

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/01
Controlled Test

General comments

There were some strong responses to this paper with a range of interpretation for many of the questions.

On the whole, candidates had submitted a good amount of preparatory work to support their final exam piece. However, the submissions from some candidates achieving lower mark levels often consisted of only one or two sheets and at times no supporting work at all.

The majority of submissions were produced in a range of 2D media and processes included a variety of paint mediums, pencil, crayon, pastel, mixed media and photography. Most candidates who chose to work in photography used digital photography rather than film photography, and the best works experimented with a range of digital tools, making well-considered links with relevant photographers. Printmaking was seen in a few submissions with relief prints, intaglio and silk-screen. A few candidates responded to the graphics questions working with Photoshop, but many omitted to research designers to help them in their development.

Many candidates made contextual references. They benefitted from studying the subject matter and techniques of a wide range of artists to influence their own work by informing their decisions and development of ideas. In many cases, particularly in the lower mark ranges, candidates made little or no reference to other practitioners or if they did, they did not use the research to inform their own work.

Submissions seen in the higher mark ranges explored media confidently and there was evidence of thorough experimentation with a wide range of materials and processes. Strong personal involvement was apparent through all the assessment objectives at the higher mark range, resulting in mature preparatory studies and fully resolved exam pieces. Most of the candidates' work came from first-hand observation with some effective and personal drawings in a range of media. Photography was often used to support visual research and many candidates made good use of this to explore alternative compositions and ideas. In the mid and lower ranges there was an over-reliance on secondary-sourced images and a failure to fully research the chosen topics. In many cases, work seen at this level did not refine ideas or develop technical skills in the preparatory studies and final exam pieces were unresolved.

Presentation was generally good with worksheets clearly labelled and fastened although in some instances, unnecessarily heavy mount board was used. Old labels were used in some cases with no question number indicated.

Some Centres submitted candidates work presented on individual CDs in large files with no image printed out. Candidates should submit a printed final outcome and supporting work all on one CD or memory stick. Some Centres encouraged candidates to write far more than to visualise creating a misunderstanding of the exam requirements.

Photography submissions

Submissions seen at the higher mark range included work of other photographers to inform development and the final outcome demonstrated knowledge gained from this investigation. Candidates included a variety of viewpoints, angles, locations and lighting arrangements in their photo shoots and had explored a range of ideas. There were imaginative responses to the questions and where work was annotated, candidates working at the higher level used relevant terminology to explain the processes and to demonstrate an understanding of the media.

At lower levels candidates often relied on the use of filters and colour adjustments in Photoshop to attempt to develop their own photographs. The weakest works contained little or no evidence of first-hand research and

all the imagery was often taken from the Internet and then manipulated on Photoshop. Annotations were descriptive and where reference was made to the work of another photographer, information had little analysis. There was a lack of exploration of the media and limited awareness of basic elements such as composition, lighting, viewpoints and contrast in the photo-shoots.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: Contained

This was the most popular question and was answered by more candidates in the middle to lower mark range. A cultural response to this question was seen with many female candidates looking at the ideas of female containment and role, and referencing other female artists to emphasise this aspect. Female war photographers, fashion photographers and family portrait artists were explored in this context.

Stronger submissions demonstrated very good use of observational work, with the addition of photographs of objects, figures and architecture, showing a range of compositional studies. References to artists led to experiments with textures and patterns and also surface decoration such as tattoos, allowing candidates to develop personal outcomes. Very good exploration of the forms and shapes were evident in experiments with media such as collage and mixed media as well as watercolour, colour pencils, and graphite and fine liner. Colour photography with political content in lavish settings was also explored.

The candidates displaying work in the middle mark range had a satisfactory grasp of observation skills and some connections with related media and artists. They often relied on photographs to record and develop their ideas. They showed imaginative use of their manipulation skills and were able to select, evaluate and communicate in a systematic way. A literal interpretation of the question was common at this level and often showed the candidate inside an object as a portrait study, for example, or a person behind bars, in a cell, or in a symbolic box of some sort, often depicting the moral consequences of activities such as drinking or drug use. Colours were subdued to show the lack of liberty, physical or intellectual.

Work seen at the lower range often used Photoshop tools to manipulate own photographs in a basic and limited way. Photography submissions at this level generally demonstrated a restricted use of media and limited understanding of manual focus, depth of field and composition.

Question 2: Enlarge

Responses to this question were often well-considered, exploring not only enlargement of a figure or object but also distortion.

