

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01
Broad-Based Assignment

General comments

There was a very broad range of responses to the questions and a high proportion of very individual submissions. The control shown in the handling of media was often very impressive and showed a great deal of maturity and sensitivity.

On the whole painting was the most popular media used, but many candidates had experimented with more of a variety in their preparatory work, including printmaking and textiles. There were a few interesting textile-based submissions with some excellent development and presentation. There were several digital responses, such as digital paintings, which were strong in the supporting work, effectively covering all the assessment objects.

Very little straightforward photography was seen but elements of using photographs creatively in the supporting studies was seen in the stronger submissions. Most candidates used photography as a means of recording. Photographic submissions seen were mostly in the mid to low mark ranges. Stronger candidates explored their topics by undertaking a range of photoshoots which explored objects/environments over time, with the dramatic impact of lighting and weather conditions, significantly changing the mood of their images. Where photography was used in a design context some stock images were included which were undeclared and this undermined potentially promising outcomes.

There were a small number of video submissions which covered animation and film genres. Such work mostly neglected the gathering, development and exploration of the topic, with candidates rushing towards a single final outcome. The exploration of the chosen question would have benefitted from the use of storyboards, experiments with key frames and quick sketches based on initial scripts which explored camera angles and editing possibilities.

The strongest submissions included well-planned research and well-executed preparatory studies, which were always informed by first-hand observation through drawing, painting, and photography. There was evidence of good depth of analysis and investigation of chosen topics. Occasionally centres had supplied candidates with resources to work from. Whilst this often led to some good outcomes, they tended to be a little more remote from candidates' personal experiences, and were predictable and safe.

For some candidates, a shortage of first-hand research and the use of the candidate's own weak photography led to much reliance of secondary research to gather images. Consequently, submissions lacked the range of ideas to form the basis of a cohesive body of work. In many of the submissions at the lower level, the development of ideas was limited or absent. Any inclusions of artist referencing tended to be irrelevant to the topic and did little to inform the direction of the work. The preparatory work was sometimes disconnected from the final piece, where a single idea was either basic in development or not at all. This inevitably led to outcomes which had little in common with the preparatory work with a confusing direction of ideas. In some work, there was a large amount of written information to express ideas, but the candidates' ability to visually articulate these ideas through art materials was less clear.

There were several instances where candidates had explored a range of directions in their preparatory work. Some of these ideas had considerable potential but the candidate had then selected a totally unrelated image with no evidence as to its origin for their examination. This approach undermined all the investigation, experimentation and development which had taken place during the preparatory period.

The submissions were generally well presented, clearly labelled and submitted on appropriately sized card or paper. The work usually followed the format of an identified final exam piece with attached sheets of preparatory studies, though in some submissions the final outcome was not always clear.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: A crowded place

This question offered plenty of opportunity for those candidates who enjoyed working from the figure and there were lots of crowded streets, marketplaces, people on buses and trains and in cafes or restaurants. In the strongest of these, compositions were imaginatively explored as candidates experimented with variations in viewpoint, angles and lighting. Some achieved a sense of movement through paint effects and superimposed figures. Others depicted night scenes or people hurrying in rain and stormy conditions.

There were other interesting interpretations including visual maps of the over-loaded mind illustrated with thought bubbles. Art rooms, especially sinks and art cupboards stacked with dirty jars, dripping paint and stained palettes were also seen.

Although there was very little in terms of other artists being looked at, there were some, usually implicit, cultural references.

In weaker submissions, primary sources were evident but were minimal, and consisted of photographs and/or rough first-hand drawings. Weaker candidates appeared to have decided on their final image and then worked on their preparatory work, rather than being led by it.

Question 2: Items on a shelf

This question encouraged direct observational recording of jars, bottles, food containers, plants and toys and other accessible sources. Most candidates included primary photographs and drawings of domestic items on shelves in houses or retail outlets, in their preparatory work. It was a popular choice for those candidates who preferred a literal response to familiar objects in a domestic environment and stronger candidates had the opportunity to demonstrate their drawing and painting skills.

In the upper mark range candidates made good use of reflective shelf surfaces such as glass and highly polished wood and they were able to represent the overlays of cast shadows on top of detailed reflections from the selected objects. Their compositions were also enhanced by an ability to see through surfaces which produced complex multi-layered imagery.

Some candidates in the mid and upper mark ranges had also visited museums or art galleries which resulted in some very inventive interpretations of the question. Other interesting sources used by candidates included point of sales displays in shops and department stores. Such research encouraged candidates to explore decorative outcomes in a wide range of media.

