

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/01
Controlled Test

General comments

There were submissions seen across the ability range and while there were many strong pieces, there were also many where candidates were not able to demonstrate a strong outcome.

The candidates in the higher mark ranges had produced some personal and committed responses to the questions. Effective use of the preparation time was evident with thorough investigation of the various angles of their sources, resulting in some creative and personal responses. Most often the strengths lay in their first-hand research, interpretation of the subject, the development of ideas and manipulation of media. There was excellent investigation and depth of analysis, with appropriate contextual referencing. These submissions often demonstrated an accomplished, sensitive and confident rendering of a wide range of materials. Most of the responses at this level came from **Section A**.

The work in the middle range was mainly located in **Section A** and **B** and often featured first hand research and observational studies which were of a good standard. Thoughtful consideration to composition and detail was evident. The preparatory work tended to demonstrate a variety of studies exploring a range of media and focusing on alternative angles of their subject, with varying levels of detail. The main focus of starting points was on the recording and observation, with fewer development of ideas, personal evaluation or critical analysis than demonstrated at the higher levels.

The responses at the lower mark order lacked personal engagement and investigation. Candidates would have benefited from spending more time researching their question and organising their material. At this level there was insufficient preparatory work with a limited investigation of the topic, exploration of ideas and commitment to the work. The control of materials was either poor or inappropriate. Candidates were less likely to produce an informed response when attempting to manipulate from the fragmented or little research, random images and unfulfilled ideas. There was much reliance on the use of secondary sources and also on imagination. The potential available to them within their topic was frequently not explored.

More than two thirds of the responses came from the starting points in **Section A. Question 6 – Overlapping** was the most popular followed by **Question 5 – Breakdown**, and **Question 2 – Scaffolding** was the least popular starting point.

Within this Section the responses spanned the mark range – from the limited to outstanding areas. The stronger candidates demonstrated a high level of personal commitment and a sensitive and confident handling of materials, with well-considered ideas leading to informed outcomes. The work of the less strong candidates displayed a lack of organisation of imagery and ideas, with inconsistencies in the technical skills. The candidates were less able to demonstrate a refined visual understanding. Investigation at these levels were less thorough and purposeful, and consequently outcomes often remained unresolved.

Section B questions were chosen by fewer candidates. Most popular was **Question 9 – Figure reclining on a sunbed** and **Question 8 – Preparing a picnic**. Least popular was **Question 10 – Ted Hughes extract**.

Responses were again located across the mark ranges of limited to outstanding, though predominantly came from the lower to middle areas. The majority of responses were observational in approach. They contained much investigation of the relevant sources to varying levels of observed detail, technical skill and manipulation of ideas. Strengths were apparent in both the supporting work and in the final outcomes. The few responses at the higher range demonstrated thorough investigations of the subject, accomplished rendering of media with careful observation and appropriate and informative references to artists' works which led to resolved outcomes.

There were very few responses to the specific design brief of **Section C. Question 14 – Flower festival outfit** was the most popular and **Question 13 – Lovejoys** was the least frequently chosen across the whole of the paper. There were very few responses for **Questions 11 and 12**.

Much work seen for this section was located in the low to middle areas of the mark ranges. Generally, work demonstrated weak graphical, illustrative and costume design skills. The better work illustrated some observation of initial sources which were used to manipulate design ideas leading to a successful form. The less strong submissions illustrated little commitment in the gathering of resources and investigation and demonstrated poor personal engagement with the topic. Technical skills were weak and the ability to manipulate the work into refined ideas was not evident.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1 – Squashed

This was the third most popular question and responses came from across the mark range, with many located in the lower and middle levels of achievement. The candidates at the higher level had worked directly from first hand observation, producing dramatic photographic images and sensitive studies of faces and bodies pressed and trapped against glass. Accomplished drawings, paintings, printing, superimposed photographs and mixed media work, illustrated squashed fruits and crushed cans with careful observation of the surface qualities, textures, forms and character of the selected sources. The referencing of artists' images clearly informed the work. This included the observation of skin tones, mark making and brush strokes. Intelligent and mature responses demonstrated personal and creative ideas, informed by a range of artists. There was a high level of personal involvement and final outcomes were generally informed and successful.

