

THE WINCHESTER GUIDE TO



KEYWORDS AND CONCEPTS



FOR INTERNATIONAL
STUDENTS IN ART,
MEDIA AND DESIGN

ANNIE LU MAKHOUL AND SIMON MORLEY

WILEY Blackwell

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*Simon Morley dedicates this book to the loving memory
of his father, Michael Morley, 16 June 1926–27 March 2014.*

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PREFACE

Studying is always rewarding and daunting, ecstatic and frustrating, challenging and demanding. It is doubly so in a second language. The guide you hold in your hand is designed with these demands and rewards in mind, crafted carefully over many years to heighten the positive elements of studying art, design or media in a second language and to minimise the negative elements. This book's goal is to make your life as a student easier and more fulfilling. The authors of the work have long experience with second-language learning situations, including having both studied and taught in such settings, and they have determined what kinds of information would be of most benefit to students of art, design or media in English when students are not native speakers of the language. The fields of art, design and media are internationalising at a rapid rate, demanding collaborations across national borders and often in English. Students well versed in the English-language study of these fields will have distinct advantages and will also be able to generate satisfying collaborative projects.

Based at the Winchester School of Art at the University of Southampton, Annie Lu Makhoul is head of the International Studies Department and Simon Morley is an artist and writer who teaches fine art and has much experience working with international students. Together they recognised over their years of engaging with the ever-growing second-language population in art, design and media that a guide of this nature would prove an invaluable aid in the successful negotiation of a student's career and degree demands. From names of tools to more abstract information (e.g., introductions to important theorists and their thought), and from project examples to strategies for studying and reading lesson plans, this guide covers a wide range of material that will serve any second-language student well throughout his or her time as a student and beyond into a professional career.

Successful study in a second language entails more than simply knowing the language. It also entails understanding differences in methods of teaching and in the classwork that is asked of students. The pedagogy of one's home country might differ widely from what is asked of students in English-language settings. Primary among the differences is the critical engagement with the materials, projects and assignments required of students in English-language systems.

Whether your studies take you to Australia, Canada, the UK, the US, New Zealand or any other English-speaking environment, this guide will aid you in this most demanding and fundamental element of English-language study in art, design and media: critical thinking.

So, if you are now embarking on your own studies in an English-language curriculum, rest assured this guide will be just that: a guide – something that will lead you through the new, uncharted territory of your studies and that will aid you in realising your potential as a student and your goals as a professional.

Ryan Bishop

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and Director of Research,
Winchester School of Art,
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SECTION I

KEY WORDS AND PHRASES IN ART, DESIGN AND MEDIA



The Winchester Guide to Keywords and Concepts for International Students in Art, Media and Design, First Edition. Annie Lu Makhoul and Simon Morley.

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PART A

GLOSSARY



Art Movements and Historical Periods

Art, Design and Media Terms

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General Terms

A

abject Sunk to or existing in a low state or condition. In recent theory it refers to our reaction (horror, disgust) to a threatened breakdown in meaning caused by the loss of the normal distinctions between subject and object, self and other.

abstract art A term referring to various art styles that first emerged in the early twentieth century in Europe and that do not use representational imagery, or that select and then exaggerate or simplify forms suggested by the world around us. Artists focus on the **formal** properties of line, colour, shape and texture. **Cubism** and **Futurism** explore abstraction, while Wassily Kandinsky (Russian, 1866–1944) and Piet Mondrian (Dutch, 1872–1944) were two of the first creators of pure abstraction.

Abstract Expressionism An American painting movement that originated in the 1940s and became popular in the 1950s. It is characterised by a strong dependence on intuition, spontaneity, accident and chance. Often using large canvases, artists painted rapidly and with energy in an effort to express peaceful or anguished emotions. Works were painted gesturally and non-geometrically, sometimes with paint applied using large brushes or dripped or thrown onto canvas. The expressive action of painting was often considered as important as the finished painting. The movement is connected to parallel tendencies in other media, such as jazz music. Artists who painted in this style include Mark Rothko (American, 1903–70), Willem de Kooning (Dutch-American, 1904–97), Clyfford Still (American, 1904–80), Jackson Pollock (American, 1912–56) and Robert Motherwell (American, 1915–91).

