Textiles FAQs

HOW MUCH DOES THE COURSE COST?

There is a studio fee of £55. This covers the cost of the workshops and of most of the equipment that will be needed during the year. If you want to use expensive consumables or a lot of consumables, you may have to contribute to this.

You will need to buy one or two sketchbooks (£5-£10 each).

There are about five trips during the year. They cost between £10 and £20 each.

There is a small bursary fund at the college if you need help to pay for things and if you have any worries about paying for anything, then please talk to me and I can usually sort something out.

HOW MUCH WORK DO I HAVE TO DO IN MY OWN TIME?

You will have four hours a week in the studio. You will be expected to do at least four hours a week in your own time. You are very welcome to come in and use the studios and equipment any time when I am in (four days a week).

DO I NEED TO BUY EQUIPMENT TO USE AT HOME?

That is entirely up to you. You have access to all equipment in the studio and you are welcome to come in and use it in your frees (as long as it’s not being used by someone else). Some students want to buy a sewing machine but it’s not necessary.

Lots of students enjoy collecting bits and pieces for their projects from charity shops and sales. We are keen re-cyclers and make use of lots of things that are donated to us.

WHAT DO STUDENTS DO AFTER STUDYING TEXTILES?

Most students will go on to do an Art Foundation Course. This is a one-year course that enables you to experiment with many new techniques and you spend time building a portfolio ready for interviews for degree courses. If you go when you are eighteen, it’s free – if you take a gap year and go at nineteen, you have to pay and it will probably cost you about £5,000. So take a gap year after your Foundation!

There are lots of good local Art Foundation courses at Oxford Brookes, Bucks New Uni, Reading and The Henley College. We have done very well with applications to the Central Saint Martins Art Foundation, too.

Some students will go straight to a degree. Fashion and Marketing is a popular choice as are Textiles, Interior Design, Costume Design and Fashion Design. We have ex-students at Central Saint Martins, Kingston, Westminster, Wimbledon, Manchester Metropolitan, Brighton, Bath…

HOW IS THE COURSE STRUCTURED?

Year 1

Over the summer, I’ll ask you to put together some ideas for things that you are interested in looking into and exploring further. When you come back in September, we will spend most of the first term doing workshops and relating them to your chosen subject matter. I’ll take you to Oxford for the day so that you can do research at the Museums there – the Pitt-Rivers, the Ashmolean and the Natural History. There should be something there for everyone…

Towards Christmas, I will take you to the Costume Museum at Bath (and the Christmas Market!) to inspire you further.

After Christmas, you’ll start to decide what you want to do and which techniques you want to use to create your own self-directed work. By the end of the first year, you should have a good knowledge of textile techniques, a good body of work and a final piece.

Year 2

You will do two projects. One will start at the end of Year 1 and will continue until the end of January. This is self-directed – you choose what you want to study. You’ll also have to do a short (one thousand word) essay. You’ll produce a body of work and a final piece.

At the beginning of February, you’ll be given an exam paper with twelve starting points. You have until the beginning of May to prepare for the exam.

WHY DO THIS COURSE?

Textiles is great fun. We have a fabulous studio, a friendly atmosphere and we go on lots of trips. We always have lovely students and by the end of the course, there are strong friendships and bonds. Lots of ex-students stay in touch and visit, telling us what they are doing, showing us their work and doing tutorials with current students.

Our facilities are excellent – we have Bernina sewing machines, photographic screen-printing facilities, looms, knitting machines, dyes, felting, batik pots and cupboards full of things to inspire you.

Our results are excellent and our destinations are exceptional. We currently have six ex-students at Central Saint Martins which is the most famous university of the Arts in the world. We try to ensure that everyone gets where they want to go and where they will be happy.

The Arts generate a staggering amount of money for the British economy. Everything you see has been designed and made by someone. There’s a huge resurgence and interest in recycling, upcycling and cutting waste, especially in the fashion industry and our students are very aware of this and are part of making a difference.