ART & DESIGN

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Coursework</td></tr>
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General comments

Fine Art was the most popular area of study with examples of 3D, graphics and textiles work were also seen. Photography was mainly used to record observations and to record fragile and large scale work, as well as a focus for exploration. Only a few candidates worked digitally. Some work would have benefited from clearer themes, and from labelling the outcome

Candidates chose a broad range of individual themes for exploration and the figure or self-image was a popular subject. Other themes included: work from different cultures and symbolic forms, family, dance, nature, emotion, etc.. Supporting sheets contained a range of recording methods including a good selection of 2D media and some 3D materials. Candidates manipulated images through digital processes to explore sources and ideas. Some candidates highlighted the areas in their coursework sheets which related to each Assessment Objective. While this was not always accurate, it did reflect the candidate's thought and understanding of the assessment criteria. However, it is important to remember that each assessment objective forms a holistic part of the creative process.

There was some interesting 3D work which demonstrated a creative integration of materials and ideas. However, the refinement in the construction processes was sometimes less skilled. The exploration sometimes demonstrated ingenuity, and those candidates who lit their forms from different light sources to photograph, illustrated an effective way of presenting their work. Other candidates who photographed their 3D work or installations in situ, gave a sense of context to indicate how their ideas had come together.

There were many examples of highly innovative work in which the development and resolved outcomes demonstrated maturity, with high levels of skill and creativity. In this work there was a genuine sense of personal engagement, which was well considered and sustained, and candidates built on best practice. In other work many responses were very similar in approach which limited personal enquiry. This practice limits candidates' achievement by preventing options for individuality. The less successful submissions usually did not distinguish between the candidates' own images, internet sources, or other secondary-sourced material and imagery derived from the imagination. Often this work was a confusing compilation of photographs, art works, designs with no clear indication of where these images came from.

Comments on the levels of ability

The **strongest** work contained excellent exploration of the chosen theme. Thought processes and ideas were clearly communicated through visual imagery, with thumbnail sketches of compositional plans and annotation. The supporting work in particular was strong and demonstrated clear vision and strong methods for gathering relevant visual and contextual material to inform ideas. Sometimes candidates demonstrated their strongest work in the supporting studies, rather than in the final outcome. With these candidates there was a real sense that they were very committed to the creative process, illustrating a thorough investigative approach and an enthusiasm for trying out new strategies.

Candidates frequently used a mood-board to show ideas containing their own photography and found imagery relevant to their topic. This was an effective method to inspire initial investigation. Supporting sheets contained the candidates' own strong photographic recording and an accomplished use of media. There were examples of excellent development which had been influenced by the critical analysis of other artists' work, with mature responses that highlighted both technical skill and conceptual thinking with equal sophistication. This analysis helped to inform the rendering of media, colour, composition and style. An exciting range of approaches were taken and ideas were explored into individual submissions.

Examples of paper cutting and paper manipulation were popular during media exploration. This was often developed towards a final outcome, or were used as a starting point for development. Hand-made starting

points usually evolved into individual and creative submissions. Technical ability was accomplished and ideas inspired by other artists' examples were effective. There was much use of layering and some candidates experimented with lighting to create shadows which were documented through photography or colour media. The strength of the supporting work was seen in many ways, but the sense of skilful material exploration was most obvious. Materials were rendered with creativity to show impressive effects conveying surface, texture, form and the colouration of objects. Those candidates who experimented with materials and took risks, often discovered new effects and ideas for development.

Photography as a focused medium and as a research and development technique was often seen. The strongest submissions exploring photography as a process included many relevant investigations into artists and photographers, which informed composition. The use of cropping to focus the attention into a specific area illustrated the consideration of composition to explore styles, before developing an outcome.

Many candidates in the **middle** of the ability range, demonstrated personal and engaging submissions, and candidates responded well to their chosen themes. The recording was purposeful and a wide range of sources were used for investigation. The research from direct observation usually originated from found objects, visits to exhibitions and museums and from exploring the possibilities within their local environment. Many candidates documented this through their own photography or from a series of drawings, paintings or media experiments. Others explored narrative ideas which drew on their personal experience to illustrate emotional reflection, into inventive compositions. Again for many candidates, the supporting work was strong, where they demonstrated their ability to record observations and experiment with ideas with originality and engagement.

Candidates across all levels used their own photography as a way of recording, but some of the responses at this level relied heavily on this research process alone. While this is good practice, candidates should remember that it is only one method. They should also make other direct observational research from their sources through a wider range of media, where they are able to interpret such things as surface quality, form, composition and colour through further studies.

