

How Artists Work



The intersection of
AP Art & Design, Studio Habits of Mind, and more

You do more when you make art than you realize!

- You ideate/brainstorm to come up with ideas
- You research aspects of that idea
- You plan out what you are going to do
- You get better at using your materials
- You experiment with ideas and materials
- You use visual organization (P&E design) to create a composition
- You choose the best materials and process to get your idea across
- You reflect on your work & You get feedback on your work
- You make changes to your work based on critique and reflection
- You don't give up

You ideate/brainstorm to come up with ideas

Artist have to come up with ideas of what to make, so they ideate/brainstorm

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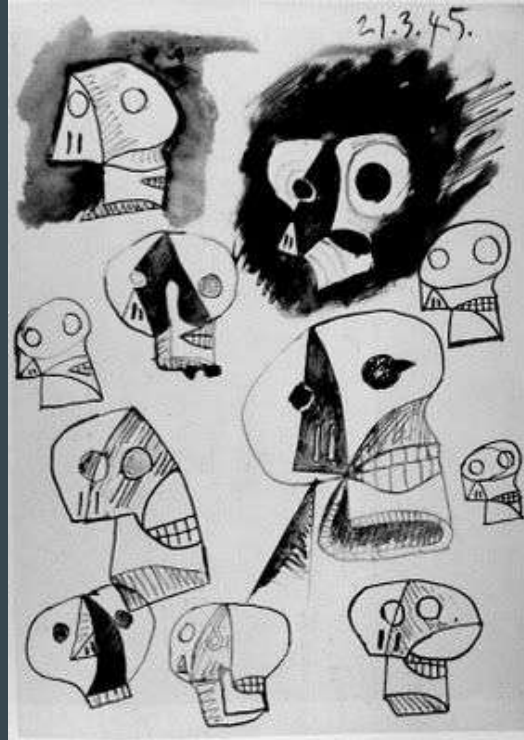
Envision (Imagining & Planning)

Observe (Looking Closely)

APAD:

Formulate questions that guide a sustained investigation through art and design.

Right: Picasso sketchbook page



IDEATION



Right: (source unknown)

THE WATERMAN FALLS INTO THE "TRAP" OF LOOKING.
THE "SPY" IS A DIFFERENT PERSON.
"LOOKING" IS + IS NOT "EATING" + ALSO "BEING EATEN".
THAT IS, THERE IS CONTINUITY OF SOME SORT AMONG
THE WATERMAN, THE SPACE, THE OBJECTS.
THE SPY MUST BE READY TO "MOVE," ~~THE~~ MUST BE AWARE

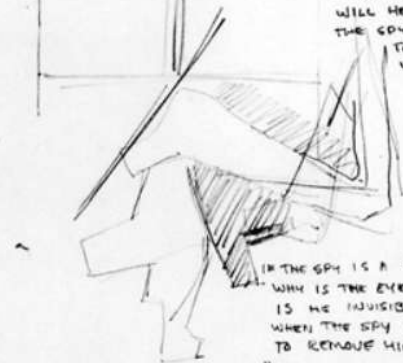
SOMEWHERE HERE, THERE IS THE
QUESTION OF "SEEING CLEARLY."
SEEING WHAT?

ACCORDING TO WHAT?

OF HIS OUTRAGES + BITS.
THE WATERMAN LEAVES
HIS BID + TAKES AWAY
NO INFORMATION.
THE SPY MUST REMEMBER
+ MUST REMEMBER HIMSELF
+ HIS REMEMORABLE.
THE SPY DESIGNS HIMSELF
TO BE OVERLOOKED. THE
WATERMAN "SERVES" AS
A WARNING. WILL THE
SPY + THE WATERMAN
EVER MEET? IN A
PAINTING NAMED SPY,
WILL HE BE PRESENT?
THE SPY STATIONS HIMSELF
TO OBSERVE THE
WATERMAN.

CREATING? EACH
OBJECT REFLECTING
THE OTHER.

IF THE SPY IS A FOREIGN OBJECT
WHY IS THE EYE NOT IRRITATED?
IS HE INVISIBLE?
WHEN THE SPY IRRITATES, WE TRY
TO REMOVE HIM.
"NOT SPYING, JUST LOOKING" —
WATCHMAN.



