

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/01
Controlled Test

General comments

The question paper gave candidates the opportunity to work to their strengths and provided a broad range of options which covered most genres. Generally, the strongest work came from questions that were based around observation, and here candidates showed very strong analytical skills and a confident use of media and mixed media.

Many strong submissions were seen. There was some very imaginative use of mixed media across the questions. Additionally many candidates showed good control and use of the media they had selected and frequently demonstrated a high level of observational skills.

Among weaker candidates there were a number of photography submissions. These were limited by the lack of any sustained supporting studies with much of the preparatory work consisting of images of the technical process of producing a print. Many candidates with photography submissions had followed a template or formula. This resulted in submissions which were very similar and lacked personal qualities.

Quite a few of the candidates using computer/graphics packages spent time and effort showing every stage of the process of construction. This time would have been better spent demonstrating the development, exploration or experimentation with the work.

In many of the design led responses, pre-existing designs were used and adapted into the candidates' own version. This usually consisted of the same composition, the same palette and tone, but with one or two minor details changed. These candidates did not demonstrate sufficient research and development. A further difficulty with some of the design submissions was that the final piece was executed in 3D. This often detracted from the more sensitive, controlled work seen in the preparatory studies.

Comments on specific questions

Section A

Question 1: In between

In stronger submissions, candidates made reference to established artists' work, such as Klee and Picasso and these were used as starting points to develop some quite personal ideas. There was some excellent use of composition and colour and an understanding of abstraction along with a competent use of media and experimentation. Photography and observational drawing was often included in the preparatory work, which showed a clear journey from research to development to final outcome.

At the mid level of achievement there was some conceptual and visual clarity. The themes pursued were frequently quite unusual, but there was a clear structure and a sense of a journey in the works which made sense to the viewer. Alongside this, there was some control of the media being used. The range of media was fairly broad but was lacking in the area of experimentation. There was some use of primary source material here, but very few artist references.

In weaker submissions there was often a lack of real clarity of conception. Very little preparatory work was seen and what there was, was fairly incoherent and lacking in clear narrative or developmental structure. The use of media was limited, both in its range and control. Very little primary sourced work was evident in these submissions and artist references were not seen at all.

Question 2: Seen by candlelight

In the stronger submissions there was an imaginative approach to composition and the images included other objects, such as books, figures, glassware and mirrors. This gave a stimulating feel to the submissions and an opportunity for visual exploration. With these elements there was the possibility to focus on refracted and reflected light, local colour and multiple light sources. Some of the strongest work here drew very effectively on artists' work, especially in the area of tone and colour. The preparatory work for these submissions was typically full of alternative compositional experiments, with different viewpoints and palettes.

In the mid-level of achievement, there was some variation in terms of composition and there were only a very few centrally placed images. Observation, especially in terms of colour and of the subtle shifts in the umbra and penumbra, was quite strong and sensitive. The use of media reflected this and was used with a degree of skill and sensitivity. The preparation showed a certain amount of variety and development. There were some artist references, such as Georges de la Tour, which while obviously relevant, acted more as a model to copy, rather than as a source to develop from and further the candidates' own understanding of mark making, tone, colour or composition.

Weaker candidates tended to make very simple compositions with, for example, the candle placed centrally, the image divided into a central area of orange and the remaining area of shadow. The preparation on the whole was a rehearsal for this final image, and was usually executed in the same medium. Media were limited to pencil, paint and pastel. The use of these materials was relatively basic and the little observational work that was seen was simple. Many of the images seen were taken from the internet and simply copied, which immediately narrowed the scope of any exploration.

Question 3: Waiting at a bus stop

At higher levels skills in both observation and media handling were very strong. Candidates tended to be quite limited in their range of media use, but used the media they had chosen with a high degree of sensitivity and expression. The preparatory work consisted of a range of first-hand studies of individuals or groups of people in varying compositional arrangements and from a variety of viewpoints. There were some artist references but often these contributed little to the development of the submissions. There was a consistency of intense observation throughout the preparatory work and the final image was typically just as strong as the studies made previously.

