

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01

Observational/Interpretative Assignment

General comments

All of the questions were responded to, with the most popular questions being **Question 9** Twisted; **Question 2** Fungi and **Question 3** Shadows. The least popular were **Question 4** A reclining figure; and **Question 8** A bird in the hand.

Preparation remains the key to success, those submissions that demonstrated that time and effort had gone into this aspect of the examination inevitably achieved higher marks in whatever ability band the candidates were finally placed. In most cases supporting studies was thorough and relevant to the chosen question.

It was evident that the candidates at the higher mark range had made effective use of the preparation time and had been encouraged to search beyond the obvious interpretation of the question, resulting in a creative, thoughtful and individual response. Thorough research and investigation from first hand sources had been made, with a depth of analysis and investigation of the subject matter. The more successful submissions demonstrated a sophisticated, sensitive and confident rendering of a wide range of media. However, occasionally, the final outcome lacked the vitality seen in the supporting studies.

Work in the middle range often featured observational studies of a good standard with thoughtful consideration to composition, colour and tone. The supporting studies contained a variety of studies exploring different use of media and focusing on different angles of their found objects, with various amounts of detail. The main focus of this approach was on the recording and observation. There was less development of ideas, personal evaluation and critical thought, hindering the acquisition of higher marks.

Responses at the lower mark range lacked consideration of personal investigation. Photography was used to mask the lack of technical skills of manipulating art media, while producing a range of studies. There was little investigation of the topic and exploration of ideas, with poor control or inappropriate use of materials. The consideration of composition was limited, demonstrating a lack of understanding of the placement and relationship of images together. Candidates at this level either tended to rely on the use of secondary sources or not take full advantage of the potential available to them within their chosen question.

Many candidates are encouraged to reference the work of other artists or cultures. At best these have informed their personal direction and development. However, many had seen this as an opportunity to submit lots of downloaded illustrations and printouts of biographical details to pad-out otherwise moderate amounts of their own first hand research.

A wide range of media was seen with some excellent colour work in acrylic, oil pastel, crayon, chalk and mixed media. Some very mature and expressive handling of media was seen, as well as some very precise analytical studies. Mixed media approaches were popular, but when each object in a group is rendered in a different media, aesthetic and spatial qualities are lost. The use of different media should be carefully integrated throughout the whole composition.

Many candidates used photography in their supporting studies to gather visual information and research material, and some had extended this in realising their final outcomes.

Presentation was generally very good, and with a few exceptions, the work was well organised and clearly labelled. Submissions sometimes exceeded the recommended amount of sheets of supporting studies required and some further editing would not have disadvantaged these candidates.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: Three glass containers with their contents, and a piece of brightly patterned fabric

Submissions at the higher level demonstrated a sophisticated understanding of form and composition, reinforced with detailed and sensitive observational studies within the supporting studies. Candidates at this level demonstrated a skilful ability to record the reflections and distortions of glass from direct observation. Some had explored the potential of using coloured liquids within the glass and displayed a creative exploration of colour through layered washes. Draped patterned fabric backgrounds were popular as the patterns distorted and reflected through the glass, and were clearly understood and replicated in a graphical and illustrative manner. Other work could be symbolic with regards to the contents within the glass. The best work demonstrated analysis from the works of other artists, supported by studies with a clear influence from the selected artists. Experiments of still life arrangements had been made using photography combined with other media.

Candidates in the middle mark range demonstrated less exploration and development of ideas through processes, or opportunities for personal evaluation and critical thinking. However, the quality of the observational studies was successful and care had been taken to represent ellipses and the transparency of the glass. Drawing and painting media had been explored to create the reflection of light and consideration had been given to representing distortions and the shapes of the patterned fabrics twisting and stretching through the surfaces of the glass.

The weakest submissions responded to the question in an unimaginative manner. The work displayed little investigation of composition or background and little consideration had been given to the choice of components for their arrangements. Composition presented difficulties for the candidates at this level and the work lacked depth and space, with little understanding of the relationships between their chosen associated objects. There was little exploration of the glass, and the recording demonstrated weak technical skill with little observation of detail. Poor elliptical shapes were apparent and the reflective quality of the glass was not observed.

Question 2: A collection of fungi

This was one of the more popular choices and outcomes covered the full ability range with a slight bias towards the upper levels.

The best submissions showed an excellent manipulation of materials to create texture and had worked from direct observation. These candidates explored all areas with informative, detailed and technical recording and development. There was good blending of pencil exploring tone and excellent collage experiments.

Candidates in the mid achievement levels used line, tone and limited colour to study groups of mushrooms. The technical skills were well controlled and the use of colour captured subtle shades, but there was a lack of shape, texture and vitality, providing little scope for expressing individual ideas or aesthetic judgements. Compositions consisted of a collection of forms on a table with each mushroom placed in its own space. There were a great amount of very similar submissions and although they fulfilled the assessment objectives to a good level, they lacked individuality of development. Some candidates used the question as a starting point for design based interpretations which included costume designs, stained glass windows and repeated fabric patterns.

