

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/01
Controlled Test

General Comments

The question paper provided candidates with a broad range of options and stimuli to work from. This session saw a number of strong hand-rendered submissions. Some candidates specialising in photography had included relevant influences from established photographers and artists in their preparatory studies. There was an increase in the number of personal interpretations this year which could be due to the more 'open ended' nature of this year's questions.

Section A was by far the most popular area of exploration with over half the work seen responding to these topics, attracting responses from across the mark range. At the higher levels candidates had made thorough use of working from direct observation during the preparatory period, were skilful in their use of media and made references to other artists in developing their own ideas. Many had used their local environment as their initial inspiration or as a backdrop for their ideas.

Middle level candidates made relevant research but often missed opportunities to develop a range of ideas from which they could select the best to develop in depth. Although in many cases the handling of a single medium was satisfactory, experimentation with a range of media was seldom seen. Relevant influences from artists and photographers were utilised by some candidates but many included references which weren't relevant to their ideas.

The less successful submissions relied heavily on the copying of secondary images from the internet or publications and lacked personal qualities. There was evidence of tracing from photographs even with still life questions from **Section B**. Most candidates lacked skill and understanding in their handling of media, and many repeated images were seen in preparatory studies using the same medium. Few candidates made any references to other artist's works.

Section B accounted for nearly a quarter of the submissions and marks were distributed across the whole range with some competent to outstanding submissions seen with **Questions 7, 8 and 9**. The figure question in particular elicited some very personal and expressive work where some candidates had really considered their viewpoints and compositions. **Question 10**, the extract, was the least popular question of this section.

Section C was the least popular section and attracted less than a quarter of the submissions, some candidates showed an intelligent understanding of the design process.

Submissions explored a range of painting and drawing and other 2D media such as textiles, printmaking and graphics. Photography was an increasingly popular option this session and some candidates produced 3D outcomes and a few submitted film. There continues to be a massive disparity between photography and other media, particularly in the approach to research and the development of ideas.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Question 1: Opening

A very popular question which was interpreted in many different ways - doors, eyes, hearts, locks, mouths, boxes, zips, buttons, bags, opening emotions, flowers. Some candidates chose any subject at random and somehow related it back to 'opening' with some strange results. The story of Pandora's Box was explored by a few candidates whilst others took a Surrealistic route influenced by Duchamp. At the higher level, candidates showed more originality and complexity of thought, better composition skills and greater technical competence in their drawing and handling of media. Preparatory work contained some excellent examples of primary observational drawing or independent photography.

This was also a popular question with candidates submitting photography some of whom showed much skill in their use of digital software. A few candidates also showed a mature understanding of montage in their willingness to deconstruct and use parts of the material gathered in making strong compositions.

At the middle level candidates showed inventiveness and engagement in their work but often lacked sufficient evidence of initial research and gathering ideas. Although many candidates showed skill with drawing and painting, much of what was produced was derived from secondary sources. A dreamlike atmosphere was present in some responses in which openings to another world were seen. These appeared to draw heavily on popular fantasy images from film and television and lacked personal qualities.

Work at the lower level tended to be quite literal in interpretation showing physical apertures of various kinds opening, but few of these submissions relied on primary sources as a starting point. Many candidates struggled with perspective and conveying space, particularly those who responded with doors and windows as a subject. The use of media was generally weak and evidence of alternative ideas in preparatory studies was often non-existent.

Less successful photography submissions showed a resistance to go beyond the first idea resulting in minimal preparation. Most interpretations were emotional and often to do with doors opening on the next stage of life. Contact sheets displayed a minimal number of shots and showed little change in lighting, viewpoint, composition or atmosphere. The work of other photographers was often included but had little relevance to the question chosen.

Question 2: Falling

This question was equally as popular as **Question 1**, particularly with photography candidates. Strong links were made between literature and the work of other artists for example *Alice in Wonderland*, using underwater shots of a model and linking the work to Bill Viola.

The submissions covered a wide range of specialisms. Some of the most successful submissions conveyed imaginative responses via the manipulation and exploration of a variety of media - drawing, painting, print making, collage, photography and animation, to form independent and personal ideas. The best work was informed by strong, well-observed drawing from primary sources. Some photographic submissions made good use of digital software tools to produce realistic feathery wings and thunder clouds, which were used as a backdrop to their photography. Other examples of higher level submission focused on food falling into a mouth where the candidates had concentrated on rendering the texture and colour of food.

Candidates at the middle range made imaginative use of photographic techniques to freeze frame objects as they fell, e.g. fruit falling into a tank of water. Others had ghosted images to show the sequence of falling down stairs, through the sky or off buildings, sometimes relating their work to Muybridge.

Less successful responses focused on literal interpretations such as falling in love or figures falling from a height. Most of the photographic responses were in the poor to very poor range and consisted of single photo shoots which would have taken little time, and ideas based on internet images which lacked personal qualities. Development often followed a similar pattern of selecting one image and applying simple digital filters to produce a final outcome.

