Course notes

International Baccalaureate · IB Diploma · Visual Arts · SL

IB visual arts first assessment 2016; 2027 course tracked separately

Current SL exhibition selects 4–7 works; HL 8–11. SL process portfolio 9–18 screens, HL 13–25; comparative study 10–15 screens plus 3–5 HL screens linking own practice. Use school-selected artists and licensed/credited images.

Current SL/HL: comparative study 20%, process portfolio 40%, exhibition 40%. No written examination. First assessment 2027 replaces these with art-making inquiries portfolio, SL connections study/HL artist project and resolved artworks.

Comparative study · Visual analysis, context and comparison

Formal analysis examines line, colour, form, composition, space and material.

Compare function, meaning and context through trustworthy sources; distinguish an observation from an inferred interpretation.

■ Checked example

For original classroom studies, compare a centred composition with an off-centre figure and a larger area of empty space. Explain how balance and negative space change the viewer's attention.

In assessment, use actual credited works and evidence about their contexts.

Original composition studies



Compare balance and the empty space around the figure.

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■ Limits and practice

These original studies do not fulfil the artist/artwork source requirements.

HL adds explicit connections to the student's own practice; a visual similarity alone is insufficient contextual analysis.

What makes a comparison more than a list of colours?

Answer: Explaining how formal choices interact with function, meaning and context.

Process portfolio · Material inquiry and iterative development

The process portfolio selects evidence of investigation, experimentation, development and reflection across required art-making forms.

Record the question, material choices and observed result rather than presenting every page of a sketchbook.

■ Checked example

Make two original texture tests with one variable changed, such as pressure. Photograph and annotate them, then explain how the result informs a planned artwork.
Connect a researched artist's strategy to a transformed decision in your own practice with a source credit.

■ Limits and practice

A portfolio is curated evidence, not a chronological dump or a finished-work gallery.

School checks the current art-making-form requirements and screen limits; the future inquiry portfolio has different criteria.

What is the best process annotation?

Answer: A specific account of what changed, what was learned and how it affected the next artistic decision.

Exhibition · Resolved artworks and curatorial rationale

An exhibition selects resolved works and presents them through a coherent curatorial intention.

Explain relationships among works, spatial arrangement and audience encounter, then document the actual exhibition.

■ Checked example

Arrange original studies in two ways: by material and by a developing theme. Compare how the sequence changes what a viewer notices.
Choose the arrangement that best serves your intention and explain any work you leave out.

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Limits and practice

Current SL selects 4–7 works and HL 8–11; five resolved artworks belongs to the future 2027 model.

School supervises actual work and exhibition evidence; a written mock cannot replace it.

What should justify the exhibition order?

Answer: How the arrangement supports relationships among the actual works and the intended audience experience.

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