

# Art Techniques Student's Guides *Mixed Media & Experimental Approaches*



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# Introduction:

Art has always fascinated me because it doesn't have to fit into a box. From my early experiments with sewing and fashion to my love for watercolor and digital media, I've always been drawn to combining materials in unexpected ways.

This guide is dedicated to Mixed Media & Experimental Approaches – the exciting world of layering, combining, and reimagining materials. It is about risk-taking, curiosity, and breaking away from traditional definitions of “painting” or “drawing.”

For IB Visual Arts, mixed media is more than an experiment; it is a way to expand artistic intention, connect with global practices, and show that materials themselves can carry meaning.

# Why Mixed Media?

Mixed media matters because it:

- Breaks Boundaries: Combines painting, collage, textiles, photography, sculpture, and digital art.
- Carries Symbolism: Materials themselves become part of the message (recycled paper, fabric scraps, found objects).
- Encourages Risk-Taking: IB values experimentation, and mixed media shows evidence of creative courage.
- Connects Cultures: Many cultures traditionally combine media — from textile art to architectural decoration.

When we experiment, we embrace happy accidents and discover new voices in our art.



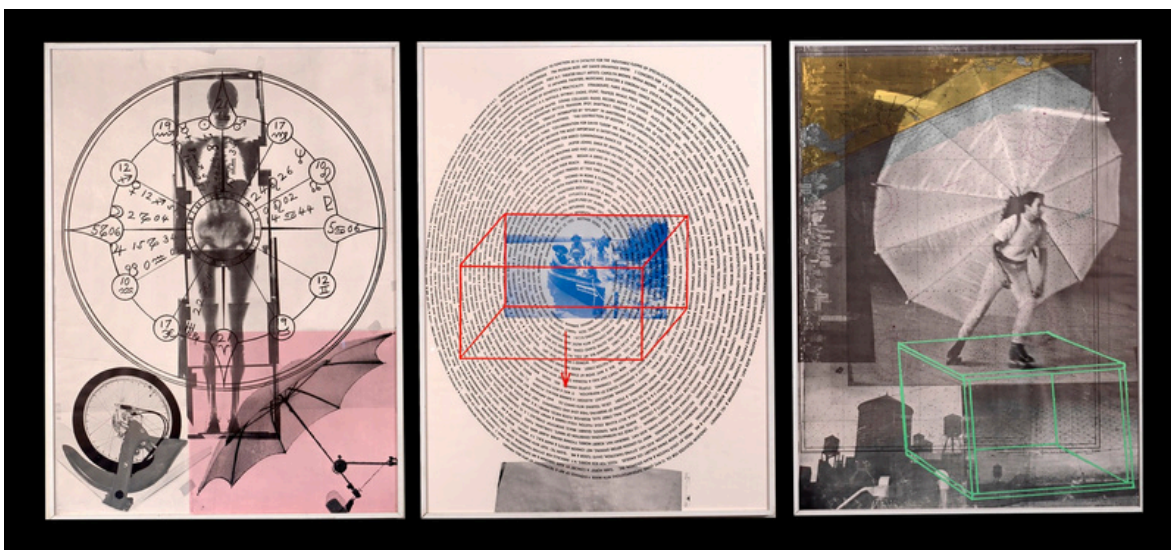
# Artists Who Inspire Mixed Media

## **Robert Rauschenberg.(USA):**

Rauschenberg created artworks inspired by each country's visual and cultural environment. These works were exhibited alongside his existing pieces to spark cross-cultural dialogue and mutual understanding. The aim was not just art-making, but using art as a bridge for human rights and artistic freedom, particularly in countries where expression was suppressed.



ROCI CHILE, 1985



Robert Rauschenberg, *Autobiography*, 1968, offset lithograph on paper, sheet: 66 1/4 x 48 3/4 in. (168.3 x 123.8 cm), Smithsonian American Art Museum, Gift of Mrs. Marian Javits, 1976.144C



# Artists Who Inspire Mixed Media

**Wangechi Mutu (Kenya/USA):** Collage with magazine clippings, paint, and organic textures exploring identity and feminism. Known for collage paintings that combine magazine images, medical diagrams, fashion photos, and traditional African motifs into otherworldly female forms. Her figures often become hybridized, blending human, plant, animal, and mechanical parts.