Jasper Johns

One thing made
of another.
one thing used
as another.
an arrogant object
something to
be filled or
bent or stretched
(SKIN?)
Presence of the body
+ the mind.
Avoid a polar
situation.
Think of the
edge of the city +
the traffic there.
For hinge line?
this canvas could
then be dropped to
rest on the floor.
some clean souvenirs - a photograph or a
fisherman's den or
a dried corsage
lead reaction?
bronzes junk?
glove?
glass?
ruler?
vase?
title?
neg. female fig?
dog?
make a newspaper
of lead or sculpt metal?
Impressions?
metal paper bag?
(profile? In dream?)
perhaps on falling
hinged section
something which can
be erased or shifted
(magnetic area)
stretches on
part of chair
hinge
a newspaper clipping
caught in the
corner of
a mirror
distorted
as usual



Right: Playstation

You research aspects of that idea

Artists research other artists,
the world around them,
using materials, and
social/political/physical
aspects of their topic.

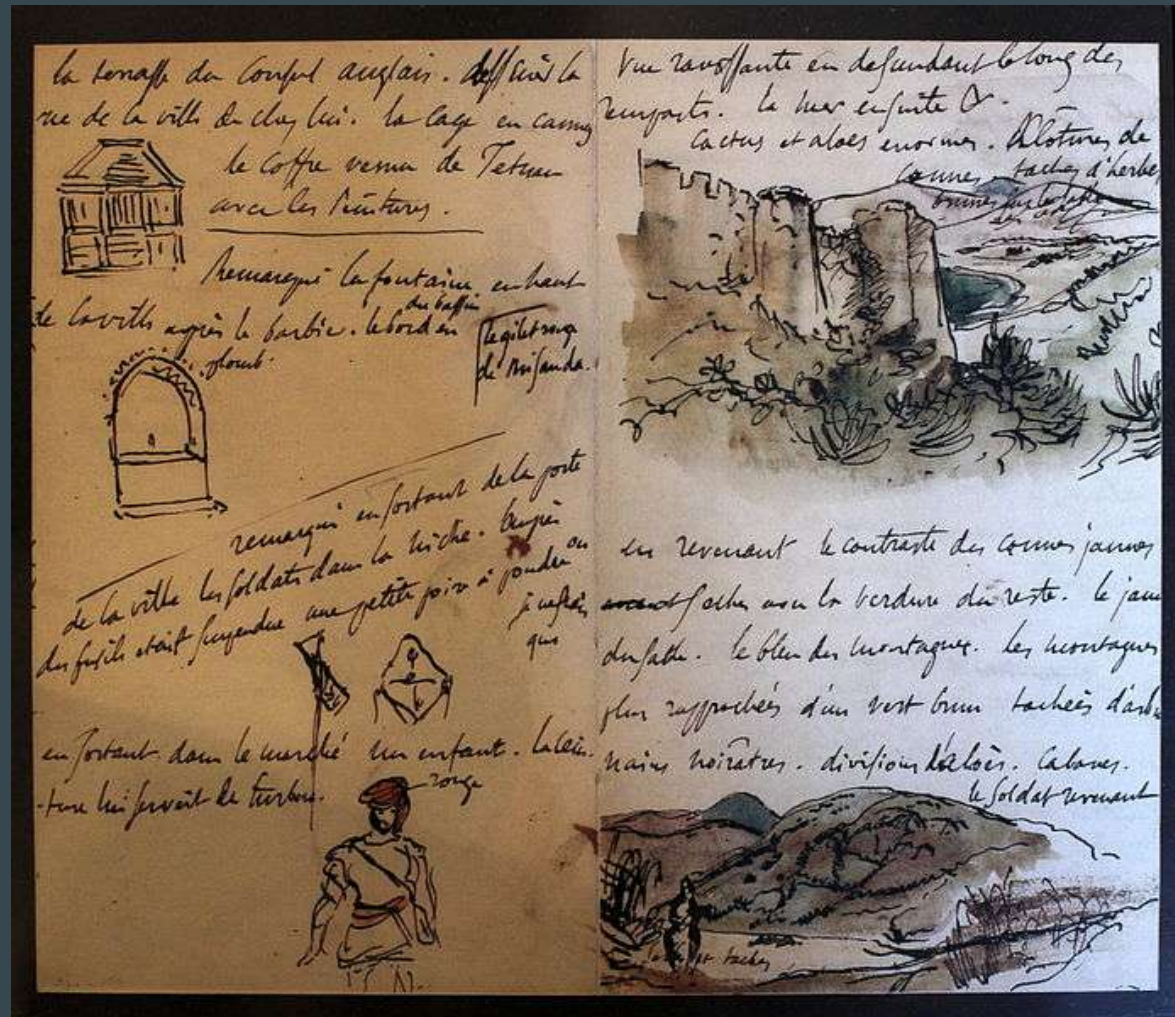
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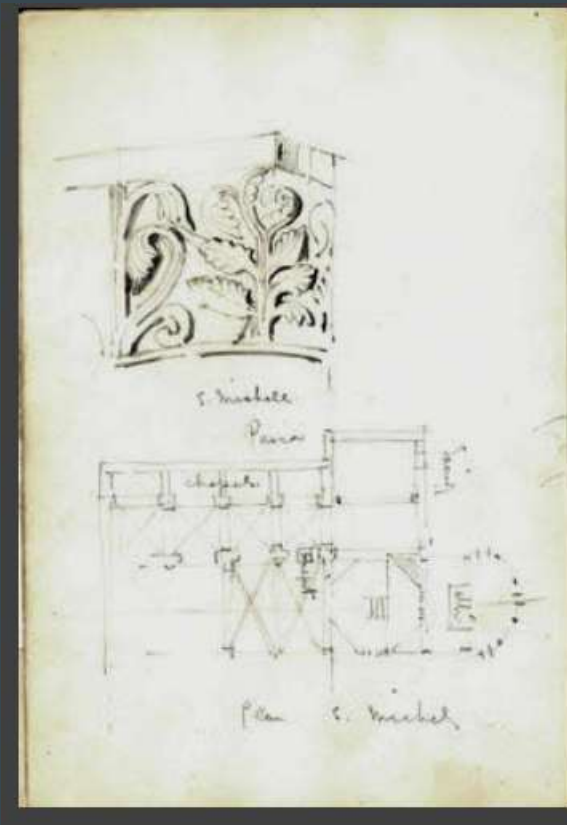
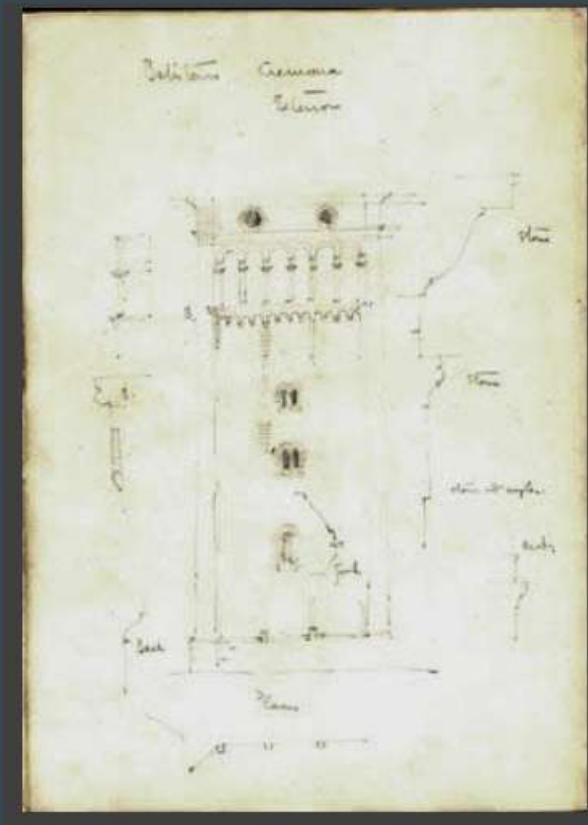
Observe (Looking Closely)
Understand Art Worlds (Domain &
Communities)

APAD:

