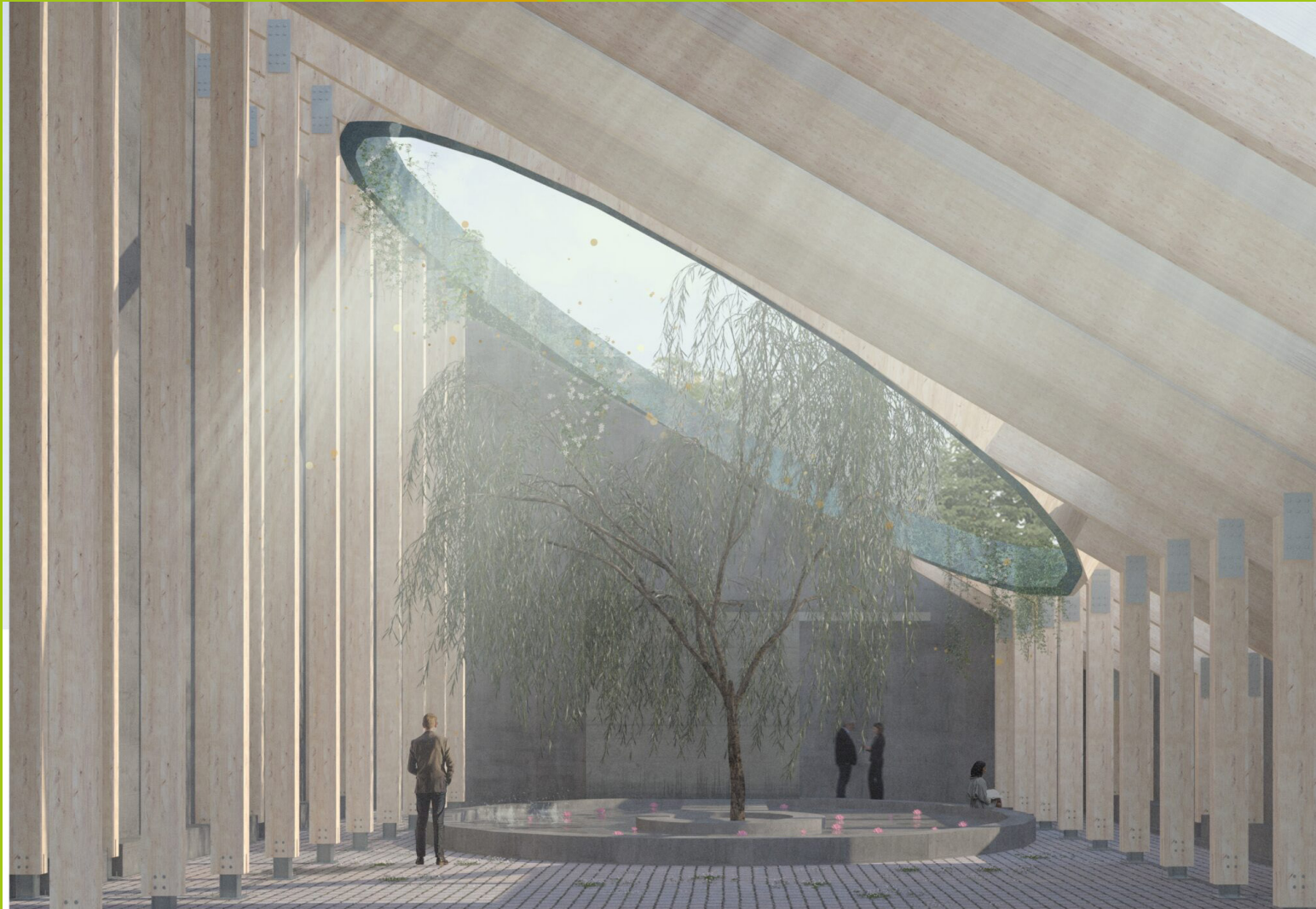


**MACKINTOSH SCHOOL
OF ARCHITECTURE
THE GLASGOW
SCHOOL OF ART**



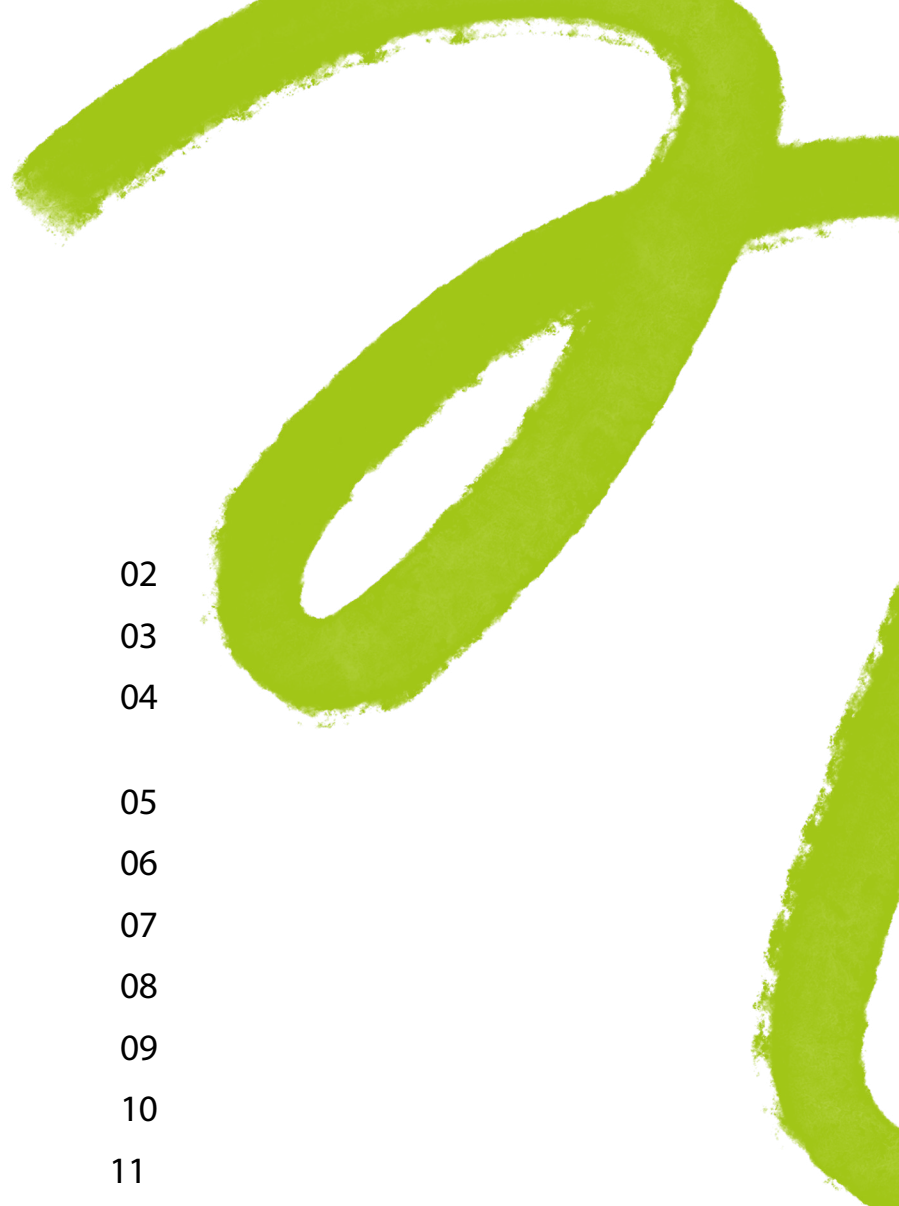
Emelie Fraser, MSA Stage 5, 2025

UNDERGRADUATE APPLICATION GUIDELINES

BACHELOR OF ARCHITECTURE

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ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

STANDARD ACADEMIC ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO YEAR 1

Scottish Highers — 4 Highers at ABBB including a literate subject* and Maths or Physics

A Levels — ABB including Maths or Physics, and GCSE English at Grade A/7

Other equivalent qualifications at SCQF Level 6 (EQF Level 3) such as UAL Level 3 Diploma

- International Baccalaureate (IB)
30 points overall in the Diploma, including 18 at Higher Level, normally including English and Maths. Students not presenting English at grade 5 or above at Higher Level will be required to submit an IELTS.
- Irish Leaving Certificate — Four Highers at H2 or above, subjects required as per Scottish Highers.
- International qualifications — People with qualifications from outside the UK should contact admissions@gsa.ac.uk for more information.

