

# ART AND DESIGN

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Paper 9704/01  
Controlled Test

## General comments

Almost two thirds of candidates chose the open-ended questions of **Section A**, for which **Question 1, Barriers** and **Question 4, Reflections** were the most popular. A quarter of candidates opted for the specific starting points of **Section B**, with the still life arrangement of **Question 8** attracting the most responses. Slightly more than 10% of candidates focused on the specific design briefs of **Section C**, most choosing **Question 12**, the menu cover design. As in previous years the majority of submissions were of the painting and related media area of study, and this often included printmaking. Graphic design, lens and digital media and fashion design were also seen often. This session there were a number of 3D installation pieces but only a few submissions in textiles, ceramics or other three-dimensional work.

Approximately 30% of the work achieved the upper levels of the mark range, although fewer excellent or outstanding responses were seen compared with previous years. The confidence and determination to sustain research from direct observation informed the development of personal ideas, inventive experimentation with media and processes and exploration of the relationships of visual elements. The best work also continued to develop in the examination pieces, rather than just using the preparatory studies as a rehearsal to be reproduced in the time limit. Especially rewarding was seeing the 'journey' candidates took when exploring and refining ideas. Sometimes a genuine struggle to come to terms with difficulties was apparent, with a candidate at the cutting edge of their experience; such is the maturity the examiners looked for when awarding the in higher range of marks.

The mid levels of achievement, where competent research and development of ideas led to some selection and control in the examination work, caused some concern where it was apparent that the ideas had failed to develop into personal interpretations. Digital photography was often used to support direct observation in conjunction with references to relevant artists' or designers' works. When, however, either the photographic recording or the influence of artworks dominated the investigation at the expense of personal interpretation and evaluation, such work was inhibited from reaching the higher levels of the mark range.

The less successful responses tended to be very dependent on secondary sources, often neglecting the requirement to develop ideas from direct observation and personal experience. Consequently, preparatory sheets were usually bolstered with 'cut and paste' images from magazines which did little to inform ideas or development, despite the technical skills apparent when the images were slavishly copied. More weaker submissions were seen than in previous sessions, much of it simply lacking adequate preparation and some with none at all.

Although most Centres gave their candidates good advice on the mounting, presentation and labelling of work, the examiners continued to find some practices frustrating. Quite a few submissions, for example, offered no indication of which question had been answered, when this was crucial to the Assessment Objectives, particularly *Personal Qualities*. The examiners also experienced confusion when work had been incorrectly labelled with the wrong candidate numbers, and in some cases no identification was provided at all. Work submitted crudely stapled to mounts was actually hazardous to handle. Other Centres, despite previous requests not to, continued to wrap each sheet in tissue paper or cellophane envelopes: when the work became stuck to these wrappings it was inevitably damaged when removed. Advice has been offered in previous reports about applying a thin layer of talcum powder and separating work, which might become stuck together, by a single sheet of plain paper.

## Comments on specific questions

### **Section A**

#### *Open-ended starting points*

#### **Question 1**

##### *Barriers*

Only a few weak submissions were received as, on the whole, the more able candidates tended to choose this theme. A wide range of interpretations was seen; as well as physical barriers, such as walls, fences, roadblocks, border checkpoints and sports boundaries, emotional, social, political and gender issues were addressed. Some of the most interesting responses took the form of installations, involving a variety of materials to signify contained levels of consciousness. Photography specialists were attracted to the theme by focusing more on the natural environment, featuring sea walls, escarpments and sand dunes. Glass containments, such as shower cubicles or isolation chambers and physical incarceration or restraint through imprisonment also fuelled imaginative ideas, often informed by reference to the works of Francis Bacon.

#### **Question 2**

##### *Watching the watchers*

Although a less popular question in this section, some very good observation was encouraged by the theme. Photographers and painters researched well from people in cafés, sports arenas and street life. The open-ended possibilities also inspired some sinister and clandestine developments. One candidate, for example focused on technological installations to develop imaginative ideas on mass surveillance. Most responses were of a mid to high level of achievement and few thoughtless submissions were seen.