The sources selected by some candidates at the middle level appeared to be less personal or symbolic. Books were a popular source for investigation and some candidates recorded bookshelves from different angles through a range of 2D media, but the work lacked the variety and interest of that at the higher level. Many chose to draw using line and water colour in an illustrative and decorative style, but these were sometimes one dimensional and understanding of form and space was not well developed. Some of the work was flat with no attempts at shadows, form or tone. Some submissions demonstrated the careful graphic drawing of different shaped shelving rather than focusing on the contents of the shelf in the supporting studies. This was often neatly drawn with a ruler like a diagram and some candidates took perspective into consideration.

In many of the weaker submissions, objects were often placed on a single shelf with little consideration given to form, shape, or surface texture. Some experiments with wet and dry materials were seen. However, these experiments did not always contribute to the interpretation of the question, or to an understanding of the objects depicted. Lower achieving submissions did not explore any variations in composition, light, form and tone and many simply reproduced internet advertising images of shelving units with little thought to any development towards an outcome. Random objects were adequately rendered, but isolated on the page, often floating with little thought or understanding of composition.

Question 3: Pathways

As well as the obvious pathways leading through forests, gardens and towns, some candidates opted for a more symbolic or spiritual pathway. Monet's gardens and water lilies were used for inspiration and a variety of media was experimented with. City streets and railway lines at night were also commonly seen in answer to this question. Some submissions concentrated on a sinister or foreboding interpretation of this question.

Stronger candidates were more rigorous in their collection of their own images, either by photography or sketching and presented their ideas and media experiments well. At this level, candidates also considered the composition of the piece

Candidates in the lower mark range showed some understanding of one-point perspective but their initial studies were often repetitive using the same centrally positioned vanishing point which was mechanical.

Question 4: Taking a selfie

This question provided an opportunity for portraiture experiments from some candidates. The most successful candidates explored media well and thought carefully about composition. They also used the opportunity to express thoughts about body image and social stigmas.

Theatrical make up and other forms of costume and set dressing techniques were used by candidates which took outcomes into unusual and ambitious directions. Such an approach was seen in the mid and upper mark ranges and showed considerable inventiveness and imagination. The works of Cindy Sherman were referred to by several candidates who adopted this approach.

Candidates in the upper mark range made good use of foreshortened imagery when recording outstretched arms holding the camera phones.

Weaker candidates took the question very literally, with little individual development or deep investigation. There was a tendency to simply draw a picture of a phone with a person's face on the screen, leaving any context out of the picture. While these images were generally made from first-hand observation, many of these observations were weak. The observational images made were lacking in rigour, sophistication and accuracy. The media use was also very weak and in general clumsily handled. This was often partly due to a poor choice of material: crayons, felt tip and oil pastels gave some of these submissions a childish look.

Question 5: Sliced and diced

Most candidates produced studies from cutting up fruit and vegetables. However, some more inventive interpretations of the theme were seen with the picture plane divided and the manipulation of images juxtaposed and merged with the aid of digital design. Architecture was also a popular choice to cut and combine allowing for further exploration into cross cultural studies.

Stronger candidates had explored a variety of media, including ceramics, working with several artists, and explored more creativity in their final outcomes. Candidates demonstrated high levels of control and appropriateness of media to communicate intention. Development work was consistent and organised, but sometimes the outcome was not as resolved as preparatory work.

Mid level candidates showed an ability to develop mixed media responses with consideration to surface quality and composition. However, there were inconsistencies in the planning stage. Some candidates in the middle range responded more imaginatively and looked at Picasso's cubism to inspire the cutting and re-arranging of the photograph/painting.

With weaker submissions, there was usually a basic approach taken, with two or three fruits or vegetables being sliced and either drawn or painted. The use of media generally lacked sensitivity and control. The compositions made were basic and were generally at eye level and arranged in unimaginative ways. Often these objects seemed to be floating in the picture plane without any visual context at all. At this level, the preparatory work was quite static, with no real development or active investigation apart from some basic first-hand drawing and a few first-hand photographs, alongside several downloaded internet or magazine images. The fruit and vegetables being used should have given these candidates plenty of opportunity for playing with stimulating combinations of colour, but often this was missed and instead the images seen were not particularly animated by an interest in colour.