Candidates at the lower levels of achievement produced engaging but limited studies in one or two colours that lacked tone, form, observation of colour and detail. Candidates struggled to differentiate the different types of fungi-shapes, sizes and colours. Colour became more uniform and shapes became less controlled and observed. There was very little preparatory work and as a result media and ideas were not explored and images displayed much repetition. Biro and pencil were often used together, creating an unhappy alliance. It was obvious that many had resorted to copying from illustrations.

Question 3: Sweets and their wrappers

A few excellent submissions included strong exploratory work in collage and print media. The use of colour was a significant element and some candidates had made appropriate and informing connections with the Pop Art genre, producing strong, imaginative graphic images.

Some candidates had looked at the sweets within, or spilling out of the wrapper. There were very sensitive observations of cellophane wrappings, rendered with an intense analysis of colour and tone. Some

candidates attempted to illustrate the topic in context such as sweet jars in a shop window, a shelf, in the hand, scattered on a table.

This title attracted a great deal of repetitive rather than developmental preparatory work with many examples of final outcomes that were merely copies of early studies (both in composition and handling of media) There were a number of submissions with preparatory work that consisted of a number of compositions competently painted but just subtle rearrangements of the same objects. The final outcome could have been a copy of the very first or the last of those studies.

The representation of lettering on curved tube forms and on packaging presented all but the most able with great difficulties. The perspective distortions of letterforms whilst being attempted by candidates from the mid mark range and upwards proved to be an exacting task and exposed weaknesses even in candidates who had been able to represent the forms and structures of the actual sweets to an outstanding level.

Health issues were tackled by several candidates in the mid mark range with images of obese children being surrounded by sweets.

Question 4: A person reclining with their hands behind their head

There were only a small number of responses to this question, mostly in the mid to top range. The majority were straightforward figure studies in paint usually developed from their own photographs. A few very good submissions had clearly benefited from some sustained and proficient first-hand studies from the life model and were able to capture something of the character of the person.

Proportion, angles and scale were also challenges for these candidates when attempting to represent the whole of a figure for the examination piece, especially when not practiced during the preparation period. The best work displayed an understanding of the form and structure of the figure within a composition and challenging perspectives were represented with success.

Less successful work demonstrated difficulties with composition and the placement within the frame. The weakest outcomes were flat and basic with little skill in the rendering of materials, containing little observation of detail and tone.

Question 5: Shadows

This was one of the most popular questions.

This topic brought out a wide variety of interpretations from simple visual shadow arrangements to some work with 'dark' or evil overtones. The latter seemed to attract candidates that wanted to express some inner fear or phobia and produced some of the best preparatory work that indicated real idea and image development often with good annotation.

At the top end of the mark range, this question elicited some of the most technically sophisticated outcomes for this examination. Experiments with multiple coloured spotlights had investigated complex shadow overlays from objects and figures. Candidates in the upper mark range also explored the absorption of forms into areas of shadow and the apparent dissolving of form by intense light.

Shadows also had a metaphorical interpretation for a number of candidates who introduced the concept of a shadow being a dim memory from the past. Such an approach explored old family photographs as a starting point.

Mid range candidates relied greatly on technique, with less observational work and much use of secondary sources and found images with exaggerated shadows. In some submissions, there was also an over reliance on comic book-art to portray angst. Materials and techniques were explored displaying a successful rendering of media, but a personal direction was not in evidence.

Candidates at the lower mark range tended to focus on obvious interpretations of shadows, such as sinister shapes and distortions of unidentifiable beasts and wolves etc. Imagery consisted of simplistic shapes and enlarged shadows and the lowest end responses were often reliant upon secondary Internet sources, with development simplistic and repetitive. These candidates struggled to find a range of ideas and tended to concentrate on one image repeatedly, with no development into a final outcome.

Question 6: A shopping centre

This was the second least popular question. Although many candidates started their research with interesting photographs of the subject, these did not develop into strong preparatory work or outcomes. On the whole there was a poor development of ideas and manipulation of images.

Research and gathering of many others was limited to a single visit to a shopping mall, which was recorded in a single photo-shoot. The majority of candidates concentrated on shop windows or still life groups of their purchases. Slightly more ambitious imagery was seen which concentrated on reflections in shop window displays.

Many weaker submissions tended to consist of one shop front with the portrayal of figures shopping, with limited understanding of perspective, scale form and depth.

Explorations into alternative ideas around the theme such as markets, or street traders were few.

Question 7: Looking in, looking out

This topic attracted some interesting, very personal responses. At the higher mark range there was good evidence of idea development, gathering and 'journey' combined with well-developed technical skills.