Other responses at this level sometimes lacked the required depth and coherent investigation, highlighting the candidates' inability to focus on an informed direction of study. More purposeful in-depth recording would have been helpful to enrich the investigation of the theme. Many had selected their materials with intent and while most were of fine art media, other techniques chosen were lino cutting, 3D and some textiles. The rendering in many examples was competent, sensitive, sometimes lively, but not always refined. Sometimes images were repetitive, especially when copying from own photographs. This work usually demonstrated high levels of technical skill, but lacked creativity and ideas.

Candidates selected a range of artists, crafts persons and cultures for study and this impacted on the development in many ways. Some candidates used relevant referencing, and made good connections which prompted ideas for composition, media, colour, approach and style. Personal written analysis supported the stronger examples in development and evaluation, which reflected understanding and intention. However, for some candidates the links between their own ideas and the work of the artists were unclear. For others, selection of more appropriate examples would have supported their ideas better.

The coherent submissions demonstrated an outcome that had brought ideas together with the successful recognition of composition and media. Confident analysis and focused planning led to an informed and resolved final outcome. The least successful outcomes attempted to bring elements together, but some were the result of an mixture of studies where a lack of choice led to poor decision making in the final work. If the critical evaluation had been better understood, candidates would have been able to select the most effective ideas to develop.

The responses at the **lower** range of the ability were varied. Some candidates produced cohesive submissions but with unrefined technical skills. Others showed a lack of first-hand recording, or sometimes none at all. This showed an insufficient response to the "Record" assessment objective, which is vital in underpinning the whole submission. Consequently, those candidates who lacked the initial recording, limited the development of their project.

In some examples, candidates started to develop images without support from initial resources, and were therefore unable to develop an informed body of ideas. In this work it was unclear how images were arrived at and what sources had been used. This was often seen in some examples of illustration work, where the candidates' imagery would have been better developed from referencing appropriate artists' examples. Critical evaluation would have also assisted in selecting the most effective methods for presenting the work. In contrast to this work, sometimes a good range of sources had been explored through a variety of

recording methods. However, the candidates' poor decision making during the development of compositions or selection of media, limited the exploration to a resolved outcome. There were also responses where the selected sources had no obvious relationship to each other, leading to disconnected imagery. If connections had been better, there would have been more cohesion and the candidate would have gained a wider opportunity to develop a body of work into an informed direction.

The submissions within this ability range demonstrated references to the works of other artists through a range of examples to varying levels of relevance and depth. Candidates who had been inspired by the processes, imagery or techniques used by chosen artists, and who had followed the natural process of developing their informed and personal ideas, produced more cohesive and engaging results. Others who had based their development around a particular artist, sometimes showed insufficient investigation of appropriate sources through the supporting studies, and so produced predictable imagery. Sometimes images were derived from the imagination but contained the essence of another artist's work. Here, any sources used were limited and imagery was unsupported, undeveloped and ideas were not fulfilled.

Generally, a range of fine art media was explored, with some photography and 3D work. Ideas were sometimes thoughtful and inventive, and recording was relevant. However, the lack of refinement in the manipulation of the materials sometimes limited communication in some of the work. In other responses candidates recorded the making process through photography. This sometimes limited the exploration of ideas. The documentation of the making process did not add depth or improvement to the work.

Final outcomes at the lower level tended to vary in success. In some work it remained unclear as to how ideas in the supporting work had informed the final piece, with outcomes appearing to be scaled-up versions of an initial idea, rather than the result of a series of investigations. Often the inability to recognise any potential in the supporting work led to a less successful realisation of intentions. Many candidates would have benefited from experimenting with alternative compositions before attempting their final outcomes, to inform visual understanding and aesthetic connections. In other examples, it was the unrefined skill in the rendering of and selection of materials, that restricted success.

ART & DESIGN

Paper 9479/02
Externally Set Assignment

General comments

Most submissions were in the area of Painting and Related Studies with supporting photography included. There were a few centres offering submissions with Graphics, Photography, 3D and Fashion and Textiles outcomes. Where final outcomes were larger than A2 or were 3D and fragile, centres submitted good quality photographs showing clear and thorough representation of the work.

In many submissions there was a sense that candidates were very committed to the creative process and this could be seen particularly in the supporting studies. This frequently showed a thorough investigative approach and a willingness to explore and try out new strategies.

There was a very broad range of responses to the questions, and many demonstrated individuality and imaginative ideas. The control shown in the handling of media was often very impressive and showed a great deal of maturity and sensitivity.

