

# ART & DESIGN

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Paper 9479/01  
Coursework

## Key messages

- Successful submissions contained clear intentions and purpose, with carefully organised work which communicated candidate achievement. Effective editing would have benefited some presentations to show refinement of the work as it progressed, and to demonstrate ability.
- The assessment objectives inform a holistic part of the creative process. Some candidates demonstrated a consistent response to each one. Other submissions would have benefited from candidates sustaining a clear focus, to enable resolved responses to these objectives.
- Successful candidates demonstrated recording from a thoughtful selection of primary sources. Themes were explored in depth through detailed observation. Other work contained an overreliance of downloaded images from the Internet or secondary sources. This undermined personal vision and limited an individual response.
- Some submissions lacked development. In this instance, candidates would have benefited from challenging their ideas through critical reflection. Investigating the works of others to inform the direction of study could have enabled exploration of alternative ideas and compositions.
- Where photographs of large works are submitted, it is advisable to include examples of the actual skill level in the supporting work, so that achievement can be seen at first hand by the examiner.
- Photographs that demonstrated the making process were often not relevant and did little to inform the recording or development of ideas.

## General comments

Most candidates presented their portfolios on A2 sheets. Carefully organised supporting work included the most relevant pieces which supported intentions and clearly communicated ideas. The presentation of other portfolios was less considered. The excessive layering of work prevented coherence and a clear picture of candidate achievement. In this instance, careful selection and editing of the work would have helped to demonstrate the creative process, especially in response to Assessment Objective 4: Present.

Thoughtful and sustained work demonstrated clear responses to the assessment criteria. Topics stimulated investigation from a range of sources, offering depth and opportunity for personal exploration. Recording from first-hand study, including the analysis of relevant contextual referencing, encouraged a personal response to the themes. Visits to exhibitions, galleries, and artist studios informed direction. Many first-hand observations focused around themes such as the local surroundings and places of interest, providing candidates with the opportunity to photograph and make direct observational studies. Accessible themes enabled candidates to revisit their subject to investigate in depth. Portraiture and the human figure were popular and frequently portrayed emotional conflict and self-analysis. Other work was narrative in nature which enhanced personal engagement.

Some submissions, contained disconnected work from different assignments, rather than one sustained project based around a theme. These lacked intention and direction. Others were formulaic, containing work derived from candidate participation in the same workshop. This impacted on depth and focus, preventing a personal response and an informed final outcome.

A wide range of materials were explored, but many candidates realised their ideas within the area of fine art. Photography was often used to record initial ideas to generate visual references. There were also examples

of printmaking, textiles, fashion design, sculpture, digital manipulation and graphic design. Candidates across each level appeared to demonstrate a genuine enjoyment of experimenting with materials. Large or fragile work was evidenced through photography. While these images reflected achievement, some would have benefited from capturing other angles, surface quality and scale. Further consideration of focus and lighting would also have benefited the presentation of 3D work.

Successful work was inventive, showing a thorough investigation of ideas from starting point to final outcome. Candidates were focused and all work had meaning. Some work lacked cohesion with supporting work not always connecting to, or informing the final outcome. A lack of clear intentions prevented the focus and meaningful investigation required to produce a portfolio that builds on an idea and demonstrates a sense of purpose.

### **Higher level**

High levels of independence and personal engagement were evident at this level. Clear intentions enabled focus and a consistency of exploration. Ideas were ambitious and sustained throughout the creative process. Purposeful first-hand study initiated the recording and lively submissions contained many appropriate visual references. Some approaches to the themes were observational, while others were more conceptual and interpretative. Extensive investigation enabled these candidates to build on their ideas in depth, with intelligent references supporting self-reflection and refinement.

Themes were personal and fully investigated from starting points such as family, mental health, cultural issues, climate change, etc. Candidates made intelligent connections to contextual references which informed their own observed imagery to stimulate personal development. Ideas and techniques were often developed within a critical context making a positive impact on the work. Skilful first-hand studies led to development, with obvious enjoyment of exploring the theme. Development was focused and committed. Critical thinking enabled candidates to refine their ideas and to reflect on achievement.

