

Unit 3: Mixed Media Photography

Content Area: **Fine Arts**
Course(s):
Time Period: **Marking Period 1**
Length: **1-2 Weeks**
Status: **Published**

Brief Summary of Unit

Unit 3: Mixed Media Photography

This unit will introduce students to the concept of mixed media in photography, blending traditional photographic techniques with other art forms such as painting, drawing, collage, and digital manipulation. Students will explore how combining different media can transform a photographic image and allow for deeper creative expression. Through hands-on projects, students will develop a personal artistic approach, experimenting with ways to enhance or alter their photographs with other artistic elements.

Revision Date: July 2025 - Samantha Berk

Essential Questions

- How can the combination of photography with other media enhance the storytelling and emotional impact of an image?
- What are the technical and conceptual challenges when working with mixed media in photography?
- How do different materials and techniques influence the viewer's interpretation of a photograph?
- In what ways can mixed media photography push the boundaries of traditional photographic practices?

Essential Understandings

- Photography can be enhanced and transformed by combining it with other art forms, expanding creative possibilities.
- Mixed media allows photographers to communicate complex ideas, narratives, and emotions in innovative ways.
- The integration of various materials and techniques in photography can challenge traditional boundaries and offer new forms of artistic expression.
- Experimenting with mixed media encourages risk-taking, problem-solving, and creative decision-making in the artistic process.

Students Will Know

- How to integrate traditional photography with other media such as painting, drawing, and digital manipulation.
- Techniques for physically altering prints (e.g., collage, painting on photographs) and digitally enhancing images with mixed media elements.
- How to balance and merge various art forms to create cohesive mixed media works.
- The historical and contemporary use of mixed media in photography.
- How to critique mixed media work, considering both the photographic elements and other artistic additions.

Evidence/Performance Tasks

Fine Arts students demonstrate differentiated proficiency according to their ability to answer the essential questions through formative and summative assessments. Evidence of progression may be demonstrated in divergent ways through the Artistic Process of Creating, Presenting/Producing, Connecting, and Responding.

Tasks will include:

- Preview/Answer essential questions
- Meaningfully and appropriately participate in class critique and discussions
- Complete class projects including weekly critique assignments
- Complete self-assessment rubrics
- Participate in assessment discussions with teacher
- Complete final exam

Learning Plan

1. Preview Essential Questions (Class Discussion + Journal Prompt):
Begin the unit by presenting essential questions to spark curiosity and personal connection:
 - How can photography be transformed through the use of other materials?
 - What does it mean to blend media in a meaningful way?

Suggested activity: Students write personal reflections and predictions in their sketchbooks or journals before sharing in small groups.

2. Introduce Mixed Media Photography (Mini Lecture + Slide Presentation):
Define mixed media photography and explore its potential for storytelling and creative expression. Discuss how it merges photography with drawing, painting, collage, and more. Introduce key terms like overlay, transfer, layering, texture, and alteration.

3. Artist Study: Contemporary and Historical Examples (Visual Analysis):
Present a range of artists who use mixed media with photography—e.g.,

Suggested Artists to explore:

- Robert Rauschenberg (photographic transfer & collage)
- Maggie Taylor (digital and photographic layering)
- David Hockney (photo collages)
- Lorna Simpson (text and photography)
- Alma Haser (photographic sculpture)

Suggested Activity: Analyze how each artist uses materials to add meaning or abstraction.

4. Class Brainstorm: What Other Materials Can Be Used? (Interactive Anchor Chart):
Collaboratively generate a list of traditional and unconventional materials that can be combined with photography (e.g., thread, paint, fabric, newspaper, found objects, charcoal, ink, acetate, vellum, text, wax, etc.). Post the chart as an ongoing reference.

5. Material Exploration Stations (Hands-On Practice):
Rotate through stations where students experiment with integrating photographs and other media.
Examples:

- Watercolor wash over black and white photo
 - Image transfers using gel medium
 - Embroidery or stitching into photo prints
 - Layering vellum or acetate for transparency effects
 - Drawing or inking over photographs
- Encourage students to take notes on techniques they enjoy.

