

ART AND DESIGN

Paper 9479/01
Coursework Assignment

Key messages

- Successful work contained clear intentions with focused ideas that developed around a theme. This work was carefully organised to communicate achievement. Candidates would benefit from editing their work to show refinement as ideas progressed.
- Engaging with accessible themes enabled a well-researched and personal journey, from initial research to final outcome.
- It was difficult to identify the clear progression of ideas in a number of submissions. This was most evident where many creative images were presented without evidence of a clear starting point. This incohesive development prevented clarity of where images originated and how ideas had evolved.
- Candidates are strongly advised to distinguish between their own work and that of others. Clearly labelling their own photography and citing other references will communicate achievement more effectively.
- The practice of working over the top of lightly scanned or photocopied photographs was frequently evident. This practice should not be relied upon. While there was skill in the rendering of materials, this method did not give a true reflection of the candidate's ability to compose a composition or express shape and form.

General comments

Submissions were generally labelled and presented in the correct format: on A2 paper or thin card. Many candidates presented their coursework in a well organised and coherent way, with most containing a portfolio of supporting work and a related final outcome. Successful responses were well organised showing the candidates' ability to identify and present the most purposeful work, clearly communicating achievement.

Many submissions were presented on heavy board or plywood, which presented difficulties during the handling of the work. Other work was inappropriately submitted on oversized sheets or was encumbered with multiple flip out and overlaid sections, causing unnecessary confusion. Presentations using reflective plastic sheets/wallets, or those with excessive amounts of tissue paper covering every image made viewing the work difficult. Candidates are also reminded that additional sketchbooks are not required.

Topics were varied, with most candidates selecting thoughtful themes relevant to their interests and strengths. Furthermore, they selected subject matter which encouraged observations from their local environment, friends and family or belongings as a starting point for development. Portraiture and self-portraiture remained popular starting points, as did issues investigating mental health. Other subject matter included organic forms, food, musical instruments, still life and religious festivals. There were many individual interpretations of the chosen topics.

The development was often the weakest area in the work. Sometimes there was little connection between the supporting studies and planning for the final outcome, or the potential in the supporting work was not recognised to progress ideas towards a successful conclusion.

Many submissions demonstrated engagement with materials and processes to communicate ideas, but most candidates chose to explore their topics through fine art media. Most work included photography to record and develop observations and well considered photographs enhanced the submissions. Photography also documented work in progress and recorded large or fragile work. Other candidates explored their ideas through graphic communication processes, 3D exploration and fashion and textiles design.

Connections made through contextual referencing in the stronger work, such as visits to galleries, artist interviews and local art exhibitions, continued to inform observations. However, not all candidates used these

references to progress their work, where a lack of critical understanding prevented an individual response. Insightful annotation at the higher level supported intentions and indicated influences.

Higher levels

Work at the higher levels demonstrated a consistent response to the Assessment Objectives. The creative journey was coherent and easy to follow. Intentions were clear, with candidates making personal and considered observations based on a concept that could be explored through first-hand recording. Ideas were developed through continuous reflection showing a clear engagement with the creative process.

Detailed investigations enabled a range of personal responses. Some candidates used their accomplished skills in observational drawing, while others developed a more complex, abstract and conceptual approach to their topics. Effective observations informed development and photographs were orchestrated with good consideration of subject matter, interesting viewpoints and imaginative lighting to inform subsequent work.

Materials were purposefully chosen and demonstrated creative and technical accomplishment. Candidates were able to select and effectively apply their media to represent the qualities of their subject and communicate their concept. Experiments with printmaking enhanced ideas and designs, whilst creative uses of collage, stitching and 3D pieces expanded ideas and skills. Conceptual submissions sometimes developed into installations and sculpture where final outcomes were presented through clear photography.

The use of digital manipulation increases each year. As editing software become more familiar to candidates there appears to be less inclusion of annotation, or explanation of specific procedures. It is often difficult to decipher which aspects of the work should be attributed to the candidate and which are simple filters or effects. Candidates should clarify this to enable accurate assessment of their own work.

Ideas progressed through strong connections to the works of others, where in-depth contextual research influenced both concept and process. Consistent critical understanding enabled the formal qualities of their own work to develop. This analysis of the work not only informed the development of ideas but also encouraged greater ambition in the realisation of intentions.

