

EXPLORING SKYLINES IN THE CAST COURTS

The Cast Courts are like a built-up city full of life-size fragments of Classical, Renaissance and Gothic buildings, monuments, statues and details from Northern Europe, Italy and Spain.

The outline shape of some buildings have become iconic as they become universally recognised and contribute towards the identity of a place. In London this included buildings like 30 St Mary Axe (The Gherkin), The Shard and 20 Fenchurch Street (nicknamed 'The Walkie-Takie').

Expanding sources of wealth have developed new styles of landmark buildings in cities all around the world, seeking to demonstrate status, individuality and creativity. High-density, high-tech and ever taller structures are being developed.

Are there any buildings in your local area that are iconic because of their shape?

- *Explore the Cast Courts (Rooms 46a & 46b) from different perspectives – from the ground floor and from the walkway above. These activities would also work well in the Ironwork Galleries (Rooms 113-114e).*
- *Choose a position on the walkway to sketch from. Look at the shapes and forms of the casts below and the way they interact with each other. Draw a long horizontal line in your sketchbook. Sketch out the outline of some of the shapes you see on the line. You can overlap the shapes, and make some bigger or smaller than others.*
- *Imagine the shapes are buildings in a skyline. Add architectural features such as windows, domes and cladding.*
- *Back at school redraw the shapes on card and cut them out. Try rearranging them for maximum impact.*

EXPLORING TEXTURE & COLOUR IN THE GLASS GALLERIES

The Glass Galleries are a good place to look at different and unusual shapes, forms, textures and colours. Take inspiration from the objects on display to use when designing your own fantasy skyline.

Some buildings are iconic because of their unusual colour or texture. The Selfridges building in Birmingham, for instance, is instantly recognisable for its curved shape, pale blue colour and the large silver discs that cover its surface. It stands out on the Birmingham skyline because it provides such a contrast to the other buildings around it. The ArcelorMittal Orbit tower at the Queen Elizabeth Olympic Park, Stratford, stands out not only for its unusual shape, but also because it is bright red against a skyline of mostly grey and silver buildings.

Can you find any buildings in the V&A+RIBA Architecture Galleries that dominate the skyline because of their unusual colour or surface texture? Are there any buildings like this in your local area?

- *Use your sketchbook or the space below to record interesting shapes and surface textures in the objects you see.*
- *Use a camera to record colours you might be able to use in your own designs. Look through coloured glass objects to see other coloured objects. How do the colours change when viewed through each other? Which colours work well alongside each other?*
- *When you get back to school see if you can match the colours in your photographs to a pantone colour that you could use if you are creating your fantasy skyline digitally, or try mixing paints or inks to match.*