Submissions in the higher mark range included some beautiful studies of the human form using perspective well with strong observation. These candidates had often fully experimented in the preparatory studies.

In the top of the middle group of candidates, there was some very good use of observational work. Mostly candidates used photography, and introduced other imagery, ranging from faces to stacked cups, feathers and fruit and vegetables etc. Backgrounds and the use of space featured in submissions with some success. Exploration of the structures, forms and shapes were evident with candidates experimenting with media such as oil pastels, watercolour, colour pencils, graphite and pen work as well as some collage assemblage. Some connections to artists were seen. These included Françoise Neilly, Khalid Labal, and Georgia O'Keefe. This informed the composition and style of application, such as working on torn overlaying collage and Impressionist style application of paint.

There were few submissions seen at the lower level but these demonstrated a poor grasp of observation skills with limited connections and research. The use of photography enabled easy access to the images but poor research limited the development. These candidates displayed a limited ability in the understanding of form and texture with less evidence of effective preparation to inform outcomes.

Question 3: Strata

Many candidates focused on the layers of architectural features, perspective, layers of life and landscape features.

Higher achieving work included some good observational drawings of a range of buildings, flowers, people, social strata and all with focus on the stratification and the placement of the shapes. Imaginative interpretations were produced concentrating on form, texture and pattern. Work was in a variety of media

including watercolour, coloured pencils, and felt-tip pastels on coloured and ripped papers, with some photography. The preparation mostly included a range of compositional studies including the context for the layers of shapes. Candidates made connections with artists' works looking at Matisse and Manet to help generate ideas for composition, colour and pattern.

In the middle mark range there were a number of photographic submissions. Ansel Adams themed black and white photography was popular although some photographed in colour and then manipulated the images using tools and filters including glitching (achieved by editing the digital data file code) which produced random horizontal or vertical lines resembling strata with varying aesthetic success. Other submissions at this level showed a satisfactory ability to record from life and from photographs. Drawings showed some good technical skills but lacked the creative arrangement and selection process. Candidates chose to work in acrylic, watercolour, pencil and graphite mostly.

Weaker candidates showed limited ability to experiment with materials and techniques. Little reference to artists was seen and colour and pattern featured highly in their outcomes.

Question 4: Feminine and masculine

There was a wide range of interpretations of this question with many candidates exploring gender politics in society with reference to artists such as Mapplethorpe and Tracey Emin.

In the higher achieving work, candidates demonstrated a good ability to work from observation and produced some figurative drawings and photographs from a range of studies of the subject. Their use of line and tone showed a good grasp and understanding of the formal elements. This was evidenced in some successful studies in a range of mixed media such as marbling and torn paper to create a range of backgrounds. The simplest responses looked at fashion in culture, often portraying boys as girls and vice versa for the final exam piece, with two figures, drawn, painted or photographed. Some transgender images and developmental studies leading to a final image of a single figure portrayed as half female and half male included some very careful observation and attention to detail in the depiction of the hair and clothes. The outcomes were dependent on the excellent preparatory studies and the scale of the work showed a confidence and commitment to the starting point.

The submissions in the middle mark range included subjects of yin and yang, and genders coming together influenced by Michelangelo's David, with dark and inward looking suggestions of both qualities existing within some individuals. Work was produced in a variety of media including watercolour, oil pastel and mixed media.

The weaker submissions relied on secondary imagery and often copied artists' works in their own interpretations. Preparatory studies did not develop initial photographs or drawings and there was a limited ability to explore media successfully.

Question 5: Disguise

Many submissions chose to explore and represent the disguising of a face with makeup and cosmetic enhancements. The theme of a hidden self was very apparent and some submissions included photographs of candidates painting themselves into the landscape, urban and rural and trying to create a sense of invisibility. At all levels the theme of veiling and covering up was explored. Masks covering the face with different cultural expressions of human emotions were often seen in preparatory studies.

The higher range submissions demonstrated the development of some of these traditional masks which candidates adapted and re-arranged around modern ideas of what should be hidden and what should be exposed. Candidates working at this level were able to experiment with more abstract qualities such as laying textural elements on top and underneath figurative images, creating a composite set of images that mask feminine soft pastel images with harder biro rendered line drawings influenced by Paula Rego.

The submissions in the middle range responded mostly with photographic portraits and masks from the Internet or were photographed from life rather than drawn first hand. Candidates copied these shapes using a range of media, creating a graphic response. Some candidates experimented more with colour and texture. Their exploration allowed them to work with composition and some artists' works were introduced to help with their development of ideas.

