

Investigate: Inquiry and the Artistic Process

AP 2-D Art and Design

Inquiry and Asking Questions

In AP Art and Design, making begins with **inquiry** 探究 — asking questions that guide a **sustained investigation** 持续探究 over time. This is Big Idea 1.



AP Art 2-D · Investigate · the artistic-process inquiry cycle

Inquiry drives a cycle: ask a question, investigate, make, reflect — and let each answer raise a new question

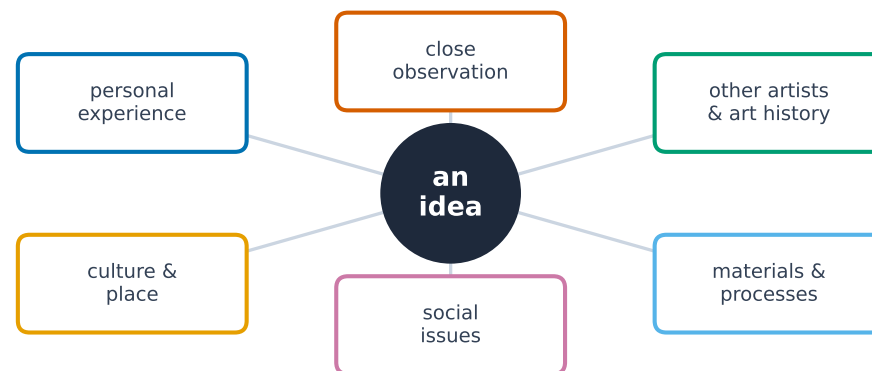
- Inquiry is asking questions to find information and drive investigation.
- A sustained investigation is an in-depth, question-driven study of materials, processes, and ideas.
- Good questions can be simple — who, what, when, where, why, how, what if, and why not.
- Questions **evolve**: early questions lead to new questions as the work develops.

Sources of Ideas and Experiences

Artists' and designers' **experiences** 经历 inform why, how, and what they make.

- An experience is any event — real surroundings, imagined ideas, communication, or research.
- Reflecting on experiences sparks questions and inspires investigation.
- Ideas come from **observation** 观察, memory, other disciplines, and other artists' work.

- Experiences can be **documented** with drawings, photos, notes, or sound, becoming a resource.



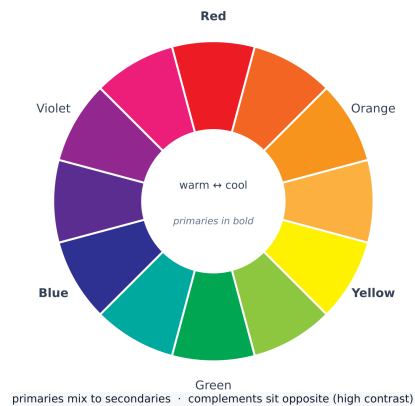
AP 2-D Art · Where sustained-investigation ideas come from (mind map)

Strong inquiry questions grow from experience, observation, other art, culture, issues, and materials

Materials, Processes, and Ideas

Every work is built from three interacting components — **materials, processes, and ideas** 材料、过程与想法.

- **Materials** are what a work is made of; **processes** are how it is made; **ideas** are what it is about.
- The components interact: a material suggests a process; a process shapes an idea.
- Investigating all three expands the possibilities for making, and influences how viewers interpret the work.



Return to the color wheel when choosing harmonies for a series

Art and Design in Context

Works are made and understood within a **context** 语境 — traditions, cultures, and other disciplines.

- Context is when, where, how, why, and by whom a work was made and viewed.
- Artists work within, or challenge, art and design **traditions** 传统 from cultures around the world.
- Comparing works reveals similarities and differences in materials, processes, and ideas.
- Acknowledging references and influences shows **integrity** 诚信 — never copying without credit.



Hokusai in context: historical works teach composition for the investigation

Evaluating Art and Design

Works can be **evaluated** 评价 by using visual evidence to compare them with specific **criteria** 标准 (as the AP scoring guidelines do).

- Observe carefully: identify the materials, processes, and ideas, and how they connect.
- Consider whether the components show **synthesis** 综合 — parts working together for one effect.
- Evaluation can be informal (as you work) or formal (a **critique** 评图 with peers or a teacher).
- Reflecting on evaluation improves your later thinking and making.



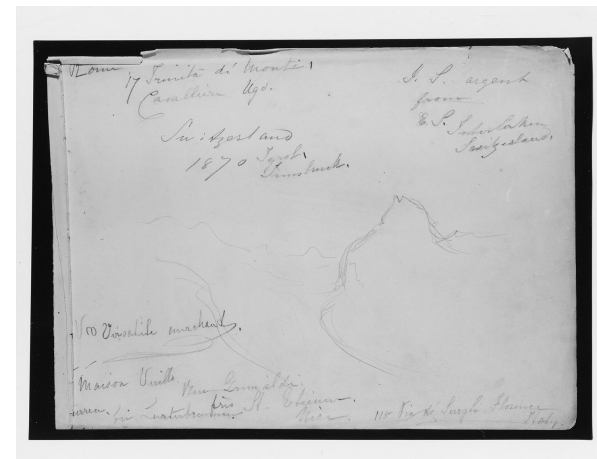
Critique names visual evidence: line, tone, and composition in a master drawing

Documentation and the Process Journal

Documentation 记录 records information and becomes a resource for the sustained investigation.

- It takes many forms: images, notes, diagrams, material samples, and written reflection.
- A **process journal** 创作日志 (sketchbook) records questions, experiments, and revisions over time.
- Documenting your **lines of inquiry** 探究路径 shows how the investigation developed.
- Consistent documentation makes writing the portfolio's written evidence far easier.

Worked example (framing an inquiry). A weak sustained-investigation question is really just a topic: “*My investigation is about the ocean.*” A strong one is a real **question** that can drive many artworks: “*How can I use colour and texture to show the ocean shifting from calm to dangerous?*” The question names an idea **and** points to the visual choices you will test — exactly what raises a portfolio's score.



A process journal page: inquiry notes and small experiments document how ideas develop

Exam tips

- Frame the work with an open **guiding question**, not a closed yes/no one.
- Draw on varied **sources** — observation, experience, research — and cite your influences.
- Aim for **synthesis**: materials and **processes** chosen because they carry the idea.
- Evaluate through **critique** using the elements and principles, then plan a **revision**.
- Keep a **process journal**: record experiments and failures as evidence of inquiry.