

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/01
Controlled Test

General Comments

The most popular areas are Painting and Related Media and Photography, Digital and Lens Media.

Painting and Related Media

Painting and related media submissions were similar in number to last year.

The question paper offered all candidates the opportunity to research and develop ideas from *primary* sources irrespective of which section they chose. A small number of candidates opted for developing their own design briefs from questions in **Section A** or **B**, and some candidates specialising in photography chose to produce work from **Section C**.

The candidates who achieved at the higher levels used the preparatory period in a positive way to produce research and developmental work based on primary sources using observational drawing and personal photographs as well as contextual references from other established artists or knowledge of different cultures. These candidates also had mature and personal concepts, a thorough grounding in formal elements and were able to use a variety of media with confidence and dexterity. They were able to annotate and evaluate their work in a meaningful and self-critical way which informed their final outcomes to make the right choices regarding media and techniques.

Some candidates achieved all the above throughout their preparatory studies but did not reach those expectations in the *Controlled Test* itself, either through making the wrong choices with media, ground, viewpoint, resources or change of scale. References to other artists were not always apposite or useful. Other problems included an over reliance on text, leaving little room for visual development, and a higher proportion of computer based imagery which only demonstrated a basic knowledge and often relied on secondary images. In order to make the use of computer based imagery more successful, candidates should be encouraged to see the computer as '*one of the tools*' available to them rather than the '*only tool*.' Integration of media/mixed media often seems to free up not only the aesthetic aspects of submissions but also appears to support a much more considered approach to concept and context.

Candidates at the mid-level often were unable to realise the expectations of their preparatory work by playing safe in the *Controlled Test*, consequently the final outcomes were either prescriptive or poorer copies of preparatory work which had lost its vigour. The reverse was also true in some cases where candidates had produced much better work for the final outcome by taking risks which outshone the work produced during the preparatory period. Generally, work seen in the mid achievement levels lacked consistency and personal involvement, as well as skill in terms of the handling of the chosen media. One Centre's candidates submitted preparatory and examination work which was all in heavily manipulated coloured pencil. The preparatory work consisted of finished pieces lacking any sense of research or development towards a final outcome and consequently, candidates excluded themselves from a significant range of marks.

At the lower levels, much of the work had little understanding of formal elements and it was apparent that many candidates lacked engagement with the subject matter and had had little practice with the manipulation of materials. Often, only one idea was submitted for the preparatory work which was repeated over and over again and mainly in the same media. Some Teachers had obviously instructed their candidates to choose the same question, so there was no choice! This resulted in many candidates using the same media, as well as following prescriptive directions for their preparatory studies, producing work that lacked any personal qualities and subsequently did not fulfil many of the Assessment Objectives. Some candidates used photography to record the process of producing the examination work and submitted this as their preparatory studies. What were these candidates doing during the preparatory period? Taking photographs of a process does not constitute meaningful personal research or the development of ideas.

Many candidates chose painting and drawing and a wide range of media and techniques was seen including acrylic, oil, watercolour, oil and chalk pastel, collage, crayon, ink, marker pens, graphite and pencil. Some exceptional and mature drawing and paintings were seen which contained a strong understanding of rendering, composition, structure, form, perspective, colour, tone and texture. Apart from photography and computer aided imagery, film and video, and animation, there were ceramic and sculpture submissions in clay, plaster and mixed media, printmaking, textiles and a small number of installations recorded through photography.

Photography, Digital and Lens Media

Photographic submissions continued to rise this year by about 40% over the previous year.

Submissions from some very large Centres contributed to the rise in photography this year, but many lacked an understanding of the syllabus requirements and knowledge of research and development. There were some exceptions where candidates displayed a good understanding of their chosen topic, exploring different viewpoints and compositions through a number of different photo shoots in a range of locations, as well as experimenting with different dark room techniques or computer programmes. Candidates at this level also made relevant references to established photographers and artists as a catalyst for their ideas. However, candidates at the lower levels were unaware of genres and art movements that would have informed their work. Pictures used as 'inspirational images' were obtained from image banks which had implicit references to Surrealism, Futurism, Magic Realism and Impressionism but candidates seemed unaware of these links to art movements and wider cultural references. It was clear that there was a shortfall in the level and quality of guidance given to candidates, and in many cases, it was obvious that candidates were following a prescribed method in producing their preparatory work and final outcomes resulting in a lack of personal qualities.

In some instances, the aesthetic quality of the original images was undermined and in the worst cases, destroyed by the need to rush towards the manipulation facilities of programmes such as *Adobe Photoshop*. Aesthetic judgements were lacking in the work of many candidates regarding viewpoint, composition, and lighting, time of day, colour relationships, cropping and relationship of images to background. Very few candidates understood the importance of submitting a range of experimental work using different photographic techniques, or the importance of making a variety of photo shoots as a basis for initial research. Many candidates seemed totally unaware of the rich history of photography and the many famous photographers that could have provided a springboard for ideas. Much of the work at the lower level was digital photography manipulated through *Photoshop*, without any references to manual photography, dark room techniques, photograms or pin-hole cameras. Ideas were often literally copied from image banks although a few candidates managed to combine images successfully to produce a more original outcome.

