

# Critical Studies

Samuel Peploe

# Tasks

1. Read over the first slides to revise your art terminology.
2. Revise your knowledge of Samuel Peploe by watching the YouTube clip.
3. Learn about Samuel Peploe's choice of media handling, scale, style and subject matter by reading through the next slides.
4. Answer question 1(a) and use the slides after to assist.
5. Answer question 1(b) and use the slides after to assist.

# Expressive Art Vocabulary

- Composition/ arrangement
- Subject matter/ imagery
- Visual elements
- Media handling and techniques
- Style
- Scale
- Mood and atmosphere

# Expressive Art Vocabulary

- **Composition/ arrangement** - arrangement; pose (in figure and portrait work); setting; viewpoint; focal point; choice of subject matter; perspective; proportion; scale and use of space
- **Subject matter/ imagery** - choice of subject matter; sources of inspiration and influences; effect on the work
- **Visual elements** - line; tone; colour; shape; form; texture; pattern; how they have been combined/ applied; their effect on the work
- **Media handling and techniques** - choice of media and processes; application of media; effect on style; treatment of subject matter; level of detail; expressive qualities; skills demonstrated; 2D or 3D; scale of the work; influences on technique
- **Style** - aims and influence of specific art movements; what makes the work distinctive; sources of inspiration; the artists' 'trademarks'; artists' response to the subject
- **Scale** - the dimensions of the work; large or small; effect of scale on the work; effect of scale on detail/ realism/ visual impact etc.
- **Mood and atmosphere** - the mood and atmosphere created and how this has been achieved (e.g. colour, use of media, subject matter, composition, style etc.); what the work communicates to you and why

## Words about composition

|              |             |                      |              |                         |
|--------------|-------------|----------------------|--------------|-------------------------|
| Arrangement  | Viewpoint   | Focal point          | Subject      | Sitter (in portraiture) |
| Foreground   | Framed      | Centre of interest   | Object       | Subject matter          |
| Middleground | Cropped     | Point(s) of interest | Distorted    | Frame within frame      |
| Background   | Close-up    | Elevated viewpoint   | Fragmented   | In proportion           |
| Horizontal   | Wide angle  | Camera angle         | Symmetrical  | Out of proportion       |
| Vertical     | Circular    | Eye-level            | Asymmetrical | Portrait orientation    |
| Diagonal     | Triangular  | Bird's eye view      | Balanced     | Landscape orientation   |
| Linear       | Staged      | Low viewpoint        | Busy         | One-point perspective   |
| Horizon line | Set up      | Picture plane        | Cluttered    | Two-point perspective   |
| Perspective  | Dynamic     | Negative space       | Crowded      | Flattered perspective   |
| Leading line | Small-scale | Rule of thirds       | Minimalist   | Aerial perspective      |
| S-curve      | Large-scale | Depth of field       | Sparse       | Vanishing point         |

## Words about mood and atmosphere

|               |            |              |             |                   |
|---------------|------------|--------------|-------------|-------------------|
| Tranquil      | Exciting   | Atmospheric  | Violent     | Sad               |
| Peaceful      | Busy       | Overcast     | Disordered  | Pessimistic       |
| Quiet         | Fun        | Gloomy       | Aggressive  | Melancholy        |
| Serene        | Happy      | Sunlit       | Hostile     | Depressing        |
| Calm          | Joyful     | Sun-drenched | Moody       | Dismal            |
| Informal      | Passionate | Shadowy      | Intense     | Desolate          |
| Relaxed       | Flamboyant | Warm         | Threatening | Lonely            |
| Still         | Lively     | Cold         | Disturbing  | Sensitive         |
| Undisturbed   | Optimistic | Leaden       | Powerful    | Thought provoking |
| Controlled    | Emotional  | Dreary       | Inspiring   | Moving            |
| Dispassionate | Expressive | Lack-lustre  | Poignant    | Breathtaking      |

# The Visual Elements

- Form
- Colour
- Shape
- Pattern
- Texture
- Line
- Tone

# Form

When you add tone to a shape it creates form. That means that the shape becomes 3D. When you work with 3D materials, such as clay or papier mache you are creating 3D forms.



# Shape

There are lots of different shapes. A shape happens when you join the two ends of a line up. The basic shapes we have are geometric squares, circles, etc.

