

2026 Art and Design – What shall I go and see this Summer?

**For Art and Design students, museums and exhibitions are not just “inspiration trips” — they are part of learning how to see, *analyse, think, and make.* Visiting exhibitions helps students develop the visual and practical awareness that design courses expect from day one. You need to start Year 12 with a wealth of wide ranging resources that you can tap into as you develop your work.**

We’ve put together a guide for this summer we expect you to take full advantage off. If you go on to art and design degrees at university they expect you to be able to discuss artists, exhibits and installations critically to show your interest and passion in the subject.

<b>Exhibition / Venue</b>	<b>Location</b>	<b>Dates (Summer 2026)</b>	<b>Why it’s useful for Art and Design Students</b>	<b>Website</b>
NIGO: From Japan with Love	Design Museum	Until Oct 2026	Branding, fashion-object crossover, product identity, interiors, material aesthetics	<a href="#">Design Museum</a>
Schiaparelli: Fashion Becomes Art	V&A Museum	Through Nov 2026	Sculptural fashion, form, wearable design, theatrical presentation, materials	<a href="#">V&amp;A Museum</a>
HOLY POP!	Somerset House	21 May – 9 Aug 2026	Immersive environments, colour systems, audience interaction, visual storytelling	<a href="#">Somerset House</a>
London Festival of Architecture	Across London	June 2026	Architecture, spatial thinking, installations, sustainability, urban design	<a href="#">London Festival of Architecture</a>
Serpentine Pavilion 2026 – “a serpentine” by LANZA atelier	Serpentine Gallery Pavillion	6 June – 25 Oct 2026	One of the most important annual architecture commissions in the world. Excellent for studying temporary architecture, spatial flow, brick construction, pavilion design, material experimentation, and public interaction with	<a href="#">Serpentine Pavilion 2026</a>

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			space. Particularly valuable for architecture, interiors, furniture and spatial design students. <a href="#">(Serpentine Galleries)</a>	
Design Museum Permanent Collection	Design Museum	Ongoing	Furniture evolution, industrial design, prototyping, exhibition design	<a href="#">Design Museum Exhibitions</a>
V&A Permanent Collections	V&A South Kensington	Ongoing	Furniture, ceramics, jewellery, interiors, construction methods, decorative arts	<a href="#">V&amp;A South Kensington</a>
Collect – Contemporary Craft	Somerset House	Summer-related programming	Ceramics, wood, glass, textiles, material experimentation, collectible design	<a href="#">Collect at Somerset House</a>
<b>William Morris Gallery</b>	Walthamstow	Ongoing	Pattern, interiors, decorative arts, sustainability, craft philosophy	<a href="#">William Morris Gallery</a>
<b>Museum of the Home</b>	Shoreditch	Ongoing	Furniture, domestic interiors, user-centred design, living environments	<a href="#">Museum of the Home</a>
<b>Saatchi Gallery</b>	Chelsea	Summer programme varies	Installation art, immersive environments, speculative design, large-scale visual communication	<a href="#">Saatchi Gallery</a>
<b>Design Centre Chelsea Harbour</b>	Chelsea Harbour	Ongoing	Interior materials, lighting, textiles, luxury finishes, spatial styling	
<b>Royal Academy Summer Exhibition</b>	Royal Academy of Arts	Jun–Aug 2026	Exhibition curation, contemporary art/design crossover, presentation methods	
<b>Frameless Immersive Art Experience</b>	Marble Arch	Ongoing	Immersive storytelling, projection environments, audience experience	

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<b>Moco Museum London</b>	Marble Arch	Ongoing	Contemporary installations, visual culture, immersive presentation	
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<b>Benefit</b>	<b>Why it matters for Art and Design Students</b>
<b>Develops visual literacy</b>	Students learn to notice proportion, balance, colour, texture, scale, lighting, and composition — essential skills in all 3D disciplines.
<b>Builds material awareness</b>	Seeing real objects teaches students how wood, metal, fabric, plastic, ceramics, glass, and composites behave in physical space.
<b>Improves spatial understanding</b>	Architecture and installation exhibitions help students understand movement through space, human interaction, circulation, and atmosphere.
<b>Encourages observational drawing and sketching</b>	Sketching objects and spaces trains students to analyse form and construction more deeply than photographing alone.
<b>Introduces professional standards</b>	Students see how professional designers present work through curation, display systems, lighting, graphics, and storytelling.
<b>Expands creative references</b>	Exposure to historical and contemporary design broadens students' visual vocabulary and prevents repetitive ideas.
<b>Shows design in context</b>	Museums demonstrate how objects relate to culture, society, politics, sustainability, technology, and everyday life.
<b>Strengthens critical thinking</b>	Students begin asking questions such as: Why was this material chosen? How does the user interact with this? What emotions does the space create?
<b>Supports portfolio development</b>	Exhibition visits can generate sketchbook work, photography, annotations, research pages, and concept development for future projects.
<b>Builds confidence before university</b>	Students become more comfortable discussing design ideas, analysing work, and engaging with creative environments before starting their course.