The work seen at the lower range demonstrated little evidence of technical graphic skill and very little tonal rendering of form and shape. These submissions responded to the question more literally with photographs of friends hidden in the forest or undergrowth using the natural environment to disguise the person.

Question 6: Collision

Ideas such as the collision of cultures or collision of emotions were investigated by the better candidates as well as schoolwork pressures and personal sanity.

In the higher mark range candidates responded to a wide range of studies of either organic forms such as shells from life or photographs, and of cars which were found in a scrap heap. Some candidates used still-life forms such as skulls and flowers to produce exciting and sensitive compositions in mixed media. Colour, form and texture were usually quite well addressed.

In the middle mark range, drawing and painting was attempted to a satisfactory standard with less evidence of light on form. Candidates relied mostly on a combination of photographs and some observations from life. Limited development from life was seen and candidates experimented with a range of media including biro, coloured pencils and watercolours to develop into their outcome.

The lower range submissions showed limited understanding of form with some gathering of research for development.

Question 7: Vacuum cleaner

This question enabled candidates to choose a specific starting point and encouraged work from first-hand observation. Studies from direct observation featured highly in the preparation and in the gathering of information, and work from these helped to provide ideas for development.

In the higher mark range candidates produced studies from direct observation of individual or groups of vacuum cleaners and other kitchen appliances, demonstrating good recording skills. They observed differing viewpoints and compositions and experimented with different drawing/painting media, including coffee and pen combination and marbling.

Middle range submissions demonstrated the ability to experiment with composition and many produced very competent still life submissions as the final outcome. There were some very successful watercolour studies of cleaning material both in the preparatory studies and in the final work.

Lower achieving work relied on digitally photographed or scanned studies from first hand, which candidates had worked on with paint to show experimentation.

Question 8: Vase of flowers

The higher achieving candidates worked initially from life but incorporated a good range of compositional studies from which they were able to resolve their ideas. Studies from direct observation were competent and showed a well-developed ability to respond to the subject and environment. The strongest candidates studied the reflective and refractive qualities of glass and water as well as the distortions looking through glass vases. Others worked imaginatively and used secondary sources to help them in their gathering, producing a good range of imagery to select from. Candidates worked in a range of media, including paint, colour pencil, pens and graphite to good effect. Some imaginative final studies were produced showing a confidence in the development process.

Submissions in the middle range showed less confidence in the control of media and there were many digital photography submissions. These often demonstrated a controlled use of the selection lasso, applying desaturation effects for a vintage feel over images. Back-lighting through semi-transparent petals was successful in some cases while other candidates used the lasso tool to select the flowers and enhance or change the colour. Robert Mapplethorpe's influence was popular.

Lower range submissions worked more from secondary sources and some first-hand sources, but they were not helped by their lack of preparation. Digital photography submissions at this level explored a range of compositions with only one or two setups. Flowers were often portrayed in silhouette which meant although brightly coloured flowers had been selected for the still-life, in silhouette the flowers' colour values were lost.

Question 9: A person brushing their hair

Submissions for this question included some good studies of hands and some wonderful hair styles were evident including braiding. There were studies of combs, brushes and hair ornaments with a good variety of different media, such as paint, collage, ink, coloured pencils and photography.

Candidates submitting work that achieved high marks included research that showed a range of compositions from various angles. Own photographs were sometimes shot in time-lapse multi-shot, and detailed pencil studies explored the tugging of hair. Paula Rego was a strong influence, informing several acrylic portraits which used a broad range of media – ink, pastel, chalk and oil. Different angles and uses of contrasting colours provided dynamic interest. Several candidates at this level achieved a real feeling of solidity of form in their paintings. There was evidence of candidates using digital photography very successfully at this level.

Submission in the middle mark range worked from a range of figurative imagery, mostly using the upper body as their reference, which encouraged a freedom of compositional choice. Secondary sources were well evidenced with ideas developed and outcomes were of a good standard. Photographs helped to realise intentions and were developed into final pieces. Imaginative work was seen and candidates displayed quite personal work of models brushing their hair, in a range of media.

Work in the lower mark range showed some evidence of an ability to work from first-hand and secondary sources. Photography candidates experimented with a Photoshop tool which merged a paintbrush into the brushed hair but ideas were often not fully developed and the exam pieces were unresolved.

Question 10: Pile of empty cans

At the higher level candidates used their painting and drawing skills to produce beautifully constructed collections of cans in a variety of compositions. Warhol and Lichtenstein influenced some exciting colourful outcomes. Photoshop outcomes were evident and mass produced and collaged ideas added to the 'Pop Art' range of work. Work was lively and imaginative and the resulting final pieces had a great sense of vitality and brought together the strong elements of the preparation.

