

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/01
Controlled Test

General Comments

Section A was by far the most popular with over two thirds of candidate responding to one of the open ended topics. 'Underneath' was the most popular question, with many possibilities for interpretation. 'Seen by candle light', 'Shattered images', 'The near and the far' and 'Sightseers' were also popular. Responses to **Section A** came from across the mark range, with the majority located at the lower and mid-levels.

Responses to **Section B** amounted to slightly less than 25% of the overall entry and were scattered across much of the mark range. The most popular questions in this section were Q10 'The interior of a large building', Q11 'I walked on clouds...' and Q7 'Several potted cacti', which was particularly popular with photographic submissions.

There were very few responses to the starting points in **Section C**, but those seen covered the mark range. Q13 'East meets West' appeared to be the main topic of interest, with Q14 'Glasses and bottles repeat pattern...' Q15 'Design a hat...' inspired very few candidates and was the least popular overall, along with Q12 'Fit 4 U'.

Just over half of the work seen consisted of graphic design and photography submissions and many of these were strong, imaginative and provided individual in response to the starting points. There was evidence of some competent, confident and individual graphic design work, but there was also evidence of a formulaic approach where many candidates had followed the same process of working which lacked creativity and focus. This method of working was sometimes accompanied by a written design brief which bore little or no relevance to their chosen question.

Of the other work seen, nearly all used traditional painting and drawing media such as pencil, acrylic and other dry media. However, there appears to be a lack of understanding regarding the term 'recording from primary sources and from direct observation', as many candidates tended to copy secondary images rather than drawing from life. Recording from primary sources and direct observations means the student should take photographs, or make sketches or paint from looking directly at an object or building or figure and not from the internet or a magazine picture of an object, building or figure. There was a lot of work seen that was wrongly referred to as from 'direct observation'.

There was some evidence of film and video being used to creative effect. There were very few 3D outcomes submitted, however, some candidates had photographed 3D work as part of their preparatory studies. There was much evidence of Photoshop and similar programmes being used with mixed levels of achievement.

A wide range of artists references were used in the higher and mid-mark ranges, often researched from the internet and sometimes rather 'bolt on' in effect, not informing the direction of the work, merely picking up on stylistic approaches. In the best work seen, studies of practitioners and/or art movements led to highly informed development of ideas. In many cases, particularly at the lower mark range, candidates made little or no references to established artists, designers or cultures.

The majority of the candidate's responses at the higher mark level were inspired by the open ended starting points within Section A. The work at this level demonstrated an effective use of preparation time which had been used to search beyond the obvious interpretation of the question. The strength at this level of achievement lay in the initial stages of recording which were observed from direct observation. There was evidence of a thorough exploration of ideas and a wide and skilful manipulation of materials and processes, which demonstrated creative and confident responses, and much personal engagement. There were examples of excellent investigation and informed in depth analysis, with appropriate contextual referencing.

The work in the middle range had been mainly inspired by the topics in Sections A and B. The work at this level tended to contain inconsistencies within the recording, the technical skills and within the development of

ideas. There was evidence of observational studies and recording from first hand sources, which were mostly of a good standard containing thoughtful consideration to composition and detail. While there was clear evidence of recording from direct observation in some submissions, the origins of sources were sometimes unclear. Again some of the candidates at this level had made good use of their preparation time, which had been used to produce various studies exploring different media and focusing on alternative ideas, in varying levels of detail. At this achievement level the candidate's personal evaluation or critical analysis of their question was less apparent than in the work at the higher levels.

The candidates at the lower mark order would have benefited from spending more time researching their question. Teachers are reminded that the preparation time for this component is **at least** three weeks; students may have the paper as soon as they are available (from 1 July for November). The responses to the starting points at this level lacked commitment, continuity and personal investigation. The majority of submissions demonstrated very little investigation of the topic, which led to a limited development of ideas. Their exploration of materials often demonstrated either poor control or was limited in selection, hindering their ability to show knowledge of the possibilities available through using a range of materials. The achievement of an informed final response was less likely at this level as the reliance on the development from fragmented research, random images and unfulfilled ideas was insufficient. At this level there was also much reliance on the use of secondary sources and the candidate's imagination rather than fully exploring the potential beyond the obvious.

Comments on Photographic submissions

Some of the photographic submissions were awarded high marks, with most falling into the 50–79 mark range. Nearly all included thorough references to the work of other relevant photographers, and had used these references to develop their own ideas. It was evident that the candidates had taken a large body of photographs and been selective in the presentation, which was very good in most cases. A lot of candidates had manipulated their work by cutting, stitching, burning, weaving and layering up several prints. Evidence of digital manipulation was also seen. In a few cases a little more care with the cutting would have benefited the outcomes, where edges ended up rather wobbly. The quality of the preparatory work was often very strong, and a thorough exploration of ideas was apparent, but the strength and development of these ideas was unfortunately not always recognised in the final outcomes. Most candidates had included some annotation in their submissions to explain their intentions, which was helpful. Some of the best work demonstrated a clear understanding in exploring and arranging successful aesthetic qualities, particularly in the use of colour and in the clarity of an image, whilst others used black and white photography reflecting the candidate's confidence to present very simple yet powerful images.

