PACA Art, Design and Photography Curriculum Intent:

"Art should be something that liberates your soul, provokes the imagination and encourages people to go further." – **Keith Haring**

Why We Teach Art, Photography and Textiles

At PACA, our Art, Photography and Textiles curriculum is designed to empower students to explore, interpret and shape the visual world around them. Through hands-on creative practice and critical engagement with artistic contexts, students develop the skills to express themselves, communicate ideas, and make meaningful artefacts. These subjects foster curiosity, independence and resilience, while nurturing a deep appreciation for visual culture and design.

We believe that creativity is a vital skill for all learners, and our curriculum supports students to become confident makers and thinkers who can respond to the world with imagination and purpose.

Why It's Important

Art, Photography and Textiles are essential for developing visual literacy, creative problem-solving and emotional expression. These subjects offer students a space to explore identity, culture and personal voice through a wide range of materials, processes and techniques. They also support mental wellbeing, offering therapeutic benefits through making and reflection.

Students gain transferable skills such as critical thinking, project planning, and the ability to analyse and respond to visual stimuli. These skills are valuable across many career pathways and life experiences.

What Art, Photography and Textiles Looks Like at PACA

Key Stage 3:

Students explore foundational skills in drawing, painting, colour theory, sculpture, and textiles. Lessons are practical and discussion-based, with regular contextual workshops that introduce students to a wide range of artists, movements and making strategies.

Key Stage 4:

Students follow the AQA Art and Design specification, choosing between **Fine Art** or **Photography**. They explore personal themes through a wide range of materials and techniques, developing independent projects that reflect their interests and ideas. The course is assessed through:

- **60% coursework**: a portfolio of practical and contextual work.
- **40% externally set assignment**: including an extended preparation period and final outcome.

Durham Gallery:

Our on-site gallery is a vibrant teaching and learning space where students exhibit their work, celebrate achievements, and develop critical thinking through peer and public engagement.

How We See Progress Within Learning and Attributes

Progress is tracked through formative and summative assessment of practical work, sketchbooks, written reflections and peer critique. Students demonstrate growth in:

- Technical skill and control of materials
- Conceptual development and personal response
- Understanding of artistic contexts and influences
- Independence, resilience and creative risk-taking

We also look for development in key attributes such as self-expression, visual communication, and reflective thinking.

Transferrable Skills Gained in Art, Photography and Textiles

- **Creative Thinking**: Students learn to generate and develop original ideas.

- **Visual Literacy**: Understanding and interpreting visual information is central to modern communication.
- **Emotional Expression**: Making art supports emotional wellbeing and self-awareness.
- **Cultural Understanding**: Students engage with diverse artistic traditions and perspectives.
- **Project Management**: Planning, refining and presenting work builds organisational skills.
- **Critical Analysis**: Students learn to evaluate their own and others' work with insight and sensitivity.
- **Confidence and Presentation Skills**: Exhibiting work and discussing ideas builds confidence and articulation.

Potential Career Pathways

Creative Industries: Artist, photographer, textile designer, illustrator, graphic designer, fashion designer, art director.
Education: Teaching roles in schools, colleges, and community arts programmes.
Arts Therapy: Careers in art therapy supporting mental health and wellbeing.
Cultural Sector: Roles in galleries, museums, and heritage organisations.
Media and Design: Careers in advertising, publishing, web design, and content creation.
Craft and Making: Careers in ceramics, textiles, jewellery, and other applied arts.

Our Art, Photography and Textiles curriculum nurtures creativity, independence and critical thinking. It prepares students not only for further study and careers in the arts, but also to be visually literate, thoughtful and expressive individuals who can make meaningful contributions to society.