Question 3: Alleyways

This was a fairly popular question and challenged candidates' knowledge and use of perspective. Some very strong submissions were seen where candidates had thoroughly investigated the topic using first-hand studies and photography. There was evidence of good use of photography and subsequent digital development which often enabled candidates to create mood and atmosphere when translating their ideas into painting or related media.

Some candidates displayed mature and expressive painting skills using strong contrasts of tone reminiscent of De Chirico. Candidates demonstrated a good understanding of perspective and space and worked from a range of primary observations and photographs.

Two examples of textile garments were seen in the middle range using hoods and graffiti inspired imagery, screen printed on to fabric. Some candidates explored social commentary basing their ideas on poverty, drug and alcohol abuse or violence.

Some submissions could have been greatly improved by a much more observational approach and disciplined practice with first-hand drawing. Few candidates at this level had any understanding of perspective. Many submissions at this level were photographic but relied on poorly chosen and brightly lit snapshots of local streets devoid of mood or atmosphere. Often these had no resemblance to, or awareness of the excellent professional images presented in some of the research.

Question 4: Out of Focus

Entries for this question came from across the entire mark range and this was the 4th most popular question, displaying some outstanding work. The topic was very popular with photographic candidates, though often many submissions in this medium were disappointing and it was evident that a number of candidates saw this question as an easy option, some even stated this in their preparatory studies.

In the more successful responses, some candidates developed an emotional and personal response to the brief demonstrating an excellent ability in drawing from primary sources. Some candidates made references to the work of Gerhard Richter and Dali, whilst others used digital software for manipulating images and ideas which gradually became more abstracted and were then used as a reference for painting and drawing final compositions. Examples of hyper-realism were seen with distorted faces seen through glass vases or window panes.

In the middle ability range, some evidence of ideas development was seen but work lacked the originality and innovative qualities seen at the higher level. Some photographic responses showed promise but did not go far enough in the development of ideas and lacked the curiosity to experiment.

Some work would have benefited from a greater investigation of sources to inform a considered outcome. Many photographic candidates produced contact sheets of a poor quality which were then made *out of focus* using post-production tools in an attempt to adhere to the brief. Little consideration was given to lighting, atmosphere, mood, composition, viewpoint, focal point or depth of field, resulting in some very poor quality final products. Although some candidates had researched professional photographers and chosen some excellent examples of their work, this seemed to have no impact on their own work.

Question 5: Splitting

This question produced some very strong observational studies and was 6th in popularity.

The investigation of bodies being ripped apart or split open to reveal internal organs or heads splitting open to reveal thoughts or split personalities were some of the themes pursued. Work was successful where candidates had developed their figure drawing and their understanding of anatomy and proportion. Excellent use was made of research into other artist's work; the more able candidates built on techniques studied and used them to inform their own ideas. Some ideas explored faces disintegrating so that the form was splitting into fragments or the idea of a split personality where the two joined forms conveyed different aspects of the same person. The work at the higher level was sometimes of an abstract nature which was the result of observing and recording from first-hand and careful consideration of ideas development often influenced by established artists' works. Some candidates relied on their strengths with drawing and painting still-life by recording fruit or vegetables being cut with a knife, which enabled them to explore surfaces and textures.

Some candidates relied heavily on the use of digital effects to alter a few poorly contrived situations and it was evident that the awareness of composition and design was at best, adequate. The use of the same digital effects produced a similarity of ideas and finish throughout these scripts and opportunities for individual expression were missed.

Some submissions were very literal and similar in terms of subject matter - splitting fruit, body parts, heads or plants. The principal difference between these pieces and the stronger works lay in the use of media. Candidates appeared to have chosen one subject and not explored different possible outcomes or alternative compositions or even exploration with other media. Many of these candidates would benefit greatly from exploring alternative compositions. This implies not simply an alternative arrangement of a still - life but rather the use of radically different viewpoints, significantly shifting light sources, widely contrasting set-ups, colour schemes and contexts or environments.

Question 6: Contrasts

This was by far the most popular question with a wide range of responses seen. The most successful of these were individual, imaginative and intellectual. Some entries used this topic as a starting point to investigate ideas of gender and sexuality. Ideas were thoroughly developed through exceptionally detailed and composed photographs, drawings and paintings of bearded men in women's 1950's clothes, ironing, dusting, vacuuming, cooking etc. in various kitchen scenarios. Other examples at the higher level included the contrasts in exterior and interior light on the human form, the contrasts between Bonnard and Degas' figurative paintings and those of the candidates' own culture or the imbalance between rich and poor.

Many candidates tended to rely on internet sources for their inspiration and would have benefited more from personal enquiry and direct observation through drawing. The idea of dividing the face into half human/half animal appealed to a number of candidates and although some good attempts were made the use of media was not fully explored.

The least successful responses focused on more obvious subjects - rich/poor, new/ broken, happy/sad. Amongst these were some fairly honest pieces which began to explore the contrasts more intensively, but the majority were quite weak, with some barely communicating the intended contrast at all.

Section B

Question 7: An Open Suitcase....

