

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/01
Controlled Test

General Comments

There was a significant rise in the number of photographic submissions seen this year; with about the same number of submissions for Painting and Related Media.

Entries for **Section A**, *open ended starting points*, were much higher this year with about 60% of candidates choosing questions from this section. **Question 6**, 'Transparent' attracted the greatest number of submissions overall.

Section B, *specific starting points*, attracted about 30% of the total entry, with **Question 9**, 'A figure engaged in a hobby,' proving the most popular, with many of these submissions being photographic. All questions from **Section A** and **Section B** attracted candidates across the whole ability range.

Section C, *working from specific design briefs*, attracted only 10% of the total submissions, although there were some candidates who chose questions from **Sections A** and **B** and produced graphics based work. **Question 12**, 'Nature's Essence Logo' was the most popular question. Nearly all the work from this section was in the mid- to lower level mark range, although there were some very good graphic design submissions from candidates who had responded to **Section A** by writing design briefs from the starting points, demonstrating their personal interpretations of the questions. Digital manipulation was supported by hand drawn imagery reflecting a depth of understanding in the design process.

The question paper offered candidates the opportunity to develop ideas from primary sources using a wide range of media and this was evident from the higher achievers who took full advantage of the preparatory period to make relevant visual and contextual research. However, there were a number of candidates who produced work of a higher standard for their preparatory work than for the Controlled Test itself. A number of factors influenced this such as a change of scale for the examination work from A4 to A1, unresolved compositional aspects which left candidates poorly prepared for the examination, poor discrimination and judgement when selecting work to develop further for the examination, and the use of canvas or board as a ground to work on for the examination when all the preparatory studies had been carried out on paper.

It was telling that the most successful submissions not only included a large element of context/reference, but that the use of this material was intrinsic to the outcome. Mid-range work tended to include a sufficient amount of such preparation but generally failed to inform the creative journey sufficiently. Many candidates chose to use their own photography as an element of preparation and development and this worked well where it was seen as an opportunity for experimentation or to play with viewpoint or composition. Photography was also used by some candidates to record the processes of the final examination work, and this was used as the only preparatory work, indicating that these candidates had little understanding of research and development.

Excluding the highest achievers, there was a real sense of reserve and 'playing safe'. Candidates generally seemed to have undertaken some experimental approaches during preparation for the examination but once it came to the Controlled Test itself the work stalled, ending up rather prescriptive and safe. Some very exciting preparatory studies were seen that had huge potential, but were not followed through to the final outcome with as much vigour as hoped.

A very wide range of media and techniques was used, including the traditional Painting and Related Media. Some exceptional and mature painting and drawing in all media was seen which indicated a strong understanding of rendering, colour and tone, composition and viewpoint and texture. Apart from photography and the use of *Photoshop*®, there were some sculpture submissions which used clay, plaster, papier mâché, wire, polystyrene, wood and mixed media, ceramics, collage, printmaking and some very interesting installations that had been recorded through photography.

On the whole the photographic submissions were generally weaker and lacked knowledge of research and development of ideas. There were some exceptions where candidates displayed a good understanding of their chosen topic, exploring different viewpoints and compositions through a number of photo shoots. Coupled with well observed paintings and drawings, these candidates were able to make sound judgements on the choice of the final outcome. The use of established contemporary or historical photographers was often a catalyst for ideas which was pursued through the preparatory studies.

It is very clear that a large proportion of candidates, particularly those pursuing Photography, are unclear how to research their topic, what is relevant, and how to develop their ideas in a personal way, which would greatly enhance submissions in future years. A greater understanding of the assessment criteria and what these mean in the context of the preparatory period prior to the examination, and the examination itself would benefit all candidates regardless of their choice of media.

Research is about the gathering of information in response to a chosen topic and requires time, curiosity, involvement and a passionate interest in the chosen subject. It also requires lateral thinking, so that the information gathered encompasses a range of options for possible further development.

Development concerns making judgements about the research, editing ideas that do not engage so much or have little content for development, choosing ideas or an idea that have real possibilities, taking risks with experimentation. Candidates should not just limit themselves to *Photoshop*®, but also wet processes, pin hole cameras, photograms and so on. They should be looking at established photographers and artists as a catalyst for their own ideas and influences, annotating why decisions are made rather than making descriptive comments, and highlighting strengths and weaknesses in images.

Thorough and relevant research and development are crucial in the process of making a final outcome. A range of ideas need to be explored before embarking on the development of a final idea, therefore the preparatory period needs to be utilised in a positive way with a number of photo shoots in possibly different locations and under different lighting conditions. Using photos that were taken on holiday the previous year does not meet with the examination requirements as the work produced for this component must be in response to one of the questions on the question paper. Inspirational photos should be sourced from research carried out of established photographers as opposed to simply downloading images from 'shutterstock'. By combining good research and development with relevant images from established photographers and artists, candidates should be able and better equipped to arrive at more personal, in-depth work that indicates their involvement, interests and commitment.

Judgements with regard to the composition and viewpoint, as well as lighting conditions, are often what separates a good photograph from a mediocre one. Many good photographs are also ruined by poor cropping which results in a weak relationship between the subject and the background.

