ART AND DESIGN

> **Paper 0400/01**
> **Broad-Based Assignment**

General comments

In this series, responses were received for all ten questions. There were some strong pieces submitted but it was noticeable that many candidates showed their best work in their preparation rather than in the final piece. Many candidates were able to demonstrate the investigation of the materials being used in their preparations. There was often an impressive range of media used, and the approaches taken were also varied and imaginative.

Candidates achieving the higher levels of achievement often worked initially from direct observation using drawing and photography to record and investigate their chosen question in detail. Their preparatory studies included a range of source material, both local and global, and thorough experimentation of materials and techniques. Artist research had influenced the candidates' ideas for developing the final outcome and the ways to explore media and processes.

In the mid-range submissions there was sometimes a lack of connection between the preparatory work and the unsupported examination piece, which often showed a complete change of direction. Also at the mid-mark range, some preparatory work explored a very limited range of outcomes.

Much of the work at the lower level lacked the research from first-hand observation that was needed to appropriately form initial ideas and studies. Consequently, submissions did not contain the range of ideas required to form the basis of a cohesive body of work. There was little experimentation and an over reliance on repeated images and ideas, with a limited use of materials. Technical skills were unrefined and underdeveloped and observational understanding was limited. Any inclusions of artist referencing tended to be inappropriate and did not inform the direction of the work. Outcomes lacked refinement and development, and made little progress from the initial thoughts.

In the stronger submissions, media was often handled with great skill and complexity. Most of the submissions were in paint and related 2D media, but there were some photographic and textile submissions. Very few 3D submissions were seen. Some printmaking was seen and candidates included lino/block prints as part of mixed media explorations combined with photography, textiles, paint, etc.

Photography was used as a medium in its own right in a number of submissions. In the lower mark range candidates rarely moved beyond a single photo shoot. Outcomes in the lower mark range were often unrelated to the preparatory work. Photographic work in the upper mark range frequently explored several separate photo shoots when exploring compositions. Some candidates showed a strong use of graphics pads and Photoshop and demonstrated a mature understanding of how to integrate these new technologies with traditional observational skills, hand generated media experiments and text.

Generally, the submissions were well presented, clearly labelled and submitted on appropriately sized card or paper. However, in some submissions the final outcome was not clearly indicated and was sometimes not labelled. Some submissions used inappropriate materials such as moss with soil still attached. Others used dried leaves which had often disintegrated into dust becoming unfit for purpose. Other inappropriate materials used included nails, drawing pins, broken glass and tablets. Frequently, the glue used to attach the work to the mount sheets was inadequate and pieces of work often became detached. In some submissions there was lengthy written material. Whilst brief notation can help in explaining a candidate's thought process and intentions, long downloaded extracts detailing the history of a subject or process, or providing biographical details of artists is not necessary.

The most popular questions were **Question 2: A pile of books, pens, pencils and a lamp** and **Question 3: Retro**.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: Mechanical madness

This question inspired a very wide range of interpretations and some were very esoteric. Among these were automata which were used to make mechanical mark making patterns on a range of surfaces. Pendulums were used to make a range of elliptical patterns and experiments were made with computers linked to these devices which made adjustments to the swing of the pendulum. Steam Punk was a popular genre with the middle to lower range candidates.

Candidates at the higher level often created a good personal interpretation to the question. Many candidates reflected on the use of technology in their lives and so their portfolios reflected a coherent journey exploring their own thoughts and ideas. At this level observational work tended to be based on the human figure, combined with mechanical components, such as cogs and springs. Images were confident, strong and imaginative, and work was well developed and ideas were thoroughly explored. Other work focused on machinery and candidates took excellent photographs or made drawings of complicated machine parts demonstrating a confident use of line and tone. Some good decisions were made about what to include in their observations and how to produce strong successful compositions.

The middle range of work relied more heavily on other artists' interpretation of machinery, and this was copied and not fully developed. There was less evidence of individual research and experimentation of different media.

In the lower mark range the representation of the motor car was a popular interpretation. However, work was generally not well researched and was often based on poorly constructed copies from secondary sources such as promotional photographs and technical illustrations. Other submissions achieving lower marks were unable to demonstrate the ability to record from relevant and appropriate sources and were often imagined with little evidence of development or investigation into the question.

Question 2: A pile of books, pens, pencils and a lamp

Many of the submissions for this question focused strongly on traditional observational and drawing skills. This starting point provided the candidates with accessible sources to enable recording from direct observation.

