
A-LEVEL

ART & DESIGN

7204/C & 7204/X – Textile Design
Report on the Examination

7204
June 2017

Version: v1.0

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Personal Investigation 7204/C

The Personal Investigation provided opportunities for students to work in an individual manner on their own selected themes. These included: the natural world, creatures, pattern, cultures, figures and portraits, landscapes, seascapes, flowers and foliage, gender issues and other issue based themes such as depression and mental health. Successful personal investigations were well informed by relevant contextual references.

Successful students produced sustained and focused investigations and continued to develop their understanding and skills, building upon previously explored materials and techniques. Clearly, affording students the time to experiment early in the course produced confidence and maturity in subsequent work.

An inevitable reliance on the knowledge and expertise of individual teachers was apparent in the direction of students embarking on their personal investigations. The more successful work was enriched by visits to galleries and exhibitions, trade fairs and retail outlets.

One centre had a very interesting approach that, as an extension to their work students produced drawings and paintings of their textile piece showing how, where and when the textile would be worn.

Students experimented with a wide range of materials, processes and techniques. These included: dyeing, printmaking and etching, heat transfers, free/machine stitching, embroidery, appliqué, quilting, materials manipulation and mixed media work. Developmental work often built on these skills and involved combinations of materials, techniques, digital manipulations and transfer techniques and collage.

Outcomes included examples of fashion textiles, costume design, constructed textiles, installation and fine art textiles. Photography was used widely and often productively to record observations and many students used Photoshop to advance their investigations and the development of ideas.

Successful work often included well observed drawings and colour studies and provided evidence of refining ideas. Exploring media, processes and techniques was considered and purposeful. In less successful examples, students' abilities to record ideas and observations were limited and there was little understanding of how to refine or improve the chosen idea.

Sketchbooks were a major asset for students for the collation, development and, often, the presentation of work; affording a less formal medium for personal decision making and reviewing and refining. Many students presented preparatory work entirely in sketchbooks or workbooks. Some students presented all their work on mounted sheets or together with a sketchbook. High standards of presentation were seen in many schools and colleges. The carefully considered presentation of work enhanced some excellent Textile outcomes.

Fashion outcomes were occasionally supported by confident illustrations in which students provided evidence of the development and refining of ideas. Good quality photographs of models wearing garments and fashion accessories demonstrated understanding of context and provided an additional insight into students' work. Digital presentations were evident in some elements of the work, particularly in initial research and the development of ideas.

The written element mostly took the form of journalistic responses to the work of artists, designers and craftspeople with the inclusion of links to fashion designers. Bibliographies were often confined to a list of web addresses although it was evident that many students benefitted from visits to museums and exhibitions. In successful written work students provided a rationale for their

practical work and there was clear evidence of analytical and critical understanding when investigating and responding to the work of others. An interesting example based on women and fashion, focused on aspects of liberation and its impact on fashion design. The study was based on investigations at the Victoria and Albert Museum which had informed the formulation and development of ideas. The written work had clear intentions and the student explained how contextual material both inspired and helped them when producing their own practical work.

Clear connections with the work of other artists and designers informed the development of ideas, aided the decision-making as work progressed and helped students to develop their own personal language.

A wide range of sources supported and informed investigations. Often there were multiple influences on students' work. References to work by Cas Holmes, Alberta Ferretti, Irit Dulman and Felicity Brown combined with Anselm Kiefer were seen in texture and surface pattern based projects. Work by Alexander McQueen, Issey Miyake, Wende Reinstra and Gareth Pugh was referred to in work based on structure.

Externally Set Assignment 7204/X

Teachers and students found contextual references in the questions supportive and the variety within the questions exciting and challenging. The breadth and range of starting points provided ample opportunities for students to make a personal response, enabling students of all abilities to produce a creative journey in the development and realisation of their ideas.

Embroidered illustration

A variety of lively and colourful exploratory work was seen with reference to Debbie Smyth and Lauren DiCoccio, in addition to the work of Jan Beaney and Claire Coles. Students demonstrated a sound understanding of skills and techniques which provided a platform for the development of ideas. Students used drawing in machine stitch on paper, fabric and bubble wrap. The scope of the question led to the production of hangings, garments and portraits, some inspired by the work of Jean Michel Basquiat.

Feathers and plumes

Some investigations into birds and their habitats were inspired by visits to the Natural History Museum, pet shops and local collections of birds. Imaginative responses included free, hand and machine embroidery techniques and heat transferred imagery. References to Hiromi Gibbs supported the investigations into the breakdown of form to reveal skeletal effects. Some effective costumes, garments and headwear were seen.

Historical periods

The curves seen in Rococo architecture inspired and influenced ideas taken into digital repeat patterns. Primary images of flowers and the delicacy of the petals encouraged the use of fragile materials and fabrics. Printing and layering techniques used in textile samples resulted in some exciting final outcomes. Dolce & Gabbana and John Galiano were used as additional sources resulting in flamboyant costumes containing ruffles, crinolines, pleats and bustles.

Shibori

Some lively and imaginative work was seen involving investigations into marbling, combined with drawing, to generate abstract images that were overlaid onto fashion figures. Pleats and folds were additionally used to create garment pieces. References were made to the shibori fabrics of Carter Smith, with additional influences found in the quilting work of Janice Gunner.

Cultural inspiration

This starting point prompted students to explore a wide variety of cultures, resulting in some beautiful mixed media work, often involving strong initial observational studies. Experimentations with dyeing, batik and silk painting were sensitively investigated. References to Deepak Perwani, AA Wazir and Anita Quansah provided opportunities to research and develop these ideas. Examples of Kimonos embellished with sashiko hand stitching and wall hangings inspired by patterns from Persian floor tiles were seen.

Recorded events

Some students recorded events from their own experiences, including a trip to Amsterdam and the Wirral coastline. Political, historical and local events inspired a number of investigations. Diaries and sketchbooks were used to record observations with drawings, photographs and collages from their trip or event. Experiments with stitching and printing techniques over drawings resulted in some beautiful and delicate personal outcomes. Contextual references to the work of Sarah Walton, Donna Rumble and Rosie James informed some of the work seen.

Indigenous Australian art

Some students explored the symbols of aboriginal culture looking at journeys and legends. Sketchbooks and backup sheets were used to document the developmental work. There were references to the paintings of Anna Petyarre and the creature paintings of Melanie Hava.

Sculptural forms

Investigation into natural patterns found in shell structures were reinforced by research at the Natural History Museum, from personal collections of shells and from studies of trees and rock-forms. Beautiful layering effects were carefully explored showing in depth analysis as students' ideas progressed. Links to Hiroshi Iwasaki supported explorations into the fluid nature of the materials considered and this was clearly represented in the sculptural outcomes. Contextual references were made to the three-dimensional structural work of Noa Raviv, Iris Van Hersen and Rachel Poulter.

Use of statistics

Statistics used in this report may be taken from incomplete processing data. However, this data still gives a true account on how students have performed for each question.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.