



CONTENTS

ART AND DESIGN	2
Paper 0400/01 Observational Study	2
Paper 0400/02 Interpretative Study.....	6
Paper 0400/03 Paper 3 – Design Study.....	8
Paper 0400/04 Paper 4 – Critical and Historical Study	11
Paper 0400/05 Coursework.....	12

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 0400/01
Observational Study

General comments

There were entries from all questions except **Question 3 (b)** (Two figures posed together). The majority of submissions came from **Questions 1 and 2**, although both options for **Question 4** were also popular. The *Human Figure* option tended to be restricted to submissions by candidates of higher ability, and to those Centres who had structured this activity as part of their course of study. There were a few Centres which restricted candidates to work from a single common still life group. In such cases candidates' originality suffered.

Nearly all candidates now seem to be well prepared for the demands of this paper, and their entries can be measured against all of the assessment objectives. The majority of submissions fell within the competent to highly competent achievement levels. The work was well organised, showed relevant research which enabled examination pieces to be developed with confidence. Encouragingly there were many examples which demonstrated a superior creative ability resulting in interpretations which were highly personal and perceptive, reflecting informed and considered judgements. Of these, some were justly awarded full marks.

For all such entries candidates had made good use of their preparatory time in producing evidence of research and investigation which was relevant. Chosen objects and subject matter had been explored using a variety of techniques of visual recording. Still life arrangements had been viewed from a variety of angles and different compositions tried. There were experiments with media to try and capture differences in texture or surface pattern. Many also showed the influence of looking at the work of other artists relevant to their subject or chosen style of working.

Submissions which did not meet all of the Assessment Objectives to a satisfactory level of competence generally lacked a focus to their preparation. Preparatory sheets tended to contain lots of individual studies of single objects, all executed in the same manner and with little variety of media. There was little attempt to begin to observe and record objects together, to explore relationships or to discover alternative approaches. There was much evidence that a lot of this work was not relevant to the examination piece. A limited number of candidates had only provided evidence of a single photograph as a starting point, and could not be rewarded much for Objective C (Personal Investigation and Development). A few entries were received with no preparatory work at all. Although many showed competent skills in observing and recording, they could not access marks from all the assessment domains and failed to achieve their potential.

There were very few submissions showing a complete lack of skill or knowledge, or of a genuine attempt at trying to meet their intentions.

The use of a wide variety of media was seen, and at best this was used with confidence and sensitivity towards the chosen subject.

Centres who encourage the use of chalks and pastels must make sure that this work is well fixed with a fixative or hair-spray. A few Centres had simply covered the work with tissue paper, and this resulted in serious smudging for some entries.

Similarly acrylic paintings must be thoroughly dry before covering with tissue paper. There were many which were badly stuck and difficult to examine properly.

There was more evidence this year in the use of photography and particularly digital photography to aid research and investigation. Many had used the ease of producing such images to good effect in recording different arrangements and viewpoints. The increase in numbers using **Question 4, Interiors and Exteriors** may be attributed to the ease by which candidates can collect and retrieve information from their own environments.

However a note of caution must be raised against those candidates who simply copy from photographs – all they are really demonstrating are skills at transcription! In order to fully analyse the structure and spatial relationships objects need to be studied at first hand, additional analysis of photographs can only act as support to this type of research and investigation.

There were a few examples of candidates using only photography; both for their preparatory and for their examination submission; in one Centre the photographs had all been commercially processed and printed. Teachers should note that this approach does not meet the rubric for this paper. The syllabus clearly states that candidates must work from direct observation from primary sources in the examination. It goes on to state that 'Candidates must be prepared to draw or paint a subject from a choice that will include the human figure, interiors and exteriors, natural and man-made forms'.

Centres' administration was mostly very acceptable. Packets included accurate registers and there was clear labelling. Some Centres are still sending submissions which are not fixed together. It would be very helpful if each candidate's work was organised with the examination piece on top of the Preparatory Studies, and all sheets fixed at the top left corner preferably with a treasury tag or a piece of loosely tied string.