This question was ideal to demonstrate primary research and experimentation with media and attracted a range of abilities across the responses seen. Most entries were formal still-life arrangements, often well researched with primary observational studies and personal photographs. There were much fewer photographic submissions. Links were made with artists who were used to inspire the rendering and exploration of materials, and most of the best work had used a range of media in the preparatory studies as well as experimenting with different compositions and viewpoints.

Some responses had an excellent command of media which they used with confidence. Many of the submissions at this level took a realistic approach to the subject, but a few explored the possibilities of abstraction, influenced by Cubism. There were also several photographic submissions which experimented with split images and joiner techniques to convey the excitement of packing and the destination. At this level, the use of perspective, space and tonal contrast were key features in the success of the work.

Some work would have benefited from a more considered approach but they lacked the experimental qualities of the higher level work, resulting in similar viewpoints and compositions all seen from the same eye level. Some submissions tended to focus in on the suitcase resulting in cropped and awkward compositions.

Some candidates chose to just use photography with little care taken setting up the still-life and almost no thought given to the background, or whether all the articles in the question were included. Lighting and composition weren't considered appropriately. Several drawn submissions lacked research and development and an understanding of perspective and composition, these are the basic tools of visual language and candidates should be able to demonstrate understanding of these basics in even the simplest of responses.

Question 8: Carrier Bag and Vegetables.....

This was the most popular question in this section. Some excellent responses included a diverse range of experimental studies from various aspects and different compositions and eye-levels. They also added to this an undeniable sense of enjoyment in employing a wide range of media. An understanding of surface and texture seemed indicative of a level of both observation and engagement.

Fluency with materials and process included some excellent examples using the pointillist technique on a dark ground which added vibrancy to all the colours, particularly red and green. Others drew on the cultural tradition of miniatures with exquisite detailed painting. Interesting and perceptive comments were made in scripts about the way Cezanne pieced together his still-lives from sketches of different viewpoints and how that could be used to an advantage for a final idea. More successful photographic submissions explored many creative arrangements of the still-life, both long shots and close ups, plus changing the props and lighting for different moods.

There were also some good preparatory studies seen which demonstrated competent observations of sliced vegetables, reflections in metal and water and the surfaces of the carrier bag. In many cases the research and development were superior to the final exam piece.

Some submissions often worked from one viewpoint and lacked an understanding of form and texture, composition and spatial awareness. Few candidates at this level researched the rich vein of this genre by looking at established artists which would greatly have improved their submission.

Question 9: A Figure Looking into a Bag

The nature of this question provided candidates with models that were active and therefore more expressive, and some candidates conveyed this intensity of 'looking' very well. There were some excellent examples where different viewpoints had been explored and the figure had been composed well within the format of the paper. This was the 7th most popular question.

An understanding of the figure and proportions was evident in the strongest responses together with a personal engagement that really connected with the curiosity that the model was feeling as they were looking into the bag. Apart from some excellent drawing and painting techniques in a naturalistic manner, there were also submissions which relied on influences from pop art and German expressionism. Some of the best examples employed a low or high viewpoint, exploiting the foreshortening of the limbs with dynamic effect.

There were some good ideas in the digital submissions which made use of the media to look through the bag to the figure.

Some responses were ambitious in scale but often relied on copying photographs resulting in rather wooden outcomes. There was also a tendency to play safe with media rather than experimenting with a range of media in the preparatory work. It was noticeable too that few candidates at this level played with different viewpoints or compositions.

Some work would have benefited by a greater understanding of figurative proportions, perspective, foreshortening, and placing the figure in space. Many candidates struggled to link the figure, the action and the bag together.

Question 10: Extract - Packing Up After a Day at the Beach

This was the least popular question overall. However, some candidates approached this by collecting a range of images relating to the quote and some focused on the passing of time and events that could occur within half an hour. These were drawn from direct observation and personal photographs. Examples were seen where the candidates had created paintings based on collages of these images where the handling of paint, juxtaposition of imagery and thorough research resulted in very successful outcomes.

Some of the work was well executed but not very ambitious, with a tendency to portray single figures silhouetted against sunsets. There were a few satisfactory photographic examples with strong final outcomes that were lacking in research and development.

At the lower level, some candidates saw this as an easy option by painting a deserted beach at sunset, copied from a travel brochure. Some photographic candidates made similar images omitting any signs of beach paraphernalia and providing a single photo shoot as their preparatory work.

Question 11: Looking into a Garage or Workshop

This question attracted entries which were distributed between the excellent and poor mark ranges. Several submissions at the higher level showed a very personal engagement with the subject matter where candidates had visited garages and made a range of drawings from different aspects as well as taking photographs as an aid to composition. This resulted in some well researched and observed work, sometimes influenced by Jim Dine, which contained portraits of mechanics working, interesting studies of engines or parts of cars, tools and equipment and the general detritus that is found in garages. The very best work had experimented in depth with composition and viewpoint, and used media in a confident and mature manner.