Portfolios were coherent from supporting work to the final outcome. Final pieces carefully demonstrated a successful and relevant realisation of intentions. The understanding of visual language was clear and well written analysis accompanied ideas which added to the communication of intentions.

Middle levels

Many candidates identified an intention and investigated relevant reference material. Stronger candidates recorded from primary and secondary sources, making detailed and careful studies of their subject matter. However at these middle levels, decision making was less focused with more reliance on found images. A good range of technical skill was apparent in the stronger work which enhanced individual ideas, supported by effective analysis. The less successful examples lacked clear vision and direction.

Themes were often personal with thoughtful explorations of ideas, originating from relevant sources. Portraiture and self-portraits were particularly popular. Ideas addressing the complex problems of teenagers and world-wide issues were frequently investigated. Though these topics had potential, it was sometimes difficult for candidates to fully visualise and access first-hand subject matter, which may have strengthened their submission. The overall depth of research was less informed and weaker in content.

Many submissions contained references to artists and designers, who influenced development. Visits to exhibitions, artist studios and recording from cultural places of interest were included. Stronger candidates made effective connections and realised the potential in this research to inform their own skills. Not all candidates applied the knowledge learnt from others, to progress their own work and insufficient analysis prevented some candidates from experimenting with new and challenging directions.

Media exploration was experimental in approach, and engaged. Most candidates were able to purposefully select and apply relevant processes to reflect their subject matter. However, while the work was lively, insufficient critical understanding or intentions, sometimes prevented the progression of ideas. Development was often the weakest area of the work with some candidates not understanding how to progress ideas from their observational work. Others developed ideas into a resolved final outcome, but lacked sufficient initial research to realise an original conclusion. Stronger recording could have enabled candidates to improve their design ideas and make informed connections.



In some responses, ideas for the final outcome began without enough sources of inspiration. The final pieces at this level were either fully resolved and varied in technical quality, or complex compositions which lacked focus and balance of design. The most successful outcomes were those that were driven by a clear concept.

Lower levels

At this level, there was a noticeable deficiency of first-hand recording. Submissions relied heavily on secondary sourced imagery which limited the scope for individual development. There were weaknesses in the ability to generate a cohesive idea, and an inability to explore a starting point in any depth. Work was often disconnected. Some candidates used only imagery taken from the internet or copies of artworks as their initial source material, regardless of whether the subject matter was accessible first hand. Those who took their own photographs produced poor quality pictures, lacking detail or useable reference. Where observational studies were included, they were often limited in accuracy and without the visual information needed for creative idea development.

Media exploration was limited and inconsistent in demonstrating technical skill. A few candidates were able to render in pencil or paint, but there was little experimentation with a wider range of materials. Those who explored their materials with a sense of enquiry or purpose, rather than relying on the familiar, demonstrated individuality.

There were few contextual references, but those who considered the works of others mainly included biographical notes, which did little to inform the candidates' own work. Appreciating the value of making contextual connections could have informed the candidates' individual and creative direction. The development of ideas was frequently limited by unclear intentions which impacted candidates' abilities to gather purposeful reference material. In some responses, initial ideas were too focused, with the candidate moving forward with one idea. Others produced a few ideas which did not progress into unexpected or more interesting outcomes.

At this level, the final outcome was often a repeated version of an earlier study. Candidates would have benefitted from more in-depth research and awareness of their chosen subject, to broaden their response. Meaningful reference material and visual analysis may have led to personal ideas and more ambitious final outcomes.



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Paper 9479/02
Externally Set Assignment

Key messages

- The most common area of study was drawing and painting and related media. Other areas of study included photography, graphic communication and fashion design.
- Inappropriate material such as heavy wooden frames or broken glass should not be submitted. Any work that is fragile, three-dimensional or larger than A2 must be photographed, printed and mounted on A2 sheets.
- Candidates used a combination of recording approaches. Those that included recording from direct observation often demonstrated a more in-depth investigation of their chosen question.
- Stronger submissions included relevant research of other artists or cultures to inform the candidates' own development.
- Most submissions showed a clear engagement with materials, with candidates exploring different ways to combine materials and processes.
- There were some examples of candidates working with a limited range of materials but they had refined their technique, creating intense works showing a good range of mark making.
- Some submissions would have benefitted from more editing and careful selection of work to present a cohesive and clear journey from the starting point to the final outcome.