However, some of the photography was relatively weak compared to work carried out in other media. Experimentation pursued by these candidates was seen purely as a moment in post-production, whereas real experimentation in photography should take place either in the planning or at the moment of execution. The field of experimentation could include some of the following: alternative compositions (prior to editing), varying focus/depth of field, a range of viewpoints from ground level to bird's eye view and everything in between, an exploration of lighting conditions, moving camera shots, double/multiple exposures, blind shots, macro shots and pin hole camera experiments.

Comments on Specific Questions

Section A

Q1 Roadworks

There were only a few submissions seen in response to this starting point. The work at the higher level was a photography submission which contained a series of documented black and white images of men at work, illustrating various activities while working on the roads. The research was personal and the technical manipulation while conveying the story was very good. There was much consideration given to perspective, depth and clarity of the images and a mood had been evoked from the decision to capture the scene in black and white rather than colour. The final outcome, however, did not reflect the detail and atmospheric qualities seen in the preparatory work. Other submissions at this level were well researched and developed from first hand studies in paint and pencil of local road works. A variety of photographic studies combined with figure drawing from direct observation contributed to fully resolved outcomes integrating the various stages of road improvement and the machinery used.

At the mid-level there were two submissions whose approaches were quite different; one of the pieces departed from the straightforward 'men at work' option taken by other candidates. The candidate produced a

fractured scene of road works and played with the composition using a limited range of colour. The second candidate's submission was more conventional but stood out due to the level of commitment to figure study and compositional development. The candidate had also started to look at the more abstract possibilities of the question but did not develop this further.

The lower level submissions were mainly photography and graphic design. The graphic design work concerned an idea based on a rock band called 'Road works'. There was evidence of good photographic research, though this was not always used to inform the development of ideas and was not reflected in the final design. The photography work at this level contained straight forward images of diggers and roads etc., as a starting point. Some digital manipulation during the development of ideas was apparent, but this often tended to over-complicate the images rather than enhance and consequently the impact was lost and confused.

Q2 Seen by candlelight

This was a popular starting point which attracted candidates of all abilities, and responses were scattered across the mark levels from 20–80. Submissions varied with the topic attracting many photographic entries along with drawing, painting and related media responses.

In the higher levels the most imaginative responses demonstrated lively shadows within portraiture using a variety of art materials and photography. Images of still life containing tea-lights or candles were very popular and provided an excellent opportunity for the investigation of dramatic tone and shadow. The best of these had managed to manipulate the reduced lighting, inherent within the topic, with sensitivity. Partly lit faces, other objects and the representation of shadows and reflections were illustrated effectively to create highly accomplished images, leading to an informed final outcome. Other innovative outcomes were studies of cups and jugs illuminated from below, power cuts, using a fridge as a bookcase and a broken generator on a table. Influences came from Rembrandt, Caravaggio and Georges de la Tour. Some work made use of the subtle colours within the shadows to enhance the image. Within photography, digital manipulation had been used successfully to produce abstract and atmospheric effects.

Among the mid-level achievers, a candidate at the upper end chose to look at copper pans illuminated by candlelight. Although the rendering and mixing of paint in the final outcome was successful, the preparatory work was repetitive and showed little development of alternative ideas, viewpoints or compositions.

The least successful work illustrated many compositions of figures illuminated by candlelight through much repetitive tea-light imagery. There was evidence of the recording of a few different angles and viewpoints, but these candidates tended to repeat their images rather than develop alternative ideas, and opportunities were missed for exploiting focal depth. Many of the candidates at this level were unable to manipulate or grasp an understanding of technique, which led to them under exposing their photographs or forming yellow casts which tended to envelope their images, and any atmospheric or dramatic impact was lost. Final outcomes tended to be the repeat of an image rather than an informed or developed conclusion.

Q3 Sightseers

Landscape, snowboard designs, portraits and racism were some of the subjects developed for this question. Responses were scattered across the mark range with the bulk located in the middle. The question inspired some very imaginative work. The most successful candidates had produced personal interpretations and had demonstrated detailed research, derived from first hand sources. One photographic response consisted of maps projected on to a figure. There were some very good graphic design responses and some candidates had invented a travel company and interpreted the question through a design brief, in order to research and develop ideas through a series of graphic design outcomes such as, logos, luggage labels and travel guides. Other photography submissions had displayed a series of very aesthetically pleasing images of scenery, in their response to the question. One candidate superimposed views of places onto faces, with another producing some powerful black and white images of a person in a city. It was clear that the question had inspired an array of very individual responses.

At the lower level, some candidates made literal interpretations of tourists on holiday derived from magazine photographs. The understanding of the human figure was basic as were the use of colour and composition. Preparatory work was sparse with just a few hastily drawn sketches of scenes and figures differing little from the final image.

Q4 Shattered images

This was a popular starting point which attracted a range of responses from all levels of ability and there was evidence of some inventive, interpretative examples. The themes that candidates explored included shattered dreams, shattered expectations, reflections with some using Futurism and Surrealism as references. Other submissions took a more visual approach, concentrating on abstract approaches to cutting up and reconstructing their images.

Responses were thoughtful in the best work seen; in-depth preparatory studies included well observed studies and photographs, with references to the work of other artists and photographers. Strong manipulative skills were apparent and displayed accomplishment through the use of painting, drawing and photographic media. A memorable piece explored unwanted pregnancy and the mockery of school 'friends'. Another submission was arresting in its treatment of a white surface peeling-off a face. The preparatory studies were comprehensive in exploring alternatives and how issues of race and culture have shattered people's lives and hopes.