A few Centres are still mounting work on sheets much larger than A2, and some are submitting many more than three supporting sheets, some using both sides. Some form of editing is to be encouraged as this can be a measure of a candidate's ability to make critical judgements.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Still Life Group

- (a) *Arrange a group which is made up of roller skates **or** ice skates **or** football boots together with cleaning materials. A background must be included.*

Candidates had tackled this question with obvious enthusiasm, and felt an affinity with the subject matter. The strongest submissions were well prepared. Candidates had familiarised themselves with the complex structure of the boots by some careful analytical studies before organising these into more complex groups.

Many in the mid ability range seemed to have paid too much attention to the boots and did not consider the possibilities offered by a choice of background. Many used items of clothing associated with the chosen sport. Many ignored it completely.

Weaker work appeared to overlook form in their attempts at filling in the shapes with colour. Drawing submissions at this level were lacking in tonal contrasts or the use of shadows to connect forms with the background and surface planes.

- (b) *A group which includes a number of fruits with a decorative jug placed on a table covered with a plain cloth. This should be seen against a curtain.*

This was a very popular choice and very well executed in an established traditional format. Items were carefully placed in relation to each other and the overall composition. The successful integration of the background with the foreground was a major feature of the more able candidates' work. Sound contextual references were in evidence with submissions benefiting from exposure to reproductions of works by Cézanne, Chardin etc.

Weaker work, as usual lacked an understanding in Assessment Objectives 1, 2, 3 and 4. Whilst they demonstrated an enthusiasm and ability to observe and record objects in isolation, they could not tackle the more complex tasks of arranging and working from a group.

Question 2*Natural and Man Made Objects*

- (a) *A stapler or staple gun and a box of staples on it's side with some strips of staples spilling out.*

A very popular question but even the very best candidates found the clean, hard forms of a stapler difficult to handle convincingly. However there were some exceptional entries in pencil and a few that utilised projected and reflected colour on shiny metallic surfaces. Careful control of light sources had enhanced the quality of some of the best work. There were very inventive compositions where more than one light source had been used to create complex cast shadows.

Mid and lower ability submissions demonstrated inevitable weaknesses in representing form and structure, and in the recording of different surface qualities. Placing the loose staples was always difficult.

Some entries at this level used a "product design" technical illustration solution in which the representation of colour, light and surfaces was rendered in a very schematic way, based more on a formula rather than careful observation.

- (b) *Two different flower heads such as roses, poppies, dahlias or chrysanthemums.*

Some of the most sensitive and articulate entries came from this question with evidence of exceptional skills in direct observation. Careful consideration had gone into the choice of flowers and candidates at this level could fully explore and show differences of shape, colour and texture.

Mid range work was often spirited and considered in use of tone and colour, but structures were not always as advanced in treatment. Photographs often helped as an aid to research. Reference to Georgia O'Keefe was very common, resulting in some successful close up compositions. However, whilst most of these had thoughtful compositions and bold use of colour, internal form and structure had not been explored and results remained rather flat.

The few very weak pieces failed to think about composition, making individual studies of each flower and simply mounting them side by side.

- (c) *Fish in a fish bowl or fish tank.*

Not so many entries for this question and the results tended to be either extremely successful or very weak. Only a few candidates realised that they could set up an arrangement of dead fish on a bowl from which to work, whilst the majority chose the more difficult option of viewing live fish in a bowl or tank.

Success was only achieved through thorough preparation and good use of photography had been made. Many at this level had been inventive with use of media to capture the movement of fish, ripples in water, and distortions through the glass bowl.

Less successful entries overlooked such qualities. Many resorted to copies of fish from biological diagrams or of information of varying quality downloaded from the internet. These lacked any sense of form or movement.

Question 3*The Human Figure*

- (a) *A seated model is leaning forward with hands resting on an upright walking stick, cricket bat or umbrella. The whole figures should be drawn or painted.*

There were some outstanding entries from this question using soft pencil studies and work in pastel. Work at this level was ambitious and displayed a confidence and maturity beyond the expectations of this level of examination.

Candidates producing mid level work were aware of the proportions of the human figure, and made praiseworthy attempts to ensure that these were recorded with accuracy. Where they had used direct observation of the figure they tended to render form and structure far more accurately. Those relying on photographic sources were often flat with a simplistic shading in of shapes which gave a poor sense of form.