Submissions in the mid level of assessment showed observational skills that reflected a careful viewing of the figures being studied. There was some focus on creating a convincing figure or figures. There was a fairly good range of media used, including pencil, paint, pastel, inks and even a little collage. The materials used were generally treated in a sensitive way. These submissions often included a visual context, meaning that the figures being studied sat far convincingly in a specific setting. Generally these candidates had considered alternative possibilities regarding composition and use of media, but these submissions remained fairly safe and were rarely experimental. There were plenty of first-hand studies and some first-hand photography as well as a few secondary sources.

While the work seen from weaker candidates was usually very basic there was often an attempt at some first-hand studies. The figure/observational work was notably weak, with problem areas such as hands and feet usually avoided. The materials used were normally limited to pencil or pastel. There was a lack of visual context with many of these submissions, so instead of a scene including a bus stop and figures, there was a bus stop with a figure, floating on a white page. The preparatory work for these submissions showed a certain amount of first-hand study but they were usually limited to one or two brief sketches, which did little to really develop the work at all. There were no artist references or any other cultural materials included in these submissions. Most of these submissions included images drawn from second-hand sources, such as magazines and the internet.

Question 4: Human technology

In stronger submissions the idea of technology itself was usually well integrated within the idea of what it is to be human. There was a sense that these candidates were looking at the relationship between technology and humanity, not at two separate things, although this was usually not explicitly stated. Visually this meant a subtly integrated use of technology with, for example, wires and veins being fairly indistinguishable. During the preparation stage there was typically an effective use of an evolving growth of one aspect into the other,

with montage/collage, overlapping drawings and other layering techniques being seen. This was a very successful fusion of concept and application of media. The use of media itself was very strong, showing a great sense of control and sophistication. There were relatively few artist references, but the few there were, were used as part of the development of the candidates' own approach. Primary source materials included photography and 'from life' drawings.

At the mid-level, there was a fairly good handling of media seen with a sense of control and subtlety. Much of the preparatory work, while fairly basic, was probing in nature and there was also generally evidence of some kind of journey occurring. However, these candidates often did not locate their image in a context. There were quite a few figures floating on a largely white page seen. There was some use of first-hand material at this level, and the observational skills seen were fairly strong.

Many of the lower level submissions took the cyborg as their model, bringing together mechanical and biological images in very basic ways, sticking or collaging images of circuit boards, cogs or machinery onto a human figure. The use of media was often not refined, and the collage that was seen was generally stuck on with tape. Other media were typically limited to pencil, pastel or felt tips. There was no real development in these submissions. Instead, in the preparation there was a collection of disparate images, not showing any kind of exploration or connection. No artist references were seen, but there were some attempts at research. This was mainly limited to pictures of technology and the human figure. Most of this research was secondary, although there were a few drawings from life.

Question 5: Emergency

Responses to this question fell into the mid and lower levels of achievement. Conceptually there was not that much difference between the mid and lower level candidates. There was a similar single focus aspect to the majority of these submissions. In some cases there was a notably stronger, far more controlled and nuanced use of media. Mid-level submissions demonstrated better observation and a more proactive approach to composition. The preparatory work usually showed a number of differing viewpoints, varying points of focus and colour use. There were many first-hand sources seen and these often consisted of candidates' own photography and 'from life' drawings. However, there were very few, if any artist references.

Weaker responses were very basic and often consisted of an image of a fire engine or other emergency vehicle, or emergency personnel. There was some photography focusing on the subjects but the images included were very flat, seen from eye level, using light sources which had not been well considered, with little variation from the preparatory work to the final outcome. Drawn or painted submissions took an equally simplistic route. The use of media, which was mostly pencil, pastel or paint, was lacking in control and expression. The use of colour in particular was unsophisticated. The sense of composition, in both photographic and hand generated submissions, was basic. There were no real alternative compositional paths explored in the preparatory work. There were some first-hand sources included, including photography and 'from life' drawings, but they were highly limited in terms of aesthetic consideration or developmental potential.