As well as the fruit and vegetables seen in these submissions, there were quite a few unusual routes taken in response to this question. Various peculiar collections of objects were chosen and cut into pieces, both visually and literally. Often the results were quite confusing and due to the limited observational abilities most of these candidates showed, it was occasionally impossible to tell which objects had been used.

Question 6: Features in a landscape

This question saw a variety of media being attempted, and this included sculpture, printmaking, collage, pen and ink, as well as painting and drawing. At the higher level of achievement candidates who worked from their own imagery and observational drawings were able to create fine detailed etchings and woodblock prints, and combined media successfully. Many chose forests, flowers and foliage as subject matter and Japanese painters and printmakers were a popular choice of artist to study.

In the middle range there were some beautiful observational studies in preparatory work but few ideas were explored or pursued further for the final outcome. Power lines, bridges and architectural drawings were also a popular choice, as were older, textured and derelict dwellings. In this mark range there were candidates who had a strong grasp of the perspective division of the landscape i.e. foreground, middle distance, distance and sky. There were also candidates who were aware of the use of aerial viewpoints and colour recession. However, well-finished paintings were not always supported by the gathering, experimentation and exploration of the question.

In weaker submissions many unoriginal sunsets, mountain ranges and seascapes were copied from second-hand sources, with little understanding of composition or idea development.

The many photography responses to this question tended to be of a lower standard. Candidates' photographs were mainly pictures taken of their local vicinity, often with no development and little consideration or understanding of the visual forms.

Question 7: A person fastening a shoe

This question provided an excellent opportunity to work from life. The more creative responses looked at Degas' ballet paintings for inspiration utilising the paint technique and sensitive colour palette. A variety of interesting camera angles were also used by stronger candidates looking at foreshortening, close-ups, various foot attire and these showed a good understanding of form and space. The most successful submissions considered the angle and pose of the figure and developed compositions based on a variety of primary studies and the candidates' good, clear photographic images. In some submissions there was a general preference for focusing on the shoes, the laces and detailed studies of hands. Photography frequently assisted the recording process and helped to resolve compositional challenges, particularly in the construction of the final outcome.

Examples of sports footwear being fitted were seen in the mid mark range with the extended laces being put to good use as a compositional device, linking hands and feet within the picture space. Some candidates in the mid and upper mark ranges experimented with the movements of the hands when tying laces. These outcomes involved studies of movement which were strongly influenced by the Italian futurists such as Balla.

The work at the lower level was mostly limited by a lack of first-hand observation. Those candidates who did work from direct observation, through their own photography, tended to produce repetitive imagery which did not help to develop ideas. In other work, there were examples of poor attempts to copy photographs from the internet which did not produce successful outcomes. At this level, the media choices and development of ideas were limited and candidates lacked the technical ability and creativity to successfully execute their ideas.

Question 8: The winning shot

Stronger candidates demonstrated some strong observational skills through a series of well observed 'action' drawings and colour studies. Again, exploratory first-hand experience of the subject matter had clearly benefitted the work and final outcome.

Much of the work at the lower level contained some weak attempts to copy sporting photographs. There was a shortage of careful direct observational studies and much secondary-sourced material. The question also attracted darker themes with studies based around syringes, injections, drugs and weapons, often with no apparent origin of sources, but derived from the imagination. There were a few cartoon-style studies and visual influences from computer games.

Question 9: A grand entrance

Most candidates approached the question literally by looking at doorways and gates, churches and temples. Some candidates explored the merging of cultures, sometimes with a strong design bias. Others showed very detailed ornate drawings that were translated into printmaking and backed up by strong explorative photography. There was a good range of photographing from primary sources, particularly when related to doorways. However, further development from these initial findings was lacking.

A few candidates took this question as an opportunity to produce fashion designs for cat walks and theatrical staircase entrances.

Question 10: Merging forms

Candidates used a range of materials and processes in response to this question. These included collage, digital manipulation, pencil and water colour. Many submissions focused on domestic appliances, organic forms or animal motifs. Others focused on the human face and some of these merged an expression of emotion such as joy or despair, for example. Other responses aimed to merge the face with objects like clock faces, masks or sections of skulls.

The stronger work was inventive. Creative connections with the theme led to the development of some imaginative images and striking abstract outcomes. Surreal and abstract images were present which had clearly been informed by the experimental supporting studies during the initial stages of investigation. Personal expression was seen in this work. There was evidence of some engaged and detailed decorative work as well as expressive mark-making, along with a playful and experimental rendering of media.

