking the same effect endless junk mail can have. His work is constantly being processed and he often works with urgency in order to try and collect and use as much information as he can before it disappears.

His work acts like an on-going social commentary, highlighting the vulnerability of the individual and of society as a whole.

- Personal journeys
- Internet/ cyber pathways
Dominic McGill

McGill often works on a epic scale, incorporating elements of collage, drawn imagery and a swirling sea of text. The text in McGill’s work is sourced from a variety of locations including clichés, sayings and political speeches. Words and phrases collide with one another adding a sense of contrast and implied contradiction. The size of his work makes you feel like you are entering the eye of a brainstorm when you stand before it. The use of B&W also emphasises a feeling of information sharing, like in the press or newspapers.

- Historical and cultural journeys
- Pathways of text
Justin Craun

Craun’s work combines an electric colour palette with geometric shapes to make intensely packed scenes.

His paintings always feature human figures, exploring the interior lives of others and whether these can be captured and communicated in an image.

His work sarcastically depicts modern people in social media ready poses.

There is a sense of realism to his hallucinatory paintings, which sometimes mimics Picasso’s ‘Primitivism’.

Whilst the colours are bright and sweet in their saturation, there is a sense of uneasiness and even drama. Many of the figures look trapped or staged, as though they are stuck in varying social moments or narratives they cannot escape. Craun is particularly interested in how social pressures influence people. The predominately pink colour palette in this painting also plays on the fact that all frozen characters are female.

- Colour pathways
Fowler’s action-packed figurative surfaces are almost Matisse like in their flat decorative treatment of space. His starting point often comes from one of his own photographs, which captures a moment or episode in his life. He incorporates 3D objects into collages, constructed from various pieces of furniture and objects sourced from his local surroundings. By doing this he injects and includes a lot of himself and his own environment into the work. Each piece depicts a narrative based on events from his own personal history. Many of these personal experiences are horrific or violent in nature and provoked Fowler to become an artist.

He wants the viewer to connect with a “world that may not be familiar” Fowler.

- Personal journeys
Simon Bedwell

Bedwell’s work has an element of fiction vs fact. He continually engages in a process of arranging and rearranging to expose what was previously subliminal in his found imagery.

Some of his posters have intertwined the original commercial content so deeply with the artist’s fictional and aesthetic alterations that it is hard to detect what came first. His posters combine found image and text with those of his own invention. He uses ClipArt and WordArt software to make his work, keeping true to many of the methods used in advertising. He will also scavenge and reuse torn posters from billboards, bins and thrift stores, giving his work a sense of timeless authenticity.

- Visual journeys
- Suggested journeys
Roman Stanczak

Stanczak was one of the young artists involved in the ‘Forge’ movement. The ‘Forge’ was a collective in Warsaw, which was the home of the 1990s ‘Critical Art’ phenomenon. This movement took the human body and made it into a site of power within artistic practice.

Stanczak uses domestic objects and fills them with traces of the human body. This includes sweat and blood which act as temporary stand-ins.

He brutalises his work, destroying its fabric. He says this prepares him for the journey of life to death. By using domestic items, Stanczak makes the work relatable to the audience and asks them to reconsider the way they view the objects and themselves within their own domestic environment.

- Personal journeys
- Journey from life to death
John Stezaker

Stezaker plays with the fabric of photography. He re-examines the audience’s relationship with it, questioning whether it’s a documentation, a memory or a symbol of modern culture. His works are photo collages, using found image to create ‘readymades’. He gathers images, with his collection currently containing more than 300,000 photographs. Stezaker’s work is playful but highly effective in prompting the viewer to consider identity. In his ‘Marriage’ series, Stezaker fuses together images of men and women, creating new identities. In the ‘Mask’ series, he creates new faces by overlaying images of landscapes or buildings and playing on the subject matter within the image. The end result is an optical illusion where trees become mouths and bridges become eyes.

- Natural **pathway** in landscape images
- **Pathway** from one image to another and how they merge and become one
Douglas Kolk

Douglas Kolk uses large scale collage to create overlapping and endless dialogues within his work. He draws inspiration from comic books and pulp novel covers. His pieces are densely packed and full of information, which arrive from various angles and sources.

The images present delicate ideas of identity and tainted virtue. This use of overloaded imagery replicates the feeling of being blasted with information. This is reflective of many people’s experience in contemporary urban life. There is a feeling of narrative within the work but with the clamour and confusion of the composition, it feels hard to find and follow it. The imagery also resembles the process of channel-surfing on the TV, where the viewer faces a barrage of information in broken and unfinished stages. The use of text in Kolk’s work adds another layer of concentration in that it demands to be read. In ‘Country Road’ images are swapped and interwoven, so nothing is any one thing.

- Personal journeys
- Visual pathways
Marianne Vitale

Vitale has used a range of materials throughout her artistic career but now largely uses reclaimed wood from derelict structures found around the USA.

The ‘Burned Bridges’ series (pictured) plays on the saying “don’t burn your bridges”. Their broken and charred nature evokes sadness. This feeds into Vitale’s exploration of American concepts about land, loneliness, posterity and death. Many of her pieces are filmed thus trying to achieve her own posterity as well as injecting a sense of performance into the work.

• Personal journeys
• Cultural journeys
• Physical pathway
• Broken or damaged or compromised pathway
Aleksandra Mir

Mir works in B&W, thus mimicking and parodying newspapers and the press.

Her work is large in scale and incorporates strong bold text with illustration.

The font is often playful, which masks the frequently dark political/historical themes being explored, but there is definitely a sense of history being told.

Mir works collaboratively, sometimes sketching out the bones of the work before a team fills it in. Her assistants often took on humorous titles like ‘The Supervisor of Paper Cutting and Protector of Fingertips’ and ‘Secretary of Finesse’. The strong contrast of the B&W emphasises the contrast between hot and cold, light and dark and good and evil.

- Political and cultural journey
- Visual pathways from one topic to another