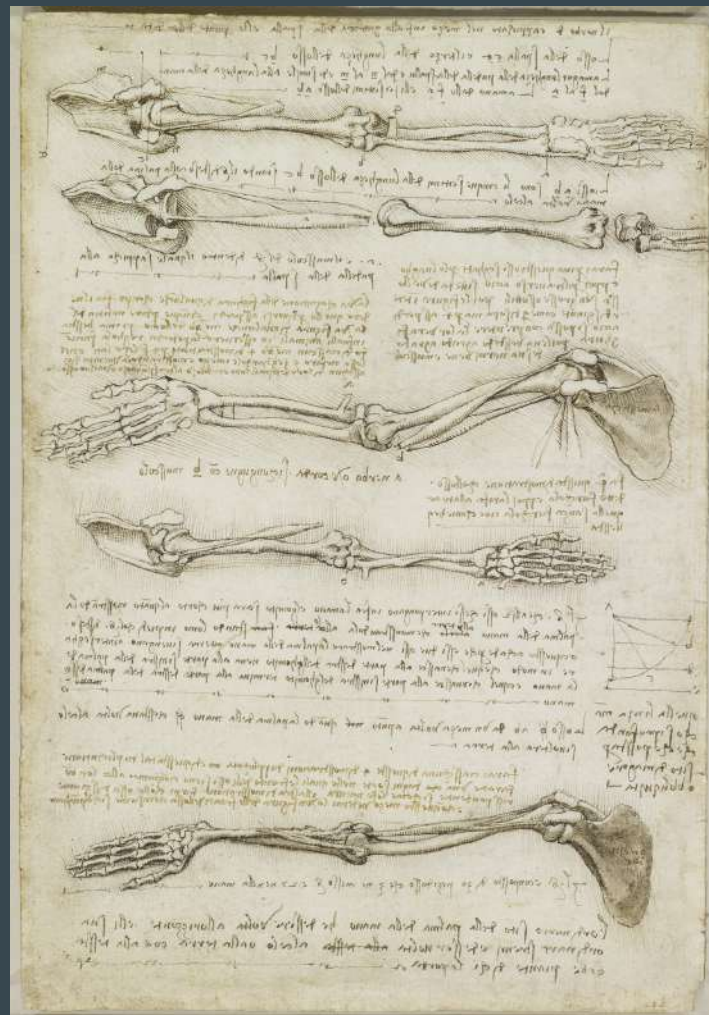
Inquiry & Investigation -
Investigate materials, processes, and
ideas.

Right: Eugene Delacroix: Notes from a
Journey to Morocco






Above: Architectural sketches in a sketchbook done during a tour of Italy by architect Charles Mackintosh, 1891, contain careful pencil studies of exteriors, and a few interiors, capitals and floor plans. Materials, and sometimes measurements and sculptures, are included in his notes.



Right: Leonardo DiVinci




YAYOI KUSAMA

BORN: MARCH 22ND 1929
MOTSU MOTO, JAPAN

FLOWER OBSESSION
SUNFLOWER,
2000

BIOGRAPHY:

Kusama started painting when she was a child in Japan, where she began to experience hallucinations that often involved an abundance of dots. These hallucinations and dots would continue to be incorporated as a theme in her art throughout her career. Family conflict and her desire to become an artist against her parents' wishes drove her to move to the United States in 1957 (when she was 28 years old). Her early work (such as what she called "infinity net" paintings) anticipated the emerging minimalist movement, but soon after she transitioned to pop and performance art. In 1973, Kusama moved back to Japan, and 4 years later she sent herself to a mental hospital, where she continued to create art and write surreal poetry. She later returned back to the international art scene in New York City, where she continued to have a successful career as an artist.



"The Earth is a dot. I am a dot. The moon is a dot. The stars are dots. Dots are innumerable infinite. That's why my life has been a continuous struggle for the creation of my art."

dots

OBSESSION

As a child Kusama was heavily afflicted with various neuropsychiatric disorders, and art was her escape. Unlike impressionist pointillism, Kusama incorporated dots into her pieces to completely fill the space, yet without creating real images. Instead, the dots symbolise her passionate, tired, and restless soul. Kusama's dots soon spilled from the canvases to everything around her, including floors, walls, chairs, and whatever objects were in the room at that time.