MINIMUM ACADEMIC ENTRY REQUIREMENTS TO YEAR 1 (FOR ELIGIBLE APPLICANTS ONLY)

- Scottish Highers — BBCC including a literate subject* and Maths or Physics.
- A Levels — BBC, including Maths or Physics and GCSE English at A/7 Grade or above

NOTE For applicants whose exam results are pending, conditional offers will be made at the standard or minimum tariff where eligible.

*literate subjects include English, Business Management, Classical Studies, Economics, ESOL, Geography, History, Media Studies, Modern Studies, Philosophy, Politics, Psychology, Religious Studies, Sociology

The Glasgow School of Art (GSA) is committed to working to widen access, including fair admissions for applicants from a wide range of backgrounds.

The minimum entry requirements apply to applicants from Scottish Index of Multiple Deprivation (SIMD) 20/40 postcodes, as well as applicants who declare via UCAS that they are care experienced, estranged from their parents or legal guardians, have caring responsibilities, are a refugee or currently receive free school meals.

More information is available at www.gsa.ac.uk/wp

DIRECT ENTRY TO SECOND OR THIRD YEAR

This is an Undergraduate Honours Degree programme at The Glasgow School of Art comprising four years of study. Most applicants apply to start in Year 1. If you have completed, or are studying a relevant higher education qualification, you can apply to start in 2nd or 3rd year. This is known as 'Direct Entry'. Accepted qualifications include a foundation diploma in art and design, an HNC or HND or a year or more of university study. The year you apply to depends on the level of the qualifications you already have, or what you're currently studying. You must be able to satisfy us that you have undertaken a period of study equivalent to the first, or first and second year, of the degree programme. You can find more information on our website [here](#).

Important: If you are applying for direct entry to second or third year, we will consider your application from your highest desired entry point and work backwards from there. That means that you do not need to put in an application for each potential year of entry - if you apply for Year 2 direct entry and we feel you do not meet the requirements for direct entry we will automatically consider you for Year 1 entry instead.

ENGLISH LANGUAGE REQUIREMENT

We expect all students to demonstrate proficiency in the English language, which for UK students is normally evidenced by a pass in Higher or GCSE English or other literate subject*.

Applicants who require a Student Visa, and who are not a national of, nor have obtained a degree in one of the countries on the approved UKVI exemption list, will need to provide evidence of their English language ability through the use of a standardised test.

The GSA's preferred test is the IELTS for UKVI (Academic) test taken at a UKVI approved test centre. A full list of English Language tests that may be presented can be found [here](#).

Applicants who successfully enrol and complete GSA's Pre-Sessional English for Creative Disciplines programme can also use those test results to satisfy English language conditions.

Our current requirement for Mackintosh School of Architecture programmes is IELTS for UKVI (Academic) with 6.5 overall and no less than 5.5 in each component.

For guidance, please email admissions@gsa.ac.uk or call +44 (0) 141 353 4512.



The Reid Building

COST OF STUDY

FEES, FINANCE & HELP

The annual cost of your study will depend on a range of factors including your tuition fee status, programme of study, accommodation arrangements and lifestyle. We understand, however, that for your effective planning it is really important that you have a good idea of how much studying at art school is likely to cost, and what kinds of costs you are likely to incur over and above tuition fees.

Have a look at the GSA's Total Cost of Study Guide for more help with your financial planning. You'll also find information on other costs associated with your chosen programme (called 'Indicative Programme Costs') on each programme page on the website.

TUITION FEES

Your annual tuition fee will depend on whether you are a Scottish student, Rest of the UK student or international student, as well as the subject (programme) and level (undergraduate/postgraduate) of study.

You can find current information on Fees and Finance pages on the GSA website [here](#).

APPLICATION TIMELINE

In order for your application to be considered complete, you must complete the two steps outlined by the relevant deadlines:

STEP 1

UCAS APPLICATION FORM

DEADLINE - 18:00 (UK Time) January 14, 2026

The first step is ensuring you complete your UCAS application via www.ucas.com

We suggest that begin the UCAS application form as soon as possible and don't wait until minute as there's a lot of information required to complete the form. You don't need to complete the UCAS application form in one sitting. You can save your progress and return to the form as often as you need to. However, please ensure you submit this before the deadline.