The stronger candidates showed excellent use of observational work, with back-up photographs of still-life arrangements in organised light conditions creating interesting and exciting shadows. The subsequent studies showed a range of compositional exploratory work, sometimes with emotive and atmospheric detail. Many candidates at this level realised the potential of the unifying effect of an illuminated lamp which provided a source of light within the picture. The dramatic dark shadows which were produced merged into a dark background and produced a chiaroscuro effect with object outlines being merged into shadows.

In mid-level submissions observational work still provided some of the best starting points for research. Sound observational drawing was often seen, combined with the development of tonality through drawing and photography. However, some responses were straightforward and lacked interpretation and exploration of the theme. Some Centres adopted a rigid formulaic approach and all candidates responded to this question and worked from the same starting point. This limited the personal qualities that could be displayed.

At the lower level, candidates relied on a more limited range of source material. Therefore the exploration of their starting point also demonstrated limited qualities, with very little evidence of the exploration of a range of materials. These candidates lacked the technical skills to produce coherent studies and demonstrated a weak understanding of tone and form. Images tended to be flat with little sense of depth or space and were often simplistic. Basic groupings of objects were put together with little understanding of forming a composition. The control of media was weak. Most of the preparatory studies at this level did not contain sufficient explorations or appropriate research to form the basis of a coherent body of work. Alternative ideas for the final composition were not apparent resulting in uninformed and unresolved submissions.

Question 3: Retro

Inspiration was taken from a combination of personal images from direct study and from found material. Toys, clothing, fashion, accessories, furniture, telephones, record players, objects made of metal and wood with interesting patinas were amongst the inspired sources.

While there were some strong submissions, most of the work fell into the mid and low mark range. Middle achieving work demonstrated an ability to explore a range of media in order to develop the initial images that had been gathered from secondary sources. Many candidates chose to use photography as a way of gathering first-hand source material.

Pop Art influences were frequently seen with works by Andy Warhol, Roy Lichtenstein and Robert Indiana providing inspiration in terms of style, techniques and subject matter. However candidates in the lower mark range often failed to provide evidence of working from direct observation and in the mid-mark range several candidates just imitated these works. The concepts behind this movement were mostly ignored with candidates simply focusing on techniques and style.

In the case of photographic submissions some candidates found suitable locations for their work but a lack of planning with a single photo shoot meant that most images were limited. Where candidates had revisited their selected venues at different times and weather conditions the development and exploration of subject matter was of a higher standard.

Question 4: In disguise

This was a popular question and many candidates were interested in disguising their own faces with a variety of different objects such as masks, foliage and flowers, cloth and mirrors, or portraying themselves as hidden or distorted with photography and Photoshop techniques. The higher achieving candidates often looked to their own cultural identity of mask-making. Combining the human figure with animal heads was a very popular idea. Some submissions showed that alternative compositions had been considered, with the inclusion of candidates' own photography, paintings and drawings from differing viewpoints and layouts of ideas, within the preparatory work. This led to some well-considered and dramatic final outcomes.

Some candidates based their responses on invented forms and imagination. Such works tended to be in the mid-mark range and were often based on surrealist landscapes and still life compositions. Mid-level submissions showed some clarity in their sense of a journey and had some control and exploration with various media. The range of references was often broad and included folk, religious or ethnographic aspects which made the submissions far more engaging. The skills seen in observation and media handling reflected the feeling of a deep and sensitive connection to the subject.

Lower achieving work included straightforward development which was mainly from found images of faces and masks. Candidates often just copied the image as the outcome in the exam. The preparatory work was fairly static and often showed little relation to the final image. Artist references were not seen and there were few primary sources. There was some variety in the choice of media but the control of these media was very basic and there was no real understanding of the potential qualities of the materials being used.

Question 5: Leaf, petal and root patterns

Stronger candidates produced excellent development of ideas using a range of responses to the theme. Photographic work explored evidence of textures, colour and form and experimented with a range of techniques. There was evidence of observational drawing and the use of traditional techniques of shading to suggest form, colour and composition. Candidates included evidence of the work of artists and designers which helped with the development of the final outcomes. At this level examples of both lino and screen printing were seen with a very high standard of registration of colour.

The middle level work also contained good observational skills, but there were inconsistencies. There was evidence of detail, abstraction and pattern work which had been rendered through a range of exploratory materials. Candidates explored the patterns formed by the veins in the leaves and petals. They explored colour, but the results were less sophisticated and considered than the higher level work and the application of the media was inconsistently manipulated. Surface qualities were often textured with an interesting use of collage with watery paint and ink that was washed over to form a background for the application of sharper detail. Close-up compositions produced abstracted effects. Repeat patterns were often seen and William Morris was a popular artist used for inspiration. Detail was evident in the preparatory work, but this was not always reflected in the final outcome.

