
A-LEVEL

Art and Design

7201/X & 7201/C – Art, Craft and Design
Report on the Examination

7201
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The Personal Investigation (7201/C)

Moderators received many favourable comments about the new specification.

The strength of this title is the flexibility which enables students to work in any area of study, or combination of areas. In most instances, students elected to follow two specialist areas. However, a some students decided to work across several areas, combining different techniques and materials in unconventional ways to produce more diverse and often unpredictable work.

There was a genuine sense of personal involvement in many of the submissions seen. Some investigations were highly detailed and sustained in which students built on best practice. In successful work, the development of ideas was often systematic and coherent, displaying high levels of skill in handling materials. The most successful work convincingly linked the required written element to the practical work and resulted in well resolved outcomes.

Accomplished work often displayed effective engagement with a diversity of materials, processes and techniques. The use of mixed media and collage on a variety of surfaces featured strongly in experimental submissions. Many examples of highly innovative work were seen in which developmental work and resolved pieces showed maturity and high levels of skill and creativity. Photography used advanced digital manipulation, layering and photomontage effectively.

There was evidence of confident and assured recording skills which enabled students to investigate source material in depth and articulate ideas fluently. Expressive ways of recording ideas and observations were seen, often on unusual surfaces and a larger scale.

The realisation of intentions was seen in accomplished outcomes across all areas of study. Product design featured more strongly this year with an increasingly proficient use of laser cutting and CAD. Many innovative pieces in Textiles, made resourceful use of unusual and recycled materials. Graphic communication made confident use of technology. The scale of completed work included miniature paintings and elaborate installations, light work and projected images.

Contextual references included work by traditional and contemporary artists and designers. Work by traditional artists was more often referred to when students visited art galleries and were inspired by their work. The selection of examples by contemporary artists was not always appropriate to intentions and on occasion responses demonstrated a lack of understanding by the student.

Successful written work provided insight into students' ideas and thinking, together with an in-depth knowledge of their topic. Such quality writing was based on critical analysis and evaluation of work, articulated with fluent and accurate specialist language. Journals and logs varied, the least successful simply describing the practical work. Meaningful journals outlined reasons for decisions made and how work by others informed the development process. Some innovative submissions combined written work with video.

Externally Set Assignment (7201/X)

Many teachers in schools and colleges commented positively on the breadth of questions and range of starting points in the question paper. Teachers noted that the paper catered for students of all abilities. The contextual references were considered appropriate and were used effectively by students to start the research. In the samples seen most students made effective use of the 15 hours to create resolved work demonstrating their understanding and learning.

Musical instruments

Many responses were inspired by the analytical Cubism of Georges Braque and Pablo Picasso. Adventurous work included life size pianos and musical instruments created from discarded objects such as computer parts. There were many exciting installations involving sound, some inspired by John Cage and Pierre Schaeffer and others using vinyl records.

Figures at windows

Surrealism, Rene Magritte and double images in windows provided a tight focus for observational work, particularly in painting where the concept of inside and outside space produced complex imagery. Other work was based on distortions of figures and faces through glass with reference to Jenny Saville. Much work was based on Jan Vermeer and Edward Hopper leading to narrative work that displayed a good understanding of chiaroscuro. Some very personal work was produced from people peering out from and into windows.

Arts and crafts of Mexico

'The Mexican Day of the Dead' was the inspiration for many examples seen and skulls were often used as source material. Some students produced decorative skulls involving colour and pattern. Successful responses including pen and ink illustrations informed by the work of Jose Posada and colourful and vibrant textile pieces which referred to work by David Lazeau. Mature and personal portraiture work invariably stemmed from the iconic self-image of Frida Khalo.

Multiples

David Hockney's "joiners" and photographs by Eadweard Muybridge often formed the basis of research which led to paintings and collage work. Many submissions were often skilfully produced with strong compositions but some did not develop beyond initial starting points. Productive use was made of lino printing, photo-copying, and acetates for experimentation and exploration, and Eyal Grever's use of transparent layers and glass inspired some accomplished work. Growth and decay was an intriguing starting point which resulted in mature and innovative photographic and mixed media responses.

Beside the seaside

This theme provided opportunities for students to record from direct observation and use photography. Many of the samples seen explored traditional and iconic scenes of British beaches, often with a sense of humour. These included ice cream, candy floss and seaside rock in well observed and highly detailed paintings influenced by Wayne Thiebaud. Other work explored the atmosphere and weather of the sea inspired by Kurt Jackson. Architectural features of

lighthouses, helter-skelters and piers relied heavily on photographs and led to composite pictures. Old post cards were used productively to create colourful posters. Some interesting installations were created involving sand, deck chairs and parasols. Objects found on the beach were used for printmaking and mixed media work with varying levels of success.

My street

Students made productive use of recording their close environment in both photography and plein air studies. Examples of highly detailed architectural studies were influenced by Stephen Wiltshire and atmospheric paintings inspired by L S Lowry and Rob Adams. Interesting illustrations were produced with reference to Jon Measures. Other examples involved the construction of a set design and stop motion photography, whilst another set involved the casting of a drain influenced by the Boyle Family. One extremely personal response concerned local gang culture and how a neighbourhood was impacting on a student's life.

Fish

Local aquariums and Sea Life centres were visited by many students. Closely observed studies of scales, pattern and colour resulted in outcomes which included painting on textiles, repeat designs in graphics and sculptured ceramic fish. Koi carp were a popular subject portrayed through delicate and stylised work influenced by Lin Li. Work by Maximo Laura inspired decorative, vibrant and semi-abstract painting and prints. A visit to a local food market resulted in the construction of an impressive life size fish stall.

Freedom of expression

This starting point inspired extremely diverse and original work. Students readily grasped the opportunity to express their thoughts and beliefs about society, politics and culture. This often involved thought provoking compositions combining montage with text influenced by the Gorilla Girls and Barbara Kruger. The diversity within society was explored with reference to Uday Bahn Singh, the issue of emotional and physical abuse with Peony Yip's work and racial issues based on graphic designs by Michael Thompson. Other topics explored in mature and accomplished work included Women's Rights, Freedom to Roam, Political Graffiti and Human Rights.

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.