Read the advice from UCAS to help you through their application process, step by step, [here](#).

STEP 2

DIGITAL PORTFOLIO & PORTFOLIO STATEMENT

DEADLINE - 13:00 (UK Time) January 21, 2026

After the GSA receives your completed application form from UCAS, you will receive an email from the Admissions team at the GSA with an acknowledgement of your application and instructions on how to upload your Digital Portfolio and Portfolio Statement to the GSA Digital Portfolio Site. You can find Digital Portfolio examples at the end of this guide.

You are welcome to upload your Digital Portfolio as soon as you receive your invitation email from Admissions, but no later than the deadline given to you.

The Digital Portfolio site will open to new submissions from the end of October each year.

APPLICATION TIMELINE



DIGITAL PORTFOLIO

Your Digital Portfolio is a selection of images of work that you have made, laid out clearly. It demonstrates your skills, ideas, interests and your suitability for the programme you are applying to.

The Digital Portfolio must include no more than 15 slides and should be in PDF format. Remember, you can include more than one image on each slide.



PORTFOLIO STATEMENT

In addition to your Digital Portfolio, you are required to submit a Portfolio Statement, which is in addition to your previously submitted UCAS Personal Statement. The Portfolio Statement you submit should not be the same as your UCAS Personal Statement.

Your portfolio statement must not exceed 3000 characters (approx. 500 words). Please do not include links to external websites within the Portfolio Statement as they will not be reviewed.

APPLICATION KEY DATES

01

1
SUBMIT APPLICATION
FORM TO UCAS

14 JANUARY 2026
18:00 (UK Time)

Apply via UCAS at
www.ucas.com

UCAS Code G43

02

2
UPLOAD DIGITAL
PORTFOLIO

21 JANUARY 2026
13:00 (UK Time)

GSA Portfolio
Deadline

You will receive instructions on how to upload your digital portfolio and accompanying portfolio statement after you have submitted your UCAS application. You are welcome to upload your digital portfolio as soon as you receive your invitation email from admissions, but no later than the deadline given to you.

03

3
INTERVIEWS

FROM EARLY FEB TO
MID APRIL 2026

GSA Staff will assess your application. If you are shortlisted, you may be invited to Interview. Interviews may take place on zoom or in person.

See Interviews.

04

4
FINAL DECISIONS

13 MAY 2026

The outcome of your application will be communicated through UCAS.

05

5
REPLY TO OFFER

When you have received decisions from all of your UCAS choices, UCAS will send you an email to let you know all your decisions have been received and you can now reply to any offers you've been given.

If you receive your last decision on or before 13 May 2026, your reply date is 3rd June 2026..

HOW WE ASSESS YOUR APPLICATION

ASSESSMENT

Admissions staff access your UCAS Application Form, Digital Portfolio, and Portfolio Statement all together.

Your application will be numerically scored against your chosen programme's specific assessment criteria (see OUR CRITERIA). The scoring is between 1-7 (7 being 'excellent evidence of' and 1 being 'unsatisfactory evidence of').

On the basis of your application score, you will either be:

Unsuccessful

- This decision will be processed as a 'Rejection' via UCAS

or

Invited to Interview

or

Offered a Place

- This decision will be processed as either 'Conditional' or 'Unconditional' via UCAS

OUR CRITERIA

It is important to know what the assessment criteria are for your programme.

You should try to respond to these criteria when creating your Digital Portfolio, writing your Portfolio Statement, and preparing for Interview.

SEE FOLLOWING PAGES FOR CRITERIA.

STAGE ONE: CRITERIA DIGITAL PORTFOLIO & PORTFOLIO STATEMENT

DIGITAL PORTFOLIO AND PORTFOLIO STATEMENT

1 Commitment to the studying the programme:

- We want to know why you want to apply to the programme. What do you find exciting about the subject area? How is this evidenced in the content of the portfolio? Can you reference artists or architects in the work that you present?

2 Engagement with Creativity

- The portfolio should be varied, personal and interesting. Drawing skills and your ability to represent 3-dimensional form are of particular interest to us. These can be demonstrated in a variety of ways including free hand drawings, painting, computer work, photography, model making, print making, woodwork or textiles.