There were hardly any entries which failed to achieve a competent level of success.

- (b) *Two figures may be posed together. On as described in Question 3 (a) and the nearby as though engaged in conversation.*

No entries were received.

- (c) *The portrait of a person who is seated and is looking up from an open book which is lying on the lap. One hand is holding the book and the other is pointing to a page. The work should include the head, upper body and hands.*

Again this tended to be used by the more able candidates and there were some exceptional entries. Through careful and considered observation these studies had managed to convey the relationship between facial expressions and the articulation of body and hands.

There were examples of very vigorous painting which had developed exciting compositions using unusual viewpoints or dramatic light sources.

Most had used photography as a visual aid in investigating forms and compositions, with only a very few who had relied solely on this to arrive at their finished piece.

Question 4

Interiors and Exteriors

- (a) *A garden scene.*

Of the two options the better responses came from this question. There were some excellent studies focusing on the variety of textures and colours such a subject offers. Most had been well taught to understand the basics of good composition; the importance of foreground and recession through middle ground with a focus of attention and a background beyond. The influence of impressionism was strong and this had provided a stimulus for experiments with paint application, colour combinations and an attempt by some to portray a sense of time as seen in Monet's Series studies.

Weaker work was heavily reliant upon photographic sources with some using postcards and scenes from magazines of which candidates had little knowledge or empathy.

- (b) *A view which includes steps or stairways. This may be inside a building or outside.*

Structures of stairs and steps often predictably caused problems in all but a very few of the best entries. Photographs did help most candidates to sort out perspective and most were using their own examples. Where they showed evidence of experimentation with viewpoints and eye levels they provided useful starting points. However, all too often candidates had made use of a single image which had just been transcribed into a drawing or painting, and had seriously limited marking in Objective C.

A large number of candidates had been taught the basics of one and two point perspective to a competent technical standard. They had failed to apply this knowledge to the art of observational recording and in such cases there was little evidence of actually observing views. There were many imaginative responses much more suited to Paper 2.

<p>Paper 0400/02 Interpretative Study</p>

General comments

This was a very good year with some impressive work seen from many Centres. Teachers continue to work very hard in preparing their candidates and give all candidates maximum opportunities to do well in the examination. In many Centres, there is evidence seen in the examination work that demonstrates that courses are clearly well designed and skilfully taught, developing the candidate's skill, confidence and independence.

Use of media continues to develop with use of a variety of processes and techniques. Many candidates use inks, print, collage and paint, often acrylic, quite well. Pastels of various kinds are popular and the general exuberant use of colour, texture and mixed media was impressive. Digital photography had a part to play with some candidates and expert computer manipulation was evident in some cases. Drawing skills were often quite good, with a good use of line and tone and sensitive concern for form and structure.

The weakest candidates were often those that do not understand the best way to use the time before the examination as preparation time to develop their work. Developing an original and personal idea from initial drawings can sometimes mark out the weaker from the stronger candidate; often the weaker candidates lack a sense of direction or courage and fall into the trap of immediately searching out secondary imagery to slavishly copy. A photograph cut out of a magazine or downloaded from the Internet is not sufficient evidence to reward marks for research. Copying them is unlikely to be evidence of personal investigation or development.

Stronger candidates sometimes think that because it is an examination, they should work in a different way from their usual practice or how their teacher has encouraged them. For example, ideas, research and development should be embedded in the work from initial conception through to the final piece. Research and development does not mean repeating the idea several times, almost like a musician rehearsing for a performance. This repetition can act to stifle creativity and originality. They should be encouraged to think that even at the point of work done in the ten hour examination itself there really can be evidence of continued development of ideas and progress in refining the use of media: there is no need for a young artist to stop thinking, feeling and responding at any time in the process of creating their work.