There were many images of caged birds and animals and images of the human eye with stories told within. At the higher levels individual and creative responses were apparent along with introspective work with studies of reflection and self reflection. Some candidates made full use of their own photography and explored a range of media and techniques with accomplishment.

Very successful studies were seen in the mid to upper mark range where candidates had created cross-sections of fruit so that the inside patterns could be seen against the outer skin patterns.

There was also a lot of expressive and imaginative work in the mid-range from, which was highly personal and individual, but lacked proficient technical skills.

Weaker candidates relied on ideas copied from the media such as TV, film and magazines with less investigation from direct observation. They selected ideas without investigation and superficially presented them in the final work. Often obvious imagery had been represented such as eyes and keyholes which lacked personal engagement and individuality.

Question 8: 'A bird in the hand is worth two in the bush'

There were very few entries for this question. Most had taken the obvious interpretation, featuring cupped hands, copied images of birds and pieces of foliage. None had attempted to explore into any deeper meaning than the phrase offered.

Question 9: Twisted

This was one of the most popular questions and the topic provided candidates with the opportunity to explore individual ideas resulting in many varied interpretations.

Candidates at the higher mark level often explored twisted rope, branches, hair, wool, twisted jewellery or ribbons that had been recorded from direct observation. An understanding of form, pattern, design and colour was evident and ideas were developed through the experimentation of media. Man-made forms such as barbed wire, leather-belts and twisted fabrics were sometimes combined with the natural forms to create complex still life groups, which developed towards abstraction.

Some of the most successful work was based on multiple views of the human figure cropped to fill the picture plane with interlaced and twisted arms and legs. Plaited hair was studied by several candidates in the mid and upper mark ranges with the addition of reflected light being seen in work of the highest level.

Candidates at the middle level focused more on emotional responses with contorted bodies and faces to represent hate and anger. Photography was well used to capture these poses and the topic had been well researched. However, the final outcome was often disappointing, lacking a successful resolution of ideas and aesthetic judgements. Sometimes ideas could be 'dark' or sinister, such as twisted human behaviour; drunkenness, murder or drug addiction with work from the human form used to portray such behaviour.

Still life groups based on electrical items were popular in the mid mark range often using the twisted wires to perform a link between objects; although candidates in the lower mark range found it very difficult to show how forms twist around other objects with such intersections becoming confused or simply left unresolved.

The lower level work contained little exploration or development of ideas with little consideration of composition. Images represented could be of violence and antisocial behaviour but were heavily reliant on copying directly from secondary sources through a poor execution of media.

Question 10: A winding path

Many candidates at the higher achievement levels tackled this question as a metaphor for the diverse experiences in life, such as the winding route of selecting a career path or the path between good and evil. These approaches succeeded in combining a personal and creative response with a clear development of ideas. Media was well controlled. Other responses were more literal with quiet and subtle paintings of the countryside paths or mountain walks. The best work contained detailed and evocative studies in the preparatory work of local rural areas and landscapes through drawing and painting supported by the candidates own photographs. There was evidence of the inspiration of Chinese brushwork representing winding paths between mountains in the orient.

Secondary sourced imagery was often undeclared and was very common in many less successful submissions. Development consisted of copies of sections of the picture taken directly from the original source with the final image simply being reproduced from the original with no modification or interpretation. Where candidates did take their own photographs of the landscape, these were mostly just replicated in the examination piece.

One or two candidates in the mid mark range introduced undulating ground so that the winding road disappeared before emerging at another point on a distant hill. Also at this level were some imaginative interpretations involving stairways which were well researched but too complex to succeed visually.

Work seen at the lower levels tended to be repetitive with stylised drawings and paintings of trees and landscape with winding paths within. Sometimes the candidates even forgot to put the winding path into the landscape! Others submission were simply made-up from imagination with no first-hand study at all.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/02
Design Assessment

General Comments

The question paper covered a wide range of design options including logo design, magazine cover, fashion design, illustration, wall hanging, calligraphy, repeat pattern, 2D and 3D design for an interior, 3D design and poster design. The most popular questions were **Q1**, **Q2**, and **Q8**, with **Q3** closely following. Questions **4**, **6**, **7** and **9** were far less popular.

Submissions were varied in quality, there were a few that were of an exceptional standard, compared to those that were very poorly researched and lacked any development. The majority were in the middle to lower range where the research, direct observation and development of ideas were confined to one sheet of supporting studies. In order to produce a successful design outcome, candidates should undertake a process of thorough research, experimentation, ideas development, refinement and making, all underpinned by initial drawing from direct observation.

In the very best submissions there was evidence of a design process; development of ideas from observational studies and personal photographs, experimentation with and control of media, reference to the work of other designers and artists, and numerous variations and manipulation of images before decisions were made about the final outcome.

Mid and lower range work relied heavily on secondary source material such as downloaded imagery. Insufficient developmental work led to disjointed submissions, showing no clear journey through the design process. Although subject matter such as local fruits was readily accessible, too many candidates chose to work from poor quality downloaded images.