Lower achieving submissions displayed no real understanding of pattern or design and concentrated on painting a single leaf, petal and root as a still life. Although work was often colourful there was little evidence of an understanding of tone and composition.

Question 6: Out of the blue

Responses to this question were very individual in approach and ideas were varied. Candidates in the middle and lower of the mark ranges selected this topic, with just a few at the higher level. Some candidates responded to the question imaginatively finding ways to represent a sudden idea or inspiration out of the blue in order to develop a favourite theme such as fashion or costume design.

Stronger work demonstrated an ability to experiment with the colour and effects of blue filters using photography, printmaking and digital manipulation as well as paint effects exploring watercolour, acrylic, oil and inks.

Underwater cameras were often used by candidates in the mid-mark range to explore the reflections and distorted images of swimmers in pools and the sea. Figures emerging from the sea were also presented at this level.

Candidates in the lower mark range often focused on fishing boats and these were often based on imagination rather than observation.

Question 7: A reclining figure with their hands behind their heads

The strongest submissions for this question often included observational studies of more than one figure and these supporting studies included sketches, detailed observational studies and own photography of various people in different poses, with good reference to other artists. Candidates rendered proportion, form, structure and space with considerable accuracy. Experiments were seen at this level which recorded a range of models and viewpoints including foreshortening of the models from a range of angles Candidates worked in a range of media exploring tone, colour, background and composition.

At the middle level, the range of materials was more limited with inconsistent technical skills, but there were some successful submissions which explored the figure through line, etching and ink. References to artists inspired ideas and Lucien Freud was very popular. At this level candidates often relied on copying from photographs rather than working directly from the figure. Consequently, images tended to be flat and lacked the vitality of the stronger work. Candidates struggled to understand and form an accurate representation of complex poses, proportion and perspective. These submissions lacked the technical understanding of the higher level work.

Question 8: Crossing over

Many candidates chose to explore the theme of old age and the passing of time and included images of childhood. This aspect of family life was explored in great depth with many photographs, observational studies and written annotations about grandparents. The stronger candidates were able to develop these collected images into a successful final outcome demonstrating good compositional skills and technical ability in a range of media.

Crossing over in terms of time was investigated by some candidates, who compared the changes between historic periods with references to customs, architecture, legends and artworks. These were mostly in the lower mark range. In these examples, secondary sources were often used with little evidence of working from primary sources.

Question 9: Twilight

Some of the more successful candidates explored beautiful, atmospheric photographs of night time, expressing personal qualities in paint and developed these into sustained studies of ghostly images of empty landscapes.

Other interpretations of the question involved the concept of the "twilight of their years". These examples were mainly seen in the mid and upper mark range and took the form of very sympathetically recorded portraits of older people. Picasso's Blue Period was also used as a starting point by candidates in the mid-mark range.

Twilight activities such as beach parties showing silhouetted figures seen against dramatic skies sometime with fires creating additional sources of light within the picture were seen in the upper mark range.

The less successful submissions relied too heavily on secondary sourced images and did not attempt to record from direct observation. Photography would have been a useful form of recording for these candidates and could have encouraged more development and investigation of the question. Some candidates at this level chose to place a person into the final outcome without including initial studies of figures in the supporting work. More planning was needed to inform the final composition and to present a well-considered outcome in the exam.

Question 10: Embellish

The more successful submissions explored their own cultural expression of embellishment in terms of national costume, hairstyles and crafts with some very effective and detailed studies of ceramics, carved doorways and temple spaces in the supporting studies. These were often developed and manipulated using a range of media into a considered and resolved final composition in the exam.

The ornate quality of jewellery was a popular choice in the embellishment of figures and candidates were keen to exploit this avenue of enquiry. This enabled candidates to zoom in and concentrate on detail and to experiment with abstract qualities.

Candidates in the middle mark range also explored figurative embellishment such as body art and make up, with heavily made up faces and eyes. Some of the work illustrated symbolic patterns and shapes which embellished the skin and adorned cloth with effective and personal results. Candidates explored various media through a range of compositions demonstrating some skill and sensitivity, but showed inconsistencies in the refinement of ideas.