Administration

Examiners were very grateful that the majority of Centres complied with the examination regulations regarding the labelling and packaging of work, the scale of the work and the materials used by the candidates. However, there are still a small number of Centres who continue to disregard these regulations. The labelling of work is important and must include the question number and title. It should be stuck to the *top right-hand corner* of the work, and the preparatory work should be attached to the examination work in the *top left-hand corner*, with the examination work placed on top. Some submissions continue to be carried out on canvas stretchers or wooden panels, whereas the regulations state that paper should be used. Centres are once more reminded that candidates must not submit broken glass under any circumstances and teachers should refer to the *Appendix* in the syllabus for a list of inappropriate materials. Work must be thoroughly dry before dispatch to avoid scripts being stuck together, and work done in chalk/oil pastel or charcoal should be fixed.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Questions from this section were by far the most popular among candidates particularly those submitting photography. Responses to some questions in this section contained a broader and more explorative use of media with the higher level work demonstrating evidence of confidence and accomplishment in the handling of media and development of ideas. Drawing from primary sources was a key element in the success of many higher level candidates together with some pertinent research into the work of established artists or different cultures.

Question 1: Emergence

This question ranked 4th in popularity and marks were fairly evenly spread across the mark range. Some of the most successful work was personal and was interpreted in the light of spiritual or emotional development or a growing political unrest/autonomy. The research material was drawn from a range of sources and supported by the use of a variety of media in the preparatory studies and examination work. Although technically proficient, some ideas were obvious such as the transition from cocoon to butterfly, birth of animals and birds or the emergence of another character through costume and make-up. Many candidates who achieved marks in the higher levels had realised the value of working initially from direct observation; some strong drawing and painting was seen in their preparatory studies supported in some cases by personal photography.

Ideas in the middle levels tended to be more predictable, particularly with photography submissions and were supported with thin preparatory studies, much obtained from secondary sources. The structure of natural forms was not always closely observed from direct observation having been taken from poor quality secondary sources, and references to artists or other cultures was either not used or irrelevant. CAAD was used to show the human figure emerging from a wall and road surfaces. The initial research was mostly extremely limited and the interface between the figure and the solid surface was not fully resolved.

At the lower levels, preparatory work was thin and sometimes consisted of photos of the process, or scant line drawings illustrating a lack of commitment based on one idea. Some preparatory work only consisted of cut and paste secondary images with no drawing or painting or development of ideas at all. Amongst the lower level work was a small proportion of 3D submissions all in unfired clay. Some of these pieces had taken an abstracted approach to the question and used flowering or erupted forms. Whilst it was good to see a more individual approach to the interpretation of the question, the lack of skill in execution and almost complete lack of preparatory work held marks back significantly.

Question 2: Façade

This was the 6th most popular question with marks distributed across all levels, although many of the marks awarded in photography were at the lower level. Approaches were both observational and conceptual with inspiration from cultural and ornate architectural façades, to faces, personalities and masks. The most successful submissions drew inspiration from contextual sources, alongside observational recording, demonstrating a serious and confident analysis of ideas through drawing, painting, mixed media, photography and annotation. Results were mature and sophisticated with a high level of individuality. One photography submission showed a series of images of local buildings in black, white and sepia. These were multi-viewpoint, varied, long and short focus, experimental and well composed in their production. Each image had a clear narrative with links to other photographers researched and evident in the preparatory work.

Many candidates in the middle level had relied on working from observation in their own locality but there were some exceptions where candidates had worked from magazine photographs of buildings. The understanding and rendering of perspective was not understood by some candidates who struggled with a variety of different eye-levels. Much of the work at this level lacked consistency. One Centre had a formulaic approach where candidates focused on the façades of buildings, some from secondary sources. Each submission followed the same pattern of observation, development and final outcome to varying levels, lacking individuality and personal qualities.

At the lower levels there was little evidence of direct observation and drawing skills were of a rudimentary nature, with little understanding of perspective or composition. Photography submissions often relied on a single shoot which did not take into account the time of day or weather conditions. Candidates tended to rely on their first and only idea without any lateral thinking and much of the preparatory work was thin, repetitive and lacking in alternative ideas and contextual research.

Question 3: Juxtaposition

This question ranked 3rd in popularity and was chosen in fairly equal numbers by photographers and those opting for painting and related media, spanning the mark ranges apart from the top and bottom levels. Some approaches were abstracted and often contained much lateral thinking, sometimes to the point of obscurity, particularly at the lower level.

This question was very open ended and candidates responded with a wide range of starting points from politics to fire and ice to portraits. It sometimes produced more interesting compositions in still life rather than the conventional responses to questions in **Section B**. The most successful responses focused on contrasting emotions, moods and personal experiences, demonstrating a mature development of ideas and analysis of concept with a confident manipulation of materials and photographic material.

The principal difference between submissions at the middle level and those at lower level was the approach taken with media; the more successful candidates generally chose to express a sense of 'juxtaposition' through a contrasting use of materials. However, some exciting preparation was often not the catalyst for examination outcomes of a similar standard.

Submissions at the lower range focused on placing two dispirit objects together, often quite randomly without considering the context or what the objects evoked. The preparatory work for these submissions mostly comprised a variety of objects being looked at but the approach to media, viewpoint and composition was invariably fixed. Most photographic work was in the mid to low level and because many candidates acquired 'inspirational' images from image banks, there was very limited evidence of creative thinking, development of ideas and personal qualities, with the examination work simply being a pastiche of a secondary sourced photograph.