#### **Question 3**

##### *Out of order*

Famine, pollution, war and natural disasters were frequently interpreted for painting and photography. Observation of dilapidated buildings and still life arrangements of broken objects informed many good developments. Psychological and social issues were fully exploited through a focus on mental breakdown, bulimia, transvestism, misogyny and homosexuality. There were, however, many more predictable responses to the theme, most of them attempting to emulate popularised Surrealism, arbitrarily transposing elements, some of which were derived from actual works by Dali.

#### **Question 4**

##### *Reflections*

By far the most popular question of the whole examination paper, the work received covered the full ability range. Ideas developed from a wide range of sources, such as pools, rivers, the sea, mirrors and the reflecting surfaces of glass and metal objects, the more able candidates showing great expertise in exploiting distortions. Some strong recording and selection was seen for photography and interesting mirrored surfaces were often employed in fashion design. One three-dimensional installation made use of a triptych of mirrors to reveal different angles of various objects. There were also many carefully observed self portraits and studies of the elderly, reflecting on their experiences of life. Weaker responses often focused on secondary source images of wild life, reflected in the riverside.

## Question 5

### *Focal point*

This was also a frequently chosen theme which inspired some diverse approaches. Many candidates at all levels of ability employed perspective constructions for depicting domestic interiors, landscapes and town or city locations. In some more abstract developments the manipulation of colour, layering and surface qualities conveyed ideas about focus. Other developments were energised by conflicts relating to contemporary events, religious adherences, war and natural disasters. Some good photography literally focused on parts of natural forms, such as the centre of flower heads. Less successful responses, however, often attempted to reproduce any particular view that was accessible from a photographic record or a magazine.

## Question 6

### *Legacy*

Many arrangements of objects using cultural artefacts, such as pottery, weaving and copperware were seen. Good research was also developed from historical buildings for development of works based on architectural styles and decoration. Genealogical inheritance and the nurturing of children were fully explored, with an interesting use made of personal family photographs. The study of traditional dress for theatre, festivals and dance led to some well informed fashion design interpretations. Again, intensely observed self portraits surrounded by family heirlooms led to many successful outcomes. There were also interpretations based on the less positive aspects of industrial pollution, global warming and miscreation. Some weaker attempts were simply based on illustrations from history books, hardly a creative starting point for developing ideas from personal experience.

## Section B

### *Specific starting points*

## Question 7

The still life arrangement, involving a hanging basket of trailing plants overlapping a mirror and including a watering can with some compost on a newspaper, attracted a moderate number of responses. However, some excellent studies were seen from the more able candidates who engaged in thorough preliminary studies for the compositional potential of the plants reflected in the mirror. Some of the best work developed merging and contrasting tone and colour relationships by observing the additional light source from the mirror. Mid level and less successful responses were more challenged by the complexity of the arrangement, but some were able to establish spatial recessions through the observation of overlapping shapes.

## Question 8

Surprisingly, there were far more responses to the still life arrangement of a vacuum cleaner placed against a chair with other associated cleaning items. Studies were seen from candidates of all abilities with the better work resulting from good preparatory experimentation to develop the most interesting compositions. Some of these involved masking off part of the arrangement to create a more abstract outcome. At mid levels of achievement many serious and individual studies were seen, in which reflected light, colour and tone had been competently observed on the metallic, plastic or cloth surfaces and structures. In much of the weaker work the candidates had not developed their own organisation of the objects, but had been directed instead to study a common arrangement set up by the teacher. This was decidedly not an advisable practice for a controlled test at AS/A Level, as candidates were prevented from meeting the Assessment Objectives evenly when the lack of preliminary investigation and evaluations limited the potential for *Personal Qualities*.

### Question 9

The study of the whole or the upper half of a person engaged in craftwork was quite a popular question in this section. It was interesting to see the variety of crafts focused on, such as pottery, weaving, sewing, knitting, carving, metal working and printmaking. Some exceptionally able studies were seen, clearly developed from direct observation, showing a fluid use of media which had grown from a confident understanding of the underlying anatomical forms and bone structures of the model. Many mid level responses developed interesting compositional ideas from research gained from digital photography as well as direct observation. Weaker submissions were inevitably based on secondary sources, some of them well known from the Internet or popular postcards.