There was a fluency in the rendering of media and a desire to explore the qualities of the chosen materials. Accomplished and inventive uses of media were apparent at each stage of the work. Collage added layering, texture and transparency, photographs were embellished with embroidery, painted over and deconstructed to show abstraction. The use of print explored mark-making, shape and design. Photography was used not only as a form of recording, but to also support development. Links to professional photographers informed approach and technique. Many candidates set up scenes to inform composition choices and experimented with costume, postures, lighting and context to support ideas. Understanding of the formal elements was clear and the strength of these images enabled strong development. Digital processes also developed ideas, with the focus on manipulating original existing imagery, rather than using filters to create different versions of the same image. Creativity and technical ability encouraged idea development to a resolved final outcome. Examples of design-based work demonstrated the principles of design, evident in garment or costume design, book design, posters, digital illustration and advertising. The visual work clearly expressed candidate intentions, and effective editing and pertinent annotations assisted in enhancing a clear journey.

### **Middle level**

Candidate intentions were sometimes less obvious at this level, but responses to a range of thoughtful and appropriate sources demonstrated personal engagement. Most candidates displayed a competent ability to record from direct observation, while others relied on secondary sources to inform ideas. This restricted a personal response to the topic. Some candidates copied from their photographs, demonstrating less understanding of form and structure in space. Many photographic images were successful on their own and did not need to be reproduced. Objects were arranged, figures posed, and subjects approached through creative exploration, but there was less ability to refine ideas. Technical skills were less sustained as was relevant media selection. Submissions sometimes lacked clear direction. At times the work was incohesive with the final outcome not clearly connecting to the main body of the work. In some portfolios, research was purposeful and committed, but contained less depth of enquiry where possibilities were not realised. These candidates were less confident in progressing their ideas. In-depth recording and clear focus could have enabled the refinement of ideas. Some submissions were personal, but others demonstrated less engagement to support a sustained and resolved body of work.

Most submissions contained contextual references to influence ideas, encouraging new directions for exploration. The works of relevant artists and designers supported ideas, enabling alternative approaches and development of the theme and media exploration. Some candidates were able to analyse and reflect, to inform decisions and build on ideas. Sometimes, candidates were unable to recognise the potential within

their references to move the work forward. In other work, connections made to the works of others were tenuous and not always relevant to progress their ideas.

A range of materials and techniques were explored with commitment and purpose, but the technical skill demonstrated inconsistency. Candidates were keen to experiment, but the application was sometimes less confident or refined. This limited their ability to successfully convey ideas. Other candidates, rather than take risks and explore possibilities, relied on using the materials they were most confident with. This impacted on the opportunity to move their manipulation skills forward.

Idea development sometimes lacked depth. Critical analysis and depth of observational research during the initial stages could have expanded ideas. Design-based work often lacked first-hand recording. While some submissions produced strong designs and skilfully crafted outcomes, insufficient initial primary research restricted the development of alternative ideas and understanding of the visual elements. Some candidates seemed unaware of their own strengths, and while the exploration and development of an idea was effective, the final outcome was sometimes disappointing.

### **Lower level**

Candidates at the lower level demonstrated a limited ability in the recording process and were unable to produce a meaningful body of work. Submissions were often characterised by their superficial research and weaker technical ability. Recording was frequently derived from secondary-sourced imagery or from the imagination, showing little depth of observation. Focus and purposeful investigation were not apparent and images tended to be disconnected. Those who attempted to research from first-hand sources often gathered their ideas through poor quality photography, containing insufficient information to be useful. These candidates would have benefited from focusing on first-hand studies as good starting points encourage development and the growth of ideas. Studies from accessible subjects in their surroundings relevant to their chosen theme would have encouraged the development of skills and ideas.

Candidates appeared less able to select and explore a range of materials, which restricted creativity. The work was either limited or repetitive and many chose to work in one media with little experimentation of alternatives. Where there was some competence in the materials rendering, this often lacked consistency, purpose and experimentation. However, when candidates made transcriptions of the works of others, they were often able to demonstrate a satisfactory manipulation of materials to show colour and surface quality, but were unable to sustain this level of application when refining ideas in their own work.

Contextual referencing was apparent in some portfolios, but other candidates would have benefited from exploring the work of relevant art practitioners or cultures to inform media use, idea development and direction. Where investigation of contextual sources was evident, this tended to be superficial and demonstrated little understanding of concepts. Most annotation lacked meaning, and analysis was mainly descriptive or biographical, and sometimes without visual reference. These candidates were less able to make contextual connections with their own work to support the development of ideas.

The work was often incoherent in both content and presentation. Insufficient visual stimulus impacted on the whole submission. Without this initial recording there was little information available for developing ideas and demonstrating continuity. Some portfolios consisted of finished pieces of work from different genres. Others were compiled from a number of workshops or class projects containing little connection. These candidates were unable to reflect on their work to refine ideas or communicate intentions. Stronger candidates attempted to develop a theme, but the work often lacked continuity or a sense of a journey. Submissions were often without direction and personal connection, with the outcome frequently not evolving from a progression of ideas.