The work seen at the middle and lower levels tended to show a more detached view often from outside the workshop. Some submissions had evidence of informative studies which did not develop into informed final outcomes. Photographic submissions showed a lack of research, development and engagement in the subject, and often there were too few photos to work from and develop. Digital software was used in some cases to change or heighten colour which gave an unnatural effect, and opportunities were missed to improve and explore composition through cropping and change of eye level or viewpoint.

Section C

Question 12: Perfume Bottles and Packaging

Work seen in response to this question was often lively and engaged, and the candidates who really understood the elements of the design process produced the most successful work. There were many candidates at the middle and lower levels who struggled with understanding the design process and would have benefited from more extensive research into the use of imagery and text in contemporary packaging.

More successful submissions used starting points that showed a personal and creative theme. Some interesting approaches to this topic included exploring alcoholism and addiction by making a parallel with potions and perfumes. These were developed from observational drawings and photography and included actual packaging. Some candidates used observational drawings from nature as a starting point and one candidate had used flower forms as inspiration to create a variety of shapes for perfume bottles. Some of the stronger submissions from Centres were seen where all the candidates had used observational drawing as a starting point, had researched commercial perfume bottles and packages and had shown a range of alternative designs in their preparatory studies.

In the middle range, some of the work seen was innovative, but it was unclear what the sources were for the ideas, and many candidates at this level had missed out important elements of the design process.

At the lower level, candidates gave no alternative ideas to their initial design and very little, if any, of the design process was present. Use of media was generally limited, but regardless of this, extra marks could have been gained had there been any evidence of research and ideas development. Some candidates missed out a crucial part of the question which was the design of the package.

Question 13: Book Cover Design for 'The Artist's Book of Materials'

Although this was not a popular question there were a few entries that were innovative, imaginative and very 'fit for purpose'. The best submissions started with observational drawings of artist's materials and equipment. These drawings were then used to make thumbnail sketches of different designs, incorporating different texts against different backgrounds. Some candidates used these studies to digitally manipulate further images before deciding on a final outcome. Higher level submissions also included extensive research into existing book covers and used ideas from these influences to develop their own designs.

The middle range work also displayed some evidence of research from other book covers, and some creative ideas were apparent and the use of media was lively. However, in many cases the final outcomes lacked the vitality of the preparatory work.

Much of the lower level work consisted of a single idea often repeated, and lacked an understanding of image and text relationships and layout. Research and development were scant and showed little awareness of the design process. In some cases there was far too much writing at the expense of visual research.

Question 14: A Poster for a Music Festival

This was the most popular question in **Section C** and marks were awarded across the range, although most were located in the adequate and satisfactory bands. A major difficulty with a question of this nature is to relate a large amount of text to the images or background used and to consider how to capture the attention of the public. Candidates at the upper level showed an awareness and use of the design process, integration of text and imagery, clarity of composition and use of space. These candidates were able to show a thorough exploration of images from both primary and secondary sources. Consideration of text was used as part of the development stage and experiments had been carried out with a range of type fonts as well as designs of their own. Some candidates combined painting and digital outcomes.

The work in the middle range was enthusiastic but was not so confident technically. If digital software was used, the joins in the artwork were apparent, or paint handling lacked precision, and much of the imagery used was known from previous posters or album covers. Preparatory work included a wide range of printed posters with variations of colour, layout and font, but often the final outcome was not as creative as the process.

In the lower range, examples consisted of random images put together with some hand written or computer generated information placed on top, and displayed little planning of composition, layout and balancing of

text and image. Exploratory work was weak and contained many images from magazines or other secondary sources. These candidates could have been more successful if they had employed a coherent and developmental design process.

Question 15: Fashion Design Based on Architecture

Primary drawing and taking photographs from architecture were key elements with this question. At the higher level responses were seen demonstrating an understanding of how to develop abstract ideas from drawings, photographs and secondary sources. Patterns and structures were gleaned from high rise buildings, bridges, factories, different period houses, museums and architectural details. Fashion designers were also researched in depth to explore costumes related to architecture. The most successful developed a wide range of ideas using thumbnail drawings. Worksheets showed a real involvement and enthusiasm and were packed with information. Not all candidates at this level made the best choices for their final outcomes, however the evidence of potential was seen in their preparatory work.

The middle range work displayed much research and drawing but sometimes missed opportunities to show the development of the research work into successful final designs.

Some of the work did not appear to be based on architecture at all and were merely dress designs, others demonstrated copying from other fashion magazines, repeating shapes which looked vaguely architectural or structural. All the work at this level was lacking in research and development and an understanding of the design process.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/02

Coursework A

General comments

The range, ambition and quality of the work produced in the best submissions was impressive. This was the result of well-constructed projects which had clear expectations that candidates should see their own ideas and techniques within a critical context. The work suggested a prior knowledge of a range of other artists and more specialised research into the work of appropriate artists was carried out as projects developed. This work was always informed by a commitment to first hand observation and the candidates had drawn extensively, using a variety of appropriate media, including their own photography. These drawings and photographs always had a purpose and helped clarify the candidate's intentions through evaluation and progressively more focused experimentation. These secure foundations had given candidates the confidence to take risks and make imaginative leaps and, consequently, ideas had been developed into highly personal work.