Photographic submissions used overlays of imagery. In the mid mark-range there was evidence of landscapes being merged with portraiture but this often resulted in a single combined image with no evidence of experiments with compositional possibilities.

Theatrical masks and costumes were also seen in the mid mark range with these designs successfully creating invented or mythological creatures.

Most candidates choosing this question were in the lower level of marks. Many of the responses seen were incoherent, both in terms of the final image and the nature and structure of the preparatory work. The preparatory work itself was highly fragmented and there was little sense of a common theme or progression. The use of media here was very limited and especially so with those candidates choosing to use felt tip pens.

The ways in which objects can change visually and physically were not really explored beyond what a phone app or graphics tool could do to them. There were certainly examples of transformations done by hand and not a graphics package but these were generally limited to quite basic attempts at merging two objects together.

ART AND DESIGN

<p>Paper 0400/02 Design-Based Assignment</p>
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General comments

This paper offered candidates a range of opportunities and subject matter in design and encouraged personal experience and observation as the basis for several distinct outcomes in graphics, fashion, textiles and jewellery alongside a design outcome of the candidate's choice.

Submissions for all questions were seen, with **Question 6: Botanical Garden** being the most popular, followed by **Question 1: The Blues Guitarist** and Question 7: Sugar Rush.

Many candidates did not read the questions fully, and so did not answer the briefs properly. In many cases the lettering was ignored, or well investigated in the preparatory work and then not used. Many submissions showed little or no evidence of development from research using a design process. Some candidates appeared to have decided on an outcome and then researched the necessary imagery to fulfil their pre-conceived idea.

The majority of work used traditional painting and drawing media, though a few examples of digital manipulation were seen. Where this was used well, it enhanced the submissions.

Stronger candidates used everyday examples to help them to combine text and images effectively. Weaker candidates made fonts up or found scale more challenging.

The strongest works fulfilled all five assessment objectives to a high standard. These submissions were well researched, with candidates using first-hand observations as starting points, often from close-up or unusual viewpoints and developing their ideas with rich material studies.

Work in the mid mark range fulfilled the assessment objectives to a lesser degree by relying on secondary sources and lacked the originality and in-depth research seen in the stronger work.

Submissions in the lower mark range did not contain enough initial research and candidates were heavily reliant on secondary sources. Ideas were limited and not explored thoroughly enough and candidates possessed poor technical skills.

A lot of candidates relied on secondary sources, some of which were poor, from which to research their topics. This was mainly internet images. Consequently, a true understanding of structure, form, texture and colour was not developed, and this lack of understanding carried through into the final design. Candidates would have benefitted from researching a wider range of designs to aid them with their own creative choices and needed to spend more time planning their final outcome as compositions were often weak.

Little evidence of reference to the work of other artists or designers was seen, and where included it was not always informative or relevant to the work.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1: The Blues Guitarist

This question provided a good opportunity for observational studies and exploration of composition, but most candidates focused on one or the other. Picasso's blue period and guitarist were a popular reference alongside the many posters to be found on the internet. Several candidates also referred to cubism. The strongest submissions demonstrated evidence of thorough first-hand research into guitars and figures, particularly hands, alongside research into poster design etc. Some candidates had looked at vintage

graphic design and researched blues musicians, using this to inform well-composed designs. Exploration of media and techniques was done in some depth, and lettering was well integrated with images in the outcomes.

Mid range submissions relied more on secondary sources for imagery, with some evidence of first-hand observation. Photography was used to record images and copied with some skill, and many candidates used digital media both for development and as the outcome. In many cases the work of other graphic designers and artists was referenced and was informative, but often the ideas explored were not carried through to the outcome. Outcomes in some cases had visual impact but the preparatory work did not back this up.

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates relied heavily on secondary sources for images of guitars and guitarists. Some copied existing images from the internet as their final designs. Little evidence of exploration of image or media was seen, and few examples of artist or designer research were evident.

Question 2: Costume based on Boats etc.

Many candidates answering this question focused their attention on gathering images of dancers rather than boats, sails etc.

The strongest submissions demonstrated good research from first- and second-hand sources, looking at ropes, sails, knots, water etc. and showed some high levels of skill in these studies. An understanding of human form was also evident in these high level submissions. The research was used intelligently to inform the design of garments, with attention to details such as fasteners, stitching, drape, flow and movement. Some included fabric swatches and had considered colour, texture etc. Outcomes were strong and well designed. The manipulation of media enabled these stronger candidates to communicate their ideas successfully.