Too many photographs suffered from excessive use of *Photoshop*® the resulting outcome was overloaded with 'effects' at the expense of aesthetics. In many cases, it was as if the candidates were following a prescribed list of effects with little or no understanding of why they were doing this or whether it actually enhanced the photograph.

Most candidates produced preparatory studies, which ranged from the exceptional to the very weak. Some preparatory work at the upper level showed a real engagement with the topic and included strong observational drawings and paintings, the use of personal photographs, relevant research into established artists, experiments with composition and viewpoint, and the use of a range of media, annotation to explain ideas and decisions, and a clear and focused journey to the final examination piece.

Whilst the majority of Centres had fully complied with examination regulations regarding the labelling and packaging of work, there were a number of exceptions where it was not always clear what was the examination work and what was preparatory work. Candidates should be reminded of the need to clearly label their work and to include the question number. Any work produced in oils or acrylic paint must be thoroughly dry before dispatch, as a number of scripts arrived that were firmly stucked together. Centres are reminded that they must not submit broken glass even if it has been taped down, teachers should refer to the *Appendix* in the syllabus for a list of inappropriate media. In this particular case a sheet of acrylic would have been a better option.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1 Overhanging

Work was seen across the whole mark range with the higher achievers exploring more unusual viewpoints and compositions such as worm's eye views of subject matter. Some of the most successful work involved studies of hanging baskets seen from below, or chandeliers with tiny figures suspended from the structure. A study of a washing line seen from below was very strong in terms of composition, handling of media, tone and colour. Most candidates at the upper levels submitted excellent preparatory studies which indicated that initial drawings had been fully developed through changes of scale, thorough exploration of composition and viewpoint, use of a wide range of media and personal photography. All of which resulted in very personal interpretations.

In the mid-range, balconies based on traditional local architecture were a popular interpretation but the use of two-point perspective was not always fully understood. Some candidates had used objects suspended from hooks or tree branches, but few developed the potential for dramatic viewpoints that this question offered. There was also a fantasy element within some of the submissions, where candidates had shown influences from Surrealism and based their ideas on dreams and nightmares.

Lower range work tended to rely on imaginative ideas such as the fear generated by certain animals, a human puppet and figures hanging from the gallows. Much of the preparatory work at this level was weaker, although some candidates had attempted some observational studies from hands and figures but these often lacked form and dexterity in the handling of media.

Photographic submissions ranged from clouds, chandeliers, the American flag, swans, ceramic turtles and a girl on a swing. A greater awareness of composition and viewpoint would have improved much of the work, as would more engagement and curiosity with the subject matter. Preparatory work was generally thin and often did not inform the final work. All the submissions were formulaic and would have benefited from more research, development and personal qualities.

Question 2 Aftermath

Work submitted for this question was quite evenly distributed across the whole of the mark range, with a very broad range of interpretations. Ideas such as the holocaust, domestic violence, and the remains of a meal, equipment that has not been cleared-up, floods and earthquakes, alcoholism, car crashes, the effects of modernisation on traditional living, wars and auto-destruction were seen. A wide range of media and techniques were used by candidates including video, photography, sculpture, collage; as well as paint, pastel, crayon and pencil.

The very best candidates displayed mature concepts and in some cases an excellent expertise in the handling of media. Preparatory work indicated a willingness to experiment with composition and viewpoint as well as media; and many very good observational studies were seen. Occasionally, the final examination work did not reach the standard of the preparatory studies, mainly due to unresolved problems with composition. In some cases the candidate simply could not manage a change in scale causing unforeseen problems which could have been resolved during the preparatory period.

Many candidates at the mid and lower levels did not demonstrate where their ideas came from and subsequently there was little evidence of any development of ideas. They also tended to stay with one medium rather than explore and experiment with a range of media. Second hand source material was evident as a starting point for ideas, with few candidates drawing from direct observation.

Photography submissions were variable with a high achieving candidate photographing two figures in a bath after a party. The work was well documented, clearly showing the processes used. Photographic interpretations which were produced using *Photoshop*® included exploding buildings, car accidents, ghostly figures, corrosion, abandoned factories, cigarette smoke morphing into a skull, and a time lapse diptych of an exploding balloon. There were many innovative ideas that were not supported by relevant research and development, and some good photographs were often ruined by the over application of *Photoshop*® effects, or poor cropping.

Question 3 Time-Honoured

Work with strong personal qualities was characteristic of submissions for this question. Respect for elderly relatives from a range of cultures was popular, as well as aspects of different cultures displayed through artifacts such as jewellery or pottery. Some excellent observational drawings and paintings of elderly people were seen, supported by personal photographs in which lighting played a significant role. An unusual installation was seen of a table arranged with broken bowls that signified the break up of the candidate's culture. This was submitted as a group of personal photographs, supported by very strong contextual references.

There were also some strong ideas in the mid-levels, particularly in the preparatory studies, although often, the final examination work did not reach the same standard. There was an interesting study of ancient architecture related to Cubism, and a study of tree roots and vines which morphed into figures.

Much of the lower level work came from photography submissions which were poorly researched, with many candidates simply taking the first idea that came to them without applying any lateral thought. A montage of several figures was submitted without any reference to David Hockney's 'joiner' photographs, and a photo of Mickey Mouse was seen against a background of running paint, again with no references to Morris Louis. A popular subject was war cemeteries and memorial days; sadly candidates did not take full advantage of different viewpoints or compositions, or consider weather conditions and lighting. Much of the photographic work seen at this level was very prescriptive.

