

SECTION

5

**2-DIMENSIONAL ART  
AND DESIGN WITH  
CONVENTIONAL  
AND NON-  
CONVENTIONAL  
MATERIALS**



# Creative Methodologies

## Fabrication and Construction

### INTRODUCTION

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Welcome to Section 5. In this section, you will be introduced to Art and Design Studio practice that can be used to address problems in your community and Ghana at large. In doing this, you will make use of both conventional and non-conventional tools and materials. Specifically, you will learn about the concept of materials, tools and methods. You will also produce a design brief and art proposal to help you create 2D artworks using non-conventional, and conventional materials from your environment.

#### By the end of this section, you should be able to:

- Examine the workability of conventional and non-conventional tools and materials from the environment that can be used to create 2-D artworks.
- Design and create 2-D artworks using conventional and non-conventional materials, tools, and relevant processes to respond to societal problems.

#### Key Ideas

- Tools, materials, and methods used in Art and Design Studio depend on the artist's level of creativity and immediate environment.
- Tools and materials used in Art and Design Studio can be conventional or non-conventional.
- Classifying art tools, equipment and materials as conventional or non-conventional depends on the tools, equipment and materials available for the artist to use.
- The choice of conventional and non-conventional tools and materials is based on their suitability (workability) for the project in hand.
- A design brief is a document that explains the purpose of an artistic project which serves as a guide for the project work.
- An art proposal is a written plan for an art project.
- Visual diary is a creative source book that contains sketches and ideas for art projects.

## CONCEPT OF MATERIALS, TOOLS, EQUIPMENT AND METHODS

In **Section 2**, you learned about materials, methods and techniques for Art and Design Studio practice. Also, you learned in **Section 4** how Art and Design could be used as a solution to societal problems. Let us engage further on how to use the right tools, equipment, materials, and methods for specific Art and Design Studio tasks; and in so doing explore the **workability** of Art and Design tools, equipment, materials, and methods.

**Workability** in Art and Design Studio practice refers to the effective and efficient use of a tool, equipment, material, or method to achieve a desired form or function. Tools, equipment, materials, and methods used in Art and Design Studio depend, to some extent, on the working environment in which you find yourself. This means that different environments can provide different materials, tools, and methods for producing Art and Design Studio works to solve problems in society. Specifically, you will be expected to use your understanding of the tools, materials, and methods you learned in **Sections 2 and 4**, to produce 2-Dimensional artworks such as fabric printing, printmaking, painting, murals, collage, graphic design, pyrography, and drawing. It is important to note that the available materials, and tools found in your environment can be classified as conventional, or non-conventional as learned in **Section 2**.

### Workability of Conventional and Non-Conventional Tools and Materials in Creating 2-D Artworks

Creating 2-D artworks is a form of expressing an artist's idea using the creative process. In making 2-D artworks, artists and designers often make use of different tools, equipment and materials. These can be grouped into *conventional* and *non-conventional* resources. They are broadly referred to as “resources” because they aid or support the creating of artworks. Understanding how *conventional* and *non-conventional* resources could be used resourcefully can open up many possible ways for making your art projects.

### Conventional Tools, Equipment and Materials

Conventional tools, equipment and materials are the working resources generally and frequently used in creating 2-D artworks. They are common and widely available, and often used by artists in creating their artworks, taught in art classes, and accepted as standard in art making communities and or the art world. In today's artistic practice some of the conventional tools and materials taught in art classes include:

- Pencils (graphite) and Charcoal
- Paints (Acrylic, Watercolour, Oil)
- Brushes and Palettes
- Paper and Canvas

- Inks and Markers
- Easels

## Non-Conventional Tools, Equipment and Materials

Non-conventional tools, equipment and materials are usually obtained from the environment or everyday objects. They are not easily found in an art supply store, however they can be used in producing interesting and unique artworks. They include but not limited to:

