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FOREWORD

This booklet contains reports written by Examiners on the work of candidates in certain papers. **Its contents are primarily for the information of the subject teachers concerned.**

ART

GCE Ordinary Level

Paper 6010/01

Drawing and/or Painting from Still Life

General comments

The questions were suited to the candidate's needs and certainly many more than usual were able to produce excellent still life studies. There were some Centres where the candidate's marks fell almost entirely in the Grade A area and many full marks could be awarded. It did seem that there were far fewer who could only achieve very low marks. The response to the two questions was almost equally divided.

The materials used followed a usual pattern. There were paintings in gouache and watercolour. Coloured pencils and pastels were also used as was pen and wash – while soft lead pencil and charcoal were favoured for monochrome presentations. There was one Centre where all the work had been carried out most successfully using pen and indian ink hatching. Unhappily, some other candidates had chosen to use unsympathetic pattern textured paper. This often proved to be a handicap when pencil and pastels were used on such surfaces.

The usual mark scheme was used by the Examiners and that can be found in the published subject syllabus.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

A group made up of a large polished object such as a chrome, brass or copper kettle or bowl seen together with three smaller coloured objects such as fruit, ornaments or flowers.

Some Centres retain a very high standard of excellence and many Grade A marks could be awarded. This question brought forth an unusual number of fine watercolour paintings and a superb work in pastel.

The higher standard of work demonstrated that candidates had shown considerable care in the choice of the objects and their successful arrangement. Singing watercolours of deft brush strokes and truly edible looking fruits, all in strong form and space, could only delight the Examiner. Many were able to exploit rewarding reflective qualities in the shining kettles and bowls used. Well placed cast shadowing increased the illusion of depth. It seemed that the colours fell rewardingly into the compositional whole.

Grade B work showed a more laboured and unsure approach. Compositions were not so confidently arranged, reflections were not so positively seen, space and depth was not so well understood and colours and tones in the pencil drawing was lacking in sparkle.

Grade C candidates were just about nearly getting things right. Some candidates floundered in matters of perspective, whilst others found difficulty in managing the ellipses. Colours could become muddy or overworked and bordering on the unpleasant. The making of form was tentative and unsure, and composition could often be left to chance.

Grade D work was characterised by the candidates finding it difficult to pin the objects down in space. They hopped around and could find confusion in fighting for their own space. The form of objects was often absent and reflections were not attempted.

Grade E candidates were usually able to glean marks on one of the examination objectives. Most usually in the expression of shape but without the advantage of contour or in a clear depiction of colour.

Ungraded candidates had struggled with all aspects of the accepted criteria. These were mainly of heavily outlined, very basic shapes, and with no consideration given to tone or colour.

Question 2

A group of small objects which could be found in a garage. Spanners, pumps, oil cans and examples.

Some of the best work seen was actually carried out by using soft lead pencil. Compositions had been excitingly composed using all manner of objects, all impeccably drawn and toned and with splendid regard for background negative shapes. Colourwork could match that found in **Question 1** but seldom did.

Grade A work was of accurately formed shapes placed in fine perspective, enhanced with meaningful shadowing and personal artistry in the depiction of form and colour.

A lot of talent was found in the Grade B work but here the candidates often let themselves down in regard to the arrangement of the composition or in the less than subtle use of colour or in the misunderstanding of depth in their pictures.

Grade C work was usually found to be lacking in the care taken with the shapes, the making of subtle form and the understanding of perspective and ellipses found in all of the manufactured items required in the work.

In Grade D work candidates missed out on at least one of the assessment objectives, the most common being the ability to fit objects confidently in space. Thus ill drawn items could be left jumping wildly about in space.

Spanners without volume, ill mixed colours, dreadful lettering on oil cans and distorted proportions all went to land candidates in the lowest Grade of E.