Question 4 Horizon

This question produced some very innovative outcomes, among which was an installation piece where filmed and photographic views of landscapes were presented on split screens in a dark room and photographed. Another candidate produced an unusual four figure fold-out relief supported by strong developmental studies using collage, paint and ink. A graphics submission was a package for postcards, combining photographs, drawings and digital manipulation. There was also a work which employed an array of luminous colour, using pointillist techniques in a way which was reminiscent of Chris Offili.

At the mid-levels, one candidate produced a comic, the land upon the horizon, using manga drawings which were derivative but well drawn, combined with digital preparatory studies. Some striking, if rather predictable colour studies were seen, some of which took a more abstracted route. Although these did not always work, they were strong on personal qualities.

At the lower levels, there were many photographic submissions where candidates resorted to using a horizontal line seen in a flat landscape or sea, sometimes including a boat or a jetty, but rarely a figure. Photo shoots were scant and sometimes references were made to photos taken on holiday during the previous year. Some candidates made reference to 'the rule of thirds' in their preparation without understanding the meaning of this rule. Many candidates used *Photoshop*® on their examination work which made some images unrealistic and garish. Many candidates needed to consider research and the development of ideas linked to established photographers.

Question 5 Arrival or Departure

A wide diversity of subjects were seen from figurative studies of commuters at transport hubs, objects on the shore, abstracted designs based on transport signs, weddings, birth, leaving home and funerals. Responses came from across the entire mark range. There were some emotive and expressive paintings, notably of a departure on a railway platform which expressed mood and atmosphere through effective use of colour and a portrait profile of an elderly woman watching her daughter depart.

There were a large number of photographic submissions in the mid- to lower-levels. An imaginative Surrealistic response of doors on a beach was seen, although not supported by any references to Magritte or De Chirico. Many candidates had taken time to stage shoots, often using props such as clothes and suitcases, and had also considered locations. There was evidence of well composed photographs in the contact prints but these were mostly overlooked and a less successful photograph was selected and subjected to over manipulation in *Photoshop*®. A good black and white photo of a figure entering Grand Central Station appeared to be the result of several photo shoots but was in fact partially created from down loaded imagery.

Question 6 Transparent

This question proved to be the most popular; candidates were obviously stretched and the topic stimulated some exceptional outcomes which were full of interpretations from the mystical and psychological to the literal. Some very personal experimentation was seen, both in the preparatory and examination work especially at the upper levels. One particular outstanding submission stood out; a face pressed and distorted against the glass wall of a shower with areas of glass fogged by steam and droplets of water. A compositionally strong and precise painting of fish in a bowl was also seen, clearly influenced by Georgia O'Keefe. It was supported by some excellent preparatory work in which the candidate had experimented with a wide variety of media. One candidate had used this question to produce a poster for a Museum of Glass, and although the work was thorough and well researched, a lack of understanding regarding 'kerning' (the adjustment of spaces between letters to achieve a visually pleasing result) had prevented the candidate achieving their full potential.

A good photographic submission was seen which experimented with transparent objects such as ice and glass or muslin and jewellery, with the preparatory work containing several photo shoots and some good editing and judgement. On the whole, the majority of photographic work was in the mid- to lower-range. Several candidates produced very similar images of flowers and grass seen through spectacle lenses. Bubbles were also popular with *Photoshop*® images seen in the bubbles against various backgrounds. At the lower level, experiments with glow sticks and open shutter photography were seen and an underwater shot of a diver which had been heavily manipulated. In both these cases the candidates would have benefited from a range of photo shoots and some contextual references.

Section B

Question 7 Plant pots seen on a windowsill

The most successful work achieved a unity between the background and the subject matter by means of cast shadows and reflected colour shown on adjacent surfaces. Whilst most candidates composed the objects by using spatial overlap, some realised that they could link objects by carefully recording cast shadows. An understanding of the effect of light sources on objects was an important aspect of the work in the upper mark range.

Some beautiful painterly results were seen where the influences of established artists such as Van Gogh, Bonnard, the Scottish Colourists and Matisse were evident. Pictorial space was explored through unusual viewpoints from below and from oblique angles.

An unusual and innovative response came from a candidate who produced a relief using card and acetate, combining these materials with painted and drawn images. Some excellent preparatory work with a high degree of experimentation with a range of media and materials supported the final outcome. There were also some beautifully observed analytical studies from other candidates using crayon and watercolour, and a delightful illustration which emphasised shape, pattern and stylisation.

Responses to this question generally revealed a disparity between preparatory studies and the examination work. The majority of candidates explored a good range of approaches and media use in their preparatory work, but seemed to retreat to a safer, more traditional way of tackling the final outcome. Candidates in the mid-level mark range understood the basics of construction of ellipses but had not fully mastered the technique. Typically candidates in this mark range did not understand the possibilities of exploring exciting viewpoints or the possibilities of experimentation with the compositional elements.

In the lower mark range, candidates tended to record individual objects such as single pots or flower heads, and the ability to see the still-life group as a whole was lacking. The handling of media, particularly paint, was flat and primary, and lacked form and subtlety.