There were submissions in the middle mark range that had used photography as the chosen medium. These candidates had manipulated their photographs in Photoshop or other digital manipulation programmes.

In the lower mark range there was evidence of working from secondary sources and some first-hand sources with studies of a single can, being repeated into a 'Pop Art' format. However, development was limited and the final outcomes were unresolved. Computer-aided colour manipulation in the style of Andy Warhol was popular at this level.

Question 11: "Eye for an eye"

There were many submissions from candidates working in a graphic manner and this tested their graphic/illustrative skills.

Although there were some stronger submissions, many of the lower range candidates showed limited ability to experiment with materials and techniques and little reference to the work of other artists was seen.

Question 12: Poster design

In the higher mark range candidates had been experimental in their gathering of visual research. However, most candidates would have benefited from much more initial investigation of their chosen theme and from taking relevant photographs or making detailed observational studies. This would have given them more initial images to work with and to explore, allowing them to demonstrate stronger personal qualities. The weaker submissions relied too heavily on secondary-sourced images from the Internet with very little preparatory work to inform their outcome.

Question 13: Travel brochure

Work seen in the middle mark range often sourced their own photographic images on location, using high and low angles. Several candidates chose to produce the designs of the brochure in a simple 3-way folding triptych. Candidates who achieved marks in the lower mark range also relied heavily on secondary sources

and these images were repeated in very simplistic ways to develop a graphic outcome that demonstrated limited understanding.

Question 14: Human face

Most of the candidates with submissions for this question did not show confidence in their drawing and technical skills but did demonstrate some thinking and understanding of process. Some ceramic ware submissions did not show sufficient initial visual research and this meant that development of the designs was limited.

Question 15: Crustacean outfits

In the middle mark range, images of lobsters and crayfish were resourced either from the Internet or from first-hand photographs, camouflaged in their environment. Fashion garments were drawn to incorporate their qualities arriving at a creative, colourful response. Weaker submissions showed a simple response featuring fashion drawings that included real 3D shell added to various parts of the costumes, or prints of shells placed on fabric which showed no understanding of the relationships between the human form and shellfish.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/02
Coursework A

General comments

Painting and Related Media was by far the most popular area of study, followed by Photography, Digital and Lens Media, Graphic Design and Fashion Design. There were fewer submissions for Textiles, Ceramics, Sculpture and Printmaking.

In most Centres, candidates had identified individual themes for investigation and a wide range of topics were seen. Most Centres understood the requirements for the AS Level and the differences between the AS and A Level Components. Few candidates submitted collections of finished pieces or whole class exercises and most focused on the development of ideas. Portraiture was a popular theme, as were still life, natural forms, landscape, architecture, and water. Some stronger candidates tackled social commentary and political concepts with maturity. Some themes were determined by the investigation of selected artists, and included techniques, media development and other abstract interpretations. Some of the weaker submissions tried to portray more symbolic themes such as emotions, feelings, pain and trauma but this led to some obvious conclusions. Some Centres had set a common theme but the responses tended to be individual.

Many candidates demonstrated exploration of a range of media and the development of individual ideas from a variety of starting points. Many included photography as a method of gathering first-hand research. Some of this was creatively and technically excellent and some was less strong, particularly in relation to composition, focus, tonal contrast and printing.

Generally there was little useful annotation included in the coursework. Sometimes candidates gave some rationale for their research or ideas but mostly images, ideas, materials and artists were just noted down. However on some occasions there were large amounts of writing providing detailed background on the candidate's emotive feelings for showing the images and what symbolism there was. Only in a few submissions in the higher mark bands were reasons given for choosing an option or rejecting another. Candidates would benefit from more direction in critical thinking in this area.

The standard of presentation was generally good. In most cases it was easy to identify the candidate's intentions and to follow their research, experimentation and decision making. A small number of candidates had not securely fastened mounted sheets together. Some candidates had not attached final outcomes to the preparatory sheets. It is essential that Centres and candidates ensure that all media has dried absolutely before submission. Examples were seen where paintings had stuck to one another and consequently suffered damage because they had not dried completely before mounting.

The application of the assessment criteria was frequently generous which often presented an inaccurate assessment of the candidates' skills. Several Centres made insufficient differentiation between candidates of obvious differing abilities, with Centres failing to recognise that many of their candidates were not at the same mark level.

