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ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01
Observational Study

General comments

There were submissions from all questions. Each option suggested different possibilities and a range of challenges which were generally within all candidates' capabilities. However, the *Human Figure* option tended to be restricted to submissions by candidates of higher ability, and to those Centres who had structured this activity as part of their course of study.

The majority of submissions fell within the competent to highly competent achievement levels, but encouragingly there were also many examples which were awarded full or nearly full marks. There appeared to be far less really weak work this year.

Candidates usually fulfilled their potential mainly through positive attention to preparatory studies, and in the main these were relevant to the chosen question. Research undertaken by most candidates was thorough and involved experiments with viewpoints, lighting effects, compositions, and media. These studies often lead up to a full compositional try-out before the examination piece. However, the latter often resulted in the most lively and vital statement, making the examination piece merely a rather dull re-run lacking in any further development. There were very few entries without any preparatory studies at all.

The use of a wide variety of media was seen and at best this was used with confidence and a sensitivity towards the chosen subject. There was some very exciting use of mixed media, combining collage and print techniques which had been overdrawn or painted into in a more detailed manner. This enabled a more interpretative approach to be adopted.

Some candidates chose to section off areas of their final piece and execute each area in a different medium, and sometimes in a different technique. This resulted in rather disjointed final compositions where such qualities as special relationships, cast shadows etc. which are so vital to still life compositions were difficult to measure. This approach whilst very valid is better suited to preparatory work and can give a candidate the opportunity to try out different approaches to see which is best suited before making a decision for the final piece. This will also address the Assessment Objective 8 (making informed aesthetic judgements).

Direct first hand observation predominated, supported on occasions by the candidate's own photographs. There were a few examples where candidates had been encouraged to make copies from "old master paintings". Whilst this practise might be useful for preparatory work it fails to meet the rubric for this paper.

Where Centres use computer aided design programmes, such as "Adobe Photoshop", they must ensure that the preparatory work shows the selection of ideas that build up to the final outcome. This would involve experiments with viewpoints, lighting effects and surface qualities. To simply show the stages achieved from within the programme means that candidates work fails to meet all the Assessment objectives.

Of concern this year was the casual way some Centres approach the labelling and presentation of their submissions efficiently and effectively.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Still Life Group

- (a) *Make a still life drawing or painting of a flower arrangement which has been made in a bowl or vase for a table decoration, other objects may be included.*

The best responses to this question realised that colour and tone could be used to represent light and texture as well as form, particularly in the rendition of the flowers.

There were some strong tonal drawings where candidates had used a wide range of pencil grades. Weaker work of this kind failed to achieve good qualities of line and tone where they had only used an HB pencil.

The treatment of space tended to be problematic with all but the best candidates, with the effects of eye levels and treatment of elliptical forms of vases not being fully understood. There were some very weak entries where candidates had simply filled in shapes with flat colour.

- (b) *Create a still life composition using a few unusual objects which have been brought together for a second hand goods sale.*

This was a popular question and the open ended quality gave candidates enormous freedom in the selection of objects, and this was well received by candidates at all ability levels.

The best submissions considered contextual aspects in their choice of objects and arrangements were often made more interesting where objects were linked by cast shadows as well as the more obvious overlap of forms.

In a few cases it was clear that the Art Department resource collection had been raided or that large arrangements had been set up by the teacher from which all candidates worked. This approach tended to mitigate against mid to lower level candidates who had problems in selecting suitable areas from which to draw or paint and who could not bring any personal direction to the arrangement.

Question 2

Natural and Man Made Objects

- (a) *A pair of sandals.*

This was a very popular question producing at best results which went far beyond the standard expected of a candidate at this level.

There was a real interpretation of the character of a well worn sandal in terms of structure, tone, colour and texture often using a combination of media.

Many candidates had been equally imaginative in their interpretation of choice of sandal including ladies shoes with straps and stiletto heels. These offered very interesting possibilities for arrangements and some candidates included the shoes both inside and balanced on shoe boxes.

Weaker entries had concentrated their efforts on renditions of individual sandals or parts of sandals seen in isolation. There was little or no consideration given to surrounding surfaces or of cast shadows.

(b) *A small branch of a flowering shrub.*

This appealed to all ability ranges. There were some very skilled traditional drawings and paintings where the more able candidates were aware of cast shadows and reflected colour to be seen on the surface on which the branch was placed.

There were also some very imaginative responses that combined accomplished drawings with mixed media and collage elements.

Weaker entries were more reliant upon a formulaic approach particularly in rendering the leaves, many of which were based upon imagination rather than close individual observation.