absurd Ridiculous or unreasonable. Also refers to the view that there is no order or value in human life or in the universe – to the idea that human beings exist in a meaningless, irrational world, and that our lives have no purpose. During the 1940s and 1950s this concept became important in relation to contemporary art. *‘The painting expressed a vision of life as absurd.’*

academic art Works of art made according to established and traditional rules and conventions, and usually hostile to progress. Considered in contrast to **avant-garde**, radical or progressive art.

accident, accidental Anything that happens by chance or is uncontrolled. In art this may be considered a negative quality, or it can be taken in a positive sense, as an opportunity to break free from conventions. *‘The use of accidental effects (or “the use of accident”) in the artist’s work...’*

achromatic Black, white and greys. Artwork that is executed without colour.

acrylic A water-based paint that uses a liquid plastic medium. This kind of paint is thicker and stronger than tempera or watercolour paint.

action painting A style of abstract painting linked to **Abstract Expressionism**. It emphasised process or gesture, using techniques such as the dripping, throwing or splashing of paint to achieve a spontaneous, unplanned effect. In action painting the canvas is often described as the arena in which the artist acts – painting is a kind of performance or event, and the action of making becomes a moment in the biography of the artist. Associated with several of the Abstract

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Expressionist artists, including Willem de Kooning (Dutch-American, 1904–97) and Jackson Pollock (American, 1912–56).

adhesives Substances such as glues, pastes and cements that cause one thing to attach itself to another through stickiness.

aerial perspective The perception of depth in a painting produced by the depiction of the appearance of humidity, cloudiness, rain, snow, smoke or any other kind of atmospheric vapour. It is achieved by using less line and focus, and bluer, lighter and duller hues for distant spaces and objects.

aestheticism or æstheticism or estheticism The belief that the pursuit of beauty rather than some social, moral or educational purpose is the most important goal in art. Prominent in the nineteenth century, it is now often viewed in a negative light. It is mostly associated with the painter James A. McNeill Whistler (American, 1834–1903), with the circle of the writer Oscar Wilde (English, born Ireland, 1854–1900) and with the illustrator Aubrey Beardsley (English, 1872–98).

aesthetics or æsthetics or esthetics The part of philosophy that deals with the nature and value of art objects and experiences. Originally, it meant any activity connected with art, beauty or taste, or with the appreciation of beauty or good taste, but now it is more broadly used to refer to the study of art's function, character, essential character, purpose and so on. Also: a set of principles underlying and guiding the work of a particular artist or artistic movement.

affective Relating to feelings or emotions. The noun form is 'affect'.

aleatory, aleatoric Depending on chance or accident, or improvised. Art and design of an aleatory nature aims at freedom from the influence of the past,

from academic formulas and from the limitations placed on the imagination by the conscious mind. Such techniques were employed by many twentieth-century **avant-garde** artists, such as the **Dadaists**, the **Surrealists**, the **Abstract Expressionists** and the musician John Cage (American, 1912–92). *‘The artist used aleatory effects to produce new forms.’*

alienation The sense of being unhappily alone, isolated or powerless. It is often considered a major cause of modern social problems – especially of the poor, youth, women and racial minorities – and as a result is an important cultural issue of the twentieth century. *‘The artwork expressed a powerful sense of alienation.’*

all-over painting A painting technique that treats a surface as continuous and indivisible, without a focus of attention, and where paint is applied so that every portion receives equal attention. First used to describe the method of Jackson Pollock (American, 1912–56).

allusion An indirect reference to or suggestion of something or someone understood to be already familiar to the viewer. The verb form is ‘allude’. *‘The artist’s work was full of allusions to the art of the past’; ‘The artist alluded to the works of other landscape painters.’*

ambiguity, ambiguous A situation in which something can have two or more possible meanings. Many works of art are characterised by a strong sense of ambiguity. *‘It was difficult to clearly describe the work because of its ambiguous character.’*

ambivalence Mixed or uncertain feelings. Conflicting attitudes or emotions, such as love and hate, that one can feel towards a person, a thing or an idea. *‘His work expressed a powerful sense of ambivalence towards women.’*

analogy, analogous Similarity in some respects between things that are otherwise dissimilar. *‘The painting’s surface was like skin.’*

analysis The separation of the parts of something for individual study in order to find out their nature, function and meaning. As a result, its organisational structure may be better understood. *‘The critic made a thorough analysis of the artist’s work.’*

anarchic No controlling rules or principles; wild; entailing the expression of extreme hostility to order and tradition. Much **avant-garde** art has embraced an