6. Mini Mixed Media Challenges (Short Prompts):
Assign 2–3 quick "challenge prompts" such as:

- Alter a portrait to reflect an emotion using only line and color.
- Create a surreal scene by combining photo fragments and found textures.
- Merge a photograph with a text overlay that changes the meaning.

7. Photography Collection Walk (Independent Shooting Assignment):

Students go on a photo walk (in school or at home) to capture images with future alteration in mind. Encourage experimentation with angles, texture, and lighting, keeping composition in mind. These photos will be used in later projects.

8. Sketch and Plan Final Mixed Media Composition (Creative Planning):

Students choose one or more photos from their collection and sketch 2–3 different ways to manipulate or layer them with other media. Include annotations about materials, mood, and message.

9. Create Final Mixed Media Piece (Studio Work Time):

Students develop a finalized mixed media photographic artwork using the materials and strategies explored earlier. Encourage originality, experimentation, and craftsmanship. Multiple class periods can be devoted to this phase.

10. Gallery Walk + Reflection (Presentation and Critique):

Host a gallery-style viewing of all final works. Students give and receive peer feedback using a structured critique protocol (e.g., “Describe, Analyze, Interpret, Evaluate”). End with a written reflection: What mixed media techniques helped you enhance or transform your photo the most? How does combining media change the viewer's experience?

Materials

The materials used in this course allow for integration of a variety of instructional, supplemental, and intervention materials that support student learners at all levels in the school and home environments. Associated web content and media sources are infused into the unit as applicable and available.

Digital Cameras, Sketchbook, Various Pencils, Sharpies, Markers, Various Papers, Various Erasers, Mirrors, Blending Sticks, Charcoal, Graphite, Sharpeners, Colored Pencils, Oil Pastel, Chalk Pastels, YouTube Videos, Value Scales, magazines, glue, scissors, Watercolor, Watercolor paper, paint brush, ink, printing materials, chromebooks, ipads, Paint, Color Wheels, Drawing Pen, Rulers

Websites:

- The Art Story – Mixed Media Art
<https://www.theartstory.org/definition/mixed-media-art/>
(Clear overview and history of mixed media art.)
- Creative Bloq – How to Combine Photography with Other Art Forms
<https://www.creativebloq.com/inspiration/mixed-media-photography>
(Practical ideas and inspiring mixed media photography examples.)
- The J Paul Getty Museum – Image Transfer Techniques
<https://blogs.getty.edu/iris/image-transfer-techniques-for-artists/>
(Step-by-step image transfer methods.)
- Tate Modern – Robert Rauschenberg
<https://www.tate.org.uk/art/artists/robert-rauschenberg-1877>

(Biography and collage techniques.)

- Maggie Taylor Official Site
<https://www.maggietaylor.com/>
(Examples of digital photographic layering.)
- Creativebug – Stitching on Photographs Tutorial
<https://www.creativebug.com/classseries/videos/stitching-on-photographs>
(Embroidery and stitching techniques on photos.)
- Art is Fun – Mixed Media Materials List & Ideas
<https://www.art-is-fun.com/mixed-media-materials>
(Comprehensive list of mixed media materials.)
- Digital Photography School – How to Take Photos for Mixed Media Art
<https://digital-photography-school.com/how-to-take-photos-for-mixed-media-art/>
(Tips for capturing photos suited to mixed media manipulation.)
- National Art Education Association – Art Critique Guide
<https://www.arteducators.org/research/standards-positions>
(Structured critique protocol for peer feedback.)
- The Getty Museum – How to Critique Artwork
https://www.getty.edu/education/teachers/build_lessons/art_critique.html
(Guidelines for conducting critiques and reflections.)

Suggested Strategies for Modifications

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This link includes content specific accommodations and modifications for all populations:

[Fine Arts Accommodations & Modifications](#)

- Auditory re-phrasing to assist students.
- Examples of successful projects to model.
- Group critique of work.
- Hands on activities to support unit objectives.
- Individualized instruction where needed.
- Mini lessons in addition to large group instruction.
- Use of document camera and projector.
- Use of handout as guideline for working procedure.

- Use of Visual Aids such as photographs, and presentation tools.
- Videos to enhance instruction.
- Working in small groups.
- Written outline of procedure as guideline.