- Found Objects
- Recycled Materials (Cartons, Fabric Scraps, Plastic)
- Sand, Soil, and Clay
- Sponges, Feathers, and Stamps
- String, Yarn, and Wire
- Household Items (Cutlery, Toothbrushes, Cardboards, Tubes)
- Digital tools

## Factors to Consider in Determining Workability of Art Tools, Equipment and Materials

In selecting tools, equipment and materials for creating artworks, it is important to think about how they can easily be used in your artwork. Some factors to consider include:

- *Surface Compatibility:* Certain art materials work better on specific support surfaces. For instance, oil paint works well on primed (coated) canvas enabling the colours to be well bonded to the canvas. Vegetable dyes also work well on cotton fabrics. Non-conventional materials like fabric or wood might require adhesive or additional preparation to adhere properly to a surface.
- *Durability* of selected tools and materials is an important factor to consider if you want your artwork to be long-lasting. Weak tools or materials may break down or fade over time.
- *Ease of use:* Some materials are easier to work with than others. For example, using a spray diffuser allows for more precise application of paint on a surface while natural objects such as plantain bark or wood might create more random patterns or designs. The creative effect you would like to achieve could be a determining factor.
- *Environmental sustainability issues:* Using non-conventional, found, or recycled materials from your surroundings can help reduce waste found in the environment and promote sustainable ways of using art tools, equipment and materials. In this regard, the use of [biodegradable materials](#) is encouraged.

- *Aesthetic qualities:* Non-conventional materials can add a unique visual appeal to your 2-D artwork. They improve the overall look of an artwork. Using a combination of both conventional and non-conventional materials can result in visually interesting mixed-media outcomes.

### Activity 5.1

Use photographs, video, real objects or a combination of any of these to create a manual or digital inventory of materials in your immediate environment that can be used to perform Art and Design Studio tasks.

### Activity 5.2

Make a list of different Art and Design Studio tools and materials found in your environment and explain how they could be used in creating any artwork of your choice.

## DESIGN BRIEF AND ART PROPOSAL DEVELOPMENT IN ART AND DESIGN STUDIO PRACTICE

Having learned that the **workability** of Art and Design Studio tools and materials is necessary for creating 2D artworks, note that it also helps artists and designers to develop art proposals and design briefs. Art proposals and design briefs include defining concepts, outlining objectives, and assist in planning project execution. Through coming to understand this will help you acquire the necessary skills to generate your own art proposals and design briefs, which shares your creative vision.

### Design Brief in Creating 2D and 3D Artworks

A design brief outlines the objectives, scope, and requirements of a design project. It should include project goals such as target audience, budgetary requirements, timescales, creative stylistic direction, and technical and material specifications. It should help to provide designers with a clear guide for solving problems in the community.

Creating a design brief involves the following steps:

**1. State the Design problem:**

- Before beginning the design process, consider the problem you need to solve and the context and purpose of the proposed design solution.
- Decide how the project should proceed and who and what will be involved. Carefully consider the steps to follow, and the tools and materials needed to produce the artwork.

**2. Research and set goals:**

- Find out everything you can about the problem to be solved. Gather important relevant information to help you fully understand how to develop an effective solution to the problem.
- Consider the people who will use it, what others are doing, and any guidelines you need to follow. Taking this into consideration will help you to create a user-friendly, quality, and original design that meets both user and industry standards.
- Write down what you want the design to achieve. You need to clearly state what design you have in mind to solve the problem.
- Make sure these goals match what the project is supposed to do. To get the right result, you need to make sure that what you have in mind about the design agrees with the purpose of the project.
- Look at other design solutions to similar problems for ideas. This will help you to understand the strengths and weaknesses, of other ideas and to build on them in producing an original work.
- Figure out what words, pictures, and other things to include in the design brief. This will help you to make your design intention clear.
- Decide on what is important and what it should look like. This involves focusing on the main ideas, making information clear, and ensuring a better understanding of the design.