General comments

Higher levels

Candidates working at a higher level responded to the questions from a broad perspective and made mature observations. They were able to interpret the question in a personal and insightful manner.

Recording was thoughtful and conducted with purpose. Submissions were well organised, and the focus of responses were clear, which demonstrated high levels of engagement. Detailed recording informed the development of ideas, often leading to further in-depth research. Artists, designers and cultural references were purposely chosen to inform the direction of the work. Strong supporting imagery demonstrated excellent critical thinking when selecting the best idea to take further.

At this level media selection was purposeful and materials were applied with energy and sensitivity. Experimental mark making and papers, collage, paint and pastels were appropriately manipulated to explore surface quality, form and pattern, reflecting detailed observational studies. Photography was used effectively to express intention, whilst also demonstrating the candidates' clear understanding of the visual elements and technical ability. Effective annotation enhanced the understanding of the development of ideas.

A range of media was evident in these submissions and candidates were confident in experimenting with media to explore different possibilities. The candidates used their studies to refine their use of media and to take their ideas forward. The work within the supporting studies demonstrated clear links between ideas, media and presentation.

The submissions were coherent and candidates had presented their creative journey in a structured manner, clearly showing each of the steps the work had taken and the creative decisions being made. Supporting studies directly informed the final outcome.

Middle levels

Candidates at these levels often struggled with Assessment Objective 1 and 3. At times there was an over reliance on secondary source material. Primary studies are always beneficial for candidates to make as they often lead to a better understanding of form, tone, texture, and colour.

Some candidates did use a combination of primary and secondary source material. Although photography was used to support and develop ideas, it often did not demonstrate awareness and understanding of the visual elements. Further attention to detail and consideration of the quality of the images would have benefitted the overall submission.

The exploration of ideas was sometimes imaginative and confident, but the ability to fulfil ideas in the final outcome was less successful. Recording was mostly relevant, providing a sound body of work for development. Candidates' observations were well interpreted through skilful media. However, the rendering of materials tended to be inconsistent.

Work at this level demonstrated an ability to experiment with a range of media and candidates were able to explore combinations of materials and techniques to express their ideas. This could have been further challenged through more refined studies of their subject matter and a better understanding of the connection between media and concept.

Most submissions contained artist research, and many were carefully chosen to help support an idea and develop the candidates' own work. Surface quality, scale and the exploration of subject matter could be combined to develop conceptual, abstract or figurative ideas. However, sometimes candidates were unable to use this research to effectively plan and inform the final outcome, which as a result was unresolved. The strongest work at this level demonstrated good connections with the works of others.

Most of the work showed a clear intention throughout the creative process. Work was presented in a clear format and demonstrated clear engagement with the development of a personal response.

Lower levels

At this level, most recording of ideas was carried out through brainstorming, mood boards and secondary sources. Candidates would have benefitted from gathering more primary sources and visual information from a broader range of sources to inform their ideas. Detailed direct observational studies would have developed a better understanding of their subject matter.

Most candidates demonstrated a limited ability with their chosen media, showing better control when carrying out copies of others' work. Unfortunately, they were not always able to carry this through into their own work and the lack of developed ideas meant that these technical skills did not grow. Investigating the works of other artists could have benefitted the work, providing purpose and direction. This could have encouraged the selection of relevant and personal research and influenced idea development. Where artist referencing was included, the content was often unrelated, biographical or copied, which did not inform development of the candidates' own work.

Work seen at this lower level often did not include enough development. Candidates were unsure of how to develop their initial observations and often moved too quickly to deciding the composition and content of their final outcome. More planning and exploring alternative compositions before completing the timed test would have helped these candidates to produce a more informed outcome.

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Paper 9479/03
Personal Investigation

Key messages

Many candidates worked towards one final piece rather than generating a body of interconnected works in response to their visual, practical and contextual exploration.

There were some submissions mounted on heavy, oversized boards and canvasses. Others were presented in large sketchbooks. Editing work is essential as too many unrelated pieces were included, which confused the narrative of the work. In some cases, this was detrimental to the responses' achievement.

There were many submissions where the written content did not meet the minimum requirement.

General comments

Most submissions were fine art based and others included architecture, design, fashion, photography and 3D works. Some candidates worked across disciplines.