Most candidates used traditional media, but some examples of computer manipulation were submitted. The sources of images were often unclear with no annotation to explain if they were first or second hand images.

In general, work was presented well on thin card or suitable weight paper. There were a few cases where work had been mounted on very flimsy black paper. In one particular Centre the work arrived torn and continued to tear as the examiners turned the pages as the work was marked resulting in unnecessary damage. Work is not simply looked at once during the marking process, it is marked and checked and re-checked many times and teachers should ensure that the paper is suitably thick and that all work is clearly labelled and secure.

There was one example where the supporting studies comprised 24 A4 sheets of random computer images printed on card, stapled together and placed loosely in amongst the work, making the submission very heavy. Teachers are reminded that students should submit their supporting studies on two sheets (up to four sides) of A2.

Although the majority of marks this session were below 50, there were a number of scripts marked in the 80–100 mark range, with two of the outstanding scripts rewarded with maximum 100 marks.

Comments on Specific Questions

Question 1 – Bill & Ben’s Garden Centre logo design

This proved to be a very popular question. Marks rewarded covered all the ability levels, but with most scripts seen in the 10 - 30s.

The few submissions seen in the highest mark bands ranged from ‘proficient’ to ‘outstanding’. Research was very personal at this level with candidates often choosing a particular type of Garden Centre from which to develop ideas, such as Cacti; Jungle plants or Orchids. There were excellent observational drawings and

photos produced by these candidates and a thorough exploration of fonts that might be suitable, plus a collection of existing logos to aid their designs. The preliminary images and type were then incorporated to develop a wide range of ideas in different layouts and colour. Only then were these designs considered for the apron. Most of the final outcomes showed a close up of a well-designed logo with accompanying apron. The presentation was excellent.

In the middle range there was more thoughtful research, some first-hand pencil sketches of local flowers supplemented by a few examples of the candidate's own digital photos. However, these were not always used to develop ideas at this level. Much more use of coloured marker pens was seen in this series, both for rough idea work and the final artwork. This did not always produce the best finish, particularly by candidates whose drawing skills were not adequate.

The lower ability candidates did not always use the opportunity to gather primary research from local plants, as indicated in the brief, but chose to use copious numbers of printouts from the internet of ordinary flowers and leaves, or simply invent their own images. Much more interest was shown in designing the apron at this level than developing an appropriate logo for the Garden Centre. The name of the Garden Centre was also given less emphasis than the illustrations, with type sometimes produced without any reference to known fonts. Idea development was also lacking at this level, as was the presentation of the final artwork. The finished outcomes were often unfinished and poorly drawn in coloured pencil or marker pens.

Question 2 – Gra-Fixx magazine cover

This question was popular for its reference to street art, culture and graffiti. Most of the lower level submissions produced final artwork based on the graffiti work of other artists which was usually straight copies directly downloaded from the internet. Sometimes only one or two images were used, and little idea development occurred before the final artwork was produced. The lettering for the title was often illegible graffiti and the price and date of issue were seen as a hand written afterthought. Here, vivid colour was very popular but there was a real lack of design skills, composition and drawing ability at this level.

The highest submissions were much more individual pieces of work. They were supported with very good first-hand exploration using, in some cases, inventive personal photography which resulted in some unexpected and lively imagery. There was also some very good juxtaposition of image and text, especially when combined with colour experiments. These candidates understood something of how a magazine cover is laid out, readability as a concept and how to grab readers' attention!

One design was based on wooden hand painted signs from around their locality and a couple of submissions contained the candidates' own digital photos of local graffiti. Some interesting and individual ideas were produced for the magazine title, and much more thought and experimentation was put into this logo than in the 'Bill & Ben' question. Examples of other magazine covers were considered by most candidates and references to the work of Banksy were made by a few candidates. Coloured marker pens, pencils and paint were used to a much higher standard at this level and the final designs were lively and original.

Question 3 – Man and Machine poster

A popular question which asked for designs for a poster advertising a book, but most candidates interpreted this as a book cover design rather than a poster design. Submissions were seen evenly over all levels of achievements. The work seen in the lowest band were inclined to feature robots or heads with half man/woman, half robot taken from film adverts or DVD covers copied from the internet. Originality was scarce here and the poster element was not always adhered to, all too often the illustrative element gained precedence over the design of the poster as a whole with little consideration given to the typography. There was very little development of ideas and exploration was limited at this level resulting in unfinished or hastily produced final artwork. Some candidates had approached this question as a painting project and had ignored the demands of the design brief. Coloured pencils and paint were the most popular medium used and there was a tendency for candidates to copy images exactly and use them for their final artwork without any further development.

At the mid-levels research, gathering of information and the thoughtful development of designs incorporating two or more images were more evident. Candidates produced proficient layouts and were more thorough in their planning and experimentation with typefaces. A well balanced, cleverly composed black and white design, with a tiny man standing on the hand of a robot stood out as the most realistic and professional of these submissions.