Many of the photographic submissions were in the lower mark range due to candidates' inability to see the benefit of altering the viewpoint during the photo shoots. Some candidates only took photos of two pots; however one candidate did improve a rather pedestrian photograph through *Photoshop*® manipulation.

Question 8 Sportswear and Equipment

Although this was not a popular question, it did yield some very good examples where fishing equipment, including hooks, rods and lures were arranged over tanks of water. One unusual interpretation was a Klimt-like use of pattern and colour in an abstracted composition. Work at the upper levels explored complex compositions with an understanding of form, space and overlap, and successfully placed the objects in context.

There were some examples of good media experimentation at the mid level, and playing with composition and viewpoint, which were not followed through to the final works, resulting in a lack of context and fragmented compositions, but the preparatory studies indicated personal qualities.

Work at the lower levels consisted of very basic compositions and although a real effort was made to understand form, the handling of media was invariably clumsy. Preparatory work indicated that many candidates did not understand the importance of setting up a still-life group, and exploring different viewpoints and compositions.

Photographic submissions seen here were generally weak, although one candidate had made several photo shoots on a tennis court and considered the importance of context, viewpoint, lighting and weather conditions.

Question 9 A Figure engaged in a hobby or leisure activity

This was the most popular question in **Section B** due to a large number of photographic responses from one particular Centre.

This question produced some lively and personal submissions at the upper level including an androgynous figure smoking a pipe which was supported by an interesting range of personal photographs. A powerful and low viewpoint of a roller-skating figure which explored foreshortening and dynamic qualities successfully was seen, although the placing of the figure in context was unrelated. The strongest work demonstrated sensitivity in the use of media, an understanding of form and an ability to experiment with composition and viewpoint, all of which was thoroughly explored in the preparatory studies.

There was some technically sound work at the mid level, mostly copied from secondary sources; however some candidates managed to make a personal interpretation. Some candidates also submitted preparatory studies of finished figure drawings and paintings that were unrelated to the question.

Direct copies from the Internet or magazines of pop stars or sports celebrities were often the subject matter of the lower level candidates. This gave no opportunities for exploring different viewpoints or compositions.

A range of subject matter was seen from the photographic entries such as skateboarding, football, baseball, surfing and swimming. The aesthetics of some good photographs was not improved by over manipulation in *Photoshop*® and poor cropping. One submission at the lower level showed a hand drawing a cat which did not fulfill the demands of the question. Many candidates would have benefited from researching the wealth of images from established and historical photographers as a catalyst for ideas.

Question 10 A River bank or estuary

The Highest achieving candidates were more aware of the traditions of landscape painting and its sub-genre of river painting, as seen in their preparatory studies. Candidates attempted to communicate something of the atmosphere of the river bank as well as successfully integrating occasional figures within the composition. There were some excellent small scale preparatory studies which explored a variety of media, which became fragmented once scaled up. A successful outcome based on the entangled structures of mangrove trees created a highly textured and sinister atmosphere.

Candidates at the mid level experienced problems with distortions and reflections along the riverbank together with contrasts in tone between the objects and their reflections.

Submissions at the lower level were markedly naïve in character and generally full of vivid primary colour which did not relate to the subject matter. Many of the photographic entries were not improved by the over manipulation of *Photoshop*®, which created garish colours and effects.

Question 11 'Walking through the extensive palace gardens, containing trees, flowers, paths and statues.....'

Although this was the least popular option in **Section B** it yielded some well developed outcomes particularly in the upper levels of response. A submission based on Japanese manga showed solid draughtsmanship and an adventurous use of black and white, together with some excellent annotation which showed a perceptive journey. Another submission based on the work of Anthony Green, but by no means a pastiche, was a very personal interpretation of an evocative walk through a park. There was a high degree of observational and manipulative skill shown which ranged from a strong awareness of colour and tonality to a good understanding of the figure and portraiture.

Photographs in the mid-range included a forest walk in which textures played a key role, and a child suspended from a tree branch which used basic *Photoshop*® skills.

Section C

Question 12 Nature's Essence logo

The very best candidates were capable of designing strong images and could demonstrate how these could be successfully applied to bottles and boxes. They also developed these into adverts using digital technology. The most successful had also carried out thorough research into what makes a successful design for a perfume bottle in terms of catching the eye of a potential examiner. Many candidates at this level combined strong observational drawing and the use of *Photoshop*® throughout their preparatory studies. One very successful design combined traditional letter forms from European and Eastern cultures into a unified logo.

Some candidates reproduced their CAAD designs and then tried to replicate these using paint. In these cases, they would have benefited from experimenting with *Photoshop*® in a freer way to develop their ideas.

The main concern for candidates responding to this question was the successful development of a font/text for the logo. All too often there was limited exploration of possible alternatives and those that were developed did not fully utilise any of the well tried tools or approaches for this. An awareness of tram lines, kerning and other basic elements of text would have been an advantage.

At the lower levels of achievement, very little original work was seen. Bottles of fragrance were copied from secondary photos, mainly in black and white, or stylised leaves were lifted from the Internet. Preparatory studies were thin with a lack of understanding of the design processes.

Question 13 Ocean's Edge

Some very sophisticated and professional outcomes were produced, although some preparatory work contained too many secondary images and there was a lack of personal endeavour in setting up photo shoots.