Weaker submissions generally consisted of an outline of an object which was then decorated with a few patterns. The use of media in these submissions was not strong with fairly clumsy use of felt tip or other media that lacked any sensitivity. The preparatory work here lacked artist references and was also generally missing primary source material. There was no real developmental aspect to these submissions, as the preparatory work consisted of a few fairly unconnected images which often failed to show any sense of a journey or connection with the final piece.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/02
Design-based Assignment

Key Messages

- Rather than relying on secondary images, candidates should be encouraged to draw directly from their subject matter or from personal photographs which inevitably enhances understanding of the topic.

- Candidates should ensure work submitted in their supporting studies is linked to the final outcome and helps to demonstrate how this outcome has been reached.

General comments

The paper offered a balanced range of opportunities and subject matter for the design process and encouraged personal experience and observation as the basis for several distinct outcomes in graphics, fashion, textiles, jewellery, product design and sculpture.

The presentation of the work was very good at the higher end. Candidates at this level showed excellent use of first-hand observational work and very good ideas development and editing to select their most relevant designs. Particular attention was paid to the way they presented their work which culminated in informed personal responses showing creative vision and commitment. However some submissions were untidy and often more sheets than necessary were submitted. Some critical editing would have helped in these cases. Some submissions included pages of information showing colour swatches and irrelevant notes about materials and colours were added by some weaker candidates. Less attention was paid to research and gathering/developing ideas. Supporting work included every tracing and rough drawing. These candidates often copied the same image in different media rather than developing a range of different ideas, or used the same secondary reference as each other which resulted in almost identical final images.

Stronger candidates divided the preparatory period well between research, drawing and developing ideas to reach alternative solutions. Weaker candidates tended to focus on one or the other and only offer one design solution. Stronger candidates included relevant research and exploration linked to one another across the whole sheet showing the progress of design ideas and solutions. However on occasion, some excellent research was overlooked or not followed through in the examination piece. Primary research was at its best in **Question 2: Sewing Equipment** and **Question 4: Something from the Sea**, where some very good photography, drawing and painting techniques were used to portray lobsters, crabs and fish from local fish markets. Lower ability candidates collected much of their reference from the internet, the prints of which were too small or inadequate to work from. Although some of their own photography was in evidence too this was seldom of a useful quality.

Relevant annotation was included only by the strongest candidates. Little personal critique or evaluation was seen. There was a tendency at the lower and mid-levels to have no notes at all or to describe the media used, rather than the candidate's ideas.

Experimentation with a range of media was rarely seen, with most candidates choosing pencil, biro and markers plus sometimes watercolours or acrylic paint. A few responses were seen using 2D media. Candidates would have benefited from further practice of observational drawing and compositional skills in preparation for their final outcomes. There were also some 3D final outcomes. Some candidates carried out work in clay showing stages of the making of their sculptures but with no reference or idea development. The standard of finish in the 3D submissions was variable. Many lacked planning and experiments with the chosen media and the presentation was poor. Submissions were also seen in printmaking, photography and some outcomes demonstrated digital manipulation.

There was research about artists/designers from some candidates but they were not always relevant to their themes. Occasionally references which had no relevance to the question were included. Designers were not always mentioned by name, and examples of fashions, logos, illustrations, etc. were seen without any notes to identify their inclusion.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: Bugs & Vine

Most candidates who selected this question presented boards squared up as in Snakes and Ladders with a few vines snaking their way over it and the counters were bugs. The reference material gathered consisted of a few photos of leaves, a ladybird or beetle image and idea development was limited.

In stronger submissions first-hand photos were taken to support the design of the board game and a range of shapes were considered before developing a final design. Different images of bugs and winged insects were produced which helped candidates to develop thoughtful projects.

Mid-range candidates showed some quality in the standard of painting and drawing. However weaker submissions showed little technical skill. Some were lacking in creativity and relevance to the theme.

Even though most candidates presented a range of fonts in their research they were not always referred to again. Some were hand rendered, but most candidates printed out a few examples.

Question 2: Sewing equipment/repeat pattern

Photos and drawings of scissors and cotton reels were often referenced as were sewing machines, buttons, needles and embroidery silks.

At the highest level, there were some competent observational drawings and photos of a range of equipment. Different compositions led to experiments with a range of 2D media. These enabled the candidates to make informed judgements regarding compositional balance and successful repeat patterns. Digital manipulation was used by a few candidates to produce their repeats. However these were quite simplistic and often did not show any linking between the patterns.

Weaker candidates' work had limited resources to work from and observational drawings often showed a lack of understanding of form and few technical skills. The same studies were sometimes repeated in different colours and media but these did not add anything to the final designs. Outcomes were limited to very basic repeats.