Paper 6010/02

Drawing and/or Painting from Observation

General comments

Most candidates chose **Question 2**, *A cluster of fruits, such as berries, grapes or bananas* and **Question 3**, *A pair of spectacles or sunglasses*. A substantial number opted for **Question 1**, *Two different stones or two different pieces of bark*. As usual there were very few responses to the subjects for working out of doors with none for **Question 4** and barely a dozen for **Question 5**.

An increase in the numbers of candidates entered for the paper this session led to more achieving the higher levels of the mark range, whereas lower level responses remained similar in number to last year. The use of media ranged from water colours and oil pastels to pencil crayons, dry pastels and soft pencils. As usual a competent control and dexterity was evident in the majority of submissions, but water colours were used with considerable expertise in many of the most able submissions.

Comments on specific questions***Natural or Man-made Objects*****Question 1**

Two different stones or two different pieces of bark

Although the least popular of the three choices in this section, some outstanding and many excellent studies were received. All candidates chose their specimens well in terms of interesting forms and structures and stimulating textures and surface qualities. In the best work the geological formations of stones or the crusty layers of bark were rendered meticulously in relation to the overall forms of the objects. The use of line, tone and colour to render subtle nuances, clefts and fissures and cast shadows led to lively mark-making and fluid rhythms. Only a few less successful studies were seen where the interest in surface textures detracted from observation of forms and structures. However, even these submissions were good and very few weaker attempts were seen.

Question 2

A cluster of fruits, such as berries, grapes or bananas

Sometimes the choice of specimens, their arrangement and the point of view adopted for observation caused unnecessary problems for candidates. For example, some engaged in a still life study, more appropriate to Paper 1, by making an arrangement of several different fruits, rather than focusing on just one cluster; others studied separate berries, grapes, cherries or bananas as individual fruits unlinked to a cluster by stalks or stems. In contrast many of the most able candidates understood how to make their studies more interesting by breaking a few fruits away from the cluster, placing them in the foreground and also partly peeling a banana or slicing a berry to reveal the interior. The better studies therefore, arose from a consideration of the selection, arrangement and aspect chosen for observation of the specimen. Many excellent studies were received where forms and structures were meticulously defined, with colour and tone used with great proficiency to render light and shade, cast shadows and surface textures.

At the mid levels of achievement, while some success was apparent in conveying a sense of the overall form within the surrounding space, observation of structures where stalks and stems were attached to fruits was often avoided or vaguely defined. In the less able attempts the rendering of forms and shapes tended to be generalised with little awareness of the relationship to the space surrounding or within the specimens. However, the weakest work struggled to define simple shapes and became repetitive through heavy linear emphasis or an elementary use of colour and tone.

Question 3

A pair of spectacles or sunglasses

Again, it was interesting to see how the more able candidates responded to the challenge of this object by purposefully arranging it and considering the most stimulating viewpoint. In the most able submissions this also involved the reflection of light from the lenses as well as shadows cast by the frames onto the surrounding space. The rendering of the mouldings of the frames and the points of articulation, such as hinges, were always precise in definition. Colour and tone were used effectively to convey reflections and the different surface qualities of glass, metal and plastic materials.

At the mid levels of achievement many competent and ambitious attempts to study the specimen from an interesting angle were seen. The problems of foreshortening arms and rims often proved too challenging, although credit was always given for trying. The definition of articulated points, such as hinges and nose rests, also tended to be vague or avoided. In the less able studies, however, candidates struggled to define the forms of frames and the shapes of lenses, even when the specimens were studied from the most obvious frontal viewpoint. Only a few very poor studies were received; the challenge of observing the object had little appeal to those with a limited ability.

Subjects for working out of doors or from a sheltered position

Question 4

A view through a half-open gate to a garden or yard

No submissions were received for this question.

Question 5

Large potted plants seen close to the entrance to a building

Several studies were received. Some were rendered solely in line with a sensitive definition of the plants but an inconsistent use of perspective for the surrounding space. Others were more ambitious when studying pots placed on steps leading to a doorway. Most submissions achieved a competent to high level of observation.