Photography and *Photoshop*® design were the principal elements in these responses and while some of the work was relatively strong and fit for purpose at the mid level, there was a lack of professional finish that such an outcome requires. However one candidate produced a pleasing design in which the curves of the text related well to the natural curves of grasses in the image.

Some candidates suffered from resolving their final responses far too rapidly and conclusively so that any experimentation that may have taken place was limited to the elements already chosen.

Question 14 Banner for an historic building

There were very few submissions for this question although there were some very professionally produced large outcomes. The best work was well composed and balanced image and text, and was supported by some strong personal photos, attempts at different layouts, and experiments with a range of fonts. The candidate had also made extensive background research into Gandhi's house, the subject for the banner.

At the mid level candidates had again produced some good preparatory studies, but the final outcomes were unbalanced and in some cases the text was too small or bunched together.

Some candidates at the lower level produced a lot of preparatory work which consisted of numerous photos cut from magazines and showed no direction towards the final design. A photographic submission for a London museum consisted of an aerial view with the text applied to the top and bottom of the image, without any evidence of exploring layout design.

Question 15 Costume design for The Bestiary

There was some very successful fashion drawing in many of the candidates' work at all levels. The stronger submissions went well beyond the obvious and were very inventive in the way that they incorporated parts of animals, birds and insects into their designs. Surprisingly, invented creatures were rarely seen.

One outstanding entry where the candidate had experimented with materials and media with tremendous verve and vitality, resulted in a dynamic presentation of two figures in costumes derived from insect studies, using pencil, ink, crayon, pipe cleaners and translucent materials.

Many candidates in the upper range were able to show the form and fit of their costumes from several angles. Swatches of fabric were provided to show the materials that would be used in the finished garments. There was an emphasis on observational drawing from real creatures, which concentrated on texture, pattern, colour and form.

Candidates at the mid level did not always provide sufficient evidence of initial research nor show how the costumes had evolved during the preparatory period, although their fashion drawing was generally satisfactory.

The lower level candidates could have produced more preparatory work based on observational drawing rather than secondary photos from magazines. Many produced only frontal designs which showed figures with a poor sense of proportion or which appeared to have been traced from equally poor illustrations.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/02
Coursework A

General comments

Painting and Related Media was the most popular area of study, followed by Photography and Graphic Design. Fewer numbers of candidates were entered for 3D Design and Fashion and Textile Design.

The range, ambition and quality of the best submissions were impressive. It was clear that there were some well structured courses which had encouraged candidates to develop their own ideas and techniques within a critical context, whilst also reinforcing the practice of sound drawing and craft skills. Work at this level was always informed by a commitment to first hand observation, particularly drawing using a range of media, although the candidates' own photography is increasingly being used to gather visual information. The most successful had used the camera to thoroughly explore their subject using different viewpoints, changes of scale, revisiting and recording under different lighting or weather conditions. The evidence was presented as thumbnail contact prints. Exposure to the work of artists, designers or other cultures was also seen as an important part of many investigations in the search for ideas. There was evidence of visits to museums and galleries, and in some cases contact made with artists and craftspeople.

Less successful submissions often took the form of a range of unrelated finished pieces, either copied from the work of other artists or from other secondary sources. Materials and processes had not been explored fully and although some work did display a good level of technical competence, the imagery was derivative and limited opportunities for candidates to show individuality or originality.

The standard of organisation and presentation was generally very good. Preparatory studies had in many cases been carefully selected, arranged and well stuck down. Any notation was short, relevant and demonstrated the candidates' thought processes and provided evidence of evaluative skills and critical thinking. Labelling was clear and all sheets had been securely attached at the top left corner.

Unfortunately, there was still a great deal of submissions that did not comply with the syllabus instructions regarding presentation. Folders contained many pieces of un-mounted work in no logical order and it was difficult to distinguish between final outcomes and relevant supporting studies. In many cases only a few pieces of unrelated finished works were submitted with little evidence that candidates had pursued a specialist course of study to any great depth.

Many candidates included biographical information about artists with reproductions of work as part of their supporting material, but in many instances these were disconnected from the candidates' own work and understanding, and could not be rewarded. Likewise there was a trend for elaborate decoration of mounted sheets which often distracted from the content. Title pages embellished with poor lettering and heavy decoration were frequently seen and must have taken a great deal of time to produce. This time would have been much better spent in producing work relevant to chosen themes as none of this adornment could be credited against any of the Assessment Objectives.

Teacher assessments were very varied. Most demonstrated a good understanding of the Assessment Criteria. The syllabus guidelines on what evidence is expected at various mark levels had been consulted and used in placing their candidates in merit order. There were many cases of Centres using the full mark range with the best being marked at 100 and the weakest being marked too harshly. Other Centres had over marked in the domains of Personal Qualities and Knowledge and Critical Understanding; especially when the work was highly derivative and where there were little cultural references or of the work of other artists.

Comments on Areas of Study

Painting and Related Media

A wide variety of topics and approaches were seen.

Subject matter focusing on aspects of the self-portrait was very common, as were figure studies. Still-life was also a popular choice along with local architectural features as well as landscapes. The majority of candidates choosing these topics provided evidence of first hand research.