Question 6: Street patterns

Almost all responses to this question fell into the mid and lower levels of achievement. At the mid-level the use of media was sometimes adventurous and sophisticated, with some limited experimental approaches used. Texture was consciously considered with these submissions, whereas with the lower level work it seemed incidental. There was an element of compositional exploration and development. The preparatory work was open ended and searching at times, with alternative routes being explored both in terms of composition and media. There were also some artist references seen, but these were used in fairly unimaginative ways. However, despite a lack of deeper understanding here, there was a positive impact from this reference material.

Weaker submissions mostly consisted of simple representations of road markings, road signs and paving stones. Photographic work generally entailed very basic compositional studies of these subjects, usually taken from above and with very few, if any variations in viewpoint, lighting conditions and composition. The candidates at this level frequently chose to add to the colour of road markings etc., usually by heightening the saturation, which led to fairly unsubtle results. Submissions which used paint, pencil and pastel etc. sometimes showed a poor use of media. Preparatory work for both photographic and non-photographic submissions was typically static and fractured without much in the way of developmental or explorative material. They generally lacked a sense of a meaningful journey. First-hand material was often included in

the form of photography and/or first-hand drawings, but these were of a relatively basic nature. There were very few artist references, except for the occasional reference to graffiti artists which were not used very effectively.

Section B

Question 7: Boots, shoes, tins of polish, brushes and a cloth placed on a newspaper

In the strongest submissions good observational skills were seen and there was also an expressive use of line, especially from the candidates who used pencil or other line making media. There was a bold and active attitude towards composition, which gave a dynamic and sophisticated feel to the work. The preparatory work was full of experiments for varying compositions, viewpoints and media. These submissions showed a sense of development, helped by the exciting use of media, which at times was experimental.

At the mid-level, there were noticeable observational skills, and the use of media was fairly controlled and sensitive. However, the range of media was generally quite limited, with a strong preference for pencil and paint. There was a tendency to place the boots etc. being looked at within a fairly wide visual context. While there was some sophisticated understanding of composition, there was a relatively static quality to the preparatory work, with little by way of alternative approaches or development. However, within the preparatory work there was sometimes a developing sense of exploration. This was seen primarily in a little variation in the viewpoints used.

At lower levels, while the observational skills seen were relatively undeveloped, there was generally a real sense that these candidates were engaging as well as they were able with the subject matter at hand. The choice of media often did not really help the candidates to show their strengths sufficiently. Many of them chose paint or pastel, both of which can be difficult for those at the beginning of their creative journeys. In many of these submissions, in the preparation there were simple pencil drawings which demonstrated a sensitivity and confidence that the other media did not. However, the work in the preparatory studies was fairly static, without much variation in media, composition or mark making. There were no artist references at this level.

Question 8: Leaves, stems and roots

Responses to this question fell into the mid and lower level of achievement. At the mid-level there was a tendency to make muddy, fairly indistinct images, but there were also a number of submissions which showed a much stronger and effective use of colour. Media use, was generally controlled and expressive, but lacked sophistication. However, there were some candidates who started to take advantage of the sinuous, twisting nature of the material they were studying. The preparatory work was fairly coherent and there were the signs of a journey with some of these submissions.

At the lower levels much of the work was quite indistinct. Earth colours were not used very effectively due largely to an insensitive handling of media. The preparatory work was typically short, without much variation and usually consisted of a few briefly executed studies of leaves. There was some first-hand drawing from life here, but the observational skills seen were not very strong. Alongside this primary source material there was also quite a lot of secondary source material, consisting mostly of images from magazines or the internet.

Question 9: The whole or upper part of a figure getting ready

In stronger submissions the handling of media was impressively strong, showing both sensitivity and expression. The use of a wide range of media was apparent and was of great help in the preparatory stages. The preparation itself was full of various experiments and alternative options. There were a certain number of submissions with a cultural content at this level and this helped the submissions in many ways. Firstly, it gave them a sense of depth, character and context, and secondly it often provided a richness of surface, colour and design.