(c) *Light fixtures such as a table lamp or a dismantled electric plug or torch.*

There were some excellent responses demonstrating skills in very careful observation and considered drawings. These candidates experimented with a wide range of viewpoints and compositions. Large scale drawings of plugs enabled candidates to achieve a good sense of form.

However, most submissions came from middle to weaker candidates. Those who selected the table lamp tended to use a single central composition with little consideration given to cast shadows or to ellipses. Similarly with those choosing torches, although both this subject and the plug provided more effective arrangements. Smaller drawings of this subject often lacked structure and tonal shading resulting in misshapen forms.

Question 3*The Human Figure***(a)** *The model who is wearing a pair of headphones is seated near a table on which there is a personal stereo player. The hands are resting naturally in the lap. The whole figure should be drawn or painted.*

This section was more popular than in previous years and results were generally very accomplished.

Most candidates were aware of the proportions of the human figure, and made praiseworthy attempts to ensure that these were recorded with accuracy. The best of these were distinguished by candidates being able to convey a sense of concentration in the listener.

Photographic sources were used extensively, but in cases where no studies of direct observation from the figure had been made, results were often flat with a simplistic shading in of shapes giving a poor sense of form.

The relationship between the model and background proved to be problematical for many less able candidates, especially for those who made small scale studies of the figure surrounded by large volume spaces.

(b) *Two models are posed together as though chatting. The surroundings must form part of the overall composition.*

Very few attempted this option. The best made some very exciting compositions often with unusual viewpoints where overlapping forms of both figures filled the page. Some had even managed to establish psychological links between the figures.

Photographic research was very much in evidence within the mid ability range.

The weaker entries had resorted to placing poorly copied figures from magazines in bizarre settings emulating from pure imagination. These entries were more suited to Paper 2.

(c) *A person's portrait. As well as the head, the upper body and hands should be included.*

This was the most popular of the three *Human Figure* options. Most entries were good honest attempts which explored relationships between head and hands.

Many had used this option to base their study around a self portrait, and at best this presented some exciting challenges over compositions which included hands holding mirrors and in the act of making drawings. Supporting studies were most thorough.

Question 4*Interiors or Exteriors*

- (a) *A view which includes buildings seen from a window or doorway.*

A limited number of entries were honest investigations of the candidates' own environment, where atmosphere and space had been effectively rendered through direct observation, and often supported by the candidates' own photography.

Although a large proportion of entries demonstrated a sound knowledge of one and two point perspective they had not been trained to apply this to the art of observational recording.

There was little evidence of candidates actually observing views from windows or doorways. There was however, more evidence of imaginative work better suited to Paper 2.

- (b) *A tree should be the main focus of your composition.*

There were some excellent studies exploiting texture and colour based upon thorough research from direct observation.

Good use had been made of mixed media approaches with excellent backgrounds being well integrated with the form of a tree.

Most compositions had the tree centrally placed and the possibilities of unusual viewpoints and looking through the branches or closer and the trunk, root formations had been ignored.

Some of the weakest work was seen from this question where tree forms resembled something closer to images from cartoons or the kindergarden.

- (c) *Overshadowing. An Interior or Exterior which express this theme.*

Only a very few entries from this option and mainly from the more accomplished candidates. Doorways, archways, gardens and interiors of historical buildings provided scope for developments which were almost exclusively paintings exploiting both colour and atmosphere. The best using contrasts of light and shadow to good effect.

Paper 0400/02
Interpretative Study

General comments

Much of the work seen demonstrated that candidates had confidence in their ideas and in the use of media, and had also been prepared well for the examination. They experimented and researched with visual language, and seemed to respond well to the topics and themes suggested by the examination paper.

A number of candidates did not use the preparatory time very well, seeming to settle quickly on a response and practising it before the controlled test, by which time any sensitivity or room for development had evaporated. The preparatory time should be seen as a time for taking a journey of ideas and responses and a time for development.

Weaker candidates responded with less vigour or confidence, and it would seem are more unused to the mature methods of working through to a solution than they might be.

At whatever level they have achieved most candidates produce work that has freshness and originality and is at times very personal and imaginative. The examination scripts continue to delight and are a pleasure to study and to mark.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

In the mirror

This was a very popular question. The responses varied from objects or people reflected in a mirror that were generically still lives or portraits, to more surreal ideas of aging faces, skulls and images of death. Other candidates saw the question as an opportunity to represent a mirrored reflection in water – puddles, lakes etc., and interpreted the theme through a landscape, built environment or natural scene.