Kusama explained that "the earth is a dot. I am a dot. The moon is a dot. The stars are dots. Dots are innumerable, infinite. That's why my life has been a continuous struggle for the creation of my art." This quite highlights the reasons Kusama has consistently been incorporating the dots into her work.


Dots obsession is a series of installations across the globe, where she incorporates her passionate and therapeutic dots, along with items such as inflatable objects, pumpkins, and other things which are covered in dots along with the environment they are in. Dots obsession approximates the hallucinations Kusama suffered, and the installations reveal her careful attention to construction of space through colour and form.

"Yayoi Kusama was a heavily influential figure in the postwar New York art scene. She is often considered an influence on Andy Warhol and a pioneer to pop art."

MUSEUM TRANSCRIPTION OF KUSAMA'S PUMPKIN (2018)



AT LOUISIANA MUSEUM OF MODERN ART
KUSAMA WITH PUMPKIN 2010 (GERMANIA)



Right: (source unknown)

CYANOTYPES

METHODS
+
MATERIALS

In this exploratory workshop we explored another realm of analog photography, cyanotypes, which use the sun to create an exposure on surfaces coated with a mixture of chemicals.



↑ Here the simplicity and clarity of the cyanotypes created by Anna Atkins.



For this piece, cyanotypes have been drawn onto + collaged, creating a multi-layered piece.

↓ This was my first cyanotype - it was underexposed so I needed the concept of the plants. Atkins inspired cyanotype no. 1



ARTIST RESEARCH: ANNA ATKINS

Anna Atkins was a British botanist, photographer, and natural history painter. She was a highly scientific woman, and had a great knowledge of plants and animals. She was an acquaintance of Henry Fox Talbot (who I have previously researched in photography) and it is said that she took many techniques such as cyanotypes from him. She learnt the cyanotype process from its inventor, Sir John Herschel. Atkins began using the process extensively - first to document algae, but then using it for all kinds of botanical subjects. Her book, 'Photography of British Algae: Cyanotype Impressions' is considered to be the first book that was illustrated photographically, and Atkins herself is often considered the first woman to have taken a photograph.

← These cyanotypes, by Helen Lewis, who normally works in illustration and printmaking, show how the design can be created with line drawings, not just solid objects. I particularly like how they have used cyanotype in most of a collage format, it adds interest.

Atkins inspired version 2 - with longer exposure, more darker shade of blue.



This second cyanotype I kept in the sun for longer, so it's darker.

THE CYANOTYPE PROCESS

To create cyanotypes you need to use a chemical mixture. You need 10g of Potassium Ferricyanide with 100ml of water, plus another 100ml of water mixed with Ammonium Ferric Chloride. These two solutions, mixed together, gives the cyanotype solution.

TO CREATE A CYANOTYPE

1. Evenly coat a piece of paper, card, wood or other material with the solution, and leave to dry fully, in darkness.
2. Place objects, drawings, negatives etc. on top of the cyanotype surface, in an A frame if possible.
3. Leave under a UV light box, or in direct sun light for roughly 6 minutes (this changes based on sun intensity, and line drawings and negatives take longer to create a good exposure).
4. Rinse in running water, then soak in a water bath until the green/yellow fringe has gone.
5. Leave the print to dry - this will give you the final outcome!



↑ This is a cyanotype I made using a simple black pen/drawing on tracing paper. It was not very successful, I think it needed quite a lot longer to expose. (and brighter sun could help!)

This is my second attempt at creating a cyanotype. I left the cyanotype in the sun for an even 5-10 minutes, which helped with the image clarity.



