

How to become an art scholar

If you have a child who shows artistic promise, it's worth them considering a scholarship in the subject. Ann Buchanan, the Director of Edinburgh Art Studies, explains what schools will be looking for and we meet current scholars

ACHIEVING the status of 'the art scholar' is a competitive business among senior-school children. 'Who's going for an art scholarship?' is a subject of animated discussion as port-folios and sketchbooks are prepared for submission in January.

Opinions about art have been subjective since the 19th century, but fortunately for art teachers in the sensitive position of judging who should achieve art-scholar status, there are certain criteria to assist in spotting potential in candidates. These are based on an ability to draw, an obvious enthusiasm for established artists and evidence of thoughtful manipulation of different materials in both two and three dimensions.

Despite what the Turner Prize judges would lead us to believe, drawing is a key skill. If I had to choose one indicator above all others in the work of a potential art scholar, it would be an ability to draw sensitively, using a range of line, tone and pattern. Most schools set a drawing test,

so successful art-scholarship applicants should be able to draw with confidence and sensitivity, just as musicians interpret a sight-reading piece.

Preparing the portfolio

Do include recent work completed in the past year (or two at the most). **Don't** include 'masterpieces' produced in infancy that indicated the candidate was the 'next' Jackson Pollock.

Do include drawings from first-hand subject matter, such as still-life objects on a kitchen table, corners of rooms or views from windows. **Don't** include drawings from second-hand images, especially air-brushed photos of models from magazines.

Do present a large sketchbook of projects that shows development from drawings into various media, such as pastel, chalk, ink watercolours, gouache and acrylic, photos of sculptures and larger paintings.

Don't present too many 'one-off' sketches that are unrelated to larger pieces.

Do show a response to established artists in art galleries. Stick in tickets and postcards from the gallery to show that you've seen them at first hand and be prepared to talk about these artists and how they influence your work in your interview. **Don't** include out-of-focus images of artists randomly printed off the internet whose name you can't remember.

Do be curious and enthusiastic!

Ann Buchanan teaches at Loretto School and has taught at St Leonards School, St Andrews, University of Edinburgh and Belhaven Hill School, Dunbar. As Director of Edinburgh Art Studies, she organises Art and History of Art courses for all ages in Scotland, London and Italy. She's married to the artist Hugh Buchanan and two of their daughters were art scholars (www.edinburghartstudies.co.uk)



Facing page:
Charterhouse
Sixth-former
Jamie Murray
standing in front
of *Self-portrait of
a classless society*

Above: *Vancouver
landscape* by
Harrow pupil Giles
Hart

Right: *Floral
Series* by Ebba
Sahlgren, who
was awarded an
art scholarship
at Marlborough
College at the
start of her lower-
sixth-form year



Meet the scholars

Charterhouse

Jamie Murray is studying Pre-U Art in the Upper Sixth
Self-portrait of a classless society (oil on canvas)

These portraits represent the class divide in the social melting pot of Charterhouse School, whose personas I observe every day. Being an art scholar has allowed me to explore and express more my creative personality, which I believe has helped me in other

aspects of life socially and academically.'

Harrow School

Giles Hart is in the fifth form studying GCSE Fine Art
Vancouver landscape (oil on canvas)

'This landscape painting was chosen from a photograph I took in Vancouver. I didn't manipulate it at all by using Photoshop as I wanted to capture how naturally beautiful the scene was. The painting took me roughly 10 hours. The detail I put in is important because it's what makes the piece the biggest accomplishment for me. The art facilities

at Harrow are excellent and extensive with regular art trips to go on (especially as the top London galleries are only a 40-minute Tube journey away) and we have great teachers. All the boys studying art have the same high-quality teaching; what sets art scholars apart at Harrow is the ambition to exceed our expectations and be excellent ambassadors for the subject.'