There was very little in the submissions that referred to different styles of repeat patterns. Quite a few of the weaker candidates lacked knowledge of the rudiments of repeats and therefore produced inconsistent, asymmetrical designs. However at the higher level there was an understanding of this. These submissions often included pictorial examples of existing wallpaper or fabric designs but no artists or designers were mentioned.

Question 3: A book is like a garden carried in the pocket.

This poetic question gave candidates good opportunities to produce creative responses using drawings or photography. Most of the research images at the lower levels found photos of flowers, leaves and trees, but the stronger candidates used their own photography and drawings. Reference to other illustrators was seen in a few of the higher submissions and were used to enhance the style of drawing with very good effect.

Most of the submissions were in the lower mark bands, and these were often incoherently designed with confused images and relied on the same few collected pieces of research. When included, hands or faces were often poorly copied from photos or badly drawn from life showing a limited understanding of anatomy. Experiments with colour would have benefitted the submissions at this lower level.

Question 4: Something from the Sea

Submissions for this question ranged over all the mark bands with most work in the middle bands. The final outcomes were generally produced to a very good standard, mostly in paint.

This question produced lots of primary and secondary research which included drawing and photography of crabs, lobsters, oysters, shells and many different types of fish.

The stronger work showed gathering and recording in paint and photography, from a good range of sources including a few visits to fish markets. Excellent observational images were produced and these were developed into compositions using paint, pens, stencils, rubbings or collage, with an emphasis on texture and colour. Typography was explored thoroughly with candidates choosing fonts that reflected the nautical theme. The quality of the designs at this level was very creative and referenced the work of other artists to develop unusual and personal styles.

Middle candidates also produced some good observational work in a range of media but their idea development was less rigorous and sometimes complex ideas were not worked through sufficiently well. When this occurred the final artwork suffered and became muddled and overworked, particularly when candidates had chosen to design the menu.

At the lower end of the mark range candidates had minimal reference and relied on secondary sources for their ideas, often producing cartoon fish and digitally produced type. In several of the submissions candidates gave more emphasis to the buildings where their posters were displayed than the actual posters. The quality of drawing and finish was very limited.

Question 5: On your bike

The stronger submissions had satisfactory reference and used some creative thought to find personal solutions to this question. Observational drawings and candidates' own photographs of bikes and their parts were reasonably thorough and an adequate range of different media were used to develop ideas. These included collage and some digital printouts of type.

The weaker candidates worked less from observation and although some took their own photographs, these were not always referred to. Generic drawings of bikes, often inaccurate, were still used. There was little idea development or well-rendered type and this resulted in poor final outcomes.

Leger and the Cubists were referenced as well as the Futurists by some of the stronger candidates. Very few candidates took the opportunity to show their banner in context.

Question 6: Clothes based on architecture

In the strongest submissions, ideas were developed from a selection of found images. The patterning and decorative details were used well and creative outcome were produced.

Mid-range candidates lacked a range of reference and had few ideas. Often in these submissions the shape of the clothes was not considered and the designs were just decoration on the front.

Weaker candidates' research was often limited to one or two small internet images of buildings and very limited idea development. Sometimes photocopies of buildings were cut out and collaged together as a design on the clothes. Drawings skills were very poor at this level and were often just in pencil or crayon.

Question 7: Bake House

This question provided many opportunities for first-hand reference drawings and photography. Some candidates visited cake shops to take photos whilst others even made their own cakes. Cupcakes, croissants, gateaux and doughnuts were often seen. Often the same internet images and typefaces were used, particularly in the lower level work, as were copies of cartoon chefs and smiley cakes. Wayne Theibaud's paintings were the only artist images to be sourced. Examples of other logos were printed out and included in supporting sheets by most candidates, even though they were not always relevant or used.

Observational paintings and drawings were of a good standard in the strongest submissions and colour and textures were well used. Typography was also of a good standard.

The strongest candidates used their own photography to develop a range of ideas through experimentation with different strap lines and presentation. A range of typographical examples were shown, both drawn by hand and digitally manipulated.

At the mid-level included generally technique and composition were satisfactory but references were repetitive and there was little idea development.

At the lower level candidates often collected lots of small examples of existing logos from the internet or produced tiny pencil drawings, relying on their imagination for ideas. Most outcomes were poorly finished and presented.

Question 8: Jewellery based on Birds.

Candidates at all levels engaged well with this question. This was a successful theme which provided a good quantity of research images of parrots, peacocks, swans, flamingos, crows, owls, etc. Some were candidates own photographs from zoos, but most were second-hand images from the internet. However some first-hand drawings of feathers and a few bones and bird skulls were submitted.