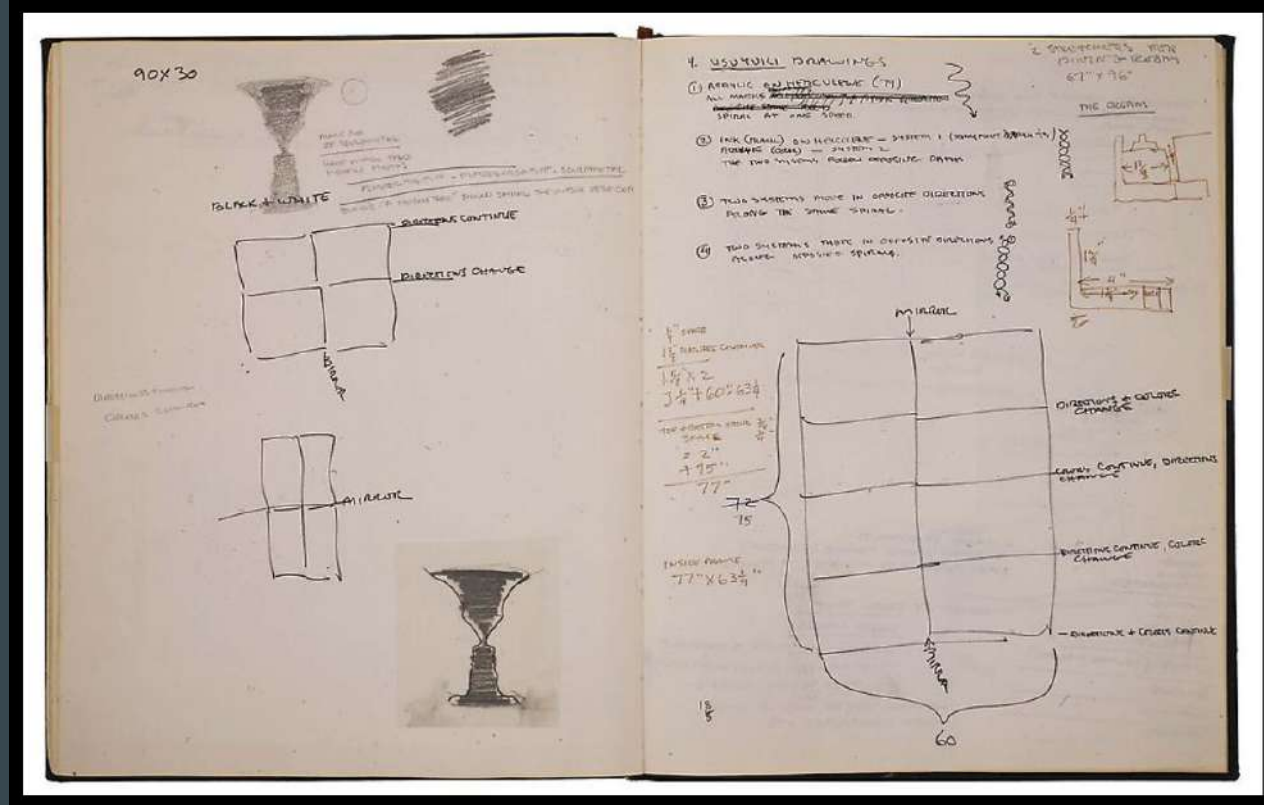
You can see how much darker the image is, and how much more detail is visible in the image clarity.

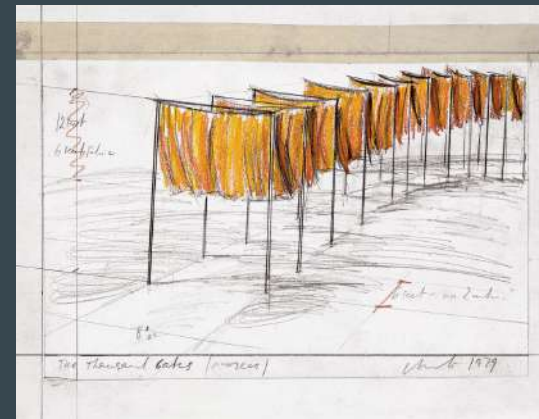
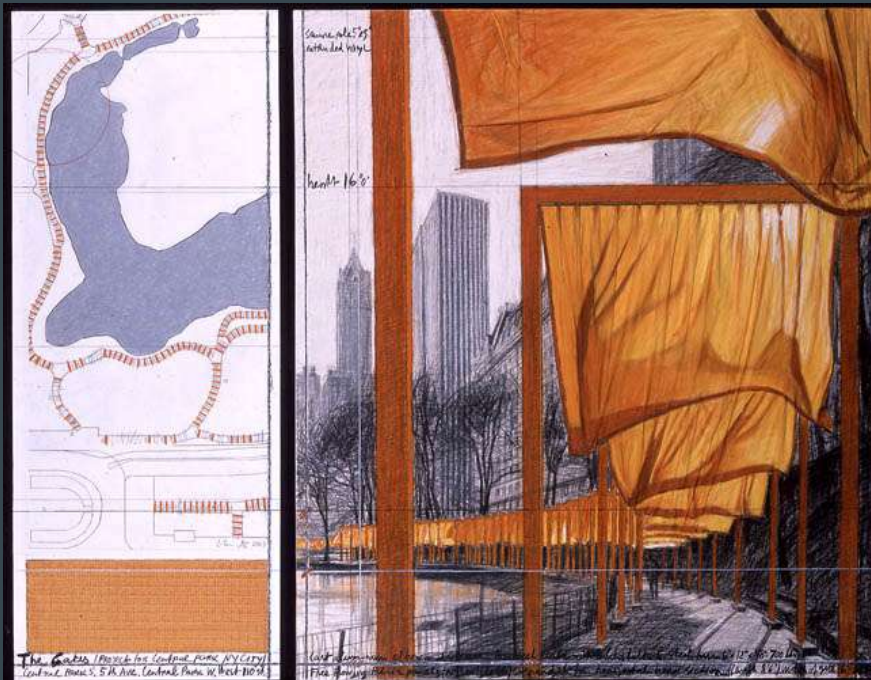