The work in the middle range was also developed from an observational approach which incorporated first hand recording and the candidates' own photography and was supplemented with imagery from secondary sources. The quality of the research and recording was generally good with evidence of some sensitive observations of squashed faces and flesh based on Jenny Saville's work. Candidates had set up their own arrangements of sources and recorded using crisp, sharp and well-composed photographic skills. There was evidence of good personal engagement. However, the development of the ideas into an informed outcome was less successful. More planning and the exploration of scale would have benefited the work. A range of materials had been explored, though there was evidence of inconsistent skill in the rendering of some forms. The character of the subject was sometimes lost with the outcome often lacking the sensitivity or vitality of the preparatory work.

The lower level work contained limited research with little scope for development. The submissions tended to contain recorded images of random items. These candidates often needed stronger preparatory work as the levels of observation and investigation were limited. Images were often disconnected from each other but displayed some control of a range of media. As a consequence of this, the development of an idea was limited which led to unresolved final outcomes. Candidates also often did not appear to recognise and use any of the strengths which may have been in the preparatory work. The photography work at this level also contained fragmented images which were often disconnected from the final outcome.

Question 2 – Scaffolding

This was a less frequently chosen starting point. The work at the higher level demonstrated much recording from direct observation through photography and mixed media studies. Many alternative abstract compositions were explored and a range of media, particularly collage and silk screen printing were used effectively and creatively to suggest the form and rusty surfaces of the metal.

The candidates at the middle of the mark range also produced images from first-hand study which were sometimes integrated with secondary sources in an attempt to form ideas. Abstract compositions were explored demonstrating a good understanding of the organisation of forms within a space. The rendering of a range of media was inconsistent. Individual ideas were apparent in the preparatory work which had been explored effectively, but poor decisions which were made during the planning stage led to less successful outcomes.

The work at the lower mark level contained very limited research and development. Technical skills were sometimes stronger, but the rendering of a limited range of materials led to uninformed preparatory work. At

this level there tended to be a reliance on the copying of imagery rather than developing alternative images and personal engagement was limited.

Question 3 – Neglect

This was a popular starting point and responses covered much of the mark range. The approaches tended to be abstract and were often developed from first-hand research. The higher level work contained very accomplished and sensitive studies of old, neglected cars and abandoned figures. Photography and a rich use of colour and mixed media was used effectively to thoroughly explore and record the detail and colour within rusted and corroded metal, broken dashboards and shattered wing mirrors. Figure paintings reflected subtle colour palettes and muted tones to represent skin tones and mood and atmosphere. This contrasted with lively mark making from brushstrokes or charcoal marks to represent expressive qualities. The work at this level was highly personal. Photography was also used to record scenarios, and artist referencing influenced style, techniques and narratives. Outcomes were informed, confident and personal.

Many of the candidates in the middle range had also recorded their topic from direct observation and some were personal in nature. Some of the work contained thoughtful imagery and compositions, though the development of ideas was sometimes either unclear or repetitive. Other work at this level contained a detailed manipulation of images but it was sometimes difficult to decipher the origin of the initial sources. Some candidates showed an accomplished control of media, though the rendering skills tended to be inconsistent and the integration of materials within an image could be unsuccessful due to a lack of understanding of the visual elements. At this level the development of ideas was less strong with candidates tending to repeat rather than develop. There was much use of text to express a conceptual idea, though the result could be an obvious development. Other work demonstrated some planning, but ideas had not been explored in depth and were disconnected to the outcome. The work at the lower range demonstrated some literal research and recording. Where there were more personal submissions, they were not explored or developed. Images were formed through poor photography of neglected figures in predictable positions. Other submissions contained fragmented images with little apparent visual thought process. There was much repetition of images rather than these being developed and the manipulation of materials was inconsistent and lacked refinement. The levels of technical skill were also less strong. The recording tended to be inconsistent and offered little scope for development, which was again repetitive. Final conclusions were aesthetically and technically weak and also unfulfilled. The work at this level lacked the personal engagement required at this level.

Question 4 – In and out

The responses to this question were distributed across the mark range, with the majority in the middle and lower mark levels. Most approaches were interpretative and ideas were individual. The work at the higher level was inventive and committed, supported by observation from first-hand study and artist referencing. Work generally demonstrated an individual response to the starting point through a sensitive manipulation of media, backed up by photographs and other images. The preparatory work was consistently lively, but sometimes the outcomes did not reflect the best ideas in the research. The work at the middle level was also experimental and individual, but the rendering of media and the technical skills were less strong and sometimes lacked refinement. The strengths in the work at this level were in the development of ideas, which translated well into the final outcome. Much of the lower level work contained little observation and recording. Sources were often unclear and the incohesive preparatory work was often disconnected to the outcome. Other work demonstrated some research and development of ideas but the poor technical skills and rendering of materials hindered the refinement in the development of ideas.