Mid-level submissions showed some good observational skills, the range of media was broad and the media use itself assured and sensitive. The figures seen were usually placed within a visual context and there was a conscious consideration of composition. This meant that the preparatory work was good, and had the

beginnings of some sense of development and exploration. There was some variety and cohesion in these submissions. A number of viewpoints were considered, as were a number of approaches to composition.

The themes in weaker submissions were mostly connected with the idea of somebody getting ready to go out for the evening and getting dressed or applying make-up. There was some relevant focus on primary source drawing and some of the candidates' own photography was seen. This was of a fairly basic nature and was usually used alongside secondary source material – mostly magazine and internet imagery. The key weakness with these lower level candidates was the lack of rigour in the observational drawing. There was also an insensitivity in the handling of the media used. There was usually a lack of visual context and considered composition. Preparatory work at this level was weak, with just a few studies of figures but without much idea of a connection, narrative or developmental journey linking them.

Question 10: The interior of a barber's shop or hairdressers

In stronger submissions, some strong images were seen with good use of photography as a tool for development, along with use of paint, crayon and pastel. Most images consisted of the barber and the client placed in the context of the barber's shop.

At the mid-level level there was some consideration of composition or colour use. However these submissions usually lacked a consideration of the light source. The figures at this level were likely to be situated within a visual context and by extension formed part of a compositional framework. This provided an engaging social aspect to these pieces. These candidates had a sense of exploration, and there was a sense that there was a genuine struggle taking place with drawing, media use and mark making.

The weakest of these submissions typically showed just a figure sitting in a chair, with very little else going on to situate this figure in space. These images gave the sense that the candidate had viewed the question at its most basic. i.e. just to show an image of a figure in a barber's chair. There was no exploration of human form, of the varied environments that can constitute a barber's, or of the social interaction that takes place there. The figure drawing was usually basic, with little attention paid to the more demanding aspects, such as foreshortening, hands, wrists etc. Media was generally limited to pencil, pen and paint. Little attention was paid to light source, composition or use of colour.

Question 11: One hundred years of solitude quotation

There were few responses to this question but many were very interesting. However, many submissions lacked any development. Many candidates viewed the question as a problem to solve, rather than as an opportunity to explore.

In stronger submissions there was some very mature and effective use of colour seen giving a real sense of life and movement as the extract was portrayed. However, there was rarely a sense of development seen from the starting point in the preparatory studies and much of the work was fairly incoherent, disjointed and unclear.

Section C

Question 12: Sweets and chocolates – shop sign

Almost all submissions for this question were at the lower end of the mark range. Many candidates took a formulaic approach and relied heavily on drawing directly onto graphics packages. The majority of these submissions took one or two simple graphic images and repeated them throughout the preparation with very little, if any, attempt to really explore, or even begin to consider the potential of this question. Some of these candidates mentioned the nostalgic element of sweets, candies etc., but then did not use anything genuinely personal or nostalgic. The use of colour was limited to bright, brash colours. There was limited exploration looking at, for example, complementary colour clashes etc. Nearly all candidates answering this question chose to look at existing, fairly common material. There was little evidence of a sense of culture seen.

Question 13: Bunches of keys – shop sign

There were only a few responses to this question and they were all at the lower levels. These candidates generally took a few 'from life' drawings as the basis for their designs, which was a sensible starting point. However, there was usually not much refinement from the initial studies to the final images. The media used was quite limited, which while not unusual for design led submissions, did give a very unadventurous feel to this work. The observational work that was seen was not very strong, showing a lack of sensitivity and control. There was no clear design process or structure with these submissions. The preparation was full of various, seemingly unrelated images. There were a few references seen, but these were limited to, typically, local locksmiths etc. With more breadth of design research, submissions would have been stronger. There was very little in terms of variation, experiment or exploration seen in these submissions.