Question 4: A moment

This was by far the most popular question on the whole paper, possibly because of its open ended nature, but also because it appealed to photographers (capturing a moment in time). Marks were distributed across the whole mark range with the bulk of marks at the mid to low ranges, particularly with photographic submissions, although there were a few exceptions.

Work at the higher levels showed a strong personal connection to the subject. One candidate had chosen a moment in conversation with her mother which identified the importance of this one comment by her mother, and caught this 'moment very successfully'. It showed a sensitivity to philosophy, humour and pathos which was outstanding. Many ideas were developed from first hand sources which were documented using photography, drawing and annotation. Another high level submission showed a series of overlapping black and white photographs of her family displaying a wide range of movement in the style of Muybridge. This was supplemented by a film which was cropped and carefully edited to be full of short bursts of movement from various angles, at different depths of field. A further submission showed a girl crouched on the floor afraid of what had or might happen next. Many candidates at the higher level utilised their research into other artists and photographers effectively.

Middle range candidates also produced some strong ideas, such as a girl opening a letter from a university offering her a place, and photographs showing a 'split-second' moment of slipping in a shower, or falling out of a window, or down the stairs. Some candidates researched Futurism and showed a fractured approach to imagery suggesting a short section of film. Most candidates at this level had inconsistencies in their preparatory studies and few references to other artists or photographers.

Work in the lowest levels tended to focus on a moment of physical action. Drawing skills were rudimentary, with figures very small, and their placing on the picture plane showed little understanding of composition. Many photographic submissions, particularly from one large Centre, produced obvious responses, with the final image being a manipulation of some thin preparatory work.

Question 5: Pathways

This question was 2nd in popularity with marks distributed mainly between the middle to lower levels although there were some candidates who achieved at the upper level.

Those candidates who worked from their observational drawings and own photographs rather than from stock images obtained from the Internet, generally achieved higher marks. A few candidates opted for painting landscapes where the use of colour, tone and application gave the images and approach a more personal quality. Subject matter varied between concepts of life and death, stages of life, religion, weddings and conventional pathways through woods or to beaches. Many candidates, particularly those submitting photography, interpreted this question very literally, taking shots of pathways in their own localities, nearly all from the same eye level, and relying on photo shop 'effects' to enhance the images, which they were unable to do.

At the upper level, one candidate embarked on a ten mile walk and recorded the major features along the route. These images were combined into a montage which had a rather unresolved composition as a result of inadequate planning. Many of the more successful submissions demonstrated imaginative interpretations with good recording and rendering of materials to produce creative ideas and abstracted illusions. The works of Escher were sometimes a source of inspiration along with Dali and Magritte.

Submissions in the middle achievement range showed a wide variety of starting points; from the literal (paths and roads) to works which dealt with choices. The non-literal pieces generally used some references to human figures which were mostly taken from photos, but the majority of candidates missed an opportunity to imbue their work with a strong personal feel. This weakness came partially from a lack of risk and experiment with media.

Lower level work was limited by a lack of research and an inability to develop ideas away from the literal. Many candidates found the challenges of perspective too difficult and experimentation with a range of media at this level was rare. One candidate copied a painting from another artist which they had found online, and this highlights the problem that some candidates have with their understanding of what research and development of ideas consists of, and the lack of guidance given to candidates about these important parts of the process.

Question 6: Relics

This question ranked 7th in popularity with responses placed across most of the mark range apart from the very highest and lowest.

At the higher level, one candidate recorded the elders from his local community with some very strongly observed drawings and paintings which showed a clear knowledge and execution of media, composition and tone.

In the middle range, some candidates were able to compose a creative response but had little evidence of recording, and then only from a limited source. This restricted their inspiration and the outcomes were more predictable. Other candidates focused on more personal interpretations by taking objects which were significant to them, or choosing to challenge or reinterpret certain cultural assumptions. Some responses were of architectural forms, statues, ceramics and museum artefacts, as well as still life arrangements of personal objects.

This was a popular starting point for the photography submissions where superimposition of images and integration of contrasting forms was seen. Some candidates chose to enhance the form of their objects through lighting effects. The stronger candidates tried to imbue their objects with a sense of history particularly if they were treasured family heirlooms, and this was done digitally using *Photoshop*.

At the lower levels, submissions mostly took the form of still life arrangements focusing on religious objects or earthenware pots. These works suffered from a static, eye-level viewpoint, and there was little experimentation with alternative ideas or media. Preparatory work was generally limited to a preview of the final composition and occasionally a few studies of individual elements of the still life group.

Section B

About 20% of the total entry responded to a question from this Section. Over half these submissions were responses to **Question 7**. Candidates responding to questions within this section had a tendency to experiment less than those responding to **Section A**, both conceptually and regarding use of media. Candidates at the higher levels demonstrated strengths in observational recording and analysis of form supported by clear journeys in their preparatory work, whereas the work at the lower levels lacked an understanding of formal elements.

Question 7: Fruit in a basket on a crumpled tablecloth

This was the 5th most popular question and the favourite choice in **Section B**, with marks spread across the mark range.