# ART & DESIGN

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Paper 9479/02  
Externally Set Assignment

## General comments

Responses were received from all of the set stimuli. **Question 1: Festivals** gave candidates a great opportunity to include cultural references of festivals celebrated by their own families and in their own locality. This provided excellent opportunities to record scenes and to gather related imagery through first-hand observation and photography. Other starting points were researched with enthusiasm and originality in the initial stages and often developed into a unique and unexpected twist of subject. **Question 4: Membrane**, for example, included submissions that dealt with anatomical references from cell division and bacteria to films between worlds of perception.

Photography was used by most candidates and in some cases the level of expertise was excellent. A wide range of different materials and techniques was seen in submissions, for example, paint, collage, charcoal, biro, pencil and coloured pencil, ceramics, photography, lino and etching. There were quite a few digitally manipulated submissions where original ideas had been developed in skilful and inventive ways. Some candidates produced graphic design outcomes and some fashion designs were seen. Unfortunately, there were many examples of unfinished final outcomes.

When there was clear evidence of the use of primary sources of research candidates were able to develop individual and personal outcomes.

Other supporting sheets were used to experiment with materials and processes, and to manipulate images to develop ideas. Many candidates used contextual references and benefitted from studying the subject matter and techniques of a wide range of artists to influence their own work.

Final examination outcomes were rarely as strong as work seen in preparatory sheets. A common feature was a lack of planning for final compositions, with many candidates simply repeating an earlier study. More time could have been spent on considering alternative compositions by producing a number of thumbnail sketches.

Some submissions had glitter, leaves, petals, feathers, or shells glued onto pages. These tended to fall off easily. Images need to be securely attached and loose pieces of paper need to be avoided.

## Higher levels

Candidates working at this level were highly articulate in communicating their ideas both visually and in their written annotation. Annotation was concise and did not overwhelm the visual exploration.

The most successful candidates usually fulfilled their potential mainly through in-depth preparatory studies, and these were usually relevant to the chosen question. Direct, first-hand observation was usually seen, supported by candidates' own photography. Secondary sources alongside detailed references, in the form of sketches and notes, to the work of other artists were also intrinsic in these candidates' supporting studies clearly informing the outcome of the work.

At this level, candidates also demonstrated clear observation skills, sensitivity and inventiveness in the exploration of media, including pencil, paint, pen, pastel and collage to digital, photography, sculptural and fashion applications. Photography and digital work included at this level showed engagement with the setting up of particular scenarios to photograph and/or draw and various programmes were used to develop work into original outcomes. Submissions at this level were usually creative, playful and experimental with the chosen media demonstrating creative risk taking during the earlier stages of the development of the work. This demonstrated maturity and confidence. Ideas were fully explored and different viewpoints and compositions for final pieces were carefully considered. Candidates were not afraid to reject ideas which

were not progressing and experiment with new or unexpected ideas.

The creative journey within the supporting sheets was well organised. The layout was thoughtful, making clear links between the various elements that formed the body of work. Some submissions contained annotation which supported the visual exploration but some at this level did not include any annotation and instead the clarity of the journey was visible in the presentation of the practical and creative responses.

### **Middle levels**

Mid-level submissions were inconsistent in meeting the assessment objectives. Many candidates who had made genuine first-hand studies did not develop them into coherent final compositions, or there was a lack of experience and confidence in controlling media which limited outcomes. Other candidates relied on secondary sources for their ideas, and inhibited success in developing a personal response.

Media had been explored and experimented with, but at this level there was not the depth of research into technique and process seen in stronger submissions. These candidates did not show a high level of confidence in their exploration of materials and they had not developed the skill in handling and in the application of media seen in the stronger work.

The initial recording, research and experimentation were used to help in the development of ideas. In some cases, candidates only explored a single idea and in others, ideas were numerous but not developed coherently. Further research and exploration would have benefitted these candidates. Also, some ideas were quite derivative and lacked originality.

Sometimes submissions at this level contained evidence of interesting explorations with 3D media which were helpful at progressing ideas but too often candidates abandoned these ideas too early and settled for an earlier study for a final piece or a composite.

Digital media submissions at this level needed to make it clearer which images were the candidates' own with appropriate referencing. It would have been useful to see clear development and process too in design-based work.

It was clear that candidates struggled with developing ideas by making connections with the work of others, and most changed the palette or added a background to their work in response to their chosen artist.