Right: (source unknown)

You plan out what you are going to do

Right: Jasper Johns





Above and right: Christo & Jeanne Claude
- Gates project, NYC



Above: Leonardo da Vinci - Study for the Last Supper

You get better at using your materials

Artist get better at using materials by practicing skills and techniques

SHOM:

Develop Craft

(Technique & Studio Practice)

APAD:

Practice

Practice is repeatedly using a material, process, or idea over a period of time. Practice should support learning and development.

Right: Michelangelo





Above: Mary McAndrew - <http://marymcandrew.com/>

You experiment with ideas and materials

Artists try things out that may or may not work

SHOM:

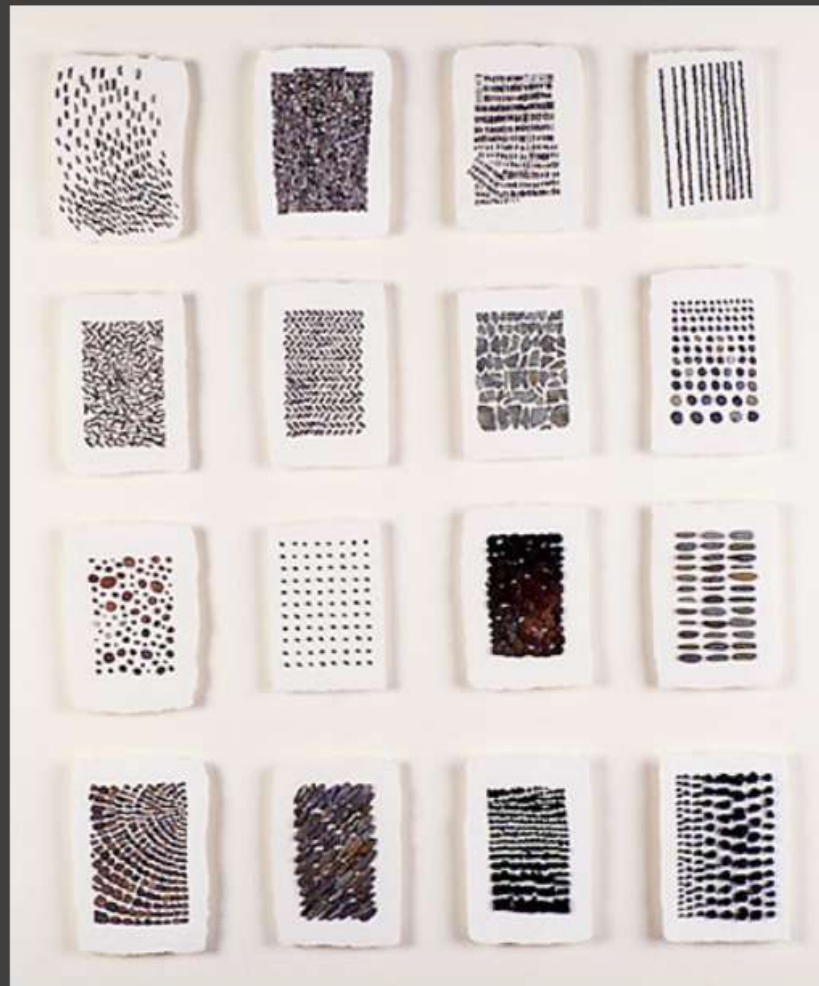
Stretch & Explore (Play, Use Mistakes & Discover)

