Starting out as a trainee or junior in the Art Department can be a daunting prospect. There's so much to take on board in one go.

Here, in one intense course, I will provide you with the building blocks you'll need.

The six fundamental skills I teach on this course will stand anyone in good stead within the Art Department. Without them, it would be impossible to be a fully contributing member of the Department, and to pursue work without restriction.

From the basics of hand-crafted Drafting techniques, how to read complicated construction drawings and the making of 3-dimensional card models, the group will progress to calculating various lens angles on the drawing board and using them to make perspective visuals of sets or locations.

By understanding what the camera sees and being able to put on paper an accurate perspective drawing, participants will have gained an essential skill that few others in the Film and Television Industry possess.

The knowledge of camera angles and screen sizes (aspect ratios) is a small step towards drawing a storyboard sequence. Using a short scene from an actual screenplay each individual will be guided in the techniques of creating a sequence that illustrates dramatically all the various angles and set ups. Through being able to express one's ideas with a storyboard sequence, one can grasp a basic understanding of designing for the moving image.

Surveying locations is one of the essential jobs that a designer is expected to do as a beginner. Utilising the skills learnt from the Basic Drafting session, we will transfer them to making an accurate drawing of a given location. Techniques for estimating heights and taking measurements on-site will be practised and explored in-depth. How to present a location "pack" with photographs is an important part of presentation to a Director or Producer. We'll do this too.

Finally, the script. This really is the basis of everything we do as designers. We'll discuss how to break down a full-length screenplay into its various parts, and how to read between the lines for hidden elements. What questions should we be asking of the screenplay? We'll then take these found elements and work them into a shooting schedule, giving an overview of everything that may be required from the Art Department.

This comprehensive course will shine a massive insight onto the core skills of being in an Art Department. Everything will need to be worked on and developed individually.

Practice makes perfect.

David McHenry