# Words about shape and form

| Shape and form |             | Shape          | Form       |               |
|----------------|-------------|----------------|------------|---------------|
| Regular        | Simple      | Circular       | Sphere     | Sculptural    |
| Irregular      | Complex     | Rectangular    | Cube       | Architectural |
| Geometric      | Fragmented  | Oblong         | Cylinder   | Profile       |
| Organic        | Jagged      | Square         | Pyramid    | Relief        |
| Man-made       | Pointed     | Triangular     | Cone       | Moulded       |
| Natural        | Distorted   | Oval           | Conical    | Sculpted      |
| Angular        | Freeform    | Pentagon       | Helix      | Modelled      |
| Rounded        | Bold        | Hexagon        | Spherical  | Carved        |
| Symmetrical    | Distinct    | Octagon        | Cuboid     | Built         |
| Asymmetrical   | Indistinct  | Outlined       | Triangular | Constructed   |
| Flat           | Spiral      | Positive       | Tactile    | Assembled     |
| Repeating      | Twisted     | Negative       | Textural   | Tool marks    |
| Elongated      | Large-scale | Overlapping    | Massive    | Solid         |
| Simplified     | Small-scale | Silhouette     | Monumental | Hard          |
| Stylised       | Short       | Negative space | Hollow     |               |
| Spiky          | Tall        | Amorphous      | Light      |               |
| Hard-edged     | Wide        | Nebulous       | Heavy      |               |
| Soft           | Narrow      | Fluid          | Mass       |               |

# Colour

There are hot and cold colours, primary and secondary. Colours can harmonise and contrast.

# Words about colour

|                  |               |                |                    |
|------------------|---------------|----------------|--------------------|
| Primary          | Transparent   | Bright         | Monochromatic      |
| Secondary        | Opaque        | Strong         | Neutral            |
| Tertiary         | Hue           | Harsh          | Subtle             |
| Complementary    | Pigment       | Vibrant        | Restrained         |
| Opposite         | Tone          | Intense        | Limited palette    |
| Contrasting      | Tint          | Saturated      | Restricted palette |
| Harmonious       | Balanced      | Bold           | Pale               |
| Related          | Varied        | Deep           | Muted              |
| Hot/ warm        | Deep          | Vivid          | Faded              |
| Cold/ cool       | Fluorescent   | Rich           | Realistic          |
| Symbolic         | Luminescent   | Expressive     | Naturalistic       |
| Decorative       | Pearlescent   | Exaggerated    | Life-like          |
| Advancing        | Iridescent    | Clashing       | Earthy             |
| Receding         | Lurid         | Gaudy          | Delicate           |
| Balanced         | Loud          | Garish         | Weak               |
| Blended          | Brilliant     | Polychromatic  | Washed out         |
| Reflected colour | Kaleidoscopic | Multi-coloured | Pure               |

# Pattern

Pattern can be created by line, colour and texture. Patterns can be seen on clothes, clay and paper. It can be simple and is usually a repeat of a colour or shape.

# Words about pattern

|             |                   |               |             |
|-------------|-------------------|---------------|-------------|
| Applied     | Random            | Dots          | Decorative  |
| Repeating   | Varied            | Polka dot     | Ornate      |
| Simple      | Regular           | Dashes        | Ornamental  |
| Complex     | Linear            | Lines         | Embellished |
| Man-made    | Rectilinear       | Stripes       | Bold        |
| Natural     | Curvilinear       | Chequered     | Subtle      |
| Geometric   | Rhythmic          | Tartan        | Clashing    |
| Organic     | Symmetrical       | Plaid         | Kinetic     |
| Mechanical  | Asymmetrical      | Floral        | Optical     |
| Motifs      | Symbols           | Speckled      | Digital     |
| Squiggles   | Mirror image      | Marbled       | Abstract    |
| Large-scale | Multi-directional | Cross-hatched | Psychedelic |
| Small-scale | Half-drop         | Stippled      | Tessellated |

# Texture

Texture is how something feels. For example rough or smooth, soft or jagged. You can create texture using thick paint, clay and collages and by scratching and piercing paper, tearing and cutting materials. Everyday objects can have a texture. For example a concrete wall or a tree trunk.