Reference to artists who had painted birds and internet images of jewellery were included by most candidates and some candidates took photographs of their own jewellery as well. Some well observed first-hand drawings and paintings were produced. The most usual designs were for earrings, bracelets, necklaces and brooches.

The strongest submissions were well-produced designs and showed good development of ideas. Many candidates showed good exploration of their ideas and use of media, culminating in involved painted designs.

At the mid-level less observational drawing was carried out, but candidates' own photographs were still included. Ideas were often under developed and were more factual and less creative. Jewellery with hanging peacock feathers was very popular. A controlled use of paint in the final designs was sometimes seen and there was evidence of manipulation of images, but the exploration and expressive intentions were not so evident at this level.

Weaker candidates submitted little secondary reference and ideas were very limited. Poor technical skills prevented experimentation with media and final outcomes were simplistic: often a single bird on a chain.

Question 9: Midsummer Nights' Dream

Costume designs, posters and stage sets were the most popular designs. There were some submissions that used digital manipulation but most candidates worked with paint, coloured pencil and pens plus some collage.

At the highest level there were some creative submissions with figures drawn with good proportion and in lively poses. Many submissions included evidence of investigation and research and included photos and drawings of natural forms with useful references to artists, designers and illustrators.

Many outcomes in the mid-range included work taken exactly from an existing design in the reference material but some of these submissions were able to display an atmospheric feel to the work. Often although the responses were adequate, the designs were not fully developed.

Weaker submissions included limited research and lacked technical ability, showing uncontrolled painting and inaccurate figure drawing. Composition and colour work was poor and candidates would have benefitted from experimenting and practicing more with their chosen media.

Georgia O'Keefe's work was a popular reference for flower painting.

Question 10: Public Sculpture

The stronger submissions included some innovative and ambitious pieces which were supported by candidates' own photography. However even at this level there was sometimes a lack of experimentation with the chosen media, resulting in outcomes lacking in understanding of form and presentation.

Weaker submissions were adequately drawn but were often not backed up with any reference or ideas development.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/03
Critical and Historical Assignment

A very broad range of topics were chosen for this component. Subjects seen were within the areas of fine art, sculpture and painting, architecture, textiles, ceramics and jewellery. The design areas of fashion, graphics, and three dimensional-design were also submitted. The majority of work seen was within the middle level of attainment.

Some candidates had taken a thematic approach to the assignment which often involved making connections through their own practical responses. These were found to be particularly successful when clearly informed by first-hand experience gained from a visit to an artist's studio or gallery. Many candidates benefited from practical engagement with some of the processes involved with the production of two and three dimensional works.

Most candidates made good use of the outline proposal forms (OPF). These encouraged well-considered planning and enabled the candidates to make their aims and intentions clear. Many submissions at the lower levels of attainment had often clearly not made use of these forms.

The use of photographic recording was seen and was used in an imaginative way to document some personal first-hand observations. Supporting written analysis was concise and provided some intelligently informed personal insights.

Sources for first-hand study included visits to artists' studios, art galleries, museums and buildings of architectural significance, and had provided material for written and visual analysis. Several submissions achieving marks within the higher levels of attainment had made good use of their first-hand studies to develop ideas and discussion around the work of the selected artists and their own practical explorations.

Very thorough gathering was made at the higher levels. Assignments were all well researched and the imagery used to support the discussion was relevant. The selection of imagery at this level of achievement demonstrated a sense of purpose in many cases, clearly helping to inform the development of ideas. Hand-rendered studies showed skill and understanding of the formal elements and of how to manipulate materials. Candidates demonstrated a fluency in both visual and written languages.

The general presentation of these assignments was strong and showed a level of commitment, integrity and involvement regardless of whether they were in a sketchbook format or an illustrated essay. Within the digitally produced works the personal qualities and level of curiosity and exploration could be seen through the juxtaposition of photographs/images used and how well the candidates own personal judgements were informed.

Submissions with a practical focus often showed promise but were unable to bring the various elements together. At this level the candidates tended to have a singular focus in developing a specific skill in relation to a selected artist. Much of the understanding was developed through a practical exploration with related annotations and experiments rather than an in-depth analysis of the works. These assignments demonstrated some progression through the practical elements but lacked refinement and reflection.

Assignments within this middle range of marks started to bring an element of personality, skill with materials and consideration to the overall look of the project. The candidates were able to make connections visually through the layout of the work, use of materials and the development of their own ideas.