Candidates in the middle range fell into two categories. Some candidates had explored lively ideas that were personal and demonstrated a well developed cultural awareness. However, these candidates' would have benefited from greater focus on their practical experimentation in order to develop appropriate skills and to refine their ideas, restricted achievement. Other candidates had concentrated on developing technical skills, usually by carrying out a prescribed set of tasks using a small range of media. While skills levels in this group could be very good, the absence of investigation and development of the candidates' own ideas and the failure to connect those ideas with the work of other artists, lowered achievement significantly.

Some Centres entered very little work apart from a small collection of studies from secondary sources, so despite the candidates good level of technical competence evident within the final outcome, projects lacked the volume of research expected at this level.

There seemed to be many more entries this year where it was obvious that candidates' prior knowledge and experience of the subject was very limited or non-existent. Judging from the general standard of many of the weakest submissions, this appears to be a common experience and may partly explain the extraordinary naivety and lack of skills demonstrated in the work of the majority of these submissions. It was also apparent that many of these candidates devoted limited amounts of time to the production of their coursework; in the majority of cases this seemed to be only a matter of weeks and, in some cases, it seemed to be only a matter of hours. Significant numbers of entries lacked any evidence of first-hand studies or researching the work of other artists to inform experimentation and development was minimal if it existed at all. Centre assessments rarely recognised these deficiencies and very large adjustments were frequently required.

Most submissions were well presented on sheets of card or spirally bound folders. A few candidates submitted work on very heavy card which made handling difficult. A few presented work on thin paper which became tattered after handling. Much of the images came unstuck and had to be reattached, particularly when attached to thinner backing sheets.

The best submissions were well laid out with consideration given to margins and spacing and lettering. They showed the logical progression of the work through development of ideas to the final piece.

There is often too much writing, especially in coloured felt tip. Annotation is an important part of presentation but it should be succinct and legible.

Although some Centres use the criteria accurately, assessments remain unrealistically generous in the majority of centres. It is apparent that some Centres do not base their assessments on evidence within individual submissions or differentiate sufficiently between a candidate's variable performances in each of the assessment objectives. Some Centres simply place all of their candidates in the upper mark range, regardless of the evidence, which necessitates large adjustments during moderation. It was apparent that

some Centres did not carry out internal standardisation when they had more than one teaching group or areas of study which created an inconsistent order of merit.

Comments on specific areas of study

Painting and related media

There were some examples of excellent work submitted within this discipline. Candidates had chosen a variety of themes ranging from portraiture to politics and had opted for a number of different approaches to convey their ideas.

There were examples of graffiti which were highly ambitious and successful, some very expressive painted pieces and good examples of illustrative work. These were all backed up by in-depth research and technically competent material studies.

Candidates were greatly aided by their own photos which played a big part in ensuring interesting viewpoints and providing some personal qualities. Artist research also helped candidates to be experimental with media and ideas.

There were quite a few large-scale portraits which were reliant on the candidates' ability to paint using proportion and also their ability to give the portrait personality and originality. There were some highly competent portraits seen which demonstrated these qualities where candidates had carefully observed their subject but had also considered the use of colour and application of paint.

There were some very well-observed still life paintings which demonstrated the candidates' ability to use watercolour and some relief work where surface texture had been played with. There were a couple of artists' books submitted which used text and imagery successfully and showed a wider interest in the subject.

It was good to see that a few candidates had experimented with simple printmaking in their coursework: lino, etching and collograph. These were only one-colour prints but they added depth to the submissions. The more successful candidates had allowed their studies of the work of other artists and cultures to influence their work especially in the use of colour.

The weaker candidates relied on secondary sources, photos from magazines and downloaded images. There was much copying and tracing of images which were then repeated in one or two different media, often pencil, coloured pencil and felt tip. The laborious use of a single medium means that the work loses all life and vitality. Colour was often used in a very literal way with no explorations or inventions. These candidates often included reproductions of the work of other artists but there were no in-depth studies to explore the artist's work, techniques or use of colour.

Photography

This was the second most popular discipline for which candidates achieved varying degrees of success. The best work contained carefully considered photo-shoots, good lighting and an understanding of viewpoints and composition. Candidates had captured the character of their subject within a portrait, still-life or landscape and had only used digital effects to enhance an initially well-taken photograph. Some candidates had considered the presentation of their final outcomes and produced thoughtful and inventive ways of displaying their work.