It must be said, however, that happily, increasingly fewer candidates present little or no evidence of research and development. On the contrary, to show their thinking and ideas candidate's preparatory work was often far more than needed: layering masses of smaller sheets and sticking work on both sides of the three A2 sheets. This is generally unwarranted. A stronger editing process to demonstrate the sources, the development and the experimentation is needed by some Centres. More selective use of the preparatory sheets can lead to a better sense in the submission of the candidates thinking than a mass of sticking everything down regardless of whether it actually informs the Examiners reading of the work.

All questions seemed popular and accessible to the candidates. The questions appeared to be well-received and as starting points brought out strong personal ideas and excellent interpretations. Some questions sparked a real connection with candidates and in these the personal qualities in the work was very strong.

Comments on specific questions

Question 1

Robotic

This was a very popular question. Science fiction seemed to be the biggest influence. Some candidates explored the idea of half human/half robot in an interesting manner. Reference to human or machine forms that were observed first hand, developed and modified led to some strong well-informed work. There was some quite interesting graphic work in pen and wash based on this theme and a memorable robotic scene based on the Michelangelo Sistine Chapel ceiling. Weaker responses were secondary images copied from film, magazine or computer game sources without any attempt to interpret.

Question 2*Decorated*

This question seemed to bring out a wide range of cultural references, with jewellery, make up, fabric, tattoos and skin paintings all featuring. Whilst much work centred on personal adornment there was also some that was based on interior design and home decoration as well as war medals. Wedding ceremonies and family parties often provided some stimulus. Some candidates saw the question as an opportunity for abstract work.

Question 3*Knots*

This seemed quite a popular choice and often started with first hand studies of rope, material or wire. Where these were well observed they sometimes led to abstractions and developed into quite personal work, but weaker candidates were often defeated by their attempts to draw knots or to develop ideas from them. Some quite clever ideas went into the kind of knots that human relationships can get into. A few Centres used collage successfully.

Question 4*At the end of the day*

Many sunset lit landscapes were evident and there were also some excellent city scenes. There were some particularly good examples from places where they had interpreted this question as the end of a hard working day. This question led to some original and personal compositions, often based on the candidate's own surroundings.

Question 5*Washed up*

There was a range of responses from the everyday task of washing up plates and dishes to the effects of the Tsunami disaster. Some work was very poignant, and some first hand studies of seashores were excellent.

Some candidates thought about the question in terms of washed out rather than washed up, often depicting exhausted, tired or stressed individuals. As the questions set are purely to provide a starting point for personal interpretation this is perfectly valid.

Question 6*A strange or unfamiliar place*

A very popular question that seemed to give candidates a free rein on their imagination. Sometimes this led to fantasy and sometimes to Dali like interpretations. There was much whimsical work often based on Victorian fairy illustrations. Where just copied, these could be quite weak and not lead to much originality. Others derived material from the film of 'The Lord of the Rings'. Where imagery was uncritically downloaded from the Internet the results lacked personal depth. This kind of question, however, does allow a capable candidate to develop a genuine surrealist response.

Administration

In almost all cases work was tied, packaged and sent with care and efficiency. The work was all well labelled well, though sometimes the labels were hard to find or had fallen off. Paper clips are not the best way of keeping the three or four sheets of A2 paper together – far better to punch a hole in the top left corner and use string, firmly knotted but loosely tied so that work can be easily turned. Most Centres now send accurate attendance registers but there are still some that omit them: they are very important documents.

Too many are still exceeding the number of sheets that candidates are allowed to submit or bending the rules by using both sides of the three preparatory sheets and doing too much “layering” of sketches. Some paper larger than A2 is being used in a few cases.

Fragile collage, especially where glitter, earth and objects are stuck on paper or card, generally spill their contents in the packet before arrival or on the floor when the packet is opened by the Examiner. Some work is packed when still wet or sheets of tissue paper are used to cover paint and pastels that then sticks, irremovably, together. Papier maché should be completely dry before being sent. Some Centres use heavy stiff board to mount the work on and this causes problems in handling heavy parcels of work.

In most cases, however, the work was a pleasure to see and a joy to mark.

Paper 0400/03
Paper 3 – Design Study

General comments

Almost half of the candidates chose **Question 1** *Design using Lettering* and **Question 6** *Fabric Design*. However, **Question 2** *Illustration and Calligraphy* and **Question 5** *Fashion Design* also attracted substantial numbers. Although there were fewer responses for **Question 4** *Interior Design* and **Question 8** *Photography*, far less work was received for **Question 3** *Environmental Design* and **Question 7** *Printmaking*.