Question 5 – Breakdown

This was the second most popular question and appealed to candidates in the middle and lower of the mark range. In the middle level, ideas were personal and supported by much photography, particularly the work containing figures acting out scenarios, heavily made up in varying poses within an appropriate setting. Text often accompanied imagery, combining texture and mixed media. Ideas could sometimes be predictable and the manipulation of materials was sometimes inconsistent and lacked refinement. There were many representations of emotional figures posed appropriately to express their pain. Some responses were predictable, and others were sensitive representations competently executed through photography or paint to illustrate expression and atmosphere. The work at this level was inconsistent and outcomes were not always fully resolved.

The work at the lower level contained some work from direct observation through photography and drawing, but many images were derived from the internet. Much of the work was interpretative and lacked the

manipulation of ideas. The preparatory work tended to contain random and fragmented imagery relating to 'breakdown', which were disconnected to each other and to the outcome. Media control was weak and clumsily rendered. Outcomes lacked sensitivity and cohesion due to the gathering and recording of disjointed images and lack of exploration of ideas in the preparatory work.

Question 6 – Overlapping

This was the most popular question and responses spanned the mark range, with most in the middle and lower levels of ability. The responses at the higher level were personal, engaged and inventive. Much commitment was apparent in the research work and approaches were interpretative, abstract and observational. Ideas were creative. Photographic manipulation and digital programmes as well as traditional 2-D media were used to explore ideas. There were extensive explorations of compositions and the manipulation of imagery – hands twisting and intertwining, sensitive observations of skin tones and structure recorded through paint and photography. Layers of colour and fragmented overlapped forms featured regularly. The application of materials demonstrated sensitivity and accomplishment. Much of the work had been supported by artist influences and direct observation, and led to creative and well informed outcomes.

The work in the middle of the mark range also illustrated some personal and inventive ideas. Scarves had been twisted and overlapped and recorded through sensitive drawn and painted compositions which illustrated the subtleties and the transparency of the fabrics. Still life forms overlapped, as well as abstract shapes (inspired by artist referencing); layers and layers of beads and beaded bangles; overlapped images and layered fabrics in garments were all sources of inspiration for the candidates at this level. The preparatory work was often lively but could sometimes lack cohesion. The manipulation of materials, though widely explored, contained inconsistencies and lacked the skill seen in the higher level work. References to artists were often made and had inspired the exploration of ideas, but did not always inform the outcome. Some work contained well-constructed, but predictable final outcomes, as a consequence of insufficient research and experimentation.

The work at the lower level often demonstrated limited research and exploration of ideas, but good control of media. Other work explored the subject, but demonstrated a weak rendering of materials. Inspiration was often derived from the imagination, as sources were not always apparent. Ideas consequently could be confusing and final outcomes were often unresolved and incoherent.

Question 7 – A power drill, a screwdriver, a hammer

There were fewer responses to this starting point and they were distributed across the mark range. Approaches were observational, and responses from across the mark range demonstrated work which had originated from direct observation to varying levels of depth and skill. At the higher level of the ability range, candidates demonstrated their observational skills through drawing and painting illustrating sensitive manipulation of a range of materials. The work at this level was thoroughly explored. Various set arrangements of sources were manipulated and photography was used to record ideas. Materials were appropriately selected to represent metals, plastics, wood grain and other surface qualities. Investigations were purposeful and led to informed outcomes.

The work in the middle mark range also demonstrated a good exploration of the subject, but inconsistencies in the handling of materials and in the observation of forms were more apparent. Strengths could generally be found in the preparatory work, in the exploration of compositions but the final outcome often lacked the vitality of the supporting work.

The responses from the candidates at the lower mark level varied. Some contained limited preparation with insufficient investigation or exploration of the subject but demonstrated a good control of a limited range of media. Others were exploratory, demonstrating more personal investigations with an inventive use of media. However, the candidates' weaker technical skills hindered the refinement of ideas and also demonstrated a lack of understanding of form, tone and surface qualities. Final outcomes tended to be predictable or poorly constructed due to the limited or weak manipulation of ideas.