The higher level submissions showed a marked confidence with media usage, mainly acrylic, oil or chalk pastel, pencil, ink and crayon, and a degree of personal expression. Many candidates researched established artists such as Cezanne and other Neo-Impressionists. Some candidates took the 'tipped over' element of the question into account and produced some interesting compositions, exploring a sense of

rhythm with good observations of form, tone and colour. Observations of the basket weave, ellipses and folds in the cloth were also competently handled. Preparatory work at this level consisted of experiments with a range of media, different viewpoints and compositions, and personal photographs exploring a variety of lighting, eye levels and arrangements.

The work at the middle level demonstrated less ability to observe and record but did explore a range of media and lively, sometimes expressive work was evident though the grasp of formal elements was less apparent. All the candidates from one particular Centre responded to this question in a formulaic manner producing very similar work which lacked individuality and personal qualities. All the sheets of preparatory work were the same using the same techniques, compositions and viewpoints, but differed in quality.

At the lower level, the submissions reflected weaknesses in observation and recording and the development of ideas lacked any sense of a journey. Many candidates used the same media throughout, and there were few who experimented with composition or different viewpoints. Some candidates worked directly from poor quality photographs which hindered their understanding of form, tone and spatial qualities.

Most of the photography submissions were in the lower achievement level. Having organised a still life arrangement, candidates simply worked from this without realising the benefit of working from alternative arrangements and playing with a range of viewpoints and compositions. There was little evidence of good studio practice using lighting or filters.

Question 8: Television and DVD player on a stand

This was by far the least popular question and it elicited some rather poor responses from candidates who did not understand the rules of perspective and did not utilise the reflective qualities of a television screen.

Much of the research was very limited; however there were a few exceptions. One photographic submission was very innovative and the candidate had furnished a swimming pool by putting all the objects under water and placing a light inside a gutted television. The resulting photos were both eerie and surreal and the candidate had then manipulated the photographs into strips through *Photoshop* to create a very subterranean image. However, there was no explanation of the decisions and choices made or reasons for these choices. Some candidates in the middle range demonstrated competent development of ideas from primary sources and relevant research into other artists.

Question 9: A person trying on clothes for a holiday

This question ranked 8th in popularity and marks spanned the 'very poor' to 'outstanding' ranges. At the upper levels there was much research from direct observation with the aid of some personal photography. Preparatory work consisted of studies of the figure in various attitudes indicating a searching response to the right composition. Some bold and confident work was seen with lively effects from the rendering of media and colour observations of pattern in the clothing. There was accomplishment and sensitivity in close up observation and recording of detail in the figure and in the draping of fabrics. Some candidates related the figure to the background successfully through the use of mirrors and fragments of interiors and also made strong links in their research to established artists such as Degas and Bonnard.

There was still a satisfactory degree of observational skill shown in the middle range, but generally with less subtlety of rhythm in the use of line and less understanding in the proportions of the figure. One candidate produced a short film using stop motion animation demonstrating some ability in the control of light, elements of story boarding with titles, and some humorous content. However, little editing was evident.

At the lower levels, candidates tended to copy photographs which severely limited any experimentation with different viewpoints or composition. Preparatory work was very thin and rudimentary often consisting of hastily done line drawings that showed little understanding of proportion or relationships to background. Much of the photography work was at this level although some candidates attempted to tell a story rather than taking the question too literally. However, it was noticeable that very few photographers researched other artists or photographers.

Question 10: A corner edge of a swimming pool

This question was 11th in popularity and only a few candidates achieved marks at the competent level with most candidates seen at the lowest achievement levels. One candidate demonstrated good understanding of perspective, composition and formal elements within a well-executed painting. There were also links to David Hockney's California series of swimming pool paintings which informed the final outcome.

Photographic evidence also showed a gathering of a wide range of images taken at varying angles and viewpoints.

At the middle level, one candidate produced a flat, graphically influenced work which had potential but did not play to the strengths of this approach. The preparatory work comprised of a few studies of objects but no experiments with the overall composition and viewpoint.

Lower level submissions suffered from a poor understanding of perspective and a lack of development of ideas which was further hampered by weaknesses in the control of media. Photographic submissions showed limited evidence of set dressing with candidates taking photographs of a single arrangement with no experimentation of viewpoints or alternative compositions. A single photo shoot was the limit of experimentation for most candidates.

Question 11: Extract based on a sacred site with gateway

This question was 9th in popularity.

Work seen at the upper levels of achievement demonstrated much personal involvement in the development of ideas which were sensitively rendered, supported by personal photographic research of trees, branches, hands and human forms, superimposed, manipulated and then developed through illustration to make sophisticated results incorporating a variety of media. Candidates who relied on direct observation were successful in creating images that showed the metamorphosis of trees to human figures as well as parts of ancient, crumbling buildings. One candidate built maquettes of people and trees, then took photos of them and finally made paintings from the photographs. This process enabled the candidate to produce some genuinely innovative outcomes.

Middle range work tended to be marred by unresolved problems with composition, which should have been overcome during the preparatory period. There were also some interesting experiments with media which could have been developed further. There was a greater tendency to copy directly from photographs to produce final outcomes rather than rely on drawing from direct observation.

Lower level candidates had problems with interpretation linked to their compositions, and often did not make links between their preparatory studies and their final outcomes, so there was no sense of a journey. Obvious research from second hand sources including gothic imagery did nothing to aid the process, and weaknesses in media use and creating mood and atmosphere were apparent.