3 Ability to analyse and explore ideas

- We are interested in the ideas behind your work: What was the initial starting point? What decisions determined the finished piece of work? This can be done graphically or through a short description that relates a group of images to each other and explains their relationship.



STAGE TWO: INTERVIEW

MACKINTOSH SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

If shortlisted, you may receive an e-mail inviting you to attend an interview. You can choose for your interview to be held via Zoom or in-person in Glasgow. If you choose to attend in-person you will be invited for a morning or afternoon session which will involve a visit to the department as well as the interview. The actual interview, for both online and in-person sessions, will last 20 minutes or so and are usually with two members of staff.

This is a chance for staff from the programme to meet you, hear you talk about the work in your portfolio and find out more about your readiness for the programme. It is also a chance for you to get a clearer sense of the programme, find out about the facilities available and ask any questions that you may have.

Staff will score your interview using our interview assessment criteria below. The outcome of your interview will be communicated to you via UCAS.

If you are invited to interview the following criteria apply:

- **Ability to communicate ideas**
At interview we will discuss the journey of your work. We want to know what excites you about the subject and how this relates to the work presented in your portfolio.
- **Engagement with design process and project development**
We are interested to know about initial inspiration and starting points, how your ideas evolved and how you explored and developed your work.
- **Awareness of developments in the wider context of the built environment**
We would like you to expand on your interest in studying architecture and demonstrate how you have researched the subject. Have you read any books, seen any news articles or visited any buildings that you could discuss?
- **Evidence of creative skills**
We want to see your practical skills and how you explore and use different media and materials. Evidence of how you have tested or explored your interests can be conveyed through the drawings and work you choose to discuss from your portfolio.

MORE INFORMATION

Start Early

Give yourself plenty of time to prepare your UCAS application, your Digital Portfolio, and refine your Portfolio Statement.

The Digital Portfolio site will open to new submissions from the end of October each year.

Reach Out

Don't hesitate to contact us if you have questions. If you need help with your application:

- For any queries about the application process or issues with our application site, contact admissions@gsa.ac.uk or call +44 (0) 141 353 4512.
- Remember if you're in education currently, you can speak to your teachers or lecturers for support with your application.
- If you are interested in applying to the GSA as a Study Abroad student (single semester or one year study) you can contact international@gsa.ac.uk for information.
- If you are interested in attending one of our on-campus or online events you can sign up on Eventbrite or join our mailing list for updates on events, exhibitions and more here.