Successful research included themes such as the potentials of a local market. Multiple themes had been explored in considerable depth, such as the behaviour and interactions of people and the differences between the public performance of the salesperson and the private individual in quieter off-duty moments. The pattern and colour of produce displays provided another rich avenue of enquiry for some candidates which also led to a series of more intimate photographs that revealed small incidents that might easily have escaped our notice, such as, oil falling through a large slotted utensil as food was prepared at a stall. Candidates demonstrated their technical skills by transforming imagery using of a very high shutter speed and precise focal depth. Compositions expertly balanced dynamic contrasts of light, areas of focus and colour and succeeded in transforming the ordinary into the extraordinary. Other interesting approaches seen were by candidates who had initially explored issues of 'Identity' in using techniques suggested by the work of other photographers. Building on this foundation, the candidates had used face and body paint on individual and groups of models to explore much more inventive and personal work. Over a number of

studio sessions, the potentials of dramatic lighting, the interactions between the models and the relationship between the figures and constructed backgrounds had been explored. The ambiguous play between the physical reality of the bodies and space and the illusions created by the paint and lighting resulted in a series of unexpected and powerful images.

Weaker entries producing photography heavily reliant on effects often failed to consider the impact of their starting points and needed to spend more time considering their initial shots through in depth planning and technical knowledge. Artist research would have greatly benefitted the candidates who needed some direction about how to make their photographs interesting or original. Candidates often referred to images found on search engines rather than looking at the work of a recognised photographer.

Some Centres had placed an emphasis on creative presentation rather than providing substance within the actual artwork and there was a lack of actual photography taking place. With too few starting points to work from, the development of the work and consequently the final outcomes, suffered.

There was some still-life photography which contained good ideas but a lack of technical understanding meant that out of focus, poor quality images did not present the ideas well. The candidates needed a greater understanding of depth of field and lenses in order to produce such close-up work.

There was some interesting video work seen using time-lapse photography which was backed up with good observational drawings which provided the planning element of the work. Most others were competent, well structured videos, competently edited. However there was no supporting work to document any other films they have made or experiments with films or references to professional filmmakers.

Graphic design

There were examples of good graphic work where candidates had developed designs for posters, leaflets, corporate logos and packaging designs. Some candidates worked well combining images and lettering using their own initial drawings and digital media to create a range of effects and designs. The design process had been clearly understood and all elements of the final concept had been worked through via material studies and placement of images and lettering.

However the majority of submissions using digital software were limited and lacked exploration and development. Little consideration had been given to layout or the relationship between text and image. There were no references made to international designers; they were just scrapbook work from magazines and CD and DVD covers.

A few candidates produced digital illustration projects in which most was produced on a computer. Stinger submissions were seen where candidates produced projects informed by their own first-hand studies at each stage of development. Experimentation was extensive, sustained and the multiple outcomes were highly skilled and personal. In contrast, the other submissions were heavily reliant on secondary sources and did not progress beyond the reproduction of pre-existing clichéd imagery.

Other graphic work was a little scruffy and these candidates needed to practice refining their skills in order to convey their ideas effectively. Other work was a little predictable and despite candidates using their own photography, they did not produce very exciting work. Some candidates did not understand the design process and relied on manipulating found secondary sources using digital media rather than producing their own starting points for designs. There were some examples of drinks packaging but this comprised of finished designs rather than demonstrating design skills through development and a variety of compositions.

Fashion and textile design

There was only a small quantity of fashion design seen which took the form of fashion illustration or the making of garments.

A few candidates used fashion as an art form and put the garment they had made in various settings/environments. Work was very well presented with excellent photos of the clothes worn. There were also other successful submissions with lively, inventive fashion studies showing starting points and inspiration. Candidate designed contemporary and traditional fashion with strong fashion drawings, good colour and photos and examples of their own embroidery.

There were many fashion designs based on natural forms but the outcomes were a little predictable.

There was some very accomplished fashion illustration seen which was technically highly competent but lacked the exploration or development expected at this level.

The weaker entries still had lively, inventive fashion studies but lacked evidence of starting points, colour alternatives or fabric swatches. All made reference to fashion designers.

There were some lovely textile designs which had been based on original drawings of sea-life which were digitally manipulated to create ideas for embroidery and quilting. This work presented a very personal approach.

Other submissions demonstrated an imaginative approach to felt making combined with effective use of computer-aided design, which helped the development of ideas.

3D design and sculpture

There were only a few submissions for 3D work which took the form of pottery and large scale sculpture. The general standard of achievement was weak.

Within the pottery work it was clear that a lack of technical skill in using the material hindered the candidates' progress. All showed some research and limited previous work in the medium. The submissions were adequately presented, good photographs of the work, some references to other artists' work – they were genuine projects. However they lacked sufficient experience with and understanding of the qualities and capabilities of the medium.

Some sculptural work based on distorted heads and figures was of a competent standard and well presented. There was an understanding of 3D form with more refinement in the work.

Other large-scale sculpture was more personal but lacked refinement. A lack of experience with their chosen media made the aesthetic rather crude and further drawings and maquettes would have helped.

Some had made maquettes but these were often more successful than the final outcome.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/03

Coursework B

General comments

There were many approaches to this paper and in general the level of technical competence of candidates was good. In the better submissions candidates had worked with commitment, developing projects thoroughly and choosing their best ideas to sustain into a final outcome. These outcomes were ambitious and personal and demonstrated the candidates' best work. All seemed to appreciate the relevance of critical understanding and this had informed the development of personal ideas.