## Words about texture

|          |           |          |             |
|----------|-----------|----------|-------------|
| Tactile  | Furry     | Even     | Brushstroke |
| Touch    | Scaly     | Uneven   | Impasto     |
| Textural | Silky     | Grainy   | Bas relief  |
| Soft     | Hairy     | Indented | Low relief  |
| Hard     | Rippled   | Pitted   | Linear      |
| Rough    | Wrinkled  | Dusty    | Swirling    |
| Smooth   | Crinkled  | Waxy     | Dashed      |
| Coarse   | Ribbed    | Greasy   | Directional |
| Fine     | Grooved   | Velvety  | Random      |
| Flat     | Spiky     | Fleecy   | Bumpy       |
| Shiny    | Scratched | Woolly   | Woven       |
| Glossy   | Abrasive  | Matt     |             |



# Line

You will use lots of different kinds of lines when you are drawing and painting. You can use lots of different mark-making tools to create those lines, such as pencil, pen, paintbrush, charcoal stick, pastel, etc. The lines will be very different when using the different materials. The lines can be broken, thin, thick, fluid and jagged lines. These kinds of lines can be used to express different ideas, moods and atmosphere. For example a sharp, pointed, jagged line can express a feeling of anger perhaps.

## Words about line

|          |             |             |            |               |              |
|----------|-------------|-------------|------------|---------------|--------------|
| Thick    | Angular     | Outline     | Flowing    | Zigzag        | Continuous   |
| Thin     | Rectilinear | Horizontal  | Graceful   | Jagged        | Broken       |
| Broad    | Rough       | Vertical    | Elegant    | Twisting      | Ragged       |
| Straight | Textural    | Diagonal    | Precise    | Cross-hatched | Scratchy     |
| Curved   | Expressive  | Wavy        | Accurate   | Stripe        | Inconsistent |
| Long     | Bold        | Curvilinear | Sensitive  | Neat          | Freehand     |
| Short    | Confident   | Fluid       | Delicate   | Sketchy       | Gestural     |
| Hard     | Hesitant    | Smooth      | Controlled | Faint         | Spontaneous  |
| Light    | Fine        | Squiggly    | Definite   | Subtle        |              |

# Tone

Tone happens when light falls on an object. It can be a range of lightness to darkness or lightness of any colour. It is light and shadow. Tone can also create mood and atmosphere.

## Words about tone

|           |           |                     |             |                 |        |
|-----------|-----------|---------------------|-------------|-----------------|--------|
| Light     | Highlight | Limited tonal range | Dramatic    | Hard light      | Drab   |
| Dark      | Half-tone | Wide tonal range    | Contrasting | Diffused light  | Faded  |
| Soft      | Mid-tone  | Tonal value         | Exaggerated | High key        | Sombre |
| Subtle    | Monotone  | Tonal scale         | Hard        | Low key         | Gloomy |
| Muted     | Graduated | Light source        | Glowing     | Reflected light | Murky  |
| Gradation | Graded    | Direction of light  | Luminous    | Reflection      | Dim    |
| Blended   | Shaded    | Shadow              | Illuminated | Bright          | Flat   |

# The Scottish Colourists

- The **Scottish Colourists** were a group of painters from Scotland whose post-impressionist work was not very highly regarded when it was first exhibited in the 1920s and 1930s due to its highly developed use of colour.
- It aimed to challenge the classical use of tone and texture in landscape painting.

# Who were they?

The term '**Scottish Colourists**' refers to four painters:

- S. J. Peploe (1871—1935)
- J. D. Fergusson (1874—1961)
- G. L. Hunter (1877—1931) and
- F. C. B. Cadell (1871—1935)

# Similarities

- Each was born in Scotland in the latter part of the nineteenth century.
- Each was attracted to France early in their careers.
- Although the four were friends, they did not make up a formal group and the group name by which they are now known derives instead from their shared preference for vivid colour and a fluid handling of paint.

# Samuel John Peploe



'Still Life' (1913)  
Oil on canvas



'Still Life with  
Bottle' (1912)  
Oil on canvas



'Tulips and  
Fruit' (1919)  
Oil on canvas



'Still Life, Black Bottle'  
(1916)  
Oil on canvas



# Peploe Biography

- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2xK5cddoJsQ>

# Media Handling/ Technique

- **Peploe** painted in brilliant colour, developing a style containing some new painting techniques, such as use of tonal ranges, brilliant colour, dry-brush technique, trying to give objects a simple 3D form in his paintings, etc.
- Brushstrokes are bold and vigorous influenced by the Fauves.
- His strong use of angular lines not only emphasises shape but adds structure to the paintings – Cubist influence.
- Often cool colours used, with darker blue outlines around objects, and brighter warm colours for objects.

# Scale

Describes the size, location or amount of one element to another (or to the whole) in a work. It has a great deal to do with the overall harmony of an individual piece.