There were some thoughtful ideas seen in the mid-level of the ability range, such as faces on a Rubik's cube, Hitler portrayed in a strange stained glass configuration and a deconstructed toilet, but the work often displayed unresolved final outcomes, which did not always reflect the promising ideas that were evident in the preparatory studies.

Work seen in the lower levels lacked the in-depth research which would have informed the development of ideas. Ideas tended to be more predictable and inspiration at this level was often based on the more predictable cliché imagery of broken mirrors and broken glass. Compositions also tended to be derived from imagination rather than from the observation of sources. Occasionally there was evidence of more promising preparatory work, though this was not often realised or developed into informed conclusions.

Q5 The near and the far

Responses to this starting point came mainly from the lower and mid-range and typically illustrated some imaginative approaches. The best work demonstrated evidence of well researched ideas and some personal engagement.

Again, there were many photographic responses seen and the work in the mid-range had a tendency to look at the literal interpretation of the question only, but the best work used this merely as a starting point and candidates chose to study the implications of time and space, ageing, biological shoots that they had put together, or had arranged props into interesting compositions from which to investigate. One example used film to convey the idea of bullying and reconciliation being *near and far* from friends. Many submissions displayed the idea of an enlarged close-up object in sharp focus contrasting with the far away out of focus and distorted image in the background. Most candidates had used the idea of something very close with a landscape or similar, in the distance. An imaginative idea illustrated young girls looking longingly at their idol on a poster and there were a few ideas including images reflected within eyes or eye glasses.

The work of the less able did demonstrate some imaginative ideas and display some evidence of engagement, but lacked the skill to convey these ideas convincingly. More drawing from direct observation, a wider collection of images and experiments with media, as well as making references to the work of other artists would have greatly enhanced the prospects of higher achievement.

Q6 Underneath

This was the most popular question, receiving 25% of the total of responses. This question attracted candidate interest from across the mark range but the bulk of responses were in the mid and higher levels.

Much of the work in the higher level was photographic. Ideas were imaginative and included various notions of underneath; such as under a façade – a person or a building, under the skin, under a shelf or window-ledge, under water, under the city in reference to homelessness, roots under the ground, car engines and machinery. The question was deliberately open to many possibilities and approaches and the very best students demonstrated very in-depth, mature and engaged research which had informed development. The idea of façades that people use to hide their emotions was particularly well presented. One candidate had also looked at cultural and religious reasons for the use of the Niqab veil, and how we are all the same underneath. This demonstrated a questioning investigation and an open ended development of ideas. There were also some very individual submissions that illustrated a more observational and direct approach, where the strengths lay in the skills of manipulation, composition and artistic flare. Contextual research into the work of Millais' 'Ophelia' resulted in some very fine analytical paintings of a figure mostly submerged in water.

The work at the middle level of ability focused on more obvious subject matter such as the skeleton under the skin and buried bodies under the ground. Various sources were used at this level with more reliance on the internet than at the higher level. There was evidence of personal engagement with the subject, but there was less exploration and interpretation of ideas. There were weaknesses in the technical skill and some predictable outcomes.

Work seen at the lower level used more obvious imagery derived either from the internet or from imagination. Sources were not always obvious to decipher. The recording demonstrated a lack of continuity and the development of ideas was limited. The handling of materials displayed technical weaknesses and the candidates in this mark range would have benefited from spending more time on their preparatory studies.

Section B

Q7 Several potted cacti

This was a popular question with marks ranging between the 20s and 70s. Much of the work consisted of observed representations of cacti in pots through drawing, painting and photography alongside some unusual experimentation.

At the higher level, candidates had investigated their subject matter thoroughly using first hand sources to research structure, form, surface quality and colour. Excellent studies of different types of cacti had been produced through drawing, painting, mixed media and photography. The work fully expressed the character of the plant through rich colour, sensitive drawings, bold paintings and very clear and sharp photography. Candidates had given consideration to composition and had thought about overlapping pots and the close-ups of leaves, zooming in to enhance surface textures and the cool silky quality of the succulent leaves. These bold, lively and delicate illustrations represented a clear observation of exciting colour and a clear understanding of form, shape and structure. References had been made to other artist's works and had been used to inform and inspire the development of ideas. The photography submissions illustrated the recording and exploration of the plants with sensitivity, through a range of clear and subtle images to a professional finish. Some lively and creative ideas had been explored through digital processes and there was evidence of much personal engagement and individuality. All submissions seen at this level displayed both traditional and digital manipulation, materials had been appropriately selected to represent this subject and resulted in some bold, lively and sensitive illustrations. A textile submission successfully mimicked the surface and structure of various cacti and the final piece, although not as strong, showed a willingness to take risks and try alternative directions.

At the mid-level, candidates made good use of photography and also drew from observation from a range of viewpoints, including very detailed close-up studies of the surfaces of cacti. Understanding of form, texture and colour was good and some candidates used different coloured torn papers to work over on charcoal, chalk and pastel. A popular artist for research was Georgia O' Keefe.

The work at the lower level displayed weaker observational and technical skills, with little detail in the recording. Candidates at this level had clearly struggled to represent the ellipses which formed the shape of the plant pots and encountered difficulties while forming compositions to show depth and perspective. The research was limited with little exploration of composition or the rearrangement of the plants. There was less personal engagement or development of ideas from their chosen subject. Consequently the final outcomes at this level were often underdeveloped and lacked understanding of the subject.