# Artists Who Inspire Mixed Media

**Vik Muniz (Brazil):** Works with chocolate, garbage, and unusual materials to recreate images.



*Marylin on Chocolate, 1999*



*Pictures of Garbage, 1999*



*Double Mona Lisa (Peanut Butter & Jelly)*



*Vik Muniz. Marinary Medusa, 1998. Detail.*



# Artists Who Inspire Mixed Media

**Mark Bradford (USA):** Layered posters, advertisements, and paper into monumental abstractions.



*Mark Bradford. Jungle Jungle. 2021*



*Mark Bradford. Keep Walking. 2024*



# Artists Who Inspire Mixed Media

***Ghada Amer (Egypt/USA):*** Painting intertwined with embroidery, challenging gender roles, fighting for equal rights one stitch at a time.



*Ma jolie, 2016, acrylic, embroidery and gel, medium on canvas*



*Portrait with Wounds, 2015, ceramic*



*Norah, 2014, acrylic, embroidery and gel, medium on canvas*



# Techniques & Approaches

Here are a few experimental approaches you can try:

- **Collage:** Layering paper, photographs, fabric, or text.





# Techniques & Approaches

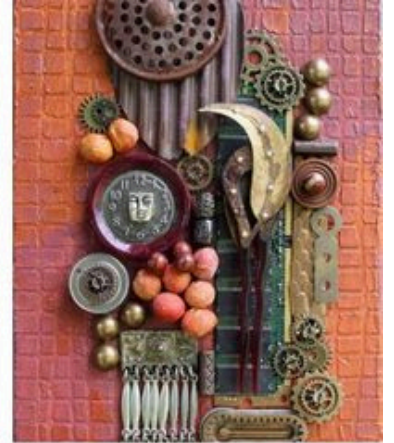
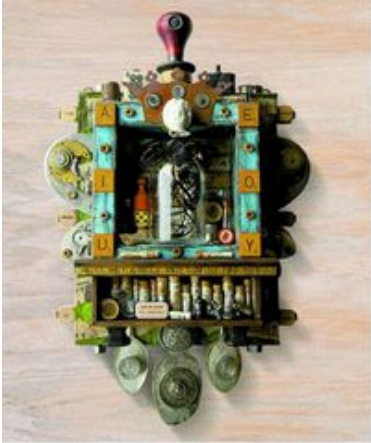
Collage Art, Collages by Sisay Teshome /  
ArtMajeur





# Techniques & Approaches

- **Assemblage:** Using 3D objects in a painting or sculpture.





# Techniques & Approaches

- **Photo Transfer:** Transferring images onto paper, canvas, or wood.





# Techniques & Approaches

- **Texture Additions:** Mixing paint with sand, plaster, wax, or glue.





# Techniques & Approaches

- **Hybrid Media:** Combining traditional techniques with digital edits or projections.



# Techniques & Approaches

- **Fabric & Thread:** Embroidery, patchwork, or fabric collage integrated with paint.





## Student Challenges

## ***"Memory Collage" - Layers of Identity***

Collect personal photos, found images, fabrics, or objects.

Combine them with paint or ink into a collage that tells a personal or cultural story.

Focus on contrast, layering, and intentional meaning.



***IB Reflection Prompt:*** How do the materials themselves add to the story you want to tell? 



# Student Challenges

“Texture Experiment Board” – 5 Materials in 1 Work

- Create a sampler board with at least five unconventional materials (sand, fabric, recycled paper, thread, leaves, etc.).
- Combine them with acrylic, ink, or watercolor.
- Aim for variety in surface, texture, and layering.



IB Reflection Prompt: How does experimenting with unexpected materials change your process?



# IB Reflection Prompts

- How do materials themselves change meaning in art?
- When does an object stop being “ordinary” and become symbolic?
- How do accidents or unexpected results influence creativity?
- How does experimentation help you grow as an artist, even if the outcome is not “perfect”?





# Student Worksheet

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

## Project Planning

- Project
- Title:

\_\_\_\_\_

- Materials I Plan to Use:

\_\_\_\_\_

- Main Idea/Theme:

\_\_\_\_\_

## Experiment Log

- Material 1: \_\_\_\_\_ (Result/Reflection)
- Material 2: \_\_\_\_\_ (Result/Reflection)
- Material 3: \_\_\_\_\_ (Result/Reflection)
- Material 4: \_\_\_\_\_ (Result/Reflection)
- Material 5: \_\_\_\_\_ (Result/Reflection)

## Reflection

1. Which material surprised you the most? Why?
2. How do the materials support or expand your idea?
3. How does your work fit into mixed media traditions in art?



