

# BORDERLANDS: LAYERED MIXED MEDIA IDENTITY UNIT (GRADE 11 ART 20)

To be delivered after visiting the [Esker Foundation](#), either in person or digitally. The Esker Foundation is in Calgary, Alberta.

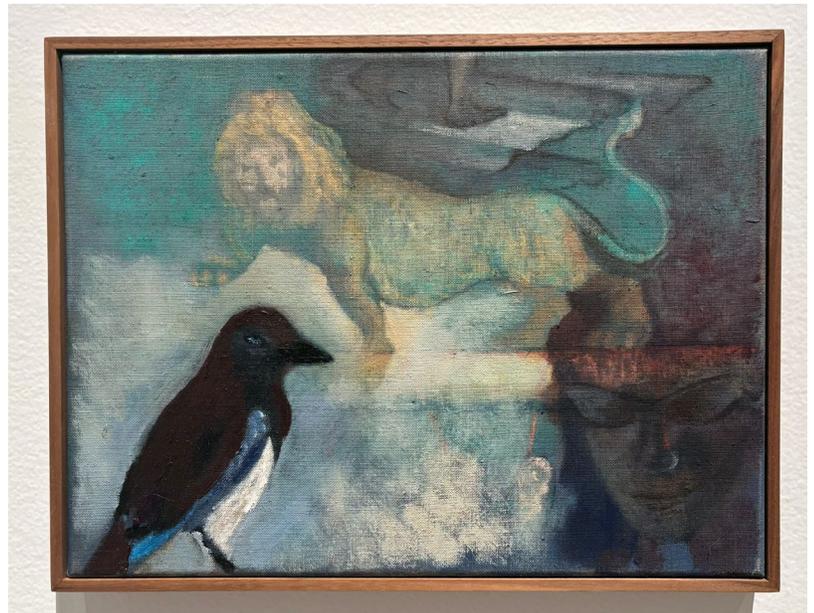
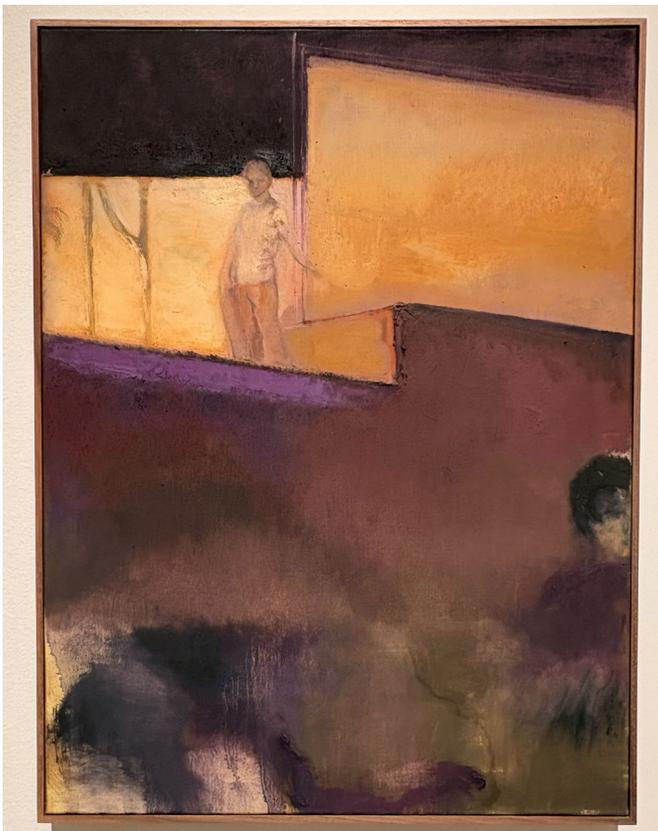
## INQUIRY STATEMENT

**How can layering materials and imagery help us express tensions between different parts of our identity?**

## WHO IS JUSTIN DE VERTEUIL

*"Justin de Verteuil (b. 1990) is a Düsseldorf-based artist whose figurative oil paintings reveal the intricacies of the human experience as an individual existing in a complex interpersonal society. Characterized by the tension between proximity and distance, his compositions depict individuals in multilayered group settings or as isolated figures, capturing situations emblematic of contemporary and timeless phenomena. The spaces peopled by de Verteuil's figures extend their atmosphere and dimensions to the inner reality of their inhabitants and act as planes of projection for the viewer: a play of ambiguity and detail, grounded in settings that reference the familiar and mundane. Born in Port-of-Spain, Trinidad and Tobago, de Verteuil studied at the Kunstakademie Düsseldorf."*

- (de Verteuil, [Sies + Höke](#))



A Lady Bird, a Lion and a Leg, 2024, Oil on Canvas

←Blue Giant, 2025, Oil on Canvas

(Photographs were taken by Ms. Pie when attending the exhibition in person)

## STAGE 1 – RESEARCH & VISUAL INQUIRY (20%)

Looking closely at Justin de Verteuil's paintings, analyze the composition and symbolic elements. What do you think this work is about? Why?

