

EXPLORATION:

What is it?

How is it done?

What does it look like?

Exploration: opening up possibilities for artists.

There are plenty of IWB pages on the Wiki that show really good examples of exploration, it is an expectation that you visit these pages and learn from them.

The IB *require* that you explore:

media/subject-matter/scale/social/ /historic context/elements of art/principles of design/artistic context (other artists, dead or alive) so it makes sense to do it as well as we can. Exploration, when done well, makes our work more interesting, more skillful and more rewarding.

How is it done?

Basically, exploration is experimentation. It cannot be done with a closed or limited mind.

You have to want to find out.

Let's say, for example, you are working on a project based on the paintings of Roy Lichtenstein. Let's call it 'China pop'

(<http://www.artchive.com/artchive/L/lichtenstein.html>)

The first thing you should do is find out as much as you can about the man and his paintings. This research should carry on throughout your project. It doesn't begin and end on specific dates.

How did he make his paintings?

With what did he make his paintings?

What were his paintings about?

Was he part of a group/movement?

What was the social/historical setting for his work?

Does gender affect his work?

Who were his contemporaries/peers?

What other influences affected his work?

How did his style evolve?

What were his major achievements?

If you were to base a piece of work on one of his, how could you explore the same subject matter but in different media?

Could you visualize the same thing in 3D?

Could you use photography? Digital images? Moving images? Collage?

How could you use the concepts behind his work in your own?

How could you use ideas/images/styles/textures/materials from your own culture and that of your host culture in this work?

Would there be a way for you to incorporate traditional Peking Opera images in this kind of work?

What could we actually do to satisfy all of the demands in our research, our relentless quest for fabulous ways to make new, interesting, thought provoking, visually arresting work?

OK, here's some ideas.

You are in China, they have rickshaws in China.

Some are pedal ones, some are motorised. Guys sit in them outside major tourist sites offering to take you to another major tourist site for 10RMB (you wish!).

Take a photo of one (close up, fill the frame), in fact, hey, take several. In colour and black/white. And digital. And video if you have one.

Scan the image. Print it out (multiple on a page).

Go over the images with acrylic or poster paint or marker pen or glass pens or water-colour pencils or coloured plastic or tissue paper.

Go over the major lines in black marker pen.

Go over each major colour area by making black marker pen dots.

Find out which contemporary Chinese artists are working in a pop style.

Show examples of their work.

Go to visit galleries that show their work in Beijing. Don't wait for me to take you, go yourself.

Get the catalogue of the exhibition, use the images in your RWB to support a written review of the exhibition.

See if you can talk to the artist.

Find out about all the other pop artists working in the USA and Europe (and anywhere else for that matter). Look at this link <http://www.fi.muni.cz/~toms/PopArt/contents.html>

See if you can find the Mao image made by Andy Warhol.

Think about how could you incorporate that into your rickshaw image?

Lichtenstein's makes reference to, amongst other things, consumer based societies and particularly, Americana. How could you adopt that approach in the new China?

How could you represent China in terms of 'branding'?

Could you mix those references up with Communist party images? Lots of Chinese artists (Cao Yong, for example) already do.

Now then; if doing these things and more doesn't get you thinking in ways you hadn't already thought, then maybe it's a lost cause!

The point is this: really investigating all these aspects of art work liberates your ideas, it allows the uniquely creative person that you are to come out. This happens because, when you look at art work, you react. Exploration helps turn that reaction into a response. I promise you, with an open mind and hard work (not just reserved for the more 'academic' subjects), you will succeed.

How's that for a promise?

But, when I say 'hard work', boy do I ,mean hard work.

Here's a graphic that may help you in your research. Good luck.

exploration explored

what happens to my ideas/work when I explore

the elements of
art

the principles of
art

meaning

by playing with

colour
value
line
shape
form
texture
space

balance
contrast
proportion
pattern
rhythm
emphasis
unity
variety

icons and symbols
of a

social, historical
or cultural nature

(eg:
words/pictograms/numb
ers)

*having trouble with any of the above words/phrases? when you
have recovered from the shame, look them up at
www.artlex.com*

*am i exploring other artists
by researching....*

am i practically exploring...

how they did it
(techniques/style/process)

what they did it with
(media/tools)

when they did it (time-line)

where they did it (location)

why they did it (motivation)

the social/political climate
in which they were working
their contemporaries/peers

media: what else could i work
with?
scale: how big/small could this
thing (or its parts) be?

dimensions: could i be working in
3 or 4 dimensions?

have i considered the 4th
dimension of 'time'?

have i considered working with
video?
slides?
computers?
audio tape?
performance?
installation?

what does my research actually look like? is it..

legible?

imaginatively presented?

clearly presented?

sequentially presented?

thorough?

(that means have i really looked at

this from all angles, not just the ones i'm good at?

for example, it's not ok for a research workbook to just show exploration of media and no historical research)

Here are some words related to exploration

How do you think these apply in a visual arts context?

discover

study

consider

investigation

testing

possible courses of action

searching

examine

diagnosis