Some candidates, whilst displaying a certain level of technical competence, produced repetitive or unrelated studies and did not demonstrate a creative journey of sustained investigation or exploration of ideas.

Some Centres could be more selective in the work submitted. Some rather poor quality images mixed in with much stronger work was presented.

Other Centres encouraged very large-scale work and presented photographs as evidence. Occasionally this scale seemed to be a Centre focus and did not suit all candidates.

In other instances ideas, especially those concerned with abstract emotions or social/political issues were too ambitious for the levels of skill.

In less successful submissions there was little evidence of research and only a small amount of poor quality studies, concluding with an unrelated final piece with little or no reference to planning their compositions.

The use of sketchbooks was variable, ranging from a small number of Centres that did not include sketchbooks in their submissions through to some Centres that only submitted a few very poor sketchbooks with no other work at all. The best sketchbooks evolved as the candidates' projects developed and clearly demonstrated the candidates' critical thinking and understanding through annotated experimentation and exploration. In some other cases, sketchbooks amounted to little more than a random collection of drawings that did not inform the development of the candidate's work and tended to reinforce evidence of candidate's lack of critical thinking and independence.

Comments on specific areas of study

Painting and related media

A wide variety of materials were used; oils, oil pastels, acrylic, watercolour, inks, charcoal, coloured pencils and mixed media combinations glue and tissue paper, cardboard and corrugated card. A few more Centres had included simple printmaking: lino, dry-point, etching, collograph and mono-print in the supporting studies, which adds to the depth and variety of media. Watercolour had been used in a very skilled way.

The best work showed research and sustained development and refined ideas towards the finished piece. The most successful subjects were the most accessible; portraits of family and friends, street scenes, buildings, markets, the seashore and the landscape. In the very best submissions the work was very creative both in terms of concept and presentation. The candidates had clearly researched relevant artists and understood the concepts behind the creation of artwork. They demonstrated a high level of maturity and personality within their work which had been developed thoughtfully and was produced at a professional looking level.

A few candidates had used a range of 2D and 3D media, and in some cases sound and light, to produce installations for their final outcomes. These had been documented through photography and video in addition to the sketchbooks and other preparatory materials. All of this work demonstrated strong social

concerns and was undoubtedly personal and ambitious in its investigation of concepts. Video interviews attested to the fact that the best work was emotive and successfully connected with its audience. However, generally the development of the individual components or works within the installations lacked sufficient investigation and refinement of their technical qualities. While the best work was skilfully made, some candidates had given little time to exploring how their interesting and ambitious ideas could be translated into visual form and the making of the actual work was simplistic; in some cases, skills were very poor indeed.

In the weaker submissions much of the work was copied and traced from photographs and downloaded images and then reworked in different media. The design for the final piece was often practised more than once, losing life and vitality.

Photography

There was a wide variety of work seen. The best were well presented on sheets of card showing research and development. There was evidence of the development of the ideas with alternative shots in the thumbnails. There had been some exploration of the idea through digital software. There was some lively reportage style work that had been beautifully presented. This work demonstrated that these candidates had a keen eye for capturing a moment and choosing appropriate scenes rather than producing 'snaps'.

The weaker submissions were little different from Component 2; there was little in-depth research and investigation. Ideas had not been explored and developed through different photographic techniques.

Many candidates had merely taken photographs of their immediate surroundings with little thought given to lighting, mood, atmosphere or subject. These images were then distorted using digital effects but little knowledge or understanding of the medium was evident within the work. There were some submissions where images displayed a certain level of technical knowledge but did not connect to form a coherent project.

There was some interesting video work submitted with very individual themes where nostalgic images of home video had been intertwined with a modern footage and the overlapping created an interesting juxtaposition of atmosphere and meaning. Others with a narrative or with a message: bravery, soccer, school safety, costumes, texting and driving. Most were competent and the best were personal and inventive with consideration given to lighting and editing. Unfortunately there was very little supporting work submitted to show other experience with film making or references to professional film makers.

Graphic design

A wide range of areas were covered; magazine advertisements, CD covers, DVD covers, logos, letterheads, book jackets and posters – but none in great depth.

The best submissions were only competent and the worst were poor.

There was insufficient research and investigation at the start of the project. Ideas seemed to appear from nowhere and had not been explored, developed and refined. There were few variations on the designs or experiments with colour.

There were scrapbook reference sheets of printed graphics but no references to acknowledged graphic designers.

Fashion and textile design

There was very little fashion design. The strongest submissions were where candidates had used observational drawings of architecture as a starting point and produced outcomes which were very well researched and highly personal. Appropriate materials were used and the technical competence in creating the finished outcomes was generally good.

Candidates demonstrated an enthusiasm for their subject and a knowledge of contemporary designers, however, most of the candidates' own work consisted only of a series of generalised final design shapes. The successful entries had used their own first-hand studies to explore and refine their use of fabrics and media which enabled them to develop detailed designs that had clearly defined and inventive identities.