Q8 A handbag lying on its side

There were only a few responses to this question which were scattered across the mark range, but mainly situated in the middle and lower levels. Most approaches to this starting point were obvious and investigation of the subject was made through observational drawing, painting and mixed media.

At the higher level, submissions explored a variety of bags despite the question asking for a handbag. Food bags, travel bags and sports bags were all considered; they demonstrated a good understanding of perspective and used a range of media to explore different surfaces and textures. Some submissions included their own photographs from which they had developed ideas. One candidate used the text on a bag and took a design approach as a starting point to develop ideas which became increasingly abstracted.

At the mid-level, detailed studies of handbags with the contents spilling out were seen. The candidates demonstrated their understanding of form and tone through the representations of the bag and through the

simulation of the surface texture with some realistic drawings of open handbags produced. However, the representation of the contents spilling out often lacked detail and refinement in the manipulation of materials and the understanding of shape, form, pattern and scale was lost. Other imaginative and conceptual approaches were apparent. One submission attempted to portray violence and peace. The 'bad' was represented through images, which were then paper folded – origami style – into birds flying into the bag and the 'good' was demonstrated by the birds flying out. Another submission had also dealt with macabre ideas of what a bag could contain such as guns, knives, etc., and made a photographic montage of related images.

The work at the lower level presented straight forward observations of the subject, though the observational studies were weaker and the technical skills lacked refinement, often resulting in a heavy and clumsy handling of materials. The work reflected less of an understanding of form, tone and colour and final outcomes tended to be obvious and lacking in spatial awareness.

Q9 The whole or upper part of a figure

Responses were seen across the whole mark range, although this was not a popular choice, it did elicit some of the strongest observational responses. All work illustrated a direct observational approach, through drawing and painting from the figure, situated in various positions. The work at the higher level was well researched through the candidate's own photography. The figure had been explored from a range of angles, from direct observation and manipulated through a variety of drawing and painting materials. One submission demonstrated a good understanding of perspective and drama by looking up to a figure seated on a tall stool. There was a sensitive and confident rendering of media and an understanding of form, though the development for the final outcome did not always reflect the vitality seen in the preparatory studies. A more creative idea at this level was the overlapping of figures as they were drawn on the paper, moving the candidate's idea into more imaginative territory.

The work at the mid-mark range consisted of observation through drawing and photography, from figures sitting at desks on chairs and on stools in a range of supporting studies, though often from the same viewpoint. The recording at this level could also lack depth of observation. Inconsistencies and a lack of refinement in the manipulation and control of media were also apparent in the recording process, along with a more limited understanding of form and proportion. Compositions could sometimes be undeveloped which often led to an unfulfilled final response.

At the lower level there was very little in the preparatory studies to suggest a sense of engagement with the subject. Candidates had problems with suggesting form, foreshortening was too challenging, and there was a lack of experimentation with viewpoint and composition. The use of media was limited and confined to pencil, coloured pencil and paint. Contextual research was non-existent.

Q10 The interior of a large building

There were only a few responses to this question, which were located mainly in the middle of the mark range. However, there was one candidate who, inspired by architecture, created a graphic design brief based on origami for an exhibition, which explored the development of 2D to 3D. The preparatory work was exemplary and showed a mature understanding of the design process.

Some submissions were imaginative and others consisted of works produced from direct observation, either through drawing or photography, with the better work being more extensively researched. Images of railway stations, greenhouses, religious buildings, and other large buildings were apparent. Some candidates had often used their own photographs taken from relevant sources to work from, but these lacked the necessary detailed analysis required to explore the building and its contents in sufficient depth. The least successful work within this mark range generally recorded images of the inside of a building, either through photography or traditional media, with little thought given to alternative or unusual viewpoints, or the spatial qualities of the interior.

Q11 Extract

Although this question contained many visual prompts, there were few responses to this starting point. Marks were mainly located across the middle and lower ranges with a small number at the higher level.

One candidate chose to interpret the extract as a design brief for a book shop; other submissions at the higher level produced thoughtful ideas and demonstrated a high degree of technical skill and ambition. A photographic submission demonstrated good planning, use of lighting and photographic and Photoshop to

compose images of paint, frozen in mid-air, being thrown over a model. The outcome had similar qualities to abstracted paintings and was very successful. Some imaginative and illustrative responses to this question were apparent across the ranges. Candidates had either used the whole extract to tell a story or just parts of it in their research and development of ideas. The more able candidates had superimposed the relevant imagery inside a silhouette of a head or figure to convey a dream, while one very strong submission built up layers of transparent photographic images to achieve a similar concept.

The work of the less able candidates suggested that they had tried to convey their ideas but demonstrated weaker manipulative skills and a more limited range of materials. The research on which to base their development was not as thorough, leading to unfulfilled ideas that resulted in inconclusive outcomes.

Q12 Fit 4u

There were very few responses to this question. The work at the higher level showed a good understanding of the design process, but less research and more development of ideas. Preparatory studies considered a number of colour ways, different font styles and some examples of fascia's and other graphics taken from existing sports clubs and gymnasiums. The origin of logos was clearly evident in the form of own drawings and photographs. Some candidates used Photoshop to show their designs in situ on bill boards and bus shelters.