Question 8 – Preparing a picnic

The responses to this question were mainly in the middle and lower areas of the mark range and were observational in approach. The work in the middle mark range demonstrated the exploration of a variety of sources and ingredients to make up a picnic through a range of compositions. Images illustrated picnic baskets with foods and cloth spilling out and abstracted compositions. Images were sometimes bold and confident, illustrating a good control of media, but showed the candidates' inability to understand tonal

qualities to demonstrate form and tone. Compositions often demonstrated a lack of understanding of spatial awareness in the planning stages and candidates were sometimes unable to reproduce the subtleties, form and tones apparent in their preparation in the final outcome due to the change in scale. More exploration of scale in the preparatory work could have helped much of the work. The work at the lower level lacked the investigation of forms and contained insufficient research to explore the subject to the required depth for this level. There were some sensitivities in the recording, but the candidates at this level tended to focus on singular items and were unable to achieve depth, space and the relationships between the chosen objects when forming a composition. As a result, final outcomes were often lacking in cohesion and depth.

Question 9 – Figure reclining on a sunbed

Responses to this starting point were mostly located at the middle level but there were some stronger works. All candidates worked from either direct observation or from their own photographs of family members or classmates striking alternative poses. The submissions at the higher level demonstrated a confident handling of materials to illustrate the fluidity in the folds and undulating fabric in the clothing. Different positions were observed through a range of media and scale, demonstrating an excellent understanding of proportion and foreshortening.

The work within the middle mark range illustrated evidence of personal engagement with the topic. There was evidence of development and exploration of challenging view points, angles, scale and composition, which had been inspired and informed by appropriate artists. Candidates had worked boldly on a large scale but weaknesses were apparent in their understanding of proportion and form. There was much exploration through photography, drawing and painting not only of the reclining figure but also of the accessories such as sun loungers, side tables, sun cream bottles, and included reflections in sunglasses and the background in which these were positioned. Sensitive studies developed or copied from candidates' own photography demonstrated skin tones and shadows, through paint and pastel. Alternative compositions had been explored and the preparation sometimes contained a great deal of detail. However, this detail was not always translated into the final outcome.

The work at the lower level of the ability range contained a limited investigation of the topic and displayed a series of pencil studies which lacked informed observation of tone and form. There were some references to the works of others but these did little to inform manipulation. Weaknesses were apparent in the rendering skills and these submissions lacked the appropriate personal engagement required at this level.

Question 10 – Ted Hughes extract

Responses to this question were seen across the mark range. The work at the higher level contained personal and creative ideas supported by research from direct observation through drawings, paintings, mixed media work, photography and film. This clearly demonstrated a high level of personal engagement and connection with the topic. Lively painted studies represented a figure under water through layers of colour and pattern. The qualities of water were explored and expressed through a range of media which illustrated vitality and movement. The preparatory work was inventive and exciting, though the final outcome was less successful and lacked the life illustrated within the preparatory studies. Further exploration of scale would have benefited the outcome.

The work in the middle level of achievement generally demonstrated a sensitive but more limited rendering of materials in the recording of the subject. The work displayed atmospheric tones and created a sense of mood. However, the ideas in the supporting work which had been inspired by the research from the works of others did not inform the final outcome which consequently remained unresolved.

The work of the candidates at the lower ability range demonstrated limited research and development. The work tended to derive from imagination or was copied from secondary sources. The strengths in the work at this level were in the rendering of materials. However due to a lack of exploration of sources or ideas the final outcomes were either in cohesive or underdeveloped.

Question 11 – Attraction in your own locality

There were very few responses to this question and all were at the lower levels. Secondary-sourced photographs, rudimentary drawings and poor use of colour and application were seen in the supporting work along with very little research into typography which resulted in some very weak outcomes.

Question 12 – DLISHUS

There were very few responses to this question although at the upper middle level there was an understanding of the design process with the candidates starting with observational drawings, paintings and photographs of food and showing some research into typography. However, the relationship between image and typography needed a lot more thought and visual experimentation.

Candidates at the lower level included secondary photographs and poorly rendered drawings of vegetables and fruit in their preparatory studies. Few experimented with compositional drawings or researched typography resulting in some very unresolved final outcomes.

Question 13 – Lovejoys

Few candidates chose to use this starting point. At the lower level there was little personal engagement with the topic and limited preparatory work. The work demonstrated candidates' poor attempts to produce photographic images of their sources. There were incomplete drawings which lacked any detailed observation and had little sense of tone or form through the weak rendering of media. There were some attempts to explore text but this was inconclusive. Outcomes were unresolved and sometimes disconnected from the preparatory work. The work contained limited ideas and development leading to very poor final outcomes.