At the lower levels of assessment candidates relied heavily on secondary source material for images and written information. Some submissions made no attempt to disguise the use of downloaded text mixed in with their own. This was presented by word processing the text and cutting it up and placing around the images in a poorly presented way.

The method of using images and materials was basic at this level due to a lack of understanding of the work of the artists selected. This could have been improved through more thorough analysis and practical experiments. At this lower level, assignments lacked any evidence of real engagement with the subject. The visual work gave some indication of the level of involvement which was sometimes lively in terms of colour and layout.

The quality and structure of the language used, both visual and written, indicated the level of understanding and awareness for the subject achieved by the candidate. Submissions reaching the highest levels of achievement demonstrated thorough and persistent research, outstanding visual awareness supported by mature and perceptive observations and judgements. These were often featured in a well written and very personal evaluation to conclude the assignment. Some excellent material-based and mostly visual assignments were seen. These demonstrated high levels of engagement, imaginative and inventive visual awareness combined with perceptive critical thinking and reflection.

ART AND DESIGN

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Paper 0400/04
Coursework Assignment

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General comments

Painting and Related Media was the most popular area of study, and some candidates had also creatively explored mixed media and printmaking. Photography was also popular with evidence of digital drawing on tablets. Only a few submissions were seen specialising in Graphic Design, Fashion and Textiles, or 3D Design.

The strongest work regardless of the topic, always began with first-hand observation and developed with a personal engagement of the theme. This was further complimented by visits to local craftspeople, galleries, museums and relevant local places of interest. Finding support from an artist 's work or traditional craft etc., complements and helps the candidates own work to evolve and also promotes critical thinking, analysis and a personal connection that cannot be gained by referencing work on the internet.

Some candidates in the middle and lower middle range explored ideas imaginatively and carried out a range of appropriate initial experiments with media. However, a significant number of these candidates did not sustain, focus and refine experimentation, enabling techniques to be developed into resolved outcomes. Final outcomes of these candidates were often disappointing. Others did not identify their best skills or their most successful experiments. Here, the scale of the final piece was often also an issue. In some cases outcomes were very incomplete and seemed to have had a limited amount of time allocated to their creation.

Some of the weaker candidates produced a collection of random still life drawings and paintings. These demonstrated limited skills and no evidence of researching the work of artists in the chosen genre. The weakest works lacked any evidence of candidates researching the work of other artists to inform the development of their own ideas. Consequently, exploration of ideas and experimentation with media was limited. Final outcomes were unresolved, demonstrating limited skills and personal qualities.

Almost as weak were the submissions where candidates included reproductions or their own simple copies of the work of other artists, often accompanied by generic copied notes. The absence of any personal responses to this (claimed) research was confirmed by the lack of evidence of connections being formed with the candidates' own practical work. Simple collecting was indicative of limited understanding.

A significant number of the weakest candidates relied entirely on secondary source to produce their work. The labelling of this work as "first-hand studies" suggested that these candidates did not understand the difference between direct studies and the use of second-hand sources. Some of the weakest candidates simply copied low quality cartoons.

The presentation of the coursework was generally acceptable and most of the work was well mounted on thin card or substantial paper. Nearly all Centres made good efforts to present the candidates' work well. However, one or two Centres submitted work on very heavy card which was not necessary. There were also a few candidates in the lowest mark range, whose submissions would have benefited from more care in compilation and presentation. Most submissions were labelled correctly and securely fastened. Some 3D work was submitted photographically. The preparation, organisation of work and the appropriate use of media were generally good. However, candidates who chose to cover their paintings with cling film obscured the visual qualities of their work.

Centres were inclined to be extremely generous in all assessment objectives but particularly with marks for technical skills and idea development. A few Centres had made realistic assessments of their candidate's abilities, through an appropriate application of the mark scheme. However, often the order of merit was correct but the Centres overvalued the candidates' technical ability, their ability to develop a range of ideas from initial observational studies and their ability to explore a range of appropriate media leading to a

relevant final outcome. Large adjustments were required to appropriately adjust assessments. Some remarks were required to correct some Centres' order of merit.

Comments on Areas of Study

Painting and Related Media

This was by far the most popular area of study and encompassed a wide range of materials and processes. Mixed media, (often incorporating photography) was particularly inventive and lively.

Stronger submissions showed the most experimentation with media, mostly drawing and painting techniques, with a little collage. Those that were the most successful used watercolours, gouache or drawing to produce sensitively observed self portraits or portraits. Some were beautifully rendered and explored through in-depth observational studies and well referenced to other artists' work.