APAD:

Experimentation

Experimentation is testing a material, process, or idea. An experiment can begin with a question as simple as What if...? Experimenting involves trying something different. Results can be surprising, sparking new ways of thinking about and using components.

Right: Sue Lawty



**You use visual organization (P&E design)
to create a composition**

Artists use strong design principles keep the viewer engaged

SHOM:

Not specifically mentioned.

APAD:

Make works of art and design that demonstrate 2-D, 3-D, or drawing skills. 2-D skills: use of two-dimensional elements and principles— point, line, shape, plane, layer, form, space, texture, color, value, opacity, transparency, time, unity, variety, rhythm, movement, proportion, scale, balance, emphasis, contrast, repetition, figure/ground relationship, connection, juxtaposition, hierarchy

Right: Joshua K Jackson



**You choose the best materials and process
to get your idea across**

What artists show,
how they show it,
and what materials they use
should purposefully help to
get the idea across

SHOM:

Express (Finding & Showing Meaning)

APAD:

Make works of art and design that demonstrate synthesis of materials, processes, and ideas.

Above: Olivia Parker - Vanishing in Plain Sight

““Vanishing in Plain Sight” is my imagination’s journey through my husband John’s continual changes due to Alzheimer’s disease. I began with tangible things: the notes he wrote to help him remember and the office supplies he feared would be gone. When a subject or a camera moves during an exposure the subject disappears partially or entirely. I found that this characteristic of photography was well suited to the images I wanted to create next. As John became more and more disconnected from the world around him my photographs began to depart from what my eyes saw. The assumed connection between photography and reality remains giving voice to my imagined images.”





Above: Kara Walker - A Subtlety, or the Marvelous Sugar Baby, an Homage to the unpaid and overworked Artisans who have refined our Sweet tastes from the cane fields to the Kitchens of the New World on the Occasion of the demolition of the Domino Sugar Refining Plant.

“The piece is situated in a highly contested space in Williamsburg: the former Domino Sugar Factory, a site that’s become a lightning rod for discussions about post-industrial urban identity, the moneyed forces of gentrification, and the uneasy relationship of arts patronage and developers.”

“Walker’s work doesn’t explore any of the site’s recent past, focusing instead on the shadowy history of the sugar industry in the Americas and its reliance on slave labor for centuries.”

**You reflect on your work &
You get feedback on your work**

Artist think about their own work, and ask for input from other people

SHOM:

Reflect (Question & Explain and Evaluate)

APAD:

Feedback on practice, experimentation, and revision can provide insight about the effects of those activities.

Reflecting on relationships of questions and practice, experimentation, and revision with materials, processes, and ideas.

Exchanging constructive feedback about visual evidence of sustained investigation and practice, experimentation, and revision guided by questions in each other's work.



Right: a crit at RISD

**You make changes to your work
based on critique and reflection**

Based on internal/external feedback, artists make changes

SHOM:

Nothing specific in the habits, except perhaps Persist or Reflect

APAD:

Revision

Revision is intentionally making a change. Revision can be spontaneous, quick changes made during the working process. Revision can be methodical, complex, substantial changes made after stopping to evaluate work. Revision is often based on bringing together actual and desired states of work. It can include consideration of relationships of materials, processes, and ideas.



Right: Thomas Spande

You don't give up

Show GRIT! Artists don't give up because it is hard.

SHOM:

Engage & Persist

(Finding Passion & Sticking with It)

APAD:

Not specifically stated.



Your first 10,000 photographs are
your worst.

— *Henri Cartier-Bresson* —

AZ QUOTES