

Content

Two design briefs and a series of related activities for use by teachers and students as part of a self-lead research visit to the King's State Apartments at Kensington Palace.

Introduction

A research trip to the state apartments at Kensington Palace is an engaging and inspiring way to begin an A-level Textiles project and these design briefs are intended to stimulate rich and varied research, leading to a high quality final outcome. Either of the two design briefs could be used as the starting point for an Autumn project in year 12, or as the basis for the longer, main coursework project (Personal Investigation) which is usually begun at the end of the first year, in the summer term.

A flexible approach for teachers

Each brief and its associated activities has been developed to be used in its entirety or to be a welcome addition to an existing topic or theme. Most activities will also work as stand alone exercises or could be adapted to another theme or stimulus.

Meeting the Assessment objectives

These briefs have also been designed to facilitate all of the assessment objectives for Art and Design: Textiles A-level specifications. Mark schemes for all three main exam boards (AQA, Edexcel and OCR) follow broadly the same four assessment objectives:

AO1 Develop: Develop ideas through focused investigations informed by contextual and other sources, demonstrating analytical and critical understanding.

AO2 Explore/Experiment: Explore and select appropriate resources, media, materials, techniques and processes, reviewing and refining ideas as work develops.

AO3 Record: Record ideas, observations and insights relevant to intentions.

AO4 Present: Present a personal and meaningful response that realises intentions and, where appropriate, makes connections between visual and other elements.

Suggestions of how each activity can be assessed using these objectives has been highlighted throughout.

Design Brief 1

Nature Reformed 1715–1775

“Nature abhors a straight line”

Lancelot ‘Capability’ Brown (1716-1783), Garden designer

During the enlightenment, painters, craftsmen and designers attempted to control, beautify and frame nature in ways that emphasised the mastery of man over the natural world. Nature was a constant theme of investigation by the Georgians. Specific natural forms feature throughout the decorative Art and Fashion on display in the palace.

How can stylised and fantastical re-imaginings of natural forms be used as inspiration for a contemporary design and make project?

Learning resources for this project focus on how nature has been the inspiration for surface design, embellishment, pattern and silhouette. Students can then explore the theme within a historical and/or contemporary context leading to a final outcome related to Interior Textiles, Art Textiles or Fashion.

Pre-visit activities

Task 1

Collect images of Decorative Art and Fashion from the Georgian era that demonstrate the Capability Brown quote above.

Some key search terms to get you started:

Acanthus Leaves, English backed mantua, Spitalfields silk, Eighteenth century grotesque decoration, Eighteenth century embroidery, Eighteenth century court dress, Elizabeth Blackwell, The Bauer Brothers.

Task 2

Eighteenth century fashion and ideas have inspired plenty of modern designers. Research the work of one of the following designer/artists by answering the questions:

Designers: Vivienne Westwood, Rei Kawakubo, Jean-Paul Gaultier

Question 1

How does your chosen designer re-form the natural shape of the body in their work? (Include examples/images.)

Question 2

Does your chosen designer use decorative motifs or patterns that are similar to those from the Georgian period? If not, why do you think this is?

Question 3

How have they been inspired by curvilinear forms in nature? Can you pair an example of a piece of textiles or fashion with an image that may have inspired it?

This covers assessment objectives Record and Present.

Activities for during the visit

Record (using observational drawing and photography) as many examples of natural forms and their influence on Art and Design as you can while you move through each room in the King’s State apartments.

Drawing and Photography activities for contextual research:

Task 1 – The Long Gallery

Divide your page into six, choose an object that interests you and draw a different aspect or detail of it into each of your six squares.

Reflection

Which one of your drawings is the most interesting?

Which one best demonstrates the theme of nature?

How could you use this work to develop a print design for Textiles?

Task 2 – The King’s Drawing Room

(also including the garments in the adjacent room)

a) Draw one garment and one decorative embellishment using a continuous line (do not take your pencil off the paper).

Reflection

How could this be developed into a fabric surface design?

How could you explore these drawings in stitch?

b) Consider the garments that are on display, now draw the negative space around the garments.

Reflection

How do these objects compress and extend the natural body?

How does this clothing and its undergarments create a new and distinctive silhouette?

Task 3 – The Cupola Room

Cut or carefully tear a 5x5cm square into the middle of a piece of paper to make a view-finder. Use your viewfinder to isolate small areas of interesting texture/pattern/colour/contrast and photograph these. Your photographs can be used later to develop ideas for pattern and surface design in your sketchbook.

Make careful observational drawings and take photographs of as many examples of acanthus leaves as you can spot in this room.

Reflection

Did you notice the tromp l'oeil effect on the flat ceiling to make it look domed? How could this be used in Fashion or Textiles design to give the impression of depth and volume?

Task 4 – The Presence Chamber

Photograph as many 'frames' and columns as you can find (eg framed paintings, doorways, archways or fireplaces) these can be used in your sketchbook to help with presentation or used as part of a surface design piece.

Spend some time drawing either the ornate carving over the fireplace (a real test of tone and depth drawing) or make a drawing of the ceiling using coloured pencils to capture the vibrant use of a distinctive colour palette. Notice how this ceiling painting uses highly stylised natural forms to create a regular pattern - you could re-create this style in your own way using images of natural forms in your sketchbook.

All of these tasks relate to assessment objectives Develop, Record and Present.

Post-visit activities

Task 1

Print out your photographs and use a photocopier to shrink/enlarge/multiply them. Use the copies to create collages that could be turned into a digital print design or embroidery piece. Can you create a part-collage part-drawing that extends the lines and forms?

Task 2

Some of your copies could be used as backgrounds (particularly if they have been lightened on the photocopier) Use pens to draw stitch marks on top of a background image.