The very best scripts contained much more innovative research. There was a genuine interest in the

interface between what we are and what we create. Several candidates produced first hand drawings and photographs of computer circuit boards or cogs, pipes and screws and used a school friend or family member to pose for the human part of their ideas, plus there was a wide range of printed images. These were then thoroughly developed and incorporated with some excellent designs that produced creative, eye catching and informative posters. Technical skills at the highest level were outstanding in both typography and illustration.

Question 4 – Movement, a feature in a space

This was not a very popular question, although one submission attained the maximum mark.

At the lowest end was an incomplete script which contained only one sheet of drawings with little research. In the middle range an interesting design was produced for a wall mural of intertwined dancing figures. There was a reference to a Matisse painting but no design development and the final artwork was the same as the first idea. Candidates in the lowest and middle ranges made no attempts to research mural paintings or public sculpture which would have been a catalyst for ideas and subsequent development.

The highest marks were awarded to two submissions choosing 3D sculptures, both of which explored the moving figure. Work seen in the lower 70s had used the cloth around the figure to suggest movement and produced a proficient outcome in watercolour. The research was adequate but more first-hand drawings of the figure would have been beneficial.

An outstanding design based on dancing figures was awarded full marks, here the first-hand research of dancers was collected; photographs and drawings made and reference to others' work was included, plus ideas for lighting the sculpture at night – LEDs and reflective surfaces. Materials were discussed, such as acrylic sheets, moving lights, aluminium tubing and the ideas thoroughly developed into semi-abstracted versions of the dancers and their movements. The final outcome was a beautifully presented ink and watercolour drawing of two different sculptures lit at night on a well planned and executed sheet. This particular example proved to be an outstanding submission.

Question 5 – Instrument headdress design

This question was quite popular and work seen covered the whole levels of ability. The best work attained marks in the 80s and 90s. The best submissions presented drawings of a range of musical instruments, many particular to their own culture, and researched different types of headgear before developing their designs, sometimes for specific, named festivals. Exciting shapes were formed by the instruments and these were manipulated by these candidates until a suitable response was found. The best headdress designs were explored in detail, painted or drawn to a high standard with accurate and beautifully composed women's heads and backgrounds.

Two submissions in the higher mark bands consisted of five sheets each of beautifully composed girls heads with complex headdresses produced in delicate watercolour, sadly there were no separate research sheets indicating why the final outcome had been chosen in preference to any of the other four designs. There were some examples of outstanding presentation seen at this level.

The mid-range work showed some promising ideas, but with rather less research to assist them, candidates here did not progress as far with their ideas. Sometimes only small photos of instruments were provided to work from. These candidates were more interested in the overall look of the final sheet rather than thoroughly developing designs for workable headdresses. Borders and decorations were prevalent. However, one candidate actually constructed her headdresses, using a range of materials – paper, card and elastic, showing originality and a feasible design to a satisfactory standard.

Candidates at the lower end were more interested in decorating existing hats than designing new ones. The work displayed a limited awareness of the practicalities of making a hat or a headdress. Their work showed a little research of instruments but almost no development of ideas. Final artwork was basic, produced to a poor standard and lacked imagination and technical ability.

Question 6 – Lights out quotation

This was not a very popular question. Work seen here ranged from poor to very good. Capturing the atmosphere of the quote was the predominant factor here but there was no evidence seen in any of the design briefs or intentions that this had been considered. At the lowest end the visual was of someone sleeping surrounded by trees produced in b/w ink line. No research had been provided and only the one

image had been drawn from the imagination. There was no attempt to analyse the quotation and it was taken at face value by some candidates.

A winding road was drawn in the artwork of the other submissions with several lines from the poem. The highest work was a competent painting in monochrome with some atmospheric type hand rendered in white paint towards the bottom. Although different fonts had been examined none were used in the final piece.

Research included candidates' own photos of landscapes. Many candidates saw this question as an opportunity for developing an imaginative painting similar to an approach for Component 1.

Question 7 – Wall hanging for community centre

Very few candidates attempted this question and most had completely ignored the rubric '*from your own research of local architectural features and styles.*'

There was no local research evidence in the lowest submissions, with only a handful of small printouts of images of buildings downloaded. As a result final outcomes were limited with little attention given to the shape or proportion of the hanging and the colour was uncoordinated. The type was added as an afterthought.

The best submissions were 'competent' and showed more personal interpretations of the brief, with hangings designed for specific localities. Some first-hand drawings and photographs of local buildings with graffiti were produced, plus a few photographs of figures dancing hip hop included in the design. These were then used to develop several different ideas. Here, thoughtful type had been added and a satisfactory design was created in paint and marker pens, although lack of technical ability at this level prevented the final outcome from being more successful.

Question 8 – Juice Bar floor design

This was the second most popular questions, and responses seen covered the whole of the mark range.