Question 14: Street signs – duvet cover and curtains

Most submissions for this question fell within the lower bands of achievement. The images seen were often taken from the internet or from magazines, and the primary sources that were in evidence were of a very low standard: out of focus, poorly lit photographs, and poorly executed drawings etc. There was very little development seen and most works contained basic images of street signs, usually in pastel, felt tip or pencil. These were then generally repeated on a graphic cut out of a duvet and/or curtains. There was no really significant exploration of pattern, surface or colour.

Question 15: Leaves – tiles

Submissions for this question were all in the mid or lower range of marks. There was often some sensitivity in the use of media/materials in submissions and a good range was seen including some limited use of frottage. This showed a general sense of personal commitment, exploration and experiment, which was generally lacking in the other design questions. The translations from first-hand drawings and tentative experiments to a final design were generally not very successful and this was due to several factors. Firstly the lack of knowledge about a workable design process. Relating to this, there was a lack of understanding of what constitutes strong or effective design.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/02
Coursework A

General comments

Painting and Related Media was the most popular area of study. Although most centres submitted appropriate coursework, a few submitted what appeared to be a series of class-work exercises rather than a focused project. Others sent in several examples of finished pieces rather than a single outcome supported by research and development. In some cases submissions consisted of only photographs of candidates' work instead of the original drawings and paintings.

Some candidates submitted very large amounts of preparatory work, and more selection and editing of the this would have been advisable. In some of the preparatory work small scale work was then translated into large scale outcomes which lost the sensitivity and dynamism of the preparatory work.

Candidates at the higher level showed an ability to work through their chosen theme with intelligence and creativity, using their research wisely and perfecting their techniques and ideas. Some proficient studies were produced which showed excellent observational ability and an aptitude for using different media. A creative level of experimentation was also demonstrated in 2D and 3D. In the higher mark bands the journey and development from research through experimentation to final outcome could be clearly seen. This was not so apparent in the mid or lower level submissions. Mid range work had more limited and less stimulating research and sometimes these candidates presented only a few images. Often it was the lack of planning or the quality of the final artwork that prevented them from attaining a higher mark.

Some examples of the work of other artists, designers and/or art from different cultures were gathered by almost all candidates. Some candidates made exact copies of these which were painted or drawn to show the artists' techniques and either used or not. This limited the opportunity for candidates to show their own ideas. More frequently in the lower level work poorly executed copies or downloaded internet images were added to research sheets to show that other artists' work had been viewed. Occasionally, artists' names were mentioned in the notes but there were no pictorial references and little relevance to the following images. Few visits to artists' studios or exhibitions were documented this series.

Annotation was limited throughout the coursework. Some candidate gave some rationalisation for their research or ideas but these were only noted down. Other candidates wrote lengthy explanations of their hopes and feelings or personal history. Weaker candidates wrote a few words next to each visual to explain the materials they had used. Reasons for choosing an option or rejecting another were only given in stronger submissions and this showed some critical thinking.

Some centres applied the assessment criteria accurately but many assessments were unrealistically generous. These assessments were not supported by evidence within individual submissions and centres did not differentiate between candidates' performance in each of the four assessment objectives. Therefore significant adjustments were required in most moderations.

In centres which had more than one teaching group working in different specialist areas of study, it was apparent that internal moderation had not always been carried out to ensure standardisation. Consequently, some orders of merit were erratic or invalid.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and Related Media

There were a number of still life studies of flowers and a few sweet and cake themes. There were also landscapes/cityscapes and a small number of architectural explorations, but the human form was the most

popular, focusing mostly on portraiture. There were several outcomes showing dancers, either their feet or dance positions, or submissions illustrating issues such as abuse and feelings of being trapped. Abstract qualities and images were the hardest to develop into satisfactory outcomes. Manga images were popular with a few candidates.

The strongest candidates in this area of study had developed their own ideas and techniques within a critical context. The work suggested a prior knowledge of a range of other artists with more specialised research being carried out as coursework projects progressed. These candidates' work was sustained and ambitious and was always informed by first-hand observation. Candidates had drawn extensively throughout their projects rather than simply using this as a starting strategy and had explored a variety of media. The work had a sense of purpose with candidates clarifying their intentions through perceptive evaluations at different stages of development. These evaluations informed increasingly focussed experimentation, enabling candidates to develop and refine appropriate skills. These secure foundations gave candidates the confidence to make their own imaginative leaps and to produce personal, skilful work.