Marlborough College

Ebba Sahlgren, Upper Sixth, is studying for A Level Fine Art
Floral Series (Photography, Porcelain Installation)

Art scholarships



Japanese still life by Loretto School's Charlie Yates

'By recording my installation photographically, I have been able to depict contradictory industrial and natural forms to create a juxtaposition of beauty against function. As an art scholar, I have been granted the opportunity to collaborate and share practices and techniques with other scholars as well as being able to contribute various works within the annual College Art Scholars' exhibition, local galleries and publications.'

Loretto School

Charlie Yates first year GCSE
Japanese still life (acrylic on canvas)

'This painting was inspired by an Elizabeth



Quentin Martin's mixed-media **Forms in Space** uses an innovative slashing technique

Blackadder exhibition. Being an art scholar at Loretto has helped me, as a shy boy, to express my creativity. It's wonderful to have been chosen in a school where the subject is taken so seriously. I get the freedom to use all the facilities in the art department and to work with specialists in different media, such as ceramics and painting, and am able to take double the amount of art lessons in my weekly timetable. I'm really looking forward to taking Art and History of Art at A level and look

forward to applying for art college in years' time.'

Bryanston School

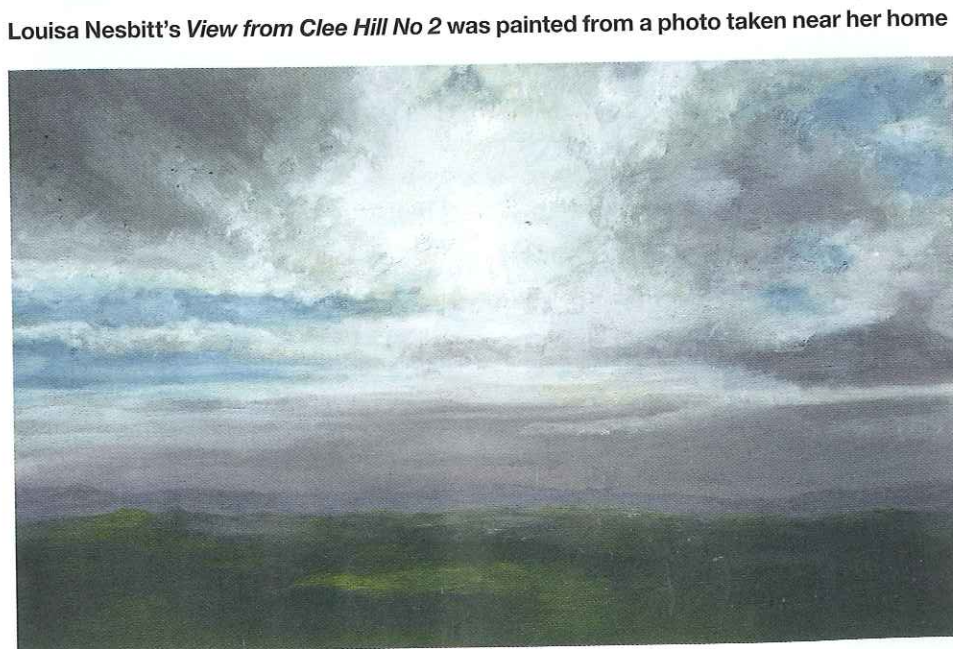
Quentin Martin is in B year (the equivalent of Year 11) studying GCSE Art
Forms in Space (mixed media)

'Being an art scholar at Bryanston is amazing. There is no limit to what you can do, and the range and quality of the facilities is incredibly useful. I've chosen painting as it's my biggest yet and, I think, the most successful I've done. I made a sculpture and suspended items in it with string and took some photos. The painting is a compilation of these photos. The slashes in the picture were accidental. I sometimes use a scalpel to create an effect; however, one time, the knife cut through the canvas. It actually created quite a nice effect, which fits the dark theme of the painting.'

St Mary's School Ascot

Louisa Nesbitt, Lower Sixth
View from Cleve Hill No 2 (oil on board)

'I painted this from a photo I took near my home for an art project focusing on the environment. Throughout my time at St Mary's I have embraced and enjoyed being an art scholar. It has improved my work and given me the ability to be proud of my own art.'



Louisa Nesbitt's **View from Cleve Hill No 2** was painted from a photo taken near her home