The standard of work submitted for this paper has continued to improve, with over 15% of candidates achieving the highest levels of the mark range and noticeably less responses of only a basic level of ability. This is mainly a result of focused teaching for the specialised design briefs of the question paper. The majority of candidates demonstrated a good understanding of the design problem, engaged in thorough research and development of ideas and made effective use of appropriate materials. Computer processes were generally used well for developing preliminary work and there were far fewer examples of downloading ready-made imagery compared with previous years. Only a handful of candidates neglected to submit any preparatory work and this inevitably limited their access to the full range of the Assessment Objectives.

The mounting, labelling and presenting of work was usually effective and appropriate. Centres were mostly aware of the importance of attaching the examination piece to the front of the preparatory sheets before dispatching the work. Problems still continue to arise, however, when collage elements, some of which are very messy, become detached and spoil other candidates work from the same Centre. Also, when all the work is presented wrapped in tissue paper damage can result when it has to be removed.

Comments on specific questions**Question 1***Design using Lettering*

The logo design for a signboard and a vehicle for a company named HELIX, specialising in architectural restoration, inspired some excellent research into historic building structures in the best work seen. One outstanding submission, for example, made use of Gothic cathedral rose windows. Further selection and refinement led to thoughtful integration with well designed lettering of the helix symbol. Mid level responses often became embroiled in elaborate illustrations of buildings at the expense of clarity when lettering was attached as an afterthought, rather than being integrated with selected shapes. Repetitive brick patterns and poorly drawn helixes characterised many of the less able attempts. Line and colour enhancements were rarely considered and company vehicles were illustrated in a very elementary manner.

Question 2*Illustration and Calligraphy*

- (a) The cover design for a brochure for a travel company specialising in water sports holidays led to many competent submissions, but less high level responses than most of the other popular questions. Possibly this was because there is an abundance of images available for illustration and few candidates were really able to select and refine such information, let alone integrate the brochure's title of 'The Coral Islands' with it. The most able designs showed a clear concern for layout by balancing the relative size of shapes or using specifically chosen colour and tonal distributions; letterforms were also given an appropriate clarity through linear and border enhancements. At the mid levels of achievement, although illustrations were thoughtfully researched and organised, the placing and refinement of letterforms was often much poorer and in some cases actually spoilt ideas which had a greater potential. Much of the weaker work, however, used the Internet to offer a cut and paste of existing photographic images.
- (b) Although there were less responses to the calligraphy option, most of the work received was of a competent to proficient level of achievement. This was a pleasing contrast to previous years when a number of candidates with little calligraphic experience misguidedly chose this question. Nearly all preparatory work showed a thorough consideration of layout and spacing for the poem 'Casting' by Howard Nemerov. Most illustrations and borders were well researched and used well to enhance the feeling of the poem. Only the most able, however, could convey the rhythms of the words by integrating their calligraphic hand with the movement of water, fish or the idea of the fish hook as a question mark.

Question 3*Environmental/Structural Design*

The design for a barbecue area for the garden of a house attracted very few responses. Not all of these were based on an ability to create ground plans or use perspective to convey an artist's impression of the design. The most able submissions were clearly informed by an understanding of how an architect would present such plans for a client, as well as showing the use of materials for a potential builder. Mid level achievements tended to be dull and uninteresting because the specifications of the question for different levels of terracing and pergolas for hanging and climbing plants had been ignored. The weaker attempts simply offered a painting or a drawing of an imaginary structure with little awareness of the placing of any particular elements in space.