Question 2

Beyond repair

Perhaps the most popular question with a vast range of very imaginative responses. Quite common, but clearly an aspect of candidate's lives that is of great concern, was the idea of the damage done to the environment and to the planet, with pollution and global warming, drought and famine featuring. Another common thread was that of broken love relationships. Political and religious imagery also featured, and some work as always had the resonance that comes from very powerful deeply felt personal beliefs.

Question 3

A busy market place or shopping mall

Surprisingly this was less popular than other questions, but a number of good responses seen dealt with the problems of human form, space and composition with confidence. The very best had a wonderful sense of atmosphere and of place, and communicated the excitement and colour of the markets and malls with great skill.

Question 4

Seen through a gap

A question attempted by many weak candidates who used holes in walls, fences and keyholes in doorways with rather less than successful renditions of brickwork and wood surrounding the hole. Others did grasp that other interpretations were possible and were more interesting for it, with mouths and eyes, for example, forming the gap through which we see a view or person. Landscape themes were used to good effect with branches or rocks forming a frame through which we see.

Question 5

Lit from below

Not very popular, with some using the title to develop observational studies of faces lit by a candle or other light source. Landscape approaches included light coming from volcanoes, or clouds lit by the setting or rising sun. There were a few imaginative candidates who responded with images of heaven and hell as the starting point for their work.

There were some attempts by weaker candidates who failed to grasp the effect lit from below has on form and structure.

Question 6

Preparing for action

Sport featured quite often, getting ready for a game of baseball and football being the most popular. Hunting by humans or by predatory animals also featured, as did soldiers preparing for battle. A few used the topic developed themes love or marriage. Photographic images were used a fair amount to inform the work. The better candidates who used photographs in their preparatory work used them judiciously and as a resource to develop their own response rather than slavishly copying them.

Administration

Once again, it was good to see work well labelled, in the correct order preparatory work attached together with the examination work. Attendance sheets were almost all present but in one or two cases not filled in or filled in incorrectly.

Most candidates' work was on paper or very thin card, but some had mounted their work on thick card and this is totally unnecessary and wasteful. Work larger than A2 size is becoming too common as well.

Teachers clearly work hard to prepare their candidates, and most get the very best from them. However, a few candidates from a handful of Centres seem to have little experience, being obviously very unused to developing ideas or using art materials effectively. Most candidates need fair amounts of timetable time to develop their skills and a range of material's to stimulate them and develop their techniques. They also need focused time in supervised conditions to do well in the preparation time after being given the examination paper. This time is crucial to develop and research their ideas, techniques and composition.

Paper 0400/03

Design Study

General comments

Question 1, Design using Lettering, and **Question 6**, Fabric Design were chosen by almost half of the candidates. The next most popular choices were: **Question 2**, Illustration and Calligraphy, **Question 5**, Fashion Design and **Question 7**, Print Making. Fewer candidates opted for **Question 3**, Environmental Design or **Question 4**, Interior Design and only a handful of submissions were received for **Question 8**, Photography. The thoroughness of preparatory work throughout the ability range was generally good and this perhaps accounted for the fact that fewer very poor responses were seen compared with previous years. An increase in the numbers of candidates achieving the higher levels of the mark range was also noted.

More Centres had acted on the comments of previous reports concerning the appropriate use of media for design work on papers, as well as the general presentation of preparatory sheets with the examination pieces. However, if only one candidate in a Centre is allowed to use materials such as glitter, sand, seeds and pulses for collage effects, the rest of the work from that Centre inevitably becomes spoiled when despatched in the same package. It should also be noted that the examination concerns design on paper, so the submission of work on computer discs is not acceptable and may lead to difficulties in assessing the work. Inconvenience is still caused when Centres do not attach the examination piece firmly to the preparatory work or when the preparatory work is mounted on much larger or heavier sheets than the examination piece. While the Examiners appreciate that the majority of Centres are concerned to advise their candidates to mount and present their work sensibly, there are still several Centres who are unaware of the problems caused by the points covered above.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Design using Lettering

The logo design for a boat builder and repairer using the name 'KALKO' was chosen by over a quarter of the candidates and the work received covered the full mark range. The two 'K's and the 'L' in the title were appropriately incorporated into hull and sail shapes with the 'O' often used for steering wheels. The best work was both bold and refined, evolving from thorough observations of boat and letter forms preceding inventive explorations of ideas. A deliberate evaluation and selection of tone and colour as well as the use of linear emphasis, led to clarity of graphic communication. At the mid levels of achievement, research and development of ideas were generally competent, but some limitations were apparent in refining or evaluating the most effective solutions to the design problem. Less successful responses showed some understanding of the need to develop simplified shapes but inevitably fell back on easily available sources from the Internet for initial research. The weaker work struggled with sparse information, leading to poor shapes and a lack of awareness of figure-ground or positive-negative relationships.