The submissions were generally very lively and full of visual exploration but many candidates lacked the ability to carry their ideas and the strength of their pre-final experiments through to the final piece. This was often due to changing media or scale of work. In some cases, the work did not translate when created to a larger format. Some candidates made use of thumbnail sketches to explore alternative compositions with great effect but others only explored one way of expressing their ideas and the work became repetitive.

### **Lower levels**

At the lower level, preparatory work was limited, with many cut and paste secondary photographs poorly copied for final outcomes. Too often the first idea or image was the only one explored. Any contextual referencing tended to be superficial and had little, or tenuous relevance to the path pursued.

Handling of media often showed a limited skill in recording and only a basic understanding of visual language. Although candidates' use of their own photography provided a more genuine connection to their work, more consideration of composition and lighting would have led to more successful images to work from and develop into a final outcome. Some candidates who lacked technical ability in accurately representing a subject through drawing or painting, recognised their strengths and concentrated on model making or collage work.

As a result of the lack of research candidates at this level often had little subject matter from which to develop their ideas, and this was evident in the weak range of ideas explored. Many candidates came up with a single idea and pursued it without considering any other possibilities. Other candidates just copied an existing idea seen on the internet.

Where ideas were strong, candidates at this level often lacked the ability to convey their intentions in a visually convincing way. Creating alternative compositions, using thumbnail sketches to explore a range of colourways, layering of shapes and content for example, would have helped candidates make informed decisions before creating the final outcome in the timed test.

Design-based submissions at this level often included secondary-sourced material with little, if any, initial studies related to the theme. There was sometimes a focus on design ideas but development within these leading to a final piece was often not clear.

Photography submissions at this level included many photographs but candidates would have benefited from selecting which ones to include more carefully. This selection process would have helped candidates to then know which area of interest to focus on and develop further. Frequently candidates did not include a study of a relevant artist or photographer which would have helped them to explore lighting, viewpoint, focus, mood, or composition resulting in better photographs and the progression of skill, ideas, and expression.

There was poor presentation of work. Often the sheets contained large empty spaces and little consideration was given to the layout of the work or the creative journey.





# ART & DESIGN

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<p><b>Paper 9479/03</b> <b>Personal Investigation</b></p>
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## Key messages

- Candidates should not submit work from Components 1 and 2 as part of their Personal Investigation. They can develop a theme from previous components, but they should not submit or explore the same material.
- Candidates should select a theme or question relevant to their experience and ability. In some cases, the topic was far too broad, or overcomplicated and unclear. This limited candidates' ability to achieve their intentions.

## General comments

The Personal Investigation is a coherent body of work that is developed through research and exploration. Candidates are expected to generate practical and creative work in response to their chosen theme through analysis and experimentation. They should refer to the work of others and relevant cultural and contextual fields. Candidates should develop their work from first-hand, primary sources not by simply making their versions of the work of other artists.

A range of themes was developed through personal engagement and wider interests. There was evidence of personal reference material being used, individual source material generated and a range of relevant artists selected to investigate and inform the development of work. However, some submissions lacked clarity as to primary starting points. Candidates should identify and annotate their own photography, their first-hand studies and their own experiences. This is especially important when candidates are working in photography or using digital media.

Painting and related media were the most popular practical outcomes, but a few candidates developed their investigations in 3D, digital media work, photography, graphic, product and fashion design.

Most candidates were able to use basic art-specific language when reflecting on their own work and that of other artists and designers (own culture, local artist/craft/designers, national or international artist/craft/designers, past and present).

Candidates tended to focus broadly on analysing the visual elements and less on developing their opinions and using analytical terminology to inform the progression of their investigation. There were a number of submissions lacking the required amount of written analysis and critical reflection. Some resembled coursework with additional annotation. Others contained purely written analysis or descriptions of the work of others and no personal or creative responses.

Presentations were generally well organised, with written content integrated with practical visual work. Candidates should consider the materials used and attached to the submissions. Organic matter tends to disintegrate. Glass, mirror, and ceramic can break in transit making it difficult and dangerous to handle. Candidates should explore alternative materials or photograph the work and send good quality photographs of the outcome. Most work was submitted in the correct format and clearly labelled. Submissions should adhere to size, format and quality set out in the syllabus. Centres should be reminded that USBs and QR codes, DVDs or CDs should not be submitted.

## Higher level

All submissions at this level had evidence of first-hand research. Candidates had visited local galleries or museums or explored local architecture. It was clear that some centres had organised such visits for their entire group to enable all candidates access to primary source material.