Other entries were less successful because they relied on adapting or printing on to existing garments which did not allow for high levels of creativity.

3D design and sculpture

There were very few submissions in this area; most were well presented on thin sheets of card with good photographs showing only limited development of the idea from initial research to the finished coursework piece. There were a few examples where candidates had explored twisted tree forms and hands effectively demonstrating competent levels of skill.

Otherwise achievement levels were poor to satisfactory.

Almost all candidates would have benefited from more research at the start of the project. Ideas should be developed through experiment and practice in the medium. Maquettes, models, photographs of models, investigations into materials and perspective drawings would all provide evidence that candidates understand the properties of working in 3D design and sculpture.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/04
Personal Study

General Comments

A very wide range of levels of ability were seen within the submissions this year. Most of the centres found to be at the higher levels of achievement had used the proposal forms available. This ensures that candidates carry out some advanced planning and indicate some essential first-hand sources, all subject to approval. These Centres had clearly advised their candidates to ensure they had first-hand experience, through interviews with artists, visits to studios and museums. A few Centres had interpreted first-hand as meaning links to the candidates own work, to the exclusion of other cultural connections. There are still some Centres where using resources from the internet is considered to be first-hand experience. These are very relevant and helpful when used in conjunction with personal visits for example. The majority of candidates achieved a level that was adequate/ satisfactory, often reaching levels of competence. Many reached very good levels of attainment with quite a few seen to be within the excellent and outstanding levels. At the lower level, many candidates were seen to be at the poor band of achievement.

Personal Qualities:

For submissions within the lower bands of achievement, any evidence of first-hand study was often completely absent, with candidates relying mostly on the internet, often without correct reference to source material. Some candidates had downloaded information about techniques i.e. printmaking/photography, often presenting this information in an essay format without any discussion of artworks. In the lower to middle levels of assessment, some candidates had included photographs of their own coursework as evidence of first-hand research. This was valuable and relevant when some critical and comparative analysis of other Artists' work was included. However, many of these candidates had merely discussed how they had created their own paintings.

Submissions found to be within the middle to higher levels of achievement had included evidence of research and experience gained from direct contact with visits to artists, galleries, workshops; interviews were usually first-hand but email was also used. The questions themselves revealed the level of understanding and knowledge of the candidates. Submissions at the highest level often included a mixture of different approaches, with all their source material clearly identified.

Manipulative and Analytical skills:

Within the lower to middle bands, the presentation and selection of material was sometimes very poor; a few candidates had included material that was not relevant to their topic. Often at these levels, material had been downloaded and presented as text with little selection and without any consideration of art works.

In the middle to high levels of assessment, the inclusion of analysis and comparison was common to all candidates. Often experience of a first-hand visit to an artist was used to develop a theme, for example, explorations of colour, landscape or a particular technique such as batik, with some interesting cultural comparisons. Some candidates had selected topics such as photography and music or the portrayal of the skeletal structure in humans and animals. There were a few studies on specific topics such as sculpture or ceramics. Such a choice had allowed for significant comparative analysis to be made with a focus on the aesthetic elements of colour, form, texture.

Aesthetic Qualities:

The submissions at the lower levels of attainment were mostly limited to material from the internet, often with poor quality images or even some without any images. There were several examples with hand written text, sometimes very difficult to read. The more successful examples used hand-written text to create a more personal quality to the presentation. This was often seen within the middle bands, particularly where the submission included visits and interviews. At this level, most candidates had considered the presentation

carefully and had included a mixture of images from their own photographs, sketches and notes recording their first-hand experience. Increasingly digital software was used to show an understanding through the presentation; layering and contrasting images together, making strong visual comparisons combined with relevant text. At best, the use of digital applications was creative and visually stimulating; often combined with the candidate's own visual studies to create a more personal response. At the highest levels the studies often included art work that revealed high levels of skills and the outcome was very impressive. Some candidates had explored a particular technique, such as Indian miniature painting, including examples of professional quality. Some studies contained more visual images than text, this was often more relevant and was sometimes used to show analysis of images while displaying high levels of understanding and awareness. Some excellent studies also included very high quality photographs, either of candidates own work or as an artwork. The use of photography where candidates had investigated architecture provided opportunities for some excellent and personal work. Some exceptional studies were seen which contained very imaginative and well informed visual explorations interwoven with extremely perceptive and individual critical analysis, all presented in hand-made and spiral bound A3 books.

Knowledge and Critical Understanding:

There was a distinction between submissions at the lower to middle levels and those candidates who had achieved a competent to exceptional level, in the way that a very clear and evident learning path had taken place; this was often seen in an evaluation or conclusion at the end or in a further development of a candidates own work, informed and inspired by their experience and knowledge gained from personal research. The strongest candidates had developed their own work that was of a high quality showing their understanding, with close comparison to selected works. In one example, a candidate had researched contemporary religious images, resulting in their own personal photographs.

The few submissions found to have reached the exceptional level of ability demonstrated the extremely high standards of Knowledge and Critical Understanding that it is possible to achieve for this particular component.