



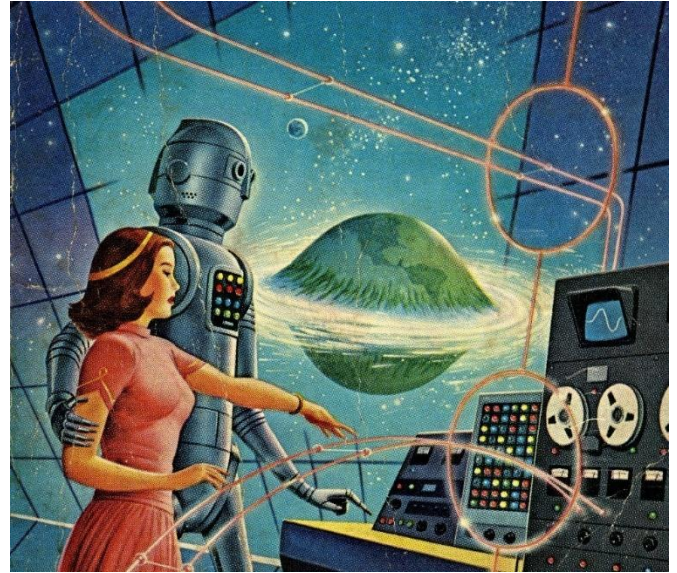
Retro-futurism

This unit dives into the imaginative world of retro-futurism, an art style that combines visions of the future with a vintage twist. We will explore colour and different mixed media techniques to explore key concepts such as foreground, background and layered composition. Through these skills, pupils will be able to showcase their unique take on space art.

Art

Key Questions

- What is retro-futurism?
- Why might artists choose certain shapes and colours to represent the future?
- What materials and tools can you use?
- How do artists imagine the future differently?
- How can you use the foreground, middle ground and background to make the artwork interesting?
- What do you think the future might look like?



Key Vocabulary

retro-futurism	imagining what the future might look like in the style of the past.
composition	how the parts of your artwork are arranged, including foreground, middle ground and background.
mixed-media	using more than one material or technique in a single artwork.
layering	putting one material or colour on top of another
foreground	the part of the artwork that seems closer to the viewer.
background	the part of the artwork that appears farthest away.
perspective	the way things look smaller as they get farther away, creating depth.
geometric	shapes like circles, squares and triangles used in design.
utopian/dystopian	an ideal, perfect world / a future world that is bad or broken.
sci-fi	stories or art about imaginary, future technologies and worlds.



Syd Mead

Syd Mead (July 18th 1933 – December 30th 2019) was a concept artist and known as a “visual futurist”. He created iconic concepts and imaginative designs for various films, architecture and industrial design, blending futuristic ideas with a retro-aesthetic. Mead’s work shows cities, vehicles and gadgets that are imaginative and futuristic with a nostalgic, retro aesthetic. He uses clean lines, geometric shapes and vibrant colours to reflect optimism in how people in the past envisioned the future.



Key themes of Retro-Futurism

- Optimism and Utopia:** a belief that technology will improve life for everyone.
- Style over Function:** Bright, bold, colourful imaginative shapes and designs.
- Cultural Reflection:** Retro-futurism reveals how people in different times thought about the future, reflecting their hopes and fears.

Brief History of Retro-Futurism

Retro-futurism is an art movement that imagines what people in the past thought the future would look like. It blends old-fashioned designs with futuristic ideas, creating art work that looks both familiar and imaginative.



Where did it come from? (1920s-1960s)

In the 1920s-1960s, people were fascinated by space travel and new inventions like airplanes and televisions. They imagined a future with amazing technology, such as hovercrafts and cities on other planets.

The post-World War II era saw rapid technological advancements and a further fascination with space exploration. In the 1950s-1960s, countries like the USA and the Soviet Union, competed to explore space. Retro-futuristic themes became widespread in comic books, movies, advertising and even architecture.

Popular futuristic art and designs included sleek, space-age gadgets, flying cars, spaceships, rockets, robots, space suits and domed cities.

The *Space Age* aesthetic, fuelled by the Space Race between the U.S. and the Soviet Union, showcased bold, optimistic designs.

Retro-Futurism's Modern Revival (1980s and beyond)

As technology advanced, people began looking back nostalgically at earlier predictions of the future. Retro-futurism emerged as a way to celebrate these creative visions. Today, retro-futurism blends past aesthetics with futuristic themes. It is still seen in various media, from art and music to video games and fashion, often reflecting a longing for a more optimistic view of the future.



Home Learning Suggestions

1. Make a collage. Use magazine, newspapers and coloured paper and your own drawings to create a mixed-media collage of a retro-futuristic space scene.
2. Learn about retro-futuristic artists, such as Syd Mead, Jean Moebius Giraud and Roger Dean, and look at examples of their work. Write a short paragraph or create a mood board showing what you like about their style.
3. Compare Past and Future. Find pictures or objects of old technology and compare them with what they look like today. Write or draw how you think these things might look in the future.