In most cases the order of merit was acceptable, but Centres often overvalued responses in each area of the assessment objectives across the mark range. Very few Centres had undervalued their candidates' work, and a few Centres had made realistic assessments of their candidates' abilities through appropriate application of the mark scheme.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and Related Media

Many still-life subjects (toys, flowers, household objects, musical instruments etc.) and landscapes/cityscapes were chosen along with quite a few architectural explorations, as well as animals and birds.

However, the human form was definitely the most popular theme. Domestic violence, body image, obesity, being trapped or drowning were popular topics and some candidates approached them with sensitivity and intelligence. Others took a more literal and obvious approach, with little exploration or development of individual ideas. The less appropriate themes were those based on fantasy, where few sources were original and much reliance on the imagination was required, which often led to predictable imagery.

The strongest candidates all sustained their investigations by reviewing and evaluating their work at every stage of its development. These evaluations progressively clarified individual intentions and enabled the candidates to refine their ideas and techniques through purposeful experimentation. The work was informed by first-hand studies and research into the work of other artists which demonstrated the growing independence of the candidates' creativity.

There was frequent use of photography as a method to make first-hand studies. At its best this was a process of discovery as the candidates thoughtfully investigated their subject matter in order to find unexpected imagery. Viewpoints, lighting and composition were explored in the best work. Having discovered potential imagery, the strongest candidates went on to draw and paint directly from the subject in order to deepen their understanding of the potential they had found.

The work in the mid ability range tended to be inconsistent in skill and development. Some submissions contained a combination of better work which was integrated with some weaker studies. There was a lack of consistency in the development of ideas which resulted in less effective and engaged decision making. The references made to the works of other artists was either not clearly understood or not appropriate, with fewer personal or meaningful connections. Therefore, these submissions often failed to reach their full potential. There was often evidence of successful work within the supporting studies but often the candidate had not recognised or developed these strengths well enough to progress the work.

There was sometimes a formulaic approach which often limited exploration. Pencil drawings developed into pen and ink, colour was applied and then scale increased and paint applied. This formula rarely led to any original work. However, some submissions showed that candidates had made discoveries and ended up with unexpected solutions that couldn't have been anticipated at the start of the work.

Some candidates produced a series of finished paintings as their complete submission. These were often still-life objects, figures in national dress, architecture, or complex compositions. They were usually painted satisfactorily, sometimes excellently and in detail. However, there was usually little idea development although some candidates tried to write a written critique. These were often very emotional and spiritual rather than critical.

Some weaker candidates only carried out a small number of directed tasks. During this limited experience there were few opportunities for independent choices to be made and skills were undeveloped.

Other candidates in the lower range presented very limited evidence of research and development with some submissions containing little more than a number of random copies from secondary sources or simply a final outcome with written notes. Colour was often used in a literal way with little exploration or invention. Any reference to the works of other artists was usually copied, with little depth in the exploration of ideas, techniques or uses of colour, evolving from these references. There was limited evidence of aesthetic analysis or critical judgement apparent in the work at this level.

Photography and Lens Based Media

There were a few specialist photography submissions. Some candidates had thoughtfully explored their subject matter and produced good images but few candidates had informed their work by researching the work of other photographers. Stronger candidates had explored a range of subject but it was rare to find candidates returning to subject matter to reshoot in the light of evaluations and the range of photographic techniques used was generally narrow.

In most submissions, a large number of photos were produced with same subject in slightly different locations. The position of the camera was changed, and sometimes the lighting, but they were all submitted with little or no critical analysis to differentiate between good or bad images. One image was then often chosen to be enlarged for the final outcome.

Other submissions contained good quality images, but it was often unclear whether composition was really understood. Even though digital manipulation was used to change colours and to achieve effects – pixilation,

and cloning parts of images, at this level few candidates cropped their photos to produce better compositions.

There were several weaker submissions which contained a series of photographs of one subject – cars, 'nature', faces of friends etc. with none marked as a final image. Photographers were often not researched in any depth, and examples were not used to show how these had influenced ideas. Often, the work was one photoshoot, with little consideration given to the possibilities of alternative locations. There was often a lack of editing, very little knowledge of camera techniques and technical ability, with little thought given to lighting, focus, viewpoints or composition.

Digital media included a variety of different software packages used to sketch and animate with varying degrees of success according to candidates' understanding and ability. In weaker submissions the ability to record was not improved by using digital media. On some occasions, a set of stills made up the preparatory work and led into little short films. Often these films were of low quality and showed poor editing ability and inappropriate music/titles that lowered the quality of the whole submission.