### *IN YOUR SKETCHBOOK:*

- Complete a half-page visual analysis of Justin de Verteuil's exhibition images (bullet-point format).

Sketchbook prompts:

- Where do you see layering?
- Where is the contrast?
- What emotions or questions do you have?
- How does material affect meaning?

*KEEP THIS SHORT...THIS IS WARM-UP THINKING.*

Now that we have looked at Justin de Verteuil's work, you need to find and research a mixed-media artist of your choosing who uses layering and coded symbolism.

### *IN YOUR SKETCHBOOK:*

- Complete a half-page, concise biography of your chosen contemporary mixed media artist.
- Identify at least 2 symbolic elements in the chosen artist's work.
- Include 3–5 images of the chosen artist in their sketchbook. (printed and then cut out)
- Identify how materials, layering, and contrast contribute to meaning.

## STAGE 2 – PLANNING & CONCEPT DEVELOPMENT (25%)

### *STUDENTS MUST COMPLETE THE FOLLOWING IN THEIR SKETCHBOOK:*

- Identify one personal 'border' or tension. (THINK: what is your theme?)
- Complete a Material Mapping Table connecting material to meaning and symbolism. (see below for example)
- Produce three thumbnail compositions showing layering and focal tension. These should be palm-sized, roughly 4 inches x 4 inches.
- Complete a float medium experimentation page.  
Testing the materials is essential to knowing how you will hide or reveal any symbolism in your work
- Write a 5-sentence planning summary explaining your concept, material choices, and composition to solidify your planning process.

Material Mapping Table must include columns for:

Material	Why I'm Using It	What It Represents	Symbolic Role	Layer Strategy

### STAGE 3 – CREATION EXPECTATIONS (35%)

#### Your Project should have a minimum of 5 layers:

**Background, transparent layer, Middle Ground, transparent Layer, Foreground.**

- Step 1 – Ground Layer: Establish the emotional tone and begin to build visual tension.
- Step 2 – First Transparent Layer: Introduce something inside the float medium.
- Step 3 – Disruption Layer: Introduce contrasting material to create a visible interruption and tension.
- Step 4 – Secondary Transparent Layer: Partially unify without fully covering the under-layers.
- Step 5 – Focal Tension Area: Define where viewer attention is strongest. Think Contrast!
- Step 6 – Controlled Refinement: Strengthen contrast and craftsmanship without over-blending or overworking the image.

#### **Students must demonstrate:**

- Clear symbolic elements.
- Minimum 3 visible layers.
- At least 2 transparent float medium areas.
- Visible interaction between paint and contrasting material.
- Highly refined craftsmanship standards.

### STAGE 4 – REFLECTION (20%)

In Google Docs, please create a reflection titled "Borderlands Mixed Media Reflection" and share it with me.

**MAXIMUM 300 WORDS.**

#### **Students must address:**

##### **1. Concept:**

What concept did you explore, and how did you represent it visually?

##### **2. Symbolism:**

Identify one symbolic element you selected. Did you reveal or conceal its meaning?

How did layering affect it?

(Remember, you do not need to explain the meaning.)

### 3. **Materials & Layering:**

How did the float medium contribute to layering your images/materials?

### 4. **Evaluation:**

If you had time, what would you refine?

Did your final piece resolve the story for the viewer or leave interpretation open?

### 5. **Interpretation:**

If a viewer misinterprets your symbol, how might that shift the meaning of your work?

*You do not need to answer all of these questions in 300 words; you do need to articulate your learning and any areas that felt uncomfortable in this process.*

**Creative discomfort often indicates growth.** What I want to know is "What have you learned?"

## **SURFACE & MATERIAL REQUIREMENTS**

- Final work must be completed on a **16 x 20-inch wood panel**.
- Orientation (portrait or landscape) is the student's choice.
- Panel must be primed before beginning.
- All edges must be intentionally finished (painted or sealed).
- **Required materials:** Acrylic paint, float medium (for transparency), and ONE contrasting material type.
- Collage material **may only cover 40%** of the surface.
- **No single collage element may exceed ¼ of the panel size.**
- Minimum 5 visible layers.  
(Background, transparent layer, Middle Ground, transparent Layer, Foreground.)
- At least **2 transparent areas** using float medium.
- One clearly defined focal point must be present.
- At least **one symbolic element** must be integrated meaningfully.
- At least **one visible material seam** must remain (not fully blended).