Many of the submissions relied on the candidates' own photography to investigate the question and to gather images in the initial stages of the creative process. Although this is a good approach it should not be used in isolation, unless of course the whole submission including the final outcome, is Photography. Candidates should still be encouraged to make observational studies directly from source where possible, as the photographic image flattens out shape and form and adjusts colour. Stronger candidates included detailed observational drawings using a range of media in addition to photography to explore their theme in depth. Where photography is included candidates should label this work so that it is clear which are the candidates' own images and photographs, and which are second source, downloaded from the Internet for example.

There was evidence of candidates exploring and using digital media in very creative and imaginative ways to inspire development of ideas. In the submissions using this process successfully, it was always in combination with extensive investigation of their theme through considered observation and recording from direct observation. Those candidates who thoroughly explored the media and analysed the work as it progressed were able to achieve effects that realised their intensions. Other candidates allowed the media to dictate the outcome of the image. For example, by putting a photograph through a series of filters.

There were a high number of candidates who made drawings or paintings from photographs that had been filtered using through various apps. These apps work by flattening the surface of the photograph and sometimes adding elements that are often simplistic. Candidates relying only on these apps to provide initial visual stimulation did not always fully explore and develop alternative approaches and experiment with the full range of visual elements such as tone and depth. This restricted the possibility for expression and sensitivity. The more successful submissions fully explored the media and often combined digital manipulation with other forms of manipulation, such as painting and collage, inspired by artist research, to develop their ideas.

Some submissions had labelled the pages of their submission as specific assessment objectives, for example page 1 as Assessment Objective 1 for their recording. Whilst this is an organised approach to collating the work it doesn't allow for the organic flow of the creative process. The assessment objectives are not discreet units and should be seen holistically.

Higher Levels

Observational studies produced at this level related to and successfully informed the final outcome. Initial observational studies were often drawn carefully with different media such as ink, paint, pencil, pastels and

graphite. These were purposefully selected to produce a range of detailed studies in black and white and colour.

Throughout the supporting studies candidates often included further recording from observation to extend and focus their investigation. Examples of such detail included observing the reflections of the surface the object was placed upon, consideration of the type and direction of light sources when recording from observation, using a limited palette and including relevant artists' references. At times, artist research involved researching several explorations of work from different artists to allow the candidate to develop and explore different techniques and to inform the layout and composition used in their work.

The work seen at this higher level demonstrated the candidates' ability to realise their intentions with confidence as their work evolved and developed, and used effective visual language. Connections with the works of others were clearly made through use of colour, tone and mood, leading to a clear and cohesive presentation of work.

Mid Levels

At this mid level of achievement submissions often explored fewer ideas. Work often relied on less in-depth observation and recordings in the initial stage of the investigation into the question as a starting point. For example, if the theme involved exploring emotions, a candidate working at this level may have focused only on the expressions observed on the faces of different people, perhaps using a limited range of media. A more successful submission may have been able to take the idea further by exploring alternative images that could indicate an emotion, or by considering how different media could change the overall effect or mood.

At this level the visual studies showed good control of media and a competent skill level. However, candidates often did not move their ideas on from these initial studies. There was less evidence of artistic or cultural referencing and candidates would have been able to access higher marks if they had been prepared to try out different techniques and expand their visual knowledge. Without this deeper investigation to explore the subject more deeply, the final outcomes did not always successfully communicate the candidates' ideas and intentions as seen in the supporting studies.

Lower Levels

Candidates achieving lower level marks did not demonstrate adequate observational and recording skills, and initial images often lacked information to indicate where they had come from or what had inspired the candidate. At times they appeared more imaginative than observational. Candidates would have benefited significantly from observing from direct observation through their own drawings or photographs. This would have led to a greater understanding of their subject matter and allowed them to develop their ideas more fully. Observational studies of the items depicted in the final piece and experimentation with the composition would have informed the final outcome in terms of visual understanding and aesthetic connections.

There was some evidence of development within the supporting work but the development needed to be much more focussed and systematic. It often remained unclear how these developments informed the final piece. At times the final outcome appeared to be a larger version of an initial idea rather than the result of a series of investigations by the candidate.

Candidates working at this level would also have benefited from exploring a greater variety of media and techniques. Artist research would have helped to inform this part of the creative process but in many submissions there was no evidence of cultural or artist links or references. These candidates did not take the opportunity to look at other work to consider different ways of using media, exploring alternative colour ways or informing the selection of objects to draw from. Where candidates did look at the work of other artists, they sometimes produced an adequate copy of one of the artist's artworks, commenting on the colour and particular style for example. However, they were not able to demonstrate or experiment with how this may have influenced their own work.

Many candidates would have benefitted from investigating various possible compositions before attempting their final piece. At times the supporting studies consisted of a series of finished paintings and drawings, unrelated to the final outcome.