Graphic Design

Of the few Graphic Design entries that were seen, a clear divide and a contrast of approach was apparent.

The stronger submissions showed a competent understanding of the principals of design with candidates using contemporary digital media manipulation and processes, with reference made to the appropriate works of others. In some work, original drawings had also been scanned and digitally manipulated to produce book jackets or album covers. Candidates had produced work from direct observation and this included drawing and photography to use as a starting point from which to base ideas. Individual ideas were explored effectively and appropriate and effective links were made to existing designs to inform personal development.

In weaker submissions, generally designs were simplistic and not informed by any depth of knowledge of professional graphic practices. While some alternative designs had been considered, critique was usually limited to a statement that one looked better than the others. Images were not derived from a process of experimentation informed by first-hand studies, so there was a reliance on the most obvious outcomes.

Fashion and Textile Design

There were few submissions using Textiles and Fashion. In stronger submissions there were impressive fashion drawings with graphical qualities. These were full of ideas and original designs which showed well-researched critical knowledge. At the lower end there were garments constructed showing low skill, limited creativity and little preparatory exploration. In these weaker submissions candidates focused on construction rather than the more investigative forms of textiles where surface and texture are explored through a combination of dye, melt, weave, stitch etc.

The stronger Textiles works demonstrated a skilful execution of design which originated from research and first-hand study. Photography was sometimes used effectively to record the making processes. Most submissions mainly contained designs for repeat patterns and originated from a series of studies from both direct observation and secondary sources as an initial starting point. Some of the designs were printed onto fabric and took the form of successful prints. However, there was little evidence of the exploration of ideas to support the work.

3D Design and Sculpture

There was some very strong work in this area with evidence of some full-scale exhibitions documented through high quality photographs. In other work, some candidates produced some small 3D experiments from some initial research, which sometimes had little or no connection to each other. This demonstrated the range of materials and ideas explored during their course, rather than producing an informed and developed body of work, demonstrating a progression of ideas.

There were very few examples of Ceramics submissions. Submissions seen, however, sometimes showed strong supporting work from the initial starting points through research and exploration, into some concluding outcomes. The use of good photography illustrated the making processes and the concluding works.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/03
Coursework B

General comments

The strongest submissions demonstrated that the different emphasis between the two coursework components had been understood and applied. These candidates submitted well-focused projects that included in-depth research and development of original ideas that were sustained through to finished outcomes. Skills gained from Component 2 were evident and candidates expressed themselves in a personal manner. There were some excellent submissions demonstrating a maturity of thought, practical skill and critical knowledge and understanding. The influence of investigating the work of other artists, designers or cultures informed the stronger submissions, both in the technical handling of media and in the choice of themes to explore.

Weaker candidates explored their subjects well but were weaker in the assessment objectives: Personal Qualities and Knowledge and Critical Understanding. These submissions would have benefitted from more primary research.

Most of the stronger candidates used a sketchbook well, filling the pages with many explorative drawings, plans, ideas and experiments. The mid-level sketchbooks were used less frequently and with less originality, being more repetitive. In weaker work, if a sketchbook was produced at all, it often consisted of a few pages of unrelated or invented pictures and cartoons or swatches of paint colours. A substantial number of entries had no sketchbook at all.

The application of the assessment criteria was frequently generous which often presented an inaccurate assessment of the candidates' skills. Several Centres made insufficient differentiation between candidates of obvious differing abilities, with Centres failing to recognise that many of their candidates were not at the same mark level.

In most cases the order of merit was acceptable, but Centres often overvalued responses in each area of the assessment objectives across the mark range. Very few Centres had undervalued their candidates' work, and a few Centres had made realistic assessments of their candidates' abilities through appropriate application of the mark scheme.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and Related Media

The quality and quantity of the research drawings in the sketchbooks and supporting sheets ranged from exciting and informative, to less instructive and personal. Candidates' own research photos were included in most high and mid submissions. These were often very creative and thought provoking and, sometimes, when included in the lower submissions, they were of a better standard than the painted copies.

Most candidates produced Painting projects, with acrylics and watercolour being the most popular media. The best works explored sophisticated techniques and compositional ideas that had been informed by researching other artists' work. These candidates' commitment to using their own first-hand studies was fundamental. Ideas had been investigated in a thoughtful and sustained manner revealing the candidates' determination to solve problems, develop skills and fully realise their intentions in personal outcomes.