Mid range submissions often presented research into boats and fashion design but did not show how this had informed the development of ideas leading to the final design. More reliance on secondary sources was seen at this level and so there was less understanding of aspects of the subject matter. Some candidates had not fully explored fabrics, colour etc. or movement of the human figure.

At the lower levels, very little research was seen in general, and what was seen was mainly secondary. Weak links were made with the designs, by including an image of an anchor or ships wheel, but these candidates did not demonstrate an understanding of what was being asked for. Use of media was often crude, lacking skill and practice.

Question 3: Jewellery based on Bicycles

As with **Question 2**, in many cases candidates did not appear to understand what was being asked for in this question. A few examples of actual jewellery were seen, but the production skills were usually weak.

Stronger candidates demonstrated evidence that they had looked at bicycles in some depth, exploring aspects and details of them such as cogs, gears, chains etc., to find elements which would be suitable for development into designs for jewellery. Research into sculpture and jewellery design was also used to inform this development. Good quality observational studies were seen at this level, showing a range of media used with confidence. Candidates had thought about the practicalities of the design and how items could be worn. Some imaginative development resulted from this and final designs were innovative and dynamic.

In the mid range, candidates used primary and secondary sources of imagery to work from, developing interesting but less imaginative designs. The subject matter used was predictable and obvious in the final outcome. Competent use of media was seen but the presentation of final designs showed less awareness of aesthetic qualities such as composition and colour.

Weaker candidates relied heavily on second-hand sources for their designs or copied their own poor quality photographs. Ideas were very predictable, such as chains with miniature bicycles hanging from them, or bike chain bracelets. The use of media was clumsy, demonstrating a lack of experience or practice.

Question 4: Quotation

Few candidates developed their own design brief using imagery in the quote, and most just produced an illustration. Lettering was largely ignored. Some submissions showed concerns for environmental issues, such as plastics in the oceans.

Stronger candidates demonstrated very strong first-hand research and developed their ideas using this, along with their own imaginative ideas. Strong use of media helped to convey ideas and led to strong outcomes.

The mid range submissions contained some first- and second-hand research of a competent level. Some included all or part of the text, but this was not always integrated visually. Many candidates used this as a stimulus for an underwater scene, demonstrating good use of paint and other media. Other examples used this as a stimulus for fashion designs based on water/underwater.

The weaker submissions often contained reasonable outcomes but very little research or development. Often submissions just consisted of an imagined underwater scene. Where research was seen, it was secondary, and candidates lacked skill in the handling of media.

Question 5: The Birds

This deceptively simple brief contained many potential challenges. Some candidates were enthused by the idea of drawing birds but had little idea of how stage sets worked or could be drawn convincingly in three dimensions. Most submissions for this question lacked spatial consideration, and final designs were mainly flat.

In the mid range, there was evidence that candidates had researched birds to a reasonable standard, using media with some skill. Some candidates made mock-ups to help with the design process, but on the whole submissions lacked any awareness of space and three dimensions, or any ideas how to interpret their research into a stage set.

Lower level submissions struggled to work out how to design something on a stage.

Question 6: The Botanical Garden

This popular question attracted a wide range of submissions. All tackled with enthusiasm and making use of primary source material. However, several thought that the title - The Botanical Garden, had to be included which did not enhance their designs.

Some candidates were very familiar with basic repeat structures and experimented with their design in several formats. However, in weaker submissions these often lacked flow and rhythm. Some candidates put their designs into a context, such as a living room. Others incorporated traditional processes or types of design particular to their own country. References to designers could have been broader and William Morris and Orla Kiely were very popular. Those who did refer to designers attempted to incorporate their design principles. There were some stunning pieces where colour, mystery of the design and presentation all came together.

The strongest submissions demonstrated thorough observational research into leaves and plants from primary sources. Photography was often used as a means of recording, and some used digital manipulation to develop interesting patterns. Strong manipulative skills were evident at this level, and final designs showed consideration of layout and composition.

In the mid range of marks, candidates also showed evidence of observational studies and gathering of reference material. In many cases interesting ideas in the preparatory work were developed but then not used in the final design. Manipulative skills were not as strong at this level, and final designs were often less successful.

At the lower end of the mark range, candidates had downloaded images and therefore did not fully understand the subject matter. Images had been used to create very basic spot repeats with no flow and use of media was weak. Some ideas for repeat patterns were developed but not fully resolved or explored.