Section C

This was the least popular section with very few candidates achieving above a competent level. Entries accounted for about 5% of the total. Unsurprisingly, there was a large proportion of computer based imagery employed. One of the general weaknesses in this area was the duplication of identical images and a lack of reference regarding where images came from. If candidates could use this key function of technology in a more developmental and process lead way, showing alternative ideas and layouts, it would ensure a far more exciting journey and give evidence for progress and decision making. Too often the preparatory studies consisted of the process of making the image on the computer. There were hardly any candidates who used direct observation through drawing as a starting point for ideas, or made references to other graphic designers and their work.

There seems to be a growing tendency for candidates to attempt design led briefs almost entirely on computer. This is a fundamental misunderstanding of what the terms 'design' and 'graphics' mean. 'Eye, hand, computer' would yield a more creative approach than simply working directly on a screen, and candidates would certainly pick up more marks if they showed a willingness to try alternative approaches and experiment more.

Question 12: A logo for 'Water Wonders' theme park

Much of the work was executed on computer, although some minimal traditional drawing was attempted by some candidates that showed a lack of skill. In most of the submissions there was a lack of understanding as to the nature of visual development, with images being lifted from image banks and no evidence of personal hand drawn ideas. Some candidates made pencil copies of 'clipart' and called this 'direct observation'. Some skill was shown in the ability to employ the graphics packages, but this was not up to the standard required for a satisfactory mark. An over reliance on secondary sources and a lack of evidence for the source and development of the logos meant that candidates did not achieve their full potential. Final

images simply appeared in the development studies with no evidence of their source. 'Image Grabs' which show the stages of the finished design being worked out do not provide the necessary evidence that the candidate has undertaken their research by working from primary sources.

An exception to this was the work of two candidates who had made hand drawn designs and text and experimented with a number of different designs and logos, with subsequent good use of *Photoshop* and digital manipulation. Some other entries indicated good designs and fitness for purpose, but there were no references in the preparatory studies of the sources of the images used.

Candidates who used this question as a starting point for photographic interpretations did not always address the design aspects of the question, mostly neglecting the design of a logo.

Question 13: Poster for a vintage railway

This question ranked 12th in popularity and marks were awarded between the very poor to satisfactory mark ranges. The most successful studies drew their inspiration from first hand studies from trains in the locality, with an understanding of perspective and ellipses on wheels. These candidates also looked at contextual sources such as poster designs and artist's works as an aid to composition, style and size of text, colour and combining text and image. Some of these submissions gave a real sense of enjoyment in their exploration of the vintage look. In most cases, the preparatory work reflected possibilities with a sense of development and understanding of the design process. Where these works were weaker was often shown in the composition element and the use of text which was often too small or unrelated to the image. Some candidates also used far too many styles of text.

Candidates at the lower levels supplied much less supporting work. The examination work for some submissions was hand drawn and showed some ability to control the medium. Other submissions used computer aided design but it was difficult to detect where the images had come from as no sources were indicated. Designs were constructed in a logical way but with no drawings or annotation to explain decisions or the journey. One photographic entry showed some promising images of trains, but lacked an understanding of typographic layout and the design process leading to poor integration of image and letter forms.

Question 14: Package design for 'Sweet Indulgence'

This question was 13th in popularity with marks distributed from very poor to excellent. One candidate at the higher level used their own drawings and photographs of cakes, buns and sweets rather than lifting images from secondary sources which was the route taken by the majority of candidates with their initial research. There was comprehensive development within the preparatory work showing ability to research, observe and record, develop a range of ideas, annotate effectively and produce a final accomplished package. This candidate understood the design process and the importance of the journey towards the final outcome.

At the middle level, most of the candidates answered this question from one Centre. The work showed some accomplishment with some good preparatory studies each supported by a DVD. However, there was little variation between them, and little individuality or personal response.

Many of the weaker responses consisted of sheets of repeat images in the supporting studies. This is one of the temptations of ICT. Generally, it would be far more interesting and advantageous to the candidate if the preparatory work included drawings from primary sources rather than secondary photos from magazines or the Internet, and hand rendered thumbnail drawings of compositions and layouts including text.

There was one photographic entry which showed some promise with the image, but little understanding of how to combine text with image. The candidate offered one idea with no alternatives and did not understand the question by giving no indication of the form of the package.

Question 15: Costume design for 'Spring or Rebirth and Growth'

Marks were distributed between the very poor to excellent mark ranges and this question ranked 10th in popularity. The higher achievers referred to other artists as well as fashion designers and contemporary costumes, and made their initial research from primary observation. There was also some degree of experimentation with a range of drawing and painting media as well as materials. The quality of fashion drawing was confident and accomplished with candidates showing back, front and side views. Many candidates at this level included a number of alternative designs in their preparatory studies, but not all made the right choices of designs for their final outcomes.

At the middle level, some use of Internet images outweighed primary analysis through drawing of natural forms. Some candidates spent too much time on page layout at the expense of producing costume designs. The quality of research at this level demonstrated a lack of content with many ideas developed from imagination resulting in some obvious and inconclusive ideas and a lack of sophistication in the handling of fashion drawing and media.