A significant number of candidates in the middle range had not informed their own ideas by studying the work of other relevant artists at all. Whilst these submissions were often skilful, they usually remained a series of technical studies rather than a process of developing personal ideas into resolved compositions. Some candidates made copies from the work of other artists but there was little evidence that these

exercises had resulted in a knowledge and understanding that could inform the development of their own work.

The best submissions contained beautifully painted and drawn studies and painted outcomes of exceptional merit. Drawn studies with photos and ideas were explored in depth and particular care was taken with the planning of the final paintings. Many different layouts were tried before candidates chose the best ones.

Some candidates in the lower middle range explored their ideas in written form. Whilst these ideas were often interesting and informed by substantial research, these candidates had usually not experimented enough with media to enable them to translate the potential of their ideas into final pieces. The lack of developed skills resulted in unresolved and limited outcomes.

The most common characteristic of the weakest candidates was a reliance on simple copying of secondary sources. Although some of these candidates demonstrated adequate skills, there was very limited evidence of a critical understanding informing the candidates' ability to make judgements as the work developed.

Photography and Lens Based Media

Many different themes were explored ranging from portraits and still-life subjects. The strongest candidates demonstrated an ability to recognise and organise visual forms into compositions and to manipulate a range of alternative layouts to communicate ideas. There was generally evidence of good understanding through the appropriate manipulation of equipment, lighting, subject and software etc. Subjects were captured, analysed and reshot. Candidates gathered a variety of sources and used effective computer manipulation techniques and processes to express their themes. Relevant photographers were evidenced and used to intelligently inform the works, without directly copying the images. The final outcomes at this level clearly illustrated aesthetic awareness and technical proficiency. Examples seen were produced in both digital and printed format.

In mid-level work submitted electronically, there was evidence of candidates carrying out more than one photo shoot. However, some images were not analysed or developed and viewpoints were obvious. Many candidates included examples of other photographers' work but did not include any analysis of the examples included. There were very few experiments with photographic techniques or with Photoshop and the work demonstrated little understanding of light and composition.

Graphic Design

Some exceptional work was submitted demonstrating a mastery of CAD/Photoshop and a strong knowledge of current design. There was also evidence of good hand-formed lettering seen within supporting sheets. Candidates had developed individual projects; menus, book jackets, fliers, logos and all work was well organised and presented in a logical sequence.

A small number of heavily directed graphics submissions were seen. The lack of independent research, exploration of ideas or experimentation with media resulted in very limited work.

Weaker submissions relied on secondary resources, which were usually in the form of internet print outs or magazine cuttings. These sources were used in a logical manner to produce either a poster or holiday brochure, designs for commercial advertising or letterheads etc., but the work lacked any personal connection or commitment to the theme and contained little in-depth research or individual development. Weaker submissions showed little evidence of starting points. There was limited development of ideas, consideration of colour compositions, layout or font styles, and had little or no reference to the work of other graphic designers.

Fashion and Textile Design

The most successful submissions were lively and inventive. They included fabric swatches, designs for accessories and alternative colour schemes, but often this did not lead to practical development or construction. Collected magazine images were used as points of reference, but there was little analysis or reference made to any designers in depth. There was little evidence of working from direct observation or of developing ideas and it was clear there was a lack of understanding of garment construction.

There were some complex screen prints on fabric submitted demonstrating both technical competence and a good aesthetic understanding. Some were less successful in the area of aesthetic awareness although their designs had been developed from in depth research from first-hand sources. However in weaker

submissions, often designs were well developed but technical craft skills were not strong enough to produce the final outcome.

3D Design and Sculpture

Very few examples of Sculpture were seen. However some candidates had worked with a range of both 2D and 3D media and produced some strong submissions. A few product design submissions were seen.

There were several mixed media installations. The themes were varied and sometimes complex. Candidates used a wide range of media including their own photos, suspended or mounted as part of the assemblage. Projections of photos were seen as part of bigger pieces. These large constructions were usually well documented and photographed from several different angles.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/04
Personal Study

General comments

Candidates made good use of the proposal forms for the initial planning of the study which was generally well considered. The form benefits the candidate through the clear identification of appropriate first-hand sources for research and experience of the chosen topic. (The sources of all the work submitted, text and images, must be clearly identified.)

There was a wide range of topics with more evidence of thematic approaches being used. Some topics seen frequently were graffiti art, portraiture, the female form, landscape, and the expression of emotions through art. Less common themes included the afterlife, the sublime, cultural identity and feminist art. Areas of study which were investigated included fine art, graphic design, three-dimensional design including ceramics, architecture, fashion design, interior design, textile design, street art and body art.