There were many themes based around issues such as aspects of the human condition; poverty, famine, pollution, war and conflict. Others had chosen more abstract concepts. These were only really successfully resolved by the more able candidates who were able to combine both first hand studies with relative secondary sourced imagery into something highly personal through their use of media. Images were combined from several sources through digital manipulation and collage and drawn or painted into. Colour was used to create mood and atmosphere and the application of paint was applied expressively to add to the overall aesthetic quality.

Photography was used by many to collect visual information and to record still-life arrangements from different viewpoints and light sources. It was also used very effectively by those basing work around the figure.

Mid range submissions were still experimental but candidates tended to regard finish and technique to be of more importance than a series of sheets of visual investigation and exploration.

The least successful candidates did not produce the quantity or quality of work expected at this level. There was a tendency to work from small scale, poor quality downloaded photographs which contributed to their inability to record details of form and structure effectively. The range of media was very limited and failed to display technical competence and there were few opportunities to show individuality.

Photography

The work presented was mostly digital photography and there was little traditional 'wet' photography so that darkroom techniques were hardly seen.

There were some very good projects where a high level of technical competence was displayed. Images were well composed with consideration given to directional lighting to produce impressive outcomes that were often displayed in highly original ways, such as artist books or as part of installations.

In the work of the most successful candidates there was evidence of a number of photo shoots shown within contact sheets. There were many others that failed in this respect which severely limited their choices and did not show progression or learning.

There were a great many submissions seen that followed a very similar formulaic approach; taking an image from stock material on the Internet as a model to replicate. Whilst this may be a good method to learn something of digital manipulation it only offers a very narrow approach. Candidates also need to experience using a camera as a research tool in discovering visual material from in-depth research of their own chosen subjects. They should also be encouraged to research the work of important photographers as well as respected artists who have used photography. Digital manipulation should be only part of the process of exploration and development. Good quality shots do not necessarily need to be digitally enhanced.

There were a few examples of video and animation where some candidates had chosen serious subject matter which they approached with an emotional maturity, conveying complex ideas well. Production values were lacking in some work but ideas were original and thought provoking. In other entries research and support work was not very thorough and the film or animation needed to be supported visually rather than with long written essays.

Graphic Design

Examples of logos, book jackets, posters, menu cards, advertisements and some illustrated books and magazines were submitted.

While there were a few technically impressive submissions it was rare to see evidence of candidates making design decisions that were informed by an understanding of target audiences and the work of other designers.

In many submissions the starting point was not obvious and only a single idea had been used. There seemed to be an over reliance on *Corel Draw* and *Photoshop®* with little evidence of candidates incorporating their own drawings into projects.

There was some very weak work seen, in these cases there was very little consideration given to layout and the relationship between text and image. There were many submissions that had included too many reference sheets which were just scraps that had been included to 'pad out' the portfolio.

Fashion and Textile Design

Fashion submissions were more predominant than textile work.

The quality of the work was quite varied. Some candidates produced excellent 'mood boards' where individual themes were explored and developed into sensitive and inventive fashion illustrations. These contained media experiments, references to other designers and fabric swatches. The standard of presentation of their designs was impressive. Many ideas had been developed into made up garments demonstrating competent dressmaking skills. Photographs were included of the garments being worn.

The work of less successful candidates was merely a collage of magazine cut outs. Any ideas generated by the candidates were very limited and consisted of a number of unrelated dress designs which lacked any references to observed starting points. Final outcomes were hand drawn designs copied from one of their previous designs.

The best submissions incorporated excellent 'mood boards' which were developed into exciting and colourful designs for textile work including dyeing, weaving, sewing, embroidery and stencil prints. Local cultural references were very strong.

Some tie and dye examples with inventive ideas were let down by a lack of colour exploration and poor aesthetic qualities.

3D Design

The work of the best candidates was highly original and consisted of a combination of media including digital manipulation as part of installations. Subject matter was highly original and demonstrated excellent research and exploration which was documented at all stages of development. The most successful demonstrated a maturity in evaluation and technical competence. Others were ambitious in intentions but lack of understanding and of practice in the media meant that intentions were not always realised in an aesthetically pleasing manner.

There was some competent modelled figure work with only limited supporting work, although a well modelled head of a friend had been informed by referencing the work of Cindy Sherman.

The work of the less successful candidates was rather more predictable and demonstrated a lack of technical ability and manipulative skills to produce successful outcomes.

Some very weak ceramic work was submitted with no research or investigation and little understanding and no previous experience of the medium.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/03

Coursework B

General comments

The range, ambition and quality of the very best work seen was impressive. Topics had been carefully chosen to allow for in-depth research which remained focused and was developed into very personal and ambitious finished outcomes. Success was achieved by building on skills developed from Paper 2 and by practising every element of the final outcome leaving nothing to chance. Candidates' own ideas and techniques were also informed by selective study of appropriate artists, designers or cultural references.

Unfortunately, in many cases there was little evidence that candidates had been introduced to the work of any practising artists in order to inform their own ideas. This was particularly apparent in the work of weaker candidates where submissions lacked purpose or focus, amounting to little more than a collection of random drawings and paintings, many copied from undeclared sources rather than a whole and cohesive project.

