

## **Edexcel GCSE Art and Design theme 2012**

### **Ordinary and/or Extraordinary**

Usual – typical – common – customary – routine – unremarkable – unexceptional – unusual

Exceptional – remarkable – unfamiliar – special – strange – curious

The Saatchi Gallery has many art works currently being exhibited that can help you think through processes of showing, making, performing and documenting your GCSE theme this year. At the Saatchi Gallery you can cover some of your assessment objectives by exploring artist's ideas, in terms of subject matter, techniques and process.

The first step is thinking about the substance of an art work of your choice at the gallery. What inspired the artist? What is the work about? Is it personal/autobiographical or a social commentary? Was the artist thinking about history or politics? Or is the work an exploration of the materials used or a capturing of physical performance?

The second step is to consider how he/she may have explored and developed their subject - what was their framework for understanding it? You can compare other works by the same artist. You can also look at other works and artists that may have inspired the artist originally. Think about what things are similar and what things are different in each instance.

Thirdly, what kind of processes were used to explore the subject matter and how were these ways of making relevant to the final meaning? Look at creative techniques employed and materials used by the artist. To help you on your way we've selected a few works from the current exhibition that explore these ideas.

## PEOPLE- Ordinary and/or extraordinary



Julian Rosefeldt  
Soap Sample V

2000-2001

Lambda print

130 x 130 cm

Julian Rosefeldt has a fascination with day to day reality and the stereotypes, clichés and mindless repetitions that suffuse popular culture. In his extraordinary arrangements, he groups together stills taken from soap operas; characters mid-conversation expressing themselves with melodramatic actions. He has grouped together the people dependent on their poses, finding common expressions and arranging the photographs in a grid. By highlighting how many of the same expressions are used in images we see every-day, a very ordinary expression can become extraordinary because of the new way it's being presented. The characters will all be different, their scenarios contrasting, but essentially they have the same basic human emotions with which to express themselves. The people above all look shocked or angered. Arranged together however, they become amusing, each character looking like he/she is mimicking her neighbour.

## PLACES- Ordinary and/or extraordinary



Zhivago Duncan

Pretentious Crap

2010-2011

Wood, glass, mixed media

300 x 307 x 250 cm

What is this place enclosed in a museum-like cabinet? Is it a city? A desert? A virtual world? An abandoned fairground? Is it a vision of the future? Or a comment on the present? It is an ambiguous place, with no sign of people or living beings, just the detritus left behind by them, piled up into towering architectural structures, or left to circulate for eternity on spiralling tracks. Duncan has created a dystopia, a vision of the world after the apocalypse, where the possessions we once held dear to us (cars, electricity- junk) has outlived its very creator, and there is no sign of humanity left. It is a haunting and eerie vision of an extraordinary place, which could become very ordinary. They resemble the ruins of a generation past, but are meant to be *our* ruins- Duncan playing around with the idea of past, present and future, carefully assembling his sculptures in a vast cabinet that resembles something we might find in a museum housing objects of the past.

**NATURAL WORLD- Ordinary and/or extraordinary**



**Markus Selg**  
**Bench (Tiger)**

2010

Collaboration with Astrid Sourkova, Wood

80 x 120 x 38 cm

Selg is interested in the idea of going back to nature, frequently working in self-isolation, the artist interested in the very *roots* of creativity. Selg retreats into the woods to work, donning the role of the traditional craftsman and exploring the idea of self-sufficiency that accompanies it. In the piece *Bench Tiger*, a roughly-formed wooden sculpture, you can see the traditional craftsmanship. This has not been created using electric saws or machines, but by hand, using traditional tools in a basic environment. For Selg, nature is the best environment in which to create, because this is where authentic creation takes place. As Selg states: *'The Creation is perfect...'*. So, nature can be seen as the source of inspiration for the extraordinary – it is where you find perfection.

## OBJECTS- Ordinary and/or extraordinary



**Josephine Meckseper**

**Ubi Pedes Ibi. Patria. (Where the feet are, there is the fatherland)**

2006

Shoes, display carousel

153 x 83cm

Meckseper is interested in the extraordinary symbolism carried by ordinary, everyday objects. The symbolism can depend on their context. For example, the shoes and the association with the words “Fatherland” in the title creates a significance for the shoes that goes way beyond the shoes themselves. Here they represent the victims of genocide who left only their shoes behind in The Holocaust. Ordinary objects can become extraordinary because of their history, and because they tell a story about people that goes beyond the objects themselves.

And think about context: because we take objects out of the contexts in which they were originally created, putting them in an expensive window display, for example, they promise luxury and excite desire, even if they were created in contexts far less glamorous and desirable (for example the in developing world by underpaid workers).

## ACTIVITIES- Ordinary and/ or extraordinary



**Kirstine Roepstorff**  
**You Are Being Lied To**

2002

Paper, glitter, pearls, sequins, paint, on wallpaper,  
collage, mounted on aluminium

274 x 388 cm

Roepstorff's billboard sized collage depicts a seemingly random assortment of cut out magazine figures arranged on a golf course. In a magazine, these figures would appear ordinary; photographs of the everyday. But cut out and rearranged on their new surroundings, they become extraordinary- a gathering of characters from different eras, social backgrounds and races. People who wouldn't usually stand side by side are grouped together, all with their own individual reason for being there, playing off one another, and creating extraordinary contrasts and conflicts of interest. If we look closely at the piece, we can see that almost all of the figures are men; men engaged in stereotypically *manly* activities. We see a man playing golf, a group playing football, an army marching, a muscle man lifting weights, someone commandeering a tank. The female artist is commenting on the superiority of men- they dominate in *every* culture, in *every* era, in *every* profession. You are being lied to- the title- makes her subject ironic. The viewer is able to tell that this is a protest, rather than an admiration of this dominance.

Look closely at the activities being carried out and note how extraordinary they are when placed out of context. In real life they would be totally ordinary, normal. This is aided by the medium of collage, where you can appropriate images to your heart's content. Roepstorff calls this **appropriarranging**.

## IMAGINATION- Ordinary and/or extraordinary



Gert & Uwe Tobias

Untitled

2005

Coloured woodcut on paper

211 x 177 cm

By mixing artistic traditions and references – cartoons, worn-down graffiti and school yard murals with their wild imagination, Gert and Uwe Tobias create macabre faces, abstract figures and surreal characters. The piece does not belong to one single tradition or culture; it belongs to many. The result is disorientating and even slightly disturbing.

Figures inspired by traditional Romanian dolls and carnival dress are made extraordinary by the modernist, Bauhaus-style mechanisation of the composition together with the domination of primary shapes and graphic symbols – hearts, bull's eyes, circles, rectangles and cones. Their weirdness is heightened by the perverse, half-toothed grins, horns, hair and cassocks, and pop-out eyes. They are characters created from two wild imaginations, tangled with influence and reference. They are extraordinary and ambiguous characters, made with ordinary and recognisable shapes.