Question 4*Interior Design*

Of the two locations offered for the design for an oval shaped ceiling painting, an Oceanographic Museum was the most popular choice although many responses were also received for a Planetarium. The best ideas were firmly based on an understanding that the design would not only be viewed from a distance but also from below and from any side. A variety of interesting solutions were received where major elements linked and projected the design. While swirls of cloud and gases were used to link spherical forms for the Planetarium, eddies of seawater, seaweed and corals were used to link fish and octopus forms for the Oceanographic Museum. As with other questions the more able candidates were concerned to select and control the use of colour and tone, sometimes limiting or distributing it very effectively. At mid levels of achievement, although thorough research of sea life had preceded the development of the idea, the designs were usually conceived in terms of a wall painting with a distinct top and bottom. Weaker responses seldom considered the oval shape of the ceiling as part of the design. There was a tendency to use repetitive shapes of stars and fish of a similar size with no major elements to link the design together.

Question 5*Fashion Design*

Many lively responses were received for the design for a camouflage outfit for a performer in a fantasy setting set in a Jungle, a Cave, a Desert or a Swamp. All four options were popular, inspiring interesting environmental research which led to some very inventive solutions. References to specific animals or insects informed the use of colour, pattern and texture. Experimentation with different materials and fabrics encouraged the development of ideas both in the preparatory work and the final pieces. Considerable expertise in figure drawing was evident in the presentation of ideas in the best work seen. At mid levels of achievement some confusion was apparent in the understanding of the design brief when candidates produced paintings in which the costume design took second place to the depiction of the chosen environment. The intention may have been to show how well the performer was camouflaged but the quality of the design of the actual costume was indistinct. Weaker attempts were inevitably limited by poor research and badly drawn figures.

Question 6*Fabric Design*

The repeat pattern design, based on shapes derived from signs and symbols, for the roller blinds of a contemporary apartment led to many high level responses. It was encouraging that, compared with previous years, far fewer candidates with a limited experience of repeat pattern techniques chose this question. The signs and symbols motifs were intentionally offered as a source which had already been simplified. Candidates, therefore, were required to develop the motifs with knowledge and understanding in order to create an effective design. It was evident from the majority of outcomes that nearly all candidates had received specialised teaching in the use of shifting, cropping and reversing of shape, colour and tone in order to create designs of rhythmic vitality. The selection and control of specific colour relationships was particularly noticeable in the best work seen, where it was also very impressive to see what had been developed from the simplest of motifs. The fewer less able responses seen suffered from a patchy development of ideas in the preparatory work. An inconsistent experimentation with the figure-ground relationships of shapes or the positive-negative reversals of tone and colour was apparent.

Question 7*Printmaking*

Relief printing, etching and stencilling were the processes used in the small number of submissions received. Of the themes offered Riverside and Performers were the most chosen with only a few opting for Clockwork. The best prints seen were some very sensitive etchings of trees reflected in a river. Research for Performers and Clockwork tended to be elementary, leading to prints of only a basic level of ability. There were still a few candidates who submitted work for this question but who did not engage in any form of printmaking. Although some design element could be discerned this misuse of the question inevitably limited access to the Assessment Objectives.

Question 8*Photography*

Work for this question was either undertaken by Centres offering specialised courses or by a few candidates in a number of Centres where facilities have been made available in order to broaden the potential for coursework. The three themes offered, Rhythms in nature, Streetwise and Precision engineering were equally popular with some excellent prints submitted in response to each. In the better work a level of expertise was apparent in the control of techniques and processes, resulting in sharp prints with a strong tonal range and depth of field. However, the most accomplished work also demonstrated the process of selection and presentation from the contact sheets to the final prints. A personal evaluation of aesthetic qualities was evident in the exploration of viewpoints, lighting and composition. Interpretation of the themes in visual terms led to interesting contrasts of light and shade for Rhythms in nature, social interaction for Streetwise and magnification of structures for Precision engineering. In the less successful submissions technical control and the sense of intention, selection and presentation lacked consistency and purpose.

Paper 0400/04**Paper 4 – Critical and Historical Study****General comments**

This was attempted by more Centres in this cohort although the number of candidates was about the same. Most of the projects were well researched and made excellent use of local resources. The actual subject matter varied depending on the environment so that Centres submissions had quite a distinctive feel.

Most projects had a good balance of text and images and presentation was often of a high standard.

It was surprising amongst weaker submissions to see some very untidy and poorly managed visual display where cutting out was random so that the overall look was untidy and the mounting appeared quite random without a proper plan. There is time allowed to ensure good presentation is maintained.