The work seen in the lower levels was derivative, based on secondary images, and often consisted of one idea which was slavishly copied throughout the preparation period and again into the final piece. Colour ways were not explored and very few alternative ideas were seen at the development stage. Initial research was invariably derived from the internet or football team badges, and observational drawing from primary sources was almost non-existent.

Q13 East meets West

There were only a small number of responses to this starting point which were scattered mainly across the lower and higher areas of the mark range. Most candidates explored digital manipulation processes and photography to research and develop their ideas.

The work at the higher level was well researched and effectively presented, demonstrating some thorough research, creative ideas and strong graphic skills. The submissions at this level contained much recording from first hand observation of figures in various poses and scenarios, through photography and drawing. There was evidence of research and exploration of lettering, composition and layout and the professional manipulation of a range of ideas were apparent throughout this level.

The mid-range work demonstrated some personal research, and although they had produced some creative alternative designs and layouts with lettering in their research, they had made poor decisions when selecting ideas to develop into a successful final outcome.

The work of some candidates at the lower level would have benefited from the preparation time being used more effectively, as the minimal research and exploration of the chosen subject limited the development of ideas. Other work at this level could be formulaic and lacked personal response in the research. The development of ideas tended to lack depth and often remained unfulfilled.

Q14 Glasses and bottles – repeat pattern

The few responses to this question were located in the higher mark level and answered the design brief using contrasting approaches through both digital and traditional drawing and painting media. Each submission contained very thorough research beginning with initial studies that were produced from direct observation. Each approach demonstrated sensitivity in the manipulation of drawing and painting media. There was clear evidence of the exploration of the works of others which was used to inspire development. One submission displayed many alternative designs, layouts and colour ways through digital manipulation. The other demonstrated their ideas and designs through the traditional method of manually drafting the designs in pencil and carefully exploring each colour way through completion in paint. Each approach demonstrated a clear and effective manipulation of ideas and good personal engagement, and fulfilled the brief to their best advantage.

Q15 Design a hat, a bag and a pair of shoes

There were few responses to this starting point which were located at the mid and lower levels of the mark range.

Work gaining the higher marks was based on the candidates own photographs of water which was used imaginatively as a waterline around the edge of a bag. However, the designs for the hat and the shoes were more ephemeral and derivative. Although this candidate looked at existing designs they tended to emulate rather than manipulate those ideas as a starting point.

The work at the lower level contained individual explorations of the patterns and colour seen within the water, but there was no investigation into the work of other fashion or costume designers to form an understanding of hat, bag or shoe design. Consequently the designs in the preparatory work and the final outcome presented an unfulfilled and inconclusive response to the brief.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/02

Coursework A

General Comments

Painting and Related Media was by far the most popular area of study but there were submissions seen for Graphic Design and Photography. There was a wide range of subject matter seen; where the themes were general they had individual interpretations.

The best work showed that working from direct observation had formed a major part of their submission. Candidates had selected themes or topics to work from such as natural forms, shells, plants and still-life arrangements. There was evidence of visits to interesting locations from which they had made drawings and taken photographs. Many had worked from the figure and had used family, friends or themselves as sources of first hand study.

Exposure to the work of other artists, designers, or other cultures was also seen as an important part of many investigations in the search for new ideas. There was evidence of visits to museums and galleries that had enabled candidates to appreciate the value of seeing works of art at first-hand that had clearly motivated inclusion in their own practical work.

The very best work seen was mostly from individual candidates rather than from whole Centre submissions. The general standard of presentation was good. Most candidates had taken care to present their work in a coherent manner that demonstrated the development process of their ideas and skills. However, some sheets were visually confusing with sketches, writing and material studies crammed onto every page. Teachers should consider encouraging candidates to display their knowledge and critical understanding by being more selective; with careful editing in order to show off their best and most interesting work. The annotation included on most preparatory sheets was about the technical content of the work rather than critiquing their work. Making informed judgements about their ideas and designs and compositions in order to inform their final outcomes would have been beneficial in such cases.

At the mid to lower levels of achievement, there was less work seen from direct observation or research and investigation. Ideas had not been sufficiently explored and developed; there was a lot of work from secondary sources such as downloaded images, magazines or 'How to draw books'. There were very few of the candidates' own photographs and some were poorly printed. Good photographs in the supporting work had not always been recognised and were rarely used as a starting point. Some of the work was very repetitive and lacked the breadth and depth of study expected at this level, with quite a small range of materials and processes used.

There was a lot of work seen that did not meet the basic criteria for this level. Candidates were ill prepared and they had not practiced enough of the basic drawing skills to be able to visualise their ideas successfully. Their research was often confined to a total reliance on secondary source material that had been poorly copied and showed little evidence of personal interpretation. In some cases the assessment criteria relating to Critical Knowledge and Understanding was practically ignored, with no evidence of referencing other artists' work, or of other cultures.

Most teacher marks required significant adjustment. It was evident that some Centres did not have rigorous internal moderation processes that ensured consistency in their assessments across different teaching groups and specialisms.

Comments on Areas of Study

Painting and Related Media

Cambridge International Advanced Level
9704 Art and Design November 2015
Principal Examiner Report for Teachers

Portraiture, Landscape, Still life and Fantasy were the most popular subjects. Portraiture was the most common subject matter that gave rise to a rich variety of imagery, though very flat copies from photographs and 'selfies' were very common throughout. A few candidates attempted abstract work.