Chosen themes were personal, creative and thoughtful. Candidates were able to make strong connections between concept, use of materials and methods of presentation. Many were able to install or present their work as if in a gallery space. Where this was not physically possible, candidates used photoshop effectively and sensitively to place their work in context.

Observations were recorded through extensive primary studies using photography, sketches and written notation. These were later analysed and developed in depth.

Visits or links were made with local artists. These were documented through photography and written evidence of an interview. Questions were well planned and probing, eliciting answers from which candidates could expand on through their analysis and interpretation.

Candidates demonstrated practical skills in analysing chosen works of art which were relevant to their themes. This was not confined to making copies of the work of other artists but was used as a stimulus for explorations in a range of media and the development of candidates' own ideas.

Candidates moved between different media fluidly with skill and confidence, exploring different ideas related to their chosen theme. Most candidates at this level produced a number of resolved visual outcomes, demonstrating that earlier research had been analysed and applied effectively.

Candidates displayed a synergy between their critical and technical skills. They continuously reflected critically upon their work throughout all stages of development underpinning their progress to ensure their intentions were being met. The written content demonstrated the ability to apply technical language and terminology appropriately. This could be seen in the analysis of the work of other artists and the critical reflection of candidates' own achievements.

The journey of the project was clear and the influences and stages of development were well documented. Written and practical work was cohesive and there was good momentum in the journey from initial ideas through to resolved outcomes. Effective editing highlighted candidates' intentions, which were fulfilled and resolved to a high level. The written content reflected on the practical and visual work and brought the investigation to a perceptive and meaningful conclusion.

## Middle level

Submissions in this category generally had good intentions and ideas but often lacked depth. Work at this level was inconsistent across the assessment objectives. The choice of starting topic was usually the major factor, being far too ambitious or unclear.

There was less evidence of first-hand source material. Research into relevant artists was carried out but often candidates chose to make copies of the artists' work and did not sufficiently analyse technique or context. Selected artists did not inform the candidates' work and subsequent development was therefore unrelated to the initial studies. Where artists had informed the candidates' ideas, these were not explored in-depth and exploration ended too soon.

Candidates choosing more issue-based themes had difficulty in constructing meaningful arguments or arriving at personal conclusions. Many researched their topics fairly well but did not manage to develop the work from their initial starting point. In many cases the written analysis did not form a review of the candidates' work or a conclusion. Very often the content of the submissions had very little relationship to the title or stated intentions.

Much of the analytical content at this level was limited to the visual elements and many candidates did not engage in further development of opinion or interpretation of material. Some were able to use relevant terminology to talk about the work of others but were less able to apply this knowledge to their practical work or in the evaluation of their own progress.

Candidates would have benefitted from thorough prior planning and from selecting their chosen artists more



carefully, in order to make their ideas clearer and more informed.

Practical work was variable. Whilst there were many examples of skilful copies of the work of other artists in a range of media, some candidates were unable to develop these into effective personal outcomes. Many candidates at this level copied the work of their chosen artists with some ability but were less able to control and choose appropriate media when carrying out their own work.

Some submissions demonstrated an innovative approach to materials, but this was not supported through research into the work of other artists and there was less evidence of candidates being able to refine the process through critical reflection.

The presentation of the investigation was less coherent and the journey or argument was difficult to follow. Candidates were less able to use the research and experience to produce an effective body of work in relation to their theme.

### **Lower level**

Whilst a satisfactory standard was achieved in many submissions, the majority of the work showed limited skills in meeting some of the objectives. Many of the chosen themes were beyond the candidates' abilities to assimilate, analyse and respond to.

Submissions at this level lacked source material to develop personal ideas from, both in terms of gathering primary visual stimulus and research into relevant artists. This limited their starting points and observations. There was less evidence of first-hand experience of the work of others to support the development of ideas.

Practical exploration mainly consisted of poorly copied examples of chosen works with limited development of candidates' ideas. There was little evidence that these candidates had gained any knowledge of composition or techniques used by the artists which they could bring to their own work.

Written content tended to be downloaded biographical copies from the internet without any form of editing or of candidates' own interpretation. Other submissions consisted of very brief notes, often hand written and difficult to read. Written analysis was limited and frequently below the required word count.

Candidates would have benefited from experimenting with their artists' techniques or ideas in their own work. This would have helped them to explore materials and processes that come from analysis. They would also have been able to make stronger connections between media and concept.

The content of most submissions was very basic, poorly organised and lacking in presentation. Candidates were unable to develop a thoughtful response or show personal engagement due to their limited resources and reliance on secondary material.