Lower level work showed a lack of ability in the manipulation of materials, limited ideas and research and poor fashion drawing. Much of the preparatory work consisted of cut and paste pages taken from magazines which were not developed further as possible ideas.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/02
Coursework A

General comments

The majority of work seen was painting and related media. However, there was a noticeable increase in entries for digital photography and video film and graphic design. Three dimensional design and fashion and textile design continues to attract smaller numbers.

The general standard of work ranged from ambitious, personal and sustained projects that were informed by first hand observational studies and research of the work of other artists, through to crudely made submissions that consisted of random collections of copied secondary source material.

Approaches were varied both in scale and complexity of ideas. The very best work seen indicated a mature level of understanding; that an interest in exploration and experimentation is valued for its own sake and that such approaches do not necessarily lead to a single discrete outcome. In many cases a set of related studies were presented, such as a series of figure studies or alternative colour ways in printmaking, textiles or graphic designs; or a set of photographs.

Many Centres are clearly encouraging candidates to work through two or more projects linking different areas of study such as painting and sculpture, or three dimensional work using soft fabrics, as a way of introducing a breadth and range of approaches.

The general standard of presentation was good or very good with relatively few carelessly presented submissions. A small number of Centres had encouraged their candidates to present their work in an imaginative manner that was consistent with their theme. Whilst this has the potential to enhance submissions, it is the development of thinking and skills within the work itself that is of primary importance and unusual presentation should not be seen as a substitute for the core focus of this component.

There has been a notable increase in the amount of written material seen and many submissions are presenting pages of lengthy notes outlining the background to their chosen themes, and of how each stage was approached, including detailed accounts of every process used, what artists' references were used with long biographical details, visits made if there were any and a lengthy evaluation. Brief annotation is often useful and can assist with evaluation and critical judgements but copious written material should be discouraged. Candidates would be better advised to concentrate their time and efforts on research, exploration and the development of their own ideas documented in a visual language.

On the whole, teacher assessments remain unrealistically generous in the majority of Centres. Many assessments are not based on evidence within individual submissions and often there is little differentiation between the requirements of each of the four Assessment Objectives. In some cases all the candidates had been given marks in the upper mark range, which necessitates large adjustments during moderation. It is also evident that some Centres do not carry out internal standardisation when they have more than one teaching group or areas of study which often results in an invalid order of merit.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and related media

A wide variety of materials and processes were used, as were themes and ideas.

The best submissions demonstrated thorough research of ideas through drawings and photographs from first hand observation. Most were from still life groups and natural forms, but some of the more successful had made visits into the town, landscape or seaside. Portraits were popular; of themselves or friends and family although these were not always sufficiently explored or developed and were often just copies from the photograph.

In some Centres it has become common practice to work from photographs of still life set-ups or other easily accessible subject matter rather than drawing directly from the objects. This practice limits the levels of detail and personal qualities in the resultant work.

Most candidates in the middle range fell into two categories with some producing lively ideas and demonstrating a well-developed cultural awareness. However, their lack of focus on experimentation in order to develop appropriate skills and refine their work restricted achievement. Other candidates concentrated on developing their technical skills, usually by carrying out a prescribed set of tasks using a narrow range of media. While the skills levels in this group could be high, the absence of investigation and development of the candidates' own ideas and the inability to connect those ideas with the work of other artists, lowered achievement significantly.

A significant amount of poor work was seen. Common to virtually all, was a complete absence or very poor first hand observational work to inform development. Colour was mostly used in a very literal way with no exploration or invention. Reproductions of the work of other artists were often included but there were no studies or experiments to explore the work and no influences could be measured.

Photography, digital and lens media

This area continues to attract more entries.

The best submissions were excellent but very few were seen. These high achievers were sustained and showed an awareness of photographic genres and photographers' work. The potential of a number of photographic techniques, such as depth of field, lighting and unusual viewpoints, had been fully explored and some evidence of independent judgements was apparent. Final outcomes had been carefully selected for their compositional impact and lighting had been used to create mood and atmosphere.

Most other examples were much more limited in range or research and experimentation. Many had a preconceived idea of what they wanted their final outcome to be, which was often a copy of another work seen on the Internet. Whilst they had some technical skills in digital manipulation to replicate this, there was very little evidence of any real personal investigation of a chosen subject with a camera. There was little evidence of revisiting a subject to record changes in light caused by weather, time of day, or seasonal change. Most candidates only took shots from a single standing viewpoint, never considering the idea of laying on the ground and looking up at the subject or viewing it from a high level, or even focusing in on close-up details.

A few video/film submissions were seen. They had all chosen individual themes. The best told a personal story and were experimenting with lighting and music, and competent cutting and editing.

The weakest were very simplistic, often shot at the same time with little editing.

Textiles and Fashion Design

The best Fashion submissions were inventive and creative with research from first hand studies. They included excellent fashion drawings with an understanding of figure drawing, and there were informed references to other designers and to fabric colour swatches. They showed development of individual themes and ideas, with a great attention to detail.

Weaker work showed little evidence of a starting point for final designs. Ideas had not been sufficiently explored and there was too much reliance on technical draughtsmanship in creating highly finished drawings with little substance.

Most textile submissions explored printed surface design. Designs were originated from first hand studies and a range of successful repeat patterns had been developed. The understanding and exploration of colour and overprinting was much less successful.