The better submissions involved a wide range of media such as acrylic, watercolour, pencil, coloured pencil, chalk, oil pastels and pen and ink in the supporting work. Very few experimented with collage, tissue, coloured paper or overprints. Colour was used well at this level with some thoughtful experiments and ideas.

There were some good examples of good practice seen, in particular where candidates made in-depth analytical first-hand observational studies, including their own photographs. They then developed ideas in a variety of media and experimental work and saw risk taking as a positive approach to their explorations.

A variety of surfaces and media were used with many candidates incorporating layering/collaging with card and tissue paper. The best painters understood how to manipulate paint with vitality and exciting use of nuances.

A significant number of candidates had started their coursework by investigating paintings by other artists, sometimes including copies of particular works. While this is a valid practice, the principle aim of such research must be to develop understanding and personal insights that inform the subsequent development of the candidates' own work. The standard of work using this approach varied considerably. The best responses were personal and demonstrated informed development beyond the initial studies. The candidates' thoughtful evaluations of their own work as it progressed presented clear evidence of a critical understanding of the chosen artists' ideas and techniques. Experimentation was purposeful and enabled candidates to make their own creative decisions.

In the mid-range, work lacked critical analysis and aesthetic coherence. Candidates often made-do with only one idea and lacked the experimentation and research that was seen in the work in the high mark range. Far too many candidates played safe with an inhibited and unadventurous approach, using colour in a very literal manner or they developed their work from very limited 'sketchy' studies lacking in depth of analysis and providing very limited information for further development.

A few candidates produced a selection of finished pieces of different architectural studies or landscape subjects. Whilst they demonstrate technical expertise, little personal qualities are evident as no other work or experimentation was included.

Candidates in the mid-range who concentrated their coursework on observational work often demonstrated competent skills. The use of acrylics, chalks and pastels were impressive in some cases, however, evidence of the development of ideas was more limited. The development of compositional ideas and the experimentation with light were particularly disappointing. Usually this was due to a lack of research.

Some of the weakest work amounted to little more than a series of random 'doodles' with no research, direct observational studies or development. These sorts of submissions represent a fundamental misunderstanding of the requirements of the syllabus. Only marginally better were candidates who simply presented a series of copied works.

Graphic Design

Some excellent work was seen from Centres specialising in this area of study although their approach was very formulaic and results were often of a very similar nature. Candidates had started with realistic design briefs that allowed development into digitally produced outcomes for logos and a wide range of bags, labels, web pages, packaging, games, T-shirts, posters or CD covers. Mostly, the company name gave a useful visual stimulus for the ideas.

Cambridge International Advanced Level
9704 Art and Design November 2015
Principal Examiner Report for Teachers

There was a very high standard of finish to the best submissions. The research for type and images was relevant and thorough and had clearly informed the ideas and outcomes. Photographs, hand-drawn images and painted textures were downloaded to computers and incorporated with type. Candidates at this level showed some excellent technical skills in both first-hand drawing and digital manipulation. Some very mature and creative final designs were submitted.

The majority of submissions were in the mid- to low ranges. In many cases, insufficient consideration had been given to the relationship between text and imagery or the use of colour; for instance, black is frequently an inappropriate choice of colour for lettering. There were also many sheets of cluttered and muddled designs where there was little indication of the starting point for the designs except for a sheet of commercial designs and clip art.

There were some cases where the candidate had produced several ideas for their final outcome to the same standard of finish, but they did not choose the most relevant one for their final design. It was not always obvious on the large sheets what was their intended final outcome as they had not labelled their work well. Some competent design outcomes were submitted but they did not necessarily marry with the research and ideas that had been developed.

Weaker submissions lacked evidence of first-hand starting points. The research was often superficial, consisting of scrapbook sheets of photocopied material. There was an over reliance on computer manipulation; distortions, different colour ways produced by simply pressing a key without any real individual thought or relevance.

Photography

This was the third most popular area of study and submissions were generally well presented and mounted. Sometimes candidates explored individual themes with similar technical starting points. It was obviously a class approach where all submitted the same technical exercises. Their ideas lacked sufficient evidence of in-depth investigation, particularly at the lower end of the ability range. Development was repetitive, often just replicating processes seen in the work of other photographers.

Candidates had generally considered individual themes. However, reliance on technical qualities overshadowed consideration of analysis and composition. Some even lacked awareness of the potential effects of lighting and viewpoint. There was a lack of research through the camera.

Other submissions were not selective in their presentations with too many photographs of the same size crowded together making it difficult to spot the few really good photographs. The ability to select is rewarded in the last assessment objective, and it was a shame that candidates were unable to develop the judgement and confidence to do this.

Some submissions seemed to emphasise unusual or surreal dramatic situations which the candidates set up to photograph, with the emphasis being on drama rather than the visual aesthetic qualities that make a good photograph (lighting, composition and viewpoint).

Weaker folders contained many photographs unrelated by theme, or based on snapshots of a 'day out' or pictures of 'my friends'. Often many of the basic skills of photography were minimal.