Paper 6010/04
Composition in Colour

General comments

Question 3, *Waiting*, was by far the most popular theme, followed by **Question 2**, *Flying high or Diving deep*, and **Question 4**, *Caught*. There were less responses to **Question 1**, *Overcrowded*, and **Question 5**, *Performers at a Festival*, and very few for **Question 6**, the interpretation of a literary passage. Over a third of the work submitted achieved good to very high levels of the mark range and there were fewer poor responses compared with previous years.

Most work was carried out in water colours which were generally used very competently, but an impressive number of highly accomplished paintings was received in this media. Even some of the less able attempts showed a facility in establishing fluid washes to create atmospheric effects, although limitations were more apparent with compositional ideas and drawing of forms, such as people, buildings or trees. Fewer problems were encountered this year with unfixed pastel media or collage materials, such as sand mixed with paint. Some Centres, however, continue to despatch work wrapped in tissue paper or transparent envelopes; this results in damage to the work when the covering has to be removed before marking can commence.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Overcrowded

Though not a popular question, a variety of interpretations was received. Human contexts focused on markets, crowded streets and traffic congestion. The most successful compositions were firmly set in specific places, making use of particular buildings. Some depictions of crowded beaches, swarming with swimmers and sunbathers, were imaginative but tended to become rather spread out rather than restricted when the scene was depicted as if viewed from above. Other interpretations focused on baskets of fish, market produce or overfilled luggage and containers. For this kind of approach to the theme, thorough direct observation during the preparatory period had clearly informed the best results. No really poor attempts were seen for this question.

Question 2

Flying high or Diving deep

Both possible interpretations were undertaken by a substantial number of candidates. Good preparatory research of birds for the former and fish for the latter had preceded the examination for the most successful paintings. The best work showed a strong interest in the point of view adopted to enhance dramatic compositions with dynamic angles and rhythmic lines. Evocative colours and textures were particularly well used to evoke underwater scenes. On the other hand less able attempts tended to be very frontal with landscapes or seascapes presented along horizontal lines. The weakest responses nearly all included poorly drawn aircraft or balloons, usually isolated in the sky with no surrounding contexts to convey the height of the theme.

Question 3

Waiting

This was the most popular choice of theme with the work received covering the full ability range. Many excellent interpretations were seen of a single person or small groups of figures adopting characteristic poses of resignation or anticipation. The focus on the facial expressions and positions of the figures conveyed everything without the need for surrounding contexts or further elaboration. Other depictions, however, resulted from thorough preparatory research of particular settings, such as a station or an airport departure area. Less able responses tended to be more concerned with the literal reasons for waiting for a loved one, a doctor or dentist, and even spiritual salvation, for example. All this had to be conveyed with the addition of verbal signs and symbols rather than the interpretation of the experience in visual terms. In the poorest submissions horizontal lines to convey space and depth and elementary figure drawing were often seen in depictions of bus stops.

Question 4*Caught*

The responses to this theme showed a very wide range of interpretation. Depictions of trapped animals, birds and fish, ball games, blustery weather, the arrest of criminals and drug dependency were all offered. The best work was imaginative and dramatic, whatever the context. Preparatory studies had clearly led to interesting compositional ideas which were conveyed with a confident and personal feeling for colour and the use of media. Less able submissions tended towards literal description, particularly for social problems such as crime and drug or alcohol addiction. However, some of these attempts to moralise were effective in communicating a sense of desperation or degradation. The few weaker attempts seen mostly used sporting contexts and were too obviously based on photographs from the news media.

Question 5*Performers at a Festival*

Some excellent interpretations of music, dance and ritual were received. The best work conveyed a strong sense of cultural identity through costume and festival decorations. Less able submissions, though competent, tended to rely on copy existing images rather than develop an idea from personal experience. Nevertheless, very few poor responses to the theme were seen.

Question 6*Extract from 'The God of Small Things' by Arundhati Roy*

A few excellent interpretations were seen which evoked a strong sense of human impotence in the face of a natural disaster. Less able responses rarely developed anything further than a river scene with no particular sense of wind, rain or flooding.