In the mid range of marks, there was less evidence of a focussed exploration of ideas. In some cases the submissions appeared to be a collection of class-work exercises loosely connected to a theme. There was more evidence of the use of secondary-sourced material at this level, and also copying from photographs. Less ability in the control and selection of materials was seen, and a less experimental approach in the use of media. Some candidates choose very broad, ambitious topics which were difficult to explore visually, such as emotions and concepts. Links were made with the work of other relevant artists but this did not always inform the development of ideas. Where annotation was seen, it tended to be more descriptive than analytical.

Copying from photos produced the best results for those in the lower mark bands. When drawing from life, these candidates lacked the basic observational skills and knowledge of perspective and proportion. Balanced compositions and good use of colour were rarely seen at this low level. Painting and drawing techniques were limited too, and the presentation of work was often untidy or incomplete. Little evidence was seen of research into the work of other artists, and where it was included it did not inform the development of the work.

Photography

A few candidates submitted very high-quality photography projects which demonstrated thorough exploration of image, several photo-shoots and a coherent journey. Photographs had been worked into with stitching, paint and digital manipulation, building up layers of transparent images, to produce dynamic final images.

However, the general standard of specialist photography submissions was limited, particularly in terms of technical skills and knowledge. Few candidates researched the work of other photographers to inform the development of their own work. Most candidates produced a small series of images of a similar standard rather than refining appropriate techniques and developing ideas through a purposeful exploration process. In other cases, photos were overworked on Photoshop until they lost all sensitivity. The weakest submissions were often a collection of a small number of photographs with little structure and cohesion.

Graphic Design

A small number of Graphics entries were seen, and all made use of digital means. While stronger candidates had investigated some alternative designs and the work of other designers, the general standard of idea development and skills was simplistic. Most weaker candidates simply manipulated pre-existing imagery. A formulaic approach was evident in submissions from some centres. There was often an over-reliance on simplistic cartoon styles. This lack of invention, subject knowledge and limited drawing skills was not recognised in very generous centre assessments.

Fashion and Textile Design

A few submissions were seen in this area. Some followed a formulaic approach to the production of printed textiles. These were of a good technical standard but lack personal qualities and development of ideas.

Sewing on top of artwork was also seen. This was used mostly by those in the higher levels and candidates exploring a painting or fashion theme. Other examples were seen where candidates had made garments, and these were mainly presented photographically. Some exploration of technique was evident, and in a few cases candidates presented their ideas using quite good fashion drawing.

Collaged 'grunge' outfits were chosen by some weaker candidates who took pieces of clothes cut from magazines and glued them together haphazardly to emulate the layered fashion look. Although there was some reference to designers responsible for this style, most submissions lacked planning, drawing ability, or any design skills. Also in this mark range, Manga style models were drawn wearing a series of imagined clothing. There was very limited reference to any particular style and no idea development.

Three Dimensional Design

A few candidates made pieces using card, clay, mod-roc and wire, and a small number of candidates produced sculptural work in ceramics. Whilst these demonstrated adequate skills, the research tasks and outcomes were heavily directed and the work lacked sufficient personal qualities and refinement. Practical experimentation and final forms were simply made and lacked sufficient detailed skills and creative ideas.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/03
Coursework B

General comments

Most submissions were in the area of Painting and Related Media. There were also submissions seen in Photography, Graphic Design and a small number in Fashion and Textiles and Three Dimensional Design.

Sketchbooks varied a lot in their relevance and quality. Some were extremely full and heavy, and these would have benefitted from being edited. Some candidates presented books full of exploration and development of ideas which informed and recorded the progress of the project. Others were a collection of unrelated sketches which were unconnected with the work. In some submissions no sketchbook was included.

Some candidates presented a series of unrelated works, with no obvious theme or starting point and a lack of focus. This should be a thematic project with a focused outcome.