Fashion and Textile Design

The few submissions seen for fashion demonstrated limited understanding of research or design development. Candidates expressed a superficial enthusiasm for fashion but were unable to research and analyse the work of particular designers beyond surface appearances. Experimentation with media and processes was very limited and the candidates' own designs were simplistic and undeveloped. Cultural consideration was limited to historical documentation without assessment or evaluation.

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Stencil and block prints made up most of the textile submissions. Working methods were very formulaic with an emphasis placed on producing many over prints in different colour ways where the original designs became indistinct and muddled. However it was pleasing to see that more emphasis had been placed on first-hand drawing.

Three-Dimensional Design and Sculpture

There were only a few examples seen but those that were seen were very disappointing with poor initial drawings or inadequate photography making development into convincing three dimensional work difficult e.g. a clay portrait bust with no understanding of the relationship and angle of the neck to head.

There was little or no evidence seen of any real engagement, understanding or experimentation with a range of processes or understanding how to articulate shapes in three dimensions.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/03

Coursework B

General Comments

Some of the best work seen was in this component. Most submissions demonstrated evidence of a journey from initial ideas and research using first-hand sources; to enriching stimuli, research of the work of other practitioners through to testing out alternative modes of expression and refinement of work via intelligent editing and selection resulting in a convincing final piece.

On the whole the difference in emphasis between Component 2 and Component 3 was understood. The best candidates produced a project that was fully focused towards the final piece. There were some large and very ambitious work seen that was well documented with good photographs.

In the mid mark range typically work presented was a collection of finished pieces, often competent under a loose title of landscape, still life or portrait.

In weaker submissions, initial research was limited. In many cases the idea for the final piece came from downloaded images with supporting studies were made to 'fit in'. These projects often lacked cohesion, logical exploration and development of ideas. These weaker submissions often consisted of either a series of 'finished' pieces with no evidence of development and research, or sadly were too heavy reliant on secondary sources.

The best sketchbooks had genuine chronological progression that was full of ideas, experiments and source material was very personal. However, there were few of these and most sketchbooks were either 'cut and paste' type scrapbooks or class exercises that did not support the final piece. There was a great deal of 'padding-out' in the way of scrapbook work in the sketchbooks.

In a few cases sketchbooks were disappointingly limited and had evidently been put together from previous drawings.

Comments on Areas of Study

Painting and Related Media

Candidates at the very top of the mark range had clearly been encouraged to explore a wide range of media and as a result their work was very individual and personal. Some very effective and creative responses were seen at this end of the mark range. The best work demonstrated mature analysis, risk taking and experimentation in the development of ideas. It was reassuring to see that teachers had encouraged candidates to follow individual themes and modes of expression. Some interesting use of mixed media was apparent as well as more traditional methods. The work was confident in the manipulation of media, as well as individuality of ideas and aesthetic awareness of the visual language.

Many had used the figure as a starting point for investigations with portraits dominating. Facial features were a popular choice and provided easy access to first-hand studies of friends as well as themselves. Good use had been made of the work of other artists in researching portraiture and painting techniques. Some of the more mature submissions were able to expand their studies from the figure to express concepts and issues of a very personal nature. One particularly memorable submission considered body image as the theme. Use of Barbie dolls as an effective cultural and visual comparison provoked powerful imagery of a very high quality in its thoroughness and inventiveness. The exquisite detail portrayed emphasised the fragile qualities that were relevant to the subject.

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Mid-level work was also ambitious in intent, but levels of understanding in some or all of the Assessment Objectives meant that intentions were not always carried through successfully. Much exploration of ideas through candidates own photography and artists references were evident, and submissions demonstrated competent manipulative skills. However, much of what had been discovered within their research was not carried through into the final work. In other cases, the final pieces had been over worked and lost all excitement and vitality.

At the lower end, there was a lack of sensitivity to media and lack of experimentation. Skills were very under developed and in many, work lacked real direction. Experimentation had not informed the development of ideas and too much emphasis was placed upon making finished pieces. Sources for study were largely derivative and lacked personal engagement with the subject.

Graphic Design

Many submissions included some very well written, detailed briefs devised by the candidates according to their choice of theme. Drawn and found images were used along with their own photography and digital manipulation to varying degrees. Exciting media experimentation was more limited, although some etching and printmaking was seen.

The most common type of brief was aimed at designing a corporate identity for a particular company, consisting of a principle logo and a range of graphic products. In this context, the best candidates understood the need to focus their work on developing a consistent aesthetic across all of their designs. A significant number of candidates were unable to do this and approached each graphic product as if it were a separate or new problem. Whilst these submissions sometimes contained promising ideas, they demonstrated a lack of understanding of graphic design practices and did not realise a resolved and coordinated identity.

Whilst better candidates demonstrated an understanding that this practice should direct the development and refinement of design ideas, weaker candidates could only superficially refer to their initial brief. In these cases, the quantity of work seemed to matter more than quality and self-evaluation was not used to focus and refine experimentation.

Many of the weaker submissions were heavily reliant on computer generated designs, especially using imagery downloaded from the internet. There was little evidence of candidates using their own first-hand sources collected through drawing or their own photography, which could then have been scanned and manipulated.

Photography

The very best work comprised beautifully mounted selected prints, both black and white and colour. These were well supported by contextual references, contact strips and alternative compositions. Themes were mostly reportage style projects focusing on trips or visits to local places of interest. Portrait studies were also popular.