Work at the lower end tended to rely heavily on internet images of fruit, even these were sometimes disregarded and generic fruit shapes were produced from imagination instead. There was no evidence of existing repeat patterns being researched and work showed little development of ideas with crude patterns, ill drawn and sometimes lacking any kind of repeat.

Submissions in the middle range varied, depending on the type of research and the technical ability of the candidates. More first-hand drawings and photographs of fruit were seen at this level, although there was a tendency by some to ignore them and draw an imagined banana or pineapple instead. There was also more evidence of experiments with patterns, using tracings to turn an image through 360° or repeat a design in lines or squares. Fruity lettering was also introduced by some candidates as part of their designs with a few examples of simple lino printing seen. On the whole, the finished work was painted or used coloured pencils or marker pens. At this level, work was more skilfully produced, and images creatively linked into basic but realistic repeats. Borders and tiles were added by many to decorate the spaces between the fruit however, generally there was an over-reliance on the use of borders and other geometric devices to link elements rather than more inventive methods to create 'hidden' links necessary for seamless continuous patterns.

It was only at the top end of the mark range that complex repeat designs were explored with some candidates showing their designs in situ. Some submissions showed a wonderful use of paint, ink, water colour and/or gouache plus their own photography to describe a wide selection of fruit first hand. These well understood images were then developed or simplified to make inventive use of their shape and colour. Examples of professional designers' work were also included and considered in these scripts. The outcomes were skilfully designed, with many alternative repeat experiments such as drop, mirror and so on. Colour ideas were also developed thoroughly before the final artwork was produced.

The candidates with the highest marks produced very inventive, personal outcomes. Specific juice bars such as tropical juice, cocktail juice etc., were designed and included on the final sheet showing the repeated pattern on the floor.

The highest mark was awarded to a candidate who presented five highly creative finished designs, each one different and on a separate sheet, with a close up of the pattern, a realistically designed juice bar and the pattern in perspective on the floor. The painting technique was excellent and the overall presentation of the work, aesthetically outstanding.

Question 9 – Indoor/outdoor Activity Centre design

This proved to be a very successful question with a few submissions at the top end of the mark range.

Maximum marks were awarded to a very original and highly personal response. A beautifully designed and drawn children's Halloween playground based on images of spiders, webs, pumpkins, mummies and graveyards, with five separate, finished designs presented on sheets. The response was innovative and had been well researched and extensive development had produced very practical, creative and fun outcomes. Each sheet was drawn to a high standard and the sheets were beautifully laid out works of art in themselves, with headings, explanations and side elevation diagrams accompanying the completed drawings of the playgrounds.

This particular method of working was obviously well taught at one Centre as another submission was nearly as successful with good research that focused on garden insects. Excellent drawing skills were seen, plus outstanding presentation. All the submissions from this particular Centre showed a thorough knowledge of the design process culminating in very personal creative responses.

Work in the middle range was reasonably well researched through drawings and photographs and some candidates provided attractive solutions which were fit for use and provided construction details.

At the lower level there was an absence of investigation and research and little development of ideas. Candidates had minimal understanding of the requirements of a play area, and ideas were based on imagination rather than existing play areas.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/03
Critical and Historical
Assignment

General Comments

There was a wide range of submissions seen, ranging from large and small sketchbooks, A2 and A3 sheets, A4 written essays, A4 folders, files and scrapbooks and a handful of printed books produced from web site templates.

The levels of attainment were mostly within the limited band through to the competent band of marks, with a few submissions either side of those mark levels.

All the submissions at 40+ contained evidence of some first-hand experience of or involvement with the subject matter, which had clearly benefitted the attainment levels of these candidates.

The strongest submissions contained evidence of first-hand sources for research and/or experience of the subject matter. Visits to Art Galleries, artists' studios, sculpture parks and design studios had all provided useful material for visual and written analysis. Gathering research and information had taken various forms, such as making sketches, taking photographs and note taking. Many candidates had conducted interviews with their chosen artists; that had invariably benefitted the assignment with some intelligent and searching questions.

The best submissions contained evidence of some personal and perceptive observations, visits to studios and galleries had provided insights into the way work is developed and made. A few candidates had gained vital first-hand experience of their chosen subject by working alongside the artist in their own studio. A deeper understanding of the process and methods involved was evident through some intelligent personal observations, shown by photographic records with coherent and informing annotations. The environment in which an artist works can reveal key insights into how ideas are developed. This was apparent in some of the photographic records of studio visits, showing still life objects, preliminary sketches and sometimes ideas which had not been used.

One very strong photographic assignment contained some imaginative comparative examples, clearly and appropriately annotated, demonstrating a clear and informative journey of discovery. The thoughtful placing of strong images had enhanced the whole assignment.

