

AP Course Objectives:

- Create a cohesive body of artwork (Sustained Investigation) through the synthesis of ideas, materials, and processes.
- Develop a personalized creative practice through the exploration of experimentation and revision.
- Communicate and articulate ideas + research through both visual artworks and writing.

Summer Assignment:

Developing your year long creative research project (The Sustained Investigation)

A Sustained Investigation (SI) is a creative-deep-dive into a specific inquiry, interest, or concern. Think of it as a research project, but instead of writing a paper you are making a collection of artwork over a sustained period of time that investigates your chosen inquiry/interest/concern (AKA your thesis.) What subject matter and/or topic is worth researching and “investigating” for an entire school year? Your SI could be anything from a technical exploration (*example: using watercolors and graphite to create colorful hyper-realistic fantasy landscapes*) to something more conceptually based (*example: using trash and found objects to create large-scale abstract sculptures that critiques the wastefulness of modern consumer culture*) and everything in between! It’s ok if you don’t know, this summer assignment will help you. Start with big, broad ideas. As you research, sketch, and reflect, the ideas will become narrower and better defined.

IMPORTANT: This assignment should be completed over the course of several weeks. Ideas need time to develop. I would advise you to dedicate at least 2 or more hours per week. Plan for at least 15 hours total on this assignment. Make yourself a schedule and stick to it. This AP course (and more generally, a healthy art practice) requires a substantial amount of discipline and self-direction. Make time to make art.

TASK 1. Idea Generation.

1. In your sketchbook or via Doc. Identify **(at least) 10** broad starting points that interest you. These starting points can be anything; concepts, materials, techniques... whatever comes to mind!
(*Example: nature, humans, landscape, bones, fantasy, clay, humor, ...*)
2. Once you have 10 starting points, generate **(at least) 10** themes that interest you for each starting point, creating a web of ideas. Challenge yourself to push the boundaries of your idea themes; your 1st three ideas may be good, but your last three might be amazing. (*Example for one starting point: Nature. Themes: fractal patterns in plants, relationship between predator and prey, unusual rock formations, decomposition, the life cycle of a frog, why are some plants weeds?, Georgia O’Keeffe, the 4 seasons, the way bats move in the sky, The wetland/marsh landscape.*)
3. Once you have generated your starting point themes, you should do a few things:
 - A. locate connections and overlap between your different starting points and themes.
 - B. Repeat a variation of the exercise above (1. Starting Point, 2. Themes.) Keep diving deeper. Remember: this should not be all done at once. Give your brain a break.
4. Once you have fully fleshed out your ideation, go back and select your top 5 points of interest/ideas.

TASK 2. Image Flood.

Review your idea web from the previous task. Choose your “top 5” ideas. Your top 5 should be something you can imagine yourself spending a year investigating. With all of your ideas in mind (especially your top 5,) use an image organizer such as powerpoint/google slides/pinterest board to create an “image flood” of information and inspiration. Gather (at least) **50 images (10 per top idea)** that inform/inspire you.

These images might include:

- A. Examples artists/artworks you admire
- B. Examples of media/techniques you would like to explore/emulate
- C. Examples from the visual world (animals, plants, buildings, patterns...)

Gathering images should be done over the course of several weeks.

TASK 3. Concept Sketches.

Now that you have some basic concepts to explore, you’ll need to expand your ideas beyond the obvious. You might even want to add to your idea generation web. For this task, I want you to make **5 thumbnail sketches** (quarter page per thumbnail sketch) for **each** of your top 5 ideas (**25 thumbnail sketches total**). Spend at least 15 minutes on each sketch. (remember, this assignment is meant to happen over the course of the summer. Give yourself time!)

TASK 4. Prototype.

Choose 2 of your thumbnail sketches (could be from different base ideas) that you would like to further explore. For each selected sketch, **develop a finished piece of artwork (2 total)**. IMPORTANT: get in the habit of documenting/photographing your process.

TASK 5. Present.

On the 1st week of school, you will have 5 to 8 minute to present your summer assignment/ideas to your pers via a Powerpoint (10 slide limit.) Prepare to articulate your ideas, processes, and experiences. Make sure to explain your thinking and creative choices. Also be prepared to answer questions.

FINAL THOUGHTS:

- **AP Art is a rigorous and challenging course. You need to be self motivated and dedicated to your creative practice. Failure to complete this first assignment will result in removal from AP class.**
- **If the prescriptive way of ideating laid in this summer assignment is not how you generate ideas/process information/structure thinking, please contact Ms. Hirsch (via email) by June 10th to come up with an alternative assignment. In the email, you should propose your own equivalent “summer assignment” with the expressed purpose of developing your Sustained Investigation. You will still be expected to complete Task 4 and 5 (Prototype and Present.)**