**3. Understand the Audience:**

- Think about who will use the finished design – the target audience. Understanding the needs of those who will use the finished design will ensure the design effectively meets their expectations.
- Select a cross-section of people to represent the target audience. This is to help you to get important feedback on what type of design they want.
- Talk to people who care about the project and see what they think. Change the design plan if needed to match what they want. Whether to change or maintain the original design depends on the feedback received from the target audience.

**4. Finish the Plan:**

- Put all the information together in a document. This will ensure easy access to the information.

- Make sure it is easy for everyone to understand and use. In doing so, ensure that the target audience will not get confused about the design.

## Art Proposal

An [art proposal](#) is a written document showing a plan for a specific art project. It includes the concept, objectives, artistic approach, materials, timeline, budget, and other details. It serves as a formal request for support, funding, or permission to produce the project. A well-written proposal is easy to understand and it clearly shows the artist's intention about the project.

The following are steps involved in writing an art proposal:

1. **Define your concept and set your objectives:** Clearly explain the idea behind your art project. To define the concept of your design, answer these questions;
  - What do you want to create?
  - How meaningful is it to you?
  - What benefit will you get from it?
  - List the specific goals, objectives, or your intention for the art project.
  - What do you hope to communicate or achieve through your artwork?
  - Provide details about the artwork you plan to create.
2. **Explain the significance and purpose of your intended artwork:**
  - Explain why your art project is important and relevant.
  - How does the project relate to bigger problems, and what change do you want it to create?
  - Include information about the medium, techniques, and materials you will use.
  - Think about who your audience is and how your artwork will benefit them.
  - Think about ways to attract your audience's attention and motivate them to stay interested in the project.
3. **Budget and resources:** Find out how much money and supplies you need to complete your art project, including any help you might need.
  - When planning, think about the costs of materials, equipment, and other things you might need.
4. **Timeline:** Create a simple plan that shows each step of your art project, from planning to making and showing it.
  - Include a specific timeline for specific aspects of the project. Set clear deadlines for each project stage. This will help to manage time and monitor the progress of work.
5. **Supporting materials:** Include any supporting materials, such as sketches, images, or previous work, to help explain your proposal.

- Review and revise:** Revise your art proposal to make any necessary changes before it is finalised for submission.

## Visual Diary

An artist's visual diary is a personal creative source book where artists' sketch and write down their creative ideas for art projects. One part of it involves jotting down notes, thoughts, feelings, and inspiration, while the other is used as a sketchbook to create visual ideas through sketches, drawings, photos and collages. The [visual diary](#) allows the artist to practice with colours, and compositional sketches.

Here are some examples of personal visual diaries:



Figure 5.1



Figure 5.2



Figure 5.3



Figure 5.4

Figures 5.1 – 5.4 shows a range of different approaches to producing personalised visual diaries

### Activity 5.3

- Identify a problem in your community or school.
- Use either manual or digital tools and processes to develop your own design brief, art proposal, and visual diary to serve as a 2-Dimensional solution to an identified problem in your community.



## Non-Conventional Material from the Local Environment

Non-conventional tools and materials refer to uncommon, but innovative resources that artists use to create their works. These include found objects, natural materials, recycled materials, digital media, unusual mediums and so on. These non-conventional tools and materials can be used to produce interesting Art and Design Studio tasks. Artists use different textures, colours, and shapes in these materials to make artworks that solve problems in the society such as environmental pollution.

### Examples of Non-Conventional Materials

**Recycled Materials:** they include plastic bags, bottle caps, and discarded metal objects (scraps). These materials can be reused to produce beautiful artworks such as collages or mixed media art.

**Found Objects:** these include wood waste, shells, and discarded scraps of fabrics and metals. These objects can be re-used to create various artworks like photomontage, decorative furniture, and wall hangings.

**Natural Materials:** cowries, leaves, pebbles, sand particles, shells, seeds, and tree barks are some examples of natural non-conventional materials. These materials make the artwork look interesting and connect it to the natural environment.

**Digital Art:** Ghanaian artists now use digital software and electronic devices to create artworks, including illustrations, animations, and graphic designs.