Some submissions were full of writing and candidates used a lot of their time explaining the techniques used, their motivations etc. Candidates could have made better use of their time in visual studies connected with the project. Other submissions contained no annotation at all to explain their progress or evaluate the work.

Most of the stronger submissions showed an understanding of the different emphasis of this component and results were engaged and focused. There was a depth of study and sustained research through to a resolved outcome.

Many candidates in the middle range showed technical skill, but the development of the candidates' own ideas was limited. While some submissions demonstrated high levels of skill, often there was no evidence that candidates had been introduced to the work of other artists to inform their own ideas or working methods.

The work of the weaker candidates often lacked purpose or focus, which undermined the development of skills and knowledge. The weakest submissions were little more than a collection of unconnected drawings and paintings.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and Related Media

As usual, portraiture and work concentrating on the human figure were the most popular subjects. Family members featured strongly in these themes. Other submissions features people in water and dancing.

Still life outcomes included flowers, instruments, machinery and fruit. Architectural themes including abstract designs or observational studies were also explored, as well as animals, birds and fish. There was a little religious iconography this year and a few paintings of fantasy mythological creatures.

The strongest painting submissions explored and developed sophisticated techniques based on first-hand studies. Candidates mainly used acrylic and watercolour and the work demonstrated a sensitive understanding of light, colour, surface and form. Personal ideas were informed by research and had been thoughtfully investigated in a sustained manner as candidates worked to solve problems and clarify their intentions. However, a significant number of these candidates had not investigated compositional ideas sufficiently and final outcomes were not fully resolved.

Some candidates in the middle and lower middle ranges presented lively and personal initial ideas that had been informed by wide cultural research. Some candidates included extensive conceptual drawings on

mounted sheets and within sketchbooks, but their subsequent work lacked sufficient focussed practical experimentation to enable the development and refinement of appropriate skills. Consequently, their final outcomes were unresolved and demonstrated limited skills.

Some candidates in these ranges had not informed the development of their own ideas with any research into the work of other relevant artists. Whilst some of their work was skilful, it was little more than a series of technical demonstration pieces rather than a process of development of personal ideas into resolved compositions.

The weaker submissions often contained very little or no evidence of research from primary sources, or exploration of media and techniques. Ideas had not been thoroughly investigated and consequently the outcomes were not coherent. Many candidates presented the same image in a range of media rather than developing their ideas further.

Photography

Some excellent, very personal photography was seen, where candidates had explored their subject matter in depth. Themes in photography tended to be similar to those explored within the painting and related media area of study. Much portraiture and figurative work was seen, and the strongest submissions also showed innovative approaches to the use of media, incorporating burning, paint, cutting and collage and stitching into the work. A variety of camera techniques and use of digital manipulation also helped in the development of images and ideas. These candidates had set up numerous photo-shoots and then selected the best images from which to develop their ideas further. A mature approach was seen, and outcomes were very personal. The work of other photographers and artists had been related to the candidates' own work in an informed way.

Photographic submissions in the middle range of marks tended to be more straightforward with less exploration of other approaches. Fewer shoots had been organised and there was less work from which to select. Some evidence of reference to the work of other photographers was seen, but this was less relevant to the candidates' own work at this level. Some aesthetic considerations were incorporated into the work, but on the whole with less success than the stronger work.

The majority of photography submissions were in the lower range. The poor quality and composition of images suggested that many candidates lacked sufficient technical knowledge to control and refine their work. The frequent absence of research into the work of other photographers restricted the development of ideas and critical understanding. The weakest submissions consisted of small collections of unrelated images.

Graphic Design

A few examples of graphic design were seen and some strong submissions demonstrated thorough research and development. Lower range submissions were more derivative and used secondary sources of imagery and existing graphic designs. Digital manipulation was used by most graphics candidates to alter type and images, but not always to any expert degree.