Understanding the effective use of sketchbooks was very variable. Where practice was at its best, sketchbooks were fully integrated into a candidate's course of study and were seen as working documents that had evolved as projects developed. The very best sketchbooks clearly demonstrated a candidate's critical thinking and understanding through a wealth of experimentation, annotation and exploration of possibilities at each stage of development. They showed that a candidate had an interest in the subject beyond the chosen project.

There were far too many sketchbooks seen that had limited relevance to the development of projects and did little to inform the candidate's thinking. In some cases sketchbooks amounted to little more than a random collection of half finished drawings or images cut out of magazines or simply downloaded from the Internet. Some books were made up from earlier works which were simply stapled together.

There were a small number of Centres that need to be mindful that folders should not exceed the maximum number of mounted sheets allowed. However, the majority of Centres were well presented and were within the maximum number of sheets. Large scale work was well photographed including close-ups and reference points that made the scale clear and assisted the moderation process.

When candidates use digital manipulation it is essential that a full record of their own experiments, draft compositions and evaluations are presented as evidence of the creative process undertaken rather than just the final outcome. This is particularly important when manipulations are the principal creative method employed. This was an issue with some graphics presentations seen this session.

In all areas of study resource materials need to be credited or labelled to distinguish what is and what is not the candidate's own work. This is particularly relevant when photographic or digital resources were used.

Comments on Areas of Study

Painting and Related Media

Themes were quite varied including landscape, architecture and still-life, but the most popular seemed to revolve around the figure or portrait. There were some successful topics focusing on 'Identity' which gave candidates the opportunity to be quite creative in their approach.

The work of the best candidates displayed a high level of commitment to the subject. Submissions were thorough and showed in-depth research and sustained development and refinement towards a finished outcome. These were often large scale paintings or mixed media works, well documented with photographs. However, there were some large mural entries executed by candidates who had not had enough experience of working to such a large scale and had not successfully planned the details of their compositions.

The media used in this component was varied. There were many instances where watercolour had been used sensitively with a high degree of skill and control of colour. Acrylics were used well when colour and form were understood and exploited but weaker candidates tended to use it to produce simpler flat or decorative work. Relatively few candidates used oil paints; those that did encouraged more sophisticated techniques that were well informed by studies of other artists' techniques.

Mid level submissions showed a high level of technical ability with a good range of materials but consisted of finished pieces generally copied from second hand sources. Final outcomes were lacking in the personal qualities seen in the better work.

Weaker work lacked development of ideas sufficiently and sketchbooks were barely used. Submissions consisted of unrelated studies displaying very poor levels of technical ability.

Photography

Submissions were predominately digital photography. The best had used the camera creatively to record their subject in a highly personal manner. Exploration was inventive and experimental but in a controlled manner, always reflecting the candidates' intentions. Images selected for final presentation demonstrated professional levels of aesthetic awareness. These candidates had researched relevant artists which helped them with ideas and execution.

Less successful candidates had good ideas but did not have the technical ability to carry them through to successful outcomes. The work was rather predictable.

There were a number of submissions where the final piece was supported with a minimal amount of visual material. These were usually printouts captured from the computer screen detailing stages in manipulation in the development of the finished print. Evidence of investigating the subject with contact prints of photo-shoots was completely missing. Instead these candidates had produced long written notes detailing what their intentions were and how they had gone about it. Written work should only be used to support visual material and marks cannot be credited without the visual evidence of research, investigation and exploration.

Graphic Design

There were only a few successful submissions in this area. These demonstrated a sound knowledge of working to a realistic design brief whilst still approaching the chosen projects in a highly creative manner. References to the best in contemporary Graphic Design had informed their work. Candidates displayed a good level of technical competence with the manipulation of text and image and the composition of their final pieces showed good aesthetic judgement.

The many weaker submissions of logos, book jackets, publicity material and advertisements had very little evidence of original starting points or research for these designs. There were few experiments with different fonts, scale, layouts or colour-ways but many scrapbook sheets referencing magazine and newspaper advertisements.

Fashion and Textile Design

The Fashion submissions showed an engagement with the subject and a particular feature was the quality of sketchbook material, where ideas and concepts had been thoroughly researched whilst referencing the work of other designers and cultural or historical sources. Colour, texture and form had been explored resulting in innovative designs which were often extended to completed garments.

Other candidates expressed enthusiasm for the subject; however the scope of reference for their projects was limited. The lack of in-depth exploration or contextual references restricted experimentation and the development of the candidates' own ideas. Garment forms and material treatments were predictable and limited in their invention.

Some weaker candidates merely produced a range of hand drawn fashion designs which demonstrated only basic levels of creativity or originality.

There were very few submissions for any Textile work. Some embroidered batik work, a tie and dyed sari and some woven examples were seen. Whilst there was some competent supporting work, which included lively and informative sketchbooks, technical skills were clumsy showing a lack of understanding the range of possibilities of the media or of sufficient practice in using such processes.

3D Design

Of the few entries received for this area the most successful were more conceptual installations based on figures, migrant workers, rich and poor, beauty and fashion. Various 3D elements were combined demonstrating excellent making skills and high level of aesthetic awareness. They were very well documented and presented as photographs.

Other submissions had worked in a variety of media and although some were ambitious in scale they were lacking in high levels of technical ability.

A few weak ceramic pieces were submitted without any supporting work.