Question 14 – Flower Festival

There were few responses to this question and these were found in the lower and middle levels of achievement. The work at the middle range demonstrated evidence of observation from first-hand study through a range of paintings, drawings and photographs. Materials were controlled with sensitivity and care and contained the detail of subtle and delicate colour and patterns within the natural forms. This informed design development. However, the development of final ideas sometimes lacked the vitality apparent in the preparatory work.

The candidates at the lower level drew mainly on secondary-source images of flowers to inform their drawings and ideas. Some control of media was demonstrated but the work lacked depth of detail. Candidates had included references to designers' works which inspired some development. This was appropriate to their intention but ideas were often repeated rather than expanded upon. Other work demonstrated the process of recording and development into an outcome but displayed a poor rendering of material so consequently the ideas lacked refinement.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/02
Coursework A

General comments

The most common area of study was drawing and painting and related media. Photography was the next most popular, followed by graphic design. There were some submissions for textile design and sculpture and ceramics, but very few. While there were some very strong submissions, the majority fell within the mid- and lower-mark ranges.

Stronger work was well structured and starting points were from relevant first-hand observations, using drawing, painting and photography. The candidates had made intellectual choices when studying and investigating the works of other artists and cultures. These submissions demonstrated high levels of technical competence, along with a confidence to explore personal themes and experiment with media and processes. Supporting sheets included evidence of direct observation, often including candidates' own photography. There was evidence of experiments using a number of appropriate media, techniques and processes which were annotated to show an understanding of the decisions taken. Several ideas had been selected and some had been rejected. References to the work of other practitioners from contemporary and historical sources were made. This gave further insight into how similar themes or topics could be approached or of how different media and processes could be used.

There was less originality displayed in mid-range entries. Technical skills were still of a competent or satisfactory level, but there was less emphasis on experimenting and risk taking to discover new and original approaches. There was more emphasis on the production of finished pieces. In many cases the same composition was just repeated in different media.

Weaker submissions reflected more limited investigations into ideas and explorations. Observations generally relied on second-hand source materials. There was a lack of basic drawing skills or of developing any control of chosen media. The area of Critical Knowledge and Understanding was usually weak with no evidence of referencing other artists' work or that of other cultures.

The presentation of the coursework was generally acceptable and mostly the labelling was placed correctly on top right corner of the sheets. In general the work was well mounted on thin card or substantial paper. A few Centres mounted work on very heavy card or presented each sheet in a large plastic wallet which made handling during moderation difficult. Much of the better work had well-thought out layout, lettering and annotation. The work was organised in a logical sequence to show the progression and development of ideas to the final piece.

Centre assessments were often generous and in many cases were extremely generous. Many assessments are not supported by evidence from the individual submission or accurately matched against the four assessment criteria. A significant number of Centres produced incorrect orders of merit. This was especially common where candidates had worked in different areas of study or had been taught in different groups. It is essential that rigorous internal standardisation is carried out in these circumstances.

Comments on specific areas of study

Painting and Related Media

Submissions were varied and covered a full ability range working under many themes such as still-life, figurative, imagination and abstract. Painting media was generally in acrylics, oil and watercolour but some candidates had worked in other media including pencil, colour pencil, pastel, collage and printmaking. However some candidates had also used combined media.

Examples of work in the higher mark band were original and thought provoking. Some good use of

candidates' own photography was seen at this level to complement their research. There was a little use of digital technology and computer image manipulation and of 3D printing. Colour was used well at this level to create atmosphere, and thoughtful experiments were made with different ideas and media. Good first-hand drawing contributed well to the final outcomes and the standard was expert in a few submissions.

Photographs taken by these candidates were relevant and often inspired a wide range of ideas. The best work contained in-depth research from both primary and secondary sources. From this, ideas were explored and developed through trials and experiments with different media and techniques. A wide range of media was used including oil paints, watercolour, acrylic, oil pastels, pencil crayons, coloured inks, charcoal, pencil, monoprint, collage and Photoshop. An understanding of shape, form and surface showed familiarity with several different media. Ideas were simplified, adapted and refined towards the final piece and colour was used in sensitive and expressive ways.