Question 7: Sugar Rush

Some submissions for this question concentrated on the design of a logo or sign, while others thought about the actual kiosk in some depth.

The strongest submissions demonstrated evidence of research into cakes and pastries from first-hand sources. Candidates had taken photographs of these things, as well as of the shop fronts, kiosks etc. The

depth of research meant that candidates developed some strong ideas and manipulative skills. In these submissions candidates also managed to research and integrate lettering within their designs. In some cases, the quality of rendering was extremely good.

In the mid range, candidates used a combination of primary and secondary sources of research. Some good quality rendering was seen, and as at the higher level, some candidates concentrated on the kiosk and some on the sign. In many cases the lettering was explored in some depth but in the final design it appeared rushed and was not as strong. Where candidates used secondary sources, the same images of pancakes or muffins from the internet were seen in submissions from different centres, consequently leading to lower marks for personal qualities.

At the lower end of the mark range, this reliance on secondary sources was even more apparent, and once again the same imagery appeared in the entries. The control and selection of appropriate media was very limited, and many submissions contained cartoon-like imagery. Lettering was often ignored or crudely added.

Question 8: Elements plate design

This question proved challenging for some candidates who did not show a good understanding of what was required. The weakness in many submissions was the lack of primary source material from which to develop ideas and the problem of how to incorporate text onto a circular format.

Within the question there were four possibilities and most candidates chose to use fire or water as their starting points. Very few candidates considered the use of the word, as asked for in the question, and often it was just placed in the middle of the plate with little sensitivity.

The strongest submissions contained evidence of research into relevant subject matter from various sources, mainly secondary. Some had looked at plate design as well and brought the strands together fairly successfully. A few imaginative approaches were seen, addressing issues such as drought or single use plastic.

Lower level submissions often relied on either secondary source material or made up imagery. Hokusai's Big Wave was seen in many instances, and where the words were included the placing and design of the lettering was very heavy handed and crude.

Question 9: Local Life and Customs

This question provided candidates with an opportunity to demonstrate aspects of their own country and culture and there were some excellent examples of this.

Many candidates struggled to find a way of selecting and using images from their research. The strongest submissions demonstrated imaginative approaches, using their first-hand studies and these candidates carefully considered how to use them. In all cases at the higher level, development was backed up by strong research.

In the mid range, some fairly good preparatory work was seen, using a range of source material, but often the development lacked cohesion. Compositional skills in the placing of lettering and image on the box were not well considered, and manipulative skills were not as refined as at the higher level.

The weaker submissions relied heavily on secondary research for images and ideas. Some research from local markets and customs was seen, but candidates did not demonstrate any selection or compositional skills, leading to very cluttered final designs. Very little consideration was given to lettering, and manipulative skills were weak.

ART AND DESIGN

<p>Paper 0400/03 Critical and Historical Assignment</p>

General comments

Submissions covered a broad range of topics. These included Fine Art, Painting & Sculpture, Architecture, Fashion, Textiles, Graphic Design, Street Art, Photography and Ceramics. Many candidates focussed on their own practical developments alongside an exploration of the work of other artists.

Assignments were usually presented using the A4 file/folder method with some larger sketchbook formats and a few sets of large mounted sheets of images and text. Some of the strongest submissions showed a personal and imaginative combination of relevant text and photographic images in the form of hand-made books and folders. Digital formats were also seen.

Many of the assignments would have benefitted from the submission of an outline proposal form (OPF). These allow the candidate to gain advice and help with choosing appropriate topics as well as presenting a coherent plan for making a successful exploration.

Higher levels of achievement

Candidates at these levels of assessment demonstrated a clear personal involvement and enthusiasm for their chosen topic. Very personal observations and imaginative responses were made from experiencing first-hand visits to studios, workshops and galleries. Documentation and recording of these visits demonstrated awareness and understanding of the works selected for investigation. Well-articulated analysis combined with coherent and strong photographic and illustrated recording contributed to successful assignments.

In the more practical assignments candidates synthesised the discoveries made, selecting and manipulating materials and processes to explore personal themes. The strongest works demonstrated a clear understanding of how to explore an idea by experimenting with a range of media. The practical work reflected a high level of skill and sophistication with an ability to apply the formal elements to effectively communicate ideas.

The submissions at the higher levels usually confirmed a clarity of understanding and awareness of the topic explored through an articulate and perceptive evaluation or conclusion at the end of the assignment.

