



Nº1

The UK's Number One Summer School

COURSE OVERVIEW

Art and Design

14-17yrs

📍 Dukes Cambridge Summer School



At a glance

Introduction to Art and Design

The Faculty of Art & Design at Cambridge introduces you to creative practice at university level, combining artistic exploration with critical thinking. This programme is for students who want to experiment with visual ideas, materials, and processes while also considering how art communicates meaning. You'll develop your own creative voice through hands-on work and collaborative projects, while gaining insight into the role of art and design in contemporary culture.

Academic Content

20 hours of subject-specific academic content per week with an experienced subject tutor, delivered through interactive seminars and hands-on practical workshops.

English Language Level

Students require a minimum English level of B1+ to enrol onto this programme.





About the programme

Art & Design at Cambridge gives you two weeks to explore how ideas move from sketch to finished work, and from individual thought to collective creation. You'll work across different media – drawing, painting, sculpture, digital tools – and experiment with both traditional and modern approaches. Central to the programme is the group installation project, where you collaborate to plan, design, and build a large-scale piece that becomes part of the final showcase.

Alongside studio work, you'll discuss the theory and history of art and design, learning how artists respond to social, cultural, and political contexts. These conversations help you place your own work within a wider framework, connecting practice to ideas.

Learning is highly interactive. You'll share feedback in group critiques, adapt your work based on new insights, and see how collaboration can expand individual creativity. Tutors guide the process with expertise drawn from both academic study and professional practice.

Studying art and design at Cambridge equips you with practical skills, creative confidence, and the ability to think critically about visual culture. These abilities are valuable not only in the arts but also in fields such as architecture, media, communication, and design industries.





Key Learning Outcomes

1.

Understand Core Creative Principles

Gain knowledge of key concepts in art and design, such as composition, form, and process, and how these shape visual communication.

2.

Apply Artistic Concepts to Practice

Experiment with materials and methods to turn ideas into finished pieces, showing how creative thinking connects with practical outcomes.

3.

Strengthen Research and Reflective Skills

Investigate artistic influences, analyse examples from different contexts, and reflect critically on your own creative work.

4.

Develop Communication and Collaboration Skills

Work with others to create, discuss, and present visual projects, enhancing your ability to explain and share creative ideas.





Subject Theme

The Challenge Lab

The Cambridge Challenge Lab gives students the chance to turn ideas into action. Over the course of the challenge, you'll take what you've learned in class – concepts, theories, and creative approaches – and put them to the test. Each subject sets its own challenge: scientists run live demos, medics work through clinic simulations, psychologists design social experiments, business students act as consultants, and artists create large-scale installations. English students launch a full publication, taking on the roles of writers, editors, and designers. The Lab becomes a space where experimentation meets presentation, where you'll learn how to move from planning to execution, and from individual thinking to group collaboration. The week culminates in a showcase where projects are demonstrated, performed, or displayed in real time, allowing the audience to see the full journey from theory to practice.





Fundamental concepts

This subject introduces students to the principles of collective creativity. They learn how artists work together to shape one idea, how scale and space influence meaning, and how different media combine to form a single piece. The focus is on collaboration and process, as well as the final artwork itself.

Art and Design Frameworks

Students follow the structure of a design studio. They begin with brainstorming and sketching, then develop a concept and decide on materials. The group divides responsibilities – construction, design, presentation – while continuing to work towards one shared goal. The final piece is installed and presented as part of the Challenge Lab showcase, echoing the way professional artists unveil site-specific work.

Foundational Vocabulary

Installation, concept, composition, medium, texture, scale, perspective, collaboration, audience, exhibition, process.





Time to Shine

Time to Shine gives every student the chance to practise public speaking in a structured setting. By researching, preparing and delivering a project to an audience, you build confidence in expressing ideas clearly and develop the ability to present with authority. It's an opportunity to refine communication skills that are valuable for academic study, professional life and beyond.

The showcase takes the form of a gallery opening. Students present their installation as a completed work, walking the audience through the idea, the process, and the finished piece. The effect is immersive: the audience doesn't just look at the artwork, they step into it, experiencing the shared vision of the group in the same way visitors encounter installations at professional exhibitions.





Time to Shine Project: Week One

Create an installation exploring sustainability. Students might use recycled or found materials, arranging them in a way that prompts reflection on consumption and waste. The emphasis is on making an environmental message visible through form, texture, and scale.

Time to Shine Project: Week Two

Design an installation based on human connection. The group could build a piece that responds to how people move through the space – for example, structures that shift as participants walk past, or surfaces covered with collaborative marks. The goal is to show how art captures interaction and community.





Case Study

Bridging Theory and Real World Application

The idea of building one large piece of art links to many careers. Architects and city planners also think about space and how people move through it. Event organisers and theatre groups design environments that create a special experience for their audience. Companies sometimes use installations to promote their brand in a creative way. Even digital designers use the same thinking when they build interactive websites or virtual spaces. By creating their own installation, students learn skills that can be applied in many professional areas – teamwork, problem-solving, and thinking about how people experience a space.





Fieldwork

Groups collect textures, sounds, or visual patterns from the campus environment – leaves, architectural details, or fragments of colour – and incorporate them into their work. This exercise grounds the installation in its setting and highlights how artists often draw directly from their surroundings.





Academic Difficulty

No prior experience is needed to take part in this subject. Every student is welcome, whether or not they've studied the subject before. Key ideas and terms are introduced step by step, and all materials are provided during the course. The emphasis is on participation, teamwork, and curiosity, so students can contribute fully and grow in confidence as they prepare for the final showcase.



Certificate of Achievement & Reference Letter

On completion of your programme, you will receive a Certificate of Achievement from Dukes Cambridge, recognising the knowledge and skills developed during your studies. A personalised Letter of Reference is also available on request, providing an account of your progress and commitment. Both serve as valuable additions to your academic portfolio.





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