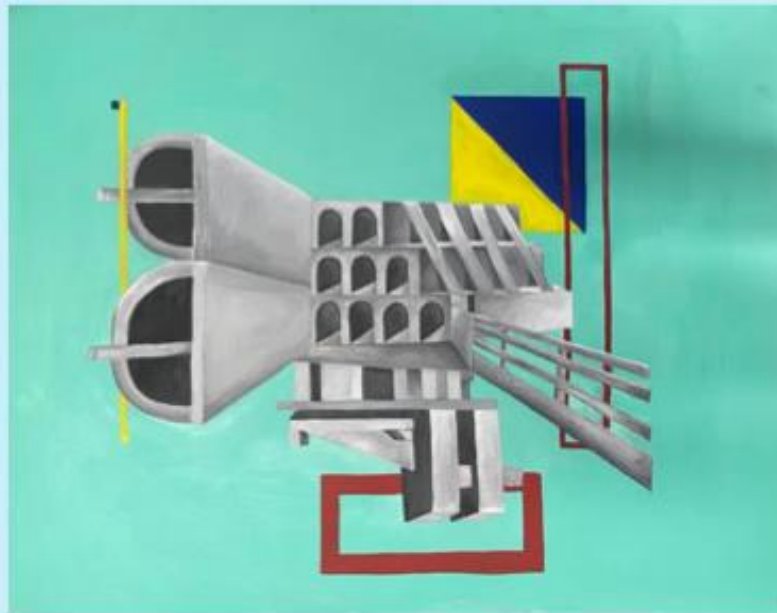
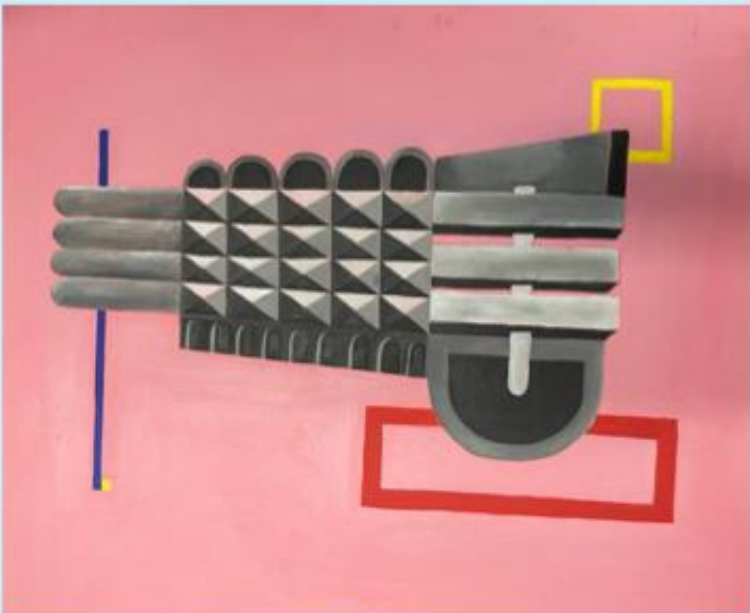
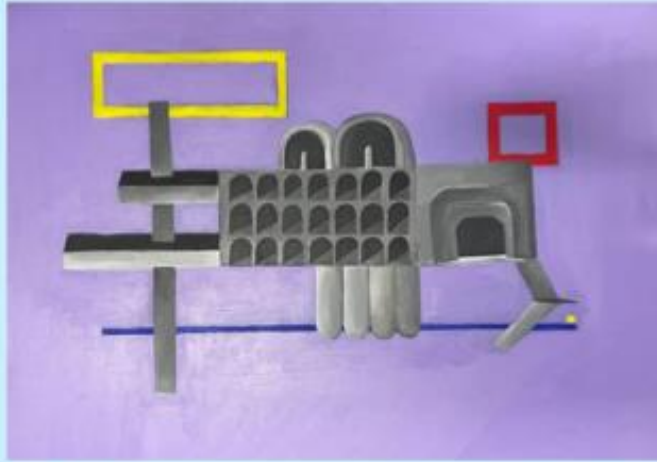
A large, thick, green brushstroke graphic that starts from the left edge and curves downwards and to the right, partially framing the central text.

DIGITAL PORTFOLIO EXAMPLES

SCHOOL OF ARCHITECTURE

The following pages are sample portfolios by our current students, taken from their original application to study at the GSA.

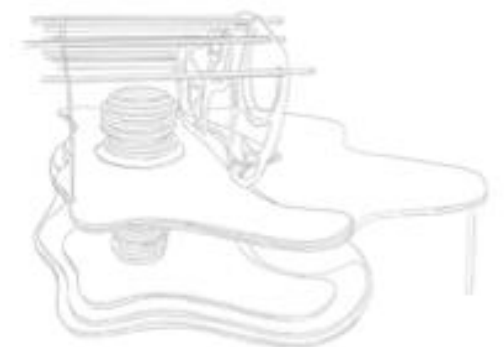
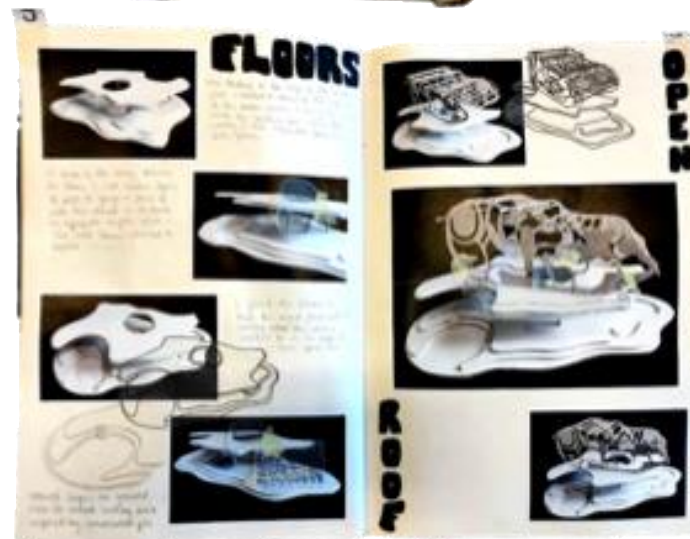
You shouldn't use these as examples to follow in terms of style but do look at how they've presented their work and their making process.