Question 2*Illustration and Calligraphy*

- (a) The cover design for a catalogue for a jewellery company named 'Jetspar' was the undertaken option for this question. The letter work made use of the upper half of the human figure for models or developed intricate geometrical designs based on facets of stones or supporting filigree. Good consideration was given to the style, size and placing of lettering for the title. Less strong submissions were limited by a lack of observation of specific sources with the title often added as an afterthought.
- (b) The two verses from 'The Tyger Voyage' attracted more responses for the Calligraphy option of the question. Some very well scripted and selectively illustrated submissions were seen where, similar to option (a), concern was apparent in the preparatory work for the placing and spacing of letter forms in relation to imagery. At mid levels of achievement, illustrations, though ambitious, often dominated the script causing problems with legibility. Only a few poor responses, with uneven calligraphic hands, were seen.

Question 3*Environmental/Structural Design*

Most candidates choosing this question offered serious intentions to establish precise plans and diagrams showing the scale, proportions, style and use of materials for a shelter at a bus or coach stop. The best work also offered thorough ideas of how the shelter related to the surrounding space in accurate perspective projections for the artist's impression. Mid level responses often showed an interest in the style of design through research into 20th Century practice but neglected to pin down through ground plans, elevations or diagrams how such a structure could be erected. Only a few poor attempts were seen which were more appropriate to Paper 2, the Interpretative Study than a Design Study.

Question 4*Interior Design*

The theme of road, rail, sea or air transport for a reception area at a travel agent attracted only a few good responses. Most candidates seemed more concerned with detailed illustrations of trains, boats or planes rather than how to use their forms and shapes for a large scale wall painting. The better responses did show some attempt to abstract and integrate essential shapes without becoming embroiled in realist depictions of landscapes. Further consideration of the selection and distribution of colour would, however, have led to higher levels of achievement.

Question 5*Fashion Design*

The theme of traditional dolls and toys for the repeat pattern design for curtains in the children's ward of a hospital attracted as many responses as **Question 1**. Some excellent research from direct observation informed the development of ideas in the best submissions. Such candidates were also well aware of the techniques of repeat pattern design and showed much expertise when creating gentle rhythms through cropping, shifting and positive-negative reversals. The choice of specific colours and tones was also given full consideration in relation to the intended hospital setting. Designs of a competent level were sometimes inappropriate for the hospital context when hyperactive imagery and colour was employed. There were also many weaker attempts which neglected any serious research for the theme and fell back on cartoon images repeated in rows.

Question 7*Print Making*

Several Centres, where expertise has developed in print making techniques, encouraged their candidates to choose this question. Sometimes candidates opted for repeat patterns produced by relief, wax-resist or stencil processes. Of the three themes offered 'jewellery' and 'bark or roots' were the most popular with fewer responses for 'Fast food'. Many excellent prints were received, the best of which were preceded by a very high level of directly observed research. This approach encouraged analysis and evaluation of the information for selection and refinement. Many final prints showed both subtlety and vitality through layering and rhythmic emphasis to create rich and evocative surface qualities. Less successful attempts were either limited in exploration or undeveloped in experimentation.

Question 8*Photography*

Only a small number of candidates submitted work for this specialisation. Surprisingly, although some ideas were evident in response to the themes offered, the work was limited in the control of technical processes. Centres are advised not to encourage their candidates to choose this question unless they can provide adequate facilities for a competent level of control to be experienced through darkroom practices.

Paper 0400/04**Critical and Historical Study****General comments**

This was the first cohort undertaking the new format of a project submission without the written paper. The intention of this was to allow candidates to concentrate fully on the research and production in the development of a project which had a good balance of text and visual imagery. Presentation therefore has become a factor of more importance as there should be time to revise and plan the visual format and process type and images up to a high standard of clarity and relevance.

In many cases these aims were met and there were some exciting and fully researched submissions where candidates had undertaken painstaking and fully developed research covering themes such as building styles, modes of local adornment, the work of local painters, visits to art galleries and designers workshops. At their best, these studies clearly represented considerable effort and a fully organised response. This option on the course allows candidates the chance to develop further awareness of visual art issues in the local community, and on a broader front, so that they can inform their own practical work with a knowledgeable base of critical studies.