Task 3

Cut out motifs from your photographs or photocopies and collage them onto fashion models taken from magazines or fashion body templates, create new ideas for fashion silhouettes. Using a collage technique should give you the freedom to experiment with scale and repetition.

Develop your ideas for a fashion outcome by making samples of textiles techniques from the eighteenth century and integrating them into the collage experiments as mentioned above. Quilting, screen printing and hand embroidery could all be explored in more depth to give your design ideas a flavour of the eighteenth century.

All of these tasks relate to assessment objectives Develop, Record and Present.

Design Brief 2

A Sense of Place: Architecture and Narratives of Fashion

The grandeur and scale of the King's State Apartments give a real sense of the status and power of the people that inhabited them, interior and exterior architecture were of particular importance to the Georgians and their choice of interior design is reflected in the clothing of the era. Begin by soaking up the atmosphere of the rooms and imagining the people who populated them, how could their stories provide inspiration for a project? Can the architectural features of the state apartments be transferred onto the body to create innovative fashion outcomes? This brief contains lots of ideas for how you can create a fashion collection using architecture, personal narratives and characterisation as a starting points for design.

Pre-visit activities

Task 1

Collect images of eighteenth century homes and the people who commissioned, designed and lived in these buildings. Is it easy to find images of all classes of people?

What do you notice about the differences and similarities in their clothing? Can you make connections between the style of the architecture and the fashion of the period? Some key search terms to get you started:

Neoclassical architecture, Grinling Gibbons, trompe l'oeil, classical columns, porticos, William and Mary, court of George I, William Kent.

Task 2

Research the work of one of the following artists/designers by answering the questions: Yinka Shonibare, Tim Walker, Colleen Atwood

Question 1

Has the designer you have chosen used an existing narrative? Have they written their own from scratch or adapted an existing story?

Question 2

a) How has your chosen practitioner used character and storytelling in their work?

b) Consider whether this artist/designer has made fashion, costume or clothing. If you were to design a garment to be displayed in the King's State Apartments, would seeing it 'in situ' give it meaning?

Question 3

How has the designer you have chosen used fashion/clothing to challenge a received opinion about something?

Include lots of images in your research.

These tasks relate to assessment objectives Record and Present.

Activities for during the visit

Use photography throughout your visit to record the key objects in the life of one of the previous residents of Kensington Palace. How would they have lived in these rooms?

How would their clothing reflect the Georgian era? Would Georgian clothing effect the way that you move?

Drawing for activities for contextual research:

Task 1 – The Long Gallery

Draw a series of hats/wigs/headpieces based on the objects you can see on display, these could be drawn or collaged later onto paintings from the Georgian period. Make unusual combinations of form and material.

Reflection

How could you make these objects? How could you use modern materials to do this? Could your idea be achieved using only paper and card?

Task 2 – The King's Drawing Room (and garments in adjacent room)

a) Inversions – Turn a body template upside down and then draw the shape of a garment from observation onto the inverted body. Try this three times in three different ways.

Reflection

Does inverting these garments give them a different character?

Does it make them more restrictive?

Could an inverted garment give a different message to the viewer?

Could you design a whole fashion photo-shoot based on this idea?

b) The gender differences in clothing from the Georgian era are very clear. List or describe the key elements of male and female dress using the portraits and examples in these rooms. Now combine these elements of eighteenth century costume to create two quick ideas for a womenswear outfit and two ideas for a menswear outfit (you do not need to use the gender distinctions from the eighteenth century to do this)

Reflection

Do you think subverting the gender of a garment has a resonance today?

c) Photograph areas of the apartments that would make a good setting for a fashion photoshoot (you can photoshop or collage your models into them later).

Task 3 – The Cupola Room

Make a page of observational drawings recording all of the columns, plinths and porticos that you can see in this room. Now have a look at the painted ceiling, do you think it is domed or flat? How has it been painted to give a 'trompe l'oeil' effect? How could this be used in a garment? Draw three quick ideas.

Task 4 – The Privy Chamber and the Presence Chamber

a) Take pictures of objects and spaces that give an atmosphere or could tell part of a story. Make notes about a particular person who lived in these rooms during the Georgian period. Who is the person inhabiting these rooms why are they here? What would they be doing? How would they move? What would they be wearing?

b) Take photographs of frames, textures (wallpaper and tapestries), surfaces, doorways and windows that can be used in your sketchbook to help with presentation or as backgrounds at a later date.

These activities support assessment objectives Develop, Record and Present.

Post-visit activities for developing ideas

Task 1

Develop the use of materials. Take one of your design idea drawings that you completed while at the palace and develop it using the textile traditions of your own cultural heritage. Can you use traditional fabrics or silhouettes to enhance what you have done already and make it your own?

Task 2

a) Use sublimation printing to transfer one of your photographs onto some polyester fabric and drape it onto a mannequin. Can you recreate some of the garment shapes that you saw in the palace?

b) Choose a fairy tale or folk story and imagine it performed in Kensington Palace. What would the main characters be wearing to reflect the venue and the Georgian era? Use this as the start of a fashion collection.

These tasks link to assessment objectives Develop, Explore, Record and Present.

Suggestions for reading list additions

Arnold, J (1989), *Patterns of Fashion Vol.1 1660–1860*, Macmillan

Edwards, L. (2017) *How to Read a Dress*, Bloomsbury

Hart, A. (2000), *Historical Fashion in Detail:
The 17th and 18th Centuries*, V&A Publishing

Ribeiro, A (1984), *Dress in Eighteenth Century Europe*, Yale

Styles, J. (2008), *The Dress of the People:
Fashion in Eighteenth Century England*, Yale

Waugh, N. (1954), *Corsets and Crinolines*, Batsford

Waugh, N. (1968), *The Cut of Women's Clothes*, Faber and Faber