Paintings inspired by Brutalist structures. I placed imaginary Brutalist structures in greyscale against a background of block colour on canvases to create tension between realism and abstraction. The greyscale structures with their tonality, grounds the composition in a sense of reality while the bold flat colours introduce an abstract modernist aesthetic. I was trying to evoke a sense of surrealism where the realism feels isolated.



Julie Begg



Hannah Roberts



Fig. 24

Series of art class shelves

24. First two made by tracing graphite over cardboard cutouts of the objects depicted. Next two and last two are made from printing different colours of acrylic paint using cardboard base cutouts pressed onto sheets of black and white paper. One is drawn in pencil and one is painted in black and white acrylic paint.

Freidrich Koenig Gimeno

Temple

5. Fine liner over map of
Halifax.

6. Blue biro on paper.



Fig. 5

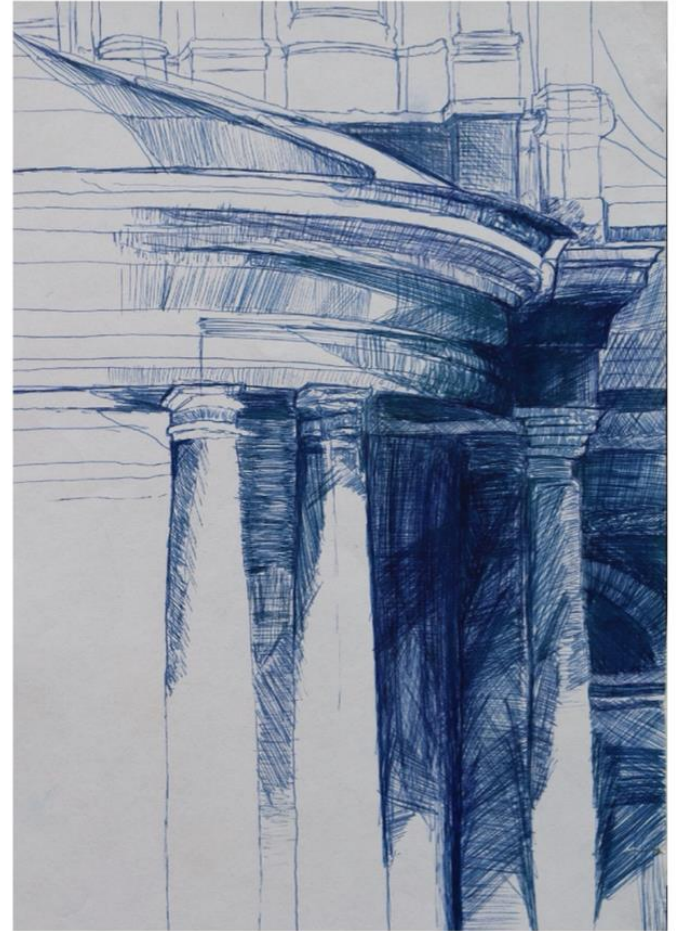
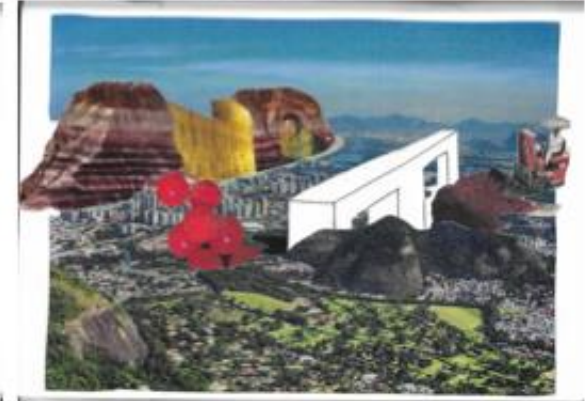


Fig. 6



10. PEPPER PROJECT

This began from some still life studies; I experimented with different ways to depict the pepper. I cut it up and drew its plan and elevations, then took it further by turning the elevated shape into pattern. Once I collaged these into backgrounds I got carried away and created lots more with an architectural element.