The use of IT was often well handled and some excellent work was often carried out using computer aided design programmes. Images were often very clear and well labelled but in weaker submissions there was little attempt to relate images to text or even label images correctly.

Many candidates made excellent use of first hand resources and visits which helped to inform and inspire some really good submissions based on the experience. Interviews with artists and designers were also used to good effect.

It was refreshing to see many candidates illustrating their work with their own photography and their own sketches and this often gave a lively and personal touch to the work.

Where photocopies and down loaded images are used these should be as clear as possible as poor reproduction gives a project a weak impact.

Those candidates that had clearly built up a body of experience and materials for their projects and then sifted the material and refined it for a final write up and presentation rather than present everything in a random unchecked order usually gained higher outcomes as the work showed proper involvement and development.

There is no compulsion to use typed text but if handwriting is to be the main form of the text then it must be clear and written without endless crossings out. There is time allowed to get this format into a well presented form and candidates should be encouraged to revisit and make submissions look as good as possible.

The real secret of this work is to set a clear aim and objective and then ensure that the focus stays clear and the research relevant.

The best work in this section revealed high quality research and some excellent themes ranging from architecture, folk arts, the style and development of single artists, visits to buildings and artists studios. Whilst many used the internet effectively some candidates became very dependent on this as the sole research tool. By comparison the verve and innovation inspired by real contact with art works and exhibitions was a major factor in many of the more highly successful outcomes.

<p>Paper 0400/05 Coursework</p>

General comments

There were more entries this year and results were very variable. At this level of examination even the better able candidates need a well structured course of study to enable them to develop individual strengths. Where Centres had implemented such a structure, which emphasised the importance of first hand research, experimentation with media, design and ideas development, and critical evaluation of work in progress, all their candidates were able to achieve their full potential within their individual levels of ability.

However many Centres still impose a common theme of set exercises. Whilst this may give candidates confidence in gaining and practising practical skills, it fails to encourage the development of individual lines of research upon which the emphasis of the assessment is placed for this component.

There are still many Centres where it is quite obvious that the teaching is centred around candidates copying images from magazines or downloading from the internet.

There still appears to be a lack of understanding the importance and relevance of preparatory work or work books to the finished project. In all but a few cases it was difficult to find any connection between this work and the final pieces. The emphasis of the assessment of coursework is within the domain of Personal Investigation and Development, followed by Interpretive and Creative Response. Most of the evidence for this will come from the way that candidates have gathered visual information relative to their chosen theme or topic; how they have investigated and studied their source material; developed ideas and experimented with suitable techniques to carry out their intentions; finally sustaining these into a conclusive piece or body of work. This evidence needs to be documented and organised in a clear way so that the Examiner can easily assess the "journey" which each candidate has taken.

Needless to say, the best submissions showed that candidates had been encouraged to focus on appropriate research and fruitful ideas from it. Some excellent observation from figures, natural and man-made forms and specific environments were seen to contribute to very lively and personal developments towards interesting and accomplished final pieces.

Centre assessments were generally accurate, certainly with placing candidates into an order of merit. Where adjustments were made they were usually only made to one part of the parameters. This was usually at the upper end where a Centre's perception of what constituted work of the highest calibre was rather generous. For submissions to be awarded marks in the highest band there must be an evenness of quality within all of the Assessment Objectives. In most cases this was not quite the case. Work of a highly technical competence did not have the range or depth of research to support it. Sometimes a quantity of personal and varied preparatory research failed to develop into finished work which demonstrated a convincing knowledge and understanding within the first assessment domain.

A few Centres had undervalued their candidates' work and marks were generally raised between 5 and 10; and in one case upwards by 18.

The value of Centres using CIE's CD on IGCSE Art and Design Standards as an assessment guide cannot be stressed enough. Details of purchase are available on the Website.

Centres' presentation of work varied from the scrappy to the highly organised. Some Centres were very unselective, allowing candidates to submit every piece of work of whatever quality, and whether or not it related to the final piece. Others had little work to select from so bolstered it with sheets of images cut and pasted from magazines. Some encouraged an enormous amount of writing which far outweighed any practical or visual content. While some relevant investigations into artists/designers' works was an integral part of developing personal ideas, others included separate and disparate internet searches which had little connection with their own sources or potential ideas. Teachers need to encourage a selective and well organised approach showing sequential developments in the presentation of work.