Some candidates developed a thematic approach which related well to first-hand visits to studios and workshops and demonstrated a keen interest in the production process. For example, Ceramics, Furniture Design and Textiles.

Submissions at these levels demonstrated well considered selections of works to be discussed and analysed. Comparisons made with related examples by other artists helped candidates to make intelligent critical judgements.

Digital processes were used to enhance the presentation through the layering and contrasting of images, making some significant visual comparisons in combination with related text. Some excellent photography was also in evidence in some of these submissions.

Middle and lower levels of achievement

In many of these submissions some personal engagement was demonstrated through practical-based studies and experiments. However, there was very little evidence as to how these works had been informed or even inspired by observation of any works by other artists. Several examples seen contained some limited drawings and paintings of objects with little or no explanation or discussion.

Evidence of first-hand visits being made was limited and more images were sourced from the internet, some of which were unrelated to the candidates' work. Several candidates interviewed their chosen artists and designers by email. This often resulted in a superficial series of questions and answers which revealed little about the ideas and process behind the work in question. Well informed and relevant discussions are vital to attain the higher levels of assessment.

Some candidates had clearly used the internet as their only source of research and investigation which limited the level of personal engagement in evidence within the assignment. First-hand and personal experience of the topic being explored would have been beneficial for these candidates.

The lack of first-hand research significantly restricted those submissions found to be at the lowest levels of assessment. It was difficult for candidates to make a connection with works only experienced on the internet, with little appreciation of the scale, shape, form and texture of the work. Often the experience of colour and tone can be misleading.

ART AND DESIGN

<p>Paper 0400/04 Coursework Assignment</p>
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General comments

Painting and Related Media was the most popular area of study followed by Photography. There were a small number of Graphic Design entries this session and only a few Fashion and Textile or 3D submissions.

The work at the higher levels of attainment always demonstrated competent to outstanding levels of recording and observations made from first-hand sources. There was a mature and personal direction in the development of ideas, a confident use of media and a well-executed, focused outcome. Many candidates had referenced and explored the works of relevant artists to inform the development of their own ideas. A coherent body of work leading to a resolved final outcome was the result of this well organised and prepared supporting work.

Candidates in the middle mark range were often more reliant on the copying of other artists' work and lacked the creativity and originality to form their own individual responses, despite demonstrating strong preparatory work. They were often able to research their topics in some depth but were less able to use this recording to develop their own personal ideas. Consequently, the outcomes were less successful areas of the submissions. However, in other cases the outcomes were stronger than the preparatory work. It appeared as though these candidates had spent insufficient time or effort on the recording, development of ideas and experiments with media.

The lower level work lacked both research and development, and was often found to provide little or sometimes no evidence of any observations made from a first-hand source. Where references to artists and designers were made, they were mostly irrelevant to the submission. Only a few impacted on the development of the candidates' ideas. Candidates relied on poor quality secondary images to work from, which were often repetitive or unrelated, and many candidates included images from the imagination. In the majority of submissions, the final outcome was unresolved and undeveloped from the supporting work.

Centre assessments were mostly generous and adjustments were often necessary. Orders of merit were generally acceptable, but where the centre had over valued the candidates work it was usually across all of the assessment objectives. This often presented an inaccurate assessment of candidates' skills and large adjustments were required to appropriately correct the assessments. Only a few centres had undervalued candidates work. Other centres had made realistic assessments of the candidates' abilities as they had correctly recognised achievements and limitations. Occasionally, remarks were required to correct the order of merit.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and related media

This was by far the most popular area of study and included a wide range of materials and processes. Mixed media, (often incorporating photography) was particularly inventive and lively. Some of the supporting sheets contained experimental work with collage - paper and fabric, with some use of sewing techniques and embroidery. Different types of printmaking also appeared as experimentation with media, but there were no final outcomes using this technique.

The most popular theme was portraiture. Figures, animals/birds, flowers, still life and architecture or landscapes were often explored as well. Themes using dancers were quite popular too. There were a few examples of abstract emotional themes such as anguish, fear, etc. but addictions like gambling, dreams and nightmares, loneliness/happiness were investigated this series.

A positive and individual approach to drawing from first-hand experience was the foundation of the strongest work. These candidates saw drawing as a process of enquiry, enabling them to discover imagery and to explore ideas rather than simply to demonstrate skills. Their work was often lively and personal. There were also some good examples of the use of photography for first-hand investigations of subject matter. At its best, this method produced unexpected imagery as starting points for experimentation and resulted in thoughtful personal work.