In too many cases the emphasis was on technical skills and ingenuity, rather than artistic skills. Many candidates revealed their lack of aesthetic awareness and personal critical judgements by not selecting their best photographs for development and presentation as final outcomes. Good photographs were often hidden amongst numerous examples of inferior ones, revealing the candidates' inability to make aesthetic judgements. Too much emphasis was given to ingenious, but purposeless digital tricks and 'effects' rather than strong personal compositions with considered viewpoints and lighting. Again, little or no reference to the work of other artists was seen.

Fashion and Textile Design

There was very little work seen.

There were a few fabric prints of poor quality, demonstrating limited skills and development, where ideas were not informed by any evidence of first-hand study or contextual referencing.

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Three-Dimensional Design and Sculpture

There were very few submissions seen.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/04
Personal Study

General Comments

A wide range of subject areas were covered such as Fine Art, Architectural topics, Graphics, Fashion design, Textiles and Ceramics. There were more studies seen this year that had been professionally bound and printed in contrast to the handmade and organically developed sketchbook presentation.

The very best submissions indicated that a gallery visit had been undertaken as part of the course of study and that the study had developed as a result of careful planning and research. Rather than the details of the visit appear as an afterthought at the end of the study, the very best work fully integrated the theme and focus of the exploration. In such cases it would have proved more successful had the student made the visit as a catalyst for their research. In selecting key works for investigation, they would have been able to develop a more focused approach that would link together first-hand research and experience of the topic.

There were still a significant number of inappropriate submissions concerned wholly or mostly with analyses of the candidates' own coursework and the processes employed, with little or no reference to the work of others. There were also a small number of studies that concerned themselves with entirely inappropriate topics, with no references to any works of art or design at all. Teachers are advised to submit Outline Proposal Forms (OPF) for guidance on the suitability of the candidates' proposals before work begins on the study. http://teachers.cie.org.uk/login/login_form. There were many submissions seen where the students had simply lost the focus or discussed the work of too many Artists. By selecting fewer works to investigate they would have developed a deeper understanding of the work selected.

COMMENTS ON VARIOUS LEVELS OF ACHIEVEMENT

Higher Level

Candidates demonstrated in-depth analysis with comparisons and visual connections identified. Some candidates at this level had used their coursework research to inform and develop successful links with carefully selected works by other artists they had discovered. These candidates were also engaging with a detailed understanding of process linked to their own personal experience particular examples were fashion, sculpture and photography. There were a few outstanding photography based studies that had clearly benefited from in-depth research which had resulted in some intelligent and perceptive observations being made.

Making relevant and informed connections between coursework and carefully selected works by other practitioners was seen to benefit several submissions. These examples, some of which were outstanding, always demonstrated a fluid and visually engaging journey, from initial first-hand research and investigation of the chosen subject, right through to the process of developing individual ideas and responses both written and/or practical. The relationship between the visual content and the written work was well organised, selected and integrated. There was fluency with creating an overall aesthetic in keeping with the chosen theme. A few very imaginative presentation methods were seen with one particular candidate investigating pop culture and album cover designs of the 60's. This particular candidate had produced a very professionally designed album cover sleeve in which the study was contained. Another candidate presented their work in a suitcase with ashes; in relation to their study on death and existence.

When candidates combined more than one approach to gathering first-hand research, they had often achieved a more informed and personal view, usually recorded through visual information, which was more effective than using written notes. Submissions at this level of attainment had made well considered selections of key works by their chosen artists. This had enabled them to carry out the level of comparative analysis required to achieve marks at the highest levels.

Outstanding examples of visual and written explorations were seen where topics included fashion, photography and installation works. The submission which had explored the theme of art and propaganda demonstrated an outstanding combination of visual and written personal analysis, as well as a high level of cultural awareness.

Mid-level

Work seen in the mid-level of achievement had included a range of first-hand research, including well documented visits to galleries and/or artist's studios and workshops. This often enabled the candidate to gain valuable experience and personal insights into processes and techniques involved with practises such as ceramics, sculpture and print making. Some candidates had recorded their experience without any analysis of the artefacts.

Although work seen here had demonstrated a considered and individual approach, these submissions usually contained some discussion of works which tended to be more descriptive than analytical, with a few personal observations made. Several candidates had carried out an interview with one of the artists or designers involved which had often provided insights that had clearly benefited the understanding of the candidate.

Visual content was often seen to lack informed annotations, and consisted mainly of a catalogue of often unrelated images.

Visits to galleries and studios were seen to benefit many studies but had not always been fully exploited. These visits had often been documented but had not informed any subsequent development of ideas or personal responses.

Low level

The studies seen at the lower levels of attainment mostly relied on material that was not from first-hand research, but from the Internet or other secondary sources, with little or no discussion or analysis of images. This had clearly inhibited the potential for making any personal comments due to the lack of relevant examples selected.

Here, the selection and relevance of visual and written material had been limited by word processing or hand written notes which listed the images and contained biographical details, rather than engaging in any discussion or analysis of the works included. A few candidates had presented images of their own coursework without making any connections with the work of other artists. Submissions showed little evidence of any personal views or independent judgements, often consisting of mostly unrelated descriptive accounts combined with unnecessary biographical details. At this level, submissions lacked a coherent structure, with written passages often seeming to have no relevance to the images selected. These submissions did not usually include any evidence of evaluative comments, or independent judgements or observations.