The Decay of Regeneration: Art Project

This selection of work was a unit in which I tried to show, the difference in wealth across the city of Glasgow and highlight the sense of decay and ruin throughout my work.



Pen and Pencil, A5



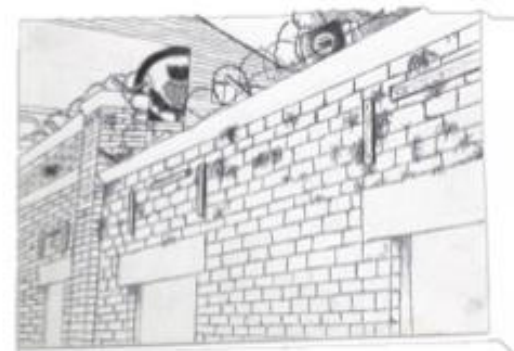
Tonal Pencil, A5



Mixed Media, A3



Watercolour, A5



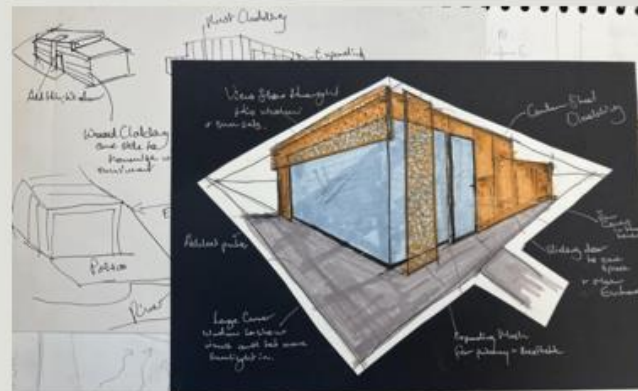
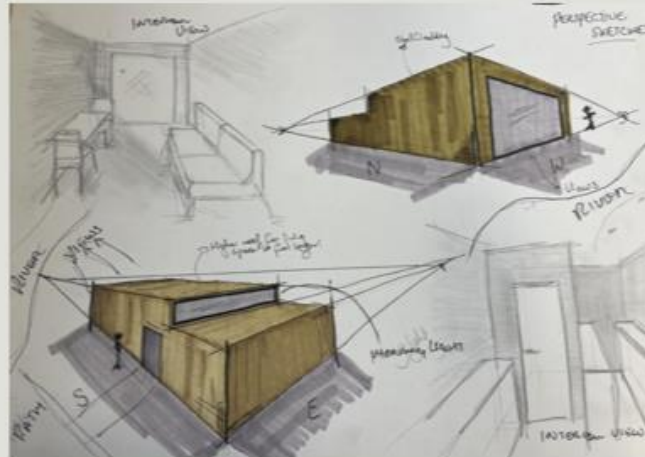
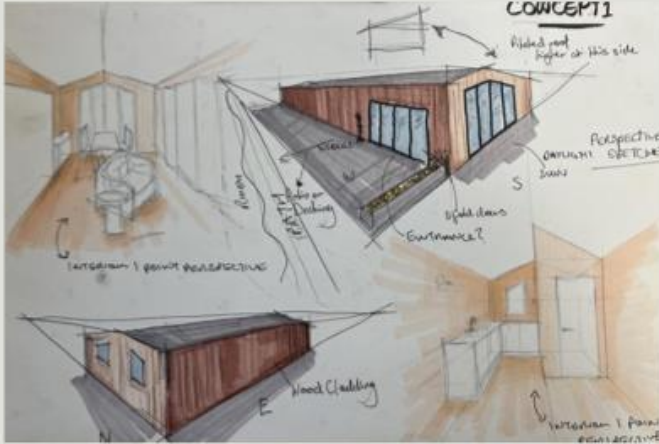
Pen, A5

Calum Aitken Glasgow Landscape Art Project

Calum Aitken

MICRO HOUSE CONCEPTS.

ABBIE PODLESNY.



Abbie Podlensy

CULLODEN VISITOR CENTRE.

In the winter, seen at a distance
this large building almost merges
into the rough pasture of
Culloden Moor - even though
it's built in a very sharp and
modern way.