The middle level work lacked the original and personal approach seen in the higher range, and often the development was less coherent. Research relied more on the use of secondary sources, or copying from the candidates' own photographs. However, work at this level could also often demonstrate the potential for producing a stronger outcome without fully exploiting the ideas and developments shown in the supporting work. This work was usually limited by a lack of research and recording from direct observation. The understanding of structure and form was often less apparent in these submissions. Artist research was seen, but was not always informative to the development of ideas. Manipulative skills had not been refined by experimentation or practice.

The lower level submissions lacked first-hand exploration and produced repeated and often static reproductions of second-hand sourced material. A large amount of unrelated support material was evident at this range. Although it often showed strengths in material manipulation and aesthetics, these isolated pieces did not support the line of enquiry to feed into the final outcome and therefore limited the development and personal qualities seen. A lot of imagery was created from looking at photographs, and this often resulted in flat and repetitious outcomes.

Photography

Photographs in supporting work were seen in many submissions. Some in the stronger submissions were of a good quality, but in other works photos were out of focus, too small or lacked interest and were a poor reference to develop ideas from. At the lower levels a wide range of unedited photographs were submitted or shown in different colours, digitally changed but without reason.

Stronger candidates specialising in photography imaginatively explored composition and experimented with variations in camera angle, lighting, viewpoint, scale and depth of field. Work was developed using a range of experimental techniques including the use of Photoshop and other image manipulation programmes. These submissions illustrated some thoughtful digital enhancements and took inspiration from connections with the works of other photographers and artists. Consequently, these candidates produced lively and imaginative presentations with a focused thematic approach, along with informative, evaluative and aesthetic judgements.

Lower level candidates did not explore the potential of the camera and the recording was often limited to basic photographs. Submissions tended to consist of collections of photographs with little development of ideas, and the outcomes appeared to be chosen from a selection of photographs in the supporting work rather than a developed image. Many candidates working at this level did not include research into the work of other photographers which would have helped them to explore ways of manipulating their images into a more personal and informed final outcome.

Graphic Design

There were very few submissions that focused on Graphic Design.

A number of book and CD covers were seen where experiments were made with different logos, lettering and layouts, mostly with the use of computer software. However, the final design ideas were then painstakingly painted in minute detail. Although this practise shows the candidates' painting ability, it does not add any extra impetus to the development of the projects. It would be far more beneficial if candidates painted for its own sake and perhaps scanned in their paintings and worked to develop them into progressing the design process. Recreating a digital design in paint does not fulfil any extra assessment objective criteria.

Other examples of digital modelling and manipulation were also seen this session. At the higher level the technology was understood and candidates showed their idea development through a series of images. At the lower level attempts by candidates to use their digital skills to manipulate photos by changing the colours and adding simplistic effects were rather limited.

Some of the weaker submissions used Manga styled images and emoji symbols in their development, which

lacked originality and coherence.

Fashion and Textile Design

A small number of textiles submissions were seen. Elements of textile design such as embroidery and sewing were mostly used as a decorative element and experimentation during the supporting stages.

The strongest submissions in this area showed great aptitude for pattern construction with fine, technical detail. Creativity and invention were not as common. However, most were very simplistic repeated patterns with messy and crude outcomes. The work was not informed by any first- or second-hand studies or the work of other textile artists.

A small number of candidates produced fashion designs. While some of these demonstrated adequate initial observational drawings and research, none progressed their work beyond drawn generic dress forms. Personal qualities and detailed inventions were limited.

Some garment construction was attempted which showed skill and technique. However, development and planning was lacking.

At the lower level, fashion drawings were largely derivative and lacked any personal development. This level of submission tended to rely upon internet imagery or magazine clippings.

Three-Dimensional Studies

Photographic presentations of 3D work as a focused area of study were seen. A few submissions also demonstrated the exploration of 3D work as part of a course and media included clay, soft sculpture, card, wire and mod-roc.

Some strong submissions were seen. Candidates often presented a very coherent set of mounted work on the supporting sheets which demonstrated a well-structured design process. Related works by some leading practitioners had been investigated which clearly informed and inspired the development and outcomes produced by these candidates. The submissions illustrated the making process with a strong series of photographs to include a number of imaginative outcomes.

In other submissions, photographs of 3D creations were seen with thorough explanation of the making process as well as various views of the sculpture itself. The competent nature of the photography helped to understand the journey made and the aesthetics of the final pieces, which in some cases were very large.

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