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anarchic relationship to art and society. *'By seeking to express her emotional confusion, her paintings appeared extremely anarchic.'*

anarchist A person holding an extreme political position known as 'anarchism' that is hostile to the state and government, which are considered to be inevitably oppressive. The movement originated in the nineteenth century.

anarchy Political disorder and lawlessness, civil war.

anomaly, anomalous A change from the normal or expected form, order or arrangement. Incorporating one or more anomalies in an artwork is one way to achieve a new or challenging effect.

anti-aesthetics A term referring to negation and an aesthetics of negation, opposition or an art of the 'anti'.

anti-art Art that rejects conventional theories, forms, techniques, materials and traditional methods of display. Examples of anti-art are Dada and neo-Dada.

anti-authoritarian Showing opposition to obedience to authority and favouring individual freedom. *'It was work of a strongly anti-authoritarian nature.'*

anti-intellectualism Any point of view that opposes, fears and mistrusts logical and rational thought, and/or intellectuals and intellectual views.

antiquity The name given to the historical period in the West between around 1000 BCE and 500 CE. It was dominated by the rise and fall of the Egyptian, Greek and Roman Empires, and was followed by the **Middle Ages**.

anxiety, anxious Fear, either justified or not. *'It was an age of anxiety'; 'He was of an anxious disposition.'*

applied arts Arts concerned with making objects with functional or practical purposes but for which aesthetic concerns are also significant. They may include architecture, interior design, manufactured items, ceramics, textiles and so on. Commercial art may be considered a branch of applied art. The applied arts are usually contrasted with the fine arts.

appropriation The act of taking or possessing something. In art and design, it refers to using another's imagery or material, often without permission, in a context that differs from its first context. A key concept in **postmodern** art and design. The verb form is 'appropriate'. 'X appropriated certain stylistic characteristics of Y.'

appropriation art The act of adopting, borrowing, recycling or sampling aspects or the entire form of existing cultural artefacts, usually to examine issues concerning originality or to reveal some meaning not previously seen in the original. An image reused in a **Cubist** collage is an example, but the term became commonplace in the late 1970s in relation to **postmodernism**. Some contemporary artists using appropriation as a central strategy are Christian Marclay (American, 1955–), Dinos Chapman (British, 1962–), Pierre Huyghe (French, 1962–), Damien Hirst (British, 1965–) and Jake Chapman (British, 1966–).

archaic Very old or ancient. In art and design, used to describe a work that stylistically is deliberately primitive in appearance.

archetype, archetypal The original pattern or model from which all things of the same kind are copied or on which they are based; a model or first form; a prototype. In the psychology of Carl Jung (Swiss, 1875–1961), a collectively inherited unconscious idea, pattern of thought or image that is universally present in individual psyches. 'The work used archetypal symbolism.'

archive A collection of information, typically of documents, that is ordered in some way.

armature A structure used beneath something else for support. For example, a sculptor might create a clay sculpture with a wood or wire armature beneath it as support.

art brut French for 'raw art'. A term invented by Jean Dubuffet (French, 1901–85) in 1945 for the imagery made by children and 'outsiders', such as naive artists, criminals and the mentally ill.

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art centre or arts' centre Typically, a group of buildings for the exhibiting, teaching and performance of the arts. May also be a place where artists live.

art deco A decorative art movement largely of the 1920s and 1930s. It evolved a variety of modern styles whose principal characteristics were derived from various **avant-garde** painting styles of the early twentieth century, such as **Cubism**, Russian **Constructivism** and Italian **Futurism**.

art engagé French for 'art involved in life'. Art with social or political significance.

art fair A commercial event or market in which art galleries and other art-related organisations participate. Art fairs are held in many major cities around the world.

art for art's sake The belief that art should be independent of practical goals and should pursue only expressive and aesthetic ends. The term is primarily used in relation to artists and art writers of the second half of the nineteenth century, especially Charles Baudelaire (French, 1821–67), James A. McNeill Whistler (American, 1834–1903) and Oscar Wilde (English, born Ireland, 1854–1900).