Many candidates made excellent use of local buildings, galleries and artists and this gave great authenticity to research. This is not a condition of submissions for this paper and good material can be based on library studies or Internet sites but it is not enough to copy materials and text without any recourse to reorganising and evaluating them. Some of the weakest submissions were just visits to Internet web sites, downloaded and stuck into a folder and this can only lead to very weak mark levels. Likewise, the submission of scruffy written text without correction and seemingly having no proofreading is not in the spirit of the examination.

To enable positive and appropriate response the following ideas and points are intended to give important factors in the development, research and the production of a project:

- keep the aim of the project clear
- ensure that enough material exists to allow thorough research
- keep good photographic evidence and notes of visits, interviews etc.
- make sure images to be used are clear and appropriate
- if handwriting is scruffy then word process text
- make good use of practical visual skills such as drawing and sketching
- do not print out Internet material and present it without evaluation
- good presentation is important
- list illustrations and number them in the text
- write out a bibliography and include web sites and other electronic sources used.

All of these things happened to good effect in the best submissions.

Paper 0400/05

Coursework

General comments

The range and quality of submissions varied considerably, depending not only on the calibre of the candidates but equally on the quality of the teaching and the course of study.

The best work seen was clearly the result of well structured courses where attention had been placed upon candidates achieving creditable skills within their chosen area of study. This was supported with evidence of study which emphasised the importance of first hand research; experimentation with media; design and ideas development; and critical assessment and evaluation of work in progress.

Mid levels of achievement recognised an expression of personal ideas matched with a competent level of skills, but limitations were apparent in research from primary sources.

Less successful work showed a reluctance to undertake first hand research of any kind or to investigate a theme in any depth.

There were a few examples of inappropriate courses which consisted of a series of exercises set by the teacher. There was no evidence that candidates had been encouraged to develop their own themes or ideas, or to research any one idea in sufficient depth.

Centres should be aware of the syllabus requirements over selection and organisation. With some submissions it was extremely difficult to identify the selected items for moderation. Supporting work was often unrelated and fragmented. Work should be clearly labelled and placed in a structured order.

Centres' assessments were generally accurate, certainly with placing candidates into rank order. Where adjustments had to be made they were usually only made to one part of the parameters (mostly the upper end where the Centres' perception of what constituted work of the highest calibre was rather generous). In a few cases Centres' marks were raised between five and ten at various levels.

Centres should avail themselves of the new CD produced by CIE. This is extremely useful in providing exemplar material and giving clear guidelines over Centre based assessment.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and Related Media

There was some outstanding work seen from Centres which encouraged development from direct observation. Sources for this came from natural and made forms, the human figure, as well as landscape and the built environment. Such studies encouraged individual development and led to some confident and ambitious final pieces.

Mid level work showed evidence of serious and engaged research but candidates' knowledge and understanding of developing compositional ideas and an aesthetic awareness was weaker.

At lower achievement levels, scrapbook cut and paste approaches led to repetitive copying from secondary sources with few personal ideas other than literal illustrations. The use of media showed a lack of experience gained through experimentation.

3D Studies

All final pieces were submitted using photography. Most of these were of an adequate standard showing work in good light and from several angles and view points. There were often additional photographs of work in progress.

Examples of clay modelling, plaster sculpture and mixed media assemblage were submitted.

Themes had been generally well researched and developed with highly competent skills levels. Attainment levels from this area of study were generally high with few entries falling below 50%.

Some candidates had developed ideas towards an abstract approach and these were usually well informed by references to the work of contemporary artists.

Workbooks showed evidence of some mature thinking and sound research skills, and were generally full of ideas, sketches and critical analysis of designs done during the course. These were most informative when evaluating and moderating the Centres' marking and suggested that many had followed a serious and well structured course.

Graphics

There were not many submissions from this study.

Some of the most personal and interesting were examples of stencil prints for repeat patterns based largely upon natural forms. These were highly competent both in craft skills and in design development with evidence of visual thinking.

Other work submitted displayed a high quality of finish with an over reliance on using computer generated imagery from secondary sources. Supporting work too often consisted of cut out photographs of logos, labels and advertisements.

Textiles

A small entry with examples using Batik, painting direct onto fabric, and fashion illustration.

Batik entries generally displayed a sound knowledge of craft skills but few achieved really personal outcomes since their research was largely based upon secondary source material.

The few fashion design submissions consisted of poorly drawn figures studies copied from magazines which were badly executed in crayon or coloured pencil.