### Question 10

The environmental study involved close observation of a limited area of space inside a motor vehicle, looking towards the dashboard, mirrors and windows. This was one of the least popular questions of the whole paper, producing generally poor results, some of which differed very little from technical drawing, and others which were no more than copies of photographs from car magazines. The potential to relate the interior structures to the exterior space and the reflected images from mirrors and windows was rarely exploited. There were some serious attempts but few could cope with spatial recessions or even the tonal differences between the inside and outside of the vehicle.

### Question 11

A pleasing number of responses were seen to the interpretation of a literary passage, which described the events in the day of a market stall vendor. The quotation offered plenty of opportunities for a focus on market produce, such as fish, vegetables and herbs, as well as a sense of location and the possibilities of relaxation in a café after the day's work. Many candidates responded to these cues, usually focusing on specific parts of the description for still life arrangements, character portrayal, a market or a café. Particular places were well researched and interesting local characters, ranging from youthful to elderly, were adopted to play the part of Karim, the stallholder. One very successful Photography submission developed a storyboard sequence to record events throughout the day. Some less able work, however, was based on a few barely adequate drawings of fish or vegetables, with little attempt to investigate the market context.

## Section C

### *Specific design briefs*

### Question 12

The design for the cover of a menu for a coffee shop and bakery named *CITADEL* attracted the most responses in this section. The better designs offered a synthesis between lettering and images by using overlapping and superimposition on the forms of pots, cups, cakes and pastries. Some approaches involved very thorough studies of the objects in the preparatory work but then neglected to translate the information into graphic communication through simplification, selection or refinement. One interesting submission made good use of printmaking by reproducing images of coffee beans on sackcloth. Concern for borders, highlighting of letterforms, selection and control of colour, tone and papers with interesting surface qualities all contributed to effective outcomes in the better designs. Most candidates researched well for appropriate lettering, but in the weaker examples there was a limited ability to render them precisely or relate them to the design as a whole.

### Question 13

The repeat pattern for the wrapping paper of a gift shop, based on observations of jewellery or regional adornments, attracted only a modest number of responses. Many of these were carried out with stencil printing techniques and were usually developed from competent to good preparatory studies. Some stronger patterns showed in the final designs how the wrapping paper could also be used as a promotional gift bag. At mid levels of achievement sufficient information from direct observation was apparent but subsequent experimentation with interlocking shapes across the grids was rarely sustained enough to develop a higher level of success for the examination pieces. Weaker attempts often neglected to select or organise a repeat pattern at all, or were based on the single colours and shapes arranged in rows, with little awareness of figure-ground relationships.

#### Question 14

Many candidates specialising in fashion design chose one of the open-ended questions from **Section A**, such as *Reflections* or *Legacy*; consequently there was only a moderate response to this design brief for two performers in a dance extravaganza based on the theme of metamorphosis. It was disappointing that so few were aware of the potential of the theme in the context of classical Greek or other cultural and ethnic mythologies. Most submissions focused on changes in insect, moth and butterfly growth, some of which were well investigated to inform lively designs. One exceptional response resulted from intricate three-dimensional experiments with nets, fabrics and feathers which were digitally recorded to manipulate further developments for the final designs. Less successful outcomes were inhibited by poor figure drawing skills as well as a lack of interest in the use of media and specifically chosen materials. The weakest examples were based on tracings from magazine images and offered very little else of interest or personal investigation.

#### Question 15

The packaging design brief for a compendium of board games and puzzles, using the trade name *REBUS*, attracted the fewest submissions of the whole question paper. Some good research from items, such as chess pieces was seen, but the ability to adapt and refine these into graphic images incorporating the trade name was often limited. Even computer manipulated designs offered mediocre outcomes fell short of creating eye-catching packaging. Few candidates using box structures showed any interest in the three-dimensional aspects, producing only a single idea for the lid top