## **SYMBOLISM POLICY- IMPORTANT!**

### **Personal symbolism is encouraged throughout this unit.**

Students are **NOT** required to disclose personal narratives connected to their imagery. The reflection will focus on artistic choices, layering, and material intention rather than on autobiographical content.

## RUBRICS:

This project is assessed with equal emphasis on concept (idea and symbolism) and technique (layering and craftsmanship). Each is equally weighted: Concept = 50%, Technique = 50%.

### STAGE 1 RUBRIC – RESEARCH

Criteria (Art 20 Alignment)	Exemplary (91-100%)	Proficient (71-90%)	Developing (50-70%)	Beginning (0-49%)
Encounters – Visual Analysis	Insightful observations of layering, symbolism, and compositional relationships.	Clear observations with an understanding of layering.	Basic observations with limited depth.	Minimal or incomplete analysis.
Encounters – Artist Context	Concise and relevant bio with strong material/theme connection.	Accurate bio with some connection.	Basic info with limited relevance.	Incomplete or copied content.
Encounters – Symbol Awareness	Thoughtful identification and interpretation of symbolism.	Identifies the symbolic element with an explanation.	Limited explanation of symbolism.	No meaningful identification.

### STAGE 2 RUBRIC – PLANNING

Criteria (Art 20 Alignment)	Exemplary (91-100%)	Proficient (71-90%)	Developing (50-70%)	Beginning (0-49%)
Drawing – Concept Development	Meaningful tension; original and avoids cliché.	Clear tension with some depth.	Predictable or underdeveloped concept.	Unclear or simplistic concept.
Drawing – Exploratory Sketches	Planning of layering and focal tension is evident.	Basic compositional planning is shown.	Limited compositional awareness.	Incomplete or rushed sketches.
Drawing – Material Investigation	Intentional symbolic connections; strong experimentation.	Materials connected with some testing.	Limited experimentation.	Minimal or incomplete testing.

### STAGE 3 RUBRIC – CREATING

Criteria (Art 20 Alignment)	Exemplary (91-100%)	Proficient (71-90%)	Developing (50-70%)	Beginning (0-49%)
Composition –	Strong focal tension; effective balance and	Clear focal area with reasonable control.	Composition somewhat unresolved.	Weak compositional structure.

Organization	contrast.			
Composition – Layering & Transparency	5+ visible layers; float medium used effectively.	Clear layering with appropriate transparency.	Limited layering or inconsistent transparency.	Minimal layering.
Drawing – Symbolism	Symbolism is layered and conceptually strong.	Symbolism is present with moderate depth.	Overly literal symbolism.	Concept disconnected from materials.
Composition – Craftsmanship	Professional finish; secure adhesion and clean edges.	Minor technical issues.	Noticeable inconsistencies.	Poor adhesion or messy surface.

## STAGE 4 RUBRIC – REFLECTION

Criteria (Art 20 Alignment)	Exemplary (91-100%)	Proficient (71-90%)	Developing (50-70%)	Beginning (0-49%)
Encounters – Conceptual Reflection	Insightful articulation of intent and decisions.	Clear explanation of concept and process.	Basic explanation with limited depth.	Vague or incomplete reflection.
Encounters – Symbol & Technical Insight	Strong understanding of symbolism and layering decisions.	Reasonable discussion of symbolism and materials.	Limited discussion of process.	No meaningful evaluation.

## BORDERLANDS PROJECT – FINAL MARK CONVERSION TABLE

### Stage

### Raw Score (/100) Weight Weighted Score

Stage 1 – Research \_\_\_\_\_ /100 20% (Raw × 0.20)

Stage 2 – Planning \_\_\_\_\_ /100 25% (Raw × 0.25)

Stage 3 – Final Artwork \_\_\_\_\_ /100 35% (Raw × 0.35)

Stage 4 – Reflection \_\_\_\_\_ /100 20% (Raw × 0.20)

### Final Grade

### Total of Weighted Scores

Reference:

Justin de Verteuil – Nexus | Caprii | Ed. 3 – Sies + Höke Shop. <https://shop.sieshoeke.com/collections/books/products/justin-de-verteuil-nexus-caprii-ed-3>