Fashion and Textile Design

There were very few entries in this area and most were based entirely on drawings from secondary sources. Whilst the submissions contained some research into the work of other designers, the development of the candidates' own ideas was very limited and lacked invention. Other submissions consisted of some sheets of unrecognisable garments using paper collage on simplistically drawn mannequins. Very limited supporting work accompanied them.

Three Dimensional Design

Only a few submissions were seen. They were mostly ambitious in scale and complexity and demonstrated high levels of imagination matched with technical skills.

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9704/04
Personal Study

General comments

A broad range of topics were seen in the areas of Fine Art, Sculpture, Architecture, Graphic Design, Fashion and Jewellery Design. Fewer craft-based subjects were seen such as Ceramics and Textile design. There were more photographic submissions and many of these demonstrated a personal approach using candidates' own images. Use of digital media combined with the more traditional methods of drawing and painting was used to enhance the visual explorations being made.

The use of candidates' own visual material for analysis and exploring a theme was commonly seen. Interviews with artists, both face to face as well as many by email, were included. Surveys were often used to support the discussions and analysis of selected examples of works and the ideas and process behind them.

Inventive methods of presentation were seen alongside the usual hand-made large and small sketchbooks and digitally produced A4 files and folders. A few submissions were seen on large A1 sheets with mounted text and images. The use of proposal forms had clearly benefitted many submissions, indicating suitable first-hand sources and setting out a plan of action for the study.

Higher Level

First-hand visits to galleries and museums were often used as starting points for thematic personal studies. The exploration of a theme was often seen to make connections with the candidates' own coursework and included thorough and detailed comparative analysis of related works by the chosen artists. The visits to galleries, museums and the studios of artists were all well documented and recorded to highlight the particular theme being explored. Most submissions at this level included relevant and clearly informed material-based responses. The in-depth comparative analysis included in these studies had informed some very significant personal observations and allowed critical judgements to be made.

Many of these submissions combined inventive integrations of visual and written material. The inclusion of material-based studies often demonstrated confident levels of personal qualities and control of materials and technical processes. Candidates at this level were seen to make use of digital processes which enhanced the studies and showed high levels of creativity and artistic awareness.

Mid Level

Many candidates at this level included reference to visits to artists' studios or an exhibition at a gallery or museum which had often been visually recorded through photographs. However, any written analysis and discussion of the work seen was more limited. The written content was often brief descriptive notes but sometimes included long and distracting accounts of technical processes, particularly in many of the photographic submissions.

Many of the submissions at this level of assessment revealed that candidates had gained personal insights and valuable experience of some of the techniques and processes involved with specialist areas such as Fashion and Textile design, Architecture, Ceramics and Sculpture. Several of these submissions included the text of an interview with an artist or designer. These provided more useful information and significant insights when the questions had been carefully considered and constructed to achieve that intention.

These submissions would have benefitted from a more considered selection of key and related works, enabling the candidate to make an informative and in-depth comparative analysis of those examples. This would have helped to inform more revealing and detailed evaluations, demonstrating and confirming higher levels of understanding and awareness of the chosen topic.

Lower Level

Many candidates at this level would have benefitted from the completion of a Personal Study proposal form. This process would have helped to prevent the choice of unsuitable topics seen in several submissions. The process involves stating clear intentions for the study as well as indicating appropriate sources from which to gain first-hand experience and research of the chosen subject. This would have helped to prevent the reliance on second-hand source material seen in many of these submissions.

Some stronger submissions did contain elements of brief discussion and visual references but these were limited within the Aesthetic Qualities Assessment Objective (AO3).

Developing a more coherent structure, combined with a thoughtful selection of visual and written material would have definitely helped to improve most of these submissions. Clearer presentation of the study could have helped to focus the organisation and coherence of the research and investigation carried out.

At this level few submissions contained a meaningful conclusion or evaluation of the exploration carried out. Those that did, often consisted of a very brief comment which demonstrated a low level of personal analysis and understanding of the topic involved.

Improvements would have been possible by increasing the individuality and initiative used in gaining valuable first-hand research and experience of the chosen subject. This vital element had been clearly limited by the heavy reliance on downloaded and second-hand source material from the internet.