Graphic Design

A small number of candidates had worked to defined briefs and actual contexts which had enabled alternative ideas to be investigated, explored and evaluated. Unfortunately, this was not the case with most graphics submissions and the general standard of work was very poor. In many submissions the starting point was not obvious with very little exploration in the search for ideas, and little consideration to layout or the relationship between text and image. Many candidates included too many reference sheets which were just scrapbook padding.

Some Centres had required all of their candidates to carry out a series of prescribed tasks which resulted in very similar imagery and graphic products in all of their submissions. The absence of choice to explore, experiment and develop individual research and ideas severely restricted those candidates with the potential to produce personal work.

The weakest work seen almost entirely consisted of secondary sources that the candidate had collected, selected from and then simply rearranged. While research and an understanding of professional design are required to inform ideas, it is a minimal expectation that candidates develop, explore and experiment with their own imagery and designs. An understanding of fonts and layout is fundamental but often absent.

Sculpture

Only a very few submissions were seen this year.

There were two interesting installations submitted with individual personal themes presented through good quality photographs which flattered the outcomes. Unfortunately, they were not well documented and lacked experiment and exploration.

There were some more traditional clay modelled heads which again were lacking in a range of research and demonstrated a poor understanding of form.

Other work seen in the Ceramics area was extremely weak and far below the standard expected at this level. The tasks set were only of a basic nature; pinch pots, coiled work, and simple moulded forms. There was no evidence of any original research or personal development.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/03

Coursework B

General comments

Most of the best submissions showed an understanding of the different emphasis of this component with outcomes being more engaged and focused than Component 2. There was a depth of study, which built on the candidate's experiences in Coursework A, which sustained their research through to a resolved outcome. All of which was supported with evidence of the process leading to the final piece.

Many candidates in the middle range had experienced courses where the primary emphasis was technical, with little opportunity or value given to the development of the candidates' own ideas. While some submissions demonstrated high levels of skill, often there was no evidence that candidates had been introduced to the work of other artists in order to inform their own ideas, which often restricted development and achievement significantly.

The work of weaker candidates often lacked purpose or focus which undermined the development of skills and knowledge. The work seen in the lowest levels of achievement amounted to little more than a collection of random drawings and paintings.

Many sketchbooks, when submitted were more like scrapbooks, or a few pages of unrelated doodles which did not inform the development of the candidate's work and tended to reinforce a lack of critical thinking and independence. The very few really good sketchbooks were bursting with visual information, full of drawings, experiments, cuttings and photographs: a visual joy.

Centre assessments were generally unrealistic, there were many large and significant adjustments made, and there were a number of Centres whose entire entry had to be re-marked as the order of merit was inappropriate.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and related media

Submissions at the higher level demonstrated a fresh and highly personal approach to the work, coupled with strong manipulative skills and aesthetic awareness.

Still-life themes were dominant, although the local environment and landscape studies were also a popular choice. Others had used the figure as a starting point for investigations. Good references to the work of other artists or cultures were seen in researching subjects and techniques. Some of the more mature submissions were exploring subjects and issues of a very personal nature or were developing abstract compositions. These were still based on extensive research from first hand sources, and these candidates had the confidence and additional skills level to resolve such work more successfully than similar subjects chosen for Component 2.

In the middle and upper ranges, watercolour had been used sensitively, with a high degree of skill evident in the exploration of colour and tone in still life groups. Acrylics and pastels were used well when colour and form were understood but weaker candidates tended to produce simpler 'flat' or decorative work. Generally, the wide potential of oil paints were not explored or used well. Outcomes in the middle range were more predictable or prescribed rather than discovered through experimentation.

Many submissions from weaker candidates only consisted of copies of secondary sources. Evidence of individual choices being made or a critical awareness of the work of other artists was absent. The tendencies to work from poor quality photographs rather than first hand sources contributed to the difficulties for these candidates.

Photography, digital and lens media

These submissions were little different from those seen for Component 2. There was a lack of in-depth research and investigation with a camera. Contact strips rarely gave any indication that more than a single photo-shoot had been made, thus limiting the range of material available for exploration and development. Ideas were also limited to a single preconceived notion of what the final outcome should be, and there was no evidence of responding to the unexpected or chance discovery made during the research.

Most candidates did not demonstrate an investigation or understanding of photographic genres or the work of specific photographers. Consequently, candidates' ability to make critical judgements about their own work to guide development and experimentation was poor.

Graphic Design

Submissions included CD-ROM covers, advertisements, package designs and posters. The majority of submissions were process driven with an over reliance on computer technology. There was little evidence of any hand drawn imagery or of defined starting points based on first hand research.

Some Centres required all of their candidates to carry out the same series of prescribed tasks which resulted in very similar imagery and graphic products in all of their submissions. The absence of choice to explore, experiment and develop individual research and ideas severely restricted achievement.

The work seen at the lowest levels of achievement consisted almost entirely of secondary sources that the candidate had simply collected, selected from and then simply rearranged. While research and an understanding of professional design are required to inform ideas, it is a minimal expectation that candidates develop, explore and experiment with their own imagery and designs. An understanding of fonts and layout is fundamental but often absent.

Fashion Design

There were some excellent fashion submissions seen this year which had produced finished garments based on thorough research from first hand studies. Cultural traditions such as the Japanese kimono and Indian embroidered garments had also informed personal development. Sketchbooks were also full of additional studies, ideas, photographs and experiments demonstrating an involvement with the subject beyond what were selected for the final submission.