A few of the strongest submissions contained personal, practical experiments which had clearly been inspired and informed by the research and experience gained from chosen artists. This approach demonstrated an engaged and personal involvement in the chosen topic. One very good example presented a series of small painterly experiments with structural elements obviously taken from works investigated. However, they also displayed some inventive and personal mark-making and textural features which were the contribution of the candidate, and had enhanced the assignment significantly.

Submissions at the lower levels of assessment had relied on downloaded information from the internet and contained little in the way of personal observations. Typically they demonstrated very little or no evidence of how artists and designers develop their ideas, or exploration of themes.

Presentation of the assignment is very important. The most popular format remains the A4 folder/file type. A few of the strongest submissions were in the form of a hand-made book/folder, containing mounted sheets and pages, demonstrating strong visual elements in the form of photos, drawings and some personal material-based responses. The layout and design of each page/sheet is vital. Some weak submissions were so poorly hand written that they were nearly impossible to read.

Weaker examples contained a few randomly placed and downloaded images; one in particular was faded black and white when colour was a significant element of the works under investigation. The weakest submissions showed no evidence of any personal judgements and were often little more than mainly biographical and descriptive accounts, limited by a lack of curiosity, enquiry and enthusiasm. The stronger submissions presented an informed response through a personal evaluation, reflection and critical thinking.

Candidates would benefit from submitting outline proposal forms (OPF) prior to starting work for this component. This would avoid choosing unsuitable topics and subjects which can be far too broad.

When CDs are presented, a printed hard copy should also be provided.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/04
Coursework
Assignment

General comments

A flexible approach to drawing from first-hand was the foundation of the best submissions. Using a variety of media, these candidates had seen drawing as a process of enquiry that enabled them to discover imagery and explore ideas rather than simply demonstrating a skill; consequently their work was always lively and personal. Unfortunately, there were also many candidates who had had a limited experience of making first hand studies and only undertook such work reluctantly. These candidates were heavily reliant on mechanically copying from secondary sources, reinforcing their lack of confidence and limiting experimentation and development.

There were some good examples of the use of photography for first hand investigations of subject matter. At its best, this method produced unexpected imagery with considerable potential that resulted in thoughtful personal work. Photographs were viewed as starting points for experimentation and invention. Unfortunately, there were many submissions where the use of photography did not inform the development due to technical weaknesses and a lack of critical thinking. Weaker candidates had difficulties progressing from their own photographs and did not explore the potential for translating their imagery into other media through experimentation. There were many examples where candidates slavishly copied photographs in tonal studies which displayed limited skills, personality or purpose.

Generally, projects in the mid and low ranges tended to lack a clear focus and direction. In some cases, final outcomes were decided upon at the last moment and remained unresolved due to insufficient time being allocated for its completion. In the worst cases, there was limited or no connection between the supporting studies and the final piece.

The syllabus clearly states that submissions should contain evidence of researching the work of other artists, designers or cultures. Some of the best demonstrated such awareness and this had clearly informed the development of their own personal ideas.

There were other examples where a considerable amount of time was spent on making pastiches of artists' work, or where they had simply downloaded and printed off poor reproductions of works of art with copious biographical details to the detriment of any significant personal development of their own based on a critical evaluation of what they had reproduced.

The presentation of coursework was generally of a good standard with some submissions presented with imagination and intelligence.

Most work was well mounted on thin card or substantial paper. Some work presented on thinner paper tended to tear easily when turning the pages. However, work displayed on heavier card or boards made navigation through the work awkward and difficult.

The teachers order of merit throughout the moderation process were generally confirmed, but the majority of were very generous throughout all assessment objectives and considerable adjustments were required. Few were severely assessed by the teachers and a few were accurately assessed.

Comments on Areas of Study

Painting and Related Media

Over 90% of submissions were from this Area of Study and the majority of final outcomes were paintings. There were a few prints and some mixed media studies.

A wide variety of topics had been explored. Still life was a popular choice with many arrangements containing ceramic pots, masks and woodcarvings, fruit, vegetables and flowers. Organic forms had been used to inspire direct observational work such as seed pods, leaves and shells, resulting in a series of very sensitive and informative studies. Portraiture was another popular subject often appearing within a collage of images. There was much work focusing on landscapes, insects and animals within an environment. Some abstract work was also seen within the experimentation of a variety of media.

There was much work containing mixed media where candidates had overlaid imagery and materials to create rich and complex compositions. Collage had been explored to various levels of skill. Painting was popular with the manipulation of acrylic, water colour and occasionally oil paints on canvas or board. Drawing materials had been used sensitively – pencils, inks, coloured pencils, graphite and pastels. A small amount of printmaking was evident, such as dry point etching, linocuts and collagraphs, which had sometimes been integrated with collage and painting materials.