- Bottle coming off the top of the painting.
- Cup looks very small in proportion to apple.
- Vase is large and dominates piece.



# Style

- Tight composition, strong colour and assured handling
- Outlines around objects
- Confident
- Defined the quality of light
- Painted in brilliant colour, developing a style containing some new painting techniques, such as use of tonal ranges, brilliant colour, dry-brush technique, trying to give objects a simple 3D form in his paintings, etc.

# Subject Matter/ Imagery

A still life is a work of art depicting mostly inanimate subject matter, typically commonplace objects which may be either natural (food, flowers, dead animals, plants, rocks, or shells) or man-made (drinking glasses, books, vases, jewellery, coins, pipes, etc.).

- **Peploe** is best known for his still lives of tulips, fruits, vases and household objects.
- He concentrated on a few simple objects - Chinese vases, a black fan, a book, fruit, fabric and flowers – and in particular, tulips or roses.

# Visual Impact

**Visual impact is the first thing we see in a painting.**

- Composition/arrangement
- Media handling and/ or techniques
- Visual elements
- Scale
- Style
- Subject matter/ imagery
- Mood and atmosphere

# Task - Question 1(a)

1. Select one of Samuel Peploe's still life paintings from the next slide. With reference to this artwork comment on:

- *colour*
- *media handling and techniques*
- *mood and atmosphere*

Why do you find this artwork appealing? Give **two** justified reasons.

**10 marks**

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Oil on canvas



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(1916)  
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- ***Look over the next slides for information on how to answer the question.***



# Exam Technique

- Read the question
- Underline the keywords
- Use the keywords as headings to structure your answer
- Each paragraph should analyse a different keyword from the question
- Always refer specifically to the paintings
- Your first sentence should be an introduction explaining which artist and artwork you are going to discuss

# Keywords

- **Composition/ arrangement** - arrangement; pose (in figure and portrait work); setting; viewpoint; focal point; choice of subject matter; perspective; proportion; scale and use of space
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# Fact, Justify, Opinion

Always answer critical studies questions with this technique. Give a fact, then a justification and then an opinion. This will ensure you receive full marks.

## Fact

The artist uses earthy warm colours for the fruit contrasting with blues in the background.

## Justify

I think that they have done this in order to make the fruit stand out and make it the most important object.

## Opinion

I like the way they have used colour as it draws my eye towards the main subject matter of the painting.

# Task - Question 1(b)

1. Samuel Peploe is your chosen artist.

Explain the impact of social, cultural and/or other influences on any of their work and practice.

**5 marks**

# Influences

## Peploe

Living in France changed his use of colour, which became brighter and more vivid. He saw the work of the French Fauve artists (Fauve = the Wild Beasts). He was very impressed by the colourful, daring paintings by Henri Matisse, the leader of the Fauves. Influenced by the work of Matisse, Peploe began to use simpler shapes, brighter colours, definite light, dark and middle tones, and bold outlines around shapes in his paintings.

He undertook painting trips to northern France and the Hebrides with his friend J.D. Fergusson, another of the Scottish Colourists. Inspired by the bright sunlight, he experimented with the bold use of colour, and the influence of the rustic realism of French painters is evident in his landscapes. His still life works show the influence of Manet, with combinations of fluid brushwork, thick impasto and dark backgrounds with strong lighting.

From Manet he learned to paint instinctively and spontaneously; from Sisley he realised the pleasure of painting *en plein air*; from Friesz he learned to apply colour expressively without abandoning the internal 'rhythm' of his compositions; and from Cézanne he discovered a more subtle analysis of form and colour.

In Paris Peploe was able to immerse himself in the intellectual environment, absorbing the latest modernist debates. From the outset, Peploe's art was defined as 'Franco-Scottish' and he succeeded in his ability to assimilate French art while retaining his Scottish identity.

Peploe was the eldest of the Scottish Colourists, and the most commercially and critically successful of the four men. This gave him the time and money to produce his paintings.

# Influences

- Social/ cultural influences
  - How has their work developed/ changed?
- “He saw the work of the French Fauve artists (Fauve = the Wild Beasts). He was very impressed by the colourful, daring paintings by Henri Matisse, the leader of the Fauves. Influenced by the work of Matisse, Peploe began to use simpler shapes, brighter colours, definite light, dark and middle tones, and bold outlines around shapes in his paintings.”

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- This answer would get you 1 mark. It includes a fact and a justification.