Other non-conventional materials include buttons, *neon lights*, rice paper, pins, compact discs, thread, smoke, felt, beads, glass, cans and garbage.

The following are examples (Figure 37 – 40) of Art and Design Studio works that were produced using non-conventional tools and materials:



**Figure 5.5:** *Dennis Lee Mitchell, Smoke on paper.*



**Figure 5.6:** *Anonymous "Evita" (Eva Peron), Medium, Bread.*



**Figure 5.7:** *Big Drip*, Joseph Fucigna:  
Plastic and Metal Fencing, Cable Ties.



**Figure 5.8:** *Everything and Beyond*, Yaw  
Owusu Pepra Medium: Coins

### Activity 5.4

Create a photomontage to show the benefits of using non-conventional materials to produce artworks.

### Activity 5.5

Make a list of 10 non-conventional materials found in your community and create your own 2D artwork using any of the materials.

## CONVENTIONAL MATERIALS IN THE ENVIRONMENT

Conventional tools and materials in Art and Design refer to common items and instruments that artists use to create their artworks. These conventional tools and materials are used by artists to create decorative and functional artworks. Such artworks capture the attention and imagination of people.

### Examples of conventional materials in our environment

- **Graphite Pencils:** Used for drawing and sketching.
- **Charcoal:** For drawing and shading.
- **Ink:** Used to draw, paint, and print.
- **Markers:** Used in writings such as calligraphy, sketching, and drawing.
- **Paints:** Include acrylics, oils, and water colours.

- **Pastels:** May be soft and oil based in nature. When applied, they allow artists to achieve rich, textured effects and interesting colours.
- **Paper:** Various types of paper used in the Art and Design Studio include cartridge, eggshell, glossy, and newsprint.
- **Digital Media:** Digital tools like computers and software such as Adobe Photoshop and Illustrator are used to create Art and Design works.
- **Printing media:** Include fabric, metal, plastic, wood, inks.

The following are examples of Art and Design Studio works that were produced using conventional tools and materials (Figure 5.9 – 5.14):



**Figure 5.9:** *Linocut Print*



**Figure 5.10:** *Watercolour painting. by E. Owusu Dartey*



**Figure 5.11:** *Pastel work*



**Figure 5.12:** *“Of Age” by Enam Bosoka. Medium: Pen*



**Figure 5.13:** *Collage using plastic waste by Essilfie Banton*



**Figure 5.14:** *Cursed Ones' actress Ama K. Abebrese Digital painting by Danny Arthur-Baidoo*

### Activity 5.6

1. Collect different conventional tools and materials found in your environment and describe their features.
2. Sketch FIVE (5) conventional materials found in your environment and state the benefits of using them in making Art and Design Studio works.

## EXTENDED READING:

1. Format.com (2024, April 18). *How to Write an Art Proposal in 16 Easy Steps*. Retrieved from <https://www.format.com/magazine/resources/art/how-to-write-better-artist-grant>
2. Asinyo, B. K., Frimpong, C., & Dowuona-Hammond, D. (2021). Conventional and nonconventional materials in conceptual textile art.

# Review Questions

1. Explain with pictures the usability (workability) of any TEN (10) conventional and non-conventional tools and materials found in your environment.
2. Write FIVE (5) advantages of using workable tools and materials in the Art and Design Studio
3. Present a pictorial or written report that explains design brief.
4. Illustrate THREE (3) differences between art proposal and visual diary.
5. Write FIVE (5) advantages of using non-conventional materials, tools and processes in designing artworks.
6. Create a scrapbook using the technique of assemblage/collage. Your scrapbook should contain TWENTY (20) non-conventional materials and tools found in your environment that can be used in creating artworks.
7. Search for artworks made of non-conventional materials in your environment or online that can be used as interventions to solve challenges in society.
8. Describe TWENTY (20) different conventional tools and materials found in your local environment that can be used to produce Art and Design works.
9. Search for artworks made from conventional tools and materials that are found in your environment or online and are used as interventions to solve challenges in society.

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