Weaker work was lacking in sources of research or evidence of design development. Submissions tended to be little more than well rendered fashion illustrations.

Sculpture

Only a few entries were seen. They were mostly ambitious in scale and complexity of ideas but were lacking in sufficient research and practice in the medium.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/04
Personal Study

General comments

There were several outstanding and many excellent Studies seen and nearly a third of all submissions achieved the upper levels of the mark range. The majority of Personal Studies offered competent to high levels of achievement. Such success is, of course, highly dependent on the teachers' understanding of the syllabus and the Assessment Objectives, and how they encouraged topics appropriate to their candidates' interests and abilities. The advice and guidance given to candidates from the majority of Centres was clearly very positive, encouraging and appropriate.

The best approach is to introduce the Personal Study to the candidates at the beginning of the academic year in which the A level component will be examined. Teachers should then discuss with the candidates which aspects of Art and Design have stimulated and motivated them the most, then offer guidance on possible sources for first-hand investigation of existing works of historical or contemporary practice which are accessible in Studios, Galleries, Exhibitions or at specific sites. Although the use of local sources will always foster the strongest interest and enthusiasm, comparisons can still be made with relevant mainstream or international examples resourced from books or the Internet.

All candidates are advised to submit an Outline Proposal form (OPF) where they can identify sources for first hand study and outline their intentions. There is a clear relation between candidate has identified the title, sources, and intentions for the proposed Study, an OPF should be completed and sent to CIE for comment and advice. If there are any doubts about the suitability of the topic, then you should contact CIE for advice, if only to reassure both the teacher and the candidate that the intentions are sound in relation to the Assessment Objectives. A copy of the relevant OPF should be submitted with the Personal Study itself for assessment

Once a candidate has accumulated sufficient visual and written material, further guidance from the teacher about the structure, sequence and presentation of the Study is recommended. Candidates should be positively encouraged to plan a visually rich presentation of the material well before the deadline for submission, and aim for clarity of communication by ensuring that all illustrations are identified and notated. Teachers need to emphasise that candidates are creating an Art and Design investigation: consequently, the layout and integration of text and image is an essential part of the way they organise and present their research. A variety of formats for presentation is possible, such as A3 or A4 size booklets, larger boards with related two- or three-dimensional practical extensions, different systems of folding, pop-up, overlaying and revealing card structures. Practical analyses of the work of artists or designers should be encouraged, as much as written comment. If Personal Studies are organised on a CD they should also still be submitted as a printed version, to avoid computer incompatibility or corrupt files.

Comments on various levels of achievement

Higher Levels

The best Studies were sustained with confidence, independence and enthusiasm, communicating a strong sense of involvement. Focused analyses from both primary and secondary sources were used selectively to inform personal evaluations of cultural contexts, stylistic influences, the organisation of visual elements and the use of materials and processes. Thorough planning of the layout of a variety of visual materials integrated with text, headings and notations resulted in lively visual presentations, often exploiting the double-page spreads of an A3 size format. Critical judgements, arising from the enquiry, were firmly linked to the candidate's own coursework experiences.

Mid-Levels

At the mid-levels of achievement, a commitment to sustain the investigation and to focus on specific examples of work was apparent. However, candidates tended to lack the understanding and confidence to analyse the compositions and structure of works for their visual elements, offering instead descriptions of what was depicted. Practical studies also tended towards copying the whole of a work rather than a selective analysis of a particular aspect of the composition or structure, such as form, space, line, colour, pattern or texture. Critical evaluations were communicated in terms of personal preference and were unsupported by comparisons or references to coursework experiences. Computer processes were generally used very competently to integrate written and visual material, but presentation was invariably confined to an A4 format which restricted the flexibility of layout and the inclusion of a variety of supporting illustrations. Occasionally, hand-written presentations were rather rough-and-ready, with areas of illegibility. On the other hand, computer-processed text printed onto transparent sheets also led to obscured rather than enhanced communication.

Lower Levels

A lack of direction, structure or focus was common in the Studies achieving the lower levels of the mark range. There was a noticeable tendency to include material which was irrelevant to the analysis of specific works. For example, lengthy biographies, broad general histories, chronological lists, questionnaires of the public and extended interviews with practitioners, were frequently used to bolster the contents. This approach contributed very little to a candidate's understanding of Art and Design issues because the lack of references to the qualities of particular works did not encourage personal evaluations. Little concern for the presentation of the material was also apparent at this level. Illustrations were given no identification or notation and often placed in an unrelated sequence separate from the text which referred to them; some illustrative material consisted of poor quality photocopies added at the end of the Study, with no attempt to integrate image with text. The investigations of some candidates went no further than technical manuals, travel brochures or catalogues of works without comments.

Unsatisfactory Levels

A considerable proportion of the Studies did not achieve an acceptable standard for an Advanced level submission. The majority of submissions seen in this range had not submitted an Outline Proposal Form (OPF). The purpose of the OPF is to identify primary sources for investigation and outline the intention of the study before study starts. In these cases the studies consisted of little more than additional pieces of Coursework and some were on topics which had no relation to Art and Design issues but were focused on such themes as Tourism, Botany and Sociology, without any reference whatsoever to existing artworks, let alone the candidate's own artistic interests.