In the middle range there was often insufficient exploration of ideas and experimentation with media. Whilst initial studies or ideas often held potential, subsequent work lacked the in-depth exploration and experimentation to enable the candidate to develop and refine ideas and techniques. Where candidates had produced outcomes, a number were incomplete.

A number of candidates in the middle range focussed on still life painting. These often demonstrated some technical competence but the absence of any research into the work of appropriate artists or development of the candidates' own ideas restricted the standard of the work.

There was evidence that some candidates in the middle range had experienced highly structured courses using a set range of references and processes. In these circumstances, the work of many candidates was very similar. Whilst work of this sort was often technically competent, the limited opportunities for individual choices restricted personal input and creativity.

Some candidates had spent considerable time thoughtfully investigating the work of a number of other artists. Whilst written annotations and practical studies demonstrated some understanding, candidates were unable to translate this into their own experimentation and ideas. Subsequent development was often limited and lacked direction.

Pencil and paint were very popular in the lower mark range. Technical ability was very poor or inconsistent and a more rigorous grounding in drawing was needed. Often the work lacked direction, development, creativity and aesthetic understanding. Relevant annotation was always missing from the submissions at this level. In the weaker work, the initial research lacked breadth and depth and there was no body of work from which ideas could be developed. Studies were often mechanically repeated in a few different media.

Photography

Most candidates had access to high quality materials in terms of photographic paper, cameras, digital manipulation programmes and printing resources. However whilst they made effective use of these, basic understanding of composition, view point, use of tone/colour in creating effective images was often lacking or weak.

However, there were some final pieces which clearly reflected aesthetic awareness and technical proficiency. Candidates had gathered a variety of sources and had used effective computer manipulation techniques and processes to enhance their themes. Relevant links to others artists were evidenced and used. All work seen was digital.

Mid-low range candidates' work demonstrated some creativity within the coverage of assessment objectives but appropriate aesthetic choices had not been made.

Weaker candidates often produced a small collection of final images with little evidence of consideration of alternative locations, composition or technical awareness. Many submissions seen comprised of one shoot with no editing and very little knowledge of camera techniques.

Graphic Design

Designs of posters and commercial advertising were seen but a narrow range of ideas were included in submissions in this session. The best submissions reflected a competent understanding of the principles of design with candidates using contemporary IT processes. The majority of submissions were undertaken using computer-aided design. The majority of these works showed that candidates were competent in using the software but very few understood how to go about developing aesthetic and effective designs. Many

submissions consisted of a number of printed colour versions of rather weak images, rather than evidence of exploring and developing alternative ideas or compositions.

There were also cartoon illustration submissions. They sometimes showed skill with marker pens and computer graphics. However, many weaker candidates used existing animated figures taken from the internet. Most cartoon images were from secondary sources or invented, with no primary reference and limited use of media.

Fashion and Textile Design

The best works demonstrated highly skilful designs inspired by candidates' study. Some had worked in silk screen printing and subsequently had made garments and bags as final pieces. Photography was used effectively to record making processes.

A few limited fashion entries had simply collaged existing fabrics or drawn patterns into generic dress shapes with very limited invention.

3D Design

The very few candidates submitting in this area of study used the materials creatively and produced working drawings for each design with detailed notes, technical diagrams and personal comments. The lack of developmental and experimental work often limited the progress of these works. However there were many references to the work of other designers to inform the designs.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/03
Coursework B

General comments

Some strong work was seen, some of which was ambitious both in scale and maturity of ideas. The best candidates' work was innovative, and original whilst reflecting excellent technical competence. The work showed in-depth investigations into media and processes. The most common area of study was drawing and painting and related media. Photography was the next most popular, followed by graphic design. There were some submissions for textile design but very few submissions in sculpture or ceramics.

A wide variety of media was used including traditional paint and pencil, oil and chalk pastels, ink, collage, linocut, etching, digital photography, computer aided design and video. The most common subject matter was figurative, especially portraiture. Many candidates used photography as a research tool for their final work. In most cases candidates had been encouraged to refer to the work of other artists/practitioners which, in the better submissions, had clearly informed their own work.

Not all candidates had used the work of others as a reference for new ideas and to discover further use of media and techniques. The supporting work of the best candidates included the work of other artists and this made their own use of colour and paint more expressive and inventive. Sketchbooks were not always submitted but where sketchbooks were used it helped candidates to develop their ideas and to make critical decisions about their outcomes. The best sketchbooks were genuine chronological progressions showing source material, experiments, drawings, cuttings, colour studies, simple prints and collages.