It was encouraging to see local artists included within the investigations where candidates had recognised a connection between ideas and use of materials, often due to their shared cultural experiences. Many candidates had chosen individual, personal themes to explore that they could relate to and use their experience to inform their observations.

In some submissions the candidate wrote an essay and then made their own work but the two activities were not connected. There was a disconnect between the research carried out and the practical responses.

Most of the submissions were well presented and organised in a logical and coherent fashion.

There was an increase in the use of digital media and AI to generate visual stimuli to support the development of compositional studies relevant to the chosen theme. It is important that images of others' work and found imagery is correctly referenced and clearly signposted.

Higher levels

At these levels, insights were perceptive and intelligent. Candidates communicated their ideas in a mature and articulate manner. The investigation was developed from first-hand studies and experiences. The observations made were extensive and continuous and evidently informed the subsequent development of ideas.

Candidates were able to make good use of studio visits and workshops, exploring different approaches in their creative process and use of materials to expand their visual language and extend their ideas.

The exploration of materials and processes were relevant to the concepts being investigated and were clearly influenced by their chosen artists. Experimentation was thoughtful, showing technical ability and curiosity.

Digital media was used at this level as an additional tool to explore ideas further. Work was annotated and clearly defined which elements were made by the candidates' own hand, and which utilised filters and effects.

Candidates were able to balance their critical and technical skills to develop ideas into a mature resolution. Although this did not always take the form of a final outcome, a conclusion of study was apparent in the way the work evolved.

Candidates used their in-depth artist study to inform and progress in their own ideas. The understanding gained by the candidates was evident in both visual and written elements.

Middle levels

Some candidates were able to make a meaningful connection between their research and the progression of their ideas. Candidates chose strong, individual and personal subject matter to explore. They were able to select relevant artists to study in relation to their chosen theme.

Submissions engaged well with Assessment Objectives 1 and 2 but this was not reflected in the development of the investigation. Some candidates visited artists and attended workshops. They were able to use appropriate technical language to record this opportunity but were unable to use the experience to inform the development of their work. Often, they developed ideas unrelated to the artists they had studied.

A common approach at this level was to copy artists' work and then apply this style to their own subject matter. This limited the opportunity for personal growth and experimentation.

Often submissions at this level had good intentions and ideas but they frequently did not have enough depth. A deeper understanding of the artists' intentions or motivations may have prompted the candidate to develop their own visual language. Further analysis of technique or context of the work may have led to more effective development of personal responses.

Some candidates were able to reflect critically on their intentions and evaluate how well they were achieving this. However, many at this level focused their reflections on how well they had copied the work of their chosen artist rather than evaluating their achievement and using this to inform the direction of the work.

Most submissions demonstrated a purposeful integration of practical and written work through the visual presentation of the development of ideas and written annotation.

There was some evidence of a refined visual language used to communicate clear concepts and maintain a good level of personal and independent study. Candidates would have benefitted from more thorough prior planning, selecting their chosen artists more carefully so that their ideas were clearer and better informed.

Lower levels

Submissions at this level were characterised by a lack of understanding of the Assessment Objectives. Observations and initial ideas needed a clearer focus to carry out a sustained investigation.

Candidates working at this level mainly referred to secondary sources, making tenuous links with the work of others, often based on shared subject matter or use of colour but without a clear intention.

Work at this level demonstrated a limited technical ability with media, showing a basic understanding of visual language. They would have benefitted from experimenting with techniques influenced by their chosen artists.

Some submissions did not include an artist study or any research into the work of others. Some had chosen to refer to works not relevant to their chosen theme. In most submissions a printout of the work was provided but this did not inform further exploration by the candidate.

Artist studies were largely biographical with a limited understanding of how the artwork could help to guide the investigation. Some candidates had visited a local artist or practitioner, providing a valuable opportunity to learn skills and gain insight directly from the artist. However, candidates documented these practical sessions without using them to inform the development of ideas or make contextual links.

There was little evidence of the use of technical language or analysis of chosen works. The written analysis was limited and frequently well below the minimum word count.

Candidates could make better use of their references by analysing key aspects of the work and trying to use it in a more thoughtful way, synthesising it with their own ideas.

Work at this level lacked engagement and personal connection. Often both the visual and written elements of the personal investigation was limited and did not relate to a clear intention.