ART AND DESIGN

<p>Paper 9704/04 Personal Study</p>

The very best work seen was extremely well focused, with candidates choosing to deal with very specific topics, and understanding the need for analysis rather than simple description. In these particular cases the chosen topic was then appropriately placed in a broader context, perhaps through comparison with other works, another artist or designer, or by looking at artists or events which had influenced their original subject. It was very refreshing to see candidates from all over the world dealing with contemporary topics with which they could identify, for instance: 'Street Art', 'Ethics in Photo-Journalism', and 'Identity'.

It was also very good to see that individual candidates dealt with issues relating to their own countries and environments, for instance, *Printed Textiles in Uganda*, *Graphic Design in Pakistan*, and *Contemporary painting in China*. In some cases, these did not always explore the critical aspects as fully as they might but it was good to see that candidates are asking questions rather than simply describing the practice.

However, examiners reported seeing a significant number of submissions which were concerned wholly or mostly with analyses of the candidates' own coursework and the processes employed, with little or no reference to the work of others. Additionally there were also a small number of submissions which concerned themselves with entirely inappropriate topics with no references to any works of art or design at all, including aspects of tourism, green issues and political themes.

Centres are reminded that candidates should produce a detailed study of any aspect of the visual arts. This should be a critical and visual appraisal or theoretical study undertaken in a written or practical form. Examples of appropriate topics are listed in the syllabus; alternatively teachers can use the online discussion group to seek initial guidance about what is appropriate. All candidates should be submitting an Outline Proposal Form **before** they start work on the study, and certainly by 31 October of the year before the examination.

There were also several examples where candidates chose to compare newly emerging Eastern art forms with those of the West. These showed both confidence and pride in their own achievements and included examples such as *The Use of Christian symbolism in Mughal Miniatures*, *Developments in African Painting*, *Furniture from China and the West*, *The Burkha in Fashion* and *Sufi Posters*.

Design has a tendency to be under represented, whether because of the anonymity of designers, or a lack of source material, so it was good to see some good representation within this area. Particularly strong examples tended to be well located within a cultural context, for instance *Allegory in Children's Books* (which explored African animal fables), *The development of the Khussa*, *Truck Art*, and *A comparison between Buildings of the Raj and a Mosque*.

Mainstream design was also included and these candidates understood the need for rigorous analysis of the actual design – *Environmentally-friendly Buildings* was a particularly good example which had been studied within both local and global contexts and, surprisingly, *The Design of Lighting in a Shopping Mall* was incredibly thorough in its analysis of light and space within an architectural context.

Unfortunately too many of the weaker presentations tended to over emphasise other aspects associated with design, for instance branding and marketing. Topics that appeared within this category included a comparison between two different brands of soap, commercial merits of a local shopping precinct, and advertising strategies of different music channels.

Some of the least successful work seen was from candidates who worked to a formula of what they thought a Personal Study should contain. Supplementing a popular and well written account of Art History - Impressionism or Surrealism for instance – with accounts of a local artist who rarely had a significant connection to the original area was not adequate. However, there were also some excellent Studies growing from such sources which were very well written, and with much personal comment from the candidate.

In many Centres, candidates had been encouraged to interview a local artist, and whilst these can be very good, some were less so, making it difficult for the candidate to personalise their research in any meaningful way. It is also difficult to take an objective view of the work, development and influences of an untrained artist, particularly if that person is a family member.

The demands of an academic study are sometimes confused with the desire to talk about hobbies or personal interests – were candidates' decision to study either fashion or fashion photography was simply an opportunity to produce photographs of themselves or their friends, which did not extend the research aspects of their investigation. First-hand research and an informed opinion are essential to substantiate any claims.

The presentation of studies varied enormously, ranging from A4 illustrated texts, to very large practical investigations. The use of various software packages is now firmly embedded and there were some excellent examples where the design of the actual study was outstanding – *Ethics in Photo-Journalism* which was presented as a small format book, and *Documentary Photography* which was presented as a facsimile of a newspaper, both of which could not have been achieved without appropriate technology.

All candidates using images which have been downloaded from the Internet should supply captions to the actual image - it is not acceptable to simply give the address as *Google*. Equally, those who relied heavily on secondary source material (from *Wikipedia* or other open sources) should be advised that such plagiarism could result in expulsion.

Some Centres traditionally encourage candidates to produce very physical investigations in which the visual analysis is very strong, through transcriptions, copies and annotations - and this certainly helps the candidate to understand the works they are analysing. Topics such as *Photo-realism*, *Equine Art* and *Stuckism* benefited from this approach.

Conversely, some presentations became over complicated, with instructions to '*lift*', '*pull*' and '*open*' on every page. Whilst some of these were appropriate to the layout and did enhance the text, too many were badly glued and became an intrusion to the clarity of communication. Overlaying images with writing on acetate becomes extremely difficult to read or, in some cases, rubbed off. Equally, the burning of the edges of pages, or the use of glitter, needs to be justified within the overall topic.

It is good to see that nearly all studies included a Bibliography, but candidates should, at this level, give full details of materials taken from the Internet *Google* or *Wikipedia* is not sufficient.

A number of submissions were presented on DVDs, CDs and Memory Sticks and this is entirely acceptable, but Centres are requested to also include a printed version.