Weaker submissions reflected more limited investigations into ideas and explorations. Observations relied on second-hand source materials. Artist or cultural research was very limited or not included.

Presentation on the whole was very good. The better work showed carefully edited and mounted work that followed the natural sequence of the creative process.

Comments on specific areas of study

Painting and Related Media

Submissions were varied and covered the full ability range working in many areas such as still-life, figurative, imaginative and abstract. Painting media was predominantly in acrylics, oil and watercolour. Some candidates had worked in other media including pencil, colour pencil, pastel, collage and printmaking. Some candidates had also used combined media.

There were a few exceptionally skilful and personal submissions that were informed by sustained first-hand studies, thoughtful research and mature self-evaluation. The influences of a range of artists had been absorbed and connected to the candidates' own interests. New skills had been learnt as the work progressed and outcomes were fully resolved.

Some work in the middle range showed in-depth research in terms of ideas but lacked sufficient experimentation with media to enable the candidates to resolve final outcomes. Similarly, some candidates had developed very good skills through their experimentation with media but neglected to explore ideas. These candidates tended to connect more superficially with the work of other artists or failed to give this important aspect of the work much attention at all.

Generally, submissions from the weakest candidates lacked a clear sense of direction or purpose. Some submissions consisted of only copies from unconnected secondary sources. Skills were variable but rarely demonstrated development through critical evaluations of the candidates' own work or the work of other artists.

Photography

Some outstanding work was seen where candidates had developed strong individual themes and direction with relevant stimulus provided by established photographers. Some very professional results were seen with thoughtful, interesting compositions which were technically excellent. Ideas were fully explored with evidence of experimentation with different forms of manipulation of the images including overlays, physical distressing of the photograph, splitting the photographs, enhancing colour and contrast etc.

Mid-range candidates' work showed some development and coverage of the assessment objectives but aesthetic choices had not been made. Some Centres over-controlled the type of photography with all candidates submitting work which followed the same format and structure. This inhibited personal expression and development.

Weaker candidates often produced a small collection of final images with little evidence of consideration to alternative locations, composition or technical awareness.

On the whole there was a lack of investigation into the works of others to inform overall personal development and techniques.

Graphic Design

Designs of posters, packaging and commercial advertising were seen. The best submissions reflected a competent understanding of the principals of design with many candidates using contemporary IT processes.

A few candidates had used first hand observations including drawing and photography. Ideas had been explored effectively allowing candidates to make excellent aesthetic choices. In some cases story boards were developed to show consideration of composition and colour. Effective links to existing designs and the work of others were also included to inform personal development.

In spite of the variety of approaches only very few submissions seen reached the higher levels. While generally work was technically sound, designs were often too simplistic and underdeveloped. Candidates often submitted sheets of unrelated ideas with little development of a particular idea. Typically an idea would be chosen and then a few alternative colours might be considered. Or in some cases ideas were very derivative and impersonal.

The presentation of work was often cluttered and it was difficult to distinguish between research and concept. Candidates should be advised to consider the use of space to give emphasis to their work rather than crowding the submission with little organisation or selection. When work did reach the higher level it was often through genuine testing of alternative layouts of an idea, and refinement and distillation to a final well-designed conclusion.

Fashion and Textile Design

There were very few submissions seen in this area. In some cases when the designs had been reduced in scale the visual quality of outcome was often lost.

The weaker submissions, particularly in fashion and design, often consisted of a small series of fashion drawings copied from secondary sources. No references were given to the works of others or starting points and development of ideas were missing. Many of these ideas were invented rather than developed but some technical ability was shown in the use of paint and inks and some adequate drawing skills were seen.

3D Design

There were very few submissions in this area.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/04
Personal Study

General Comments

A wide range of subject areas were covered which included: fine art, architecture, film, graphic design, ceramics, textiles and fashion design. Most submissions had benefitted from first-hand experience through visits to Galleries, workshops, studios and museums.

There was a good mix of styles of presentation such as hand-made and organically developed sketchbooks and digitally produced and spiral bound A4 presentations. There were some very individual and imaginative methods of presentation seen.

A few of the candidates included a gallery visit which had taken place at the end of the study rather than being fully integrated with the theme and focus of the exploration. In such cases candidates should have made the visit the starting point for their research. In selecting key works for investigation, they would have been able to develop a more focussed approach that would link together first-hand research and experience of the topic.