Several submissions were seen which included the candidate's own coursework pieces which were clearly being assessed for another component. A few submissions consisted entirely of the candidates own work with little or no evidence of any relevant analysis.

The very best submissions were always well informed, stimulating and focused. The candidates selecting an area of study that was personal and interesting to them were inspired and produced work that was engaging and full of vitality.

A wide range of methods of presentation were seen but the most common was an A4 file or plastic folder, usually consisting of digital images and word processed text. Many submissions were sketchbooks or scrapbooks of various sizes. Several exciting and dynamic presentations were seen in the form of hand-made books which used a combination of IT and photographic processes with drawings and other practical, material-based experiments. Many digitally printed investigations were seen to mimic a magazine style and most had a strong sense of graphic design through the use of motifs and/or colour schemes to give the presentation a cohesive feel.

High level

The evidence of well-considered planning and the selection of very good first-hand sources was a consistent feature in all studies at this level. These candidates were more confident in their presentation and were very well informed in the selection of artists work to discuss. The investigations were more purposeful to the candidate through a real journey of exploration which had clearly informed the related practical responses. There was more evidence of a wider use of media used in the presentations at this level. Candidates combined their own photographs with drawings and paintings to create a very personal and highly creative feel to the study. These students had obviously made excellent choices of sources from which to gain vital first-hand research and experience of their subjects.

At this level there was a clear sense of sustained development throughout the task, from the initial ideas, building to a conclusion which demonstrated a strong sense of understanding and awareness of the chosen theme. The use of media always related to the topic being investigated.

Some well-considered titles provided some excellent starting points for exploration. The ability to make detailed and complex comparisons through a perceptive evaluation of the topic was very much in evidence at these higher levels of achievement.

Mid level

The majority of submissions were within this area of attainment. Evidence of first-hand research was present in most of these submissions. This was often in the form of an interview via email. The quality of the questions and how effective they were in prompting valuable insights into the ideas and process behind the works being explored, indicated the level at which the candidate was working. The interview often just provided some biographical details and some descriptive comments on works of art. The stronger examples achieved a more personal response through direct contact with a local artist/artisan, although not fully exploiting the potential for further analysis.

The work was usually visually engaged and demonstrated an awareness of the relationship between textual information and the images presented. The candidates were often involved and made transcriptions of the selected examples of works and gained a level of understanding through that process. Art work seen at first hand was often recorded through the candidates own photography.

Several studies within this level of achievement investigated local and traditional craft practises. This had usually involved visiting a studio, factory or local craftsperson. This had helped to inform the study and the candidate often took their own photos to support the written text. Many of the submissions within the middle levels of achievement could have been improved with the introduction of a comparative element for investigation.

Some candidates included their own studies with links made to related examples by other artists. Stronger submissions within this level made good use of visits and gained some valuable experience of the chosen subject area. These studies often benefitted from the development of material-based responses which had clearly been informed by those visits and first-hand experience. It was evident that the research and experience gained from well-selected, first-hand sources significantly advanced the stronger submissions. These candidates developed more personal views and were able to reflect these in the evaluations made of their work and of the artists selected.

Lower level

The work at this level of attainment was less visually engaged and often focused on biographical or historical detail which also included mostly descriptive comments if any images of works were included. Sometimes the work referred to was either their own or other poorly printed examples. The layout of the documents were often not manipulated sufficiently to make appropriate connections between the text and the image with little evidence of any exploration of ideas.

Very weak submissions demonstrated a lack of understanding of the main purpose of the study, which is to thoroughly research a topic within any area of art and design. This first-hand experience should then go on to inform and inspire the development of personal responses through observations (expressed visually and/or written) along with independent and critical judgements contained in a personal evaluation of the chosen topic.

Candidates at this level sometimes included a visit to an artist's studio. However, the main focus was often an interview which revealed little about the ideas and process behind the actual works seen. The information gathered was mainly biographical. These candidates would have benefited from producing some searching questions to gain valuable insights into the ideas and development behind the works of the chosen artist before the interview.

There were fewer studies containing only second-hand imagery and information from the internet which limits achievement levels in all of the assessment objectives.

Some submissions made no reference to the work of other artists. These candidates often used examples of their own coursework as evidence of first-hand experience. Improvements could have been made by making some connections with related works by other artists.

In a few cases the topics chosen were not relevant to any area of the Art and Design syllabus and occasionally candidates submitted the same practical work for more than one component which is not appropriate.