The more successful work contained many references to first hand sources, including the candidate's own photographs which had been explored widely using a wide range of media. Supporting studies benefited from the exploration of the work of other artists and designers. Those candidates, at this level, who submitted sketchbooks, illustrated the journey of ideas towards the final outcome which were an asset to their submissions. Compositions had been fully considered and explored and practiced within the supporting studies. There were many painterly approaches, where materials had been rendered with fluidity and creativity, and demonstrated a good understanding of expressive colour. Excellent drawing skills were evident illustrating a mastery of technical and creative skill. Techniques and processes that were explored at this level were used intelligently to enhance the submissions and to aid development of the work towards a final outcome. Well-developed compositions and design skills were also evident. However, there were a few submissions which contained pieces of finished work to a good standard, but had not selected the most pleasing piece for presentation as the final outcome.

Less successful submissions contained a range of studies and images which were either underdeveloped or did not demonstrate progression towards the final outcome. A final piece was achieved but only loosely related to the supporting work here it was obvious that the candidate's work would have benefited from a greater amount of first hand observation within their chosen topic as there was too great a reliance on secondary sources and internet imagery.

Candidates at this level tended to favour the use of pencil, marker pens, and coloured pencils and poorly executed painting techniques. In many cases the work lacked depth and personal engagement.

Graphic Design

Successful submissions demonstrated the design of company logos within posters, book covers, stationery, and packaging and shop frontages. Candidates had obviously researched their subject very thoroughly. They had also used their own photography to inspire, develop and produce relevant simplified designs which demonstrated their understanding of the design process. Close attention to detail had been made with the inclusion of many alternative designs produced with appropriate graphic materials. They had explored various font styles and colour ways and had considered the placement of these elements to form a successful design. Both art materials and digital processes had been used to express ideas and development, resulting in some highly finished work which had been manipulated through a variety of methods. Candidates had also included imagery to illustrate their designs in the context for which they were intended. The overall result had a professional finish which was fit for purpose. However, the cluttered presentation of some submissions containing many alternative ideas hindered effective communication.

However, most submissions demonstrated only adequate skills; the submissions consisted mostly of copies of graffiti style imagery with very limited evidence of the candidates developing their own ideas.

Work seen in the lower ability range consisted of little more than copying from secondary sources with limited evidence of candidates developing their own ideas. Techniques were poor with limited experimentation to

develop skill levels. Candidates had not researched the work of other designers or of current design trends to inform the development of their own ideas and methods.

Photography

There was a small number specialist photography submissions with the best candidates showing sustained purposeful investigations of their subject matter and demonstrated at least a proficient specialised technical knowledge. The candidates' own critical judgements had been informed by researching the work of other photographers and potential ideas had been explored in depth using 'multiple shoots'. However, there was limited development and much repetition of similar images throughout. The work did not demonstrate a creative response or a full understanding of the photographic possibilities and images were often dull and unfulfilled.

However, when photography was used as part of a body of research and used to aid development, it was more successful and effective. In this instance the main subject matter referenced was figure work and still life. Here candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the technical control of lenses, setting up their own shoots and producing successful macro photography. They had also worked from these photographs in fine art media to produce alternative mixed media effects. Digital manipulation had also been used effectively during the development of ideas. Projects were personal and final outcomes were pleasing.

Weaker candidates demonstrated limited photographic knowledge either in the form of exploring available techniques or by making use of critical assessments of the work of other photographers. These submissions consisted of little more than collections of photographs rather than demonstrating a creative process of enquiry and development.

Fashion and Textiles

There were many large scale batiks presented across the achievement levels, which appeared impressive due to the ambitious scale of the imagery and the free and flamboyant use of wax and dye. The batiks were vibrant and bold; demonstrating confidence and a clear understanding of the rendering of the technique. Colours and imagery had been effectively selected to present a pleasing aesthetic. However, the supporting studies tended to vary in the depth of investigation, technical skills and design. Some candidates had produced successful first hand studies with development of ideas for the final batik outcome. Other work did not contain the depth of research or the consideration of development to lead to the final outcome. However the work contained a successful conclusion. For these candidates their strengths lay in their technical ability and in their aesthetic understanding of image making, pattern, shape and colour.

Some candidates had taken their textile final outcome a stage further and had produced a finished product in the form of a garment, wall hanging or quilt, demonstrating an understanding of process, planning and context.

Some examples of tie dye and batik were extremely simplistic. The work attempted to produce repeated patterns but these were very messy and crude. The work was not informed by any first or second hand studies or the work of other textile artists.

3D Design and Sculpture

A small number of ceramic works were seen. The design ideas demonstrated some invention and personal qualities but construction methods remained simple. The lack of experimentation with processes tended to limit development and refinement of skills.

A few candidates demonstrated ambitious intentions in their work, with quite abstract ideas seen using mixed media such as wood, string and metal. Unfortunately the actual making of their structures was crude and clumsy, and levels of aesthetic understanding were limited.

There were many examples where supporting sheets were largely confined to photographs documenting the actual making of the sculpture, rather than the research and development of the initial ideas.