Examples of plants and flowers too, were often drawn or painted in watercolours with skilful application. Colour was used creatively at the higher and mid levels, with thoughtful experiments to practise techniques for the final artwork. At this level intense first-hand drawing was clearly very beneficial to the outcomes and if a series of relevant photos were taken to compliment them, this often inspired original final responses.

The use of crayons, markers, a little charcoal and pencil were the usual drawing media. In a few submissions biro drawing was attempted with poor results and there were a few examples of relief work and some printing in the supporting work which had varying degrees of success.

Mid range submissions often lacked the original and personal approach seen at the higher level. The submissions either demonstrated good technical abilities with little evidence of working from direct observation or original ideas, or the work was personal with creative and exciting ideas, but lacking in technical skill. The development was often not as coherent and did not show a clear journey. Candidates often produced interesting ideas in the preparatory work, the strengths of which were not always recognised in the outcome, therefore not realising their full potential.

The work at the lower level was often very incoherent and the development of ideas very difficult to understand. The candidates had not spent enough time experimenting with media to develop an understanding of possibilities and limitations. These candidates did not demonstrate adequate observational skills and often relied on secondary-sourced images which had been downloaded from the internet, as their visual research. At other times it was unclear where images had originated, with candidates not referencing the source. There was often an inconsistent use of media in the submission. Poor choices of media use often had a detrimental effect on the completion of the final outcome. At times the supporting studies did not relate to the outcome and a clear progression of ideas leading from the initial collection of images to the outcome was not apparent. It was obvious that the work of many candidates at this level would have benefitted from a greater amount of first-hand study of their chosen topic.

Photography

Photography was mostly used as a means of recording ideas and investigations. Stronger candidates experimented with setting up their own photo shoots to record their ideas, such as using models to demonstrate a specific pose or applying make up and costumes to their subjects as part of their studies.

Photography was also seen as a main area of study. The few more successful submissions demonstrated the candidates' abilities to explore the subject matter fully, taking photographs from different angles and viewpoints as well as altering scale and lighting. Work was developed using a range of experimental techniques including the use of Photoshop and other image manipulation programmes. Reference to the works of other photographers and artists helped to inform ideas. Some candidates chose to manipulate their photographs physically by scratching, tearing and cutting into the images.

However, generally photography submissions were of poor quality. While some good singular final images were seen, these were not supported by sustained investigations of subject matter that explored approaches, processes and techniques. It was extremely rare to find evidence of candidates informing their work by researching technical aspects of the medium or the work of other photographers.

Graphic Design

There were few graphic communication submissions. Stronger work demonstrated good design knowledge, exploring different arrangements of font and scanning in own photographs, which were manipulated to explore possible ways to combine the text and image.

Some final responses using digital drawing were seen. Most lacked technical skill and planning, and consequently the composition was poor. Candidates did not realise the potential of the supporting work which was more exploratory and experimental.

Other submissions showed experiments with different logos, lettering and layouts, mostly with the use of computer software. However, the final design ideas were then painstakingly painted in minute detail. Although this practise showed the candidates' painting ability, it did not add any extra impetus to the development of the projects. It would have been far more beneficial if candidates had painted for its own sake and perhaps scanned in their paintings and worked to develop them into progressing the design process. Recreating a digital design in paint does not fulfil any extra assessment objective criteria.

Fashion and Textile Design

Some submissions included textile work within their supplementary studies and these included batik, screen-printing, weaving and embroidery. These were mostly used as a decorative element but in stronger submissions they became an integral part of the development process of the project.

At the higher level, an engagement of subject matter was clearly evident in the way that the work was developed and experimentation shown. Candidates working in this category often paid attention to the overall presentation of the work and in some cases, great care and ingenuity had been applied to lettering that had been stitched on the page or collages of designs using weaving techniques. These personal touches not only showcased technical ability but also showed an understanding of the overall design aesthetic.

At the lower level, fashion drawings were largely derivative and lacked any personal development. This level of submission tended to rely upon internet imagery or magazine clippings.

3D Design and Sculpture

Relief work and collage were seen as part of the supplementary studies within some submissions but very little sculptural work was seen as a final outcome.

At the higher level, submissions showed a sensitivity and connection to the source of inspiration which was clear and intrinsic to the culmination of the project.

A small number of ceramic sculptures were seen. There were severe limitations in preparatory research and drawing which restricted the development of ideas and techniques. Skills were crude suggesting a very limited knowledge of the media.