Some candidates lost the focus of their study by discussing the work of too many artists. They would be able to intensify and sharpen the focus of the study by selecting fewer works to investigate to develop a deeper understanding of the artists selected.

Several submissions included their own studies and personal developments. This is to be encouraged if relevant to the study and they should be clearly labelled as the work of the candidate.

High Level

Candidates achieving the higher levels of attainment had used their initial first-hand research throughout, revealing a very high level of personal engagement which was consistent and creative. Many submissions at these higher levels contained examples of related practical based responses, informed and inspired by that vital first-hand research and experience, reflecting a very strong personal journey of exploration and discovery.

At the higher levels of attainment, candidates demonstrated more in-depth analysis with comparisons and visual connections identified. The visual analysis revealed deep understanding and awareness of the chosen topic. Some candidates at this level had used their coursework research to inform and develop successful links with carefully selected works by other artists they had discovered. These candidates were also engaging with a detailed understanding of process linked to their own personal experience.

Making relevant and informed connections between coursework and carefully selected works by other practitioners benefited several submissions at the higher levels of assessment. These examples always demonstrated a fluid and visually engaging journey from initial first-hand research and investigation of the chosen subject, right through to the process of developing individual ideas and responses, (written and/or practical). The relationship between the visual content and the written work was well organised, selected and integrated. There was fluency creating an overall aesthetic in keeping with the chosen theme. A few very imaginative presentation methods were seen and there were some examples of informative visual explorations through excellent sequential photographic studies being made.

When candidates combined more than one approach to gathering first-hand research, they often achieved a more informed and personal view, usually gained through visual information, which was more effective than using written notes. Submissions achieving these higher levels of attainment made well-considered selections of key works by their chosen artists. This enabled those candidates to carry out the level of comparative analysis required to achieve marks at those higher levels. The strongest submissions usually

involved an imaginative integration of visual and written material. Informed and related practical studies, such as drawings, diagrams, paintings and /or photographic records, clearly identified and annotated were often seen.

The strongest candidates revealed a clear understanding and awareness for the development of their ideas.

Mid-Level

In the mid-levels of achievement, candidates demonstrated a considered and individual approach, sometimes gathering information about techniques involved with practices such as ceramics and sculpture. These submissions usually contained some discussion of works which tended to be more descriptive with a few personal observations made. Several candidates had carried out an interview with one of the artists or designers involved. These had often provided insights which had clearly benefited the understanding of the candidate.

Some thorough presentations were seen within the mid- ranges of assessment, often presented as an A4 format. These usually contained examples of well-written personal observations supported by photographic records of gallery, studio or museum visits. These submissions would have benefitted from having more evidence of personal and practical engagement with the selected works.

Candidates within the middle levels of achievement had included a range of first-hand research, including well-documented visits to galleries and/or artist's studios and workshops. This had often enabled the candidate to gain valuable experience and personal insights into processes and techniques involved with practices such as textile design, ceramics and sculpture.

Lower Level

At the lower level there was little or no evidence of any personal appreciation of the works of art. This was usually due to a lack of first-hand research. In some instances the candidate had started the study with confidence but had not developed further than an introductory stage.

Submissions at the lower levels of attainment mostly relied on material which was not from first-hand research, but from the internet or other secondary sources, with little or no discussion or analysis of images. This had clearly limited the potential for making any personal comments due to the lack of relevant examples selected.

A few candidates at the lower levels of attainment had presented images of their own work without making any connections with the work of other artists.

At this level, submissions were showed little evidence of any personal views or independent judgements, often consisting of mostly unrelated descriptive accounts combined with unnecessary biographical details. Some candidates had not understood what was required and had submitted a study that was more a general discussion of a vague topic such as 'emotions in art'.

Some studies had not been carefully structured and material had been copied from different sources and pasted into pages without changes or organisation of ideas. A few candidates presented text that was not relevant to an Art and Design Personal Study.

Conclusion

All candidates should be encouraged to submit an outline proposal form (OPF); not only does it enable them to focus and plan their choice of topic but it also ensures relevant feedback and advice, helping to avoid the selection of unsuitable topics for their Personal Study. With the majority of Centres submitting OPFs it meant that there were fewer inappropriate topics chosen with more suitable sources selected from which to gain the vital first-hand research and experience needed for the completion of a successful Personal Study.