Art Nouveau French for 'the new art'. An international art movement and style of decoration and architecture of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Typically characterised by curvilinear and organic forms derived from nature. Artists and architects associated with the style include Antonio Gaudí (Spanish, 1852–1926), Alphonse Mucha (Czech, 1860–1939), Henri de Toulouse-Lautrec (French, 1864–1901), Gustav Klimt (Austrian, 1862–1918) and Aubrey Beardsley (English, 1872–1898).

arte povera Italian for 'poor art'. Mostly sculptural and installation work made from everyday materials including soil, cement, plastic, twigs, clothes, living plants and animals, neon and newspapers. Artists associated with *arte povera*

include Mario Merz (Italian, 1925–2003), Michelangelo Pistoletto (Italian, 1933–) and Jannis Kounellis (Greek, 1936–).

artefact An object of any kind that is of historical interest.

artificial Made or produced by human beings rather than occurring naturally, especially as a copy of something natural. In the arts, calling something ‘artificial’ may be intended to be a positive, negative or neutral judgement. A negative interpretation implies lack of authenticity, while a positive one implies a connection to new technology (as in ‘artificial intelligence’). *‘The work lacked authenticity and seemed rather artificial.’*

artisan A craftsperson; a skilled manual worker.

artists’ book An artwork in book form, not a book about art or art made of books.

artists’ proof A small group of prints for the artist’s use that have been set aside from the **edition** prints.

assemblage sculpture A three-dimensional composition made of various materials, such as found objects, metal, paper, wood and textiles.

attitude A settled way of thinking or feeling about something. *‘The artist’s attitude was one of contempt for bourgeois society.’*

attribute A characteristic feature or quality of a thing. *‘The principal attributes of the painting were bold brush strokes and heavy impasto.’*

authentic Genuine; original; the real thing. Having a claimed and verifiable origin or authorship; not counterfeit or copied. This is usually considered an important prerequisite for the evaluation of art. Recent theory, however, challenges the idea that anything can be authentic, arguing that everything is already culturally conditioned and therefore in some senses a copy.

author The maker of a work. In recent art criticism, attention has moved away from analysis of the author, his or her biography and intentions, instead looking towards analysis of the contexts – social, political, cultural – within which the work is produced.

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automatism Sometimes referred to as ‘pure psychic automatism’. A process of making artworks mechanically, randomly or by unconscious free association rather than under the control of a conscious maker. It was valued as a way of liberating the creative mind from conventions and habits. Also called ‘automatic drawing’, ‘automatic painting’, ‘automatic sculpture’ or ‘automatic writing’. Often associated with **Surrealism**.

autonomy, autonomous Acting independently or having the freedom to do so; existing and functioning as an independent organism. In art, it means the artwork is understood to be important because of its own **formal** and **aesthetic** qualities rather than because it has some social purpose. ‘*An autonomous work of art.*’

avant-garde French for ‘vanguard’, or the foremost or leading position. Artists and their works that are self-consciously at the forefront of a movement or of new ideas, often in opposition to established ideas and traditions. Also refers to art that is ahead of its time, innovative or experimental. It also often refers to art that has a revolutionary political purpose.

awareness The condition of having knowledge, or being conscious or cognisant. ‘*Her awareness of the context of her work was impressive.*’

B

background The part of a picture or scene that appears to be farthest away from the viewer, usually nearest the horizon. This is the opposite of the **foreground**. Between the background and foreground is the **middle ground**.

balance The arrangement of one or more elements so that they appear symmetrical (even or balanced) or asymmetrical (uneven or unbalanced) in composition and proportion.

Baroque or baroque Of, relating to or characteristic of a style in art and architecture that developed in Europe from the early seventeenth to the mideighteenth century. It emphasised dramatic effects and used bold, curving forms, elaborate ornamentation and overall dynamic balance of different parts. Artists include Michelangelo Caravaggio (Italian, 1571–1610), Peter Paul Rubens (Flemish, 1577–1640) and Gian Lorenzo Bernini (Italian, 1598–1680). Also, more generally, a term used to describe something extravagant, complex or bizarre, especially in ornamentation.