Comments on areas of study

Painting and Related Media

The best submissions showed good development, experimentation with media, the beginnings of a personal style, good colour mixing, an understanding of form and structure in relation to space and a concern for composition and design organisation. There were some strong abstract developments showing the influence of looking at the work of other contemporary artists.

Middle range work was mostly dominated by Surrealist imagery or ideas developed from literary associations (mostly illustrations from science fiction sources). However, some personal sensitivity and involvement was usually apparent.

Lower level work was heavily dependent on secondary source information. There were limitations to candidates' knowledge and understanding of use of colour, tone and the representation of surface qualities. Preparatory work usually consisted of supplementary pictures of similar subject matter, or of other "finished" studies with no relevance to the final piece submitted for assessment.

3D Studies

There was a variety of entries for sculpture using lots of different techniques. Some large sculptural forms using cardboard were submitted which showed an extraordinary level of maturity. These had been developed from an in depth study of the human figure. The transition from visual research through drawing into 3D forms was well understood through the use of lots of maquette's.

There was also some interesting soap stone carving informed by studies of Henry Moore and an investigation of animal bone forms.

There were lots of entries using relief and assemblage techniques. The best showed a sympathetic use of materials to express form and shape and to arrive at aesthetically balanced designs. Weaker work was just an assemblage of disparate materials with very little aesthetic appeal.

Most final pieces were submitted as photographs. Most of these were of an adequate standard showing the work in good light and from several different angles and viewpoints. There were often additional photographs of the work in progress and this gave a good idea of scale. However some photographs, particularly those using cheaper digital cameras or poor quality printers were very poor, out of focus or badly lit. Some submissions only included one photograph.

There were hardly any ceramic submissions.

Graphic Design

There were not many Centres offering specialist design courses, but some individual entries from Centres allowing candidates a choice of options. The quality of the teaching was very varied, many simply resorting to using past examination Paper 3 questions.

Lots of use of computer processes which achieved competent results displaying a high quality of finish but an over reliance on computer generated imagery from secondary sources. Originality and personal qualities were lacking.

However, it was encouraging to see that some Centres were stressing the importance attached to creating competent design work through the development of sound drawing and painting skills including the formation of letterforms. From this approach candidates had created some highly competent poster and book jacket designs.

Photography

There were more entries this year but not all Centres seem to be fully aware of what is expected.

The best work showed not only evidence of high levels of technical competence but was highly personal. Good selection of sources and choice of prints for presentation.

Most submissions showed an unevenness. Results were weak in technical knowledge of both using a camera and in processing skills. Shots were out of focus and taken with poor lighting. Negatives were poorly developed with prints being too dark and lacking in tonal contrast; and further spoiled with finger prints, scratches and bits of dust.

There was little investigation of the chosen topic through photography. Too much reliance on simply pointing and shooting.

One Centre had submitted large albums crammed full of snapshots with the majority of them commercially processed. There was nothing to suggest a particular theme and no selection of any prints as final pieces. Teachers must become familiar with the syllabus requirements for this area of study and advise their candidates accordingly to ensure that entries have access to the full mark scheme.

Textiles

There was some Fashion Design and Illustration of an outstanding level with superbly drawn figures, sophisticated ideas showing the influence of contemporary trends, and a very competent and inventive use of media.

One Centre had submitted some excellent costume designs. These had evolved from first hand investigations and research and had developed through to finished garments. These had been excellently photographed and showed clear evidence of an understanding of designing for a 3D model.

There were also some weaker entries which were copies of existing fashion illustration rather than a development of original designs from source material discovered by the candidate.

There was little other Textile work entered, and then usually from Centres offering other options as well. There were examples of batik, screen and block printing, and tie and dye. Many tended to be rich in research and experimentation but lacking in aesthetic understanding, largely because most of the imagery came from secondary sources of poor quality illustrations of flowers or animals.