

Visual Research

Art & Design

Gathering references so that they inform the work rather than replace it.

Wide first, narrow later, and sourced the whole way through.

Go wide

Primary sources: drawings, photographs, objects

Material from outside your own discipline

Museums and archives, not only search results

Written sources as well as images

Things you dislike, and why

Record

Where each image came from

Maker, date, medium, dimensions

What you took from it, in one line

Keep the link and the file together

Use

Draw from a reference; do not trace it

Combine sources rather than follow one

Note what you changed, and why

Avoid

A board of other people's finished work

One image-sharing site as the only source

References that already look like your outcome

If the research board and the outcome look alike, the research was decoration. It was supposed to change the outcome.