Bauhaus An influential German school of art and design founded in 1919 and closed by the Nazis in 1933. Underlying the Bauhaus aesthetic were utopianism and left-wing politics. Aesthetically, the ideal was simplified forms and pure functionalism. This was linked to a belief that machine technology could provide designed items for the masses. Artist and architects associated with the Bauhaus school include Wassily Kandinsky (Russian-German, 1866–1944), Paul Klee (Swiss-German, 1879–1940), Walter Gropius (German-American, 1883–1969), Ludwig Mies van der Rohe (German-American, 1886–1969), László Moholy-Nagy (German, born Hungary, 1895–1946, active in the US) and Josef Albers (German-American, 1888–1976).

BCE Before the Common Era. Used to denote dates before the year 0. Until recently, the initials BC were used, meaning Before Christ.

bespoke tailoring A traditional and labour-intensive method of making clothes, especially suits (custom-made clothing).

bias Prejudice for or against some thing, person or group, usually in ways that are considered unfair and that refuse to consider the possible merits of alternatives.

bibliography A list of sources (usually literary) referred to in a research project.

biennial or biennale art fair An art fair that happens every two years, such as in Venice.

binder A liquid or paste used to suspend pigment in order that it can be applied to a surface.

biotextiles Textile products that have been given a biological finish for a specific end use.

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Blaue Reiter, Der German for 'The Blue Rider'. A group of artists based in Munich from 1911 to 1914. They were mostly painters, and worked in an Expressionist style, emphasising non-naturalistic colours, bold brushstrokes and unorthodox subject matter. Some of the important members of the group were Alexei von Jawlensky (Russian, 1864–1941), Wassily Kandinsky (Russian, 1866–1944), Gabriele Münter (1877–1962), Paul Klee (1879–1940), Franz Marc (1880–1916) and August Macke (1887–1914).

blow-up An enlargement, or increase in size, of a part of a larger image. The term is most commonly used in photography.

body art An art form in which the artist's body is the principal medium. A precursor to performance art. Body art often involved public or private performances, many of which became known more widely through photographic and textual documentation. Among the body artists at the form's height (from the 1960s to about 1980) were Vito Acconci (American, 1940–), Carolee Schneeman (American, 1939–), Chris Burden (American, 1946–) and Ana Mendieta (Cuban-American, 1948–1985).

bourgeoisie, bourgeois People or values or behaviour typical of the middle class. All those who are bourgeois comprise a group called the 'bourgeoisie'. Most members of this group are executives and professionals. The upper middle class is known as the 'haute bourgeoisie'. These terms appear frequently in **Marxist** texts, where they are used with a negative meaning. In that context, to describe an artwork as 'bourgeois' is considered an insult.

bricolage Similar to collage. An assemblage improvised from everyday materials, or the practice of transforming 'found' materials by incorporating them into a new work.

British Standards Institution (BSI) The professional organisation that sets the standards for various industries and decides what tests need to be applied to products.

Brücke, Die or Die Brucke or The Bridge A group of German **Expressionist** artists based in Dresden and Berlin between 1905 and 1913, mostly painters. They painted portraits, landscapes and nudes in strong colours and crude, simplified forms. Die Brücke artists include Emil Nolde (1867–1956), Ernst Kirchner (1880–1938), Erich Heckel (1883–1970) and Karl Schmidt-Rottluff (1884–1976).

brush A thin wooden handle made in various lengths with either animal or synthetic hairs attached at one end and used for applying paint to a surface.

C

c. or circa Latin for ‘about’ or ‘approximately’. Used when an exact historical date is not known.

CAD (computer-aided design) The use of computers as tools to create designs.

calligraphy The writing by hand of a text using a brush and (usually) ink.

canvas Fabric prepared for painting; usually linen or cotton.

catalogue A book containing the works of one or more artists and intended to record an exhibition in book form.

catalogue raisonné French, meaning a textual study of one artist that includes a complete list of their works, or all works produced in a particular medium or during a specific period of time.

CE Common Era. Used to denote dates after the year 0. Until recently, the initials AD were used, meaning Anno Domini (Latin for ‘year of the Lord’).

charcoal and Conté crayons Charcoal is made from burnt wood, while Conté is made of compressed powdered graphite or charcoal. Both give a very strong, dark line and come in stick form.

chiaroscuro A word borrowed from Italian for ‘light and shade’, or ‘dark’, referring to the technique of using strong contrasts of light and shade in pictorial representations.